



REEL RECOVERY

Be Well! Fish On!



On Friday September 9th, 2016 the 3rd annual Midwest Reel Recovery Retreat was in the process of wrapping up yet another successful retreat for men living with cancer and I sit here today reflecting on the men served, the men that volunteered and the short time that we all spent together yet were able to form life bonds with one another.

For those of you that don't know what Reel Recovery is all about, we are a non-profit organization that provides fly-fishing retreats free of charge to men facing any form of cancer regardless of the stage they are at. Doesn't matter if you have been recently diagnosed with cancer, are half-way through your treatment plan or if you've been in remission for 5 years. By accepting men from every stage and every form of cancer it creates a unique setting in which the men are able to share stories and experiences with men who are or have faced similar challenges through their experiences and are able to see the hope and determination through others that may have been in their shoes at one time. This is accomplished through a combination of guided group conversations called "courageous conversations" and fly-fishing instruction conducted by local volunteer fly-fisherman that have a passion for not only the sport of fly-fishing but also for helping those in need .

Some of you may be asking why combine fly-fishing with men with cancer? Reel Recovery was started in 2003 by a group of fly-fisherman who had a buddy named Stu Brown who was battling brain cancer at the time and occasionally they would all get together and take Stu fly-fishing in their home state of Colorado. Quickly they discovered that although Stu was battling brain cancer and had the struggles and difficulties associated with his disease, each time they would take him fly fishing Stu was just Stu...not Stu with cancer. It was as if while fishing he forgot about his cancer even if for just a couple of hours. When they realized that, they wanted a way to share that same experience with other men facing similar situations and therefore Reel Recovery was formed.



Today Reel Recovery provides 26 retreats nationwide and each retreat is completely free of charge to those that attend due to generous donations and fundraising at the local level and the support of groups such as Trout Unlimited and its volunteer members.



The 2016 Midwest Reel Recovery Retreat took place on Sept 7, 8, 9th at the Stoney Creek Inn in Onalaska, WI. Although Mother Nature did her best to try and wash out our plans and the local streams the dedication of our volunteer staff (many of which were Trout Unlimited members representing the Coulee Region and SE WI Chapters) And the willingness of the participants to change plans on the fly made for a very successful retreat for all involved.



We entered Wednesday with a new group of participants whom had never met previously and were a bit hesitant to openly share their experiences and by Friday afternoon there were tears shed, hugs given and long lasting friendships forged. What a great experience for the men, what a great experience for the volunteers who helped make it happen. We are already in the process of organizing the 2017 Midwest Retreat and are always looking for help from fellow Trout Unlimited members with fundraising, volunteer fishing buddies or referrals of men to attend. More information on Reel Recovery can be found at reelrecovery.org or by contacting State Coordinator Jeremy Southworth directly (608)769-5857.

“Be Well...Fish on!”

Jeremy Southworth

Midwest Coordinator - Reel Recovery