

Partners in Forestry (PIF) is grateful to be recognized by our peers and colleagues for our conservation efforts in the Northwoods of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. This leadership award, from Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, is named after the late (former) DATCP Secretary Rod Nilsestuen, and is greatly appreciated and fitting as we benefitted from an ongoing working relationship with the Secretary that included a working lands meeting with him in Vilas County in 2008.

PIF is a sustainable forestry landowner cooperative, now in its 16th year. Early board members founded the co-op with the understanding that sustainable forestry requires *conservation* to remain truly sustainable. We have partnered with federal and state agencies, local land trusts and conservation groups, but the core of the co-op remains the landowners who care about the future of their resource. We have eagerly worked with landowners on land conservation projects and careful forest management across the Northwood region.

Our most notable achievement to date may be steering the protection of over 4000 acres of working forest land and riparian habitat in Vilas County, which culminated recently with the Upper Wisconsin River Legacy Forest. This achievement was a result of coordinating at least 10 different projects with land owners who had very unique wishes, needs and concerns, and differing timelines. We also have an impressive record in the Upper Peninsula, conserving more than 1800 acres of valuable forest habitat. In both states, most of this acreage is also permanently available for non-motorized public recreation. PIF's land conservation efforts have protected not only forests, but also our highly valuable Northwoods water resources, including very special lake shoreline, river corridors and wetlands. We have long recognized that land conservation is not only about forest economics, but involves a vast array of ecological, social and intrinsic values which benefit society as well. These projects with high ecological value were a solid fit for federal and state programs like the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and demonstrate the value of these programs to our area and its citizens.

The PIF board of directors has many decades of experience in natural resource matters, including forestry, land management, real estate, and conservation, and we are proud that the co-op is poised to continue this tradition of conservation in our invaluable Northwoods.



"Much of Dalzell Lake is now protected in the Northern Highland State Forest, as part of a contiguous block of 2000 acres in the immediate Palmer Lake area protected by the State of Wisconsin with coordination by Partners in Forestry. PIF efforts have protected over 2400 acres and about 3 miles of lakefront in that area, all now with public access"



"In an ongoing conservation project, several PIF members stepped up to purchase a 120 acre parcel on Hilltop Lake which was about to be fragmented. Priceless lake frontage and protection adjoining the Sylvania Wilderness are important considerations in the northern hardwood-hemlock forest, which includes unique plant species such as native orchids"

Released by: Joe Hovel, president of the PIF Board of Directors
Board members: John Schwarzmann (VP), Rod Sharka (treasurer), Margo Popovich (secretary) Jim Joyce, Joe Koehler, Dick Steffes