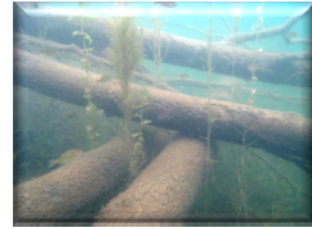


## Wisconsin Highlights



**Fish Sticks, Served to Fish** The Eau Claire Chain of Lakes (~ 3, 330 acres) in Bayfield and Douglas Counties are high quality headwaters to the National Wild and Scenic St. Croix River. Historic logging followed by a slow progression of shoreland development eliminated much of the natural woody habitat in the lake



system. Since 2006, local citizens and conservation groups, Wisconsin DNR (WI DNR), and Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Department have turned back the clock and placed hundreds of trees, i.e., “Fish Sticks”, in the water's edge and anchored them to shore where they benefit fish, bugs, birds, turtles, frogs, and other critters, and of course people. Political, private property and conservation interests have synergized and are spreading the interest in Fish Sticks projects throughout the region.

Photo: Large woody habitat being installed. WI DNR.

**Wild Lakes Preservation** The Nature Conservancy (TNC), State of Wisconsin and the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest closed a multifaceted deal with Connor Timber Associates that will protect more than 19,000 acres of industrial forestland in northeast Wisconsin for forest jobs and timber products, recreation and wildlife habitat. The property includes 55 river miles and 15 lakes, including direct acquisition of 656 acres surrounding most of the shoreline of adjacent Wabikon (594 acres) and Riley (213 acres) lakes, two of the most significant undeveloped lakes left in Wisconsin. TNC will eventually transfer the land to the National Forest for long term stewardship.

**Identifying and Protecting Habitats** The WI DNR completed Critical Habitat Designations to protect important habitats and natural scenic beauty on 14 lakes and the St. Croix River in NW Wisconsin. WI



DNR staff mapped the critical habitat - native aquatic plant beds, spawning substrates, wetlands, and fallen trees- wrote reports and invited citizens to provide feedback, which was overwhelmingly positive. Local government and conservation planning efforts identified habitat protection as a need and these groups will use the designations in local decision-making.

Photo: WI DNR Critical Habitat Coordinator measures tree diameters in a woody habitat area. WI DNR.

**Watershed Management Works** After nearly 15 years of state, county and especially local citizen efforts to control nonpoint source pollution, phosphorus runoff into Polk County's Deer Lake (807 acres) was reduced by over 50% resulting in an increase in water clarity of nearly 5 feet; an almost unprecedented lake response to watershed improvements. Many of the improvements were spear-headed by the Deer Lake Conservancy which acquired and restored 168 acres of land, much of which was in a degraded state.