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February 13, 2015

Lavane Hessler – LF/6
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 P.O. Box 7921
 Madison, WI 53707-7921

RE: Capacity grant report

Dear Lavane,

Please accept the enclosed materials as our report on the second year of our current Capacity Grant. This report follows the format of our proposal. Program materials are attached here, including an accounting of grant expenditures.

We spent a great deal of staff resources planning and implementing our extensive Field Trip Program, marketing the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund (endowment for managing state-owned conservation lands), and planning the second annual Great Wisconsin Birdathon (spend-down funds for statewide bird conservation programs).

In addition to providing educational experiences and resources for several thousand people and outreach services for programs we support, we provided \$460,963 in direct contributions to a long list of projects, programs, and conservation organizations (see enclosed). Of this amount, 26% supported NRF programs, 31% went to DNR, and 43% went to other conservation organizations (most of this was from an estate gift).

The Foundation devoted significant time and energy to developing two critical building blocks for our organization's future: an **Impact Map** that lays out our vision and the strategies, programs, and resources that will help us achieve our vision; and identifying **information management software** that will vastly improve the integration of our various databases and allow for more effective customer service, financial management, and fundraising going forward.

Capacity Grant monies support staff members primarily responsible for our Field Trip Program, Great Wisconsin Birdathon, Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund, and Wisconsin Conservation Endowment grant management.

The annual return on the Natural Resources Foundation's Capacity Grant is substantial. We remain extremely grateful for the stability this funding provides our organization.

Please call me at 261-4381 with questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

Barb Barzen
 Coordinator for Grants and Programs

**Report to Department of Natural Resources
On Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's
2014 Capacity Grant**

Highlights of 2014 for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin include:

- provided \$460,963 in direct support to conservation programs and organizations statewide;
- celebrated the first anniversary of the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund as an alternative source of revenue for managing state-owned conservation lands, which generated to-date revenues of over \$105,600 by year end;
- ran the second online Great Wisconsin Birdathon as an alternative funding source for bird conservation in the state, partnering with several major conservation organizations and raising \$57,000 from 745 donors and the efforts of 217 birders;
- coordinated 150 field trips (170 total sessions) statewide from April-November and planned 151 field trips for 2015;
- supported management activities on approximately 2,000 acres of State Natural Areas, Trails, Wildlife Areas, Parks, and Forests.

Following are accomplishments achieved with support from our 2014 \$84,100 Capacity Grant:

Support Management of State-owned Conservation Lands

Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund

February 2012 legislation enabled the Foundation and DNR to partner in establishing and promoting an endowment fund, now known as the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund, that will support management of state-owned conservation lands. Revenue will come from small, voluntary donations given by people purchasing their hunting and fishing licenses, camping permits, and (soon) park entrance permits. Contributions can also be made at CherishWisconsin.org. Each year, 5% of the Fund's investment revenue will support management of State Natural Areas, Wildlife Areas, Fisheries Areas, and Parks. The Fund was launched in September 2013.

In 2014, the Foundation focused on marketing the Fund through license and permit vendors. During the 12 month period, 25,396 individuals contributed \$85,845. An additional \$3,092 was donated through the website, bringing the total income to \$88,937. The total net income for the Fund to date, as of 12/31/14, was \$105,678.

Supporting on-the-ground management activities

The Foundation provided \$83,536 in support toward managing six State Natural Areas (SNAs) five State Trails, four State Forests, several Wildlife Areas, and one State Park. Altogether, approximately 2,000 acres of high quality habitat were maintained or restored as a result of this

funding, and trails were improved with signage and access for disabled people. Partners in these efforts include the We Energies Foundation, Lux Foundation, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation, Friends of Cedarburg Bog, John C. Bock Foundation, Xcel Energy Foundation, and individual donors through the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment.

Program staff worked with DNR's State Natural Areas Program to develop a regional approach to raising funds for State Natural Areas, setting priorities with guidance from the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and eight Regional Ecologists within the Natural Heritage Conservation program. This re-packaged initiative will be launched in 2015.

Support Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The Foundation provided \$142,860 in support for this program area in 2014 -- 92% for bird conservation and 8% for bats, salamanders, and rare plants.

Bird Conservation

Bird conservation has been our central focus for supporting rare species in recent years due to our strong partnership with Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative partners, the prevalence of bird watchers in Wisconsin, the ecological (and economic) importance of birds, and the fact that one-third of the Wisconsin's bird species are in decline.

In 2014, our second annual online Great Wisconsin Birdathon (WIBirdathon.org) raised \$57,000 from 750 donors and 217 participating birders. Proceeds were split among eight bird conservation projects and programs that are deemed priorities by the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative coalition and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Other Birdathon partner organizations include the Wisconsin Audubon Council, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, and Bird City Wisconsin. Planning then began for the 2015 Great Wisconsin Birdathon, with a goal of raising \$70-90,000. In addition to securing funding, the Birdathon is an effective tool for outreach, raising awareness of the needs of birds and those who work on their behalf among a large statewide audience.

Conservation of other rare and declining species

The Foundation fosters conservation of other rare and declining species by supporting DNR Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation projects, especially citizen science programs that monitor these species. A Foundation-funded five-day Citizen Science in the Classroom Workshop for educators occurred in June, was very successful, and will be repeated again in 2016. The Foundation is particularly concerned about bats as white-nosed syndrome creeps into Wisconsin. We directed \$9,800 to three bat monitoring projects in 2014.

Support and Foster Conservation Education

Field Trip Program

The Foundation's greatest strength is connecting people to Wisconsin's natural resources through experiential and philanthropic opportunities. Our greatest asset for doing this is our Field Trip Program.

Highlights from our 2014 Field Trip Program:

- 150 Field Trips (170 sessions) offered, up 28 trips from 2013
- 1,919 individuals (184 children) registered for trips
- filled to 88% of total capacity
- 104 new memberships from online registrations
- \$3,090 in memberships/renewals
- Over \$17,000 in donations gleaned for Bird Protection Fund, various NRF endowment funds, and other DNR projects from fundraiser field trips
- Hired permanent Field Trip Assistant

The last three months of 2014 were spent planning 151 field trips for 2015. One-third will be new trips and roughly half will be led by DNR professionals. This program is greatly valued by both conservation professionals and the public alike. Through media attention and word-of-mouth, its educational value reaches far more than the 1,900 people who attend the trips, making it a very effective outreach tool for the DNR and partner conservation organizations.

Besadny Conservation Grants and Teacher's Outdoor Environmental Education Fund

Through grants of up to \$1,000, the Besadny Conservation Grants Program and Teacher's Outdoor Environmental Education Fund support conservation education at the local or regional level. In 2014, the Foundation awarded 18 Besadny grants and 4 Teacher's Fund grants, totaling \$18,660. Recipients included schools, conservation organizations, nature centers, a museum, and a community garden.

Of the \$460,963 the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin invested in conservation activities in 2014, \$141,340 (31%) supported DNR programs, \$119,760 (26%) supported the Foundation's Field Trip Program and Great Wisconsin Birdathon, and \$199,863 (43%) supported projects and operations of other conservation organizations in the state. (\$109,000 of this was from an estate gift.)



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Permanent Staff

Executive Director	Ruth Oppedahl	608-261-4384
Director of Development	Camille Zaroni	608-264-8922
Director of Communications	Lindsay Renick Mayer	608-266-3138
Field Trip Coordinator	Christine Tanzer	608-264-8548
Field Trip Assistant	Lysbeth Lesak	608-261-4392
Grants & Program Coordinator	Barb Barzen	608-261-4381
Membership Coordinator	John Kraniak	608-264-9240
Office Manager	Christine Seeley	608-261-4394
Grants Administrator	Cait Williamson	608-266-1430

2014 Capacity Grant Budget Report

<u>EXPENSES:</u>		2014		2014
<u>Employee</u>	<u>Program</u>	Budget Wages & Benefits for Programs	% time on Program	Actual Total wages & benefits x % time on programs
Field Trip Coordinator	Field Trips	22,643	100	25,782.44
Field Trip Assistant	Field Trips		100	7,817.25
Work Study	Field Trips	2,400	100	3,187.83
Communications	Birdathon, FTs	17,112	40	11,916.80
Director (thru July)	Lands***	4,278	10	2,979.20
Communications	Birdathon, FTs		10	567.20
Director (since Oct.)	Lands**		40	2,268.79
Program Coordinator	Birdathon	14,915	40	15,930.34
	Lands	11,186	30	11,947.75
	Field Trips	3,729	10	3,982.58
Birdathon Coordinator	Birdathon	6,370	100	7,397.10
Grants Manager	Grant administration	5,659	20	2,521.89
Executive Director	Field trips	891	1	1,023.22
	Lands	8,910	10	10,232.18
Development Director	Field Trips	735	1	733.93
	Lands	14,708	20	14,678.67
TOTAL		\$113,536 **		\$122,967
REVENUE:				
DNR Capacity Grant		84,100		84,100
Membership fees		29,436		38,867
		\$113,536		\$122,967

* Hourly rate includes benefits

**Amount should equal at least \$84,100 (75%) + \$28,033 (25%) = \$112,134

***Lands Program includes both fundraising for State Natural Area management and for marketing and raising funds for the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment (which includes the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund).

2015 Capacity Grant Budget

EXPENSES:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>% time on Program</u>	2015 Budget Wages & Benefits for Programs
Field Trip Coordinator	Field Trips	100	25,782
Field Trip Assistant	Field Trips	100	10,920
Work Study	Field Trips	100	2,400
Communications Director	Birdathon, FTs	10	7,355
	Lands**	40	29,419
Program Coordinator	Birdathon	40	11,186
	Lands	30	14,915
	Field Trips	10	3,729
Birdathon Coordinator	Birdathon	100	8,190
Executive Director	Field trips	1	1,023
	Lands	10	10,232
Development Director	Field Trips	1	735
	Lands	20	14,708
TOTAL			\$140,594 **

REVENUE:

DNR Capacity Grant	84,100
Program grants and sponsorships	35,000
<u>Membership dues</u>	<u>21,494</u>
TOTAL	\$140,594

* Hourly rate includes benefits

**Amount should equal at least \$84,100 (75%) + \$28,033 (25%) = \$112,134

***Lands Program includes both fundraising for State Natural Area management and for marketing and raising funds for the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment (which includes the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund).

