



Lil Leatham, Principal Planner, Lil.Leatham@co.dakota.mn.us

Joe Walton, Senior Ecologist, joeseeph.walton@co.dakota.mn.us

RE: Comments on Miesville Ravine Park Reserve Long-range Plans

Lil and Joe,

On behalf of Twin Cities Trout Unlimited and our more than 2,300 chapter members, thank you for your thoughtful planning work to help guide the future of Miesville Ravine Park Reserve. We consider Trout Brook to be one of our chapter's home waters, and also one of the finest streams in southeastern Minnesota for native brook trout.

Through your website, we recently made comments to the Long-range Plan and Natural Resources Plan, and a summary of those comments is listed below. Protection of water quality is our primary concern for Trout Brook, and we also support the stream channel and flood plain improvements described in the plans.

Regarding volunteer engagement, we have organized a number of successful volunteer habitat events along the South Branch Vermillion River, Hay Creek and Eagle Creek – and we would be interested in partnering with you on similar projects in Miesville Ravine Park Reserve. This could be a great way to introduce new people to the park while getting some valuable work done in the process.

Thanks for considering these comments,

Chris O'Brien
Advocacy Coordinator
Twin Cities Trout Unlimited
chris.obrien@twincitiestu.org
651-703-8873

Miesville Ravine Park Reserve – Long-range Plan comments

- **Executive Summary/Natural Resources (p. ES8)** - Twin Cities Trout Unlimited suggests this bullet be adjusted as follows, "Restore natural hydrology and habitat to the Trout Brook channel and floodplain and tributaries, via *stream restoration projects*, landscape-level management practices and partnerships." We feel stream restoration should be specifically called out here.
- **Public Engagement and Participation (p. 34)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited agrees the park reserve would benefit from invasive species removal (primarily buckthorn), and we have many chapter volunteers who would be interested in helping with this work through habitat improvement events.
- **Water Quality and Natural Resources (p. 71)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited is interested in being a partner on water quality solutions, perhaps through public

outreach/communications, by providing letters of support for funding proposals, or other efforts that might be helpful. We encourage Dakota County Parks Natural Resources to continue working with Dakota County SWCD, the North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization and other partners to work on nitrate reduction projects in the watershed. This includes implementing land-use best practices (cover crops, perennial crops and vegetated buffers) as well as considering innovative solutions like woodchip bioreactors.

- **Boundaries and Acquisition (p. 111)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited agrees with the assertion that, “Trout Brook’s water quality is affected by land uses throughout the watershed,” and much of this land currently lies outside of park boundaries. Therefore, we strongly support permanent acquisition of agricultural lands upstream of Trout Brook and along its tributaries with the goal of returning these sensitive areas to perennial vegetation. We believe staff time and funding that is put toward targeted land protection efforts is well spent because clean water is critical to the long-term health of the Trout Brook ecosystem.

Miesville Ravine Park Reserve – Natural Resources Management Plan comments

- **Partnerships (p. 72)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited is interested in expanding its partnership with the County.
- **Work with upstream landowners and partners to implement watershed BMPs and restoration (p.79)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited believes watershed restoration to be of utmost importance for the current and future health of Trout Brook, and we appreciate Dakota County’s commitment to this important work.
- **Preserve beaver dams but consider removal of large beaver dams based on impacts (p. 80)** – This is a helpful explanation and something Twin Cities Trout Unlimited could potentially share with anglers who express concern about beaver activity on the stream.
- **Develop volunteer opportunities that combine education, outreach, and stewardship (p. 155)** – Twin Cities Trout Unlimited Streamkeeper citizen-science program can assist in monitoring stream conditions including erosion, water quality and water temperature. The chapter also organizes habitat work days and could recruit volunteers for activities like invasive vegetation removal, prairie seed collection/overseeding or tree planting.
- **Continue and expand conservation and restoration project partnership (p. 158)** Twin Cities Trout Unlimited would appreciate being included in this list, alongside Minnesota Trout Unlimited (a related organization). While the state organization is well suited to coordinate in-stream channel improvements to Trout Brook, our local chapter can help to engage local volunteers for riparian habitat work – and to help with outreach and education efforts throughout the watershed.
- **Water Resources Implementation (p. 165)** - Twin Cities Trout Unlimited supports these stream restoration projects and is interested in sharing updates with our membership as the work progresses.