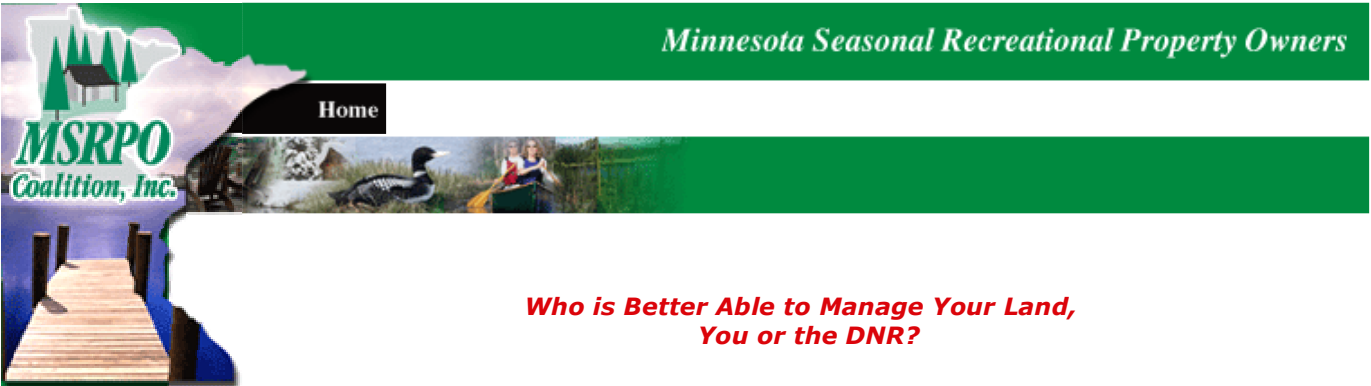


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Minnesota Seasonal Recreational Property Owners

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MSRPO Coalition, Inc.

Join MSRPO Now!

***Who is Better Able to Manage Your Land,
You or the DNR?***

Dear [firstname],

Minnesotans voluntarily imposed a 3/8th of one cent sales tax on themselves during the early days of a deepening recession. Minnesotans value our forests, our water and the vibrant arts community.

The MSRPO Board, after much discussion, supported the Legacy Amendment and worked for its passage. We all own forest or lake shore property in Minnesota. We understand the many pressures on this property and the state's lakes and river. The Legacy Amendment was a way to help protect our water and forests by upgrading storm sewer and water treatment facilities, strengthening enforcement, educating land owners and the public, mitigating runoff impacts, restoring degraded shorelines, setting prescribed burns to deal with fuel loads, managing land for habitat, bio-diversity and recreational values instead of development.

In short, we understood that by passing the Legacy Amendment we could dedicate money towards innovation, towards science, towards putting Minnesota on the cutting edge of protecting water, habitat and the arts. This money stream, about \$275 million dollars a year, is an amazing opportunity.

[Use this link to ask your legislator to take action.](#)

We have the opportunity to leave our children with options we did not have. We could leave our children a more ecologically healthy Minnesota than we have now. But that opportunity is fading.

\$275 million dollars a year is an incredible amount of money, and while it can empower our best efforts, it can also bring out our worst instincts.

A small, but highly vocal group is claiming that "Protect" means "Acquire." They are trying to codify this skewed definition into law. If they succeed, the money generated by the legacy amendment that goes for habitat can only be used by the state to buy property.

[ACT TODAY - Attend the Thursday Night Listening Session in Saint Paul](#)

On Feb. 25th, from 7-9 PM at 1410 Energy Park Drive, Saint Paul ([click here](#) for directions) the Minnesota Water Resources Center and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will hold a listening session to seek citizen input on a plan to protect and preserve Minnesota's lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater for the 21st Century and beyond. If you can, please attend this meeting.

The word "protect" is NOT synonymous with "buy" or "acquire." The power of the legacy amendment is that it provides options as we head into a rapidly changing

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future. Certainly the most fragile and at risk habitats can be acquired and protected by the state.

* We cannot buy it all.

* We cannot afford to effectively patrol the public lands already have.

* Private land holders control over 40% of the forest land in Minnesota - much of this land provides habitat for endangered species, or riparian buffers to protect water.

* Minnesotan's did not overwhelming vote for this amendment because they thought we should buy cutover timber industry land, or condemn privately held habitat. We voted to protect our environment, not to buy it all.

Who do you think does a better job managing sensitive ecosystems, you or the DNR?

Most of the land that we need to protect is privately held by families. the good news is the Forest Service and MSRPO research concurs, more than 85% of these land owners do not want to sell or develop their land. But many are being forced to sell because of intense property tax pressure. Conservation Easements provide no property tax relief, and so are not an option for those of middle income. The average household income of a cabin or hunting land owner in Minnesota is \$58,000. We need to create innovative incentives and education and cost sharing programs so these owners can do what they want to do - voluntarily restore and protect their land.

We also need to create disincentives for those that see land only as a commodity, instead of the basis of our rich and diverse environment here in Minnesota.

We need to educate Minnesotan's and give them the latest information on Aquatic Invasive Species, on forest health issues like the Emerald Ash Borer or Spruce Bud Worm, we need to help them mitigate the impacts of climate change on the forests that their family manages. We can also change laws so that these people can open up their land to recreation without opening themselves to legal liability. Minnesota will add another one million people by the year 2020, and giving land owners the tools they need to open their land for use by others for hunting, camping, hiking and other recreation will be critically important.

And we should buy some land that is critical to an integrated management plan for creating wildlife corridors, acquiring specific values, or solidifying large blocks of land.

The Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, released in 2008 after four years of work by the State's best and brightest, was written outside the corrupting influence of power politics. The MSCP offers comprehensive assessments and recommendations pertaining to the future of Minnesota. The Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan charts long-term strategies for addressing critical issues and trends impacting Minnesotans environment and natural resources. The Plan was developed to guide our environmental efforts. It is being thrown out the window.

ACT TODAY

Use the Email link below to send your legislators the message that you own forest and/or riparian land in Minnesota, and you do not believe that the only way Minnesota can "protect" the resources you manage is to condemn your land or buy them from you. You believe that research, education, incentive and innovation are also powerful tools. You believe that the true power of the Legacy Amendment money is that it will give future Minnesotans the chance to respond to a world that our best visionaries cannot even fully imagine - to changes in our climate that are just beginning to be expressed on our landscape, to Invasive Species that have yet to be introduced, to diseases and pests that have yet to take hold.

We have provided a boilerplate for you to communicate with your legislators, but please add your own comments. Impersonal boilerplate messages from constituents do

not have the power of original and personal messages from actual constituents with legislators.

[Use this link to ask your legislator to take action.](#)

If you are not an MSRPO member, [JOIN TODAY](#) so that we can keep you up to date on laws that will affect your tax bills, and the water quality of your lake as well as informative webinars on how to appeal your property tax bill, how to pass your property onto your heirs, and how to protect your lake from the advance of Aquatic Invasive Species.

MSRPO is truly a non-partisan grass roots organization. We work for cleaner lakes, better forest habitat and tax fairness for those who own cabins and hunting shacks in Minnesota. Because most of us cannot vote where our properties are located, it is only by joining together that we can preserve the places that we love. [Join](#) MSRPO today.

Sincerely,



Jeff Forester
Executive Director
MSRPO Coalition
(952) 854.1317
jeff@msrpo.org



Not a member of MSRPO? [Click here](#) to join our mailing list. Together, we can protect the family lake place from confiscatory property taxes.

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