



Green Bay Trout Unlimited (GBTU) Trout “Tails” Educational Trail Project (August 2020 – March 2024)



Conserving, protecting, restoring and reconnecting North America’s coldwater fisheries and watersheds





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GBTU 2020-24 Trout “Tails” Educational Trail Project Summary

Introduction:

Green Bay Trout Unlimited (GBTU) covers Wisconsin’s Brown and Door counties. The area does not contain what most trout anglers would define as high-quality trout fishing. Therefore, sometimes we need to be creative in our efforts to spread the Trout Unlimited (TU) message and mission.

GBTU first constructed a walking path trout educational trail, along Haller Creek (Brown County), in the early 1990’s. Since that time, we have used this location for chapter picnics, work projects, Trout Unlimited (TU) Trout-in-the-Classroom (TIC) releases, helped the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) trout stocking, and more. In 2020 we started the process of re-vamping the trail. This effort was completed in March 2024.

Whether a TU chapter has “destination” trout waters or not, we believe the GBTU Trout Educational Trail can be used as an example of how to help fulfill the TU mission of “protecting, reconnecting, and restoring the places people love to fish.”

Trout Trail History:

“The planning for the original GBTU NEW (Northeast Wisconsin) Zoo Trout Educational Trail started in 1992. Installation started in 1993 and was completed by 1994.

Lee Meyers was assigned as the “technical” trout habitat advisor from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He worked with Bob Heim, of GBTU, who had the impetus for the trail. Bob was lead project leader and Lee was the WI DNR consultant helping determine what types of displays and signage would make sense on the trout trail (during the summer of 1993). A covered bridge at the beginning of the trail would go up in the summer of 1994. Hank Mancheski was the lead carpenter that helped build the covered bridge from scratch. The bridge helps attract folks to walk through and ultimately end up at the trailhead. Jack Koivisto, a Green Bay Southwest Highschool art teacher, was instrumental in developing the artwork for all the signs located on the trail.

GBTU had to obtain proper WI DNR water zoning permits as well as approval from the Brown County parks department – who own the property. These permits were required to do any modifications or additions to the stream channel (i.e. all the in-water displays). Coordination with team from the Wild Rose trout habitat crew, to obtain the materials (logs, stone, brush bundles and sediment.) to build the bank cover, rip rap, half logs, sand trap and wing deflectors, as well as the Reforestation Camp crew who constructed the crushed stone walking trail that meanders along with the creek.

Haller Creek was added the DNR stocking quotes to help provide a put and take fishing relatively close to Green Bay.



Another note of interest is 2 or 3 years after completion of the NEW Zoo Trout Educational Trail, Lee lead a group of Minnesota DNR trout specialists on a tour of the Haller Creek display afterward the decided to plan and install a similar “working” education display along a stream in downtown Minneapolis.” (Mike Renish greenbaytu.org)

The GBTU Trout Educational Trail is located just outside of Green Bay within the Brown County Reforestation Camp. The Brown County Parks Department cares for much of the reforestation camp. The NEW Zoo is directly across the road from our trail. A campground was also installed in recently added. Because of this, the area sees a high number of visitors every year.

Project Background:

In June of 2020 Brown County Park Ranger, Clay Garrett, sent us an email saying, "The Trout Unlimited Education Trail at the Reforestation Camp could use a little work this year." He mentioned how the covered bridge may need re-roofing, the fencing could use some touching up (or replacing), and that some of the exhibits are getting very close to the creek edge (largely due to spring flooding). In the weeks that followed, leaders from GBTU made multiple trips to the trail to evaluate the extent of the aging. On one occasion, we were joined by Brown County Parks Department Program & Natural Resource Coordinator, Jason Petrella. We all drew the same conclusion...our trail needed a major revamp.

At our August 6th, 2020, meeting the GBTU Board of Directors (BOD) voted unanimously to remove the damaged parts of the trail, form a Trout Educational Trail Committee, and start the renewal process. Ten GBTU members volunteered to comprise the committee. These committee members were Dave Ostanek, Randy Rake, John Deuchert, John Tilleman, Jose Diaz, Doug Seidl, Paul Kruse, Kim McCarthy, Adrian Meseberg, and Gary Stoychoff.

Meetings:

The first meeting of our newly formed GBTU Trout Educational Trail Committee was held on August 20th, 2020. We would hold 10 virtual meetings through August 29th, 2023. These were virtual as the Covid-19 pandemic was upon us from the beginning, and one of our key committee members (Randy Rake) lives in Montana. We averaged 4.6 attendees per meeting.

During the early meetings it we decided to break the entire project into three smaller ones. First, we would have to remove the old, aging, structures. After that, we would separate the signs into two waves. Given the time needed to design new signs, share for committee review, incorporate suggested changes, send to production, and hold a workday for old sign removal/new sign install we figured each wave would take around a year. We could do seven-eight signs during each wave. Because they would be made only one year apart, the signs would age close to the same rate.



Signs:

Our former trail had ~21 signs. The committee felt we could effectively spread our message with ~15 signs. In the first meeting Paul Kruse presented a signage theme...Reconnect, Restore, Preserve, Protect (or something similar...the TU “mantra”). Randy agreed to design the new signs and came up with the title, GBTU Trout “Tails” Educational Trail. The significance of the word “tails” is that trout have tails, and the trail is sort of like a story (or tale). The signs have a tail-like pattern incorporated into the borders.

The signs would be designed, then shared with the committee for review/comments. Afterwards, the sign would be updated (if necessary). A high level of responsibility was used when considering content for the signs. Trout Unlimited National, GBTU and the Wisconsin DNR were frequently used content sources. In other cases, we went to experts in particular areas. Great examples of this were information provided by Central WI TU’s Tom Lager (aquatic insects) and Saint Norbert Geology Professor, Nelson Ham (NE WI Geology and History). The colors were also chosen to closely match that of TU National.

Once we started on the sign designs, we needed to find a partner turn our creation into something we could put into the ground. After much research, Adrian Meseberg brought forth outdoor signs, and costs, from four companies for the committee to consider. Due to their competitive pricing, variety of display options, and a solid reputation in Northeast Wisconsin; we chose Quick Signs in Green Bay. The custom fabrication on the posts and mountings were as follows: 7’ high x 3” x 3” aluminum tubing w/ 45-degree welded ¼” thick 12” mounting plates w/ holes. Prepped, printed & powder coated black. The signs started as ½” thick luster board w/ painted edges & aluminum faces w/ digital graphics and anti-graffiti laminate. However, due to apparent moisture being absorbed into the luster board of the first set of new signs, Quick Signs would provide replacements at no additional cost. According to the company, the difference in cost between the signs first provided and the replacements were nearly the same. The replacement signs were Palight® outdoor foamed PVC sheets for exterior signage and displays. They are ¾” thick and include “an industry-first 25-year warranty.” Quick Signs stated they would have originally gone with these signs at the beginning, but they were unavailable (there were supply chain issues). Each sign is 3’ x 2’. The 45-degree angle, the fact they are ~4 feet from the ground, and large size decided upon by the Trout Trail Committee to make the content easy for people to see.

The average cost of the posts & mounts was ~\$450.00/ each. The average cost of the signs was ~\$213.00/ each.

Work Projects (four total):

1) Removing Old Structures (September 19th, 2020):

Eleven GBTU volunteers gathered at the trail to begin the first work project steps in the process of our Trout Trail revamp. On this day we removed of the old structural displays, degraded split-rail fence, and removed/treated (with herbicide) common and glossy buckthorn that had overgrown on Haller’s Creek’s banks. The crew included Paul Kruse, Jim VandenBranden, Dave Ostanek, Jon Ostanek, Maya, Pat Hill, Jeff



House, Peter Tilleman, Bill Holton, Doug Seidl and Adrian Meseberg. Since TU National had a Covid-19 guideline preventing chapter's from providing lunch...work project chair Paul Kruse came up with a creative way to reward our hard-working weekend warriors with gift cards to Burger King, McDonalds, and Subway. It was wonderful to see chapter member faces we hadn't seen a long time...especially during a pandemic. It was remarkable! *Masks were encouraged & social distancing was practiced.*

2) Wave 1 (July 16th, 2022):

Six volunteers from Green Bay Trout Unlimited (GBTU – Paul Kruse, Dave Ostanek, John Ostanek, Pat Hill, Doug Seidl and Adrian Meseberg), one from Oconto TU (Wayne Czipinski) and four representatives from the WI DNR (Kyle Kossel, Brady Bartels, Joe Fishingbauer and Brent Ritter) teamed up to take the next step in making our Trout Trail re-vamp a reality. This days' work was comprised of removing the old signs, cutting, and treating invasive buckthorn and inserting six new signs.

3) Wave 2 (October 21st, 2023):

The workday was set to start at 9a. At 8:30a most volunteers had our wipers on high as we drove to the sight. At his point there was no turning back though...the messages had been sent, the power post-hole digger had been rented, and the signs were waiting. As luck would have it, the heavy rain stopped by 9a. From that time, until we wrapped up, we only dealt with on and off light rain.

On this workday the plan was to install the final eight signs along the trail. We were also hoping to remove invasive glossy buckthorn and autumn olive from the Haller Creek shoreline. Unfortunately, we would not have time for the shoreline cleanup as we needed all our volunteers to finish the trail signage.

We broke into two groups. The first group went out ahead and drilled the post holes. The second group followed...putting the posts in the ground, making sure they were level (and the same approximate height), filling the holes, and attaching the signs. We had rented the post digger for 4 hours and told volunteers the actual work would go from 9a-noon. Wouldn't you know it...like a fine oiled machine...this amazing group finished putting the last sign in at around 11:45a, the post digger was on its way back the rental company, and we all were ready for lunch.

At around noon GBTU work project chair, Paul Kruse, fired up the chapter's backstone grill. The days' menu featured brat patties, burgers, toasted buns, and chips. Thanks to the generosity of a couple our chapter's wives (Mary K and Kim VB), we also had a delicious cookie bar desert and a fantastic bacon pasta salad.

We were hoping for the opportunity to spread the word of GBTU's great work during the "Trail Unveil Chapter Meet & Greet" that followed the workday. Our educational trail is just off the parking lot of the NEW Zoo, and we expected a lot of zoo visitors would see our canopies and banner. Unfortunately, due to the rainy weather, there were very few people that ventured out.



A giant thanks goes to the volunteers who made this day a huge success: Paul Kruse, Doug Seidl, Jim Vanden Branden, Jack Koivisto, Kim McCarthy, Carla Zimmerman, Dave Ostanek, Jon Ostanek, Pat Hill, Adrian Meseberg, and Kevin Maes. It takes a village to pull off a successful vision like this.

4) Finishing Touches (March 9th, 2024):

Sixteen volunteers from the Green Bay and Oconto River TU chapters came together to put some finishing “clean-ups” on, and around, Haller Creek. This included GBTU work project chair Paul Kruse & all the volunteers that attended: Jim VandenBranden, Dave Ostanek, Stephan Walfang, Kim McCarthy, Matt Norem, Paul Pinkston, Pat Klatt, Tom Klatt, Jeff House, John Kuiken, Jeff Dugre, Dennis Dugre, Brent Levash, Doug Seidl, Paul Kruse, & Adrian Meseberg

The focus of the workday was two-fold. One of our objectives was to remove some of the invasive buckthorn that had started crowding the area around Haller Creek. To get us started, Brown County Parks Department’s Program & Natural Resource Manager, Jason Petrella, arranged to have the buckthorn (we planned to remove) painted. This way we were only removing buckthorn & and no other trees/shrubs (as plant identification can be challenging without leaves). Using loppers and chainsaws, we cut down the marked buckthorn. We then pulled the cut shrubs away from the side of the creek. To prevent re-growth, we applied the “Buckthorn Blaster” herbicide to the stumps.

The second element of our workday was to replace the educational signs we installed in 2022 and 2023 with brand new signs. As mentioned earlier in this summary, we noticed moisture getting into the luster board of the recently installed signs (inside the aluminum facing) following our last Haller Creek workday. Quick Signs provided us with the replacement signs at no additional cost.

After the work was done, the GBTU treated volunteers to a lunch of Jimmy Johns Subs, Mary Kruse’s chili (amazing!), snack foods & drinks.

Funding:

Revenue for our trail revamp project came primarily from money raised during our annual conservation banquets. Cellcom Green Bay granted our project \$1000 through their Green Gift Grant Program. Finally, “for providing environmental and health education in the Green Bay area,” our GBTU Trout Trail project received a 1500 euro (~\$1,624 US) International Grant from the Schwabe Group.

Looking Ahead:

Now that our trail revamp is completed, we would like to continue to use it for chapter picnics, work projects, GBTU TIC releases, and helping with WI DNR trout stocking. Eventually we could also use the trail as a location for single, or multiple, day youth camps (especially shortly after trout have been stocked). The signs along the



trail will continue to serve as valuable sources of information from regarding a wide range of topics regarding trout and their environments.

Thank You:

GBTU would like to thank the following: Jason Petrella (Brown County Program and Natural Resource Coordinator), Jeff Ott and Ben Gordan (Park Rangers, Brown County Parks Department), the WI DNR, Oconto River TU, TU National, Tom Lager (Central WI TU), Nelson Ham (Saint Norbert Geology professor), Quick Signs, Cellcom Green Bay, the Schwabe Corporation, our family, friends, donors, and supporters, for their help and cooperation.

Our apologies if we missed anyone.



Meetings:

Number	Date	Volunteers	Hours	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Value/ Hour*	Volunteer Value
1	2020.08.20	10	2	20.00	\$28.54	\$570.80
2	2021.04.27	5	2	10.00	\$29.95	\$299.50
3	2021.07.01	7	2	14.00	\$29.95	\$419.30
4	2021.08.05	4	2	8.00	\$29.95	\$239.60
5	2022.03.17	4	1.5	6.00	\$31.80	\$190.80
6	2022.10.20	4	1	4.00	\$31.80	\$127.20
7	2023.01.17	2	1	2.00	\$33.49	\$66.98
8	2023.05.23	4	1	4.00	\$33.49	\$133.96
9	2023.07.18	3	1	3.00	\$33.49	\$100.47
10	2023.08.29	3	1	3.00	\$33.49	\$100.47
Totals:	10	46	14.5	74.00	-	\$2,249.08

*Independentsector.org

Sign Design (Randy Rake)

Signs	Date(s)	Hours/Sign	Total Hours	Volunteer Value/ Hour*	Volunteer Value
6 (Wave 1)	7/1/2021 - 7/16/2022	12	72	~\$30.80	\$2,217.60
8 (Wave 2)	1/17/2023 - 10/21/2023	12	96	\$33.49	\$3,215.04
Total Value (Sign Design):					\$5,432.64

*Independentsector.org

Work Projects:

Number	Date	Volunteers	Hours	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Value/ Hour*	Volunteer Value
1	2020.09.19	11	5	55	\$28.54	\$1,569.70
2	2022.07.16	8	6	48	\$31.80	\$1,526.40
3	2023.10.21	11	5	55	\$33.49	\$1,841.95
4	2024.03.29	16	4	64	\$33.49	\$2,143.36
Totals:	4	46	20	222	-	\$7,081.41

*Independentsector.org



Costs:

Category	Date(s)	Units	Cost/Unit	Combined Cost
Wave 1 - Signs*	7/1/2021 - 7/16/2022	6	\$205.00	\$1,230.00
Wave 1 - Posts & Mounting**	7/1/2021 - 7/16/2023	6	\$435.80	\$2,614.80
Wave 2 - Signs*	1/17/2023 - 10/21/2023	8	\$219.00	\$1,752.00
Wave 2 - Posts & Mounting**	1/17/2023 - 10/21/2024	9	\$459.00	\$4,131.00
Lunch for each work projects (4)	-	-	\$80.00	\$320.00
Discount	-	1	-\$610.20	-\$609.20
Total Cost:				\$9,438.60

*Palight® outdoor foamed PVC sheets for exterior signage and displays...¾” thick and include “an industry-first 25-year warranty.” Aluminum faces w/ digital graphics and anti-graffiti laminate.

**7’ high x 3” x 3” aluminum tubing w/ 45-degree welded ¼” thick 12” mounting plates w/ holes. Prepped, printed & powder coated black.

Funding:

Source	Amount	
Annual Fundraising Banquet	\$6,814.60	
Schwabe Corporate International Grant (1500 euros)	\$1,624.00	
Cellcom Green Grant	\$1,000.00	
Total Funding:		\$9,438.60



GBTU Haller Creek Trout Educational Trail Pictures (2010-2024)

Urban Youth Trout Fishing Opportunities:



2010



2014



2014

Partnering with the WI DNR for Trout Stocking:



2015



2015



2016

Chapter Picnics:



2015



2016

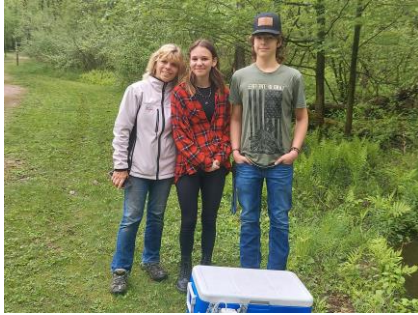


2019



GBTU Haller Creek Trout Educational Trail Pictures (2010-2024)

Lombardi Middle School Trout-in-the-Classroom Release (2022):



2022



2022



2022

Lombardi Middle School Trout-in-the-Classroom Release (2023):



2023



2023



2023

Work Projects (2014-15):



2014



2015



2015



GBTU Haller Creek Trout Educational Trail Pictures (2010-2024)

Work Project (2020):



2020



2020



2020

Work Project (2022):



2022



2022



2022

Work Project (2023):



2023



2023



2023



GBTU Haller Creek Trout Educational Trail Pictures (2010-2024)

Work Project (2024):



2024



2024



2024

Old Sign / New Sign Comparison:



Summary Created by Adrian Meseberg