

## Mississippi River Flood Plain Forest Restoration

The Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation jointly initiated the Upper Mississippi River Watershed Fund. The Foundation funds projects that benefit the forests of the Upper Mississippi while improving wildlife habitat and water quality.

### Background

The Vermillion River Bottoms stretches for 20 miles between the Minnesotan communities of Hastings and Red Wing. The land along the Vermillion River is mostly flood plain, but also includes bluffs along the south side of the river and 6-mile-long Prairie Island. Because of its biological diversity and native plant communities, the Vermillion River Bottoms is considered one of the three most significant Mississippi River flood plains in southeastern Minnesota.

The 297-acre Freitag tract, which serves as the western terminus of this great flood plain area, is being purchased by a coalition that includes the city of Hastings, Dakota County, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The tract presents a unique opportunity to restore vital high-quality habitat for the many animal and bird species that inhabit the flood plain that are rare or of special concern. The Friends of the Mississippi River will use guidance from a Natural Resource Management Plan to control exotic invasive species and restore flood plain forests.

### Location

Vermillion River flood plain between Red Wing and Hastings, Minnesota

### Goals

- Restore the Freitag tract's existing forest to enhance its ecological health and habitat value
- Reforest areas damaged by poor logging and grazing practices in the past

### Results

Restoration activities will be based on the Natural Resource Management Plan. Controlling exotic plants, particularly canary reed grass, will be necessary to achieving project goals.

### Outcomes/Accomplishments

This property is adjacent to thousands of acres of flood plain natural communities, much of it owned by the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While the protection and restoration of the Freitag property is important in its own right, it will add additional high-quality habitat for species that require large tracts of forested land.

### Partners

Friends of the Mississippi River, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, City of Hastings, Dakota County

### Grant Amount

\$34,000



For more information:

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