



HUSTISFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

John Hustis Elementary 600 Hustis St., Hustisford, WI 53034 Phone: 920-349-3228

December 4, 2006

DNR
South Central Region
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd
Fitchburg, WI 53711

SUBJECT: Hustisford Sense of Place Project

Dear Eileen Trainor,

The Hustisford School District is extremely proud and excited to have been (and continue to be) involved with the Hustisford Sense of Place Project. I was adopted into this grant when I became the new acting principal in the summer of 2005. Last school year the project included students from the fourth and fifth grades at both John Hustis Elementary and Bethany Lutheran School in Hustisford, Wisconsin as well as other children within the community who attended our summer school. The community of Hustisford is attached to Lake Sinissippi and the Rock River which are aspects of the Horicon Marsh and watershed. Therefore we enjoyed studying the features that this natural resource provides us (including the environment, recreational, tourism and economic sustainability benefits). The project explored the past history of citizen and community relationships to Lake Sinissippi, the Upper Rock River and the Horicon Marsh ecosystems. This final report summarizes what has been accomplished.

Ties to the Community and Beyond Planning Meetings were conducted in December of 2004 by the lead members (Karen Fink, Carla Knopp, Ruth Johnson and Terry Dallmann) to modify and extend the original grant. At this time the pontoon classroom idea was discussed. From this point the Lake Sinissippi Association (in conjunction with other associations) started to create the pontoon classroom books and sought out other sources and references for information.

JASON Project In the spring of 2005, the students at JHE participated in the JASON project at UW Milwaukee. Although this part of the project was not paid for through the grant, it did provide another resource to begin our study of the Rock River flowage into the Mississippi River; and the impact of farming, around and within our community.

Pontoon Classroom In the fall of 2005, the Lake Sinissippi Association in conjunction with the Hustisford School District and the Hustisford Sense of Place Project created a textbook/booklet for an "out-of-the-classroom" experience. This booklet teaches the students about problems in the lake, the river and the watershed. It also shows what the students, their parents and community can do to help protect Lake Sinissippi and the Rock River. Included in the book are: color maps of the lake, tools used to monitor the lake, student activities and much more. This book was used as a manual/reference when the students rode on the pontoon boats; as well as within the classroom.

In the fall of 2005, students from Bethany Lutheran and John Hustis Elementary boarded pontoon boats to take their new knowledge out to the lake. This experience was a wonderful opportunity and took the place of the summer school class that was to be held the previous year. Community



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members and members from the Lake Sinissippi Association volunteered their time, boats and other equipment to allow for this opportunity. While on the boats, the adults told stories related to the lake, tested the water with secchi disks, Kemmerer bottles, and so much more. It was a beautiful day and there was a great amount of learning that took place.

Groundwater Flow Model To help with the full perspective of the importance of our lake, a groundwater flow model was purchased from UW-Stevens Point. This model certainly helped the students understand how we use and get water; and is a wonderful teaching tool to show what happens with our water beneath the Earth.

Blue Heron Trip In the spring of 2006, the students ventured to Horicon to go on a boat tour and learn how both the Horicon Marsh and Lake Sinissippi were created. The students learned about how both the marsh and lake were created, the history involved with creating such decisions, the importance of maintaining correct water levels, and much more. Again, this was another hands-on experience that our students would not have taken part of if this grant wasn't available.

Community Interviews The students at John Hustis Elementary conducted several interviews of members from the Hustisford Community and asked questions of the presenters during both field trips. We will continue to have community members visiting our school, giving presentations regarding our beautiful lake and the need to preserve it. These interviews were shared with the fourth, fifth and sixth grade students.

Summer School, The Art of Nature and Nature of Art A summer school class was held in June of 2006 connecting art work to the watershed and our community. The students created art pieces concerning the Rock River, Lake Sinissippi and the Horicon Marsh. The art work included, but was not limited to: 3-D art, drawings, paintings, weavings which incorporated recreation, sunsets, animals, dams, recycling, and other important aspects of proper care for our natural resources. The art work was displayed in the hallways. Community members were encouraged and invited to view the art work at the conclusion of summer school.

Pontoon Classroom II This fall we had planned to do another pontoon classroom experience, however, the water level was too low. This has been rescheduled to take place this spring; as we look forward to continuing the partnerships that we have created.

Without question, this project did create an enthusiasm, affection and desire to protect Lake Sinissippi, the Upper Rock River and Horicon Marsh. Everyone did acquire a deeper knowledge of history related to water quality, the current state in which the water exists, and the roles/responsibilities in which we all share to improve water quality.

Sincerely,

Christopher S. Holt
Principal, John Hustis Elementary