



**Board of Commissioners**

**Lake County Service Center**

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First District – Peter R. Walsh

Second District – Derrick (Rick) L. Goutermont

Third District – Richard (Rick) C. Hogenson

Fourth District – Jeremy M. Hurd

Fifth District – Rich Sve

June 22, 2021

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

Attn: Mark Wm. Johnson, Executive Director

100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

State Office Building, Room 95

St. Paul, MN 55155

via email to [mark.johnson@lsohc.leg.mn](mailto:mark.johnson@lsohc.leg.mn)

RE: Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 / OHF FY2023

Please accept these comments as you review funding proposals for the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Lake County submits these comments in advance of proposal hearings that may be scheduled for August 31, September 1 & 2, 2021. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in advance of an application for funding from Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness (“Friends”). Lake County has participated in a conversation and listened to Friends’ presentation on proposed land purchases and potential state funding requests within Lake County adjacent to the Boundary Waters which include land located near Snowbank Lake, Lake One and on the Kawishiwi River.

As Lake County is currently comprised of approximately 84% public land, leaving only 16% of our land base private and available for improvement, Lake County strongly believes it is important to preserve this tax base and allowing for opportunities for further growth. Due to the fact that Friends’ goal is to preserve this land and not allow the potential for future development, the County Board is in agreement that no public funds should be used for this potential purchase. Lake County has shared its opinion and position with the Friends.

Lake County has supported protecting lands and expending public funds for these purposes in case specific situations, that have unique features that warrant protection. Lake County currently has many miles of protected shoreline and the majority of our acres are public land providing ample wildlife habitat. Public forest resources within Lake County are protected and are situated next to a contiguous block of unfragmented wilderness containing over one million acres. The lakes and/or rivers near these potential purchases have ample protected shoreline. In our estimation the parcels in Friends’ proposal do not indicate the need for public funding. Please contact us if you wish to review this matter. Thank you for your continued support.

Rich Sve, Chairperson

Lake County Board of Commissioners

Laurel D. Buchanan

Clerk of the Board of Commissioners

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