



# Keystone Woods

## Washington County Priority Conservation Area

### Land Area

- **Total Area:** 2,227 acres
- **Forest/Woodland:** 479 acres
- **Grassland:** 81 acres
- **Wetland:** 410 acres

### Primary Threats

- Invasive species
- Oak wilt

### Species of Concern

- Red-Shouldered Hawk
- Bald Eagle
- Common Snapping Turtle
- Blanding's Turtle
- Fernleaf False Foxglove
- Bog Copper



### Land and Water Legacy Program

In 2006, a \$20 million bond referendum passed, initiating the creation of the county's Land and Water Legacy Program, which purchases land or land interests to preserve its natural condition. The program is ongoing and has used collaborative partnerships to invest over \$40 million in protection, conserving over 1,300 acres of high-quality natural lands.

### Washington County "Top 10" Priority Conservation Areas

The Washington County "Top 10" Priority Conservation Areas represent the county's highest priority areas for land protection. They were identified using a ranking system based upon the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System and other available nature-related datasets. These areas serve as a guide for county land protection projects, however land outside of these areas may still be considered.

### Priority Area Description

Keystone Woods is located in Hugo and is on the boundary between the Rice Creek Watershed District and the Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District. It encompasses the western portion of Barker Lake, and Kelley Farms owns most of the land in the area.

Habitats in the area include wooded areas like high-quality oak forests in the uplands and tamarack swamps and fens in the lowlands. Other open wetland habitats include emergent swamps, rich fens, cattail marshes, and open water. Dry oak woodlands can be found on the sand and gravel ridges and contain oak and other hardwood tree species. The understory has woodland flowers and grasses.

## Conservation Objectives and Benefits

### Protecting Water Quality

Preserving the uplands of the area will help protect the surface water quality of the surrounding high-quality and unique wetland communities.

Protecting highly permeable soils, recharge wetlands, and upland depressional areas will also help facilitate aquifer recharge.



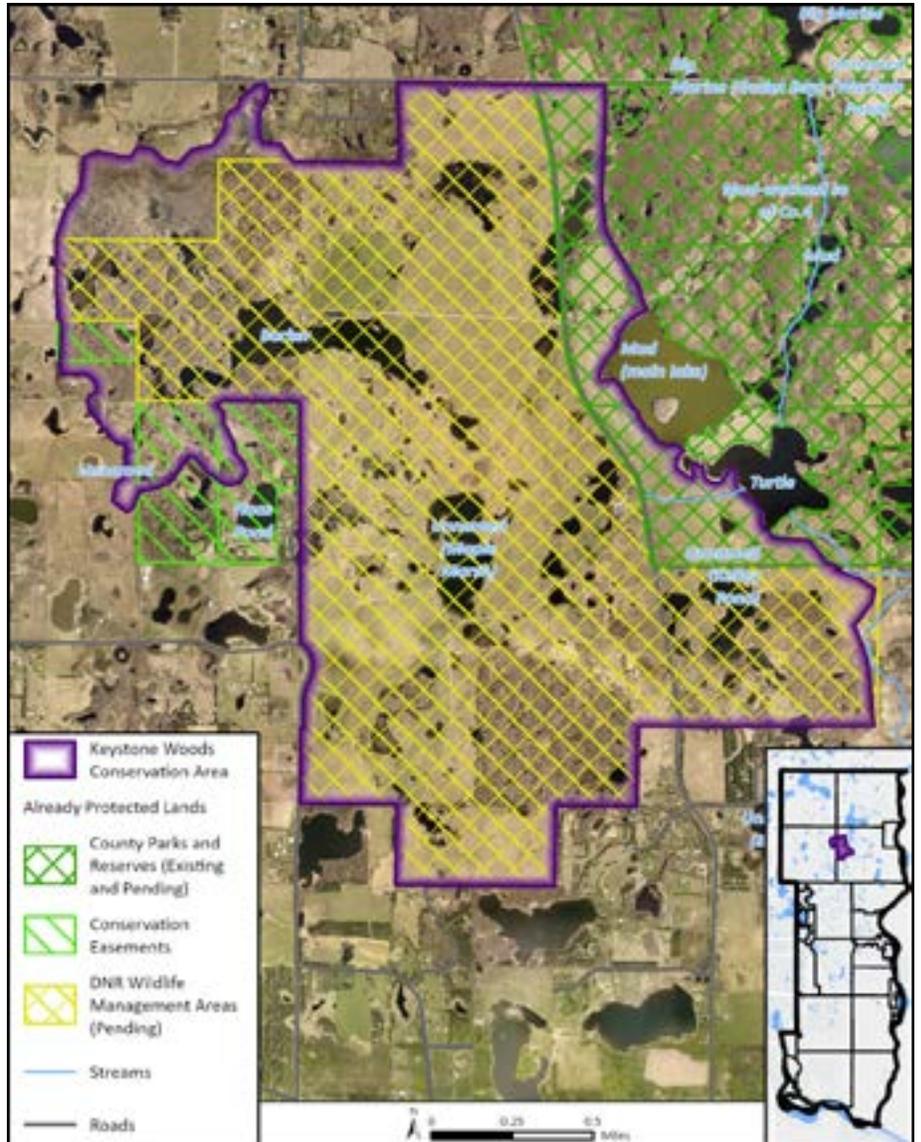
### Protecting Habitats

Protecting Keystone Woods from future development through protection, acquisition, or other means will help to maintain and improve the ecology of the area and support wildlife that depends on large blocks of continuous woodland habitats.

### Targeting Invasives

Removing the increased abundance of species of concern, including buckthorn, will help protect the forest understory from alteration.

Monitoring and addressing diseases like oak wilt early will reduce the threat of having to remove large oaks from savannas and woodlands.



### For more information:

Washington County  
Land and Water Legacy Program  
[WashingtonCountyMN.gov/LWLP](http://WashingtonCountyMN.gov/LWLP)

