



Wisconsin: Lake Superior Landscape Restoration Partnership

The Partners

The Lake Superior Landscape Restoration Partnership is an emerging effort to coordinate agency, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and private landowner efforts to restore critical habitat, mitigate fire risk and improve water quality in the Lake Superior Watershed in Wisconsin. The project is being initiated by the Forest Service and the NRCS. Other agencies include the USGS, USFWS, NPS, State and township governments, and the four County Land Conservation Departments (LCD), Forestry and Highway Departments. We anticipate that the NGOs will include the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute (SOEI), the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA), the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area (NCWMA), and Northland College. Tribally related organizations will include the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, the Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.



The Project

Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface acres, is the healthiest of all the Great Lakes. The shoreline of Lake Superior in Northern Wisconsin is dotted with intact estuaries, including the pristine Bad River and Kakagon Sloughs. Water quality concerns are manageable, invasive species are diligently controlled, and the international and tribal conservation community work together to keep Lake Superior whole. Sediment loading is a critical water quality concern in Northern Wisconsin and must be managed to improve and protect Lake Superior and its watersheds.

This project will support and enhance conservation activities on private, public, and Tribal lands while providing a unique opportunity to develop and test a model for working collaboratively with Tribes, Federal, State, and Local agencies, NGOs, and others to address critical conservation issues. Through this project, the partnership will improve and restore critical spawning habitat for Brook Trout by reducing sedimentation and removing in-stream barriers, and improving habitat for Golden-winged Warblers, Kirtland Warblers and Sharp-Tailed Grouse through forest conservation practices. In addition, conservation efforts will directly



improve water quality in tributaries of Lake Superior (including trout streams with critical spawning habitat) by increasing infiltration and reducing sedimentation through streambank protection and stabilization and improving existing forest roads and by reducing the amount of phosphorus lost in surface runoff. Finally, forest management efforts will result in reduced wildfire risk on Tribal and other lands in the project area.

The Benefits of Additional Resources



Watershed restoration focuses on land management and critical area treatments that improve water quality and restore ecosystems and wildlife habitat. The Forest Service is working on and off National Forest lands with partners in the headwaters. NRCS and partners are working together with private, state, county and tribal working lands to put appropriate and cost-effective practices and restoration treatments in place downstream. Additional funds will accelerate the ability of the partnership to address critical conservation needs in the watershed.

The benefits are immediately measureable and include: reduced sediment loads in tributary streams and therefore the Lake; reductions in non-native invasive species; increased desirable terrestrial wildlife habitat, especially riparian forests, early successional forests, and the globally imperiled pine barrens; improved road-stream crossings allowing greater aquatic organism movement; higher percentage of private landowners actively managing their wood lots and forests using sustainable forestry practices; increased and improved management of lands on the two tribal reservations; greater coordination among landowners in management practices which provide ecological and economic benefits; and greater coordination between Town, County, State, Federal, and Tribal governments in land management activities.

The Measure of Success

Success will be measured by improvements to critical wildlife habitat for targeted species, decreases in sedimentation and improvements to water quality, and increased acres treated to mitigate wildfire hazard. In addition, success will be measured by the strength of the partnership and the ability to create meaningful collaborations between public and private partners that continue to produce meaningful outcomes beyond the conclusion of this project.