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Continuing the Prohibition Against the Use of Stewardship Funds for Golf Courses

The Problem: The Stewardship Fund was passed to purchase lands for nature-based outdoor recreational activities including hunting, fishing and trapping. In August 2008 the Natural Resources Board purchased a 970 acre parcel of land in Waukesha and Walworth counties. The land was owned by the Rainbow Springs Resort and had two golf courses on it. The NRB allowed the golf courses to continue in operation for two years and then required that the land be restored to wetlands. Ducks Unlimited has plans to restore the golf courses to wetlands along with other acreage on the property and has applied for Federal grants to do the restoration. The land in question is on the Mukwonago River and will be very valuable wildlife and fisheries habitat once restored and will be open to hunting, fishing and trapping.

The Stewardship Fund statute currently contains a specific prohibition against using Stewardship Funds for golf courses. A local legislator is proposing legislation to make an exception to this prohibition for the Rainbow Springs property so that the DNR can lease the golf courses to a private operator. There are already 34 golf courses in Waukesha County and 9 in Walworth County.

Be It Resolved, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Ashland County on April 11, 2011 strongly opposes the use of Stewardship Funds for golf courses and requests the Conservation Congress Executive Council to actively oppose any legislation changing the existing prohibition of the Stewardship Fund for golf courses.

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