

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Date: 2-4-14

Via: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

From: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

Title of Item:

Continued Support of SFIA

Requested Meeting Date: 2-11-14 Estimated Presentation Time: _____

Presenter: Steve Hughes, Aitkin County SWCD Manager

Type of Action Requested (check all that apply)

- For info only, no action requested
- For discussion with possible action
- Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison)
- Approve/adopt proposal by motion
- Authorize filling vacant staff position
- Request to schedule public hearing or sale
- Request by member of the public to be heard
- Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute _____
- Approve under Consent Agenda
- Adopt Ordinance Revision
- Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution)
- Other (please list) _____

Fiscal Impact (check all that apply)

- Is this item in the current approved budget? Yes _____ No _____ (attach explanation)
- What type of expenditure is this? Operating Capital Other (attach explanation)
- Revenue line account # that funds this item is: _____
- Expenditure line account # for this item is: _____

Staffing Impact (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

- Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected. Yes No
- Applicable job description(s) may require revision. Yes No
- Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy. Yes No
- Item may change the department's authorized staffing level. Yes No



Supporting Attachment(s)

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) (please list) _____

Provide (1) copy of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at Noon to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. (If your packet contains colored copies, please provide (4) paper copies of supporting documentation as we do not have a color printer or copier.) Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for the Board packets.

AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Aitkin County Courthouse
217 Second Street N.W. Room 130
Aitkin, MN 56431
218-927-7276
Fax: 218-927-7374

TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Sue Bingham, Administrative Assistant

RE: Continued Support of SFIA

DATE: February 4, 2014

Steve Hughes, Aitkin County SWCD Manager is requesting County Board approval for the attached resolution offering continued support of SFIA. Steve also included an SFIA Talking Points handout for your review, and will be here to answer any questions you may have.

CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION OF COUNTY BOARD OF AITKIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

ADOPTED February 11, 2014

By Commissioner: xx

021114-0xx

Continued Support of SFIA

WHEREAS, healthy forests benefit wildlife, air quality, water quality, tourism, and jobs; and

WHEREAS, forest management is best performed on parcels that are 20 acres in size or larger; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) offers a small monetary incentive for landowners to follow their Forest Stewardship Plans and retain their forested property; and

WHEREAS, Local SWCD's could be contracted to annually ensure compliance with SFIA covenants.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the MASWCD lobby for and support the continuation of SFIA by the State of MN.

Commissioner xx moved the adoption of the resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote

FIVE MEMBERS PRESENT

All Members Voting Yes

STATE OF MINNESOTA)
County of Aitkin) ss.
Office of County Auditor,)

I, Kirk Peysar, Auditor, of the County of Aitkin, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in my office on the 11th day of February A.D., 2014, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE at Aitkin, Minnesota, this 11th day of February A.D., 2014

KIRK PEYSAR, County Auditor

BY _____, Deputy

SFIA Talking Points

- The SFIA program was designed to help alleviate the burden of property taxes for forest landowners who have a current Forest Stewardship Plan and are following it, are not delinquent in their taxes, and agree not to subdivide or develop their property. It is essentially a conservation easement at a very reasonable price to the state.
 - People are not getting rich off the SFIA program. Albeit far from scientific, a random search of 10 forest landowners in Aitkin County revealed an average property tax of \$8.42 per acre, less than the \$7.00 per acre the SFIA program pays.
 - The SFIA program encourages the retention of larger blocks of contiguous forestland. Fact – larger blocks of forests are easier to manage, cheaper to manage, and provide habitat needs for many species of wildlife listed as rare, threatened, and/or endangered. Migratory songbirds are an example of this.
 - SFIA, because it requires a Forest Stewardship Plan, promotes sustainable forest management. Fact – studies have shown that sustainable forest management is one of the best ways to protect water quality. Many of these forested watersheds are not yet impaired – “An ounce of prevention...”
 - Sustainable forestry also provides better habitat for wildlife, which is important for tourism and the lake-recreation-forest economy we have in northern Minnesota.
 - Violations to the covenant have been rare. The intent and integrity of the program are intact and should continue to be.
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- It is true some people sign up for a Forest Stewardship Plan simply to become eligible for the SFIA program. However, having a plan developed for your property is not free and can cost the landowner up to \$10 per acre. Landowners with “skin in the game” are more likely to follow the recommendations in their plan. Plans also need to be updated every ten years, which is another expense the landowner must bare.
 - If needed, Soil and Water Conservation Districts can be contracted to monitor landowner compliance. Work like this is currently being done by SWCDs for Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements.