

Conservation Easements

The North Shore Forest Collaborative aims to maintain the natural wooded character of the North Shore and continuous forest cover across the North Shore landscape by reducing forest fragmentation, planting species of trees native to the North Shore, protecting young trees and creating conditions favorable to the reproduction of native trees. For some properties a conservation easement is a means to permanently achieve these goals.

Conservation easements provide a means to

- Create a legacy
- Protect a special place
- Potentially obtain financial or tax benefits
- Create a legacy of care for the land
- Preserve wildlife habitat
- Some conservation easements may provide the landowner with long-term stewardship guidance.

Conservation Easements are a real estate transaction which places constraints on your and future owners' use of the property to fulfill conservation objectives. Landowners who have conservation easements are agreeing to sell or donate some of their rights to the land to an agency or organization for the purpose of protecting natural resources. For example, conservation easements can be used to limit or eliminate development and fragmentation of your woodland by limiting the type and amount of development you can do on your property.

There are many organizations that hold conservation easements. One of those, the Minnesota Land Trust, works “to permanently protect land and water, restore natural systems, and engage youth and adults in the great outdoors.” See their document, [Landowner options: A guide to preserving your land with the Minnesota Land Trust](#).

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)



Woods Walk Advisory Program

Program Name	Benefit to landowner	Requirements / restrictions	Contact
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Forest Legacy Easement Program	An independent appraisal and appraisal review is conducted to determine the monetary value of the easement being purchased. This amount is offered to the landowner in the form of a one-time payment or can be split into two separate payments to purchase the development rights in the easement area.	Focus is on protecting private forestlands for multiple purposes including timber, recreation, wildlife, and watershed needs. The goal is to prevent parcelization and conversion of forests to other cover types. Minimum parcel size of 20 acres, although exceptions can be made. Landowners must maintain a current Forest Stewardship Plan for the property. Landowners can maintain and construct new trail systems. Trails must not exceed a certain percentage of the total easement area. Temporary structures such as sugar shacks or hunting blinds are permitted.	Christine Ostern Forest Legacy Program Coordinator christine.ostern@state.mn.us 218-343-1790 Minnesota Forest Legacy Program Minnesota DNR (state.mn.us)

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

Prepared by Nate Quadhamer, Lake County SWCD Nate.Quadhamer@co.lake.mn.us and Mike Reichenbach, mikereichenbach1@gmail.com
 March, 2024



Woods Walk Advisory Program

Program Name	Benefit to landowner	Requirements / restrictions	Contact
Minnesota Land Trust: Conservation Easement, North Shore Coldwater Fisheries Program	Knowing your land adjacent to a cold water river or stream in the Lake Superior area will be protected, giving back to the community, creating a legacy for future generations. Potential tax incentives or other compensation for a permanent easement, you set the price. Receive a free habitat management plan.	<p>Land must be 40 acres in size. Land must be in Cook, Lake or St Louis Counties. Agricultural uses are limited or prohibited, including wildlife food plots, management of the vegetation is permitted if done according to the habitat management plan developed for your property. Subdivision of the land is prohibited. One conservation easement per owner.</p> <p>Applications require you to set a desired payment per acre. Your payment and the ecological value of the property will be used to determine if the application is accepted. If accepted the Land Trust will determine the value of the conservation easement using a certified appraiser. Your final payment is based on your asking price per acre to a maximum of 100% of the appraised value of the easement.</p> <p>Donation of the easement may allow you to claim a federal income tax deduction and may reduce estate taxes. Consult your attorney and CPA to determine the potential benefit.</p>	https://mnland.org/protect-land/

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

Prepared by Nate Quadhamer, Lake County SWCD Nate.Quadhamer@co.lake.mn.us and Mike Reichenbach, mikereichenbach1@gmail.com
 March, 2024



Woods Walk Advisory Program

Program Name	Benefit to landowner	Requirements / restrictions	Contact
<p><u>Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Easement Program</u></p>	<p>Riparian/Forest Protection: One-time payment of 60% of the land’s county assessed value</p> <p>Landowners can maintain ownership while guaranteeing the perpetual preservation of the natural qualities of the property by preventing development and land conversion. Extra benefits include maintaining habitat connectivity and protecting water quality.</p>	<p>Easement must meet following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is identified in or makes a contribution to a goal in a BWSR approved and locally adopted Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan • The project must leverage funds that benefit a priority water resource or contribute to a water related goal in a plan. • The project must protect, restore, or enhance habitat for fish, game, and other wildlife. <p>Parcels <5 acres will require a waiver.</p> <p>Properties must have some form of legal access.</p> <p>Many activities such as trail building or logging will require approval from BWSR. Existing trail systems can remain and be maintained. Some activities such as invasive species management do not require approval.</p>	<p><u>RIM Integrating Clean Water and Habitat (1W1P) MN Board of Water, Soil Resources (state.mn.us)</u></p> <p>Kevin Roth Easement Programs Coordinator 651-706-3673 <u>kevin.roth@state.mn.us</u></p> <p>Julie Westerlund One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator 651-600-0694 <u>julie.westerlund@state.mn.us</u></p>

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

Prepared by Nate Quadhamer, Lake County SWCD Nate.Quadhamer@co.lake.mn.us and Mike Reichenbach, mikereichenbach1@gmail.com
March, 2024



Woods Walk Advisory Program

Program Name	Benefit to landowner	Requirements / restrictions	Contact
Sustainable Forest Incentive Act Program	2024 payment rate 8 yrs \$10.48/acre 20 yrs \$14.51/acre 50 yrs \$18.54/acre Payments are higher if more than 1920 acres are enrolled	<p>Must be current on property taxes, have 20 or more contiguous acres, must be 50% forest, have a registered forest management plan and have a covenant limiting the properties use to forestry. If the land has a conservation easement the payment is less. In 2023 it was \$3.88 per acre. Payments are taxable income.</p> <p>Properties cannot be classified as 2C Managed Forestland, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP), Conservation Reserve (CRP), Green Acres, Agricultural Preserves or Rural Preserves. Also they can not be used for residential or agricultural purposes, improved with structures, pavement, sewer, campsites, billboards, cell towers or used for purposes not consistent with forestry use. Properties in the program must not be covered under a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council or similar easement granted after May 30, 2013.</p>	Questions questions about enrolling in SFIA, call 651-556-6088 or proptax.sfia@state.mn.us

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

Prepared by Nate Quadhamer, Lake County SWCD Nate.Quadhamer@co.lake.mn.us and Mike Reichenbach, mikereichenbach1@gmail.com
 March, 2024