

Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC)
July Gathering
July 1st, 2026
Coon Valley Conservation Club
Eat & Greet! Food Served: 6:00p.m.
Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

1. Greetings and Reflections:

The WI Department of Ag, Trade, and Consumer Protection and The Nature Conservancy sent an intern to the meeting to interview members for the DATCP biannual report. We asked all our members to respond to the roll call question by sharing one thing they want other watersheds in the state to know about Coon Creek, or something they feel proud of.

Responses included: The health of the people is the health of the land. 90 years ago, we learned how to come together to solve big problems, and we're doing it again. People are more alike than they are different. Relationships are everything. One member shared that the council reminds him of how things used to be when he grew up. A few years ago, people didn't know their neighbors, but now they do. The council brings people in and brings them together. We don't fail, we just get new challenges. Addressing those challenges takes everyone, working from all directions. There is so much knowledge and experience in the watershed to lean on and learn from.

Another member shared that so many friendships have come into her life because of water. There is so much contrast in Coon Creek between beauty and destruction. Coon Creek brings people in from all over the world, what we have is really special. What the council does incredibly well is inform the public, and offer continuing education for a wide variety of stakeholders.

Marc's Fascinating Flashback

From Kirk Olson: The first feral brown trout stocked in Wisconsin were sourced from Ruland's Coulee.

2. Business:

- a. Secretary's report
- b. Treasurer's report
- c. Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network

d. WI Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Producer-led Watershed Protection program updates

Heard from Dani Heisler about our DATCP grant. Some takeaways:

\$1.6 million was requested for producer-led watershed protection grant program in 2025, only \$1 million is available for 52 groups in Wisconsin. The whole state wants everyone to be funded. There is a huge sense of community among the groups.

Funding priorities include increasing living cover, on-farm demonstrations, conservation outreach, farmer-farmer mentorship, collaborative research.

DATCP sees incentive payments less as subsidies and more as entry points to help farmers experiment with innovative conservation practices.

3. Presentation on Coon Creek Fishery Survey findings with WI Department of Natural Resources Senior Fisheries Biologist Kirk Olson

14 named streams in Coon Creek, 107 miles of classified trout waters, 39.7 miles of public access.

Driftless streams are unique because water cut through bedrock to the water table over millions of years, meaning that streams are spring fed. Under ideal conditions, stream temperatures are stable year round.

Fish populations were seriously harmed by settler agriculture, but have recovered over the last 90 years, to a level where they are mostly self sustaining again.

In 2025, the DNR deployed 25 temperature loggers in Coon Creek, performed 7 vehicle surveys, and population surveys throughout the watershed.

They found that population numbers look great relative to other streams in the state throughout the watershed, and brown trout density is especially high upstream of Coon Valley.

Brook trout are not performing as well as brown trout, and are generally only in the upper portions of the watershed. Fish diversity, as well as stream temps, increased toward the bottom of the watershed.

DNR and CRTU also tagged 19 trout at the outlet of Coon Creek, which have traveled 20-30 miles upstream since that point,

4. Next meeting: August 5th 2026, location TBD