

# NORMAL SCHOOL FUND



## Investing in Communities and Public Education Throughout Wisconsin

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# Managing Wisconsin's Trust Assets for Public Education

## Revenue

- Timber sales



## Normal School Fund



Wisconsin received title to approximately 3.5 million acres of land pursuant to the federal Swamp Land Act of 1850. These acres were to be sold and the proceeds used for the purpose of drainage and reclamation of “swamp and overflowed lands,” to the extent necessary. Wisconsin chose to set aside the proceeds from the sale of 1.75 million acres of these “Swamp Lands” to create the principal for the Normal School Fund.

The Normal Schools were two-year teacher colleges that became an integral part of the University of Wisconsin system. The first state Normal School was established in 1866 in Platteville.

Today, assets of the Normal School Fund include approximately \$30 million in financial assets and over 70,000 acres of land that is managed for timber production and public recreation. Timber sale revenues are added to the principal of the Normal School Fund.

## Investments



The Normal School Fund is invested in accordance with the Prudent Person fiduciary standard. This important change in Wisconsin statutes in late 2015 allowed the diversification of Trust Fund assets necessary to reduce risk and increase long-term returns.

Some Normal School Fund monies continue to be invested in State and Municipal Bonds and the State Trust Fund Loan Program, which provides Wisconsin communities with a flexible and cost-effective source of funds for:

- Economic development
- School repairs and improvements
- Local infrastructure and utilities
- Capital equipment and vehicles

**Borrower:** Village of Kewaskum



## Beneficiaries

Provides funding for:

- University of Wisconsin System
  - \$100,000 annually for sustainable scholarships through UW Extension program
  - \$100,000 annually for scholarships through the Nelson Institute
  - \$300,000 annually for environmental education at UW Stevens Point, College of Natural Resources
  - Remainder of distribution (last year \$525,000) annually to UW Merit Scholars program

