

2014-6 RECREATIONAL USES OF SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS (SNA'S)

BACKGROUND:

Minnesota has 159 Scientific & Natural Areas (SNA). They have been established because they have unique features (land, plant, wildlife, geology etc.) that deserve special protections and, present unique opportunities for research. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) is exploring increasing recreational use of these lands. Examples include: (birding, berry picking, fishing, hunting, trapping, hiking with dogs on and off-leash) Presently it is understood that 15 -25 of the existing SNA properties may be candidates for expanded public use. All candidate proposals would go through a public hearing / comment process before final decisions are made.

The proposed actions to broaden recreational use of existing SNA properties has become controversial within the MN DNR, and with the public.

RESOLVE:

1. All SNA management shall be based on protecting the special features that gave rise to the original SNA designation.
2. MN DNR must continue to honor in perpetuity the objectives agreed on between donating landowners and the agency during the discussion that preceded the official designation.
3. The purpose of the special SNA category of property designation shall be the dominant theme in all management decisions. "Protecting and preserving the best of our natural environment". Any expanded recreational activity must be subservient to this theme, and shall not be allowed to marginalize or detract from the fundamental purpose of these designations.
4. Expansion of recreational use shall not be driven by MN DNR revenue goals.

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