

BIG SAND LAKE ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX  
PARK RAPIDS, MINNESOTA 56470

TO: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Big Sand Lake Association Board of Directors, representing 150 members interested in the welfare of Big Sand Lake, opposes the DNR's proposed purchase of a parcel of Big Sand property and plan for improving the existing public water access site for reasons, including, but not limited to the following:

- 1) An expanded access is not needed, warranted, nor requested by residents or users;
- 2) It is fiscally irresponsible for the DNR to expend over \$500,000 of precious resources to purchase and develop the expanded access, in addition to removing property from Hubbard County tax rolls;
- 3) It will increase risk for AIS and expense for prevention measures;
- 4) It is environmentally irresponsible and not consistent with the DNR lakeshore development standards.

The above reasons are substantiated by remarks made in a series of emails procured by a BSLA member between Tony Walzer, DNR Acquisition and Development Specialist, and Doug Kingsley, DNR Fisheries, Park Rapids. Complete text of the emails will be supplied upon request. Additionally, the following points for opposition were discussed at a recent BSLA Board meeting:

- There has not been a public hearing to learn of the plans of the DNR nor the sharing of concerns of the residents affected. Local residents have not been involved or at least apprised of the plans.
- Purchasing the property, removal of the house, cutting of trees and developing the property as a boat access is very costly. It seems the money could be better spent on other more important/relative issues. What is the estimated total cost of developing the proposed access?
- The acquisition would remove the property from the tax rolls impacting property tax rates for Hubbard County residents.
- The possible expansion of the access provides challenges in the fight against AIS. What additional AIS measures at no cost to the Lake Association will the DNR provide?
- There seems to be a lack of documentation regarding the need to expand the current access. Trained DNR staff has stated "The boat access is adequate" and "I wonder if access would be improved with a new site any or much more that it is now with the present arrangement". Who wants this change?
- Big Sand Lake Association has a Lake Management Plan to protect the lake. Removing mature beautiful trees, reducing shoreland forestation and increasing non-porous surface is not consistent with prescribed shoreland standards.
- The present access is adequate to handle boat traffic. The data of boats entering and leaving the lake documented by a paid DNR AIS inspector over the last two summers does not support the need for an expanded access. Is there documentation that there is a need to increase the parking or access due to full lots or wait time at the access?

The Big Sand Lake Association does not object to the current public access and welcomes use of the access by all. However, for reasons stated above, the DNR plan for this parcel of Big Sand property is flawed.

The Big Sand Lake Association does respectfully request the plan be withdrawn.

Big Sand Lake Association Board of Directors

By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Its \_\_\_\_\_