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THE
CONSERVATION FUND



NEWS



Lakefront property protected near Camp Ripley benefits communities and environment

Duluth, Minn. — Several partners today announced a conservation milestone near Minnesota Power's Sylvan Hydroelectric Project and the Camp Ripley Army National Guard Base in central Minnesota.

The Conservation Fund facilitated the purchase of a 55-acre tract on Kramer Lake from Minnesota Power with the help of the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund. The Conservation Fund then donated the land to Sylvan Township, which will own and manage the land for public access and open space while conserving an area important for wildlife habitat and fishing access.

The property is located within the Camp Ripley Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) priority area. The buffer area is a critical component of the larger Sentinel Landscape—a roughly 805,000-acre boundary around the military installation deemed high priority for protection.

Camp Ripley is an important economic engine of central Minnesota, and its Sentinel Landscape is critical for providing both ecological conservation and public recreation opportunities. The forest and lakeshores within the Sentinel Landscape not only protect the headwaters and water quality for the Mississippi River, but allow Camp Ripley to complete training with few impediments. In recent years, this land has faced high risk of being sold and converted to private development, which affects its ecological value and hinders the installation's mission to train soldiers. To avoid this outcome, partners supporting Camp Ripley, including Minnesota Power, Sylvan Township, The Conservation Fund, and others, have united to acquire and protect land within the Army Compatible Use Buffer area.

"Strong partnerships are the cornerstones of our civilization; they ensure the safekeeping of our future and the best results for everyone collectively. The solid cooperation we share with organizations like Minnesota Power and Sylvan Township are prime examples of how we can work together to complete our objectives and the safeguard of our environment for years to come," said Brig. Gen. Lowell Kruse, Minnesota National Guard Assistant Adjutant General – Army and Senior Commander on Camp Ripley.

With the acquisition announced today, Sylvan Township will own and manage all 55 acres on Kramer Lake. The lands will remain undeveloped and forested, and will be accessible to the community.

"Kramer Lake is one of the gems of Sylvan Township, and the addition of this acreage to Sylvan Township's public lands fits well with our comprehensive plan," said Greg Booth, Chair of the

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Sylvan Town Board. "The township is committed to preserving these important green spaces for the benefit of its residents, wildlife, water quality and native species. The acquisition of these parcels also fits well with our partnership with Camp Ripley in creating a buffer zone that is good for the camp, residents, visitors and the environment. We greatly appreciate the work of The Conservation Fund, which helped make this happen."

Kim Berns-Melhus, State Director for The Conservation Fund said, "Thanks to Minnesota Power for their partnership in helping us achieve the goals of Camp Ripley's Sentinel Landscape. We are thrilled to be the acquisition partner on this important conservation project and look forward to future projects that will provide conservation outcomes important to both Camp Ripley and the citizens of Minnesota."

The sale of the Kramer Lake property is the culmination of several years of ongoing conversations, site visits, and collaboration between all partners.

"Environmental stewardship is a core value at Minnesota Power and ALLETE, and we work closely with communities and customers on sustainable land management," said Nicole Johnson, Vice President ALLETE and Chief Administrative Officer. "We're pleased to see this land conserved for the public's use and enjoyment, while also furthering Camp Ripley's and Sylvan Township's goals for land management in the area. In addition, as a Yellow Ribbon company, we're proud to play a role in helping Camp Ripley and the soldiers who are trained there serve our nation."

ALLETE/Minnesota Power was named a Yellow Ribbon company in 2016 by the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs for its support of military-connected employees, veterans and their families.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 145,000 customers, 15 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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