

## MNDNR Background-UPM Blandin Project

Prepared by Richard Peterson – Forest Legacy Coordinator 6/19/2010

**Over view:** The Upper Mississippi Forest Project (UPM Blandin) will protect nearly 190,000 acres of working forests in Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Cass, Beltrami, Koochiching and Clearwater counties in northern Minnesota (See attached map). The project includes a permanent conservation easement on 187,876 acres and a fee acquisition of 1,300 acres. Protection of the property will prevent fragmentation and parcelization of the forest and ensure that the forest remains intact and sustainably managed forever and will continue to provide recreational, economic and environmental benefits to the State.

### Project Features:

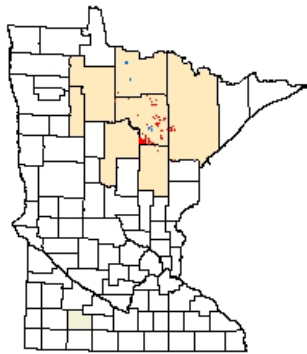
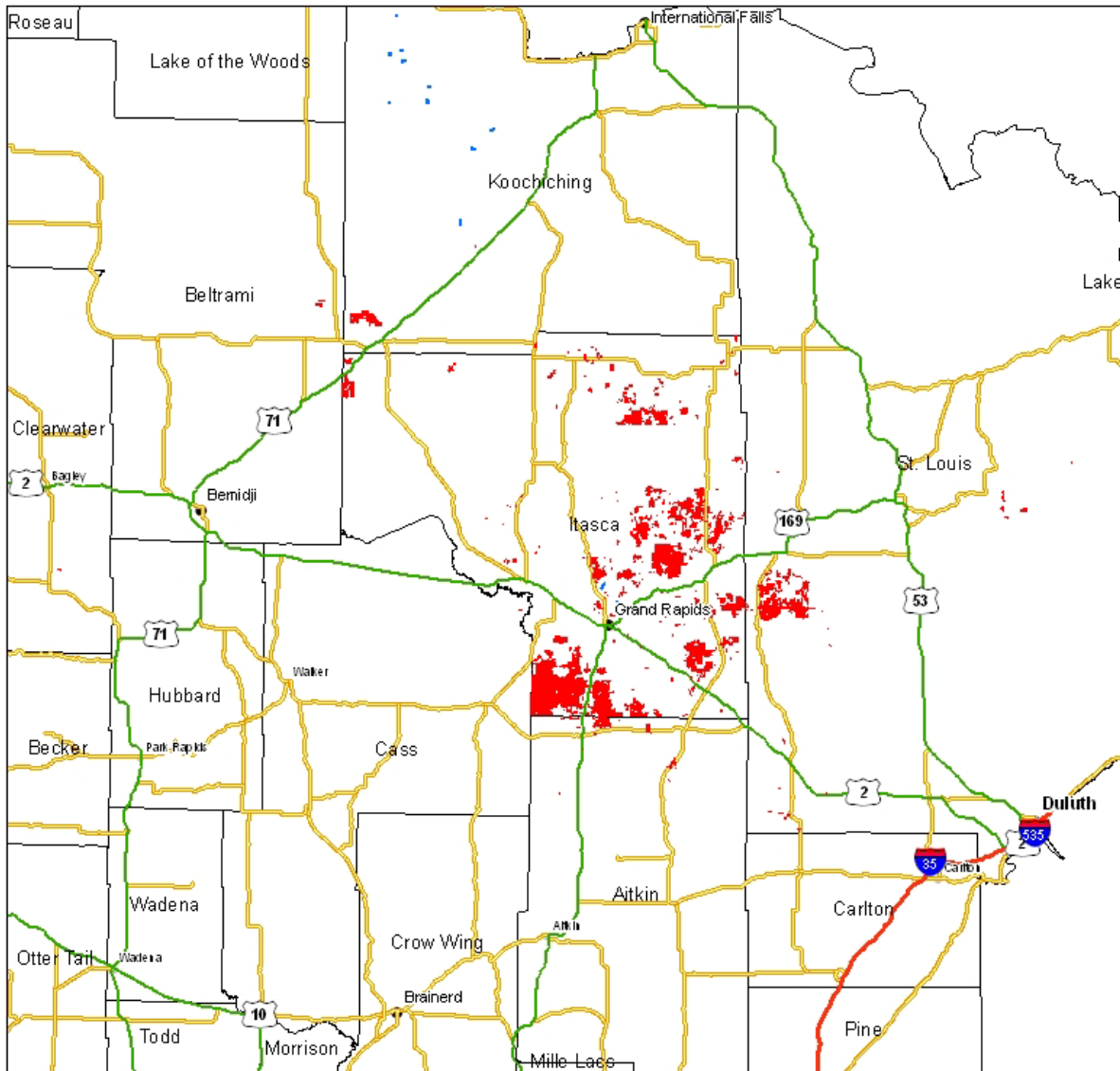
- This project will ensure permanent public recreational access for hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling and other uses. The property contains an extensive network of grant-in-aid snowmobile trails as well as state-designated ohv routes. A segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail is also planned for the property.
- The project contains extensive water features including approximately 30 miles of state-designated trout streams and over 100 miles of other streams, over 130 miles of lake and pond shoreline, and approximately 60,000 acres of intact wetlands. The managed forests provide habitat for deer, grouse, woodcock as well as numerous non-game species.
- The property provides an important forest resource that contributes timber and other forest products that are important to the regional and state economy.

### DNR Involvement:

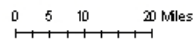
- November 2008-June 2009: Dick Peterson and Craig Engwall begin discussions with UPM Blandin with Tom Duffus of the Conservation Fund serving as facilitator for the discussions. An agreement is reached to proceed with a project proposal to the LSOHC and a draft conservation easement is agreed to. Appraisal is completed and certified and negotiations over final terms begins. A project funding proposal is submitted to LSOHC. The proposal is recommended by LSOHC to the Legislature and Legislature appropriates \$36 million over 2 years for the project.
- June 2009: Agreement on terms is reached with UPM Blandin and Option is signed.
- July 2009 –Present: Due diligence work is begun. Closing documents are in preparation with the expectation to conclude all due diligence and close on July 8, 2010 subject to funding availability and completion and agreement on all due diligence.

**Funding:** Appropriation from Minnesota Session Laws 2009. Chapter 172, Art. 1, Sect 2. Subdiv. 3. Forests. provides \$18 million each in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 that also requires at least \$9 million in private donations for the project. The total price of \$44 million comes from \$9.75 million in private donations (Blandin Foundation, Richard King Mellon Foundation, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation-Walmart Acres for America Program) provided through a grant to MNDNR from the Conservation Fund and the remaining \$34.25 from the Legislative appropriation.

# UPM Blandin Project



- UPM Blandin Conservation Easement
- Fee Lands



Note: This map shows the approximate relative location of property boundaries and other features but was not prepared by a professional land surveyor. This map is provided for informational purposes only and may not be sufficient or appropriate for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map prepared by Richard Peterson June 2010.

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