

August 20, 2013

To: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

The Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on August 20, 2013 and reviewed the proposed acquisition of 762 acres of land in sections 4 and 5 of Fleming Township. It is understood that the proposed acquisition would be managed by the DNR as part of the Gun Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Several points were discussed by SWCD Board members:

1. The Board agreed that keeping a healthy agricultural base in Aitkin County would be of great benefit to the local economy and to land use diversity.
2. It is understood that the two likely options for this property are: 1. the sale that would result in an expansion to the Gun Lake WMA or 2. continued pursuit of wetland bank credits by the landowners.
3. PILT payments would benefit the county and its taxpayers if the land were owned and managed as a WMA.
4. The land would likely remain in some level of agricultural production under the DNR WMA plan and would not remain in agricultural production if it became a wetland bank.
5. Water quality and quantity would likely be similar under either plan.
6. Wildlife (especially open-land species) would benefit from the WMA plan.
7. The existing sharptail grouse habitat and observation blinds located adjacent to the property, have tourism value and do benefit local businesses, this may be lost if the land becomes a wetland bank.
8. The existing public ditches likely provide benefits to adjacent properties and should remain open under either option.

After lengthy discussion the SWCD Board did not recommend either option 1 or 2 but did list the discussion points above for the Aitkin County Board's consideration.

Summarized from the SWCD Board discussion by Steve Hughes, SWCD District Manager

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Board Meeting Attendance Record

Date: August 27, 2013

Name	Please check the boxes that apply.			Company Representative – please list.
	Aitkin County Citizen	Aitkin County Employee		
<i>Subecroa</i>	X			
<i>Steve Hughes</i>				<i>Aitkin County SWCD</i>
<i>Tim Thompson</i>	X			
<i>BOB HARBARTH</i>	X			<i>MY SELF</i>
<i>Dennis Thompson</i>	X			
<i>Tom Thompson</i>				
<i>CURTIS SPARKS & Julie Sparks</i>	X			<i>THOMPSON FARMS/SPARKS ENV. CON</i>
<i>Jan Lundberg</i>	X			<i>self</i>
<i>Glancei Lamberini</i>	X			<i>Aitkin Age</i>
<i>Gabe Tveit</i>	X			<i>SELF</i>
<i>MARK JROSS</i>		X		<i>ACLD</i>

