

News Release May 14, 2009

From: Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission, Ocqueoc River Habitat Restoration and Protection Committee

RE: Ocqueoc River restoration and protection project(s)

Silver Creek Super Project- designated by Huron Pines

Brad Jensen, Director of Huron Pines Resource, Conservation, and Development Council, has announced the Silver Creek as a major area of focus for restoration activities for the next two-three years. The Silver Creek, located in Moltke and Ocqueoc Townships, is one of two primary cold water and nursery streams for trout and salmon in the Ocqueoc River Watershed.

In 2007, the Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission began a push to implement the strategies of the watershed management plan. The Ocqueoc River Habitat Restoration and Protection Committee was formed to develop a plan for that purpose. Charlie Lyon, County Drain Commissioner, was asked to chair the committee. This "Habitat Committee" is made up of resource specialists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MDNR Fisheries, Fisheries Consultant for Wolverine Power Cooperative, and representatives from Headwaters Land Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Hammond Bay Area Anglers, Huron Pines, Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission, the Presque Isle Conservation District, and the County Road Commission.

September of 2007 the committee met and began to discuss and evaluate the recommendations of the Watershed Management plan focusing on fish habitat. Based upon the inventory in the management plan, they prioritized road stream crossings that were a significant source of erosion and sediment loading of the mainstream and its tributaries such as the Little Ocqueoc River and the Silver Creek. In May of 2008, a site tour was conducted by the committee along with the County Road Commission. The DNR,(DNRE), also conducted a stream and fish survey. The fisheries experts then suggested a slight change in the priority list based upon the sites that would have the most significant impact on the fishery. It was decided that we should focus on the Silver Creek. The result was that there were seven road stream crossing sites, and three fish passage problem sites along about a three mile reach of the

Silver Creek. The “Habitat Restoration Committee” had adopted a plan of action and began to seek funding to begin the actual restoration work. In the meantime, a small project on the Little Ocqueoc River was conducted in October of 2008 primarily through the efforts of the Wolverine Power Cooperative.

“The Silver Creek Super Project”

Huron Pines Resource and Conservation Council has been the lead organization regarding conservation efforts for the Ocqueoc River Watershed from developing the management plan, instituting the Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission, and conducting some restoration and education activities. Now their “Resource Advisory Council has reviewed the plan of the Habitat Restoration Committee and has approved the “Silver Creek Super Project” as a means to implement a portion of the Management Plan for the Ocqueoc River watershed.

The scope of the project was formally announced by Huron Pines at the February 2009 meeting of the Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission.

At the 2009 May 14th meeting of the “Habitat Restoration Committee” it was announced that the total cost of the project is estimated in excess of \$500,000. Grant funding is being sought from Federal and State agencies along with private organizations such as Trout Unlimited, and local donations. The County Road Commission will provide some in-kind equipment and labor. Wolverine Power made a \$25000 commitment in 2008 for Ocqueoc River Watershed restoration projects. Presently about \$160,000 has been granted so far. The Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission is also seeking local donations.

“Obviously this is very great news. To have Huron Pines designate the Silver Creek a major focus for their program is a great benefit for the Ocqueoc system. It looks like the Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission and its “Habitat Restoration Committee” is making a difference. I am very excited and pleased about all the great possibilities”, commented committees chair Charlie Lyon. “Now we have to wait and see how much funding comes in for the project- that is the big question now.”

For further information about the project or to contribute and/or volunteer please contact one of the following:

Virginia Pierce, Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission Chair: 989-733-8217, ecologic@freeway.net

Charlie Lyon, Ocqueoc River Habitat Restoration and Protection Committee Chair, 989-766-3568,
picountydrain@speednetllc.com or clyon62@charter.net

Brad Jenson, Executive Director Huron Pines RC&DC: 989-344-0753

Patrick Ertel, Project Manager, Huron Pines: 989-344-0753, patrick@huronpines.org

.....

Huron Pines- Silver Creek Super Project 2010 Update

This project will address all road stream crossing sites in the upper three miles of Silver Creek. The focus of the project is to protect stream habitat by preventing sediment entry and to reduce fish passage obstacles. By coordinating the restoration of all of these sites, project resources will be better utilized and resource impacts will be realized on a watershed scale.

- The goal is to improve 10 sites where roads cross Silver Creek
- Total Estimated Project Cost = \$600,000
- Estimated Completion Date = December 2011

PROJECT DETAILS

Church Highway (one site): Replace and realign culvert, harden road surface, install diversion outlets.
Estimate \$110,000

North Curtis Road (three sites): Replace and realign 3 culverts, harden road surface. Estimate \$115,000

Beach Grove Highway (three sites): Replace one culvert, harden the road surface at 3 crossings, install riprap at one crossing. Estimate \$115,000

Spens Road (one site): Replace culvert, harden the road surface on approaches, lower road slopes.
Estimate \$105,000

Private Driveway Crossings (2 sites): Replace culverts, harden driveway surface. Estimate \$55,000

Monitoring Restoration Data

Monitoring data will be collected before, during and after the restoration projects on Silver Creek. Measurements such as water temperature, dissolved oxygen and flow rate will be collected. In addition, other indicators of water quality, such as the presence and abundance of aquatic invertebrates, will be

collected. This data will be used to formulate restoration strategies for other small tributaries on coldwater systems throughout Northern Michigan. With high quality coldwater streams being one of the most difficult systems to protect, developing a strategy will set the stage for effective protection of small tributaries in other watersheds. Protecting these tributaries, which are the lifeblood of our rivers, is imperative to maintaining and improving the condition of all our rivers.

Estimated Project Costs

\$ 335,000 -Site materials
\$ 150,000 -Construction Costs
\$ 15,000 -Monitoring stream conditions
\$ 63,000 -Engineering
\$ 37,000-Planning, Outreach, Reporting
Total Estimated Project Cost = \$600,000

Current Funding Sources (as of June 2010)

\$ 500 -Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission
\$ 3,000- Michigan Fly Fishing Committee
\$ 2,500- Paul H Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited
\$ 1,000- Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited
\$ 12,880- MDNRE-water/stream monitoring
\$ 58,000- US Fish and Wildlife- Fish Passage Program
\$ 10,000 -US Fish and Wildlife – Partners Program
\$ 22,500- Wolverine Power Cooperative
\$ 145,000- Presque Isle County Road Commission – Estimate In-kind Labor and Equipment
\$ 63,000 -National Resource and Conservation Service (USDA),in-kind engineering services

Huron Pines was recently awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in the amount of \$133,510 designated for a variety of projects including the Silver Creek Super project.