

**Position Paper of Nebraska Trout Unlimited (Chapter #710) on the proposed  
Keystone XL II Pipeline and its potential impact on the  
Verdigre Creek watershed and groundwater basin**

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a nationwide organization founded in 1959 to conserve, protect and restore cold water fisheries and their watersheds. The Trout Unlimited organization has 140,000 members nationwide. The Nebraska chapter, TU 710, has over 400 members across the state.

As concerns the proposed Keystone XL II pipeline, our mission is not to pass judgment on the validity of the project. There are many other organizations tasked with that responsibility. Our purpose is to protect the few precious coldwater resources we enjoy in our state. The proposed route of the pipeline takes it through the East Verdigre Creek watershed and groundwater basin (Community-based watershed management plan, Upper Elkhorn Natural Resource District, 2005).

Verdigre Creek is the only Class A coldwater fishery in Eastern Nebraska. A stream is designated a Class A coldwater stream when it supports naturally reproducing trout populations. The East Branch of Verdigre Creek sustains Grove Lake, a major tourist attraction, and provides high quality water to the Grove Trout Rearing Station which supplies dozens of fisheries throughout the state with catchable Rainbow Trout. The Creek's proximity to the population centers in the central and eastern portions of Nebraska make it even more valuable. Our Nebraska TU chapter has had a special relationship with these waters. TU 710 was originally organized as an effort to protect Verdigre Creek's water quality. Currently we are partnering with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in ongoing projects to continue to improve water quality and habitat on Verdigre Creek.

We applaud the passion and concerns expressed by Nebraska citizens and legislators regarding the initial pipeline route through portions of the Ogallala Aquifer and the Nebraska Sandhills region. We feel the same concern should be extended to all the potentially vulnerable areas currently in the path of this pipeline. The entire East Verdigre Creek watershed and groundwater basin should be granted the same protection from potential environmental damage as was granted the Sandhills. Given the importance of this watershed and the sensitivity of the area, we believe the pipeline should not be routed through the Verdigre Creek watershed and its groundwater basin.

We urge those with decision-making authority, either over the route or the methods of construction and continuing maintenance of the pipeline, to take these concerns very seriously and to do what's necessary to protect Verdigre Creek's surface and groundwater sources and fishery resources.

This position paper was adopted by the Board and membership of Nebraska Trout Unlimited at its meeting October 23, 2012.

Nebraska Trout Unlimited

