



2023 Minnesota Watershed Project of the Year

South Washington Watershed District Trout Brook Stream Restoration

Trout Brook is a tributary to Lake St. Croix in southern Washington County fed by a 5,500- acre rural watershed. Heavily impacted by 1800's logging and mass erosion, lower Trout Brook had been buried under 15 feet of sand and suffered from excessive bank erosion and poor habitat value.

Utilizing Lessard-Sams and Lower St. Croix Watershed-Based Implementation Funds grants, SWWD and its partners have nearly completed the final restoration phase of lower Trout Brook. In-stream structures, channel re-meandering, and perched culvert elimination have stabilized eroding banks, improved habitat and opened the stream to fish migration. A conservation easement through Afton Alps ski area now provides public access to the stream and floodplain. Lake St. Croix sediment and phosphorus loading are down by over 500 tons/yr and 200 lbs/yr, respectively and trout counts have increased from just a few individuals to rates ranging from 150-1,100 fish per mile earning Trout Brook its "designated trout stream" status.

