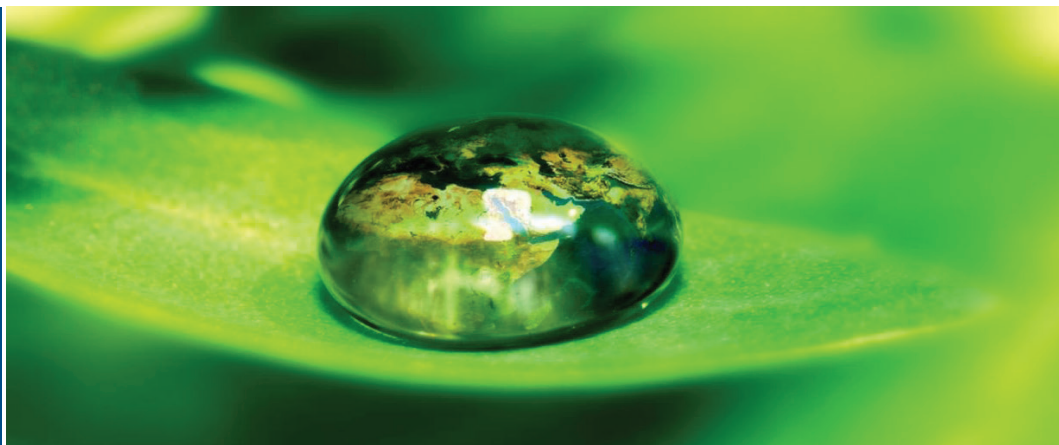




# Ulao Whistler

The Official Newsletter of the  
Ulao Creek Partnership, Inc.



Spring 2014



Hello Ulao Creek Partners and Friends,

2014 will be a signature year for the Ulao Creek Watershed and the Ulao Creek Partnership. Between invasive species removal, a major tree planting initiative and the large scale Ozaukee County sponsored creek restoration project, it will be a year to remember!

We will be kicking off our year with a garlic mustard pull-athon in the month of May. We are teaming up with the SE WI Invasive Species Consortium to help rid our area of the invasive garlic mustard. This event raises money for our organization and clears out garlic mustard at the same time. Each team member gathers community pledges based upon how much garlic mustard they gather and bag up. Pledges are paid out based upon the weight of your collection. (one 33 gallon garbage bag of garlic mustard equals 30 lbs.) Sign up to join the UCP team. Information and pledge forms can be found at the Ulao Creek Partnership website.

[www.ulaoecreek.org](http://www.ulaoecreek.org) Best picking results depend upon timing this spring, so we will pick our date sometime in April and let everybody know by sending out an email and by posting on our website and Facebook.

We are also tremendously excited about the Ozaukee County's major Ulao Creek Restoration project. Currently many parts of the creek channel have been artificially straightened and other parts have degraded over the years. This restoration project will re-create the natural meandering of the creek, which will improve fish and wildlife habitat. Once the re-channeling is completed, the Ulao Creek Partnership will work with other groups to lead a major fall planting effort on the site. You won't want to miss this large scale community planting event. The date is not set yet, but will likely take place this October. So stay tuned...

UCP memberships are critical to our success as an organization. Please take the time to fill out the annual appeal envelop located within this mailing. Once again, by becoming a member for 2014, you become eligible to win a free tree. Delivered and installed by the Ulao Creek Partnership! We are now in our 19th year as an organization and I want to thank everyone for their support over the years. Both financial gifts and volunteer action have been critical to the success of the Ulao Creek Partnership.

Thanks,

August Hoppe  
President  
Ulao Creek Partnership

## Events

### Garlic Mustard Pulling

Paul Helm's Property  
May 31, 2014 9am-noon

### Habitat Improvement & Restoration Project

Spring/Summer 2014

### A Day of Exploration - Treasures of Oz

June 14, 2014

# A Day of Exploration Treasures of Oz



Treasures of Oz invites you to join with Ulaio Creek Partnership and other Ozaukee environmental organizations to discover hidden natural treasures in Ozaukee County on June 14th.

This is a really interesting, family-friendly event that happens each year, the Saturday before Father's Day. If you have not done this before, you will want to plan to do so this year. It is a great way to discover little day-trip vacation spots that you perhaps never even heard about, all within the county borders. Many visitors come year after year, often with children and grandchildren in tow. Last year, one little visitor, forced away from his video games by his mom, proclaimed it his "best day ever" when all was said and done.

Treasures of Oz has a great website, [treasuresofoz.org](http://treasuresofoz.org), that will get you started. In June, there will be a passport you can download, a treasure map and good information on the 7 sites for 2014. Passports get stamped at each site and can be turned in for free raffle tickets for area gift certificates from many supporting local merchants and service providers.

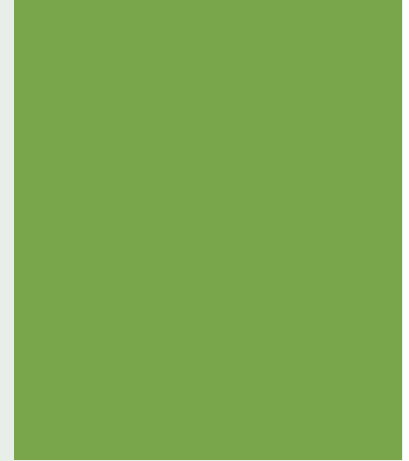
There will also be plenty of information on the celebration that goes with this event. Celebration headquarters is at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve (the former Squires Golf Course) in Belgium. There is a fun-to-shop silent auction, good food for purchase and lots of music, as well as exhibits. Randyman Hetzel brings his array of critters and Jean Lord of Pineview Wildlife Rehabilitation usually stops in with her wonderful raptors.

Docents, guides and welcome teams will be on hand at seven sites to get you started discovering and exploring Ozaukee's natural treasures. You can explore and linger at each site as long as you like.

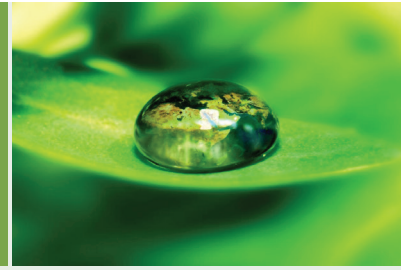
One of the places Treasures will be exploring this summer will be the Cedarburg Environmental Study Area. This is an Ozaukee Washington Land Trust property in the Town of Cedarburg. OWLT staff will be on hand to show visitors around. Featured speakers at this site will be two well-known and outstanding scientists and teachers, Kate Redmond and Tom Kroeger. Kate writes the weekly "The Bug Lady" column and has won numerous awards for her writing and efforts in environmental education. Tom is a top-notch scientist and parks manager for Lakeshore State Park and is well-known for his educational programs that cover pre-school to university. They will be focusing on the amazing ant hills of CESA.

Besides CESA, visitors will be able to explore the new mountain bike park at Pleasant Valley Nature Park, check out the trails at Mee-Kwon, visit the natural area and beach at Lion's Den, wander through the USFWS Belgium Waterfowl Production Area, spend time with birding and water experts at Trinity Creek Wetland Habitat in Mequon and walk the trails through the 5-Star Bird Hotel at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve - ten unique habitats to providing safe stopovers for the annual migrations along the Lake Michigan coast.

**Mark your calendars now for June 14th!**



# ULAO - THE LITTLE CREEK THAT COULD



*By: Paul Helms*

This small creek called Ulaio, has been an important, but abused, used, and neglected water way for many years.

Back in the day, late 1800's, when the little settlement of Ulaio / Ghost Town was a shipping port, and railroad station. This small creek was named after that settlement. It was a spring fed, free flowing, thriving stream. Over time it was ditched, pastured along, redirected with culverts, and paved over (i.e. ... I-43, in 1967). The springs were capped per a fly ash dump back in the mid 70's.

Gone were the small swimming and fishing holes. The water crest died out. Cattails, reed canary grass, and willows took over. This caused slow flow, and intermittent dry spells in it's bed. Thus trapping fish that were still trying to come back to age-old spawning grounds.

During the wet spells and spring run off, the change of it's natural flow began causing agriculture and new residential flooding. Ulaio Creek, as it once had been, was dying a slow death. Due to the necessity of new development and growth within the watershed, it would never be the same.

Ulaio Creek has its headwaters just north of Ulaio Pwy. Rd. in Grafton. The attempt to cap the springs on the fly ash dump has diverted that water to the west, along the I-43 corridor. The creek still finds it's way, through a diverse water shed, five miles south to the Milwaukee River in Mequon. Then it's waters' enter Lake Michigan.



Back in the mid 90's, a couple of neighbors and concerned citizens gathered to see what could be done with this small dying creek. Thus started the journey of the Ulaio Creek Partnership. With the dedication of landowners, professional advisers, Boy Scouts, 4-H groups, students, friends, families and other countless volunteers, all sacrificing their personal time, talents, and finances toward this seemingly undaunting task we have made huge strides to preserve this little creek.

Over the last 20 years the partnership has made a huge difference in the four or five-mile journey of this forgotten, but important aquifer of a "Little Creek That Could", become a treasure once again.

As some of us remember, and may have fond memories of the past about this small waterway. Others drive and live along it everyday, and don't have time to notice, or understand what it once was, did, and can do again. The Ulaio Creek just needs a little help from its friends.

Consider "friending" the Ulaio Creek Partnership on Facebook, or visit the website. We sure could use your help!

We're all 20 years older from when we started this. We don't skip through the swamp, jump across, fall in, and float down the creek like we use to! Join us in the adventure of restoring this lost treasure for future generations.



# Ulao Creek Water Quality Improvement Effort



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

An experiment is taking place in the Ulao Creek watershed that could improve water quality more efficiently and effectively.

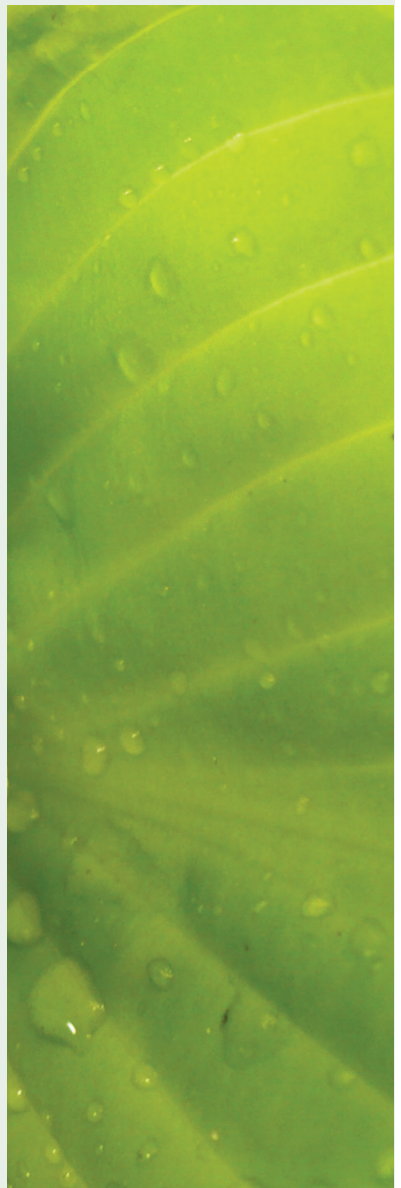
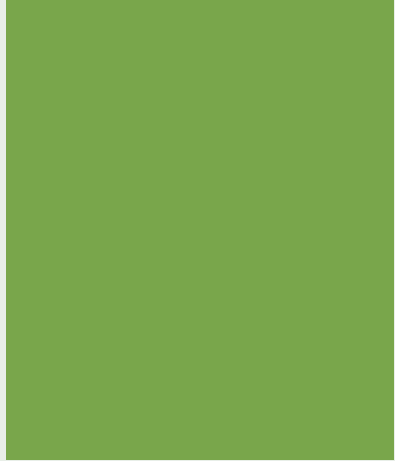
One of the many challenges facing landowners and managers in Wisconsin and nationwide is keeping sediment and nutrients on the land and out of streams. Is there a way to target efforts to improve water quality so they have the greatest impact at the lowest possible cost?

Farmers and landowners in partnership with the Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department, the River Alliance of Wisconsin, and the Fund For Lake Michigan are working together to answer this question.

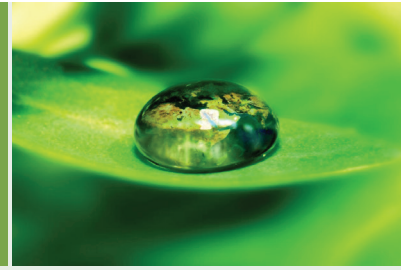
The Fund for Lake Michigan provided a grant to the Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department to collect and analyze soil samples from all of the agricultural fields within the Ulao Creek watershed and to collect field and cropping information from the farmers to determine the Phosphorus Index.

The Phosphorus Index is a planning and assessment tool for managing runoff phosphorus losses from cropland. It uses information that is readily available to evaluate the potential for phosphorus in runoff from a specific field entering a nearby stream or lake. The higher the Phosphorus Index number, the greater the likelihood that that field is contributing phosphorus to local water bodies.

The analysis portion of the project is nearing completion in the Ulao Creek watershed. Based on the Phosphorus Index, it appears that about 80% of the phosphorus load is likely from a very small number of fields. These specific fields will then be targeted for practices to reduce the amount of phosphorus runoff.



# Large Scale Habitat Improvement and Restoration Project



*By: Andrew Struck, Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department Director*

The Ozaukee County (County) Planning and Parks Department (Department) Ecological Division's Fish Passage Program will complete a large-scale habitat restoration project on Ulao Creek within the Milwaukee River Watershed in the Village and Town of Grafton. Project elements include restoring multiple stream reaches through channel remeandering, floodplain reconnection, wetland creation and enhancement, invasive plant control, native plant restoration, and installation of bird, fish and wildlife habitat structures. The project will provide direct, tangible improvements to fish and wildlife habitat, specifically aquatic habitat available to resident and migratory native and desirable introduced fish species in the Milwaukee River Watershed and Lake Michigan Basin.

Land-use changes (e.g., impervious area) and invasive species have greatly diminished biological productivity in the Milwaukee River Watershed. Only a fraction of the potential stream and riparian habitat reaches its full ecological potential. Improving aquatic and terrestrial habitat in the Milwaukee River Watershed directly supports sustainability and/or population recovery for remnant desirable, native, and/or threatened or endangered species. Specifically, restoring high quality, in-stream, wetland and floodplain habitat improves the biological and genetic diversity of aquatic communities. Improved fish, bird and wildlife

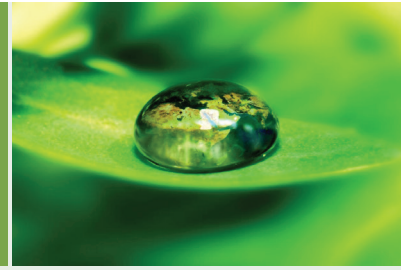


*The project will incorporate salvaged large woody debris for bank stabilization and habitat structure*

habitat promotes the long-term restoration of naturally-reproducing, native wildlife and migratory bird and fish species to the lower Milwaukee River, the Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern (AOC), and nearshore waters of Lake Michigan. This project will further the Department's mission to protect and restore critical habitat throughout the watershed and is complimentary to ongoing and planned aquatic connectivity work throughout the watershed by the County and other partners. To date, the Department has removed over 233 impediments to aquatic organism passage, opening over 129 miles of biologically productive streams. This includes 10 fish passage impediment removal or remediation projects in Ulao Creek, opening a large majority of the Ulao Creek watershed to longitudinal (e.g., up and downstream) connectivity and the free passage of aquatic life. However, approximately 7,500 linear feet of mainstem and tributary channel between just south of State Highway 60 and the downstream portion of Ulao Swamp has been significantly altered through dredging and artificial straightening, resulting in an incised channel hydrologically disconnected (lateral disconnection) from adjacent riparian floodplain areas, which provide high quality habitat for spawning northern pike and other aquatic and terrestrial species.

The County, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and other partners are refining a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) based Fish and Wildlife Habitat Tool (Tool), which prioritizes restoration projects based on species requirements and the greatest benefit to the resource. GIS Tool results and consultation with local fish, avian and wildlife experts indicate a high priority project site along Ulao Creek. The Department

# Large Scale Habitat Improvement and Restoration Project



has secured a 2010 USEPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant entitled “Enhancing Ecologic Productivity of Milwaukee AOC Watersheds” and a 2013 Fund For Lake Michigan grant entitled “Fish and Habitat Restoration – Milwaukee River Watershed”. Portions of each grant are allocated to the design, engineering, and construction of a project to improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat in Ulao Creek. The following project goals were developed after consultation with species experts, Inter-Fluve (Project Engineer) and affected landowners: (1) stream reach restoration by channel remeandering, improvement of lateral connectivity by connecting aquatic habitat to existing floodplain and wetland with suitable hydroperiod (whenever possible), wetland creation and/or enhancement, invasive plant



*“The project will remeander a significant portion of the existing straight, entrenched channel to provide for improved in-stream habitat and diversity as well as reconnection to adjacent floodplain and wetlands”*

removal, native plant restoration, and installation of fish, avian and wildlife habitat structures; (2) to the extent practical given project timelines, monitoring of fish, avian and wildlife communities at project sites prior to and following construction. Specific outputs include up to 7,500 feet of Ulao Creek remeandered, the reconnection of up to 118 acres of wetlands, 68 acres of 2-year floodplain, 97 acres of 5-year floodplain, 131 acres of 100-year floodplain, and 23 acres of potentially restorable wetlands. Fish, avian and wildlife habitat structures will also be constructed in tandem with the stream restoration project to enhance available cover, overwintering habitat, and stream heterogeneity.

The project will include the reestablishment of native vegetation as recommended by Hewitt’s 2002 vegetative study of the Ulao Swamp, while also controlling invasive species through constructed topographic features (e.g., nature-like hummocks) and targeted native plantings. Anticipated project outputs include planting up to 62 full-size trees, 58 live tree or shrub stakes, 60 potted shrubs, and up to 35 pounds of cover crop and native seeding. The Department is working with the UCP on coordinating a community-based native vegetation planting day(s) in fall 2014 to help reach these goals. Several partner organizations, including the Milwaukee Audubon Society, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Southeast Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, and the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps have provided letters of support and commitment to assist with these efforts, including cash donations, technical assistance, volunteer recruitment, and planting assistance at the event(s).

Surveying, engineering, design, permitting, public bidding, and contractor selection and award have been completed. Construction and restoration activities are planned for spring and summer of 2014. For additional project information, contact Andrew Struck, Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department Director at 262-238-8275 or [astruck@co.ozaukee.wi.us](mailto:astruck@co.ozaukee.wi.us).



# Trees. What's not to love?



*By: Dean A. Koch, Chief River Nursery*

Trees. What's not to love? They give us fruit, fresh air and of course shade on a hot sunny day. My wife Sheila and I purchased Chief River Nursery in 2011 and moved the office and shipping operation from Hayward, WI to 976 Ulao Road in the town of Grafton. Our nursery sells bare root tree and shrub seedlings including evergreen, hardwood and fruit bearing seedlings. Our customers range from a homeowner who wants to plant a fruit tree or two in their yard to large Christmas tree growers and government agencies who order tens of thousands of seedlings for resale or reforestation.

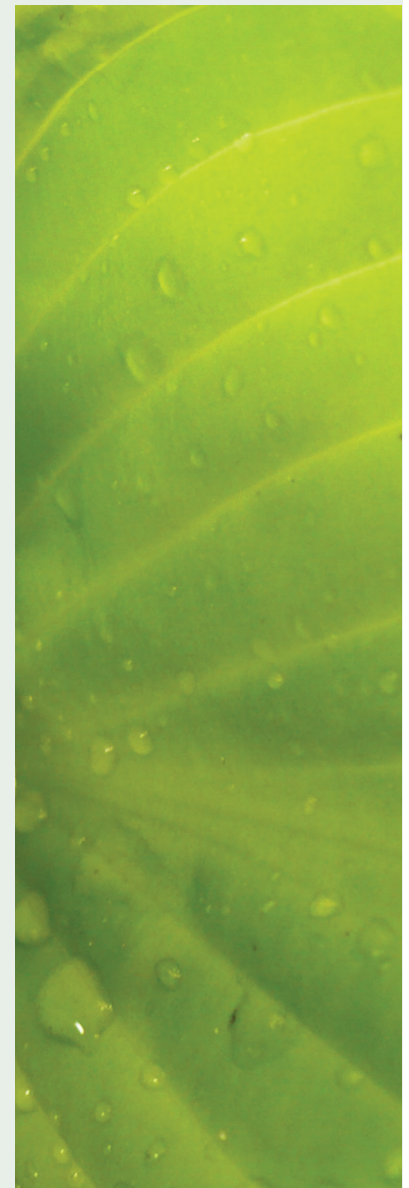
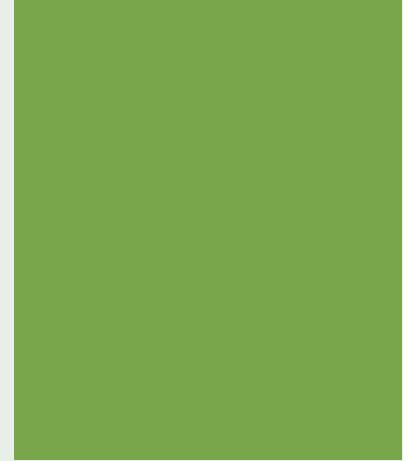
Our company utilizes several growers in the Midwest who custom grow our nursery stock just for us. Each April, refrigerated trucks pick up the harvested seedlings and bring them to our property on Ulao Road where they are organized into our cold storage warehouse. Over a 6 to 8 week period in April and May, the seedling orders are picked, packaged and shipped to those who have placed orders with us.

I am lucky enough to have the Ulao Creek run through both my business property and my property at home. There is something special about Ulao Creek and the wildlife that depends on it. It is refreshing to see people in a community band together to protect and enhance such a valuable resource.

As most of you know, the Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed locally and will certainly diminish the forest canopy along the Ulao Creek watershed. The watershed is heavily treed with Ash which are certain to be affected and perish in great numbers in the coming years. I believe it is critical for each of us to look ahead and imagine the watershed without the Ash trees that grace its banks. Trees are critical to the overall watershed quality by slowing erosion along the banks, shading out invasive species and moderating water temperature. Simply stated, a watershed without trees is not a healthy one.

Planting small trees is both easy, cost effective and should be considered prior to the large scale loss of local Ash. American Tamarack, Paper Birch, White Cedar, Red Maple as well as Bur, Red and Swamp White Oak all make good choices for planting in the watershed. We carry all of the above species as well as additional species which would be suitable for planting. I am committed to helping the UCP achieve its long term planting goals by offering very low cost and even free trees to be planted along the watershed. In addition, if large scale UCP planting projects come to light, I will attempt to direct a financial sponsor to the project so the trees can be provided at no charge to the partnership.

Thanks again for all that the UCP does. Being good stewards of the watershed is a noble and enjoyable cause no doubt!



# Become a UCP member and become eligible Win a free tree!!!



Sign up to be a 2014 Ula Creek Partnership member and you become eligible to win a free 2" trunk diameter trees, to be delivered and installed at no cost to you! The free tree is approximately 10-12ft tall!

There will be two lucky winners drawn.

Fill out the form at the bottom of this flyer and return within the membership envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

The lucky winners can choose from a river birch tree, oak tree, or sugar maple. A director from the UCP will contact the winner to pick the species and schedule a planting date this year.



Here are the details:

Cut out the form below and put it in your membership envelope. The sooner you return this form with your membership renewal, the better your chance of winning a free tree this spring.

These are large trees and will be planted professionals that are experienced in tree planting.

Sign me up for a chance to win a free tree planted by the UCP this spring!!!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_