

MILL CREEK, CAYUGA

WORKDAY REPORT

NOVEMBER 18 & 19, 2011

With winter coming on, we are required to collect our data loggers for downloading of the data. In many streams, this is a simple task walk to a site and pick up the unit.

In the case of Mill Creek, and the spring sources in Taquanyah in particular, we face a huge challenge every year: The beavers, despite our best efforts have continued to build several dams in the source spring area, including one at the site of our beaver baffler. Baffled? Not really; you see, the modified unit we installed is working to full capacity in diverting flows under the beaver dam, but this is not enough. The beavers have continued to build their dam to a point where we will have trouble finding our D/L's under an extra foot or more of water, despite GPS and tagging tape. This year it required the breaching of the dam at DCV road to lower the water levels to allow retrieval.

On a cold blustery Friday morning, Mike Goodman and the writer breached the dam down to original streambed: a drop of over a foot. This took three hours of high caloric output, interspersed with some key "Cardiac recovery" moments, but we succeeded, including sending most cuttings downstream out of the reach of the angry beaver.

Saturday consisted of more material removal downstream where it will be beneficial as in-stream woody cover. Then the search began. Our worst fears were realized. The beavers have built several dams further west (upstream), creating nearly impassable water levels higher than expected. Even with the use of Mark's kayak, we had trouble reaching the springtime placement sites. After finding only one of three D/L's, we must now use a canoe and metal detector to find the missing two units. Another challenge to overcome in the coming weeks, depending on availability of equipment.

The rest of the ten units were quickly recovered, with the exception of one, which had broken free and drifted down into the Grant road 18" culvert. The ever-resourceful Wade Dowling proceeded to crawl through the 30' long culvert, finding the missing unit. Who says we don't have superheroes these days? Cheers to Wade. He always comes through !

We sure can turn a simple chore into an adventure, but that's what makes this project so appealing. We have a new challenge every week. What we now need to do, is install a second baffler, both at Taquanyah, and the Rogers/Mill Creek confluence. Hopefully the added capacity will do what we intended. Time and budget constraints will tell the story.....stay tuned.

Bill Xmas, Ted Knott Chapter, Trout Unlimited