

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program

Wisconsin

Partnership Receives a \$92,300 Conservation Grant.

On May 3, 2004, as authorized under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Act), Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, acting on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, approved \$92,300 in funding for the Glacial Lake Grantsburg Bird Habitat Initiative Project in Wisconsin's Burnett County in Congressional District 7. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop initiatives in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean to conserve neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Certain activities defined by the Act are eligible for funding, and partnerships must match grant requests 3:1. Contributions from U.S. federal partners do not qualify as match.

The Glacial Lake Grantsburg Wildlife Management Complex consists of four properties encompassing nearly 54,000 acres of diverse grassland and wetland habitats, particularly pine/oak barren, a globally rare habitat type. One of the properties, 30,000-acre Crex Meadows, has been designated a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy. The entire complex hosts a myriad of bird species, including many of conservation priority to Partners in Flight such as yellow rail, Nelson's sharp-tailed and LeConte's sparrows, sandhill crane, bobolink, and black tern. During migration, the area's wetlands also support thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Department) has been managing the Glacial Lake Grantsburg complex since the late 1940s, but limited administrative resources have kept it from achieving its landscape-wide goals for the area. This project is an example of

how the Department has begun to work in partnership to help meet the extensive management needs of the complex. Project partners include Friends of Crex, Inc., Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, and Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. They and the Department are contributing a total of \$277,100 to protect, restore, and enhance this landscape.

Partners will acquire fee title to 173 acres of pine/oak barrens habitat and protect it for grassland/shrubland-dependent bird species. Another 300 acres of pine/oak barrens and jack pine/oak stands will be restored. Partners will enhance 4,500 acres of pine/oak barrens to promote prairie grass and forb diversity and early successional species. Some 2 miles of permanent firebreaks will be created to facilitate seasonal prescribed burning on 2,600 of these acres. Partners also will manage and maintain 1,500 acres of sedge marsh via prescribed burning. Their efforts will support the bird habitat goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's Upper Mississippi River-Great Lakes Region Joint Venture.

This project area is within the Western Great Lakes Forests and Upper Midwest Forest-Savanna Transition Ecoregions, as well as Bird Conservation Region 12 (Boreal Hardwood Transition) and 23 (Prairie Hardwood Transition).



Greater Sandhill Crane

Hollingsworth/USFWS

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