

# Maintaining a healthy creek – it's a group effort



DENNIS FRANKE

Brown trout reproduce naturally in the stream.



MINDY HABECKER, UWEX

Prairie plants protect stream banks from erosion.



ANDY MORTON

Paddlers enjoy the nice mix of pools and riffles.



DENNIS FRANKE

Visitors appreciate great trout fishing and idyllic scenery.

## Nature along the stream

Along the stream you will pass a mix of riparian habitats... wet meadows, prairie, wetlands, agriculture, and grassy buffer areas. Birds abound, particularly during the summer nesting season. Be prepared to flush Wood Ducks and Canada Geese during your paddle. You may encounter broods of young during early summer. Overhanging trees and shrubs will have Baltimore Orioles and Yellow Warblers singing from streamside perches. Notice the bugs and "gnats" flying in the air around the stream. These are probably aquatic insects that actually live most of their life underwater and emerge from the stream to mate and lay their eggs on or under the water's surface. A diversity of these underwater insects indicates we have a healthy stream. Biologists monitor aquatic insects in streams to keep tabs on stream health.



DARREN CLARK / MACAULAY LIBRARY AT THE CORNELL LAB

Yellow Warbler



GATES DUPONT / MACAULAY LIBRARY AT THE CORNELL LAB

Baltimore Oriole

It is one of the largest streams in the Driftless Area that supports a coldwater fish community with naturally reproducing brown trout present. Maintaining the water quality and habitat of Black Earth Creek has been an ongoing effort since the 1950's and the public and private effort that includes land acquisition, habitat improvement, water quality management, and nonpoint source pollution control could

easily top 6 million dollars. Protecting and restoring the stream and making sure it has good water quality for all users will need continued support in the future. Some of the streambanks have been restored and protected from erosion so that they are stable and have lush vegetation cover. The natural corridor takes many decades to establish and depends greatly on the residents and farmers that own land along the stream.

## You can help

- Please be careful with litter—leave no trace.
- Be courteous to other stream users.
- Support/join nonprofit and civic organizations whose mission it is to protect the stream:
  - Black Earth Creek Watershed Association
  - Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited
  - Wolf Run Association



Be prepared to flush a Wood Duck during your paddle!



Scan this code to learn more or go to the BECWA website. [www.becwa.org](http://www.becwa.org)

## A special creek

As you enjoy Black Earth Creek—whether wading its water pursuing the wily trout or enjoying a leisurely paddle — consider what makes the stream so special. The stream is a Driftless Area "spring creek" which means it is almost entirely spring fed and has a nice mix of riffles and pools great for trout fishing and fun for the paddler.

COX & CO.



Sign created by Black Earth Creek Watershed Association, The Shoe Box, and Dane County UW Extension