



FOX RIVER
GREEN BAY
Natural Resource
Trustee Council

Nesting Habitat Restoration on the Oneida Reservation

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Restoration Categories: Wetlands and Associated Uplands Habitat Preservation

Actions: Installation of 10 bald eagle nesting structures in restored wetland habitats throughout the Oneida Reservation and the installation of a tern nesting island

Benefits: Increased nesting and breeding opportunities for the bald eagle and other native bird species, and an increase in the presence of a key cultural symbol for Oneida Tribal members

Funding:

\$18,000 in natural resource damage assessment settlement funding, plus matching funds and in-kind services for a total budget of \$19,764

Timing: Natural resource damage assessment settlement funding awarded in August 2009; Bald Eagle nest structures installed in 2010 and tern nesting island was installed in 2015

Land Ownership: Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

MAIN BODY

Goal: To provide nesting structures for bald eagles in six restored wetlands within the Oneida Reservation.

Project Description:

Currently, bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) use restored wetlands within the Oneida Reservation. These restored habitats provide feeding and roosting opportunities for bald eagle, osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and Forster's tern (*Sterna forsteri*). However, nesting habitats are not present within the restored areas and will require many years to develop naturally. The Oneida Tribe installed 10 bald eagle nesting structures within 6 restored wetland habitats on the Oneida Reservation. The nesting structures were built to last 25 to 30 years and will require minimal maintenance. Nesting sites will be routinely monitored for nesting activity and reproductive success. The project also involved the installation of an artificial island providing nesting habitat for common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), a Wisconsin endangered species.

Benefits:

Bald eagle populations plummeted in Wisconsin and across the United States during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s due to habitat destruction and the use of DDT, the derivative of which accumulated in adult bald eagles and caused them to lay thin-shelled eggs that often cracked before hatching. While a ban on DDT in 1972 has helped the bald eagle population begin to recover, habitat loss and degradation continue to be a challenge. In addition, bald eagle populations near Green Bay were injured by feeding on fish with high polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) concentrations.

The installation of nesting structures will provide local bald eagle populations with increased opportunities for nesting on the Oneida Reservation. The project should also provide increased sightings of the bald eagle, an important cultural symbol for the Tribe. The reproductive success of the bald eagle, as well as any other raptor species using the structures, will be monitored to determine project success. Other raptor species, such as osprey, will also benefit from the installation of the new nest structures. The installation of an artificial island will benefit common tern by providing additional nesting habitat that will help expand their range and encourage a local breeding population.

Spatial Extent of Project:

Ten nesting structures were constructed at various locations throughout the 65,000-acre Oneida Reservation.

Status and Funding:

This project was awarded natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) settlement funding in August 2009. The nest structures were completed, attached to poles, and installed in the winter of 2010. The artificial nesting island was installed in 2015. The trustees directed \$18,000 in NRDA settlement funding to this project and attracted additional matching funds and/or in-kind services for a total budget of \$25,269. A local utility company donated the poles.

Project Accomplishments:

Installed nest structures will help support and improve the nesting success of bald eagle and other important raptor species, some of which were injured by the release of PCBs to the environment. The Wisconsin endangered common tern will benefit from the installation of additional nesting habitat.

Contact Information: Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin Environmental, Health & Safety Division
(920) 869-4591

PHOTOS/MAPS



Immature bald eagles (Photo by Ron Eckstein, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)



Oneida Conservation Corps technician installing nesting structure (Photo by Oneida Conservation)



Artificial tern nesting island (*Photo courtesy of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin*)