UPPER MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP
Project Portfolio

Northeast Iowa Driftless Area Initiative

BACKGROUND
The Driftless Area Initiative (DAI) is a multi-state collaborative to educate, plan, and support projects that increase forest habitat for neotropical migratory birds in the Blufflands region of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. This will be accomplished through workshops, regional planning, and technical support for on the ground natural resource projects.

LOCATION
Upper Mississippi River Basin, Driftless Area covers much of southeastern Minnesota, southwestern Wisconsin, northeastern Iowa, and the northwest corner of Illinois.

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED
Habitat fragmentation in the Upper Mississippi River Basin had led to a large decline in songbirds populations. Large contiguous forests are need for many songbirds to nest successfully. This project will help landowners so they can implement forest management practices that benefit targeted bird species.

GOALS
- Educate landowners about forestry issues that impact neotropical migratory birds in the Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River Basin
- Provide assistance to the Driftless Area Initiative Committee for regional planning.
- Provide technical support for implementation of on the ground forestry cooperative projects that improve neotropical migratory bird habitat in the Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River Basin

RESULTS
A "Bird Habitat Committee" has been very active in developing educational materials about the relationship between forest management and migratory bird habitat needs. Mapping priority areas for forest restoration and protection is underway. The Driftless Area Initiative is coordinating closely with The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited concerning the complimentary nature of each organizations efforts in the region. A MOU is being developed.

OUTCOMES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- About 100 landowners and natural resource professionals attended workshops on the relationship between forest management and providing quality bird habitat.
- An educational tool "Managing for Interior Forest Bird Habitat in the Driftless Area: Planning from a Landscape Context Perspective" is being developed.
- A GIS analysis has identified high priority forest for controlling soil erosion and providing bird habitat.

PARTNERS
- Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area
- Limestone Bluffs RC&D
- Southwest Badger RC&D
- Blackhawk Hills RC&D
- Hiawatha Valley RC&D
- River Country RC&D

FUTURE PLANS
The DAI partnered with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy to secure a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to continue landowner education about managing their forests for migratory bird habitat.

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The USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry and the Midwest State Foresters have joined in partnership to build a watershed-wide approach to forestry efforts in the Upper Mississippi watershed in order to improve water quality.