

**Progress Report Grant No. RP-012-00
River Protection Program
Balsam Branch Partnership, Inc.**

POLK CO.

Project Period: 4/01/00 – 6/30/02

Partnership and Project Goals:

- ✓ *Develop an organization with financial and human resource capability to accomplish objectives and goals of the Balsam Branch Partnership.*
- ✓ *Provide a variety of learning opportunities to increase appreciation and stewardship of the area's natural and cultural features.*
- ✓ *Encourage, support, and provide a variety of non-motorized recreational opportunities.*
- ✓ *Preserve unique environmental and critical watershed areas using a variety of land protection and acquisition tools.*
- ✓ *Restore, manage, and increase knowledge of established environmental areas.*

Project Activities to Accomplish Goals:

Develop an organization with financial and human resource capability to accomplish objectives and goals of the Balsam Branch Partnership.

Outreach materials development

Web page – completed and used until October 01. Board decided not to continue to use this tool, because of low response and high cost.

Membership brochures – completed, copy enclosed

Display – completed, used at St. River Expo (2000), Annual Muskie events (2000, 2001) membership annual meeting. Board and display case purchased.

Slide show – completed, copy enclosed. Used in presentations to local organizations including the Amery Lions Club.

Membership drive – mailed membership posted cards to 4000 households in the Balsam Branch Watershed (6/02)

These materials are used to explain the purpose of the organization, our goals and activities to increase memberships and financial support. They also help to increase understanding of resource protection needs and the ability of the Partnership activities to meet these needs.

Board member training

Conference and workshop registration and expenses – president attended Gathering Waters annual conference – Oshkosh (4/01)
Publications – none purchased
Guest speakers – no costs incurred

Training enhances the ability of board members to effectively communicate and carry out the goals of the organization.

Strategic Plan Update

Board members attended a half-day meeting to develop priorities for the organization for the coming years. (11/27/01).

Provide a variety of learning opportunities to increase appreciation and stewardship of the area's natural and cultural features.

Resource guide to environmental education and environmental areas

Completed copy enclosed. The resource guide provides a list of environmental educational opportunities and areas in and around the Balsam Branch Watershed for school and community organizations.

Interpretive program series

Landscaping with native plants
Lake restoration walk
Guided prairie walk
Family canoeing
Intro to forest management
Prescribed burning for private landowners

These programs were offered through Amery Community Education (flyers enclosed).

Muskie event. 4/22/00, 4/28/01, 4/27/02. Steve Schieffer, guest speaker. Brochure created by local high school students included.

McKenzie Creek. Freshwater ecology day planning. 6/02. Steve Schieffer, guest speaker.
Cattail trail days. 6/3/00 and 6/2/01. Phyllis Grimm, guest speaker, presented information about fresh water inveterbrates.

D.D. Kennedy Dam Forum

This forum was organized in response to the mill pond dam on the Balsam Branch River washing out during spring runoff in April 2001. It discussed issues related to ecology, history, and potential dam replacement. It was held at the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts in Amery (11/28/01).

Dear Friends:

The Balsam Branch Partnership was organized to conserve areas in the Balsam Branch Watershed to promote environmental education and non-motorized recreation.

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a certain point on the landscape. Activities within the watershed directly affect wildlife habitat and the health of lakes and streams.

The Partnership concentrates efforts towards protecting unique environmental areas in the watershed in an effort to protect and even improve the quality of our environment.

We hope that you will join our efforts to ensure a vital and diverse environmental heritage for future generations. - BBP

Promoting nonmotorized recreation

The BBP has been instrumental in improving the multi-purpose and handicapped-accessible trail system in and around DD Kennedy County Park. The trails are used by cross-country skiers during the Balsam Winter Fest ski race, of which we are a primary sponsor.

Tools available to protect critical resources

A variety of tools are available to land owners, conservation organizations, communities and others to protect significant parcels of land:

- Conservation easements
- Land donations
- Land purchases
- Bargain sale
- Limited development
- Registry programs

All of these tools offer varying degrees of flexibility to current landowners who wish to turn a love for their land into a lasting legacy of sensible stewardship.

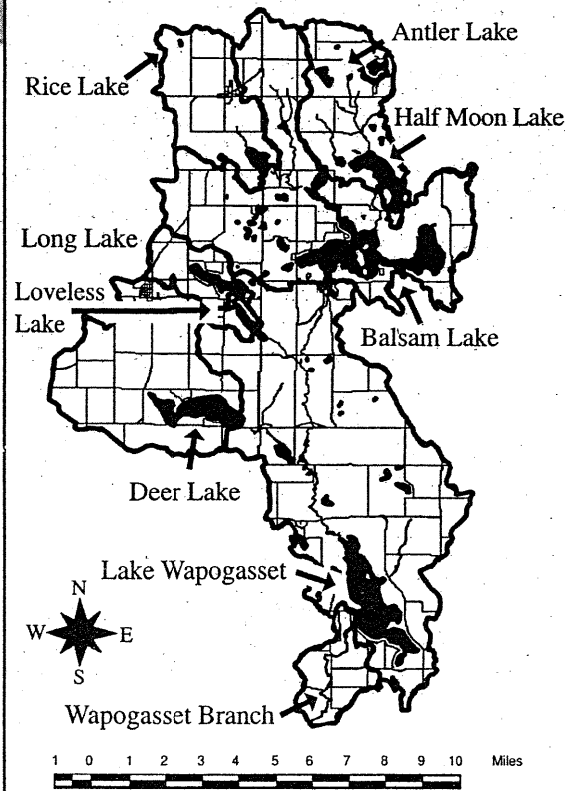
Increasing population, more residential land use, less family farms...this all adds up to a fragmented

landscape and the loss of open space and vistas that define this unique land.



Exposing children to outdoor activities like cross-country skiing and canoeing opens up a world of learning and connects them with the natural world.

Balsam Branch Watershed



Education is the key to promoting responsible stewardship. Children and adults benefit from environmentally-related courses through community education as well as participating in community events like Cattail Trail Days.

The ways in which we recreate are changing too. How will we deal with increasing numbers of people competing for a finite amount of recreational resources?



Education is the key to responsible stewardship

BBP offers more than just options to conserve and protect your land. We are active sponsors of environmental education initiatives county-wide such as the annual Muskie Event at DD Kennedy Environmental Area. Representatives from BBP are available to speak to your group about a wide range of topics from conservation and stewardship to insects and water quality. We also offer courses through Community Education. Please call Jane at 715-268-2920 for more information or to schedule a speaking engagement.

There are many ways to get involved in conservation.

The Partnership offers many ways to get involved in stewardship activities. If you wish to become more active in this dynamic group, please check your interests below and mail this portion of the brochure to the address below.

- Education
- Muskie event volunteer
- Outreach
- Photography
- Public speaking
- Research
- Ski race volunteer
- Writing articles
- Other: _____
- Expertise/interest _____

Balsam Branch Partnership
P.O. Box 217
Amery, WI 54001

www.balsampartners.org
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715-268-2920

Balsam Branch Partnership Membership Brochure



*Working to provide and sustain
environmental areas in the
Balsam Branch Watershed
where educational and recreational
opportunities are promoted for
all ages through all seasons.*



P.O. Box 217
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Activities: September 2000-October 2001

- II. Grant Tasks Completed
 - A. Slide show
 - B. Display Board
 - C. Membership Brochures
 - D. Web site
 - E. Interpretive program series
 - 1. Conservation Practices hike
 - 2. Native plant hike
 - 3. Family canoeing class at YMCA
 - 4. Landscaping with native plants
 - 5. Presentations to school groups by Phyllis and at Cattail Trail Days
 - 6. Muskie Fest Presentation by Steve Shieffer
 - F. Land Protection strategy by Cheryl Bursik
 - G. Bike trip to Lanesboro
- III. Ongoing
 - A. Resource Guide-completed but needs to be printed
 - B. Conferences and workshops
 - C. Continue interpretive program (environmental education)
 - D. Vinter Fest- Jan 19
 - E. Grant Reporting to state
 - F. Work with the green way project
 - G. Promotion of non-motorized recreation
 - 1. Crew
 - 2. Snowshoeing
 - H. Public Forums
 - 1. i.e. Northern Lakes: art based civic dialogue: Water Issues Project
 - I. Environmental impact statement- Hwy 8

Annual Report October 7, 2002

The Balsam Branch Partnership is a collaborative of public and private organizations, land holders, and private citizens who wish to coordinate conservation activities in the Balsam Branch Watershed. These activities are performed in the three major areas defined by our mission statement. These are:

1. Education.
2. Promotion of non-motorized recreation.
3. Land protection.

The major activities for this year include:

Education

- Presentations to youth and school by Phyllis Grimm and Polk County land and water conservationists including Brook Waalen.
- Muskie Festival Promotional brochure created by Steve Schieffer's fresh water ecology class.
- Forum on the ecological, historical effects of D. D. Kennedy dam washing out.

Promotion of non-motorized recreation

- Involvement with the Amery Rotary Club to organize the Cattail Trail Days bike ride.
- Thanks to Gloria Nelson, Marge Beckman and our stop attendant Becky Sunde.
- VinterFest Nordic ski race.
- Creation and distribution of a resource guide which details area environmental recreation and educational areas.

Land Protection

- Printing of maps
- Polk County with Balsam Branch highlighted
- Public properties, i.e. Interstate, Garfield.
- Finalization for procedures for selecting properties for protection. Thanks to Cheryl Bursik.

Membership drive

Our Future

- Promotion of the organization.
- Support for individual partners efforts.
- Working closely with local government to promote community conservation.

