

Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership

Progress Report for the period July –September

Implementers

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The Forest Service's Northeastern Area and the State Foresters from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana have joined in partnership to build a watershed-wide approach to forestry efforts in the Upper Mississippi Basin. The Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership focuses activities, demonstration projects, and cooperative programs on key watershed forestry issues.

The Upper Mississippi forestry Partnership is expected to increase the use of trees and forests to meet the overall objective of watershed protection in the Upper Mississippi River basin. In addition, the project is to achieve a heightened awareness of the role and importance of trees and forests by agencies and organizations working in the basin

Significant progress was made in the following areas during the July to September quarter.

A communication plan was developed for the Upper Mississippi Forestry partnership. The plan identifies the message to be communicated, the group or person to receive the message and the opportunities for communicating the message. This plan should help us communicate our message in a systematic way.

A number of communication products have been developed to enable us send our key messages far and wide they include, the upper Mississippi website, the upper Mississippi brochure, and the partnership logo. The funding for this work came from the unspent dollars out of the round table on forest sustainability that was hosted in March/2004 in Lacrosse Wisconsin.

The hot spot mapping was contracted to the Upper Midwest Environmental science center. This project has been going on well except for challenges with processing the agreement between USGS and USDA Forest Service. We expect an agreement in place by the end of October. This is much later than had been

expected. But as soon as we get a substantive agreement, work will start that will yield a web based decision support system that will guide on the ground prioritization of work and lead to investment where it matters the most. The hot spot mapping is also tagging a long the stewardship analysis project in the Midwest. This is yet another major achievement and value added by integrating two projects.

Plans for the stakeholders meeting are under way. A venue for the meeting will be Dubuque Iowa on February/March/28-1/2006. The draft agenda for the meeting has been developed and an invitation list for participants will be finalized by the steering committee at a meeting scheduled for 10/20-21/2005. At the stakeholders meeting we will give the stakeholders an account of our progress to date, receive feed back and present our long-term vision and focus.

We got involved with the army corps of engineers in the development of Navigation and Environmental sustainability plan. The plan seems to focus more on Islands in the river and the flood plain within the rail-road tracks. Consultation with the corps team revealed that their policy does not permit them to invest in the uplands, nonfederal, and private land. It also seems easier for the corp. to dredge than to work in partnership towards keeping the soil in the farms. They would also prefer to inventory the flood plain forests some other way instead of working with the FIA team and to carry out their own research through Vicksburg in Mississippi State. Teri and Samuel Osinde have been involved in these meetings.

Our web development was contracted out to a private company called info ban the packaging of information to be posted on to the website has been finalized additional information that was requested for by Infobahn has also been provided. Hopefully the website should be up and running by the end of September. This website will be hosted by the forest service with links to the partner states home page.

The development of our brochure was contracted out to the Great Lakes Forest alliance. We enjoyed work with Wendy on this communication piece and I am glad to report that the final product will be out of the print shop by the end of September. The brochure outlines who we are our objectives, why people should care and it provides contact information.

Migratory bird projects are in progress. The migratory bird technical committee recommended increased information sharing between forests based projects and projects that are strong in bird issues. We are glad to report that through migratory bird grants a four state group has been created to discuss management of forest land cover for song birds. This group is called the driftless area Migratory bird work group.

The role that trees and forests play in an ecosystem is gaining more prominence among the Midwest state and federal agencies the upper Midwest environmental science center organized a forestry meeting In Dubuque Iowa to appreciate the role of forestry in Upper Mississippi Ecosystem and to further identify the specific role that the center will play in improving the quality forest cover. I introduced the wider watershed perspective and articulated the relationship between the flood plain and the upland as wild life habitat and in the hydrologic cycle.

Information sharing between forestry specialists and bird specialists was one of major needs that the migratory bird implementation team emphasized. This is already happening at several levels, the drift less initiative has created a migratory bird team that is composed of foresters and ornithologists. This group is discussing forestry management for and migratory bird habitat improvement. They have established a three tier system for prioritizing management intensity. This group is multi-state in nature and it includes both state employees and not for profit organizations. This is one of the projects that we are supporting through the migratory bird grant.