



P.O. Box 21, Eagle WI 53119

April 14, 2015

Senator Steve Nass

Room 10 South State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Representative Cody Horlacher

Room 17 North State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Congressional Representatives:

We are disappointed to see Governor Walker's proposal to end one of the most important public/private partnerships in Wisconsin—a program that directly benefits our economy and lives by ensuring healthy Wisconsin lands and waters. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program protects Wisconsin's lands, waters, clean air, human health, working forests and the jobs they provide, tourism revenue, wildlife habitat and the trails, parks, lakes, rivers and forests where we walk, fish, hunt, ski and enjoy the outdoors. The Mukwonago River Unit of the Southern Kettle Moraine Forest was purchased using these funds, as well as several other important parcels in the watershed. Our pristine watershed needs as much land protection as we can get to retain its excellence for our dense population and its future value to southeastern Wisconsin residents.

These preserved lands and waters are one of the reasons many companies choose to do business in Wisconsin and why talented people in all professions choose to live and work here. They provide multiple benefits now, and they are the foundation for our children's future. The time to protect our lands and waters is today while they are intact and the opportunity exists to purchase them for the public. Once the lakes and rivers have been polluted, large expanses of forest divided and developed, wetlands drained, the prairies plowed and replaced with houses, roads, and parking lots, it will be too late.

We feel every dollar we invest in conserving our lands and waters at today's prices is a great value today and in the future. According to the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the debt service for the Stewardship Program is less than 0.5% of the budget General Purpose Revenue expenditures. **That means that debt service on the Program costs each Wisconsin resident less than a fishing license or state part sticker each year.**

The mission of the Friends of the Mukwonago River is to protect the Mukwonago River and its associated watershed ecosystems by way of education, advocacy, and promotion of sound land use throughout the watershed. We are a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.



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Wisconsin residents clearly understand this investment as a priority. In a bipartisan poll conducted by The Nature Conservancy, nearly 90% of Wisconsin voters agree that even in tight fiscal times, the Stewardship Program should remain a priority. We value the responsible forestry industry and the jobs it provides, take pride in our parks and open space and the tourism revenue it offers. Most of all, we treasure the long standing beacon of sustainable and effective land stewardship by local municipalities, counties, WDNR, land trusts, individuals, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance, and others. We fear losing so much of what is great about our fair state as a result of Governor Walker's budget proposal. I hope you will strongly consider opposing this cut and protect an incredibly valuable asset.

Please, as you work through the budget process, vote to keep this land and water conservation program working to protect the forests, grasslands, lakes and rivers on which our health, our economy and our quality of life depend.

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Respectfully,

Pamela Meyer

Treasurer, Friends of the Mukwonago River. Inc

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