



Project 6-4 Us-Kab-Wan-Ka Riparian Tree Planting

Background: The lower Cloquet River and many of its tributaries have supported a trophy brown trout fishery in the past. Wild brook trout populations exist in the Us-Kab-Wan-Ka River, and recently brown trout have been stocked as part of an effort to increase abundance in the Cloquet River system. Since 2006 the Arrowhead Flyfishers have conducted a volunteer project to remove beaver and dams and restore access to one of these tributaries, Us-Kab-Wan-Ka River. These efforts are intended to provide accessible nursery and spawning habitat for brown trout. While removal of beaver dams improves stream temperatures, re-establishing tree cover in the riparian corridor will further improve stream conditions and the potential for overall project success.

Problem Statement: Many years of beaver dam activity in the Us-Kab-Wan-Ka River flooded the riparian area and killed much of the large trees and shrubs that provided essential shade cover, energy for the aquatic food web, and large woody debris for fish habitat.

Goals:

- 1) Increase the number of large trees in riparian areas.
- 2) Help stabilize fluctuating stream temperatures because of a lack of shade trees.
- 3) Provide additional energy to the aquatic food web in the form of leaf litter.
- 4) Provide a future source for large woody debris instream habitat.

Priority: High

Task Duration: 5 years

Potential Mechanism: CPL, CWL, GLRI, TS, USFWS

Potential Partnering Organization(s): AFF, DNR, St. Louis County Land Department, Laurentian RC&D

Estimated Cost: \$25,000/yr for 5 years

Comments: Grant of \$12,500 received from USFWS

Special Considerations: Timber harvest within the riparian areas (per FRC Guidelines) does not protect planted trees. Most of the riparian corridor is county tax forfeit land.

Accomplishments: Arrowhead Fly Fishers have been planting trees along the Us-Kab-Wan-Ka riparian corridor since 2006.

Measure(s) of Success:

- 1) Cooler water temperatures (temperature loggers will be placed in restored reaches and project will be evaluated as shade trees mature)
- 2) Large woody debris inputs creating fish habitat

If this project has positive results, this management strategy could be used on 5 other trout tributaries within this reach of the Cloquet River.

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Vision Statement: Maintain, protect, and restore healthy cold water ecosystems with relatively stable flows and a diversity of habitat for fish and wildlife to enhance our quality of life.

For project information: www.lrcd.org/links/lsc_projects.htm