

Streambank Protection Program

Northeast Streams Team Proposed Revisions

The Streambank Protection Program (SBP) is now taking shape within Northeast Wisconsin. The Northeast streams team has delineated a focus area using ecoregion, public access, and land use. Local biologists have nominated watersheds within the region that have significant trout resources and habitat. Input received at the public meeting will help us determine where to focus our outreach efforts as the Department moves into that part of the process. Any easements acquired will help to maintain trout populations and access to them for future generations of Wisconsin Trout Anglers.

The Northeast Wisconsin Focus area contains an abundance of coldwater resources. Like much of Wisconsin, this formerly forested landscape has been logged and then converted to agriculture. These land use changes have put pressure on these resources. The Department has a successful program of acquiring easements for access and habitat protection within other focus areas (e.g. Driftless Area), and the Northeast

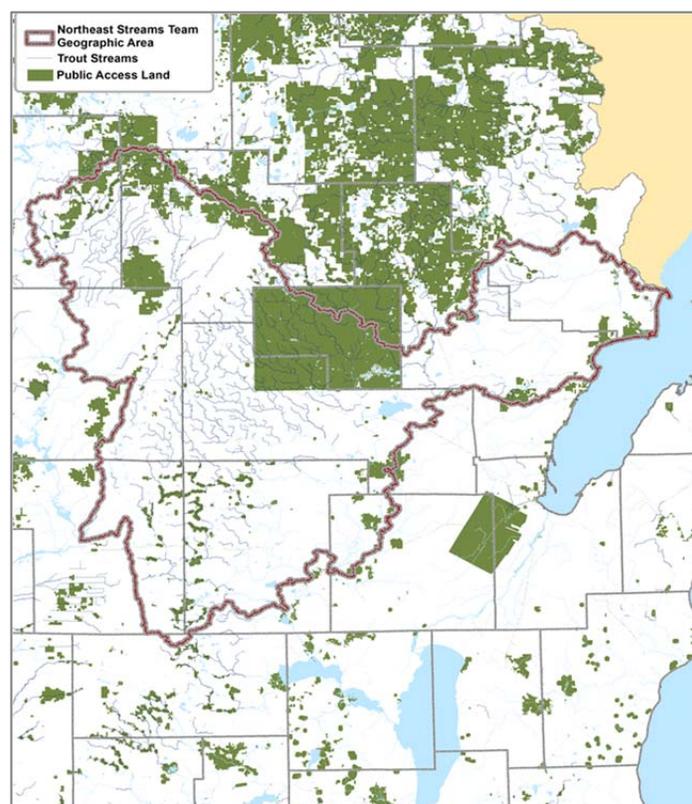
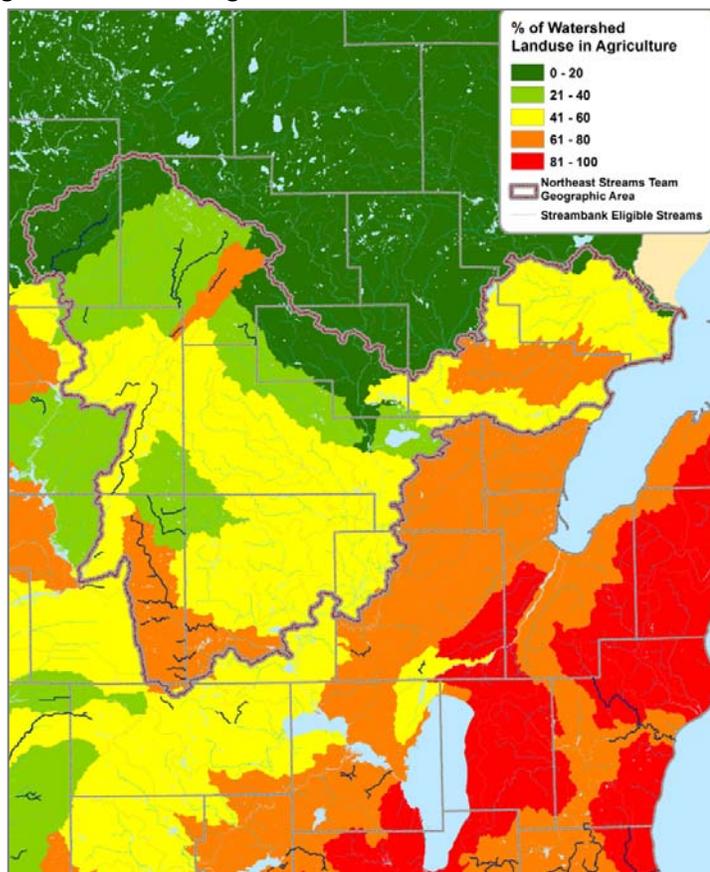
Streams Team will attempt to follow those patterns of success. The Department used statutory language to help derive the Northeast Focus area. Stream eligibility for acquiring easements includes the extent to which: 1) water quality and fish habitat of the stream are threatened by urban or agricultural runoff; 2) the threat can be protected through the acquisition of property; and 3) acquisition provides protection to endangered or threatened resources including natural communities and habitat. The trout resources of Northeast Wisconsin face these threats and acquisition of conservation easements in the riparian corridor can reduce adjacent land use impacts and protect these vulnerable cold water habitats. A landowner who sells a conservation easement is compensated for allowing the state perpetual management authority within the designated easement. In this part of WI, mature forested corridors will provide trout populations the habitat they need to persist and thrive. These types of habitats require a long term investment in order to come to maturity and the permanent conservation easement will be the vehicle which will allow these habitats to develop.





Delineation of Focus Area

The first consideration that was applied was at the ecoregion scale. In this region of the state, the North Central Hardwood Forest Ecoregion was used as the predominant ecotone (see map to the right). The next consideration that was used to create a focus area was to look at % of watershed that was in agriculture (see map below). Included were areas that were predominately greater than 20% agricultural land use.



The next consideration Fisheries Biologists examined was the extent of public access within the watersheds containing trout water (see map to the right). The watersheds along the northern edge of the ecoregion have significant amounts of public land existing primarily as national forest, county forest, or tribal lands. To further keep the geographical scope manageable, the Wisconsin River was chosen as the western boundary. After taking into account these considerations, the Northeast Focus area of the Streambank Protection Program is shown by the gray boundary in the map to the right and Appendix A.



Choosing watersheds to add to the eligibility list

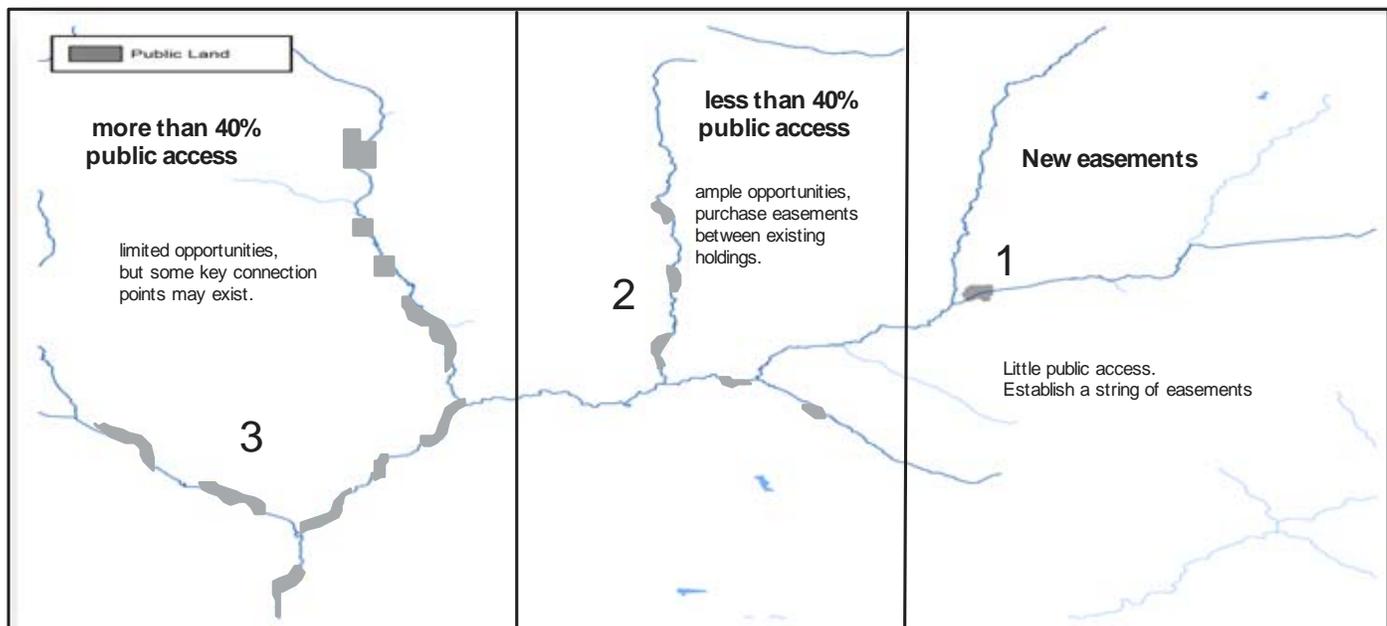
Fisheries Biologists who have the closest connection to the cold water resources within their respective management areas were asked to identify additional SBP eligible streams within the focus area (see map Appendix A). Protection criteria were based on current habitat quality and fishery performance, while rehabilitation criteria considered whether the stream could be improved from marginal trout water to regionally recognized trout water via instream and riparian habitat work. Most streams proposed for SBP addition fall into the protection category. That’s not to say that there won’t be prescriptive habitat work done to continue to improve habitat. A short-list of highlighted stream additions is shown below (tributaries and smaller streams are not listed). Appendix B compares existing eligible streams for each county to what is proposed for addition.

Stream Name	County	Stream Name	County
Spring Brook	Langlade	Kroenke Creek	Shawano
Middle Branch Embarrass River	Langlade/Shawano	Tiger Creek	Shawano
West Branch of the Red River	Langlade/Shawano	Comet Creek	Marathon/Shawano
South Branch Embarrass River	Marathon/Shawano	Whitcomb Creek	Waupaca
Mill Creek	Shawano	Peterson Creek	Waupaca/Portage

After the public meeting and comment period the department will examine all public input, consider necessary modifications, and then seek administrative approval. As with the other focus areas, there was an effort to keep the subwatersheds nominated for inclusion in SBP at about 25% of all watersheds containing trout water. The responses received at the public meeting may help us determine where to concentrate our outreach efforts.

Prioritization for outreach

The public is also being asked to help us prioritize where to concentrate outreach work. They will be given three scenarios as to where they would like to spend their acquisition dollars. The three scenarios are depicted below.





The other policy question

Department staff are seeking input on is whether to prioritize outreach within the watershed that would provide mostly a habitat protection benefit with fewer fishing opportunities, or to focus on areas with better fishing opportunities yet overall less habitat protection value. An example of a habitat focused easement would be an investment in a springhead or tributary that serves as an important source of cold water, as well as spawning and nursery habitat. Because of their small size these stream reaches provide limited fishing opportunity (see example right).



Conversely, a mainstem section of a stream would provide the most fishing opportunity (see below) and primarily provide habitat for adult trout. Responses to this question will allow the Department to determine how much outreach effort is put into waters that provide primarily a habitat protection benefit.





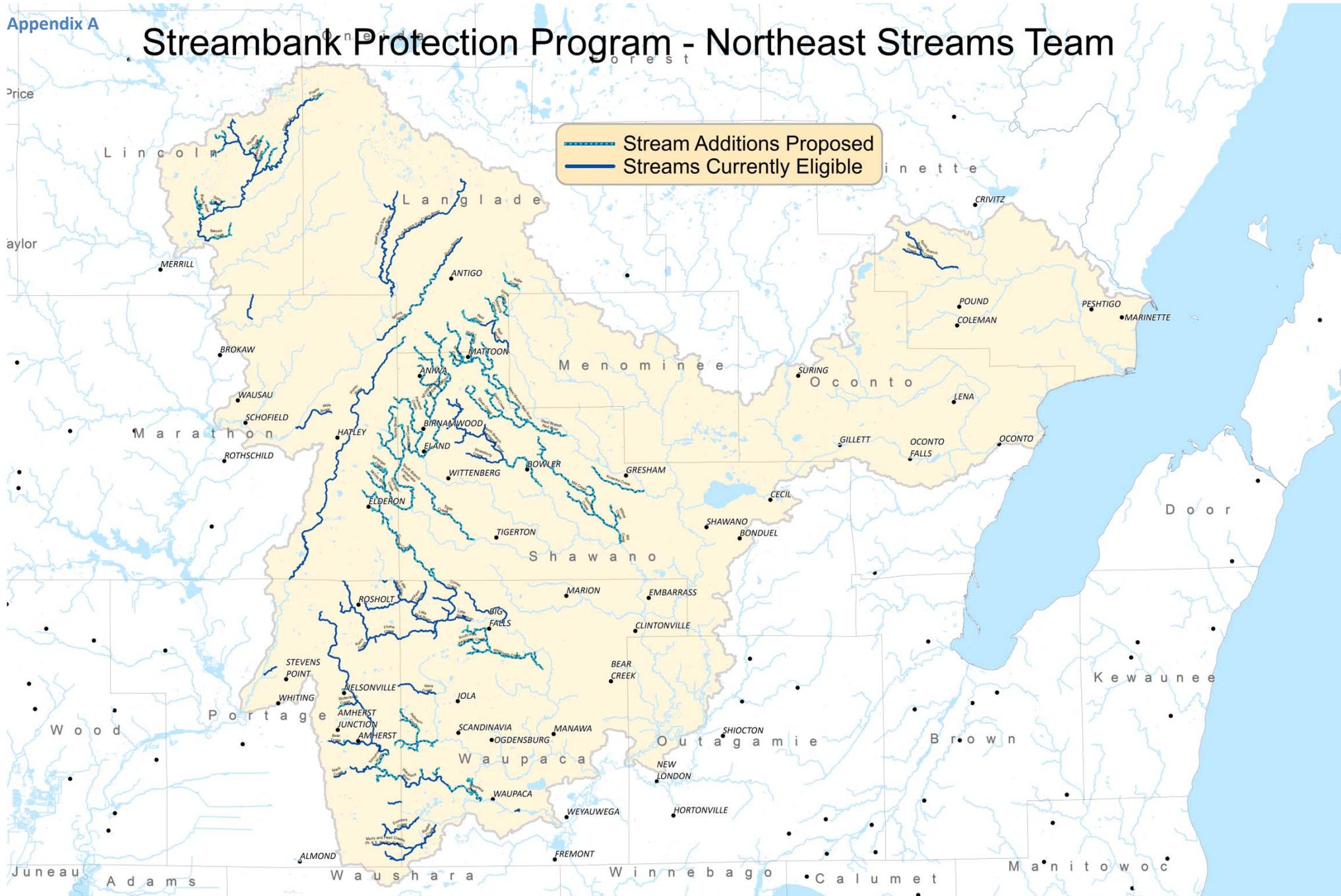
Outreach efforts

The Department plans to reach out to landowners through several different avenues. The Department will use Geographic Information Systems to locate landowners that live on SBP eligible streams. Using database tools, a mailing can be sent to these landowners to find those who might have an interest in the program. The department will then follow up with these interested landowners to determine if they would be willing to sell an easement to the Department. Biologists and land agents will meet with landowners to address their concerns and help them through the easement acquisition process.

A final outreach strategy will be to work with Trout Unlimited, county land conservation departments (LCD), and land trusts. For example, TU has purchased fishing easements on a number of waters within the Northeast Focus area and they are willing to do outreach in order to convert these short-term easements into permanent easements with the Department. County LCD and land trust staff also may have contacts and personal acquaintances with landowners that may lead to an interested party being put in contact with the Department for follow up.



Appendix A Streambank Protection Program - Northeast Streams Team





Appendix B

LANGLADE COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	48.75	71.12	119.87
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	48.38	61.87	110.25
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	0.37	9.11	9.48
Note* this county needs to be updated as portions of the Upper Prairie were removed			
LINCOLN COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	46.89	27.29	74.18
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	46.25	26.02	72.27
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	0.64	1.27	1.91
MARATHON COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	25.53	41.52	67.05
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	22.78	34.08	56.85
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	2.75	7.58	10.34
MARINETTE COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	12.25	0.00	12.25
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	12.25	0.00	12.25
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	0.00	0.00	0.00
PORTAGE COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	72.58	13.80	86.38
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	61.17	11.84	73.01
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	11.41	1.96	13.37
SHAWANO COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	26.81	205.30	232.11
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	26.57	198.90	225.47
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	0.24	6.41	6.65
WAUPACA COUNTY			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	77.73	57.42	135.15
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	71.02	32.57	103.59
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	6.71	24.85	31.56
NOTE** MILES ARE FOR PORTION OF COUNTY WITHIN THE NE SBE PROJECT AREA			

ALL COUNTIES			
	Existing (mi)	Proposed (mi)	Total (mi)
ALL SBE STREAMS	310.53	416.45	726.98
-CLASSIFIED TROUT SBE	288.41	365.28	653.69
-TRIB SBE (NON TROUT)	22.12	51.18	73.30