



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

288
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: December 15, 2020

Title of Item: Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area Acquisition

<input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*
Submitted by: Rich Courtemanche		Department: Land
Presenter (Name and Title): Russ Reisz,		Estimated Time Needed: n/a
Summary of Issue: <p>At the bequest of the Cedar Lake Conservancy, the Northern Waters Land Trust purchased 48 acres of land on Cedar Lake within the DNR Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area and adjacent to the existing public water access. Funds for this acquisition was approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. The Northern Waters Land Trust intends to donate this property to the MNDNR to add to their wildlife management area. Donations of WMA land by conservation groups utilizing Legacy Amendment funding requires notification to the County Board.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments: Notification only		
Recommended Action/Motion: Notification only		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.



23 November 2020

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners
c/o Rich Courtemanche, Land Commissioner
502 Minnesota Ave North
Aitkin MN 56431

Dear Commissioners,

The Northern Waters Land Trust has received an appropriation from the Legislature as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to purchase approximately 48 acres of land in Aitkin County. This purchase is scheduled to occur in 2020 and soon thereafter the Northern Waters Land Trust intends to donate this property to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Division of Wildlife to become an addition to the Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area and Public Water Access. This property is located in Farm Island Township (T46, R27, Section 7).

This property is a mix of forest, wetland and hay meadow. This tract will provide wildlife habitat and help protect 1500 feet of lakeshore with intact vegetation beds which provide important habitat for fish populations in the lake. The property will become part of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system and will be available for public use.

Whereas, a County Board resolution is required for MNDNR Wildlife Management Area direct acquisitions, donations of WMA land by conservation groups utilizing Legacy Amendment funding requires County Board notification. The Northern Waters Land Trust contacted the County Board and Farm Island Township in July of 2019 regarding their intentions.

As always, State of Minnesota PILT payments will be made to Aitkin County when this land becomes part of the WMA system. Please contact me if there are any questions regarding MNDNR intentions or allowed uses on the property. It will be a nice addition to one of the smallest WMAs in the area and I expect it will be well utilized by local hunters and wildlife enthusiasts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'RWR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Russell Reisz
Aitkin Area Wildlife Manager
218.429.3053



These data are provided on an "AS-IS" basis, without warranty of any type, expressed or implied, including but not limited to any warranty as to their performance, merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose.

Tuthill Trust Property Map



Cedar Lake--Aitkin County



Date: 4/13/2018

Laurie Westerlund, Commissioner
Aitkin County District 2
30517 270th Lane
Aitkin, MN 56431
laurie.westerlund@co.aitkin.mn.us

Tim Woodrow, Chairman
Farm Island Township
31776 416th Avenue
Aitkin, MN 56431
t_woodrow99@yahoo.com



July 15, 2019

Dear Ms. Westerlund and Mr. Woodrow:

The Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) received an Outdoor Heritage Fund grant in 2018 to acquire property on Cedar Lake to be conveyed to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for management as an addition to the existing Cedar State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The purpose of this letter is to inform both the Township and the County of the pending transaction.

The property description follows:

The East 1800 feet of Government Lot One (1), Section Seven (7), Township Forty-six (46), Range Twenty-seven (27).

Parcel Number 07-0-013800

Cedar Lake is a high priority refuge lake for tullibee (cisco), a fish species at high risk and requiring cold, well oxygenated waters. Cedar Lake is also an important fisheries management lake in north-central Minnesota. This WMA acquisition will continue strategic efforts to protect sensitive lakeshore and lakes by protecting lands in their respective watersheds. The parcel is located in a small bay and includes 1,500 feet of undeveloped shoreline with intact vegetation beds which provides important habitat for fish populations in the lake. The DNR is greatly appreciative to add this 48 acre tract to the adjoining existing 53 acre WMA.

We anticipate the purchase and conveyance closings to be in 2019. Let us know when NWLT and DNR may meet with the Farm Island Township and the Aitkin County Natural Resource Committee to discuss any questions associated with this acquisition project. If a formal meeting is not needed, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Bremicker".

Tim Bremicker, Board Chair

cc.: Russel Reisz, DNR Wildlife Aitkin Office; Dave Olfelt, DNR Regional Wildlife Manager; Bob Karls, NWLT Board Member & Cedar Lake Conservancy



P. O. Box 152
Aitkin, MN
56431

July 10, 2019

Laurie Westerlund, Commissioner
Aitkin County District 2
30517 270th Lane
Aitkin, MN 56431
laurie.westerlund@co.aitkin.mn.us

Tim Woodrow, Chairman
Farm Island Township
31776 416th Avenue
Aitkin, MN 56431
t_woodrow99@yahoo.com

Dear Commissioner Westerlund and Chairman Woodrow,

The Cedar Lake Conservancy together with the Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLTL) have a very unique opportunity to protect the watershed and shoreline of Cedar Lake in Aitkin County. We identified a parcel of land with a sensitive portion of shoreline on Cedar Lake that had several unique characteristics:

1. An undeveloped approximately 1500 foot shoreline with extensive emergent vegetation and habitat;
2. the 46 acre parcel with the undeveloped shoreline is adjacent to the existing Wildlife Management Area that is on the southwest side of Cedar Lake;
3. in 2017 when we approached the landowner, a Trust that had held the land for over 60 years, to discuss the possibility of a conservation easement on the parcel they indicated that they were anticipating selling the parcel for the benefit of the Trust.

The Cedar Lake Conservancy with over 200 members is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment and life experiences in and around Cedar Lake in Aitkin County. We are a Conservancy rather than a "lake association" because we recognize that the whole watershed around our lake affects the lake and we want to be inclusive of all stakeholders in the watershed, not just the shoreline itself. In that regard we have been working closely with the Northern Waters Land Trust which is active in Aitkin, Crow Wing, Cass, and Hubbard Counties and team at Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District to identify conservation opportunities, forestry practices, possible conservation easements and working with them to take steps to protect, educate, and preserve our watershed.

After we found out that the Trust owning the parcel of land described above was planning on selling this parcel we participated with NWLTL in helping secure a Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) grant to fund this with participation from the Cedar Lake Conservancy in 2018. We have an agreement with the seller at this time as discussed in the attached letter and materials. NWLTL has been a great partner in this process and has led and helped the Cedar Lake Conservancy in this process. The attached letter and supporting information from Tim Bremicker, the NWLTL Board Chair is providing information to you. The Cedar Lake Conservancy and the NWLTL would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you if you would like, answer any questions you may have and seek your support in this important conservation effort. I can be reached at 612-850-3811 (cell) or by email at bkarls58@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Bob Karls
33105 458th Place, Aitkin MN 56431
Water Quality Steward and Board Member
Cedar Lake Conservancy