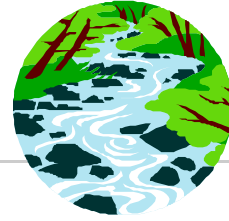


March, 2002

# Running Waters

Newsletter of the

Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership



Volume 4, Issue 1

## Watershed Spotlight - Big Roche-A-Cri Creek

Submitted by Jim Keir and Nina Stensberg

The land in and around the Big Roche-A-Cri Creek consists of an assortment of land use practices that make this an extremely diverse area. Ownership is comprised of a variety of privately and publicly owned lands ranging from cranberry marshes to upland prairies. The human population has increased slightly since the late 1970's to a present day level of approximately 2,000 individuals. Management for fish and wildlife on the Big Roche-A-Cri takes place within a matrix of other land management practices including ditching, pesticide application, and center pivot irrigation farming. Several conservation practices have been established and others are being developed to preserve and protect this diverse and unique landscape. The majority of the Big Roche-A-Cri area is in agriculture. Therefore, key components of a conservation plan for the area include maintaining high surface water quality, generating a wide variety of wildlife habitats, and reducing the effects of wind erosion.

Currently Adams County has small areas of restored prairie on federally and state owned property. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is converting several former farm fields along the Big Roche-A-Cri Creek into dry, warm-season grass prairie. These fields are on portions of state-owned property purchased primarily for trout stream protection. A dry prairie is comprised of short to medium sized native grass species along with several ni-

trogen-fixing forbs (flowering plants) as well as other sand-loving flowers. Restoration of prairie along the Big Roche-A-Cri will increase wildlife diversity and decrease the amount of surface water runoff.

Developing and maintaining a grassland prairie habitat in Central Wisconsin requires three critical measures – seedbed preparation, weed control and suitable conditions. The first two can be regulated to some extent, but weather is the variable factor in the equation. Seedbed preparation includes weed control and removal of woody vegetation. After establishment, the planting is maintained every few years with mowing, herbicide applications or prescribed burns.

Creating a diversified landscape, enhancing the wildlife habitat, increasing timber production and reducing sedimentation into the surface waters are just some of the management goals being accomplished by developing and maintaining a forest management plan for the Big Roche-A-Cri. Forest management practices along the creek currently protect surface waters by providing a forest buffer for the creek and its tributaries. The forested buffer intercepts and filters run-off from the adjacent agricultural lands while providing habitat for a variety of woodland wildlife. Several commercial timber harvests were conducted in the early 1990's on state owned properties along the Big Roche-A-Cri. These were designed to obtain natural regeneration of selected mature oak and

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### Articles of Special Interest

- *River Basin Spotlight*
- *Vandalism on the Plover*
- *Partnership Summit*

## Continue: Watershed Spotlight The Big Roche-A-Cri Creek

aspens. In addition, several conifer plantations have been planted on state and privately owned lands throughout the Big Roche-A-Cri area.

Wind erosion from agricultural fields has an impact on everything in the Big Roche-A-Cri area. Wind-blown soil increases sedimentation, nutrients and pesticide loading of the surface waters. Developing windbreaks and educating the landowners about the benefits of planting and maintaining trees and shrubs along farm fields is a top priority for the Adams County Land Conservation District. Several federal and state funded cost sharing grants have been issued to Adams County landowners to help decrease soil loss while reducing the amount of sedimentation that enters the surrounding streams and ditches. Various species can be used as windbreaks including soft and hardwood trees as well as some types of shrubs that are able to withstand diverse and harsh conditions.

The Big Roche-A-Cri is one of the more ecologically complex areas in Central Wisconsin. It hosts a wide variety of land-uses, management objectives and partners. Developing an overall land use management plan for an area of such wide diversity can be challenging. A comprehensive plan must take all objectives into account and strike a balance among goals that may not necessarily be compatible. Key components to developing a quality management plan include establishing a list of needs, taking the landscape into account, and recognizing the number of people that will be directly affected. In this way we are able to restore dry prairie alongside a cranberry marsh and maintain an agriculture field with a newly planted windbreak without considerable conflicts. For more information on the Big Roche-A-Cri Watershed or any other information discussed in this article, contact Jim Keir or Nina Stensberg at Friendship Ranger Station (608-339-3385).

## Vandalism in Camp Fletcher on the Plover River

Submitted by Jason Folstad

Camp Fletcher is a park located just outside of Stevens Point on Highway 66, owned by the City of Stevens Point and used by the local boy scout troops for various field activities. During the recent years there has been a group effort to help stabilize a steep sand bank on the edge of the Plover River in Camp Fletcher. In a cooperative effort with the Wisconsin DNR, University of Stevens Point, Plover River Alliance, the Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership, the City of Stevens Point and Portage County completed an erosion control project along the Plover River. The project consisted of shoreline stabilization, current deflectors and several educational signs describing the purpose and goals of the project.

On a recent trip to Camp Fletcher I noticed we are again experiencing some vandalism of our project. The educational signs explaining the need and purpose of the project were vandalized and/or stolen. Additionally, one brush bundle had been removed. Despite these events the bank is beginning to heal and the project is having the desired results of preventing erosion. Preventing vandalism on remote project sites can be challenging. Please contact Jason Folstad (715-421-7864) if you have any ideas about preventing further vandalism.

Photo provided by Jason Folstad, CWBP, picture of Camp Fletcher along the Plover River, near Stevens Point, WI



## 2nd Annual Partnership Summit

Submitted by Jason Folstad

The 2nd Annual Wisconsin Partnership Team Summit will be held on Tuesday, April 9th, 2002 at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn. The keynote speaker, Laura Hewitt, with Trout Unlimited, Inc. works throughout the Nation on Watershed Conservation Projects to conserve, protect and restore trout/salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Laura will discuss her experiences working on watershed conservation projects in Wisconsin and how partnerships play an important role in making integrated resource management improvements in Wisconsin.

The summit will be a great opportunity for partnerships throughout Wisconsin to gain valuable insight from successful partner teams. For more information on the 2nd Annual Wisconsin Partnership Summit, contact Basin Educator, Patrick Robinson (920)388-4313.

Photos provided by Jason Spaeth, WI DNR, (left) A back hoe creates a current deflector on the Plover River narrowing, deepening and increasing the overall velocity of the Plover River. (right) A newly constructed current deflector, which was seeded with native vegetation and the slack water on the left hand side of the photo will be converted back to wetlands.



## Highlights from our last Partnership meeting

Submitted by Jason Folstad

The Central Wisconsin Partnership convened at the Rome Town Hall in Adams County, on Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The Plover River Alliance submitted a written report of their current news and activities. The Department of Transportation's proposed alternative route for the Highway 10 by-pass crossing the Plover River has been dropped from consideration. The Alliance is currently working on developing a model conservation easement that will be used to help obtain conservation easement along the Plover River with a grant funded by the DNR.

After the regular partnership meeting a proposed educational subcommittee meeting was held. The group met to determine if the Partnership would benefit from a committee that would conduct education and outreach. If you are interested in learning more about the educational subcommittee or the Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership please contact Jason Folstad, (715) 421-7864.



## Upcoming Events

### CENTRAL WISCONSIN BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Portage Courthouse Annex Building, Stevens Point  
Wednesday, April 17th, 2002  
8:45 am to 12:00 pm  
Contact Jason Folstad for more information

### WETLAND RESTORATION WORKSHOP

Getting Financial Assistance for Wetland Restoration  
April 4th, 2002  
Portage Courthouse Annex Building, Stevens Point  
Call (608) 250-9971 for more information.

### WISCONSIN BASIN PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

Theme: "Enabling Partnerships to Succeed"  
April 9th, 2002  
Stevens Point Holiday Inn  
Contact Patrick Robinson @ (920) 388-4313

### WI PARK AND REC. ASSOCIATION (SPRING CONFERENCE)

Theme: Connecting People, Places & Open Spaces  
Alliant Energy Center, Madison  
April 10th-12th, 2002  
For more information contact  
Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association

Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership

*Working Together for Conservation*

473 Griffith Avenue  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54494-7859

**The purpose of the Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership is to bring diverse people and resources together to provide increased awareness of regionally important natural resource issues. The partnership facilitates and implements projects that promote ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable natural resource management.**



WORKING TOGETHER FOR CONSERVATION

The next meeting of the Central Wisconsin Basin Partnership will be on Wednesday, April 17th from 8:45 am to 12:00 pm at the Portage Courthouse Annex Building, 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point. The meeting will take place on the third floor of the Annex Building in conference room #5. This is a public meeting open to anyone who is interested in the management of natural resources in the Central Wisconsin Basin and the issues that impact these resources.

This newsletter is edited by Jason Folstad. If you have any question or comments please contact me.

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