

Restoring the Riparian Corridor of the Pecatonica River

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 wet prairies, sedge meadows, and shallow water marshes that once bordered waterways in Wisconsin's Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area are gone, filled with sediment from pre-1900 farming practices. Most of the resulting landscape is no longer connected to the Pecatonica River flood plain.

The loss of these habitats greatly reduced the population of native species such as the brook trout, Blanchard's cricket Frog, Blanding's turtle, and several rare nongame fish species.

Several conservation organizations have identified landscape-scale protection and restoration in the region as critical to maintaining the biodiversity of Wisconsin's freshwater and grassland habitats.

Location

Town of Brigham in southwestern Wisconsin

Goals

Return a stretch of the East Branch of the Pecatonica River to its pre-European settlement condition

Results

Project personnel will restore 1,300 feet of the East Branch of the Pecatonica River within a flood plain of 15 acres of wet prairie and sedge meadow habitat to conditions representative of a pre-settlement stream corridor and flood plain.

Outcomes/ Accomplishments

- Creating deeper water and converting the streambed to cobble and gravel will provide new, high-quality habitat for native species
- Improving the water-land interface will create and enhance wildlife corridors
- Planting native plant species will lead to a richer diversity of plants and animals and a more resilient ecosystem
- Removing material from existing streambanks, coupled with streambank stabilization, will significantly reduce phosphorus and sediment that currently make their way to the water. An estimated 80 percent of the sediment load to Driftless Area streams comes from stored sediment in streambeds and banks.

Partners

The Nature Conservancy
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
University of Wisconsin

Grant Amount

\$15,000



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