



## Lower Chippewa River Prairie/Savanna Restoration -- WI

### BACKGROUND

The Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area features the largest concentration of remaining prairies and savannas in the state. At the time of European settlement Wisconsin had over 7.7 million acres of native prairie but today only about 8,000 acres remain. This area contains over 2,000 acres of prairie, which equals 25% of all known remaining prairie in the entire state. Lying along and interspersed within the river channels are islands of floodplain savanna and forest while the surrounding hillsides contain prairie and savanna.

### LOCATION

The lower portion of the Chippewa River flows through Eau Claire and joins the Mississippi River just north of Wabasha, Minnesota.

### ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED

The Lower Chippewa River contains the largest intact floodplain forest in the Upper Midwest. The area has been identified in the State Comprehensive Wildlife Plan as one of the best areas for floodplain forest, prairie, and savanna management. Conservation actions needed include connecting large blocks of flood plain forest, invasive species control, planting to maintain habitat diversity.

### RESULTS

When completed it is expected that the following restoration projects will be completed:

1. Plant 40 acres of sand terrace prairie.
2. Plant 20 acres of oak savanna.
3. Restore 100 acres of floodplain savanna.
4. Plant 20 acres of floodplain forest.

### OUTCOMES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Beside the habitat restoration there are two other anticipated benefits of this project. The DNR forestry staff will provide expertise and training to the State Natural Areas staff about floodplain forest management. Also students from the UW-Eau Claire will monitor the site for several years, tracking survival and growth. They can alert the State Natural Areas staff if additional work is needed.



### PARTNERS

WI-DNR-Forestry  
WI-DNR-State Natural Areas  
UW-Eau Claire

### CONTACTS

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### GRANT AMOUNT

\$ 64,500 NFWF  
\$141,175 Match

\$205,675 Total Project Cost

The Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have partnered to initiate the Upper Mississippi River Watershed Fund. The Foundation grants projects that benefit the forests of the Upper Mississippi while improving wildlife habitat and water quality.