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NEWS RELEASE

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**Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter Testifies on State Budget’s Impacts on
Forestry and Stewardship at Rice Lake Budget Hearing**

Rice Lake: Today Sierra Club Legislative Chair Caryl Terrell testified before the Joint Finance Committee at the public hearing to discuss our organization’s serious concerns about the state budget’s impact on forestry and Knowles-Nelson Stewardship land purchases.

Terrell urged the Joint Finance Committee to keep the Division of Forestry in Madison to maximize efficiency and coordination of statewide programs. She also urged JFC to maintain strong oversight of the Managed Forest Land program by maintaining current DNR forestry staffing levels, by requiring DNR staff to approve MFL cutting notices, and by maintaining the requirement for DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources staff complete Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) reviews.

She also urged JFC not to freeze Knowles-Nelson Stewardship land purchases, which have protected over 500,000 acres of land since 1989. “Stewardship lands benefit all Wisconsinites by sustaining our tourism industry, which supports over 185,000 jobs and contributes \$17.5 billion to our economy each year, by protecting habitat, connecting youth to outdoor learning opportunities, and enhancing recreation such as wildlife watching, fishing and hunting,” said Terrell. The Brule St. Croix Forest Legacy Project offers public recreation and sustainable forest management on 65,867 acres of globally significant pine barrens, lakes, and streams in Douglas, Bayfield, Burnett and Washburn counties. This project - the largest recreational and forest land acquisition in Wisconsin history - would not have been possible without our Stewardship program. Freezing land purchases now will risk losing future opportunities to protect these valuable properties. Stewardship has strong support in Wisconsin, as evidenced by the fact that nearly 9 in 10 support Stewardship investments, even in tough budget times.

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Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club’s mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters from throughout Wisconsin working to promote clean energy and protect land and water resources.