



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

7A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: 2/27/18

Title of Item: MHB Habitat Corridor Project - Savanna State Forest

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	Action Requested:	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*

**provide copy of hearing notice that was published*

Submitted by: Land Commissioner	Department: Land Department
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Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jacobs	Estimated Time Needed: 15-minutes
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Summary of Issue:

At the 2/13/18 County Board meeting there was discussion involving a land acquisition via the Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project in S.22/23 T.51 R.24 (Verdon Township). If acquired, the land would be transferred to MN DNR Forestry to be part of the Savanna State Forest.

The board approved moving this specific project to the next step. The project is now to the point where County Board action is required to finalize the acquisition.

Attached is the information on the proposed acquisition.

Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:

Recommended Action/Motion:

The MHB Habitat Corridor project requires County Board action to approve fee title acquisitions.

Financial Impact:

Is there a cost associated with this request? Yes No

What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$

Is this budgeted? Yes No *Please Explain:*

Proposed 160 Acre Addition to Savanna State Forest Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project

This proposed **Addition to the Savanna State Forest** is located approximately 10 miles south of the town of Jacobson on Great River Road in Aitkin County. The property's over 160 acres is well-timbered and includes roughly 1.25 miles of Mississippi River frontage. The property is within the designated boundary of the Savanna State Forest and borders existing State Forest land on the full lengths of its north and west sides.

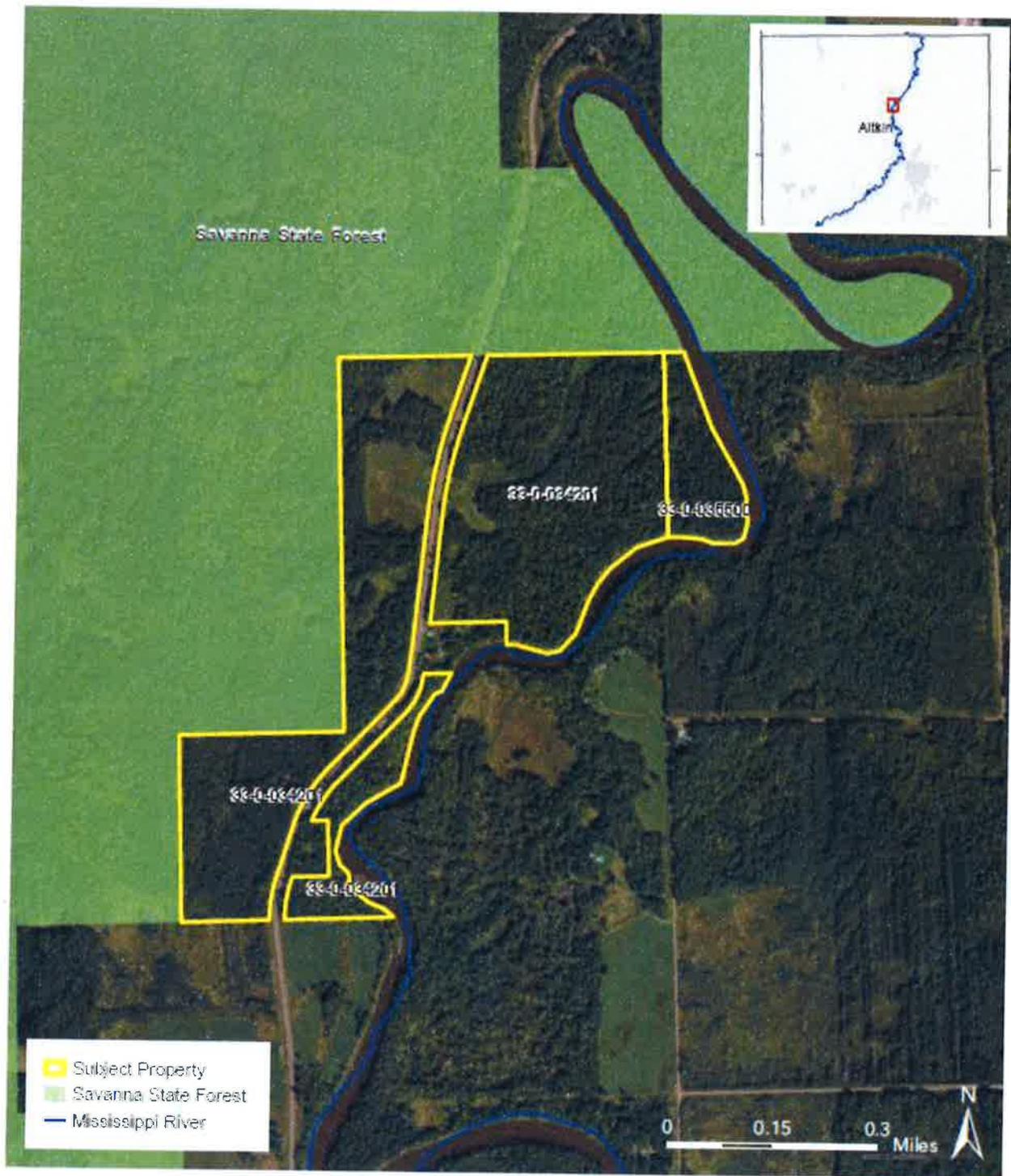
By adding this property to the Savanna Forest, DNR Foresters and others will have improved access to existing public land for timber and other forest-related management activities.

Permanent conservation of the property will provide hunters, outdoorsmen, and others with access to the Mississippi River and as well as access to other public lands to hunt, fish, and recreate.

Permanently protecting this property will prevent forest fragmentation, thereby helping to maintain connectivity to the adjacent public lands. Additionally, this project will protect valuable forest and riparian habitat.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for this proposed addition to the Savanna State Forest would be initially calculated from the sale price of the property and then re-calculated every 6 years thereafter. In 2017, the Aitkin County annual tax revenue is approximately **\$1,666**. Using the property's appraisal, the estimated PILT payments on the 160+/- acres would be approximately **\$1,666** per year. State ownership of this property would be revenue neutral for the County.





Potential Addition to Savanna State Forest

Aitkin County, MN



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Proposed Addition to Savanna State Forest

About the Mississippi River Habitat Corridor Project: The Mississippi River is known as "America's River." It is the largest river in North America, and provides drinking water, industry, and recreation for millions of people, and is the embodiment of Minnesota's outdoor traditions. Strategic and well placed public ownership is essential to maintaining the hunting, fishing, and game habitat along the Mississippi River. Public lands adjacent to private property are in danger of losing habitat connectivity because of the continued development pressures on private lands which result in further fragmentation. Land accessibility to these lands is essential to ensuring high quality, memorable experiences while hunting and fishing within the Mississippi River Corridor. Riparian corridors and tributaries are of particular value to resident and migrating wildlife populations, providing connectivity to multiple habitat types.

As loss of habitat in western Minnesota and the Dakotas occurs, and climate change causes the drying up of existing wetlands, the Mississippi flyway will take on a more important role. The Mississippi flyway is the longest migration route of any in the western hemisphere, and is well timbered and watered to afford ideal conditions to support migrating birds. The Mississippi Headwaters supports more than 350 species of animals, mammals, and birds and is an important national treasure which must be preserved.

The Mississippi Headwaters Board will use targeted land acquisitions and permanent conservation easements to accomplish the goals of this proposal. All fee title acquisitions will be approved by the local governmental unit and the Mississippi Headwaters Board where the property exists. The Mississippi River and its connecting tributaries and headwaters lakes are essential to wildlife, bird, and waterfowl transportation and sustainability. The Mississippi Headwaters Board will work with The Trust for Public Land to protect the priority lands using fee title acquisitions; and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the counties of Clearwater, Beltrami, Hubbard, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Morrison to implement the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program through the Board of Water and Soil Resources to gain permanent conservation easements. These actions will protect against fragmentation of forest land, and provide access to existing public land.

About The Trust for Public Land: Our mission is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Every park, playground, and public space we create is an open invitation to explore, wonder, discover, and play. We're proud to say that we've been connecting communities to the outdoors—and to each other—since 1972. Today, millions of Americans live within a 10-minute walk of a park or natural area we helped create, and countless more visit every year.

About the Mississippi Headwaters Board: Formed in 1980 as an alternative to designation of the river into the National Wild and Scenic River System, the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) works to protect and preserve the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River in Minnesota.

A joint powers board of Clearwater, Beltrami, Cass, Hubbard, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing and Morrison Counties, the MHB is mandated by Minnesota Statutes 103F.361-377 to enhance and protect the natural, cultural, historic, scientific and recreational values of the headwaters region. MHB achieves its goal of river protection through cooperative land use planning in the eight counties, in conjunction with the Chippewa National Forest and the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. MHB promotes water quality monitoring, education and stewardship activities for shoreland property owners, and embraces the efforts of local citizens, students and government groups who work together to protect the river in their community and preserve the splendor of this national treasure.

About the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Our mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.