Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project
Protecting Critical Fish and Wildlife Habitat in the Mississippi Headwaters

This Program offers private landowners along or near the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River or on a major tributary or Headwaters lake an opportunity to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat by permanently protecting the natural resource value of their land.

Partners

- **Mississippi Headwaters Board**

- **The Trust for Public Land**

- **MN Board of Water and Soil Resources and Headwaters County SWCDs**

- **With stakeholder support from:**
  The MN DNR
  The Nature Conservancy

Program Goal

Funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund created from the 2008 Clean Water Land & Legacy Constitutional Amendment, the Program goal is to create and expand contiguous habitat complexes of permanently protected uplands and shoreland for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat, migratory waterfowl, reduction of forest fragmentation, enhanced public recreational opportunities and the protection of water quality.
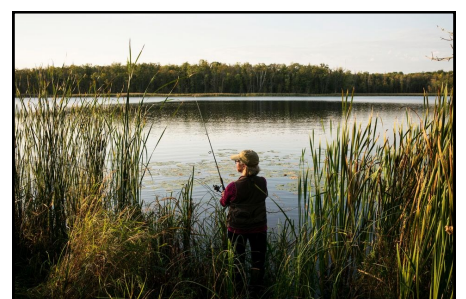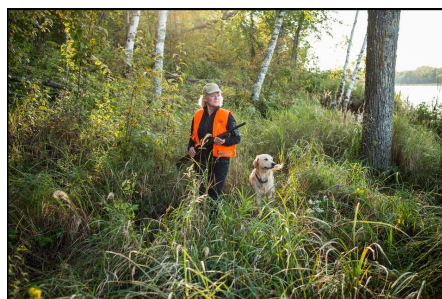
Land protection is achieved via fee-title acquisition or by enrolling land in The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation easement program.

Why Create Habitat Complexes?

- To meet the basic needs of game and non-game wildlife such as cover from predators, water, safe places to raise young, and adequate area to move around during different life stages and the protection of water quality and spawning areas for fish.

- To insure good water quality for fish and as a source of drinking water for the Twin Cities and beyond.

- To provide migratory waterfowl food and cover along the Mississippi Flyway.

- To reduce land use changes that result in fragmentation of critical habitats such as forests, shorelands, grasslands, and wetlands.

Accomplishments:

Since this program began in 2016, over **3,441 acres** and **31 miles** of shoreland have been protected. Projects on 2,000 additional acresand 15 miles of shoreland will be completed soon.

More About Land Protection Options

Interested landowners determine which land protection option best fits their long-term land use vision for their property. Both options are <u>voluntary</u> by the landowner.

Fee-Title Acquisition

The Trust for Public Land purchases the land at a fair market value and conveys the fee-title to either The Minnesota DNR or the County for permanent ownership and future protection and management of the property's fish, wildlife, and forestry features along with public recreational opportunities.

For more information on selling your property for conservation, contact:

> Will Cooksey, Senior Project Manager
> The Trust for Public Land
> will.cooksey@tpl.org; 651-999-5316

RIM Conservation Easement

A conservation easement is a permanent and legally binding agreement between the landowner and The MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The easement limits the use and future development of the land in order to preserve the land's unique natural resource values. In return for protecting their land, the landowner receives a **one-time payment of 60% of the land value** based on their County's current assessed land value.

The landowner still retains ownership and use of the land and can sell it or pass it to heirs, but the easement stays with the land title. The land is not open to the public.

For more information on a conservation easement, please contact your County Soil and Water Conservation District**.**

More About The Mississippi Headwaters

The Headwaters of the Mississippi River are the first 400 miles of the river from its beginning in Itasca State Park to the southern border of Morrison County. It is a national treasure for its clean water and recreational opportunities.

The Headwaters:

- Contain more than 350 species of animals, mammals, and birds.

- Are a major flyway for migrating neo-tropical birds and waterfowl.

- Flows through 8 Minnesota counties which contain 16% of the land in Minnesota.

- Provides drinking water for the cities of St. Cloud, Minneapolis, St. Paul and beyond.