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Crow Wing County Receives Conservation Partners Legacy Grants

Crow Wing County has been awarded two grants totaling \$269,327 from the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program. These are the first grants achieved by the County, under this program since it was passed by Minnesota voters in 2008.

Funding for the CPL grant program is from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. This fund receives 33% of the sales tax revenues resulting from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Constitutional Amendment. The CPL grant program focuses on work to restore, enhance and protect forests, wetlands, prairies and habitat for wildlife in Minnesota.

The awarded grants included a Jack Pine-White Pine Restoration project and an Undivided Interest Acquisition Project. The grants were prepared by Jake Frie and Bryan Pike, Natural Resource Managers for the County.

The Jack Pine-White Pine Restoration project will plant and protect approximately 200 acres of jack and white pine habitat in priority areas across Crow Wing County. The expected results are increased and enhanced wildlife habitat for many species while also achieving the goal of increasing conifer forests on the landscape. "It certainly is exciting to see this project funded. It is an example of a project that the public and wildlife will benefit from for many years", said Kirk Titus, Land Services Supervisor for Public Land Management.

The Undivided Interest Acquisition Project grant will secure a full 100% interest in 626 acres of property that are currently held as undivided interest parcels. The county currently owns an 81% share in the parcels. Titus stated, "These key acquisitions will help consolidate existing land holdings, increase public access for recreation, provide habitat protection and decrease forest fragmentation. The project is also consistent with the goals outlined in the County forest management plan".

The County manages 103,000 acres of forest land for timber production and diverse recreational opportunities for multiple users. The sale of timber at public auctions during the year funds the County's management of these lands, while providing revenues to local communities. County forest lands are managed to strict environmental standards established by both the Sustainable Forestry Initiative™ and the Forest Stewardship Council™ certification standards.

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