

Roseau County Landowners Coalition

c/o Mitch Magnusson, mitmag@centurytel.net

December 5, 2019

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
c/o Mark Johnson, Executive Director
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 95
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Landowner Opposition to Funding of Roseau Lake Restoration Project, Roseau County, MN and Request that LSOHC Deny Funding Extension to MDNR and/or RRWD

Dear Director Johnson:

I am writing as part of a coalition of tax-paying farmers in Roseau County. Multiple affected farmers/landowners, including myself and many of my relatives, do not agree with the planned Roseau Lake Restoration project. **For the reasons stated in this letter, we respectfully request that you deny the extension and not approve any future funding of this project.**

A professional engineer, with a background water resources, Patrick Nortz, has reviewed the HDR Engineering Report (June 2019) [the Report] and other technical documents provided by Roseau River Watershed District. Mr. Nortz has identified several technical reasons why it is not sensible to proceed with the construction of this project. Mr. Nortz identified the following MAJOR items from his review about the project.

1. Downstream flood reduction is minimal.
2. The project cost is not justified.
3. The engineer's cost estimate is low. The assumed per-acre unit price of \$750 underestimates the actual per acre cost by thousands and the overall project cost by millions.
4. Improvements to ecology and wildlife are not justified.

Additional considerations that are not addressed in the Report or are otherwise problematic are described below.

1. Impact to Thousands of Acres of Tax Generating Farmland

The local farmers understand that several thousand acres of their tax-generating farmland, including property of my relatives and me, are proposed to be taken by eminent domain or forced to agree to a flood easement in the Roseau Lake project area. The degree of impact is not appropriate for a miniscule. downstream flood reduction (5 percent, per above comments).

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2. Unreasonable Take

If the landowners agree to flood easement, they will be agreeing to increased flooding on their property created by the project. This does not make sense since taking of the land has little downstream flood reduction. We believe this project is an example of an overreach on the part of the state in taking more property purely because certain people want more land for hunting and fishing.

3. Lack of Landowner Notification

Most of the farmers in the project area had not been notified during the early stages of the project as to how this project will impact their land. Some of us have only been informed of the project in the past few months. As we now understand, this project has been in the planning stages for several years.

4. Flooding will Be Worse in Roseau Lake Area

The operation plan in the Report talks about how this project will add gates to control flow into the Roseau Lake Bottom in order to fill the lake at certain times of the year. We believe such operations will cause more frequent flooding of farmland east and south of the lake, possibly deeming the land unfarmable. Because of that, we cannot accept flood easements that RRWD has suggested they will offer.

5. Disrespect to Landowners

I have been on the Project Work Team for this project as a Landowner Representative. I have sat in multiple meetings run by the Roseau River Watershed District for this project. My attendance at many project meetings over the past two years feels like a waste of my time. The Roseau River Watershed District staff doesn't want to hear my concerns. They don't seem to care about landowners.

I have heard on more than one occasion that RRWD wants to take our property by eminent domain if we don't agree to sign flood easements or sell our property, which is very concerning to me.

Even though the LSOHC funding cannot be used for eminent domain, your approval of this money will only encourage the RRWD and the DNR to find other money to take our properties. This seems really wrong.

6. Most Project-Area Landowners Unwilling to Sell

Most of us in the Roseau Lake project area don't want this project, so why does the state and the RRWD continue to push for it? And why would this committee continue to approve funding for it?

7. Inadequate Response to Information Requests

The Roseau River Watershed District and their engineering consultant have looked at all sorts of options for the project, but we are still waiting to see a map that clearly shows which properties will be affected by flooding after the project is completed and how much. One of our coalition members

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hired an attorney and an engineer to get help. Nearly all landowners stand behind the conclusions by the engineer that this project is ill-conceived and will provide minimal additional wildlife habitat or recreational benefit. We farmers may not be engineers, but we do understand how water flows and a bit about wildlife, as we live with it every day. The attorney and engineer have made reasonable requests for essential project information and the RRWD can't seem to provide it. At this stage in a project it makes no sense that RRWD and DNR lack such information as to the property they want, possible flooding impacts of the project on private agricultural land, and more. If RRWD and DNR cannot meet the requests for information, how do you think they will get this project done?-

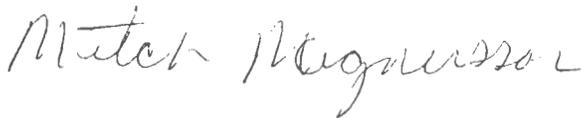
Again, our coalition of taxpaying landowners does not agree with the purpose and planned outcome of this proposed project. Our opposition is demonstrated with the following documents attached to this letter.

- Map showing parcels whose property owners oppose the project.
- Signatures of opposing landowners
- Typed list of opposing landowners, most associated with the signatures and mapped parcels.

We respectfully request that you deny the current request for extension and not approve future funding of this project. This project is a waste of taxpayer dollars and, if the project is built, could make thousands of taxpayer acres unfarmable.

I can be reached at 218-469-2296 if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

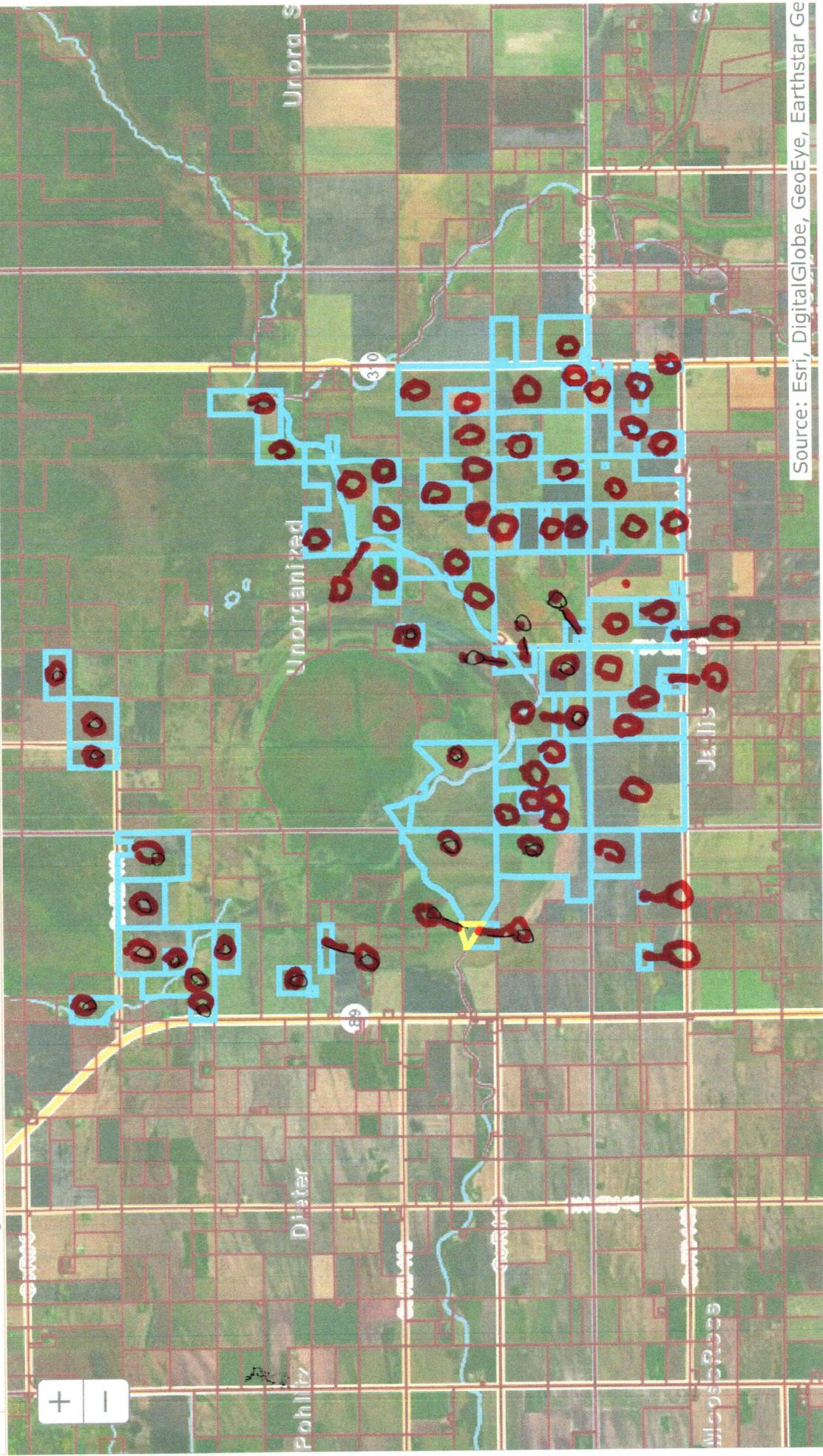


Mitch Magnusson
Farmer/Landowner
Roseau County Minnesota

Attachments (listed above)

CC: Affected Landowners

Out Pan Zoom Prev Zoom Next Zoom Select Zoom Extent Clear Search Identify Legend Overview Results Atlas Buffer X/Y Map Tips Draw Measure
 Navigation Commands View Tools



⊙ = apposed to Roseau Lake Rehabilitation

Neil Macmillan
Monica [unclear]
Laverne Johnson
Lynn [unclear]
Vern Ryland

Gladys England

Erin Pederson

Laura Pederson

Laura Johnson

Jack Johnson

Heather O'Leary

[unclear]

E. [unclear]

John [unclear]

Debbie [unclear]

Burt Bantz

Robert Bingham

Tom Oates

Chris V Ooster

Yessa Schmechel

Lynn Pederson

Dawn Hutson

Chin [unclear]

[unclear]

Chris Ponton

Steve [unclear]

Mits Nagata

Brian Rice

Sheldon [unclear]

Mark Wolk

John [unclear]

Ray Johnson

[unclear]

Gregg Welin

Rachel Welin

Andy Borood

Ray [unclear]

Steve [unclear]

Sheldon Larson

James A. Johnson

Jean Pederson

Chris John

Chris K

Steen Holm

Myron Magnusson

Magnusson

Jeremy Klein

Bill K

Matt Magnusson
Monica Dohmen
Lavern Johnson
Leroy Norstiban
~~Lavern~~ Rugland
Blaydon Rugland
Erik Pederson
Travis Pederson
Dean Przekwas
Dale Przekwas
Hunter Olerly
Jason Fuller
Erik Knutson
Sharleen Pederson
Heather Magnusson
Burt Basset
Bob Byzaglien
Tom Ostby
Kris Ostby
Lisa Pederson
Lynn Pederson
Dawn Knutson
Chris Knutson
Lewis Hayes
Curtis Ponto
Steve Tobin
Mitch Magnusson

Brian Riee
Sheldon Rice
Mark Dokken
John Douglas
greg Halverson
greg Welin
Casey Pierson
Rachel Welin
andy Boroos
gory Przekwas
Steve Kuien
Sheldon Larson
James Halverson
Jean Pederson
Chris Johnson
alex Johnson
glen Holm
yhore Magnusson
Dawn Magnusson
Jeremy Kuier
Pat Kuier