

Mill Creek Habitat Enhancement Evaluation (Survey #: 819007; 821007; 822008)

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Mill Creek (ONT-117-27-47) is a wild brown trout stream located near Honeoye, NY. The upper portions support wild brown trout while the lower portions have marginal trout habitat. Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District and United States Fish and Wildlife Service conducted a bank stabilization project on the lower portion of Mill Creek which included structures that have been shown to improve aquatic habitat. The project included toe wood, j-hooks, cross vanes, and stream bank plantings. The primary goal of this project was to stabilize eroding banks but there was potential to improve trout habitat as well. Region 8 Fisheries staff conducted electrofishing surveys at the project site, and a control site, to evaluate any changes to the wild brown trout population. Electrofishing was conducted in May 2019, before construction, and again in May 2021 and 2022, after construction.

Unfortunately, we did not see an increase in the trout population at the project site (Table 1). Anecdotally, in stream habitat appeared to be plentiful during the 2021 survey. The stream bank plantings were still young and were not yet providing shade or cover. The lack of shade and cover may have limited trout density. The project suffered extensive damage between the 2021 and 2022 surveys. In stream habitat was lacking during the 2022 survey and no trout were collected. No trout were collected at our control site during this evaluation. Future project evaluation efforts should include a higher quality control site.

Table 1. Results of electrofishing surveys on Mill Creek.

Year	# Brown Trout Collected	
	Control Site	Project Site
2019	0	7
2021	0	7
2022	0	0

