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PRESS RELEASE

Trout Unlimited Chapter Awarded Grant to Protect Streams

Goal is to make Coldwater River and Buck Creek safer for humans, fish, and wildlife

Grand Rapids, Mich., July 31, 2018: The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, as part of the federal Clean Water Act, has awarded Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited (SWMTU) \$172,638 for updates to the Coldwater River and Buck Creek Watershed Management Plans.

The overall goal of the project is to update the existing watershed management plans (WMP) to help local communities ensure healthy river ecosystems with clean water for all desired uses.

Both streams are designated trout streams, and Buck Creek offers the only urban trout fishing in the greater Grand Rapids area. However, both watersheds are impacted by excessive sedimentation, high levels of fecal contamination, and agricultural runoff from manure and fertilizer applications. All of these restrict recreational activities including body contact and fishing.

The Coldwater River watershed is located southeast of Grand Rapids and drains about 189 square miles of primarily agricultural lands in Barry, Eaton, Ionia, and Kent Counties. It is a tributary of the Thornapple River and Grand River. The goals of the Coldwater WMP are to restore areas where partial and full-body contact recreation have been impaired and fisheries and wildlife have been negatively impacted. Since a 2009 WMP was approved for the Coldwater River, several significant events have disrupted the watershed. These include multiple *E. Coli* contamination events and the clearing of 12 miles of stream channel and bank side vegetation.

Buck Creek, a tributary of the Grand River, drains about 51 square miles of land in Kentwood, Wyoming, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Byron Township, and Gaines Township. The watershed is a mix of agricultural land, expanding residential and commercial development, and highly urbanized. In 2003 and 2007, the Buck Creek WMP suggests that sediment, pathogens and nutrients are degrading the watershed, and that trash and debris is the most abundant source of non point source pollution. Despite efforts from the cities of Kentwood and Wyoming to improve the watershed quality, much more work is needed.

SWMTU is the lead partner in this effort and was founded in 1962 because of the concerns for the health of our local streams and the trout that live in them. Other major partners in the effort and funding include Coldwater River Watershed Council, Friends of Buck Creek, Barry and Kent Conservation Districts, Michigan and Lansing-Perrin Chapters of Trout Unlimited, Streamside Ecological Services, Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds, Drain Commissioners of Barry, Ionia, and Kent County, Environmental Canine Services and Helix Laboratory, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC, and the City of Grandville.