



June 22, 2015

LCCMR Co-Chairs, Sen. Tomassoni, Rep. Persell, and Nancy Gibson
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 65 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear LCCMR Co-Chairs, Sen. Tomassoni, Rep. Persell, and Nancy Gibson

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is requesting permission from LCCMR to pay more than appraised value to complete a land acquisition in Myre-Big Island State Park, a project listed in the recently approved 2015 LCCMR State Parks and State Trails Land Acquisition project workplan and on the approved acquisition list in accordance with M.L. 2015 Chapter 76, Sec. 2, Subd 9(a).

The DNR has successfully negotiated a mutually agreed upon option agreement to exercise when FY16 funds become available after July 1, 2015, with the intent to close by the end of the calendar year. The property contains 110 acres of land within the statutory authorized boundary of Myre-Big Island State Park located in Freeborn County, near Albert Lea.

The DNR certified appraisal value was \$482,000. The landowner's opinion of value and appraisal was significantly higher. After negotiating with the landowners, based on the merits of both appraisals and in consideration of the land attributes for future public benefits by real estate professionals, a mutual agreement value of \$525,000 (9.2% increase) was reached.

Under statute 84.0272, the Department of Natural Resources Commissioner may approve offers up to 10% above appraised value. The DNR's increased offer process involves the acquiring Division Director requesting approval to increase an offer, based on the real estate and acquisition staff recommendation, to the Lands and Minerals Division Director, as reviewed and approved by Lands and Minerals attorney, per attached approved memo.

This large, 110-acre, parcel is an important and high priority acquisition for the Parks and Trails Division. An increased value offer is justified based on the following:

- 1) Acquiring this parcel is a significant step towards contiguous fee title ownership and preservation of land within the state park, consistent with the Master Plan vision.
- 2) Most of the land is either wetland, or restored prairie. A small oak grove is also included in the property. This land provides a good quality wildlife habitat.
- 3) The parcel is planted with local genotype seed that could be harvested as a seed source for the Department, which could contribute to additional grassland restoration in the state park and throughout the geographic area.
- 4) The parcel is currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). If the MNDNR does not purchase this land, it has a high potential to be sold to privately for development, or returned to tilled agriculture, when the CRP contract expires.

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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PARKS AND TRAILS DIVISION
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SAINT PAUL, MN 55155

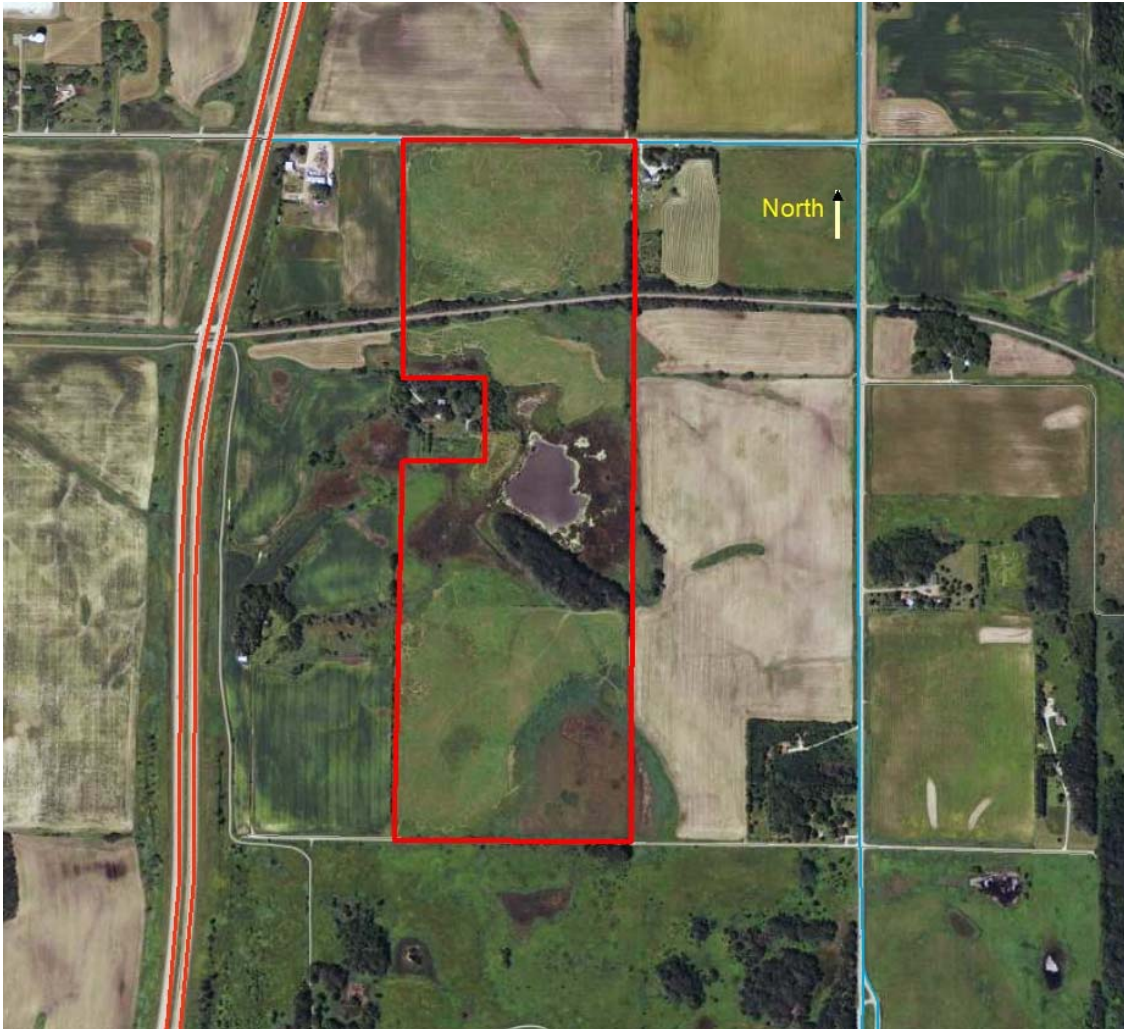
The DNR staff believes the land attributes and public benefits, along with the merits of both appraisals, justifies the long-term investment in public land with funding appropriated by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through the LCCMR.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Christie
State Parks and Trails Land Acquisition Consultant
Parks and Trails Division
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources





Myre-Big Island State Park Acquisition

The property acquisition contains 110 acres of land within the statutory authorized boundary of Myre-Big Island State Park located in Freeborn County, near Albert

HISTORY: Myre-Big Island State Park began as the vision of Owen Johnson, a conservationist, amateur archeologist and life-long resident of the area. Through his efforts, Big Island (a 116-acre wooded island) became a state park in 1947. Since 1947, the park has acquired additional acreage and is now 1,596 acres.

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- Lea