



Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
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RE: Support for application to GLRI Joint Ventures Habitat Protection program of the USFWS for Koski family 364 acres on Abbaye Peninsula of Lake Superior, Baraga County, Michigan.

The 2019 award of \$10,000 to the Keweenaw Land Trust under the Community Conservation UPEC grant program is intended to help leverage the purchase of the Koski family property on the Abbaye Peninsula of Lake Superior. This is local money that can be strategically used, in conjunction with other public and private funding sources, to achieve good results for the overall landscape.

- KLT is stitching together pieces of a valuable but tattered landscape that works towards restoration and recovery of the forest. The removal of a ten-mile fence at a game farm just south of the Koski property was a huge improvement for the movement of wildlife and people. It also demonstrated KLT's commitment to enhancing the public accessibility of this land in the face of some skeptics who doubted that commitment.

- Finnish Americans have a long presence on the Abbaye Peninsula, going back to the settlement of the community of Aura (which means "plow") by 14 families in 1914. They settled on cutover lands, and developed small farms and camps on the peninsula. Their land ethic was utilitarian, based on a history of extracting value from the land. That ethic is shifting now with the later generations.

- The letter signed by four members of the Koski family is very moving. They need to sell the land, which for many in the past had served as an insurance policy, pension fund, or educational trust. But it is not about maximizing the dollar value. They are willing to sell to KLT at a discount because they believe in the value of this land as a restored community forest for everyone, not just a woodlot. They have also set a deadline for a decision.

- Land in the Upper Peninsula is often hostage to family histories, and the Koski letter indicates that fact. The window to escape clear cutting may be narrow indeed, in this case a couple of months. Approximately half of the land in the U.P. is in small ownership, and generational transfer is a chief vulnerability. We need to act now if this opportunity is not to be lost.

Please use our arguments and funds to help support the appeal to the GLRI Joint Ventures Habitat Protection program of the USFWS.

Sincerely yours,

Jon Saari For the Community Conservation grants committee and the UPEC Board
