Conserve your forests, prairies, and woodlands while still owning your land

Spanning the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin, the St. Croix River is one of the nation’s first federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. It is also home to a diverse abundance of native flora and fauna that rivals any other location within the greater Upper Mississippi River Basin.

The Minnesota Land Trust and the St. Croix River Association are looking for willing landowners to participate in the St. Croix Watershed Protection Program, a conservation initiative to permanently protect high quality habitat complexes in Minnesota.

This brochure will help you decide if the St. Croix Watershed Protection Program is right for you. Inside, there is information about the program, conservation easements, project selection criteria, and an application.

Why apply?
- Protect Minnesota’s important wildlife habitat, water quality, and beautiful open spaces
- Preserve your family’s legacy on the land
- Join a community of more than 550 dedicated landowners who steward almost 60,000 acres of important Minnesota places
- Receive tax incentives or other compensation for a permanent conservation easement on your property
- Receive a free habitat management plan, with the potential for financial and technical land management assistance

APPLICATION DEADLINE
April 1, August 1, December 1, 2020

If you would like to participate in the St. Croix Watershed Protection Program, please complete and return the included application.

Questions?
Contact Bill Penning at:
(651) 262-6403 or bpenning@mnland.org
What is a Conservation Easement?

The Minnesota Land Trust is seeking landowners interested in securing a lasting legacy for their lands through conservation easements.

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements through which landowners agree to limit the future use and development of their property to permanently preserve its natural features.

Lands protected by a conservation easement remain in a landowner’s private ownership, with the landowner retaining the right to use and manage the land in line with the terms of the easement. Public access is not required.

When the land is transferred to a new owner, the easement stays with the land ensuring it is permanently preserved for generations to come.

Each conservation easement completed by the Minnesota Land Trust is individually crafted to reflect the special characteristics of the land and its uses. However, certain restrictions are required to protect the natural habitat and associated species.

Easement Value and Compensation

The Land Trust uses certified appraisers to ascertain the value of your land without the easement, and then the value of your land with the easement in place. The difference between the two is the easement value. The easement value results from the property rights that have been restricted and the appraised value of those rights.

Upon finalizing a conservation easement with the Land Trust, landowners will receive a one-time payment for the amount indicated in their application, up to 100% of the appraised easement value.

The Minnesota Land Trust is a nonprofit organization and the donation of all or a part of a conservation easement may allow the landowner to claim a tax deduction. Please consult your attorney.
Property must:
• Be located within the St. Croix Watershed Protection Program area (see map). If uncertain, please contact Bill Penning.
• Be at least 40 acres in size
• Contain less than 10% of proposed easement area in cultivation

Selection Process
Application Review
Applications will be reviewed, ranked, and prioritized in three rounds. Deadlines for consideration are April 1, August 1, and December 1, 2020. Funds are limited. Apply early.

Applications received after the deadline may not be reviewed for the current phase of this program, but may be considered later if funding is available.

Projects that are the best fit for the St. Croix Watershed Protection Program will be larger in size and will have high quality natural lands with little development.

Landowners must indicate their desired compensation—payment per acre—for the easement on their application. Please note that the Land Trust cannot pay more than the full appraised value of the easement.

The Land Trust is able to conserve more land and may prioritize your property if you opt to donate some or all of the value of the conservation easement.

Prioritization and Selection
Easements will be funded in order of assigned priority. The Land Trust will prioritize potential parcels using two sets of criteria:

Ecological Value
• Habitat quality and quantity
• Context relative to other natural and protected lands such as parks, wildlife refuges, etc.

Payment per acre
• Landowner’s desired compensation on a per acre basis and willingness to donate some or all of the value of the easement
Conserve your land, legacy, and wildlife habitat with the Minnesota Land Trust

The landscape of the St. Croix River contains large swaths of unspoiled ecosystems. It is home to rolling barrens and brush lands containing abundant wildlife. Although the status of the St. Croix as a Wild and Scenic River comes with federal protections, it applies only to a thin ribbon of land adjacent to the Riverway. Beyond the Riverway boundary, more than 75% of the St. Croix’s forestlands remain in private holdings.

The Minnesota Land Trust is seeking willing private landowners to protect their property. The Land Trust will purchase permanent conservation easements with funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Properties will be chosen from submitted applications (see enclosed). Their selection will be based on habitat quality, amount of nearby natural lands, and the landowner’s desired price per acre. Applications are due April 1, August 1, and December 1, 2020. Apply early as funds are limited.

Mission

The Minnesota Land Trust protects and restores Minnesota’s most vital natural lands in order to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences, and scenic beauty for generations to come.

Contact

Bill Penning
Program Manager
Minnesota Land Trust
2356 University Ave. W. Suite 240
St. Paul, MN 55114
(651) 262-6403
bpenning@mnland.org
Visit us on the web at www.mnland.org
Funds to protect high quality wildlife habitat in the St Croix River watershed in Minnesota have been made available through grants provided through Minnesota’s Outdoor Heritage Fund. Please contact Bill Penning at bpenning@mnland.org or (651) 262-6403 with questions.

Completed applications will be prioritized by the Land Trust based on a competitive bid method which considers the ecological value and the amount a landowner would like to receive in compensation. Payment to a landowner for a purchased conservation easement is made upon finalizing a conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust.

To apply:
Please return to us:
- St Croix Watershed Protection Program Application
- Landowner Questionnaire
- Current property tax statements
- Map or sketch of your property

Please send all materials to:
Bill Penning
Minnesota Land Trust
394 South Lake Ave, Suite 404
Duluth, MN 55802
or via email to bpenning@mnland.org

Application Deadline: April 1, July 1, September 1 and December 1, 2020. *
*If you wish to apply and the deadline has passed, please contact the Land Trust as there may be more funding available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Must match landowner questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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Cost Information

Are you willing to donate all or some of the value of the conservation easement?
- Yes - I am willing and able to donate
- No - I am not willing or able to donate
- Partial - I am willing to consider a partial donation

There are limited funds available to support compensation for conservation easements. Donating the value is not a requirement, but we are able to conserve more habitat across the region if landowners are able to donate some or all of the easement value.

What is your proposed payment per acre?
- If not proposing to donate the full value of the easement, please share your payment per acre bid for compensation. We cannot pay more than the full appraised value of the conservation easement. Typically, that will be 40% to 60% of the county-assessed value of the land.
Please read each of the following statements.

About the Program

• A conservation easement will place permanent restrictions on the land to benefit long-term conservation. The landowner may sell or transfer the property to any person or entity, but these restrictions will travel with the land and permanently encumber the land.

• Once completed, some information pertaining to the conservation easement project will be available to the public since State funds are being used.

• For this application to be eligible, the property must meet the Requirements to Apply listed on page 3 of the attached St Croix Watershed Protection Program brochure.

Payments

• Payment for a conservation easement is contingent on approval of the conservation easement by the Minnesota Land Trust’s Board of Directors.

• The Land Trust cannot compensate landowners for more than the full appraised value of the conservation easement.

• Any payment received may have tax consequences. If the conservation easement or a portion of it is donated, the donation may be considered a charitable contribution for tax purposes.

Title & Legal Issues

• Good and marketable title to the land is required and any objectionable title defects must be corrected at the landowner’s expense. Any outstanding mortgages or lines of credit will need to be subordinated to the conservation easement.

• Any payment received for a conservation easement may have tax consequences. If some or all of the value of the conservation easement is donated to the Land Trust, the donation may be considered a charitable contribution for tax purposes. Consult your attorney or tax accountant.

• The Land Trust will help guide landowners through the process of the conservation easement project, but it cannot provide any legal or tax advice. Landowners are encouraged to obtain legal advice. The cost of retaining an attorney or other advisors is the landowner’s expense.

I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to each of the above statements and all associated information in the St Croix Watershed Protection Program brochure. I also certify that the information I provided above represents an accurate description of the property, and that all owners of the property are in agreement with this submitted application and bid. Finally, I certify that I have the authority to submit this bid on behalf of the owners of the property being put forward.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: __________________________

Please send all materials to:
Bill Penning
Minnesota Land Trust
394 South Lake Ave, Suite 404
Duluth, MN 55802
or via email to bpenning@mnland.org
Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Completing Questionnaire</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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Property Ownership and Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner’s Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Owner’s Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner’s Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner Phone Number(s)</td>
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Additional contact information, if different from above. *Please identify relationship with the Owner, if applicable.*

Property Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
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Acreage

| Total Owned |  |
| To be Protected |  |

Parcel or Tax ID Numbers

Nearby Protected Lands *Includes federal and state lands, other nearby conservation easements, etc.*
### Land Cover & Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetation and Habitat Types</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please describe the habitat on the property. For example: “80 acres of mixed oak forest, 5 acres cultivated fields, 20 acres of restored prairie.”</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wildlife</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What sorts of animals live or visit your property? Have any unusual or rare species been seen by you or others?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Water Features</th>
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<td><strong>Are there wetlands? Is there shoreline on a lake, river, or stream? If so, approximately how much?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Existing Improvements</th>
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<td><strong>Please describe relevant buildings, roads, utilities, and other similar improvements.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Current Land Uses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please describe current land uses such as full-time residential, gardening, grazing, CRP, farming, hunting, forestry, etc. Please describe any use by the general public such as public trails.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>History</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please provide any known historical uses or relevant history of your property</strong></td>
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### Project Goals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What are your motivations for working with the Land Trust to protect your land?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E.g., preserve legacy, conservation, financial reasons, other.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Future Objectives</th>
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<td><strong>Please briefly describe your future objectives for the property, including future management or uses.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Timeline Constraints</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Are there any potential deadlines or time constraints for completion of this project?</strong></td>
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