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May 6, 2025

Casey Eggleston  
Global Water Center  
247 W. Freshwater Way, Suite 542  
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Subject: DNR Support for "Cedar Creek Watershed - Jackson Marsh Conservation Blueprint, Phase I Project"

Dear Mr. Eggleston:

Wisconsin DNR would like to offer full support for the request for funding for the "Cedar Creek Watershed – Jackson Marsh Conservation, Phase I" project proposal, submitted by Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA).

As property manager of the Jackson Marsh Wildlife Area, department staff have struggled for decades to figure out and resolve complex hydrologic issues on the property and beyond in the watershed. We are witnessing transitions in hydrologic and biological changes in the ecosystem that appear to be the result of land use changes in the watershed and the affects from climate change. These impacts appear to be resulting in flashy, damaging floods within the floodplain, native tree die-offs in floodplain forests and swamps, drained and degraded wetlands and straightened stretches of streams. The department's goals for the property and beyond is to restore hydrology within the waterways and wetlands, create conditions best suited for thriving native emergent and forested wetland plant communities, improve habitat that attracts native wildlife and improve water quality.

We believe the first step in resolving these issues is understanding the hydrology within the watershed. This will inform where restoration efforts will be targeted, how they will be designed, and who the cooperators will be. We appreciate WWA's interest and experience in the leading this project. Securing funds from the Fund for Lake Michigan will provide needed assistance to take the first step. DNR staff, including those from the Wildlife Management, Forestry, Wetlands and Waterways, and Natural Heritage Conservation programs are all invested and will continue to support and guide WWA throughout all phases of the project. In addition to investing staff time for consultations, site visits, meetings and other administrative tasks, DNR fully intends to assist WWA in seeking and securing additional funding for the project in phases II and III for on-the-ground implementation work. The investment by DNR staff and partners will likely go beyond Jackson Marsh Wildlife Area and into the surrounding watershed landscape as other landowner will be engaged in working toward hydrologic solutions.

I believe an award of FFLM funds will be an efficient and wise investment of funds for this project within the Evergreen Creek watershed and the greater Milwaukee River Watershed. We intend for our watershed-based approach to this project will serve as a model to inform other complex watershed projects throughout the Lake Michigan Basin. Thank you for your consideration in awarding funds to WWA to begin phase I for this project.

Sincerely,

Jason Fleener,  
Wetland Habitat Specialist,  
Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Wildlife Management