

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Five Star Urban Waters Restoration Grant

New Berlin City Center Community Gathering Area and Wetland Ecology Trail

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING AT THE DOWNSTREAM PORTION OF DEER CREEK THAT ENTERS DEER CREEK SANCTUARY, WE WILL ENLIST VOLUNTEERS TO PATROL THE CREEK BOTTOM FOR TRASH AND DEBRIS, REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES ON THE NRCS DATABASE. IN THE DISTURBED AREAS, WE WILL REESTABLISH NATIVE PRAIRIE PLANTINGS AND CREATE THE PATH FOR AN INTERPRETIVE ECOLOGIC TRAIL. THIS TRAIL WILL FOLLOW THE COURSE OF DEER CREEK UPSTREAM TO A POINT OF WETLANDS AND THE TERMINATION OF AN EXISTING PATHWAY. THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE ROUTE IS 1.13 MI. WE WILL INSTALL (3) INTERPRETIVE ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION VISTAS ALONG THE CREEK AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SIGNS ALONG THE PATH. WE WILL DO THE INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF TWO PARCELS. ONE WILL BE A COMMUNITY "LIBRARY GREEN PARK" FOR FAMILIES AND VISITORS TO THE LIBRARY WITH ECO-TRAILHEAD, THE SECOND WILL BE A 3.1 ACRE PLOT ON DEER CREEK AND KNOWN AS "SCOUT PARK" DEDICATED FOR VOLUNTEER BOY/GIRL SCOUT PROJECTS.

ABSTRACT

THE CITY OF NEW BERLIN IS A NON-TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY THAT NEVER HAD A "MAIN STREET" TYPE AREA. THIS WAS IDENTIFIED AS A NEED AND TO GIVE A REAL FEELING OF COMMUNITY THEREFORE, THE CREATION OF THE "CITY CENTER BUSINESS DISTRICT" IN THE HEART OF THE CITY BEGAN DEVELOPMENT. TO DATE, THERE NOW EXISTS MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING, GENERAL RETAIL, A NEW LIBRARY AND PROPOSED FARMERS MARKET IN THIS AREA. THE CITY HAS EXPRESSED ITSELF AS A "GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY" AND CITY CENTER HAS RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS BUT, IS SORELY MISSING A MEANS TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY WITH OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA. DEER CREEK FLOWS THROUGH THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THIS DEVELOPMENT AND IS MORE OF AN OVERGROWN EYESORE AND IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL, EMBANKMENT STABILIZATION AND A DEDICATED WALKING ROUTE TO ACCOMMODATE THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THIS AREA. THERE IS AN EXISTING OPEN OUTLOT AND A ZONED PARK PARCEL FOR THIS AND THE TIMING IS IDEAL WITH THE CITY CENTER DISTRICT NEARING CAPACITY. THIS PROJECT SATISFIES SEVERAL OF THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY AND IS ALIGNED WITH THE GOALS OF THE NFWF GRANT PRIORITIES. MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THIS PROJECT ARE DOVETAILING EXISTING AND THE CONTINUATION OF OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS BY OUR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND ENGAGED CITIZENS AND WE CAN BRING TOGETHER THESE EFFORTS WITH THIS PROPOSAL.

I. PROJECT CONTEXT

- 1. Specify the total acres the project will restore and identify the target watershed and focal species/habitat. Describe the project's connection to the watershed and explain the need for the project.**

This project will cover 9.59 acres and encompass the length of Deer Creek and the wetlands to the south and east of the City Center Business District. Common to this area are several species of resident birds, migratory songbirds, owls and waterfowl. Recent history has revealed an abundance of whitetail deer and smaller animals such as muskrats, raccoon, opossum, skunks, various mice/voles and even evidence of a beaver. The habitat for these species is that of an urban to rural interface and wetland transition ecology. The current state of the defined proposal areas vary between 'poor' with construction debris, litter and heavily infested invasive species to 'fair' with few invasive species and nearly undisturbed lowland habitat, native trees and wetlands plants.

The project will connect two areas of current focused conservation activities. First, the Deer Creek Sanctuary is a parcel of 47 acres of upland mature oak and maple climax growth forest that has been involved in community conservation efforts from Scout projects, the Gering Trail and a native salamander study due to the vernal ponds. The other end of the project is the Preserve at Deer Creek and Eisenhower High (EHS) and Middle School. The Ecology Club at EHS most recently has created an ecological trail through the woods at the School and would like to expand their efforts north through the Golf Course and into the wetlands following Deer Creek to City Center. At City Center, there are efforts underway to benefit the environment with the Friends of the Library engaging with the Waukesha Green Team and several local civic groups to promote water conservation with a "Project Rainway" rain barrel auction, ABC Garden and bird habitat enhancement behind the new Library. This project would give a tangible point of consolidation for those conservation efforts and a community gathering point to begin and end the Wetland Ecology Trail. When complete, the project will remain sustainable with the committed involvement from the Scouts annual activities in Scout Park, coordinated monitoring by the New Berlin Land and Ecology Club and annual activities by the EHS Ecology Club. The City of New Berlin Parks, Buildings and Grounds Department is the ultimate authority over this project and will maintain oversight of this area as identified in the Parks and Open Space Plan 2016.

In conclusion, this project will restore and make accessible to our public the Deer Creek corridor that flows through the most heavily urbanized area of the City of New Berlin. This proposal will establish a sustainable ecological trail with the use of variety of community volunteer groups and lay the foundation for additional community engagement and with the development and improvement of future park space and a means for the promotion of our local wetland ecology.

2. Who will be involved in the planning and implementation phases of the project? State the number of community members directly engaged or impacted. Describe community characteristics of the project area and identify any underserved or high-need communities.

The majority of the planning for this project is led by our Department of Community Development (DCD) partnering with the Parks, Buildings and Grounds Department (PB&G). All aspects of this align with the Parks and Open Space Plan 2016 that identified a need for additional park type space in accordance with the NRPA's standard for population density and we will implement any components to adhere to the sustainable design standards. The coordinated oversight will be the

responsibility of the combined efforts of the DCD and PB&G Departments as we task the differing aspects of the proposal to individual volunteer groups, contractors and in-house staff.

There are several members of our community that come from a very diverse background committed to this project. First, the catalyst for this proposal is the Fed-Ex Smart Post, New Berlin. They have been an active participant in projects from highway round-a-bout rehabilitation, invasive species removal at parks and are a charter Adopt-a-Park Sponsor. We have the New Berlin Land Conservation and Ecology Association, New Berlin Garden Club, New Berlin Chamber of Commerce, the Potawatomi Area Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of Southeast Wisconsin Council, the Friends of the Library and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association have given some level of support through each of the organizations ability to mobilize volunteers. The most direct impact will be for the immediate residents of the new multi-family housing and adjacent neighborhood totaling about 1000 residents in City Center proper with about twice that in the neighborhoods adjacent to the trail. There is constant transient traffic to the Library with 14,557 average monthly visitors with the retail businesses and the proposed farmers market will have several hundred additional visitors daily.

3. Will your project involve a USFWS-designated National Wildlife Refuge or Migratory Bird Treaty Area?

The Migratory Bird Treaty Area does not apply to this area. However, New Berlin is a Bird City Wisconsin community and is recognized by the National Audubon Society for bird conservation and habitat improvement activities. These efforts will be incorporated in this proposal.

4. If your project is located in one of the corporate-sponsored urban areas requesting a community service opportunity, describe the type of day-long community service event you propose to host for up to 50 employees of our corporate sponsor and your partnership's capacity to carry out this event.

We have identified several tasks that the New Berlin Fed-Ex Smart Post member volunteers can complete as part of this project. We are in need of the removal of invasive plants along the Deer creek corridor, construction of a wood chip trail along the perimeter of the wetland area, installation of ecological education signs, and construction of wildlife vista viewing platforms and associated interpretative signs. We have been in contact with Ms. April Benson of Fed-Ex Smart Post New Berlin and after a staff meeting of their COC, she has given the commitment of a minimum of 120 man hours of volunteer community service. I was also introduced to Ms. Rachel Kesselman of Fed-Ex Corporate to use as a resource for the writing of this Grant.

II. CONSERVATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

5. For each conservation metric, identify and briefly describe the major restoration activity that your partnership will undertake.

- Conservation Metric Area- Acredale: Removal of 1.44 acres of invasive brush, replanting perennial prairie plants.

- Conservation Metric Area- Culver's: Removal of 1,000 pounds of trash and debris from the creek bed and removal of invasive plants from concrete boxout approach. Replace disturbed areas with erosion blanket and prairie plants.
- Conservation Metric Area-Library: Install wood chip mulch to form gathering area, walkway to wetland area and brush out as needed. Plant 20 trees along perimeter to define area.
- Conservation Metric Area-Vista View: Remove invasive plants and replant with native perennial prairie plants adjacent to viewing platforms.

6. For each outreach/educational and conservation metric, briefly describe each corresponding, major educational/outreach activity that your partnership will undertake.

- Conservation Metric Area- Vista Viewing: (3) viewing platforms with educational interpretive signs dedicated to the overlook of the area. Each sign will be titled "*Natural Wetland Ecosystem*" and educate the onlookers to the native plants and animals to the area, how this area has changed with historical development and our efforts to restore to a more natural habitat. Platform 1. Birds and waterfowl; Platform 2. Plants and trees; Platform 3. Mammals, reptiles and amphibians
- Conservation Metric area- Trail placard and signage: Installation of signs for direction, identification and distance along the route. Install at crossings and points of interest.

7. What are your long-term educational and conservation outcomes for this project and how will you measure progress?

This program will raise awareness of the wetlands and wildlife in an urbanized area of our City that was formerly the sewerage treatment area. This is a clear demonstration of how we can rebuild and restore a native ecosystem and how habitat improvements draw and establish a thriving population of desirable plants and animals and how we can best interact with this ecosystem to maintain it for future generations. This will be measured in a number of ways. First, the birding activities through our Bird City Wisconsin Program will utilize this area for counts and log these in the *iBird Journal* and data collected with the *eBird app*. hosted at the library to record your visit and share what has been seen and shared through social media. In addition, the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association has an annual Wood Duck observation and house maintenance day that will be utilized each spring. As Scout projects are created and completed, they will become part of the Parks Inspection Report and maintained by the City PB&G Dept. The New Berlin Friends of the Library will incorporate this learning trail into their regular programming and invite civic groups, schools visitors to tour the Library Green and associated trail. All of this will be measured as an experience along with the normal record keeping of the library usage and tracked by the *iBird Journal*. Not only will the visitors of the library get the current services provided, but, adding an outdoor and ecological component will increase the overall experience and draw additional people to the area as a whole.

The Library and Eisenhower High School Ecology club will be the best gauge of the educational long term results. As this project is realized, there are additional areas in this local that are in need of habitat improvement and using this proposal as a catalyst, these new areas will get attention from the social contact network with our volunteers. Additional programming at the Library focused on the future needs and past successes from this project will be utilized as a new undertaking is proposed. There are many untapped resources to assist in future endeavors for this area and we have the means of marketing our successes with the resources of the City. So, when our new visitors take in the education and begin to actively use it as social engagement for the City Center

area, we will impart our lessons and use this proposal as a template for greater ecological improvements.

III. MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS & CAPACITY BUILDING

8. Complete the table to describe how all partners are involved in the project.

	Partner (organization / individual)	Qualifications (project-related skills/expertise)	Contribution(s) (goods or service being provided)	Value of Contribution(s) (dollar equivalent)
1	Fed-Ex Smart Post	General Labor	Invasive species removal on Acredale, Protective Railing installation	1632.00
2	Wisconsin Waterfowl Association	General Labor	Aquatic Invasive Species Removal	896.00
3	New Berlin Ecology Club	Naturalist/Plant ID	Prairie plant installation and coordination for future invasive monitoring	618.00
4	City of New Berlin	Project Manager and Skilled Labor	Coordination of all aspects of proposal. Supply hard goods, machinery and skilled labor.	26,392.10
5	Boy Scouts Potawatomi Council	General Labor	Invasive species removal and trail establishment at the Scout Park site.	1576.00
6	Girl Scouts GWISE	General Labor	Invasive species removal with the annual Garlic Mustard pull and Earth Day Celebration each spring.	1576.00
7	New Berlin Land Conservation and Ecology Association	General Labor	Ecology Trail interpretive sign installation along the Deer Creek corridor and wetland ecology trail route.	320.00
8	New Berlin Garden Club	General Labor	Invasive species removal and trailhead establishment at the Library Green area.	672.00
9	Prospect Lions Club	General Labor	Tree planting at the Library Green area.	3,336.00
Total:				\$37,018.10

9. Describe how the project partnership will build capacity for expanding community stewardship in the area.

One of the sustainable partners is the Kroger Foods store and the Community Rewards Program from the store will establish a form of funding for additional projects, improvements and expansions. These funds can be matched by donations to the Parks Development Trust from our Chamber of Commerce members, the City Center Business District members, and Fed-Ex Smart Post. This area should be placed into the City of New Berlin, Adopt-a-Park Program for corporate sponsorship.

10. Explain your plan for monitoring project achievements beyond the project period (3 years or more).

The process for maintaining advancements in habitat improvements and educational outreach will come to the Parks, Buildings and Grounds Department in cooperation with the Public Library. The PB&G has a defined program for Parks Inspection as set forth in our PB&G department operating procedures statement. As a municipal creation, we would be the authority over all maintenance operations and the Library will maintain the outreach programming as part of its overall community engagement philosophy as described in its mission statement.

Proposed Project Areas New Berlin, WI

