SPORTING COALITION for STEWARDSHIP

Ducks Unlimited · Pheasant Forever & Quail Forever · Wisconsin Waterfowl Association · Safari Club International · Delta Waterfowl · Wisconsin Trappers Association · Wisconsin Trout Unlimited · Wisconsin Wildlife Federation · Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation · Audubon Great Lakes · Ruffed Grouse Society / American Woodcock Society · Boone and Crockett Club

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Wisconsin's hunters, anglers and trappers want to see the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program continue

(Madison, WI) - Wisconsin is fortunate to have a rich sporting heritage, with hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women taking advantage of our public lands each year. That tradition continues to thrive thanks, in part, to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Since 1989, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has provided more access and opportunities for outdoor pursuits like hunting, fishing, and trapping. But the program is set to expire in June 2026.

Now, a coalition of a dozen major conservation organizations representing hunters, anglers, and trappers from across the state is working to ensure that Wisconsin's premier land conservation program will continue.

"Sportsmen and women in the Badger State have better access and opportunities to hunt, fish and trap because of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program," said Kyle Rorah, Regional Director of Public Policy for Ducks Unlimited. "If you've spent time chasing bucks or wading through marshes for waterfowl on public lands in Wisconsin, you've probably benefitted from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program."

Lands acquired using Knowles-Nelson Stewardship funds are required to remain open to hunting and trapping, making it one of the most sportsmen and women-friendly land conservation programs in the country. But if the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program expires, Wisconsin will lose its best program to acquire land for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

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"One of the most common complaints we hear is that public areas open to hunting are overcrowded," said Dan Trawicki, Past President – Safari Club International, Wisconsin Chapter. "We need to be providing more opportunities and access for the state's hunters, anglers and trappers."

The hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites who purchase hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses each year also provide significant economic contributions to the state. In 2022, hunters in Wisconsin spent more than $1.3 billion on hunting-related purchases, supported nearly twelve thousand jobs, and contributed almost $830 million to Wisconsin GDP.[1] Boating and fishing contributed more $928 million to Wisconsin's GDP.[2]

"Sportsmen and women play a significant role in Wisconsin's culture and economy," said Mike Kuhr, Advocacy Chair for Wisconsin Trout Unlimited. "We look forward to working with Governor Evers and the members of the legislature to ensure that Wisconsin can continue to provide better access and opportunities for our state's hunters, anglers and trappers through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program."

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[1] Hunting and Target Shooting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation, *Sportsmen's Alliance*, October 2024 Wisconsin - Sportsmen's Alliance

[2] *Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis*, November 2024 Office of Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation