

Project  
accomplishments/  
challenges  
summary

# Burnett County Shoreline Incentives Program

9/01/10– 12/31/15

Grant LPT-363-11

The Burnett County Shoreline Incentive Program enrollment requires signing and registering a restrictive shoreline covenant. This covenant states that the parcel will be maintained according to the county shoreland land use regulations and buffer preservation and restoration standards. Enrollment is open to sites that already meet program standards, sites that are restored voluntarily, and sites where restoration was required for a land use permit. Covenants have resulted in preservation of significant contiguous shoreline. Contiguous restorations also frequently occur when a neighbor follows another's example or they decide to participate together.

The Program provides the following incentives for each parcel enrolled in the program that meets full program standards:

- \$250 initial payment
- \$50 annual tax credit
- An exclusive program shirt
- A property sign identifying the parcel as a *Preserved Natural Shoreline*.

The shirt and sign are incentives as well as methods to promote the program.

## Technical and financial assistance for *voluntary* restoration

Where restoration is needed, technical and financial assistance are provided to complete the restoration. Restoration plans result in eliminating erosion where there is bare soil, runoff, wave actions, etc. Stormwater management and construction site erosion control plans further reduce erosion. Structures, such as retaining walls, are also sometimes removed as a component of SIP projects. Following a site visit, a site plan including planting and stormwater management recommendations is prepared. The *Burnett County Shoreline Buffer Restoration Landowner Guide* provides detailed planting instructions. The *Controlling Runoff and Erosion from Your Waterfront Property* guidebook provides guidance for stormwater projects. Cost sharing (from various sources) provides 70 percent of the cost of installing the buffer and stormwater management practices. Incentives are provided after the plantings are completed.

## Technical assistance for *required* restoration

Technical assistance and site plans are also provided to landowners required to complete a buffer restoration for a shoreland land use permit. Cost sharing is not provided for these sites. These restorations frequently require removal of impervious surfaces such as boathouses and decks. Once restoration is completed, these parcels are eligible for the incentives program. The zoning office also refers concerns regarding construction site erosion control and stormwater management to the Land and Water Conservation office.

Sites are restored according to the Burnett County Shoreline Buffer Restoration and Preservation Standards. The standards are above and beyond state minimum standards. The standards were used as the basis for a statewide NRCS technical note for shoreland habitat.



## Purple loosestrife inventory and control

Burnett County has a comprehensive program to inventory and control purple loosestrife. Volunteers with the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association are trained to identify and control purple loosestrife. As a result of presentations and individual contacts in past years, several individuals are raising beetles to control purple loosestrife. Burnett County also works with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service to find seed sources of purple loosestrife that impact public lands.

Locations of purple loosestrife infestations and beetle release are recorded in a geographic information system. When purple loosestrife is identified on SIP project sites, the information is provided to the coordinator who provides direction for control. Cutting and spraying is used for control in some instances. Presentations and written materials increase recognition of purple loosestrife, understanding of the problem, and control methods.

### **Project goal: Use stormwater management and erosion control techniques to reduce runoff to Burnett County lakes and rivers.**

Objective: Reduce the impacts of stormwater discharges from drain tiles, stormwater outlets, and impervious surfaces. Divert water away from shoreline buffer viewing corridors. These corridors may provide direct runoff channels to a water body.  
*All site visits and recommendations have these considerations in mind.*

*5 runoff control projects were installed from 2010 through 2015 using other funding sources. The technical assistance and designs were provided through the shoreline incentives program.*

Objective: Develop 10 stormwater runoff reduction plans each year and provide guidance to homeowners.  
2015: 25 plans; 2014: 29 plans; 2013: 18 plans; 2012: 25 plans, 2011: 22 plans, 2010: 25 plans.

Objective: Provide technical assistance for town officials and contractors regarding culvert installation, stormwater management, and erosion control for road projects as needed.  
*Assisted Town of Lafollette with a culvert blowout.  
Started work with Town of Meenon on a plunge pool stabilization.  
Worked with Town of Scott on a culvert replacement project.*

### **Project goal: Evaluate shoreline restoration project results and troubleshoot solutions to identified problems.**

Objective: Inspect zoning projects for completion and spot check completed restorations for compliance and report results. *Inspections to see if zoning projects were finished were completed for 37 in 2015; 11 in 2014; 8 in 2013; 10 in 2012; 14 in 2011; 23 in 2010.*

Objective: Survey landowners who have completed restorations. Identify project successes and failures. Offer follow-up visits to troubleshoot solutions.  
*Survey was completed in 2010 and results were included with previous grant LPT-331-09.*

Objective: **Develop innovative techniques to address identified problems (time watering, refine aquatic planting methods, identify plant success factors, and troubleshoot problems).**  
*Growing in the pines demo was completed in 2010. Individual owners have purchased pumps and have offered advice to other owners on their use. We also encourage property owners to invest in timers that can subsidize watering efforts in their absence.*

**Project goal: Enhance water quality, habitat, and scenery by preserving and restoring natural shorelines in Burnett County.**

Objective: Register 20 preservation covenants each year.  
*Covenant registration has been as follows: 2015: 16; 2014: 43; 2013: 12; 2012: 6, 2011: 8, 2010: 23. The objective was barely met for this grant cycle. (Although the program has sparked interest in shoreline restoration/preservation, we feel the current downturn in covenants registered may be tied to the economic downturn in Burnett County had an impact on covenants registered. However, we are experiencing an upswing in interest.)*

Objective: Spot check properties with registered preservation covenants, emphasizing properties where ownership changes.

*Spot checks were emphasized in 2015 = 17 spotchecks; 2014 = 47 spotchecks; 2013 = 15 spotchecks; 2012 = 70 spotchecks; 2011 = 20 spotchecks; .. Of these, 1 required a zoning referral and 2 required further follow-up.*

When property currently enrolled in the SIP program changes ownership, that parcel is flagged by the Real Property Lister and communicated to the LWCD. We then send a "new owner" letter to the new property owner and conduct a parcel inspection as soon as possible after receiving notification of the ownership change.

Objective: Complete 20 restoration project site plans and restoration projects each year including voluntary sites and required mitigations.  
*Plans written: 2015 – 7; 2014 – 29; 2013 – 18; plans completed: 2 voluntary in 2012; 3 voluntary in 2011; 4 voluntary in 2010. The economy has taken its toll on landowners willing to invest in plantings for secondary residences. The requests for assistance continue, and plans/recommendations are provided to the property owners, but the follow through on recommendations has dwindled.*

Objective: Continue to add to SIP accomplishments. Through December 2015 they include: 738 parcels under restrictive shoreline covenant, 50 miles of shoreline buffer preserved, and 118,247 square feet of shoreline buffer restored through cost sharing. Additional restoration occurs through required mitigations – with 141



*restorations completed since the year 2000 through 2008. These restorations at least double the square footage restored.*

Objective: Inventory and carry out eradication programs for purple loosestrife and other invasive, exotic species along Burnett County shorelines.  
*The LWCD has an AIS program which focuses in part on PLS. Each year we harvest approx 450 PLS plants, raise approx 60,000 beetles, and release them into target areas. Cutting and Spraying is also done on smaller stands of PLS. We have also partnered with the St Croix Chippewa Tribe, Crex Meadows and local lake associations to with the raising and harvesting of beetles.*

*The LWCD has a dedicated summer intern doing CBCW on lakes know to have EWM.*

**Project goal: Follow consistent, clear standards for preservation and restoration.**

Objective: Restore sites to native vegetation, while keeping projects affordable and practical for landowners.  
*All plans, including demo sites, are written with this restoration guidance in mind, especially now since property owners have become a little more guarded about their 2<sup>nd</sup> home expenses.*

Objective: Update restoration standards as needed.  
*The last update of the restoration standards occurred in 2007. They have withstood the test of time.*

**Project goal: Share successes and lessons learned through project innovations with other counties and the Department of Natural Resources.**

Objective: Evaluate project participation and satisfaction through participant surveys.  
*A program evaluation was completed in 2010. Individuals who signed up for the SIP program in 2008 and 2009 were sent surveys in March 2010. Participants (those who signed covenants) heard about the Shoreline Incentives Program most commonly through county staff (44%), word of mouth (22%), or the lake lines newsletter (22%). Others (at 11% each) heard about the program through shoreline signs, a local newspaper, the Burnett County website, or a lake association meeting or event.*

*A second group who initially signed up, but have not yet signed a covenant, heard about SIP most often through a brochure (38%), the Lake Lines newsletter (38%), shoreline signs (25%), word of mouth (25%), a lake association meeting or event (19%), county staff (13%), or a local newspaper (7%).*

*The Lake Lines newsletter has become more important as a source of initial sign ups when compared with previous evaluations.. Word of mouth, whether by neighbors or county staff, remains an important way that people hear about the program. (Seven of the twelve issues of Lakelines published during this grant*

*period contained SIP program related articles- 1 each year as a minimum – 2 issues highlighting the program on the front page.).*

Objective: Track buffer mitigations required for land use permits through landowner contacts, site inspections, and enforcement procedures.  
*During the grant years of 2009 – 2015 the LWCD provided technical assistance to Burnett County Zoning for 156 land use permit applications for plan creation, inspections and enforcement.*

Objective: Present program information at conferences and meetings.  
*Examples include presentations for the Wisconsin Lakes Conference (2010), Lilac Fest- Siren (2012), WLWCA Conference (2013), WCCA Conference (2014), Upper St Croix Group – Solon Springs (2014), and the Voyager Village Dinner Club (2015).*

*During the grant years the LWCD has given approx 45 presentations at annual lake association meetings. In addition, we always provide a presentation at the annual Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association meeting.*

Objective: Share written program materials.  
*Materials are available on the website to all interested parties. Hard copies are made available upon request.*  
*The LWCD often receives requests, for information on the formation, execution and success of the SIP program.*  
*From 2008-2012 Burnett County partnered with UWEX on the “Community Based Social Marketing” grant, highlighting 2 Burnett County lakes, tracking that information, and developing tools to facilitate change towards natural shorelines and habitat.*  
*In 2012, the LWCD worked with UWEX and the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association to present the “Learn About Your Lakes” series. Funded by a DNR grant, this series provided information different topics, including natural shorelines.*

Objective: Maintain a database and photograph records jointly with the Land and Water Conservation and Zoning Departments.  
*Photographs are stored by parcel number, so they can be retrieved and progress tracked with subsequent owners.*

**Project goal: Carry out an effective, comprehensive public education and outreach program.**

Objective: Encourage new participation in the Shoreline Incentives Program.  
*This is our greatest current challenge. While program sign ups were strong in initial years of the program, they have decreased significantly, most likely due to the economic downturn experienced by most counties.. We have recently seen a resurgence of interest in the program and have been actively pursuing those interests.*



- Objective: Increase participation in shoreline restoration and stormwater management.  
*Two demonstrations sites on Long Lake were promoted in 2010 through the CBSM project. Both of these properties are enrolled in and were supported by SIP. Volunteer crews helped to plan the Farsund site in 2009 and another crew assisted with planting the Biros site in 2010.*
- Objective: Provide information to landowners so they can complete their own restoration and stormwater management projects.  
*The Burnett County Shoreline Buffer Restoration Landowner Guide was updated in February 2012. Runoff guide information was written under this grant and designed and printed under a small scale planning grant.*
- Objective: Train landscapers and nursery suppliers so they will understand program requirements and be able to carry out restoration projects.  
*We coordinated with nurseries in 2009 and 2010 for top ten plant promotion and in 2011 and 2012 for top ten shrub promotion. We continue to follow up with nurseries and retail outlets regarding native plants v. invasives.*
- Objective: Maintain an ongoing dialog with program participants to explain the ecological importance of maintaining native shoreline vegetation.  
*Program participants are reached through on-site visits, letters, emails, newsletters and telephone calls.*
- Objective: Enhance the general public's understanding of nonpoint source pollution, construction site erosion control, stormwater runoff and management, and the importance of protecting the shoreland zone.  
*Most of this information is distributed through the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association newsletter Lakelines and talks given during lake association presentations.*

## **Project products or deliverables (included in project CD)**

### **Restoration Documentation**

Registered covenants  
Designs, Cost share agreements, and resulting installations  
Before and after pictures of restored sites  
Purple loosestrife inventory map and control locations

### **Evaluation Report**

Survey results  
Permit and enforcement tracking

### **Education and Outreach Materials**

Waterfront runoff management handbook  
Waterfront runoff management presentation  
Shoreline buffer restoration landowner guide (update as needed)

Program brochures (develop and update as needed)  
    Runoff Self Evaluation Checklist  
    Shoreland Restoration Stories  
    Shoreline Incentive Program brochure  
Native plant guide (update as needed)  
Common invasive plants and control methods  
Lakeline Newsletters