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## **1. Gathering Waters and the Wisconsin Land Trust Community Thank Governor Walker for continuing to support the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program**

### **Citizens Urged to Thank Governor, and contact legislature to also continue support for Bi-partisan program**

*Madison, WI, February 14, 2017:* Gathering Waters, Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, thanked Governor Scott Walker for maintaining support of the bi-partisan Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program in the 2017-2019 executive budget. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provides 50% matching grants to non-profits such as land trusts, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, local governments and county forests to leverage the state's investment in land conservation. The Stewardship Program has a long bi-partisan history, having been created during the Thompson administration and receiving support from both Republicans and Democrats in the legislature. It is named for Republican Governor Warren Knowles and Democratic Governor and US Senator Gaylord Nelson.

*"As an organization representing the land trust community, Gathering Waters offers thanks to the Governor for his support of this important program" stated Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters. "We also urge the legislature to maintain funding for this popular and bi-partisan program." Stewardship provides support for Wisconsin's \$12 Billion outdoor recreation industry, providing additional public lands and access to waters for Wisconsin's hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. It also supports Wisconsin's \$20 billion timber industry, by ensuring large blocks of timber remain in sustainable production for the future.*

*Citizens are encouraged to contact the Governor's office and thank him for supporting The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, and to reach out to their representatives and senators asking for their continued support for the program. A special thanks to Gathering Waters 2016 Policymakers of the Year, Representatives Loudenbeck, Kitchens and Novak, for their continuing support of The Stewardship Program.*

*Gathering Waters is Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts. A land trust is a private, non-profit organization that, as all or part of its mission actively works to conserve by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, and by its stewardship of such land or easements. In Wisconsin, there are nearly 50 land trusts, serving communities throughout the state.*