

DNR Awards Surface Water Grants To 55 Groups In 31 Counties

Healthier lakes and improved control of aquatic invasive species will result from nearly \$3.5 million in surface water grants awarded to 55 groups in 31 counties by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The surface water grants, which originate from a tax on fuel used by watercraft, will leverage an additional \$3.3 million in matching funds from lake and river associations, local governments and nonprofit groups to implement the projects, said Shelly Thomsen, lakes and rivers team leader with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The DNR money supports control of aquatic invasive species, lake and river protection and clean-up efforts and other management activi-

ties. Musky around habitat A small musky cruises among "fish sticks," one of the types of projects being funded to improve habitat.

"We are pleased that the DNR surface water grants help leverage significant private and community funds to expand the scope of work that can be done," Thomsen said. "This round of grants will help restore habitat, support the battle against Eurasian water milfoil, acquire conservation easements and improve water quality among other projects."

The grants cover: Aquatic invasive species established population control — 22 grants totaling \$1.5 million awarded, \$988,053 in matching funds. The grants defray the costs of controlling existing aquatic invasive

species populations and restoring habitat.

The grants will help 18 lakes in 15 counties battle Eurasian water milfoil and curly leaf pondweed while helping to manage wetland invasive species in five counties statewide.

The Long Lake Preservation Association has received one of these grants in the amount of \$81,745.92 for AIS monitoring and control.

River management — three grants totaling \$133,918 awarded, \$152,066 in matching funds. These grants share the cost on projects to implement management activities that protect or restore the river ecosystem.

A major project includes an effort by the Ozaukee County Planning and

Parks Division to restore fish passage on Mineral Springs Creek by replacing outdated culverts. By remediating one large-scale fish passage impediment on the creek, the project will restore aquatic life access to existing high quality spawning and rearing habitat upstream, improve genetic and biologic diversity of desirable fish species and help reduce the need for artificial stocking or habitat manipulation in undesirable areas.

Lake classification and ordinance development grants — five grants totaling \$222,204 awarded, \$292,114 in matching funds. The grants help counties study lakes to assign them to different management classifications in order to guide plans to protect lakes and their watersheds.

Among the major projects, Green Lake County is implementing a shoreline inventory system to assess all the lake shorelines within the county.

The effort will create a baseline to track shoreline development and restoration over time and to target shorelines for preservation or restoration.

Lake protection grants — 25 grants totaling \$1.6 million awarded, \$1.9 million in matching funds. The grants help implement projects that protect or improve water quality, habitat or the lake ecosystem.

Among the key projects, Bone Lake Management District in Polk County will use grant funding to implement waterfront best management practices, develop a no-wake ordinance to protect sensitive areas and install fish sticks to improve fish and aquatic life habitat and protect shorelines. Also in Polk County, Deer Lake Conservancy is receiving funds to purchase conservation easements on 90 acres of undeveloped hardwood, fields, ephemeral wetlands and

ponds in Johnson Preserve.

The Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Department will use grant funding to offer a shoreline incentive program to improve shoreline vegetation and remove woody debris in the water that has led to loss of habitat.

The grants also include funding for Healthy Lakes projects that support installation of fish sticks to improve habitat, native plantings or diversion practices along the shoreline to slow runoff, and upland practices that manage runoff from structures and impervious surfaces. This grant cycle will fund implementation of 100 best management practices for 48 properties on 15 lakes in nine counties for \$81,540.54.

For a complete list of grant recipients, search the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov for "surface water grants."