

# Challenges and Successes of Citizen Monitoring at the Zeloski Wetland Restoration, Lake Mills, WI



**Abstract:** Citizen-based monitoring began at the 1,700 acre Zeloski Muck Farms in Lake Mills in the fall of 2004 with a pilot project to map invasive plants. It has been expanded during the spring and summer of 2005 to include the monitoring of frogs and toads, plants, water quality, birds, dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies, beetles and other invertebrates. The fall and winter of 2005 will focus on monitoring small mammals and carnivore tracking, a historical survey and seed collection. The site is currently in agricultural use until the fall of 2005 when drainage tiles will be disabled and internal ditches filled.

Successes and challenges are inherent in training volunteers and determining the best scientific protocols to use for the biological monitoring of wetland restorations. Teams are collecting baseline pre-restoration data that will be used for comparison and as a gauge of success with long-term citizen-based data as restoration progresses.

Bordering the Zeloski Wetland to the south is the Hope Lake Bog, a 35 acre tamarack and sphagnum bog protected by Madison Audubon Society. This and other nearby natural areas have helped not only with training volunteers but also by comparing high-quality remnant habitat to a heavily disturbed agricultural site.

**Floristic Quality Analysis: Hope Lake Bog (HLB) vs. Zeloski Oak Island (Zel.)**

