

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
River Planning Grant #RP28316
Awarded to the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance

FINAL REPORT

Expanding Education & Outreach in the Lower Fox River Watershed

Original Award Date: February 2, 2016

Original Grant Timeline: February 2, 2016 to June 30, 2018

Grant Extension Approval: June 6, 2018

Extended Grant Timeline: February 2, 2016 to December 31, 2018

Prepared and submitted by:

Kelly Reyer

Outreach Coordinator

Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance

E-mail: Kelly@fwwa.org

Phone: (920) 915-1502

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Area (A.)	page 3
Problem Statement (B.)	page 3
Goal (1.)	page 3
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “a”).....	page 4
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “b”).....	page 4
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “c”).....	page 4
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “d”).....	page 5
Goal (2.)	page 5
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “a”).....	page 5
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “b”).....	page 5
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “c”).....	page 5
Goal (3.)	page 5
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “a”).....	page 6
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “b”).....	page 6
Outcomes & attachments for (activity “c”).....	page 6
List of Attachments with links	page 7

FINAL REPORT

A. PROJECT AREA

The project area is the lower Fox River watershed beginning in northern Winnebago County and ending in Brown County where the Fox River empties into the bay of Green Bay. "The Fox River Valley is one of Wisconsin's most urbanized and industrialized areas. Most of these urban areas are close to the river and localized urban and industrial runoff has contributed to water quality problems" (WDNR). The population of the area is approximately 400,000 people according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Overall, there are many public access sites along this stretch of the lower Fox River including 40 parks, 30 boat landings, 6 marinas, and 4 light houses. The water body indicated is located in Winnebago, Outagamie, and Brown Counties. A map showing all public access points in this watershed is attached along with this grant application. The Fox River is an Area of Special Natural Resource Interest (ASNRI) as indicated on the DNR website, and is listed on the EPA's 303(d) Impaired Water List.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Plan for the Lower Fox River indicates, "The LFR Basin and Lower Green Bay (also referred to as the Green Bay Area of Concern or AOC) are impaired by excessive phosphorus and sediment loading, which leads to nuisance algae growth, oxygen depletion, reduced submerged aquatic vegetation, water clarity problems, and degraded habitat. The plan reveals that the source of 25% of total sediment, and 15% of Phosphorus is loading from urban areas. Moreover, the Lower Fox River is listed on the EPA's Impaired Waters List that is designated to "waters that are too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet water quality standards" and suffers from other threats such as aquatic invasive species. We are deeply engaged in projects to reduce loading from agriculture, this project will expand our efforts in the urban sector. Increased public awareness of these threats, along with hand-on projects to tackle them, is needed for a comprehensive approach to River Planning. Additionally, a system or watershed approach will be most effective in seeing positive change in water health and ecosystem function. Improvements to the water quality of the Lower Fox River will positively impact the wildlife living in, along, and depending on the river for a food source, and will ultimately make the river and bay a more enjoyable place for recreation and other public uses. The issues affecting this section of the Fox River are significant and action is needed. A secondary problem is that public funding is lacking. There is limited support for a watershed organization with the potential and desire to take on these issues and see real change in the water quality within the region. This project will aid in building the capacity of FWWA by encouraging the public to support our organization and efforts in the community by becoming contributing members, both financially and as volunteers.

GOAL 1:

The first goal of this project is to increase public awareness of watershed function, ecosystem health, and non-point source pollution related to the Lower Fox River, ultimately resulting in improved water quality due to decreased urban runoff and increased knowledge of invasive species. The type of education that will be conducted will expand on the efforts of the Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium (NEWSC) by coordinating new ideas into current educational efforts. Another component of this goal of increasing awareness, is to make exhibits more engaging to the general public and people of all ages, backgrounds and interests. Our education is only beneficial if we can engage as many people as possible to enact change and consider their impacts on the health of the river. To accomplish this, we will make our exhibits more fun, interesting and approachable.

OUTCOMES & ATTACHMENTS:

Activity a:

- **List of exhibiting events**
Attachment "A" includes a list of exhibiting events coordinated during the grant period.
- **Watershed Pledge spreadsheet**
Attachment "B" includes a list of residents who took the Watershed Pledge during the grant period.
- **Photos from exhibiting events**
Attachment "C" includes photos from exhibiting events coordinated during the grant period.
- **Invoices from exhibiting upgrades**
The receipts from the exhibiting upgrade purchases are included in the financial report and are listed as receipts #1-14.
- **Printed Renew Our Waters Flyers**
Updated Renew Our Waters flyers for exhibiting events and newsletter can be found in the listed as Attachment "W".

Activity b:

- **Letter to schools**
Attachment "D" is the two-page letter sent to schools in the project area that advertises and outlines our efforts in providing watershed and stormwater education in classrooms for free.
- **School contact list**
Attachment "E" is the updated school contact list that includes all of the schools (with addresses) that are located within NEWSC communities. The 271 schools included on this list were sent the aforementioned school letter in 2016 and 2017, and were then sent the updated school brochure (Attachment "F") in 2018.
- **Updated School Brochure**
Attachment "F" is the updated school, tri-folded brochure that was created in 2018 with the hope that more teachers would open this document and reach out to schedule school presentations in their classrooms.
- **List of school presentations and locations**
Attachment "G" is the list of school presentations that were provided during the grant period.
- **Photos from school presentations**
Attachment "H" includes photos from school presentations coordinated throughout the grant period.

Activity c:

- **Infographics showing garbage cleaned up in 2016, 2017, and 2018**
Attachment "I" includes infographics showing total volunteers and garbage cleaned up as part of our annual Fox-Wolf Watershed Cleanup event in 2016, 2017, and 2018.
- **List of sites cleaned up in 2015, 2016, 2017, & 2018**
Attachment "J" includes a list of all sites used as cleanup locations (in the watershed) for our annual Fox-Wolf Watershed Cleanup event. You will note continued additions to the list as the years progress.
- **Links to volunteer photos from 2015, 2016, 2017, & 2018**
Attachment "K" includes live links to our Facebook photo albums for the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 Fox-Wolf Watershed Cleanup events coordinated by our organization.

Activity d:

➤ **Yard sign designs**

Attachment "L" includes the two double-sided designs used for printing 80 yard signs for distribution to residents in our watershed. The designs were created by members of NEWSC's General Public Committee. One side of each design reads, "I took the Watershed Pledge." The other side of one of the designs reads, "I Sweep My Grass Clippings Because... Every Choice Counts. The other design reads, "I Leave My Leaves on Land Because... Every Choice Counts.

➤ **Spreadsheet showing yard sign usage**

Attachment "M" includes the most current list of residents who have taken the Renew Our Waters yards signs to display on their properties.

GOAL 2:

Assess impact of stormwater credits on the use of green infrastructure and rain barrels throughout the region. Surveying residents in the Lower Fox River will be conducted in order to gain knowledge of the communities who offer stormwater credits to their residents. Area residents will also be surveyed to determine whether those who have established green infrastructure on their properties indicate that stormwater credits were a factor in their decision-making process.

Activity a:

➤ **Spreadsheet showing green infrastructure credit programs in Lower Fox River Watershed Communities**

Attachment "N" shows the spreadsheet created by NEWSC's Program Coordinator, Chad VandenLangenberg, which shows his work identifying green infrastructure credit programs. This spreadsheet was created by surveying employees from municipalities in the Lower Fox River Watershed.

Activity b:

➤ **Stormwater credit use residential survey**

Attachment "O" is the survey form used to survey residents in the Lower Fox River Watershed about their knowledge of, and reasoning for installing green infrastructure practices on their properties.

➤ **Spreadsheet showing the results of the stormwater credit use survey**

Attachment "P" shows the results from the green infrastructure survey (Attachment "O") listed in a spreadsheet.

Activity c:

➤ **Stormwater credit use residential survey recommendation**

Attachment "Q" is our recommendation for stormwater credit use based off the results we received from the stormwater credit use survey, along with the feedback we have received from providing community presentations, rain barrel workshops, and watershed educational exhibits.

GOAL 3:

FWWA will build the capacity of the organization by creating and distributing the FWWA quarterly "Currents" newsletter. While the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance, formally Northeast Wisconsin Waters for Tomorrow, was established in 1992, the organization has not formally established a supporting membership or distributed a monthly or quarterly newsletter. FWWA has grown in both employees and reach over the past few years, it is essential for our organization to establish a supporting membership in order sustain our outreach activities without relying on support from grant funding.

Activity a:

➤ **FWWA Newsletters**

We sent out the first Currents newsletter in 2016 to 1442 shoreline property owners, while we received positive feedback from the newsletter, paid membership did not increase from the mailing. After analyzing our target audience for the mailing, we decided that while shoreline property owners definitely have an impact on our waterways, we wanted to focus our efforts on building our reputation with an audience that has a larger impact. We decided that future mailings would be sent to agricultural producers and would provide more education to reduce sediment and nutrient loading. Based on feedback from partners at the County Land Conservation Department, we renamed the newsletter to the Basin Buzz. Based on feedback from farmers we decided to send the newsletter semi-annually, one winter edition and one summer edition when the farmers' workloads were lower. The Basin Buzz was mailed out to farmers in Winter and Summer of 2017 and 2018. The Basin Buzz is mailed directly to 436 producers in the Lower Fox River Watershed. Electronic copies of the mailed newsletters are attached to this report.

Additionally, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance staff began a monthly e-newsletter in January of 2017 to promote the organization and provide updates on our projects as well as other initiatives happening throughout the Basin. The Source e-newsletter mailing list has grown to 3,211 subscribers.

The Source can be found online: <https://fwwa.org/the-source/>. Attached at the end of the report is a copy of a monthly e-newsletter so you can see the layout in email form.

Activity b:

➤ **Spreadsheet from those interested in FWWA**

Attachment "S" are spreadsheets for mailing list of those that the newsletters were sent to as well as those who have signed up on our website with an interest in our organization, and a desire to receive our e-newsletters.

Activity c:

➤ **Current FWWA membership list**

Attachment "T" shows the current FWWA membership.

➤ **Membership Letters**

Attachment "U" shows a printed membership thank you letter.

➤ **Membership brochure**

Attachment "V" shows our tri-fold membership brochure

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachments can be accessed through Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yBII7aWU35YiRjSm4GCVwFczpPhoso8?usp=sharing>

- Attachment A: List of Exhibiting Events**
- Attachment B: List of those who took the Watershed Pledge**
- Attachment C: Photos from Exhibiting Events**
- Attachment D: Letter to Schools Offering Watershed Education**
- Attachment E: Updated School Contact List**
- Attachment F: Updated School Education Brochure**
- Attachment G: List of Completed School Presentations**
- Attachment H: Photos from School Presentations**
- Attachment I: Infographics Showing Past Cleanup Results**
- Attachment J: List of sites cleaned up in 2015-2018**
- Attachment K: Links to volunteer photos from 2015-2018**
- Attachment L: Yard Sign Designs**
- Attachment M: Yard Sign Usage Spreadsheet**
- Attachment N: Green Infrastructure Credit Programs**
- Attachment O: Stormwater Credit Residential Use Survey**
- Attachment P: Results of the Stormwater Credit Survey**
- Attachment Q: Stormwater Credit Program Recommendation**
- Attachment R: Newsletters**
- Attachment S: Spreadsheets of individuals signed up for newsletters**
- Attachment T: Current Paying Membership List**
- Attachment U: Membership Letter Thank You Example**
- Attachment V: Membership Brochure**
- Attachment W: Renew Our Waters Updated Flyers**