

## Zumbro Bottoms Flood Plain 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 Zumbro River, a tributary of the Mississippi, flows for 50 miles through Minnesota and joins the Great River near the community of Kellogg. The lower Zumbro's wide flood plain is severely degraded from generations of poor agricultural and forestry practices.

The State of Minnesota created the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest in 1961, in part to restore degraded flood plains to healthy bottomland hardwood forests. Recently, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) acquired another 260 acres of flood plain with help from the Trust for Public Lands and The Nature Conservancy. This parcel connects the Dorer bottomland forest with other state-owned lands, creating a 4,700-acre block. The DNR is currently working to acquire another 162 acres.

### Location

The project area, referred to as the Zumbro Bottoms Unit, is located in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest, Washaba County, Minnesota

### Goals

Restore flood plain forests to a healthy condition to improve water quality and support populations of plants and animals, including species of concern, such as the cerulean warbler

### Results

Project personnel will either use direct seeding or plant seedlings on 150 acres of land. The cost of seeding the site directly versus planting seedlings is comparable, but direct seeding usually doubles the number of seedlings on the site. Moreover, the resulting forest has a more natural appearance when compared to planting seedlings in rows, and produces more shade to keep undesirable plants from sprouting. Seedlings will be monitored for 10 years.

### Outcomes/Accomplishments

Re-establishing healthy flood plain forest will improve the health of the Zumbro River. A continuous corridor of thriving forest, prairie, and wetlands will offer excellent habitat for many species of plants and animals, especially bird species that require blocks of forest. Recreational opportunities will increase, providing economic benefits to private landowners and local communities. The rich variety of rare plants and animals will attract birdwatchers, hikers, campers, and other visitors.

### Partners

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

### Grant Amount

\$ 37,500



For more information:

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