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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 7, 2013**

**Bad River Watershed Association Awarded Conservation Grant to Improve Stream Habitat for Fish**

The Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) is one of 25 organizations throughout the Great Lakes region recently awarded an ecological restoration grant from the Sustain Our Great Lakes program.

BRWA was awarded \$25,171 to help replace a culvert along Fred's Creek, in the Town of Ashland, which is located in the Marengo River watershed. This work will benefit brook trout and other native fish by facilitating movement and maintaining suitable water temperatures throughout the system. The culvert replacement will begin in the summer of 2014.

A culvert is a tube that channels flowing water under a roadway; there are about 1,100 culverts in the Bad River watershed. Improperly designed or installed culverts can stop the passage of fish and other aquatic organisms, fragmenting habitat and potentially isolating populations from critical spawning, rearing or feeding habitats.

Poorly designed culverts can also cause stream banks to erode, contributing sediment pollution into streams. Poor culverts frequently wash out, damaging downstream fish habitat and adding expense to town road budgets.

In 2004, the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) initiated a Culvert Program in response to these issues. The program works to improve the integrity of streams and rivers in the Bad River watershed by identifying and working to replace problem culverts in collaboration with the 18 townships, three counties, WDNR, Bad River Tribe and three federal agencies that have jurisdiction in the watershed.

The grant made to BRWA was one of 29 grants totaling \$8.4 million made by Sustain Our Great Lakes, which is a public-private partnership coordinated by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. A significant portion of program funding is provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a federal program designed to protect, restore and enhance the Great Lakes ecosystem.

"To date, we've opened 18 miles of fish passage through BRWA's Culvert Replacement Program. It's important that Congress continue to fund programs like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to support habitat enhancement and restoration for the benefit of the Great Lakes and the Lake Superior Region." Tony Janisch, Executive Director, Bad River Watershed Association.

The Bad River Watershed Association is headquartered in Ashland, Wis. Founded in 2002, BRWA works to promote a healthy relationship between the people and natural communities of the Bad River

watershed by involving all citizens in assessing, maintaining and improving watershed integrity for future generations.

More information about this grant is available at [www.sustainourgreatlakes.org](http://www.sustainourgreatlakes.org). More information about the Bad River Watershed Association is available at [www.badriverwatershed.org](http://www.badriverwatershed.org).

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