

News

Increasing connections for students and fish



Grant Herman, experiential outreach coordinator at Northland College, far left, and a group of Northland College students join Michele Wheeler, executive director of the Bad River Watershed Association, bottom left, and Ted Koehler of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, bottom right, to assess a culvert under Hager Road slated for replacement in the spring. Also present to survey the area were Butch Loebermeier and Ben Dufford from Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation. During the fall semester, members of the class helped to assess culverts throughout the Bad River Watershed. Submitted Photo

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During the fall semester, students enrolled in Environmental Studies 379 at Northland College did a lot more than sit behind a desk. The class, a mixed group of junior and senior students, worked with the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) to increase the effectiveness of culvert selection and replacement.

The students spent time in the field taking assessments of about 50 culverts throughout the Bad River Watershed. The information gathered by the class was used to determine which culverts need repair or replacement in the spring. The goal of the class is to improve the quality of the streams and remove obstacles that prevent fish from moving through the waterways. Culverts where water flows too quickly for fish to swim upstream or where the outlet falls too far for a fish to jump into the pipe are selected for repair or replacement. Culverts that are no longer structurally sound are also selected for replacement.

In addition to their work in the field, the students planned an October workshop that brought together all the groups involved in the culvert replacement process. During this meeting, sites were discussed

and then selected by the agency representatives for replacement in 2009. The meeting also clarified who would provide funding for the various projects and how that funding would be used.

The BRWA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the healthy interconnection between human and natural communities of the Bad River watershed by involving citizens in maintaining the integrity of watershed systems for future generations. The culvert program was the main project the class worked on.

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