

# U L A O

## W H I S T L E R

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ULAO CREEK PARTNERSHIP, INC.

### FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Hello Friends of the Ulaio Creek

2012 is upon us. Our partnership remains strong and the organization is committed to full filling our mission to protect and improve the water quality and natural habitats in the Ulaio Creek Watershed. Over the years, the partnership has played an integral role within the watershed. The UCP has performed tree planting projects, removed fish impediments within the Ulaio Creek, hosted educational programs and perhaps most importantly we have helped to increase awareness of the Ulaio Creek and its sensitive nature. There has been much improvement within the watershed over the last 15 years but we still have work to do.

With our rich history over the last 15 years, it only makes sense that we go "back to our roots" in 2012. We are going to be revisiting some of our previous work sites to check out how the areas are doing. We need to review long term survival rates of some our tree planting sites. We will be monitoring some of our invasive species removal sites to see how successful we have been at halting the spread of invaders in our most critical areas.

Over the years, many areas in the vicinity of the creek have had increased water levels. This has flooded out and caused dieback of many of the ash trees within the creek zone. Not to mention the threat of the emerald ash borer on the remaining ash trees. This spring we are excited to announce that we are planning a new tree planting imitative right along the buffer zone of the creek. We are selecting native tree species that are matched up to the site and can help increase the biodiversity of the area. Our goal is to increase the tree canopy cover, allowing the shade to



cool the waters of the creek, and shade out invasive grasses that are currently choking out any other plants from growing. We will be posting news of the event on our facebook page and thru our email list. Please look for more information in a few weeks.

We will need you to help make 2012 successfully. Please renew your membership, become a new member, and/or volunteer to help us! Becoming a member of the UCP in 2012 has never been easier. Please fill out the attached membership envelope. Please sign up to become connected in our email list. Please get involved within our organization. A lucky new member might even win a prize!

Sincerely,  
August Hoppe  
President  
Ulaio Creek Partnership

C R E E K P A R T N E R S H I P



# Treasures of Oz

By Marjie Tomter

"We're off to see the river and wonderful wetlands of Oz."

Treasures of Oz is coming on Saturday, June 16th. Get that on your calendar and remember to download your passport in June from the website [www.treasuresofoz.org](http://www.treasuresofoz.org). You can collect stamps on your passport to trade for free raffle tickets at the "Celebration" site at Forest Beach. Raffle items include dinners at local restaurants and more.

The theme this year is "The Wonderful Waters of Oz" and will include

1. Tendick Park - river -(we are hoping to have kayaking available), famous disc golf course, hiking and more. Andrew Struck will be the docent.
2. Riveredge Nature Preserve - River and wetlands- it is looking like Riveredge will include their sturgeon rearing facility as part of their offerings.
3. Cedarburg Bog - wetlands- the Friends of the Bog, Carl Schwartz taking the lead, will be sponsoring this site on their Hwy. 33 trail.
4. Bike Path Island in Bratt Woods - river - the OWLT Bratt Woods team, Milwaukee Riverkeeper and the Bureau of Land Management are putting their collective wisdom together in planning this.
5. Falls Road Historical Site/ Chair Factory Dam - river- Will Warwzyn will be sharing his information on fish and waterways at the site of the former dam. The Grafton Blues Society will also be featured.

6. Village Park in Thiensville - river-- at the dam and fish passage. Our Mequon team, headed up by Jim Gennrich is working with Matt Aho and the fish passage program. It is looking like this site will have some very cool things to do.
7. Ulao Waterfowl Production Area - wetlands- Andy Holschbach is heading this site, next to Lion's Den Gorge. U.S.Fish and Wildlife and other wetlands resource groups will be there.
8. Forest Beach Migratory Preserve - wetlands- The OWLT FBMP team will be leading tours on the restored migratory habitats and wetlands areas. This is our home base site where visitors can see the progress of the restoration each year. Here is where we host the afternoon celebration with music, food and the silent auction - as well as lots of exhibits.

Out sites are open from 9 until 3. Our celebration runs officially from 1 until 6.

Treasures is an exciting gathering of the environmental experts and groups in the area and offers tours, talks, and exciting ways to explore places you may have only heard, or know little about. It is a free, family-friendly event. You can visit sites in any order or number you choose. Besides a tour, there will be music, food and many exhibits at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve site.

# Reed Canary Grass

By Kurt Gruetzmacher

One of the biggest issues facing the Ulao Creek Watershed is the abundance of reed canary grass. Reed canary grass is an invasive species that shades out the native plant species that grow along the creek. Along with shading out the native plant species this type of grass also slows the flow of water in the creek.

Reed canary grass was first introduced to the Ulao Creek

watershed by farmers that planted it to feed their grazing cattle. Because this grass grows very well in damp soil conditions, it was an ideal feed source to grow along the creek. This became a problem after the cattle herds were removed and the reed canary grass was no longer grazed upon. With no grazing by native animal species the grass quickly overtook the natural plant species. However many of the native plant seeds

are still lying dormant in the creek banks. The challenge now, is to remove this grass to allow these native seeds to grow.

One of the only techniques for removing reed canary grass is with an application of herbicide. In order to do this the appropriate permits need to be obtained by the department of natural resources. The herbicides are then applied directly to this grass

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# Ozaukee County - Planning and Parks Department - Fish Passage Program Completes Ulao Creek Aquatic Connectivity

By Andrew Stuck

During 2009 and 2010, the Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department was awarded a combined \$5.2 million in funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and \$2 million from the US Environmental Protection Agency to develop, refine, and implement a "Milwaukee River Watershed Fish Passage Program" (Program). The Program reconnects existing, high quality habitat in Milwaukee River tributaries to Lake Michigan, the Milwaukee Estuary, and lower reaches of the mainstem Milwaukee River. It also forges new connections between Ozaukee, Milwaukee, and other counties, municipalities, businesses, schools, NGO's, citizens, volunteers, and state and federal agencies. Much of Wisconsin's desirable aquatic habitat has been lost or significantly altered. Artificial aquatic habitat is expensive to create and often inferior to quality natural habitat. Many pockets of quality natural aquatic habitat remain in the Milwaukee River Watershed, but are ecologically isolated. Fish and aquatic life move around streams to reproduce, grow, and survive. Both stream ingress and egress are crucial. Human activities can directly or indirectly create barriers that inhibit access to existing habitats. This directly affects species abundance, distribution, genetic diversity, and recreational opportunities.

Twelve fish and aquatic life passage impediments were inventoried on Ulao Creek in 2006 and 2007. Impediments included multiple woody debris and log jams, reaches overgrown with invasive

vegetation, railroad ballast deposits, a stone ford crossing, and culverts with sediment aggradations. The Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department worked closely with many riparian landowners to secure access permission forms, worked with a local consultant and the Ozaukee County Land and Water Management Department to develop engineering and design plans, and secured all applicable state, federal, and local permits. The Program, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, and the Ozaukee County Highway Department began impediment removals in March 2010, completing the last removal in April 2011. UCP landowners August Hoppe and Paul Helms were instrumental in assisting with railroad ballast removals in the fall of 2010.

In total, over 8 miles of Ulao Creek was reconnected to the mainstem Milwaukee River, lower Milwaukee River, Milwaukee Estuary, and Lake Michigan. To date, the Program has reconnected over 75 river and stream miles throughout the watershed! In addition, the Program staff has completed early spring northern pike larval trapping on Ulao Creek near Bonniwell Road, finding 14 northern pike larvae in 2010 and 4 larvae in 2011. This monitoring indicates a native, migratory species continue to use Ulao Creek as suitable spawning/rearing habitat, and these impediment removals have only increased the accessible habitat. The Program would like to thank Ulao Creek riparian landowners and the UCP for all of their support!

## Reed Canary Grass

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with either a back-pack sprayer with a wand or a boom sprayer attached to an ATV or UTV. This technique is very effective but will need to be done every three to four years to prevent the reed canary grass from again taking over an area.



Untreated area of Ulao Creek.



Treated area of Ulao Creek.





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*The Ulao Creek Partnership, Inc. (UCP) is a grassroots, community-based 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization comprised of concerned citizens, landowners, and public and private organizations aligned to protect and improve the water quality and natural habitats in the Ulao Creek Watershed.*

Ulao Creek Partnership is now on Facebook!  
Check us out and become a fan.

## Ulao Creek Water Quality Monitoring

By Andy Holschbach – *Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department*

Water quality monitoring results for Ulao Creek would be almost non-existent had it not been for the efforts carried out by the Ulao Creek Partnership volunteers associated with the Water Action Volunteers network supported by Riveredge Nature Center, Milwaukee River Keeper, and Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department.

The most common parameters monitored for Ulao Creek include dissolved oxygen, turbidity, temperature, stream flow (velocity) and biotic index. In addition the Land & Water Management Department is monitoring total phosphorus and total nitrogen. While no definite conclusions have been reached, the current results thus far, indicate fair to poor stream health.

It is critical that a comprehensive monitoring program be on going for Ulao Creek. Monitoring results not only help to define and understand the impact of nonpoint source pollution on stream quality, but also provide baseline stream data necessary to assess how effective current development practices are in reducing pollutant loadings, flood risks, erosion, and overall water quality. A goal of the Ulao Creek Partnership is to implement a consistent, long term monitoring program with the information available on the Ulao Creek Partnership's website.

Ulao Creek was one of several streams included in the

2011 Urban Road Salt Monitoring Project completed by the Wisconsin Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network. Volunteer, Phil Strobel, monitored the specific conductance of Ulao Creek at Hwy 60 every other week during February, March and December in 2011, and monthly the remainder of the year. Grab samples were also analyzed for chloride at a lab. The EPA acute chloride standard of 860 mg/L was exceeded twice at this site. In addition, the EPA chronic chloride standard of 230 mg/L was exceeded three times at this site. The overall impact of chloride levels is being evaluated.

If you are interested in being a volunteer to do water quality monitoring, please contact Andy Holschbach at 262-238-8271.

