



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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FOREST CAPITAL PARTNERS WINS WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AWARD

MINNEAPOLIS – A landmark conservation easement that preserves wildlife habitat, protects jobs and ensures public access to almost 80 square miles (200 square kilometres) of rich forestland in northern Minnesota has won Forest Capital Partners LLC the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI®) and Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) Wildlife Stewardship Award.

Forest Capital Partners, which acquires and manages working forests across North America for long-term sustainability, received the award today at the annual SFI conference in Minneapolis. In 2007, the company signed a conservation easement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources restricting development on more than 51,000 acres (20,600 hectares) of its privately owned, and SFI-certified, forestland in Itasca and Koochiching counties – the single largest conservation project in Minnesota in 30 years.

"The Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project demonstrates one of the rewards of good forest management – enhanced wildlife diversity and abundance," said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of the independent SFI forest certification program. "Forest Capital Partners' Minnesota division negotiated an agreement that ensures private forestland is available for economic benefits and to support local jobs, while protecting wildlife habitat and providing public access."

"The project will help preserve the indigenous and migratory wildlife of the region by keeping their habitat intact," said CSF Vice-President Gary Guinn. "The property will be open for fishing, hiking, hunting and cross-country skiing, and allow snowmobiles and ATVs on designated trails."

The land is near a state natural area and a state park, creating more than 500,000 acres (200,000 hectares) of uninterrupted conservation territory. The nomination letter included a comment from Peggy Ladner, director of The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, who said saving 51,000 acres of forest is great work "but when those lands combine with existing public natural areas to create a conservation area that approaches 500,000 acres, it's an absolutely incredible and enduring accomplishment."

Forest Capital Partners worked closely with the Minnesota Forest Legacy Partnership to facilitate the creation of the conservation easement. The Partnership, a public-private coalition created by The Nature Conservancy and the Blandin Foundation to help conserve Minnesota's northwoods, includes the Trust for Public Land, which facilitated the transaction, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, which will hold and monitor the conservation easements. Additional partnership members are: the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, The Conservation Fund, Minnesota Forest Industries and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association.

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"While our Minnesota team truly earned this award, the project would not have been possible without our many partners from public agencies and conservation groups." said Scott Jones, co-founder and co-president of Forest Capital Partners. "In everything we do, Forest Capital Partners looks for innovative ways to derive value from our forestlands while protecting the environment."

SFI Inc. created the stewardship award in 2007 so it could honor significant achievement and innovation that has advanced the science and practice of wildlife management. This first award, co-sponsored by the CSF, invited nominations of wildlife and fisheries biologists or managers who work for SFI-certified companies, as well as collaborators in a wildlife or fisheries program being conducted on SFI-certified lands.

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Editors: A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fact sheet about the Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project is attached

About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program (www.sfiprogram.org), that is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. It is one of the fastest growing forest certification programs with 150 million acres (60 million hectares) of SFI-certified forests across North America. The SFI Standard also includes unique fiber sourcing requirements that promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands and a chain-of-custody certification, which can communicate to buyers how much certified fiber is in a specific product. The SFI forest standard is endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, a global umbrella organization that has strict requirements for endorsement. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.

About the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

For two decades, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (www.sportsmenslink.org) has been a leader in promoting sportsmen's issues with elected officials, supported by every major hunting and fishing organization and industry in the United States.

About Forest Capital Partners LLC

Forest Capital Partners is a private forest landowner, financial manager and steward of large-scale working forests throughout North America. It is owned and managed by principals who are professional foresters as well as seasoned investment managers. One of the largest private landowners in the United States, Forest Capital Partners acquires and manages working forests across North America for long-term sustainability.



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**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet
Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project:
Minnesota Forest Legacy Partnership**

Overview: The Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project is the single largest conservation project in Minnesota in at least a decade. The project will protect jobs, preserve wildlife habitat and ensure public access for outdoor recreation.

Location: Minnesota's Northwoods, north-central Minnesota, Itasca and Koochiching counties. The conserved lands are private working forestland owned by Forest Capital Partners. They are located in and near Koochiching State Forest and George Washington State Forest.

Size: 51,163 acres / approximately 80 square miles

Land Owner: Forest Capital Partners is a private forest landowner that acquires and manages working forests across North America for long-term sustainability including more than 290,000 acres in Minnesota.

Conservation Value: This project achieves significant wildlife habitat conservation by maintaining working forests and avoiding forest fragmentation. The conserved lands are located near 439,658 acres of state-owned land and serve as a critical link in creating a conservation area that approaches 500,000 acres in size. As many as 81 of Minnesota's 292 species classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (declining, rare or vulnerable in the state) will benefit from this project including Canada lynx, gray wolf, American black duck, American woodcock, neotropical migratory birds, and several songbird species.

Significant Features: Coniferous forest and peatland; 13 lakes and more than 90 ponds totaling 46.9 miles of shoreline; 43.5 miles of rivers and streams; 18,971 acres of wetlands.

Recreational Opportunities: Hunting (the property can accommodate an estimated 1,100 deer hunters a year), fishing, hiking and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiles and ATV use will continue as is subject to future trail designation on the property.

Purchase Price: \$12 million to ensure its permanent protection from development.

Public Funding: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources through public bond funds appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature in 2006: \$6.6 million

Private Funding: The Nature Conservancy contributed \$5.4 million via gifts from: the Blandin Foundation, \$4 million; The Conservation Fund, \$500,000; and from a variety of other sources including the Surdna Foundation. The source of The Conservation Fund's contribution is a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, which supports wildlife habitat conservation.

Partners: The Minnesota Forest Legacy Partnership includes the Blandin Foundation, The Conservation Fund, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, The Nature Conservancy, and The Trust for Public Land.