Northwoods Initiative

Protecting the Iconic Places of Northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan

The Northwoods of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan serve as a refuge for people living throughout the Midwest and beyond. Encompassing the Upper Great Lakes, the Northwoods are filled with countless freshwater lakes, winding streams and rivers, and an infinite wealth of stories. It is from this landscape that great conservationists — Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson and John Muir — have drawn their inspiration. And it is to this vast landscape, spanning more than 88,000 square miles, that millions of Americans venture each year for recreation, revitalization, and a chance to reconnect to the natural world.

The Trust for Public Land established the Northwoods Initiative to protect the iconic landscapes of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan and preserve a heritage that is at risk of disappearing. Through the Northwoods Initiative, The Trust for Public Land partners with communities, landowners, and public agencies to achieve the following goals:

- Protect the water quality and recreational value of lakes, rivers, and streams;
- Prevent forest fragmentation and plan for sustainable resource management to maintain the local economies and ways of life;
- Negotiate win-win outcomes for landowners, public agencies, communities, and local businesses; and
- Keep people connected to the abundant recreational opportunities in natural areas and wilderness lands.
The Trust for Public Land’s Northwoods Land Protection Fund

The Trust for Public Land’s Northwoods Initiative provides unique solutions to creating public access and conserving natural resources, whether it is protecting a community’s namesake lake or preserving thousands of acres of forestland. The need for The Trust for Public Land is dramatically increasing. Communities and public agencies have come to depend on The Trust for Public Land to assist in meeting their growing demand for land conservation before important lands are permanently lost to development. By applying its real estate and financial expertise within this landscape, The Trust for Public Land has leveraged millions of dollars into land conservation successes.

With the financial assistance of the Northwoods Land Protection Fund, a capital-revolving fund dedicated to land protection within the Northwoods, The Trust for Public Land has been directly responsible for more than $20 million of land protection, resulting in the permanent protection of 125,000 acres that will be enjoyed and cared for by future generations.

MINNESOTA

Superior and Chippewa National Forests
Preventing forest fragmentation and protecting the water quality of lakes and rivers for hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreational opportunities.

- Johnson Lake (35 acres)
- Vermilion & Pelican Rivers Confluence (97 acres)
- Vermilion Lake-Wolf Island (60 acres)
- Burntside Lake-Long Island (43 acres)
- Chainsaw Sisters Saloon (30 acres)
- Lake Four (40 acres)
- Fall Lake (28 acres)
- Moose Lake (3 acres)
- Brandenburg-Fernberg Road (560 acres)
- Snowbank Lake Overlook (280 acres)
- Iron Lake (34 acres)
- Lake McFarland (5 acres)
- Stony Point (40 acres)

North Shore
Ensuring public access and protecting natural resources along the North Shore of Lake Superior.

- Grand Marais Harbor Park (1 acre)
- North House Folk School (1 acre)
- Myhr Creek (160 acres)

Forest Legacy
Preserving forests for long-term, sustainable timber management to promote local economies and provide public access for recreation.

- Koochiching State Forest (40,259 acres)
- George Washington State Forest (10,904 acres)
- Sugar Hills (1,660 acres)
- Crow Wing State Forest (3,141 acres)
- Pillsbury State Forest (1,635 acres)

Healthy Waters
Protecting water quality in the tributaries of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers.

- Lester Lake (440 acres)
- Headwaters Bay-Leech Lake (240 acres)
- Boy River Headwaters (64 acres)
- Dead Lake (60 acres)
- Mississippi River Overlook (63 acres)
- Clearwater Forest (140 acres)
- East Rush Lake (670 acres)
- Camp Ojiketa (70 acres)
- Allemansratt (64 acres)
- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (623 acres)
- Franconia Bluffs (84 acres)

MINNESOTA

WISCONSIN

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
Preventing forest fragmentation and protecting the water quality of lakes and rivers for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreational opportunities.

- Mirror Lake (93 acres)
- Silver Lake (320 acres)
- Happles Lake (320 acres)
- Canthook & Steelhead Lakes (609 acres)
- Clover Woods (80 acres)
- Lake Three (68 acres)
- Bayfield Inholdings (881 acres)
- Lake Owen – Camp Shewamagon (24 acres)
- Lake Namakagon Wetlands (48 acres)
- Lake Namakagon – Forest Lodge (872 acres)
- Buffalo Lake (529 acres)
- Ghost Lake (87 acres)
- Moose Lake (1,135 acres)
- Venison Creek (1,150 acres)
- Buffalo Farm (639 acres)
- Indian Farms (240 acres)
- Lake Ellen (32 acres)
- Heritage Drive Scenic Byway (90 acres)
Wisconsin

Michigan

Tribal Lands
Protecting landscapes that are vital to the rich Native American heritage in Wisconsin.
- Mirror Lake, Wisconsin © Bill Poole

Great Lakes Shoreline and Headwaters
Protecting the shoreline of Wisconsin’s Great Lakes and the headwaters resources that are essential to maintaining water quality of the Great Lakes.
- Great Lakes Shoreline and Headwaters

Forest Legacy
Preserving forests for long-term, sustainable timber management to promote local economies and provide public access for recreation.
- Forest Legacy

Healthy Waters
Protecting water quality in the tributaries of the Namekagon and St. Croix Rivers.
- Healthy Waters

Ottawa National Forest
Preventing forest fragmentation and protecting the water quality of lakes and rivers for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreational opportunities.
- Ottawa National Forest

Zarling Lake (40 acres)
Wabikon Lake (32 acres)
Cathedral of the Pines (40 acres)

Chippewa Flowage (18,256 acres)
Lenawee Creek (120 acres)
Saxine Creek (234 acres)
Houghton Falls–Echo Dells (76 acres)
Four Mile Creek (40 acres)
Ellison Bluff Headlands (86 acres)

Bibon Swamp (454 acres)
Lenawee Creek (120 acres)
Saxine Creek (234 acres)
Houghton Falls–Echo Dells (76 acres)
Four Mile Creek (40 acres)
Ellison Bluff Headlands (86 acres)

Chippewa Falls-Black River (776 acres)
Snow Country Byways (2,694 acres)
Ontonagon River Watershed (31,243 acres)
Prickett Lake (1,258 acres)
Sturgeon River Gorge (2,000 acres)

Great Lakes Shoreline and Headwaters
Protecting the shoreline of Michigan’s Great Lakes and the headwaters resources that are essential to maintaining the water quality of the Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Fisheries Trust – Au Sable & Manistee River Watersheds (5,900 acres)
Meeting the Challenges of the Future

More can be done.

For each stunning accomplishment, other opportunities are lost to development. To meet this challenge, The Trust for Public Land plans to conserve an additional 250,000 acres across the Northwoods of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan over the next ten years. To achieve this goal, The Trust for Public Land must expand its Northwoods Land Protection Fund from $2 million to $5 million. A contribution to the Fund will revolve through several acquisitions, leveraging additional public funding and private philanthropy. The Trust for Public Land is also seeking additional contributions for the Northwoods Initiative, so that we can act quickly when opportunities arise, ensuring that the stories of this landscape continue to be created and passed on to a new generation that is just beginning to form a love of the Northwoods.

To make a contribution to the Northwoods Initiative and the Northwoods Land Protection Fund, contact The Trust for Public Land.