

Outdoors Forever, Juneau County Land and Water Resources Department (LWRD), and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are working together to improve trout fishing in Onemile Creek on the Outdoors Forever property off Duffy Road. For many years, Outdoors Forever has wanted a trout habitat improvement project on the property because trout populations thrive when streams have diverse habitat. Reed canary grass has overtaken the Onemile Creek corridor and the stream lacks riffles, pools, and overhead cover (besides overhanging reed canary grass – not optimal). LWRD and DNR joined forces to cost share and make the project happen.

The DNR's Wild Rose Operations Crew designed the project and completed Phase 1 in June of 2019. Phase 1 added four riffles with plunge pools, two jetted overhead bank structures, brush bundles, and 2,450 feet of streambank debrushing was completed. Riffles provide places for fish to lay their eggs and places for aquatic invertebrates (fish food) to live. These riffles are great places for trout anglers to cross the stream, while the pools create deeper water for trout. Jetted overhead bank covers are added on outside bends, providing valuable overhead cover for trout. Overhead cover allows trout to hide from predators and places to feed and grow big. Often, trout will spawn underneath these structures if the conditions are right. Brushing was completed to improve the fishability of the stream for trout anglers. Some of the brush was used to create brush bundles, a technique used to narrow the stream's width and increase both flow and depth. These changes allow for water temperatures to remain cold while increasing stream productivity with additional sunlight.

More habitat improvement work is planned for 2020 and possibly beyond. Phase 2 of the project will be completed by the Wild Rose Crew in the summer of 2020; which will include adding three riffles with plunge pools, three jetted overhead bank covers, and reclaiming a pond back into a wetland to restore the stream's connectivity to the floodplain and eliminate the pond's discharge of water to the stream. Outdoors Forever plans to improve an existing parking lot with gravel, make an additional small parking area up the road, and add a sign highlighting the work completed for trout anglers to view. Future focus will also be on invasive species control (darn reed canary grass) and management of the stream's riparian to improve the fishery and pheasant habitat.

Grab a fishing pole and have some fun! The Wild Rose Crew likes to fish on breaks and at the end of the day, they had great success. Really nice brookies, including a 13" fish, were caught all at the project site. Of course, make sure you have a license, a trout stamp, and follow the fishing regulation (8-inch minimum length limit with a daily bag of 3 trout) if you don't practice catch and release.