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Governor Doyle Announces Veto of GOP Cuts to Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

Will Also Veto Republican Provision Requiring DNR to Sell Off Land

At news conferences in Madison, Green Bay and Weston today, Governor Jim Doyle announced that he will veto Republican cuts to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, maintaining Wisconsin's commitment to preserving its natural resources for future generations of citizens to enjoy. The Republican budget cut bonding authority for the program by \$245 million over the next six years.

"Republicans launched an unprecedented attack on land conservation in this budget, voting to slash Stewardship by nearly 80 percent over the next two years," Governor Doyle said. "But they didn't stop there – they also ordered the DNR to actually sell \$40 million worth of land over the next two years. This is about more than protecting land – it is about protecting our Wisconsin values. And those values mean that even during tough times, we make key investments in Wisconsin's future."

"The roots of the Stewardship Program go back to Democratic Governor Gaylord Nelson and Republican Governor Warren Knowles," Doyle said. "This bipartisan program has been a long-standing commitment to protect some of Wisconsin's best remaining natural and recreational lands for our children and our grandchildren. Stewardship is also a critical ingredient in our tourism industry. Visitors come to Wisconsin to experience the places that Stewardship protects."

Since 1990, Stewardship has protected land in 71 of the state's 72 counties, preserving 250,000 acres of conservation and recreation land. Examples include: purchasing 15,000 acres and linking together 92 miles of conservation lands along the Lower Wisconsin Riverway; expanding our Ice Age Trail to allow hikers to trace the path of the last glacier throughout our state; and purchasing the Willow Flowage to protect thousands of acres of forests, shorelines, islands and wetlands in northern Wisconsin.

The Governor also announced today that he will veto a Republican budget proposal that would have required the DNR to sell off \$40 million worth of public land.

"These actions will protect the places that best represent Wisconsin, from urban and rural areas to land in every corner of our state," Doyle said. "As Governor, I am not going to allow today's Republican lawmakers to turn their backs on our commitment to land conservation and undermine our efforts to protect Wisconsin's natural places for future generations."

A video message of the Governor discussing his veto of Republican cuts to Stewardship can be viewed online at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/>.