

State Wild Rivers Addition: Portion of Brunsweler River

Background: The legislature designates rivers to the state wild rivers system. The Department of Natural Resources administers the system to preserve, protect, and enhance a river's natural beauty and unique recreational value. The Brunsweler in Ashland County would join the three existing state wild rivers: the Pike in Marinette County, the Pine, and Popple in Forest and Florence Counties. The last time a river received this designation was in 1965.

Issue: The Brunsweler is a scenic small "headwaters" river in Ashland County in the Lake Superior drainage basin. Much of it is trout water. Approximately ten miles of the river would be designated as a state wild river by this legislation. This portion of the river is within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The designation honors the memory of Martin Hanson, prominent conservationist who championed the Brunsweler state wild river proposal until he passed away late in 2008.

Key Points:

- The intent of the state wild rivers program is to "preserve some rivers in a free flowing condition and to protect them from development."
- Because the proposed wild river segment of the Brunsweler River is within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and it touches very few private parcels, the designation is expected to have little impact on current management of the river and little impact on private landowners.
- The U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources will work together on wild river management issues for the Brunsweler.
- The Brunsweler River is in the Ashland County Town of Marengo, which supports the wild river designation.
- Key protections afforded by this wild river designation are
 - no human activities to change the river channel would be allowed
 - no new dams, piers, or bridges (with the exception of new public highway bridges, foot bridges, or bridge access to residential dwellings where no alternatives exist).
 - No grading on the river bank over 10,000 square feet.None of these activities are anticipated for the proposed Brunsweler wild river segment.
- The proposed wild river segment flows through Mineral Lake, a natural lake, and Beaver Dam Lake, which is impounded by a dam built by the Hanson family in the 1930s. The U.S. Forest Service, the current owner, may maintain this dam. Much of the land around Beaver Dam Lake was owned by Martin Hanson, and because of his donations, most is now in public ownership.

Author: Nancy Larson, Lake Superior Basin Water Team Supervisor 715/395-6911

For more information and to view the Brunsweler River map, please visit our UW Extension partner's web site: <http://basineducation.uwex.edu/lakesuperior/>



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