

GREENLINES



A newsletter from ATC's Environmental Department -Sept. 2007

Welcome to this Special Edition of *Greenlines*, dedicated to highlighting ATC's participation in Green Tier and the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund.

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ATC's Green Tier Commitment

In October 2005, ATC became the first utility and among the first participants in Wisconsin's Green Tier Program for exceptional environmental performance. Signed into effect in 2004, Green Tier is the first and only legislatively approved program in the country that seeks to improve environmental protection through performance-based oversight.



Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Green Tier recognizes companies whose environmental practices go above and beyond what is required by state law. The program strives to encourage responsible environmental decision-making to protect and restore natural resources. Through this voluntary program companies can also address unregulated environmental concerns as well as enhance natural resource protection and restoration. To be admitted to Green Tier, companies must demonstrate a strong environmental compliance record, implement a formal system for including environmental issues in business decision making, participate in external oversight of environmental performance and show continual, measured improvement.

ATC's Environmental Stewardship Fund

As part ATC's Green Tier commitment, ATC has established an Environmental Stewardship Fund which is dedicated to protecting and enhancing natural resources and natural areas in Wisconsin. ATC recognizes that its work can impact natural resources even when in compliance with regulatory standards and requirements. The Stewardship Fund is not intended to replace regulation or regulatory requirements, but is intended to mitigate for the unavoidable impacts of ATC's business activities and positively support natural resources conservation by providing financial support for diverse projects in the state of Wisconsin.

Each year ATC gives \$300,000 dollars to the Natural Resources Foundation to support projects that include endangered species protection, habitat management, conservation education and locally-based conservation initiatives. The priority projects are chosen by an Advisory Team created by the Foundation. The Team is made up of conservation professionals from the non-profit and public sectors who review proposals from different non-profit organizations and the DNR. The Foundation's Board of Directors approves all projects funded by the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund.



Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

The Natural Resource Board of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources created the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF), a publicly supported charitable organization, in 1986 to support public conservation priorities throughout Wisconsin. Today the foundation is actively fulfilling its mission to create opportunities for people who care about Wisconsin's land, water, and wildlife, to deepen their understanding and appreciation for these natural resources, to support state and local conservation programs, and to establish conservation endowments.

To accomplish this mission, NRF raises funds for rare and endangered species, habitat protection and restoration, community based conservation, environmental education and outreach, and invasive species eradication.

The Natural Resources Foundation supports many different programs by providing financial support to field biologists and conservation groups working on programs that benefit Wisconsin's natural resources and by providing small match grants to grassroots conservation and environmental education projects throughout the state.

In 2005 ATC signed an agreement with Natural Resources Foundation, as a part of its Green Tier commitment, to create the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund with the NRF. Establishment of the Stewardship Fund allows the Foundation to provide protection and support for the natural resources already identified as special in Wisconsin, such as state natural areas threatened and endangered resources, and for local conservation organizations. We have dedicated the remainder of this newsletter to showcasing just a few of the projects and programs the Natural Resources Foundation has been able to support with the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund to date.

2007 ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund Supported Projects

State Natural Areas Program

Each year a portion of the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund goes toward supporting Wisconsin's State Natural Areas Program. The Program was established in 1952 to protect the best of the last remaining vestiges of native plant and animal communities in Wisconsin. Although State Natural Areas comprise only .5% of the total acreage in Wisconsin, they protect over 60% of Wisconsin's endangered, threatened and special concern species, 91% of Wisconsin's endangered and threatened plant species, and 81% of Wisconsin's threatened bird species. These properties have been identified as the "best of the best" of Wisconsin's original landscapes.



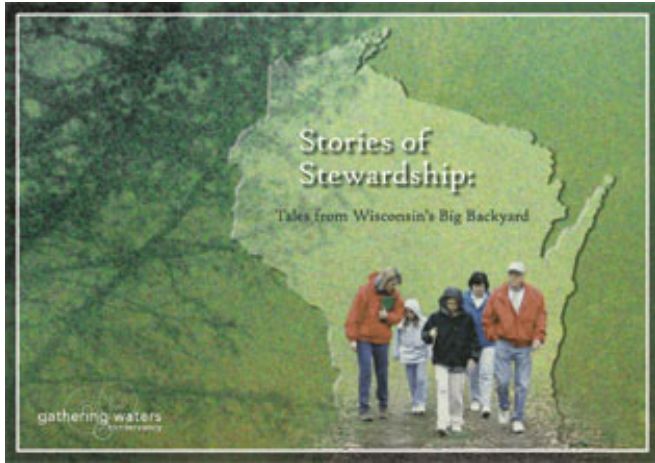
American Marten Restocking Project – WDNR



The American Marten
(Photograph from WDNR website)

The American Marten, a member of the weasel family, is a state endangered species found in the northern forests of Wisconsin. Due to the Marten's small population size found in Wisconsin, inbreeding has led to a lack of genetic diversity. In response to this, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Endangered Resources has implemented a project to introduce martens from populations outside the state to help increase genetic diversity. Money provided by the ATC Environmental Stewardship fund has helped with this effort to bring new genetic stock of the endangered martens to the reintroduction sites in northern Wisconsin.

Stewardship Fund Education Project –
Gathering Waters Conservancy



Stories of Stewardship: Tales from Wisconsin's Big Back Yard,
released by the Gathering Waters Conservancy

The ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund has provided support to Gathering Waters Conservancy for a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the success stories and accomplishments of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund over the past several decades. This support, along with support from several other partners, has helped in the publication of Stories of Stewardship: Tales from Wisconsin's Big Back Yard. This book features personal stories from Wisconsin citizens about their connection with more than 20 natural places that are permanently protected by the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund was created by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1989 to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The fund is named after two of Wisconsin's most revered conservation leaders, Governor Warren Knowles and Senator Gaylord Nelson.

To view an electronic copy of this publication, or to order a paper copy, please visit the Gathering Waters Conservancy's website at www.gatheringwaters.org/aboutus_stew.php.

Community Workshop on Ecotourism - Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council.



A workshop entitled: *How you and your Community can Profit from Nature Tourism* was held in Stevens Point April 19-20, 2007. The featured speaker was Jim Mallman, Executive Director of Watchable Wildlife, Inc. The workshop focused on bringing attention to the potential for ecotourism in the Central Sands region of the state. This workshop was made possible, in part, through a grant from the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund, which gave the opportunity to provide a valuable program to promote nature tourism and protect Central Wisconsin wildlife, especially grassland species and their declining habitat.

**How You
& Your Community
Can Profit From
Nature Tourism**

April 19-20, 2007
Portage County Annex Building
1462 Strongs Avenue
Stevens Point, WI 54481

A Workshop Presented by
Golden Sands RC&D Council, Inc.
Natural Resources Foundation
Watchable Wildlife, Inc.

Ivasive Species Curriculum – Trees for Tomorrow, Eagle River.

Trees for Tomorrow is an independent, nonprofit natural resource specialty school which focuses on natural resource topics, and offers environmental education to students, teachers, adults, seniors, and others. Currently, with the help of the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund, Trees for Tomorrow is designing a new educational course to teach people about invasive species. The curriculum to be developed includes defining invasive species, why we should be concerned, control techniques, and field-based exercises to remove/control invasive species.



AmeriCorps Program



The ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund is “sponsoring” five “members” in the newly created “Wisconsin Natural Heritage Corps”

Program developed by the Natural Resources Foundation. This program provides young professionals with field experience managing State Natural Areas, community service opportunities, and builds their skills at volunteer coordination.

Watch for additional updates on the work supported by the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund maintained by the Natural Resources Foundation in future Greenlines Newsletters.

“We are proud to support the work of statewide and local conservation groups through the Stewardship Fund,” says Rita Hayen, ATC’s Environmental Department Manager. “The fund is another way we can demonstrate our commitment to environmental protection and stewardship.”

“It’s not the amount of funding that we get out there, but the GOOD WORK we accomplish” - Charlie Luthin, Natural Resources Foundation.

For more information regarding ATC’s Green Tier Commitment, the ATC Environmental Stewardship Fund, or the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation please visit the following sites.

ATC’s Green Tier Page:

www.atcllc.com/IT3d.shtml

The Natural Resource Foundation Website:

www.wisconservation.org/index.php?page=Stewardship_Fund

The WDNR Green Tier Page:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cea/environmental/

To receive the **GREENLINES** newsletter in your inbox, to submit comments, or to make suggestions, send an email to greenlines@atcllc.com.

For more information about ATC’s Environmental Department please visit our webpage at <http://www.atcllc.com/IT3.shtml>.

ATC’s Environmental Commitment: ATC is committed to environmental leadership in all aspects of our business. ATC supports sustainable environmental policies and actions through balancing environmental stewardship with financial, engineering and maintenance requirements, and social impacts. Pairing our environmental commitment with partnerships among regulators, stakeholders, and employees provides a powerful venue for creative innovative and entrepreneurial resolution of issues.