

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road · Saint Paul, Minnesota · 55155-4037

Office of the Commissioner

651-259-5555



January 30, 2017

Mr. Robert (Bob) Anderson
Chairman, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
State Office Building, Room G95
100 Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chair Anderson:

Thank you for your letter dated November 1, 2016 notifying me of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's (LSOHC) request that DNR "initiate appropriate legal action" relative to Crow Wing County and the Mississippi Northwoods project.

Following receipt of your letter, I asked DNR General Counsel to review DNR's authority with respect to this matter. The conclusion of our General Counsel is that DNR has no clear authority to initiate legal action on behalf of the LSOHC or to enforce the terms of the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) Accomplishment Plan for the Mississippi Northwoods. Your letter correctly notes that DNR is the holder of OHF grant agreements, however, that particular grant agreement is now closed, meaning Crow Wing County has no further obligations to the DNR.

Alternatively, DNR met with Crow Wing County, the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota (ATVAM), and local ATV clubs and reached a reasonable resolution to the concerns about appropriate use of lands purchased with OHF dollars. I have attached the letter I recently sent to Crow Wing County Board Chair Doug Houge confirming that resolution.

Going forward, I do believe this circumstance has raised an interesting question regarding the mechanism to enforce OHF accomplishment plan obligations long-term, and I would be happy to work with you and the Legislature on a clarification. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding DNR's role administering OHF funds or the resolution for Mississippi Northwoods.

Sincerely,



Tom Landwehr
Commissioner

c: Mark Johnson, Executive Director, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Mark Liedl, Crow Wing County Land Services Director

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January 23, 2017

Mr. Doug Houge, Chair
Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners
Historic Courthouse
Brainerd, MN 56401

RE: Mississippi Northwoods

Dear Commissioner Houge:

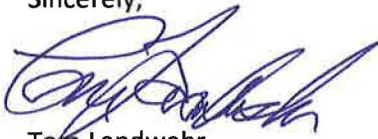
This letter is to follow up on a December 15th meeting convened by the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota (ATVAM) during which representatives from Crow Wing County, DNR, ATVAM, and local ATV clubs were able to discuss issues related to the proposed ATV trails at Mississippi Northwoods. I'm writing to confirm my understanding of, and agreement with, that resolution.

The elements of the resolution are the following:

- Crow Wing County will need to consider and approve a "limited" designation for the Mississippi Northwoods property such that trails in the property are closed to OHV travel unless specifically posted as open for such use. Therefore, only those trails designated for motorized use, as set forth in the County's Grant-In-Aid (GIA) request and depicted on the attached exhibit will be posted as open to OHV travel, except that other trails will remain open for big-game hunting, as provided by state statute. This does not preclude the opportunity for OHVs to use a future multi-use trail corridor that creates a connection across the property (such as the corridor discussed during the Mississippi Northwoods acquisition).
- The ATV trail proposal will eliminate the "Picnic Area."
- The ATV trail proposal will recognize that the "Parking Lot" is currently a logging landing area, and that parking can occur when the area is not in use for forestry operations.
- Cuyuna Iron Range Riders ATV Club and Crow Wing County will revise the GIA application to reflect the changes bulleted above. DNR staff will review the revised GIA application per the usual process.
- The County wishes to proceed expeditiously with the land exchange that was integral to the County originally agreeing to accept ownership of the Mississippi Northwoods property. To achieve this goal, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) will need to consider and approve the land exchange. DNR has reached out to LSOHC Executive Director Mark Johnson, and he has agreed to a meeting to establish a timetable for LSOHC action. DNR will facilitate scheduling of such a meeting and will assist in the review of potential lands to be exchanged.

Together, I believe these points of agreement constitute a reasonable resolution to the concerns related to the appropriate use of lands purchased with Outdoor Heritage Funds. And, again, I greatly appreciate Crow Wing County working with DNR, as well as ATVAM and its local clubs, to find this resolution. I believe resolving this issue paves the way for continued state-county collaboration on future projects.

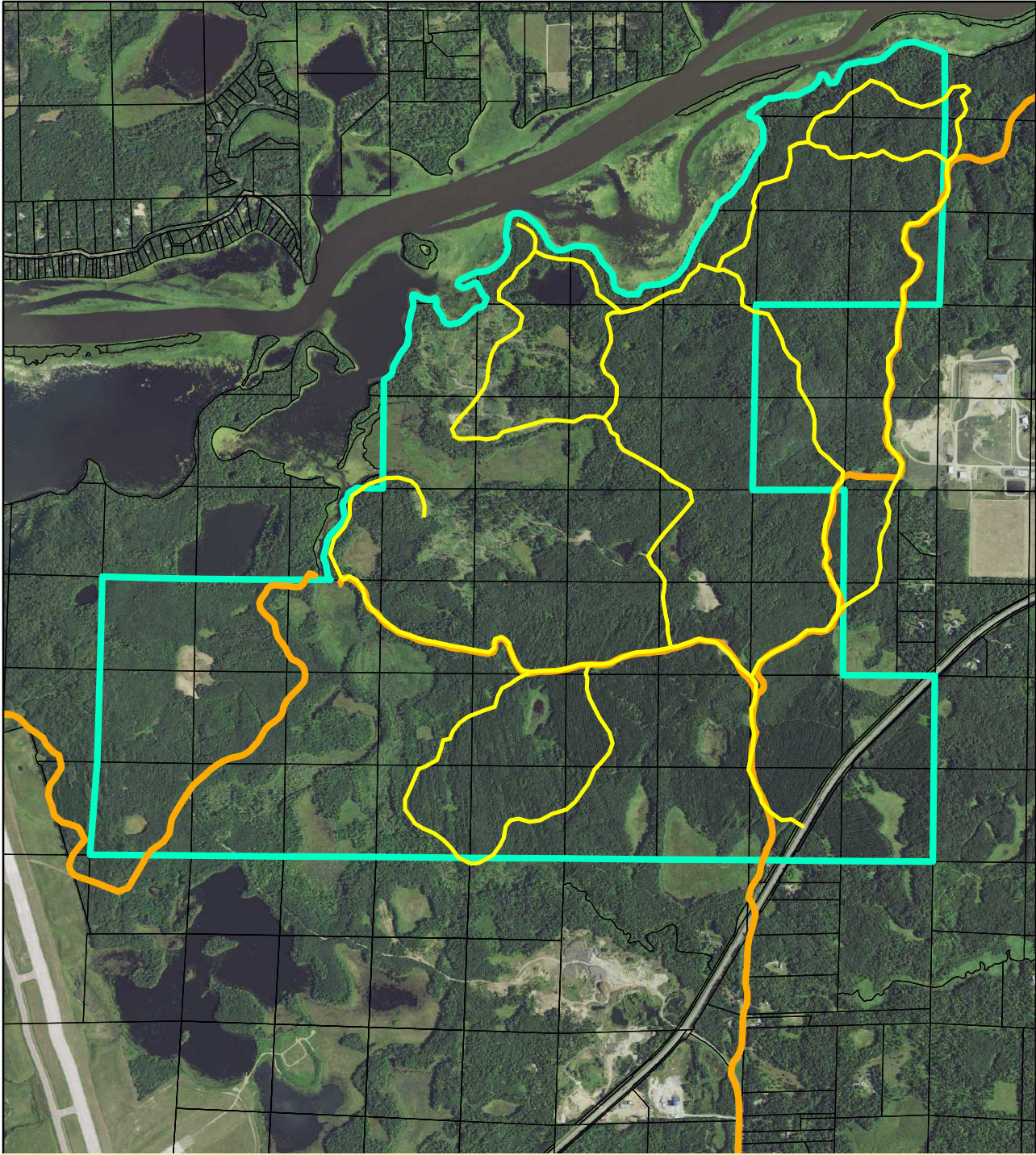
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Landwehr", written in a cursive style.




Tom Landwehr
Commissioner

c: Timothy J. Houle, Crow Wing County
Ray Bohn, ATVAM

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NORTH WOODS



Legend

-  Proposed GIA Trails
-  Minnesota Snowmobile Trails
-  Mississippi River Northwoods

