

GOGEBIC COUNTY FOREST EXPANSION MNRTF GRANT APPLICATION PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

Acquisition of approximately 4007.30 acres of unique forestland with highly productive wildlife habitat that is intermingled within the existing 50,410-acre Gogebic County Forest Ownership matrix. The Gogebic County Forest is a working forest which provides jobs in the forest products industry, critical wildlife habitat while supporting outdoor recreation. Acquisition of this significant forest acreage will economically benefit the local community and will ensure long-term stability of public access for numerous recreational pursuits.

The proposed acquisition will allow improved access to thousands of acres of the County Forest, enable the expansion of the Mosinee GEMS site, and provide added protections to over 1.5 miles of shoreline for the Little Black River. It will also enable the County Forest Program to manage more effectively towards habitat goals and objectives identified in the DNR's Devils Creek-Chaney Lake Deer Wintering Complex Management Plan. This complex is essential to winter survival of deer in Gogebic County. Deer based recreation, primarily deer hunting, remains a driving economic force in the region. Operationally, it will save the county funds by eliminating costs associated with over 26 miles of inholding boundaries.

This acquisition will ensure that the land continues to be open to the public and available for hiking, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, skiing, bird watching, berry picking, and growing array of non-traditional recreational pursuits which the area is becoming increasingly popular for. The promotion and growth of non-traditional outdoor recreation pursuits is critical to the economic growth of the Western Upper Peninsula. Securing this unique land base is the foundation for any potential for economic development and sustainability for local communities. It is essential to continue to provide, not only trails, but public space for our Gogebic County guests to utilize as well. The land assets will attract vacationers, people who would like to live, work and play here, and help retain our local population by providing additional high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities and support of the local forest products industry. The acquisition will be an asset to the whole State of Michigan for future generations and will be critically important for the Western Upper Peninsula while ensuring conservation of the land for all of Michigan's citizens and visitors.