

Partners & Assistance



Once you have consulted with a stream biologist and determined that your stream is suitable and defined your goal, you should begin building relationships with potential partners and finding experts to help you plan and conduct your project. This might be the same biologist who helped evaluate the potential of your site, or it may be someone from another organization. Agency biologists often have to program their time a year in advance and their availability for projects with private landowners may be limited.

Project Leadership

One of the keys to a successful project is effective leadership. It is important to have a small leadership group with specific responsibilities, including one person designated as the overall project coordinator. In most cases, you should serve as the coordinator or share the role with the resource biologist who is working most closely with you on the project. Without a coordinator, participants may end up duplicating work, or worse, inadvertently undermining each other's efforts on the project. The coordinator also serves as a central source whom potential partners or volunteers can contact for information. Depending on the scope of a project, the coordinator will need other participants to take responsibility for specific aspects of the project (for example, conducting surveys, community outreach and publicity, fundraising or organizing workdays). A clearly defined sharing of leadership responsibilities can ensure that each volunteer's talents are maximized if you have a large project. The project coordinator should assemble a leadership team and ensure that they have all the bases covered.

Recruiting Partners

Partnerships are essential to restoration projects. Some partners need to be on board before your restoration project can get off the ground; at a minimum you must have the support of your state fish and wildlife agency and a fisheries biologist who can provide the necessary

expertise. You should also consider seeing if the local chapter of Trout Unlimited is interested in collaborating with you. There are also a variety of state and federal partnership programs in which private landowners can participate.



Expert assistance is essential for sensitive jobs like electrofishing.

It is important to understand where your partners are coming from and what they might contribute. Keep your expectations reasonable. Think about how your project might affect your partners' workload or duties and be realistic in what you ask. Get an early start—building good working relationships with your partners takes time!

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Local, state, and federal government officials can often help in your efforts to restore a stream and its watershed. Government employees may be able to help gather (or



Professional advisors can help your volunteers better understand the stream and its inhabitants.

they may already have in hand) the ecological information needed to identify problems and develop appropriate solutions. They can offer general scientific expertise and specific knowledge of resources in your area—both vital to your project’s success. Finally, they may be able to help you obtain funding and any necessary permits for your project.

Remember, too, that in a restoration project you will be working actively with resources under the jurisdiction of the state. Instream work—whether it be on federal, private, or state lands—cannot be carried out without the approval of the agency responsible for fisheries and water resources. Your state fisheries agency is an essential partner in any stream restoration project.

It is a good idea to get to know the local representative of your state’s fish and wildlife agency as soon as you start to consider undertaking a conservation project (some may also offer technical assistance). Having a good working relationship with the local fisheries representative is essential to pursuing a habitat restoration project.

Other state natural resource agencies can provide help as well. You should contact state water resources staff, pollution control officials, park managers, forest rangers, and other state employees working with natural resource conservation. Your contact at the state fisheries agency can refer you to other state and federal officials who should be involved.

Federal agencies may also have offices in your area that can offer information, funding or technical assistance for stream restoration projects. Agencies involved in fisheries include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Biological Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service), the Army Corps of Engineers,

the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Cooperative Extension Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Reclamation. These agencies have local field offices, laboratories, and cooperative research stations throughout the country. You can contact the agency’s offices for your region and ask if they have people working in your area who can help. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s *Partners for Fish and Wildlife* program works in partnership with state and local agencies to provide financial and technical assistance to private landowners to restore private lands.

Most county or local governments also have experts who can help you design an effective project. Departments of parks and recreation, soil and water conservation districts, and agricultural extension offices are all good places to look for help locally.

NEIGHBORING LANDOWNERS AND PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Before conducting any project you should let neighboring landowners whose property may be affected by your activities know what you are trying to do. You should obtain support for your efforts **before** you invest time in assessment and project design. If you do not, you may miss out on some valuable assistance, or worse, develop plans for a project only to be hindered by an uncooperative neighbor.

Public lands include local, state, and national parks; state and national forests; public resource lands; Department of Defense lands; and wildlife refuges. If your land is adjacent or near public lands, the public lands manager may be very enthusiastic and helpful towards your project. You will be enhancing the resources for which they have responsibility, so it is in their interest to cooperate.

Land managers—from forest rangers to refuge managers—may also be able to provide technical or financial assistance for your restoration projects. They and their staff can be among the most valuable government partners for your program.

Finding Expert Assistance

Restoration projects vary widely, each depending on the characteristics of the ecosystem, the general geographic area, the kinds of fish and other wildlife involved, and the nature of degradation or alteration that has occurred. Project details are dictated almost entirely by local circumstances and must be worked out on the ground with experts who are familiar with the watershed’s unique characteristics.

You will need technical assistance from experts familiar with local conditions as you assess the biological health of your stream, determine the factors limiting trout production, and develop appropriate restoration strategies. Recruiting expert advisors is a vital first step in planning the technical details of successful restoration projects.

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There are abundant sources of information on stream and watershed restoration. People with knowledge and experience in restoration are often willing to help private landowners with restoration projects. Good sources of assistance include:

Government officials. Agency employees include a variety of professionals that can offer technical expertise for your restoration efforts, including fisheries biologists, aquatic ecologists, aquatic entomologists, and hydrologists. Fish and wildlife professionals often have busy field schedules; contact them well in advance so that they can work your project into their plans.

Trot Unlimited Chapters. Local TU Chapters often have experience working on stream restoration projects and can serve as a valuable source of information and assistance. Chapters have talents that are often untapped, and they may be willing to put those talents to use assisting your project. Chapters may have restoration experience, or they may know others who can provide assistance. Many conservation professionals are members of TU and can provide scientific and technical assistance.

Tree Farmers. Other local Tree Farmers may be an outstanding source of information. Some will have experiences with undertaking conservation projects with the assistance of technical experts and others will have knowledge of the watershed going back through their families for generations.

Local colleges and universities. The faculty at nearby colleges and universities may include stream biologists, hydrologists, ecologists, and other experts who can be of help in your restoration efforts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service also has offices at all state land grant universities, with staff providing technical assistance to landowners and private groups such as TU chapters.

Conservation organizations. In addition to your state Tree Farm committee, the national Tree Farm office may be able to assist your project. There may also be other local organizations working for the conservation of aquatic ecosystems (e.g., chapters of the Izaak Walton League, the National Audubon Society, or the National Wildlife Federation). Members of these groups may be able to help you (as advisors and/or as volunteers) or refer you to others who have helped them in their projects.

Consultants. If you have sufficient funding, consider hiring a consultant to help assess your stream and develop possible solutions. There is a wide range of fisheries consultants with expertise in biology, ecology, fluvial ge-

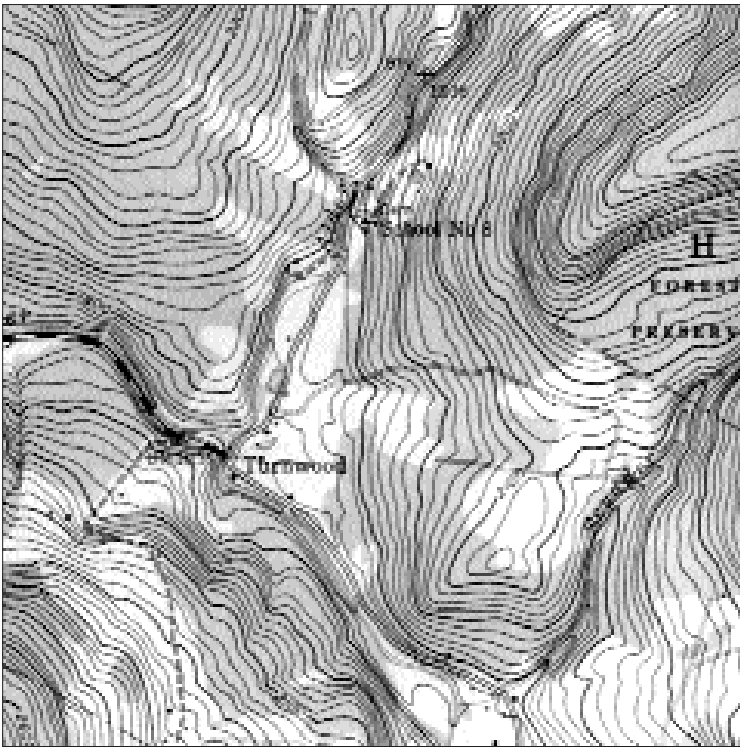
omorphology, and other fields associated with stream restoration.

Professional societies. You may also find expert help through the American Fisheries Society (AFS) or The Wildlife Society (TWS). AFS is the nationwide association of professional fishery managers and biologists. It has chapters in almost every state and territory, and its members can often provide technical advice and assistance on fishery problems. You can contact the national AFS offices at 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110, Bethesda, MD 20814, phone (301) 897-8616 or on the web at www.fisheries.org. TWS is the association of professional wildlife managers. Its members include many scientists who work with wetlands and other habitats important to fisheries as well as wildlife. Like AFS, it has chapters throughout the nation. The TWS national office can be reached at 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814; phone (301) 897-9770 or on the web at www.wildlife.org.



A useful reference as you look for expert assistance is the Conservation Directory, published annually by the National Wildlife Federation. This book pulls together many possible sources of assistance in an easy-to-use format. The Directory contains sections listing federal agencies (including regional offices), national conservation organizations, and state-by-state listings

Expert advisors can help you pick the best seed for revegetation.



U.S. Geological Survey maps illustrate elevation contours and major natural and man-made features.

of state agencies and local environmental groups. Names of key officials, addresses, and phone numbers are all included. It also provides a brief description of the responsibilities of each government agency and the objectives of each private organization listed. Copies can be purchased from The National Wildlife Federation, 1400 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20036-2266; phone 1-800-432-6564 or on the web at www.nwf.org.

After you find a source of information, cultivate it. A follow-up call to thank someone for assistance will reinforce the conviction that your project is something special and will make your sources more receptive the next time you seek their assistance. When you find someone who is a particularly good source of information or direct help, take time to make a personal visit to solidify the relationship. Not only will this strengthen the relationship; it may open doors to other sources that can be useful to you.