

Dear Landowner(manager),

The Heron Lake Watershed District would like to inform you of new conservation opportunities within the watershed. Because of your property's location within the watershed, you may be eligible for new conservation opportunities funded through a grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The goal of this grant is to preserve and protect land to provide wildlife habitat and water quality improvements within the Heron Lake watershed. Lands targeted for permanent protection and restoration will be those with restorable wetlands that will provide the public benefits of habitat and water storage.

Working with several conservation partners, the Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) is seeking landowners who are interested in preserving their conservation legacy and land. Options for landowners include placing a conservation easement on their property or selling their land to a conservation organization. Under a conservation easement, landowners still own and retain the right to use and manage their lands according to the terms set by the easement. When the land is conveyed, the easement will transfer with the land ensuring permanent protection for future generations.

For landowners interested in selling their land, another option would be to have the land purchased outright via fee-title acquisition. Once the land is purchased and restored, it will then be transferred to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the purposes of public recreation and scenic enjoyment.

There are many options provided through easement programs run by non-governmental organizations, your local Soil and Water Conservation District, NRCS, FSA, DNR, and FWS offices. The HLWD is willing to assist and connect you with the program that best fits your needs.

Our land is connected through water, and restoring marginal land is one way to increase flood protection and improve habitat for wildlife. These areas have the added benefit of being places to recreate, relax, and explore. Whether your motivation is wildlife or income, we hope we can find an opportunity that will work for you. If you are interested in conservation on your land or just have questions, please contact the HLWD, at the info listed above, to further discuss possibilities or programs. Also, if you know of anyone else who is looking for opportunities, please inform them of this program and let them know they can reach out to us!

Enclosed in this letter you will also find materials explaining some, but not all, of the potential conservation options for your land. Also, please visit our website, [www.hlwdonline.org](http://www.hlwdonline.org) to stay up to date with what is happening in HLWD.



Davis Harder is our new Conservation Technician who is charged with outreach and coordination. He grew up on a farm north of Mountain Lake, MN and is excited to provide landowners with resources to help them achieve their conservation goals.

Easement= While still retaining ownership and title to the land for potential future sale, the owner gives up specified rights in return for payment. Most conservation easements are perpetual, staying with the land through sale.

Fee-title Acquisition= The landowner sells the land, retaining no ownership or property rights.