



*Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation*

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[www.leechlakewatershed.org](http://www.leechlakewatershed.org)



April 17, 2017

Dear Landowner,

The letter provides you with information about a conservation easement opportunity.

The Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation wants landowners to know about an important and timely opportunity - **the ability to protect our water quality, preserve critical habitat and receive compensation for keeping this region unique and special.** In 2016 we launched our Reinvest in Minnesota Lakeshore Conservation Easement program with funding provided by the Legislative Citizen's Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). This program acquires conservation easements on lakeshore and forested parcels in the watersheds of selected high quality lakes that are **considered to be some of the best lakes in the region. I have sent you this letter because your property has been identified as high priority for protection in one of these selected "tullibee refuge lake" watersheds.**

Tullibee are an important food source for lake trout, northern pike, muskie, and walleye. They are the proverbial "canary in the coal mine" fish species due to their sensitivity to even slight changes in water temperature and oxygen levels. A decrease in population can signal deterioration of the lake's water quality. Protecting these lakes and surrounding watersheds from excess nutrients such as phosphorus is critical to maintaining sufficient oxygen levels. Your land can play a vital role in the protection effort.

The Foundation, in cooperation with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the County Soil and Water Conservation District, has funding from the LCCMR grant to assist conservation-minded landowners with preserving the unique natural features of their property for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat and lake water quality. The protection tool is a conservation easement which is a voluntary agreement you would place on your land that limits future development in perpetuity. You still own the land and use it as you desire within the parameters of the easement. Each easement is uniquely tailored to the landowner's interests. Because the conservation easement goes with the land it insures future owners will also keep the property in the natural state that you appreciate and enjoy and leaves a legacy for everyone.

This program is strictly voluntary. The landowners and parcels chosen for funding will be offered a payment of up to **60 percent of the County's estimated market value of the land enrolled** (from your property tax statement) for shoreland parcels and up to **50% for non-shoreland parcels**. Parcels submitted for easement purchase will be reviewed and ranked by our local grants team to determine which provide the best natural resource investment for the conservation dollar.

The Foundation is currently working with landowners on two different conservation easement programs. You may have recently received a letter from us about a conservation easement program funded by Outdoor Heritage Funds. We can help you understand the difference and address any questions you have about these opportunities.

If preserving the natural resources on your land, protecting the water quality of your lake, and leaving a legacy for the future is important to you, please contact John Sumption, our Land Conservation Specialist (218-368-8304 or [sumptionenv@gmail.com](mailto:sumptionenv@gmail.com) ) or myself (218-675-5773 or [llawf@tds.net](mailto:llawf@tds.net) ). We would be happy to visit with you via email, in person, or by phone to provide more information and provide application information. **Applications for funding must be received on or before May 31, 2017.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lindsey Ketchel, Executive Director  
Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation



Sheila Boldt, Conservation Outreach  
Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District