

Restoring the Lower St. Croix Floodplain and Bluffs

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 deciduous forests of the Lower St. Croix Valley form a major north-south migration corridor that extends from the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers to the Great Lakes. Only remnants of the lush forest that once covered the region remain.

Habitat degradation and loss have profoundly impacted the region's biodiversity. Roughly 140 Species of Greatest Conservation Need occur here, including nearly 60 bird species and numerous species of insects, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Nominated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, this area has the highest density of nesting bald eagles in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and one of the best concentrations of breeding red-shouldered hawks in the State of Minnesota. Other important bird species include the Louisiana waterthrush and prothonotary warbler. A number of Federal, State, and local governments and nongovernmental groups have identified these lands as conservation priorities.

Location

This project is located in both Wisconsin and Minnesota along the St. Croix River from the Mississippi River to Taylors Falls, Minnesota, and St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

Goals

- Improve habitat for targeted bird populations in forests along the St. Croix River
- Enhance public knowledge and participation in forest restoration and management

Results

Habitat improvement will begin as a pilot project on publicly and privately conserved lands, and includes:

- Treatment and eradication of exotic invasive species
- Use of local, native seeds for habitat restoration
- Direct seeding and growing/planting of seedlings
- Prescribed fire
- Events to involve local volunteers in invasive species control, seed collection, and planting
- Technical assistance to private landowners

Outcomes/Accomplishments

The project will enhance more than 500 acres of forest habitat. Project partners will also develop and implement a standardized monitoring process for the Lower St. Croix to track the status of targeted bird populations and forest habitat condition. Other bird conservation groups are also expected to use this process for tracking the effect of habitat restoration on bird populations.

Partners

Great River Greening, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, Audubon Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington and Chisago Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Carpenter Nature Center, Onanogozie Resource Conservation and Development Council

Grant Amount

\$ 75,000



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