

# RESOLUTION

## ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Public Works Committee

Initiated by

Public Works Committee

& Parks Advisory Committee

Submitted by



John Traynor, Parks Manager

Drafted by

April 29, 2021

Date Drafted

### SUPPORT, RENEW AND FUND THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- 1 **WHEREAS**, the Act creating the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (KNSP), named for  
2 Republican Governor Warren Knowles and Democratic Governor Gaylord Nelson, was signed into  
3 law in 1989 by Governor Tommy Thompson; and  
4
- 5 **WHEREAS**, the KNSP was created to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect  
6 water quality and fisheries, expand outdoor recreation, and support Wisconsin's timber and tourism  
7 and industries; and  
8
- 9 **WHEREAS**, because of the KNSP, the Wisconsin DNR, local governments, and nonprofit  
10 conservation organizations have received state funds which are matched with federal, local, and  
11 private funds to purchase public land and easements for conservation and to support the maintenance  
12 of Wisconsin's waterways, parks, forests, and trails; and  
13
- 14 **WHEREAS**, the KNSP has significantly benefited Wisconsin both environmentally and  
15 economically, by forests which sequester carbon and clean our air, wetlands which filter water and  
16 buffer against floods, by allowing its residents to enjoy the outdoors and nature, which is shown to  
17 improve health, and  
18
- 19 **WHEREAS**, a conservative estimate of the value of "natural infrastructure" on lands protected by the  
20 KNSP is more than two billion dollars a year; and  
21
- 22 **WHEREAS**, even with the known benefits of the KNSP, that over the past three decades, KNSP has  
23 been underfunded, especially when compared to other State investments and when compared to  
24 similar outdoor investments by other states (Wisconsin invests less money in parks and outdoor  
25 recreation than any other state with the exception of Alabama.); and  
26
- 27 **WHEREAS**, planning and executing stewardship projects may take years, and, as such, landowners,  
28 donors, nonprofits, and government agencies need certainty about the long-term future of the KNSP  
29 program in order for projects to be as strategic and successful as possible; and  
30
- 31 **WHEREAS**, a coalition of 58 groups representing environmental conservation, business interests,  
32 local governments, hunting, fishing, forestry, agriculture, and recreation recognize the positive impact  
33 that the KNSP program has on Wisconsin's health, economy, and its priceless landscapes; and  
34
- 35 **WHEREAS**, surveys have shown that 93 percent of Wisconsin voters want to see the KNSP  
36 continued; and  
37
- 38 **WHEREAS**, the County of Rock has benefited from the KNSP funds for many projects including  
39 Beckman Mill, Happy Hollow Park, Turtle Creek Parkway, Sweet-Allyn Park, the Peace Trail, the Ice  
40 Age Trail and many other parks and public properties including those in Beloit, Janesville, Evansville  
41 and Edgerton; and  
42
- 43 **WHEREAS**, the Governor's 2021-23 Budget includes a ten-year reauthorization of the Stewardship  
44 Program and that it be funded at seventy million dollars a year.  
45
- 46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Rock County Board duly assembled this 13<sup>th</sup>  
47 day of May, 2021, supports the reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship  
48 Fund for ten years and seventy million dollars as stated in the Governor's proposed budget.

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

1/1 Rick Richard

Rick Richard, Chair

1/1 Mary Mawhinney

Mary Mawhinney, Vice-Chair

1/1 Mike Mulligan

Mike Mulligan

1/1 Yuri Rashkin

Yuri Rashkin

1/1 Bob Yeomans

Bob Yeomans

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1/1 Floyd Finney

Floyd Finney

1/1 Dean Paynter

Dean Paynter

absent

Tom Presny

-EXECUTIVE SUMMARY-

**SUPPORT, RENEW AND FUND THE  
KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

The purpose of this resolution is to support the reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Fund. Rock County has been the recipient of these funds multiple times in the past and has utilized these funds on projects like the Peace Trail development and the rehabilitation of the Turtle Creek Parkway. But just like other grant funding, there is an expiration date on this program. This Resolution is to show support for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant program for ten years and seventy million dollars as stated in the Governor's proposed budget.

Therefore, it is recommended that reauthorization be made in support of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund for ten years and seventy million dollars as stated in the Governor's proposed budget.