

State Treasurer Godlewski: Celebrates National Public Lands Day

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MADISON, Wis. — State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, the Chair of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), is celebrating National Public Lands Day by sharing some of the BCPL's significant progress on environmental stewardship. The BCPL manages over 77,000 acres of public lands, generating revenue for public education funding through sustainable timber management. Wisconsinites also benefit from these lands in various ways, including hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor recreation, and water quality protection.

“Our public lands are an essential part of our Wisconsin way of life,” said **State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski**. “Not only do our public schools benefit from the revenue provided by these lands, but they provide spaces and resources for all Wisconsinites to enjoy. As Chair of the BCPL, I have taken forward-thinking actions to ensure our public lands are being sustainably managed, to combat climate change, and to protect our natural resources and water for future generations.”

Since being elected board chair in 2019, Godlewski has been dedicated to renewing the BCPL's commitment to stewardship. One of her first actions upon election was repealing a gag order preventing climate change from even being discussed, let alone considered, in investment decisions. Since then, the agency has gone on to codify environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into its investment strategy and has invested over \$300 thousand dollars in renewable energy under Godlewski's leadership.

The BCPL is also a strategic player in Wisconsin's timber and paper industries. Through the BCPL's timber sales, proactive forest regeneration programs, and comprehensive forest inventory and management projects, the BCPL is ensuring that this vital part of Wisconsin's economy is competitive and sustainable for years

to come. Implementing these practices has benefitted the Normal School Fund, a fund that supports University of Wisconsin system schools. Over \$1 million per year has been provided to the UW System to fund environmental education programs and scholarships for students, helping Wisconsinites attend college and ensuring that Wisconsin will have generations of environmental stewards to take care of our beloved lands.

Additionally, under its land management authority, the BCPL preserved an 80-acre parcel along the Namekagon River. Now part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, this complex project included the collaboration of the Park Trust and the Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) to include the protection of over 5,000 feet of historic riverfront, the purchase of valuable timberland for sustainable use, and the conservation of animal habitat and recreational opportunities along this 230-mile free-flowing riverway.

National Public Lands Day, established in 1994, is held annually on the fourth Saturday in September. People are encouraged to celebrate our connection to the natural spaces in our communities and participate in stewardship, education, and recreation. To learn more and find opportunities to get involved here in Wisconsin, check out the Department of Natural Resource's ideas [here](#).

Background

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) is chaired by State Treasurer Godlewski and also includes Attorney General Josh Kaul and Secretary of State Doug La Follette. The agency is responsible for four trust funds worth almost \$1.4 billion. This includes the Common School Fund, which makes annual distributions that fund books and technology for every school district in the state. As part of her role as Board Chair, the State Treasurer has prioritized community investment and has integrated Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations into the investment policy. One of her first actions as board chair was to roll back a climate change gag rule which prevented staff from discussing climate change and how it impacted investments. In today's volatile and uncertain financial markets, the current level of distribution would not be possible if the Trust Fund remained invested solely in loans and bonds, as required under statute from 1848 through 2015. To learn more, visit the BCPL webpage [here](#).