

Partner groups can be a significant resource for managing properties such as waterfowl nesting areas, both in financial contributions and volunteer labor through the Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program.

Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program

TAKE A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO IMPROVE YOUR FAVORITE PROPERTY.

Eric Verbeten

Do you have a favorite state fisheries or wildlife area? New this year is a chance for those who love the outdoors to give back to their favorite spots and become a sponsor. The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program opens up state fisheries and wildlife areas, flowages and riverways for groups to make a commitment to take an active role in managing and improving these properties all around the state.

Sponsors will have a unique chance to work directly with DNR staff to create a work plan aimed at improving the areas based on the specific needs of each property. Activities include a wide range of fun and rewarding projects like wildlife surveys, building and maintaining facilities (such as boardwalks), habitat improvement projects, litter cleanup, sign and fence postings, seed collections and prairie restoration. Groups will have a chance to perform their activities on a schedule that works for them. The program includes an option for groups or individuals to donate an annual financial contribution to the property.

"The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program is a great way for groups to join in and give back to their communities and the environment in a special way," says Tim Lizotte, DNR wildlife supervisor. "This program is not limited to conservation organizations, but includes school clubs, scouts, businesses, faith-based groups and other interested groups. This is a unique opportunity for groups to invest in their local natural

resources while building teamwork and comradery."

Getting started is easy. Groups can sign up by going to the DNR website at dnr.wi.gov and searching keyword "Volunteer" to find the application form and a listing of fish and wildlife areas. It is highly recommended that those considering applying consult with their local area property manager. Property managers can be found by calling DNR customer service at 1 (888) 936-7463. Sponsors who adopt will be recognized with signage at the entrance of the property that will feature their name, an image and examples of work activities being completed on the property.

The Adopt a Fish and Wildlife Area program requires groups to make an annual commitment of three work days totaling 100 hours of labor, OR \$3,000, OR an equivalent combination of the two over a three year period.

Eric Verbeten writes for DNR's Office of Communications.



Sponsors are recognized with an Adopt a Fish or Wildlife Area sign at a visible location on the property.



WHAT'S A FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA?

Fish and wildlife areas are managed to sustain fish, wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a wide range of nature-based recreational uses including hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, paddling, birdwatching and nature study. Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for the purpose of personal consumption. Select areas are also open for dog training and hunting dog competitions.