

What will become of your land in the future?

What would like the future to hold for your White River land? Landowners interested in protecting and preserving the natural resource value of their land for future generations have several options:

1. Keep your land as is—or improve it—with help.

Many landowners already know and exercise good riverfront conservation practices on their land. Those interested in learning more about conservation techniques can take advantage of agencies like the Ashland-Bayfield-Douglas-Iron Land & Water Conservation Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. These organizations, both of which have offices in Ashland, can advise landowners on soil and water conservation practices for their riverfront land, and can occasionally offer landowners grants or cost-share programs to undertake conservation projects.

2. Continue to own and live on your land but donate or sell conservation easements.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a private organization (like a land trust) or government agency that permanently limits a property's uses in order to protect its conservation values. These easements can be highly flexible, allowing the landowner to continue to own and live on their land—and in some cases, even provide tax breaks. Some White River landowners have already made such agreements with the Bayfield Regional Conservancy (a local private land trust); other landowners are talking with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources about these options.



3. Donate or sell your land. Occasionally a private land trust will buy or accept a donation of a parcel of land, and arrange that the land be forever managed for conservation values. White River landowners who might consider the outright sale or donation of their land have another unique opportunity as well: In 2004, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved the expansion of the White River Fisheries Area. This decision gave the Wisconsin DNR authority to purchase land or easements from willing landowners along the White River corridor between Bibon Road (just west of Hwy. 63 in Bayfield County) and the White River Wildlife Area (near Hwy. 13 in Ashland County). Any such land or easements that the state acquires along this river segment will be managed for conservation values, with input from the White River Citizen Involvement Committee.

For information about the above options, contact:

- ◆ Bayfield Regional Conservancy; phone (715) 779-5263; email (get email).
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources land acquisition division; phone (get phone); email (get email)
- ◆ Ashland-Bayfield-Douglas-Iron Land & Water Conservation Department; phone (715) 682-7187; email (get email).
- ◆ U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ashland office; phone (715) 682-9117; email (get email).

Citizen Involvement

The effort to protect and preserve the privately-held section of the White River watershed began in 2001 with a small group of White River landowners and river users concerned about the future of the river. This group, with support from the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in 2004 produced a management plan for the White River watershed. This plan, based on extensive public input and funded by a River Planning grant from the Wisconsin DNR, identified the following objectives as necessary to protecting and preserving the White River between Hwy. 63 and Hwy. 13 as a natural corridor for future generations to enjoy:

1. Research and maintain or improve water quality.
2. Research and maintain or improve the fishery.
3. Provide limited public access to the river.
4. Encourage ecological preservation and restoration in order to protect the scenic beauty and ecological health of the river corridor.

This group, now called the **White River Citizen Involvement Committee**, exists to serve as an information resource for White River landowners and river users, as an advocate for the protection and preservation of the White River, and as an advisory group to the Wisconsin DNR regarding the management of any state-acquired land in the newly expanded White River Fisheries Area segment of the watershed.

White River Citizen Involvement Committee

- ◆ Craig Gilbaugh, Chair
White River watershed land owner
- ◆ Myron Anderson
Bad River Watershed Association board member
- ◆ Bill Heart
Trout Unlimited-Wild Rivers Chapter president
- ◆ Vern Gilles
Town of Kelly elected board member
- ◆ Jean Hansen
White River user

Conservation Options for White River Landowners



White River Citizen Involvement Committee

What's so special about the White River?

Among Wisconsin rivers, the White River is unusual in that much of its watershed is highly protected and minimally developed. As a result, the river has retained extraordinary natural resource values, which have been recognized in the following ways:

- ◆ The Wisconsin DNR considers the White River and several of its tributaries an outstanding water resource and a Class I trout stream for brook and brown trout for its first two miles. The remainder of the river is considered a Class II trout stream and an exceptional water resource.

- ◆ The entire White River, in various segments, is rated in the top 10 percent of rivers in northwest Wisconsin in terms of natural, recreational and cultural values, according to the Wisconsin DNR Northern Rivers Initiative.

- ◆ The entire White River is noted in the Wisconsin DNR's Land Legacy Report as one of the places in Wisconsin whose protection is critical to meeting the state's future conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years.

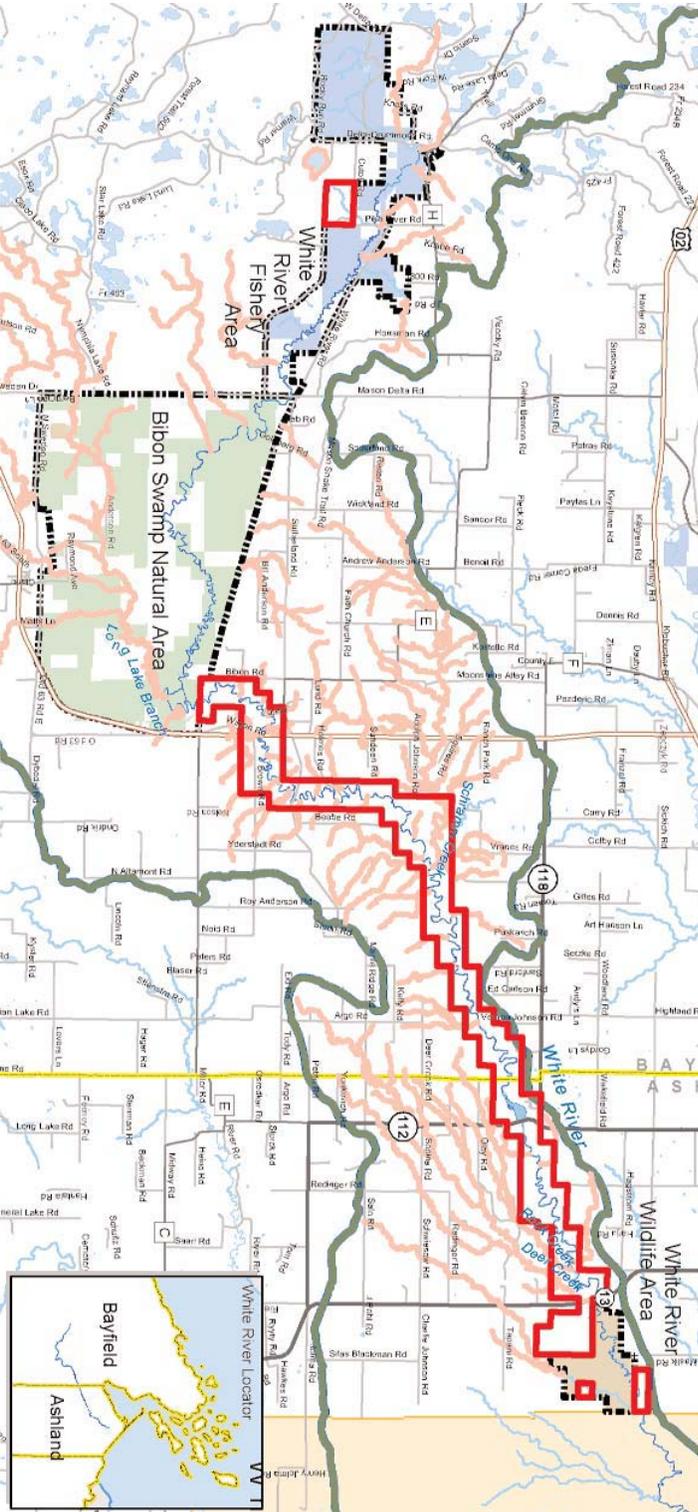
- ◆ Areas of the White River watershed have been noted for unique biological diversity by the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory program, which is part of an international effort of The Nature Conservancy focusing on documenting rare species and natural communities.

- ◆ The White River flows into the Bad River, at whose mouth is found the Kakagon and Bad River Sloughs, the largest intact freshwater estuary on Lake Superior. This slough area, often called "Wisconsin's Everglades," has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The White River Watershed

Protection currently in place:

- ◆ The Porcupine Lake Wilderness Area, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, protects about 4,500 acres of headwater streams, bogs and forest.
- ◆ The Wisconsin DNR's White River Fishery Area protects several reaches of the upper White River, including the South and West forks.
- ◆ Downstream, the Bibon Swamp State Natural Area is a 10,000-acre, state-owned wetland.
- ◆ The state-owned White River Wildlife Area protects more than 1000 acres of wildlife habitat and offers recreational opportunities for river users.
- ◆ Eastward to the White River's confluence with the Bad River at Odanah, the White River watershed includes large tracts of timber company-owned managed forest land interspersed with tribal trust land of the Bad River Indian Reservation.



Privately held areas targeted for protection:

- ◆ Those areas of the river and watershed bounded in red are the most critical places to continue or establish protective conservation measures. Landowners in these areas may apply a wide variety of conservation options to their land.