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Wisconsin Conservation Congress applauds DNR purchase of conservation easements and the welcome addition of thousands of acres for recreational access for the public

Madison—The Wisconsin Conservation Congress applauds the recent announcement that the Department of Natural Resources is set to ensure continuing public access to more than 67,000 acres in northwestern Wisconsin through the purchase of conservation easements.

“This unique public-private partnership between the DNR and private industrial forests really demonstrates how we can achieve both long term protections for our land and the environment while also preserving the forestry based economy, jobs and tourism that defines northern Wisconsin,” said Rob Bohmann, chair of the WCC. “At the same time, this purchase assures continued access to the public and protects thousands of acres of wildlife and fish habitat, which the Conservation Congress wholly supports. It is 67,000 acres of prime northern Wisconsin lands and natural resources that will be permanently opened and available for all to enjoy for hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, bird-watching, and other recreational pursuits.”

“The idea that these conservation easements will be managed sustainably, limiting habitat fragmentation, while remaining on the tax rolls is also very important,” Bohmann added. “Providing public access, ecosystem protection, and economic security to this beautiful and unique area of the state that so many people love will ensure that it will be a true legacy for generations to come, and is most certainly an idea that the Conservation Congress can get behind.”

The proposed easement is for 67,346 acres in Douglas, Bayfield, Burnett and Washburn counties that is owned by the Lyme St. Croix Forest Company. It will be known as the Brule-St. Croix Legacy Forest and is located at the headwaters of the St. Croix and Bois-Brule rivers in Wisconsin’s northwest sands area. The Natural Resources Board will review the proposed purchase at its May 23 meeting.

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As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.