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Nature Conservancy Disappointed by Joint Finance Committee Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program vote

Madison, WI - *The following is a statement from Mary Jean Huston, State Director, The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin*

The Nature Conservancy is disappointed by the Joint Finance Committee's decision to reauthorize the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program for only two additional years. Since 1989, the Stewardship Program has been reauthorized every decade for 10 additional years with broad bipartisan support, providing the fiscal certainty necessary for multi-year conservation land transactions.

The Stewardship Program is a nationally-renowned public-private partnership that fuels an \$18 billion outdoor recreation economy and supports a \$24 billion forestry industry, clearly and consistently providing a very strong return on investment to Wisconsin taxpayers.

There is overwhelming support among Wisconsin voters for conserving our lands, waters and wildlife habitat for future generations. Recent polling by The Nature Conservancy indicates a sweeping, bipartisan majority of Wisconsinites support reauthorizing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program for 10 years.

Over the next two years, The Nature Conservancy is committed to working with the Governor and the Legislature for longer-term reauthorization of the Stewardship Program.

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The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect the land and water on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. In Wisconsin, the Conservancy has protected more than 233,800 acres of land and water since 1960.
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