

Final Report

White River Acquisition (12/16/2004-12/31/2007)
RM-024-05
4/24/2008

The goals of the White River Acquisition grant were to acquire 27 acres on land on the White River and to develop an education and landowner contact initiative in the White River watershed in order to present conservation options for the future of their land.

On December 21, 2005 the Bayfield Regional Conservancy used this grant to close on the purchase of 27 acres including both sides of the White River, on a stretch upstream from the White River Dam at Sanborn Avenue (Hwy 118). This transaction also benefited by a donation of \$7,000 from the landowner and \$1,500 from the Wild River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. An article about the acquisition from the BRC newsletter is attached.

The land is held by the Bayfield Regional Conservancy with a deed restriction by the State of Wisconsin. The land is managed by the TU-Wild Rivers Chapter and is used as a breakfast/lunch spot for anglers canoeing the White River on this 23 mile stretch that has no other public rest stops. Signage has been installed to help river users find this property.

The Friends of the White River carried out a successful landowner outreach and education initiative using this grant. The grant supported:

- Developing a mailing list of 300 landowners in the White River watershed from Hwy 63 east to Hwy ~~118~~ 13th
- Mailing postcard surveys asking if landowner wanted further information on conservation options.
- Holding 3-4 landowner watershed-wide information workshops for landowners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the County Conservationist, West Wisconsin Land Trust, Bayfield Regional Conservancy, Trout Unlimited and the Department of Natural Resources sharing information for landowners about programs available to conserve land through term or permanent easement, purchase or management practices.
- Inviting all landowners and community members to the annual White River Fish Boil (2005, 2006 and 2007). Free food and donations by the Friends of the White River and Trout Unlimited provided an opportunity for residents to hear more about the White River fisheries, view displays and information booths and meet our elected officials (Rep. Gary Sherman, Sen. Bob Jauch, Gove Jim Doyle, DNR Secy. Matt Frank, Bureau of Public Lands Director Tia Nelson and others).
- Visiting landowners who had responded as wanting more information about protecting their land. This one-one-one correspondence and meetings is the next step in on-the-ground conservation on private lands. This goal of the program faltered somewhat due to a false start by one contractor (wrong person for the job—no grant money was spent) and then redefined expectations from the DNR Real Estate staffer asking the new Landowner Outreach consultant to scale back

her efforts (due to his land purchase budget being tapped out). Because of that, there is about \$5,089 unspent in the grant that would have supported more landowner outreach activities. Becky Sapper's final report is attached.

Overall, this grant built on the **2004 White River Watershed Management Plan** (funded by an earlier River Management grant) by meeting Objective #3 to provide walk-in access and create one primitive campsite accessible by river users.

The landowner program served Objective #4 of the plan to pursue opportunities to purchase land and easements along the White River in the Town of Kelly and to educate watershed landowners about their conservation options, best management practices etc.

The most valuable aspect of this work is the intention and foresight that has laid out a solid process to protect this part of the White River, which is one of wildest stretches with large holdings of private land in northern Wisconsin. The progree started with:

- 2003 "Friends of the White River" forms (landowners, DNR staff, Trout Unlimited members and land trust representatives)
- 2003 Designation by the State as a State Fishery Area—making the stretch of the White River from Hwy 63 –Hwy 13 eligible for purchase of land or easements by the State of Wisconsin.
- 2004 White River Management Plan is written with a DNR River Management grant.
- 2005 - 2007
 - 27 acres of land purchased on the river for river users
 - Landowner outreach through newsletters, fish boils and watershed-wide meetings to provide information on conservation options for the future of their land. Funded by this DNR River Management grant.

This partnership of the Friends of the White River, Trout Unlimited, West Wisconsin Land Trust, Bayfield Regional Conservancy and others has been supported by the State's work designating the Fishery Area, focusing their real estate staff on White River purchases, providing a Lake Superior Basin Educator to help coordinate meetings, funding the creation of the 2004 Management Plan and establishing a good base of informed landowners who look forward to their White River newsletter and Fish Boil to hear about conservation progress on the White River.

Thank you for grant RM-024-05 that provided the funding to make this progress possible.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Oppedahl, Bayfield Regional Conservancy
4/24/2008