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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bad River Watershed Association Awarded Grant for Water Quality Monitoring

The Bad River Watershed Association was recently awarded a grant from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program to help sustain and expand BRWA's volunteer water quality monitoring program.

The \$1,000 grant will enable BRWA to purchase supplies for its field test kits, replace equipment such as waders and sampling tools, and support outreach efforts that publicize findings of the program.

Initiated in 2002, the BRWA water quality monitoring program has been gathering data on watershed health. On a regular schedule, nearly 50 volunteers travel to more than 30 locations on streams and rivers throughout the Bad River watershed to collect water samples and analyze them for chemical, physical and biological properties.

The data gathered through this program is establishing a scientific description of the ecological health of the 1000-square-mile Bad River watershed. This data can help track the ecological effects of human and natural disturbances to the land and water of the watershed, and in turn can help inform policy decisions made by local governments and agencies.

"Before we began our volunteer monitoring program, very little was known about the health and quality of the Bad River watershed. Any data gathered prior to 2002 was spotty and very dated. Continuous and yearly monitoring is vitally important to better understand the qualities of our waters and identify changes when they occur," according to Tony Janisch, Executive Director of the Bad River Watershed Association.

Of current interest are the potential effects of a proposed open pit taconite mine within the Bad River watershed headwaters. A detailed description of water quality in the area prior to any mining would establish a valuable baseline against which to measure the effects of any mining activity.

The C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant also supports expansion of BRWA's stream testing to include baseline surveying for phosphorus, an element that occurs naturally in watershed soils but may be released at damaging levels during mining activities.

The Bad River Watershed Association is headquartered in Ashland, Wis. BRWA works to promote a healthy relationship between the people and natural communities of the Bad River watershed. To volunteer for this program, contact BRWA at 715-682-2003 or info@badriverwatershed.org. More information about the Bad River Watershed Association is available at www.badriverwatershed.org.

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