

CONSOLIDATED CONSERVATION COMMITTEE UPDATE **ISSUE – X111 – 2011**

This is your invitation so mark these days on your Con-Con Committee Calendar, March 3rd, May 5th, June 29th and the annual reorganizational meeting August 31st. The forums will be held at the Birchdale Area Community Building at 7:00 PM.

The Koochiching County Board has accepted the 2011 budget recommendations from the Con-Con Committee that totals \$18,350. Among the items the Committee endorsed include continued funding for our local cemetery beautification, community building investments, nuisance beaver maintenance and additional stipends to fund the Committee expenses and Coordinator contract. The Committee's major expenditure recommendation of \$8,000 is directed to clean and maintain our judicial and forestry ditches. This has been an ongoing effort for over a decade and conversation is taking place with the Mn. Department of Natural Resources Forestry division to partner in the endeavor. Items of discussion last year included the Highway 11 reconstruction, upgrades to the Frontier and Vidas accesses, restoration of the Williams Township Hall, a review of the by-laws and membership.

Con-Con lands as they are often called are state owned property held in the public trust specifically for conservation purposes, the responsibility for management resides with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. During the 1920's and 30's a number of counties in Minnesota issued bonds to pay the cost of ditching vast area's in Northern Minnesota for the purpose of creating the United States Mecca for agriculture. Can't you just imagine the excitement in the area that our settler neighbors must have entertained? Land in the Con-Con area was sold and the ditches were dug but as history has clearly documented most of the ditching efforts failed to create productive farm land causing owners to default on their property taxes. Naturally when the homesteaders became delinquent the result was that Counties who had all borrowed significant funding to achieve this dream also defaulted on their loan leading to many a kerfuffle. The Mn. Governor stepped in and eventually the legislature enacted a law to turn all the delinquent lands over to the State which then guaranteed repayment of loans for ownership of the land. There were 24,187 acres affected in Koochiching and we were not the lone bachelor at the party as elected officials of our neighboring Counties of Beltrami and Lake-of-Woods were also greatly attracted to the proposition and shared in the adventure. Your attendance at the Con-Con Committee meetings is requested.

THANK YOU FROM THE CON-CON COMMITTEE