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Dear Friends,

For those of you who are not familiar with the tract of land referred to as the *Van Vliet Hemlocks*, it is a gem and represents a rare remnant of the northern hardwood-hemlock forest. It includes undisturbed black-ash cedar swamps, several small undeveloped bog lakes, and one and a half miles of undeveloped frontage on Averill and Van Vliet Lakes. If you spend time there you come to see how all of us benefit from the contributions this parcel makes to the watershed, property values, aesthetics, and quality of life in the northwoods.

The property is owned and managed by the state's Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. The ultimate goal is to have it purchased by the Department of Natural Resources and protected in perpetuity as a State Natural Area. To promote this process, a new group of individuals and organizations has been formed. The *Friends of Van Vliet Hemlocks*, in affiliation with North Lakeland Discovery Center, will serve to develop ways in which the Van Vliet Hemlocks can provide educational and recreational opportunities for those who visit. A hiker-friendly network of trails, an excellent trail map, along with trail and interpretive signs have already been established.

We would very much like you to become a *Friend* to this worthwhile project and help us to continue the work we have begun. We need money for educational materials, trail maintenance, signage and a variety of other expenses. Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed membership form. Our wild land cannot be replaced. Please help to preserve and protect it.

Those needing more information about this project can contact any of the board members or go to www.vanvlietlake.com or www.discoverycenter.net.

Gratefully,

The *Friends of Van Vliet Hemlocks* Board of Directors