

Dept. of Natural Resources: Plans to complete wetland restoration projects in Sheboygan, Portage and Rock Counties

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Wetland Hydrology And Vegetation Restored To 150+ Acres



The Evansville site in Rock County is being restored as part of Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust, a wetland mitigation program administered by the Wisconsin DNR. The black lines seen here show broken drain tiles and filled drainage ditches completed to restore wetland hydrology. / Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will complete three wetland mitigation projects to restore wetland hydrology and vegetation to more than 150 acres in Sheboygan, Portage and Rock Counties by the end of 2021.

These restoration projects are funded by selling wetland mitigation credits through the [Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust](#) – a DNR wetland mitigation program in place since 2014. The credits are sold to developers to offset permitted wetland impacts resulting from development projects.

The Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust then partners with a diverse group of landowners, including farmers, municipalities and conservation groups to initiate projects in the same watershed where the development projects are taking place to prevent a net loss of wetlands. Credit fees are used to restore and enhance wetlands within the same watershed being impacted.

The Te Stroete project includes 31 acres owned by Sheboygan County near the Lake Michigan shoreline.

“Sheboygan County is excited to partner with the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust to restore our Te Stroete project and expand on existing county conservation projects already on the ground in the area,” said Aaron Brault, Planning and Conservation Director for Sheboygan County. “Projects like these helps reduce flooding, improve water quality and create wildlife habitat for our Lake Michigan watershed.”

The Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust is also working on restoring 74 acres at the DNR-owned Evansville State Wildlife Area in Rock County, and a third project in Portage County on privately owned farmland.

After the sites are restored and given time to establish, they are opened to the public for nature-based outdoor activities such as hiking.

To date, the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust has allocated \$18 million to 14

different mitigation projects and has completed over 800 acres of restoration since 2019.

“The Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust is a great example of different landowners and the DNR working together. The program benefits developers, conservation and municipalities because development projects can be implemented while still protecting watersheds,” said Josh Brown, DNR Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust Program Coordinator.

The wetland mitigation projects in Sheboygan, Portage and Rock Counties began in 2019 and are the result of extensive site planning, data collection and regulatory review. All Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust projects are protected by a conservation easement to ensure they remain as wetlands in perpetuity. Long-term management of Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust sites are funded through an endowment managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.