

July 8, 2022

David Grandmaison
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
715-817-8510

Re: Quarterly Report and Invoice – Allouez Bay Marsh Bird Conservation Design

Dear Mr. Grandmaison:

From March through May of 2022, Audubon Great Lakes (AGL) has continued regular communication with the Allouez Bay Restoration Project Site Team, including an April meeting with the full team and multiple meetings with key team members regarding project planning. The well-attended April meeting featured an in-depth discussion regarding project planning, in particular discussion of the completed project scope draft and discussion of possible phase 1 methodologies going forward after resistance from some community members and stakeholders regarding the proposed use of herbicide. A subsequent full restoration project site team meeting after this reporting period in early June also addressed these topics.

AGL has led efforts to complete the draft scope for phase 1. The draft was reviewed by the project team and minor edits were incorporated into the draft. As the scope was being developed and after it was drafted, AGL Wisconsin Conservation Manager Tom Prestby traveled to Superior, WI to present proposed details of the project with WDNR to the Wisconsin Point Committee in March and in May. Senior Wetland Conservation Manager Andy Hinickle was present virtually at both meetings. In general, the goals and objectives of the project were well received by the committee in the March meeting, and the May meeting was a follow-up after the committee requested that the project team research the implications of possible herbicide use for cattail management. The committee voted 4-1 in favor of the proposed methodology on City of Superior property, but the following day a voting member reconsidered their vote due to the proposed use of herbicide. The combination of this reconsideration, voiced opposition by a prominent community member, opposition by the Douglas County Land Development Committee, and the hesitation of some project partners to endorse the use of herbicide led AGL and WDNR to reconsider the proposed methodologies after this reporting period in June.

Just after this reporting period in early June, Tom Prestby and Andy Hinickle traveled to the project site for a field visit with WDNR. Objectives were to decide on recommendations for phase 1 restoration in Allouez Bay and to visit possible future sites in the estuary for restoration and evaluate the restoration potential of the sites. After the site visit, AGL and WDNR coordinated communication of proposed methodologies to partners, and coordinated seeking for future additional GLRI funding for the project.

AGL conducted interviews with and received rough price estimates for bathymetry and ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) measurement of Allouez Bay during May. AGL and WDNR agreed to contract with Barr Engineering to conduct these surveys in shallow water areas of Allouez Bay during summer 2022. USACE is measuring bathymetry in the deeper areas at no charge to the project.

NRRI completed three rounds of Wisconsin SLRE spring migration surveys, two rounds of Wisconsin SLRE breeding bird surveys, and two rounds of Allouez Bay breeding bird surveys during the reporting period. Data are being stored digitally at NRRI. NRRI also deployed three Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) in Allouez Bay and will retrieve them in August. In the next quarter, NRRI will coordinate and conduct field surveys for fall migration

surveys in the Wisconsin portion of the SLRE, and enter, summarize, and communicate data from Allouez Bay.

AGL and NRRI continue to promote community science in the St Louis River Estuary. During an April meeting, NRRI and AGL refined a list of priority locations to seek community monitoring at via eBird data. The list advertises and describes access for seven locations in the estuary that birdwatchers visit less frequently than the popular birding locations. This data will inform how birds use the estuary as a whole and could possibly help inform future restoration actions. AGL promoted this call to action on its website and in its newsletter, which is received by roughly 300,000 people. Tom Prestby recorded a presentation that was played at an International Migratory Bird Day event in Superior, which was run by project partners. The event included a walk that was attended by about 20 people, and about eight people stayed for the recorded presentation. A reporter from Wisconsin Public Radio and a reporter from a local TV station were present. AGL and NRRI continue to strategize ways to promote a community science-driven bird monitoring culture in the estuary in order to fill baseline data gaps of bird usage across the Wisconsin portion of the estuary, and possibly inform future restoration efforts.

The aforementioned hesitance to herbicide use from some partners and community members that was exposed during and after Wisconsin Point Committee meetings has delayed the project due to unforeseen time investment in these conversations and resulting changes of methodology for phase 1 of the project. AGL and WDNR have worked closely together through this, strategizing communication to the Wisconsin Point Committee, partners, and the community. Although these conversations and meetings have delayed finalizing the scope for phase 1 of restoration, they have been critical conversations that will benefit the partnership and the project long-term. The project is still on schedule despite these developments.

AGL will revise the project scope with partners during the next quarter reflecting the changes in methodology for phase 1 and coordinate an amendment of the QAPP with WDNR. AGL will also formalize the agreement with Barr Engineering to conduct bathymetry and OHWM delineation during the next quarter. AGL will continue to coordinate the planning of phase 1 of the project with the restoration project site team.

From March through May of 2022, we have spent and are invoicing for a total of **\$33,954.54**. The total billed to date is **\$107,392.83**.

Thank you for your partnership.

Tom Prestby

Wisconsin Conservation Manager
Audubon Great Lakes
National Audubon Society