



Sauk River Watershed Protection Program



Conserve your wetlands, grasslands, and woods while still owning your land

The Sauk River is a crucial habitat corridor, supports a wide variety of wildlife, supplies numerous fishing and hunting opportunities, and is an important source of drinking water. The river is also a state- designated water trail providing additional outdoor recreational opportunities for the region.

Landowners are being sought to participate in the Sauk River Watershed Habitat Protection & Restoration Program. This initiative is a partnership of the Minnesota Land Trust, the Sauk River Watershed District, and Pheasants Forever, and is supported by the Stearns, Douglas, and Todd SWCDs, The Nature Conservancy, DNR, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

This brochure will help you decide if this program is right for you. Inside is information about the program, conservation easements, project selection criteria, and an application.

Application Deadline

March 15, 2023

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

Questions?

Contact Leah Hall at:
(651) 240-7878 or
lhall@mnland.org

Apply Online:

mnland.org/sauk

Why apply?

- Protect Minnesota's important wildlife habitat, water quality, and beautiful open spaces
- Receive tax incentives or other compensation for a permanent conservation easement on your wetlands and their surrounding natural lands
- Preserve your family's legacy on the land
- Join a community of landowners who steward over 55,000 acres of important Minnesota places





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

On your application, you must specify a desired payment amount per acre. The amount you choose may affect whether your project is ranked and if it is ultimately chosen.

Applications to the program will be ranked on both the ecological value of the land to be protected

and the payment amount desired. **Indicating a lower desired payment per acre may result in a higher application rank.** The Land Trust will evaluate all applications received and make selections from them.

If your application is selected, the Land Trust will use a certified appraiser to ascertain the value of the proposed conservation easement. This is done by determining 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 ultimately stems from the property rights that have been restricted and the appraised value of those rights.

Upon finalizing the conservation easement, you would then receive a one-time payment for the amount indicated on this application, up to 100% of the appraised easement value. The Land Trust cannot pay more than the appraised value of the conservation easement.

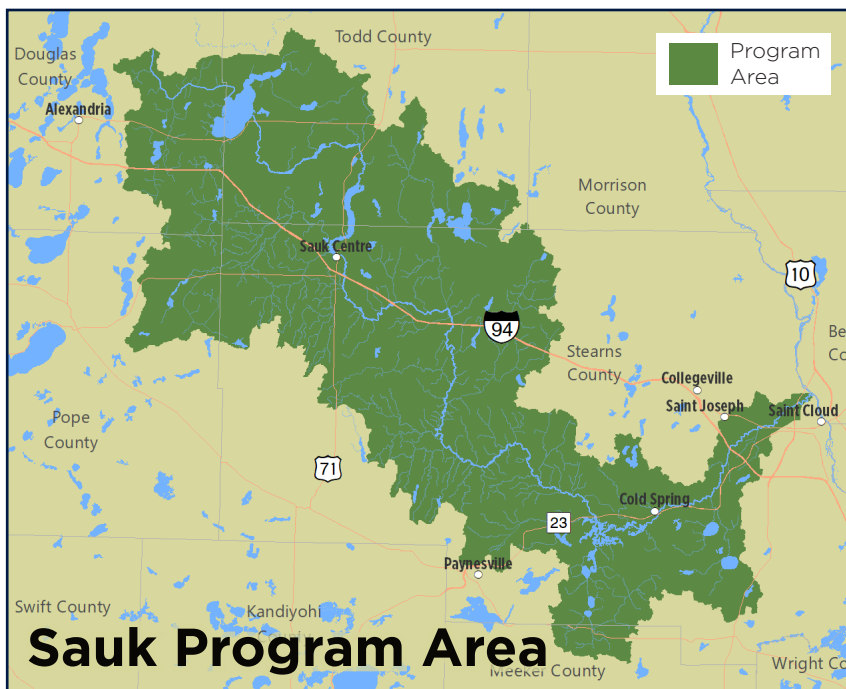
The Minnesota Land Trust is a nonprofit organization and the donation of all or a part of a conservation easement may allow the landowner to claim a tax deduction. Please consult your attorney.



Requirements to apply

Property must:

- Be located within the Sauk River Watershed Protection Program area (see map)
- Parcels at least 40 acres in size and larger are preferred
- Have wetlands or water bodies within the proposed easement area or contribute to conservation of adjacent wetland habitats
- Contain less than 20% of proposed easement area in cultivation

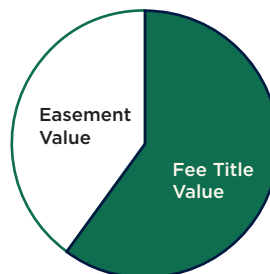


Total Property Value



Property Value Without Easement

The fee title and the entire value of the property is held by landowner.



Property Value With Easement

The fee title is owned by the landowner. The conservation easement is held by the Land Trust.

Selection Process

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed, ranked, and prioritized as they are received.

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 Sauk River 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.



MINNESOTA LAND TRUST
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Conserve your land along or near the Sauk River with the Minnesota Land Trust

Rivers, wetlands, and natural habitat are home to deer, turkeys, and other wildlife that we associate with the outdoor recreation opportunities and beautiful landscapes of Minnesota.

The Minnesota Land Trust is seeking willing private landowners in central Minnesota to protect their wetlands and surrounding natural lands. The Land Trust will purchase permanent conservation easements with funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.



Properties will be chosen from submitted applications. Their selection will be based on habitat quality, amount of nearby natural lands, and the landowner's desired price per acre.

Applications are due by March 15, 2023. Applications received after the deadline may be considered as funds become available.

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

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Visit us on the web at
www.mnland.org