

**Final Report to the
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

**For
River Planning Grant
Tomorrow River Awareness (Project Number RP-114-06)**

Introduction:

The Tomorrow/Waupaca River Watershed is 291-square-mile drainage basin located in the Wolf River Basin in Portage, Waupaca, and Waushara Counties in central Wisconsin. The watershed includes approximately 80 named lakes, including the Chain O'Lakes, a very prominent recreational and residential area consisting of 22 interconnected lakes. The watershed also includes several streams and rivers. The main river, named the Tomorrow River in Portage County and the Waupaca River in Waupaca County, runs for approximately 63 miles. The entire watershed supports a cold water sport fishery. (DNR Wolf Basin Partnership, 2001) Please refer to the attached map of the watershed.

Prior to the successful application for this River Planning Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River (FOTWR) had already been conceived, mostly to address numerous issues, such as road development and construction, loss of sensitive and significant ecosystems, non-point source pollution and housing and industrial development. With the help of the River Alliance of Wisconsin, Trout Unlimited, UW-Stevens Point, Golden Sands RC&D, the Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst, watershed residents and local businesses, the Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River Watershed accomplished several things. These include a riverbank restoration project and wildflower buffer in the Town of Nelsonville, acting as an advocacy group to ensure protection of the river from adjacent Highway 10 construction, and providing information about conservation alternatives for shoreline development.

As the final report for the 2005 WI DNR River Planning Grant (#RP-114-06), the original project deliverables, as outlined in the grant application, are listed below, along with a short summary of their status and accomplishments.

Project Deliverables:

1. River Clean-up Day



Status: Two (2) river clean-up days were implemented by the FOTWR. The first one was held on August 20, 2005 and over 20 volunteers helped remove over 2 dumpsters full of refuse. Local residents of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River watershed really cared about this pristine little river in their community. Volunteers from Stevens Point, Amherst, and Waupaca communities joined the Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River at the Boy Scout Hall in Amherst on Saturday, August 20 for the first Tomorrow/Waupaca River Clean-Up. Volunteers were divided up into pairs and each assigned a stretch of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River to clean. As the day progressed, volunteers managed to cover stretches of the river all the way from the dam in the town of Amherst, past Highway 10, to the old wayside near Bucholz Road, roughly 4 miles of the river.

It was truly a successful river clean-up! When all was done, bags of garbage and debris, a number of tires, pieces of railroad steel, old lumber, and pieces of metal machinery had all been collected and pulled from the river. It is difficult to imagine all of this material was found in such a short stretch of river.

The second was held on August 26, 2006 just upstream of the City of Waupaca and over 15 volunteers removed garbage and fallen trees from a stretch of river heavily used by City park visitors.

The Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River would like to thank members from the Frank Hornberg Chapter of Trout Unlimited for volunteering during and providing boats and waders during the clean-up, as well as cooking the food for the volunteer lunch. We would like to thank the following local businesses for their monetary support: Tomorrow River Conservation Club, Gotta Hava Java Café at the Meeting Ground, the International Bank of Amherst, Amherst Family Foods, and the Portage County Community Foundation. As well as the following organizations for their continued support of the Friends of the Tomorrow/Waupaca River: Portage county Land Conservation, Golden Sands RC&D, and The Center for Watershed Science and Education at UW-Stevens Point.

2. Development of a newsletter

Status: With the help of the DNR River Planning grant, the FOTWR were able to design, print and distribute two newsletters, one in the spring and one in the fall of 2006. These newsletters followed up their introductory newsletter, which was developed in the summer of 2005 by spirited volunteers. Circulation for each newsletter varied slightly, but averaged around 300. Copies of all three newsletters are attached.

3. Water quality monitoring training for volunteers

Status: Five members of the FOTWR received training from Nancy Turyk at the Frank Hornberg Chapter of Trout Unlimited's property in Portage County in the fall of 2006. Sites chosen to be monitored are Spring Creek near the river, the Tomorrow/Waupaca at Clemenson Road, near HWY KK, the Crystal River near the Tomorrow/Waupaca and right in the City of Waupaca.

4. Informational signs along roadways:

Status: Color signs were designed, printed and built, then installed at 11 different county highways crossings throughout the Tomorrow/Waupaca River watershed. The Portage and Waupaca County Highway Departments were critical cooperators in this effort. It's estimated that as many as 2,000 people a day view these signs. In most cases, the DNR tip-line information was also posted.



5. Educational materials re: conservation easements to landowners

Status: Four members of the FOTWR attended a training session on conservation easements and used an existing publication, produced by The Plover River Alliance, to provide written materials to landowners who are considering some sort of conservation land retirement option.

Other educational measures taken include a FOTWR brochure and three River Talk Series. River Talk Series speakers were Bob Freckman, UWSP professor emeritus, who spoke about "*Plants Along Waterways - Good Guys & Bad Guys*", Elward Engle, retired DNR Land Acquisition Specialist who spoke about "*How Streams Fall Down, and How We Rebuild Them*"; and John Edlebeck, City of Waupaca Director of Public Works, who presented information about the City of Waupaca's water quality and storm water management initiatives.

6. Strategic planning

Status: The FOTWR have been strategic planning since their inception in 2005 and have been constantly striving to gain more exposure and support throughout the community. Their accomplishments include the creation of their own logo, letterhead, envelopes and business cards. At the end of the grant period, the FOTWR newsletter solicited information from watershed residents to be used in the development of a long-term strategic plan (see attached).

Attachments:

- Watershed map
- "The River Review" - three issues
- Road sign graphic
- Conservation Easements brochure
- "River Talk Series" announcements
- FOTWR brochure
- FOTWR stationery and envelope design
- FOTWR business card design
- Strategic Plan