

# ESTABLISHING A TROUT FISHERY IN MILL CREEK

## PROJECT OVERVIEW



**ANN ARBOR CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED**  
**MILL CREEK FISHERY DEVELOPMENT**  
**COMMITTEE**



# Discussion Agenda

- Project background and goals
- Project description
- Action plan and timeline
- Monitoring program
- Benefits
- Q&A



# Project Background and Goals

- In 2006, the Ann Arbor Chapter of Trout Unlimited (AATU) began a search in the chapter's home stream area for stream habitat where water temperatures were cold enough to support trout over summer and where there was potential to establish a public trout fishery.
- AATU's research concluded the Huron River was too warm in summer to support trout, but also showed that Mill Creek near Dexter might be cool enough if the Dexter Mill Pond dam was removed.
- Dam removal occurred in 2008, and over the following two years AATU studied water temperatures in Mill Creek.
- These studies showed that creek temperatures were likely cold enough to support trout over summer in the headwaters and middle reaches of the creek every year, and in most years the lower reach near Dexter would be cold enough as well.
- As a result, last year, several AATU members formed the Mill Creek Fishery Development Committee and began to develop an action plan for an experimental stocking in 2011 which would be used to test the temperature study conclusions and determine if Mill Creek could, in fact, support a trout fishery.



# Project Description

- The project involves two major phases – stocking and monitoring – each with its own activities...
- The Stocking Phase involves the release of a number of certified brown trout into Mill Creek at multiple locations, each selected for its high potential as suitable habitat for the fish.
  - Approximately 2,000 one- and two-year old brown trout will be released in [April/May]
  - These fish will be purchased from a certified fish hatchery in Michigan
  - Several release sites are under consideration in the coldest known stretches
- The Monitoring Phase involves the evaluation of fish growth and survivability over time to determine suitability of Mill Creek as a trout fishery.
  - Scientifically accepted low-impact monitoring activities of fish survivability and water quality to be conducted periodically throughout the coming year by Trout Unlimited
- Funding for the project comes from Trout Unlimited and local member volunteers will perform most of the stocking and monitoring tasks.
- Trout Unlimited and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) have been extensively involved in the development of this project and are supportive.



# Action Plan and Timeline

Action Plan	Status/Time Frame
Secure funding for project	Completed
Identify a licensed, certified fish hatchery with available fish	Completed
Develop plan for stocking locations and numbers	Draft plan completed
Apply for and receive stocking permits from MDNRE	In process
Gather input from key stakeholders	March-April, 2011
Perform stocking	April-May, 2011
Begin monitoring program and gather data	Summer-Fall, 2011
Evaluate data and determine next steps	Fall-Winter, 2011



# Benefits

- The development of a public trout fishery in Mill Creek could have significant benefits to local communities and businesses in the Mill Creek watershed.
  - Increased fishing opportunities for Dexter-area citizens
  - Hands on learning opportunities for local students (e.g. biology)
  - The Economic benefit of anglers to local communities is difficult to quantify precisely, but some studies have shown it to be \$25-\$50 per day for local anglers and as much as three times that amount for anglers coming from outside the region or state.
  - Studies have shown that property values that border trout streams are higher than similar waterfront properties that don't have trout nearby.
- *This project will help identify whether Mill Creek can be a sustainable trout fishery, attract state resources and consequently whether these benefits can be realized in the Dexter area.*



# Questions?

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