

River planning grant final report

Final Project Narrative

This project narrative is to accompany the enclosed request for final payment for our project- Planning for Two Rivers Habitat, funded by grant #RP-259-14.

The outcome for this project was better than hoped for. The goal was to engage the public, and educate and work with them on habitat restoration in the East and West Twin River watersheds around Two Rivers, and strengthen our organizations' capacity to continue doing so to the benefit of water quality, wildlife, and quality of life in our community. The response to these efforts was enthusiastic, and what started with this River Planning Grant project has grown into a larger effort now known as Restore the Shore. This has facilitated restoration projects not only within our preserve, but involving other landowners in the watersheds, including municipalities.

After the grant award, Woodland Dunes also applied for matching funding from the John and Ruth West Foundation of Manitowoc to further increase the capacity of our organization to work with landowners and facilitate habitat improvement projects. This resulted in a \$60,000.00 matching grant. Woodland Dunes reached out to the Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership and others to create a shared full-time position- with half being a land management coordinator for the nature center, and the other half to coordinate the Lakeshore Invasive Species Management Area. The duties of both positions involve working with the public to educate about and facilitate habitat improvement. Jennifer Powell, formerly an aquatic invasive species coordinator at the Wisconsin DNR, was hired for that position. Referring to a vegetative study done in the early 1960's at Point Beach State Forest by Sr. Julia VanDenack we researched appropriate native plants that could be used for restoration projects in the Two Rivers area and prepared educational materials. As Two Rivers lies within the Lake Michigan Flyway, a subset of the Mississippi Flyway and is an important area for migrating birds, we consulted with the Wisconsin DNR's Stopover Initiative regarding restoration activities which benefit migratory birds, and incorporated that information into our program.

In fall of 2013 we publicized the availability of the educational services made available through this grant, and contacted or were contacted by a number of individuals and organizations. Those included:

Glacial Lakes Conservancy- we helped them assess the Winnie Spring Preserve along the West Twin and assisted with training on invasives management and helped with management of phragmites on that preserve as part of the training. Through funds from the West Foundation grant, we hired a contractor and treated *Phragmites* along the shore on their property.

City of Two Rivers- we communicated the impact and need for management of *Phragmites* on City property and within City limits on both the East and West Twin Rivers. The City was very supportive, and again we used Foundation funding to provide *Phragmites* treatment along the rivers with their permission on City property.

Adams St. Residents- we established communication with residents on Adams St. in Two Rivers along the East Twin, and those residents contacted and distributed information to others in the area, who

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then contacted us. About two dozen homeowners along the street received information and granted permission to be included in phragmites management, as did additional residents on the opposite side of the river. Everyone we contacted was interested in participating, and we again used West Foundation funding to treat *Phragmites* in that area.

Manitowoc Co. Fish and Game Protective Assoc. owns land along the West Twin River and was contacted about invasives. They too gave permission for control work on their property, and through the Foundation our contractor provided treatment.

Holy Family Hospital Woodland Clinic- Japanese knotweed had been introduced to their property and had colonized for a number of years. We were contacted by a third party and in turn contacted Holy Family and worked with their staff on management of the knotweed in late 2013 and 2014.

STH 310 residents- we worked with landowners on five sites near the West Twin where *Phragmites* is/was present. We contacted the landowners, met with them to discuss the importance of habitat management, and assisted with initial control. To date these landowners have continued management on their own.

Restoration- additional landowners on both the lower and upper West Twin contacted us regarding restoration. We again demonstrated *Phragmites* control (Jim Crawford site, Town of New Denmark, Brown Co.) provided native seed to landowners, and purchased native shrubs which were distributed to the public at no charge at our Bird Breakfast Event. We obtained additional restoration funding through a Coastal Management Grant (\$8,800) and matching grant (\$8,800) from the James Dutton Foundation, and received support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for plant materials. As a result, in 2014 about 2,500 native trees and shrubs were planted in and adjacent to our preserve in areas which drain directly to the West Twin as invasive plants were removed. This activity has continued in 2015 (about 1,000 plants) and 2016 (about 1,400 plants).

Phragmites was noted to be of primary concern along the lower West and East Twin Rivers, and as mentioned above there was considerable support from the City of Two Rivers and shoreline residents for management. As a result, Woodland Dunes applied for and received a five-year AIS grant of \$68,000 to map and treat Phragmites on about 50 acres of shoreline area. This was begun in 2014 and continues. At the same time, others are treating shoreline areas of Lake Michigan for Phragmites. In the fifth year of the grant, treated areas will be seeded with native wetland plants to enhance restoration).

Outreach- information about habitat improvement was made available at Woodland Dunes events, which are attended by about 3,000 people each year, and a panel about restoration and habitat management was developed and is part of our permanent displays. Information about habitat restoration along the East and West Twin Rivers was included in a number of newspaper articles, and presented to the Manitowoc Garden Club, Nature's Own Gardeners, at the Manitowoc Garden Expo, and to sportsmen's and community service groups including the Kiwanis, Manitowoc Fish and Game club, and others. Partnering with the Wisconsin Stopover Initiative, Woodland Dunes hosted a

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Grosbeaks Galore workshop in the spring of 2015 which featured a half day series of talks about restoration and field trips to restoration sites around Woodland Dunes, to address questions the public may have on the topic.

Ongoing activities also included stream sampling on the West Twin, East Twin, and Molash Creek, and total phosphorus sampling on the East Twin in 2015. Avian monitoring which has been submitted to eBird.org, was conducted on a transect near our headquarters, 11 summer transects, and 10 migration sampling points in and near the preserve. More than 130 avian species were recorded during migration periods, and about 90 during the nesting season.

What began with this river planning grant has become Restore the Shore, which has now engaged more than 35 partner organizations and businesses, hundreds of volunteers, and many landowners in and near Two Rivers, including both the Cities of Two Rivers and Manitowoc. Thousands of people have been exposed to information about habitat improvement and its benefits in the watershed. This program appears to be sustainable, and will continue to have a positive environmental impact on Two Rivers for years to come.

Submitted by:

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