

Trout Fishermen Help Keep Cattle Out Of Stream

Fences, Sod Work Aid Beaver Creek

By **PATRICK COOLEY**
Daily News-Record

OTTOBINE — Workers have been laying down new sod and putting up fences near the banks of Beaver Creek for weeks now, hoping to give the small waterway running through an Ottobine farm a more natural look.

The idea is to keep cattle out of the stream and preserve the natural habitat for trout.

"It already looks clearer," said Graham Simmerman, president of Trout Unlimited's Massanutten chapter.

Before the project started, he said, the water was brown from soil erosion.

For the past several weeks, members of Trout Unlimited, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting America's trout habitats, have been working with the Ottobine farmer who owns the property. (The owner asked that he not be identified.)

The project is also part of area farmers' ongoing efforts to keep pollutants out of the rivers and streams that ultimately flow into the Chesapeake Bay.

The Massanutten chapter of Trout Unlimited is paying for the project through several grants and other funding from

Atmospheric Administration, the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the national Trout Unlimited organization. Local TU officials did not say what the project's total cost was.

Keeping Out Livestock

Workers have been making the creek narrower, giving it a more natural curve, and smoothing the shores and planting vegetation, strategies to help reduce soil erosion.

Simmerman said an ideal habitat for trout is a deeper and narrower stream.

"The cattle in the stream are making it wider and shallower," he said.

"We've planted live willows and dogwoods," said Seth Coffman, a coordinator for Trout Unlimited. "We want to establish a root mass, so the water doesn't tear away at the soil."

Workers also have been planting grass at the side of the creek and laying down coconut matting to keep the soil in place.

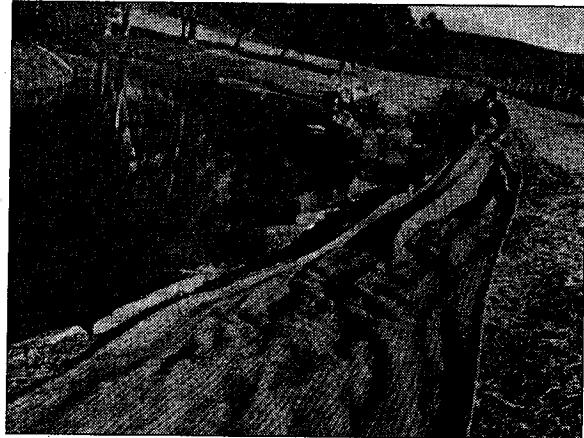
At strategic points throughout the 2,000-foot stretch of the stream, workers dug the bottom of the creek deeper — in some places as much as 5 or 6 feet — to give trout a place to live.

Workers also built



Nikki Fox / DN-R

Trout Unlimited's Seth Coffman looks at river rocks in Beaver Creek, where the conservation group is overseeing restoration work.



Nikki Fox / DN-R

Atkins Excavating Inc.'s Travis Marcum puts down coconut matting for a restoration project at Beaver Creek Friday morning.

Cows Pollute Streams

Creek FROM PAGE A3

troughs on the farm to make up for the cattle's loss of a water source.

Best Management

According to environmentalists, erosion and cows defecating in streams and rivers puts sediment and nitrogen in those waterways, two of the most common pollutants making their way into the Chesapeake Bay.

Federal money is available to local farmers for cost-sharing programs — called “best management practices” — to help reduce pollution in the waterways leading to the Bay. Among those BMPs, as they are often called, is fencing around streams

to keep cattle out.

John Welsh, an agricultural agent for the Rockingham County Cooperative Extension, said his agency hasn't seen many local farmers adopt the practice involving putting fences around streams and creeks because of the extra costs involved.

The USDA will provide the initial money to build the fences, but won't provide any additional money for their upkeep, Welsh said.

The local branch of Trout Unlimited will help maintain the newly installed fencing along Beaver Creek.

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