

From: Bob Quady [mailto:bob.quady@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2018 4:51 PM
To: Mark Johnson <mark.johnson@lsohc.leg.mn>
Subject: Oak savanna management

I am working with a group of citizens that live near the Sand Dunes State Forest (SDSF). I do not know if you remember, but our group gave a presentation to the LSOHC committee two years ago concerning the conversion of the SDSF from forest habitat to oak savanna. Most of the funding for these projects comes from LSOHC so that is why we have approached your group with our concerns. Since that time we have been working with the DNR, Rep Newberger and Sen Mathews to address this issue.

The reason I am writing is that, over the past two years, as we have worked with the DNR and others concerning the establishment of oak savanna. During that time we have come across information that we feel would be of value for your committee to consider in making resource allocations.

You had indicated that at the end of your meetings you often times gave the public some time to make comments. If that is still an option we would like to make a presentation at one of your upcoming meetings.

Best Regards

Bob Quady

Lessard- Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Summary

Introduction – Bob Quady, U of M College of Forestry graduate, 34 year DNR Forester – retired 2013, Cochair of the SDSF concerned citizens group.

Our citizens group was here in March of 2016 with concerns about the management of the Sand Dunes State Forest (SDSF). At that time we asked the LSOHC to suspend funding for any conversion of the SDSF from forests to oak savanna. Since then we have made some progress working with the DNR on their management of the SDSF but we still have concerns about the conversion of the forest. During the public review process we have become aware of other issues that we would like to bring to the attention of this committee.

Questions we have raised during the process:

1) How rare is oak savanna in Minnesota?

Is it .02 percent (1250 ac) as stated in the SDSF plan, or is it 7% as stated in the 2005 Subsection Profiles?

2) Does the DNR consider other public ownerships when deciding management strategies? At times they have told the DNR does but when we asked this question about the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (30,000 ac) adjacent to the SDSF (6,000 ac) we received the following response:

We are not responsible for other ownerships, and cannot control how the Federal Government manages their lands, and have no guarantees that they will continue to manage for open landscapes.

The LSOHC has given the SNWR hundreds of thousands of dollars to manage for open landscapes. Why would LSOHC do that if they were not committed to the long term management for open landscapes?

3) See Frelich's, statements from the 4/16/18 MPP article.

The Boundary Waters' eventual transition to a savannah, as predicted by [research](#) from Frelich and others, is a stunning example of how climate change will affect Minnesota if we continue putting carbon into the atmosphere at current rates.

Right now, the prairie-forest border runs from west of St. Cloud southeast to northern Illinois. Under a "business as usual" scenario, Frelich said, that line could move 300 miles northeast and be at Thunder Bay, Ontario, by 2100.

Even if everyone followed the Paris climate pact, it wouldn't stop the change, Frelich said

Among the trees that would be gone, Frelich said: black spruce, balsam fir, balsam poplar, paper birch, most aspen, white spruce. Potentially jack and red pines. Basically, all the trees that form the region's identity.

Given these, why then:

1) Why does the DNR continue to use Marschner's map, native plant communities and presettlement conditions as the basis for vegetative management? The DNR should look to what will be here in 2100 not what was here in 1850.

2) Why would the DNR spend millions of dollars (partially through LSOHC and LCMR) to create or enhance savanna habitats when there will be a natural move toward a significant percent of the state turning into a savanna landscape in the near future anyway?

3) If Eco Services goal is to enhance rare habitats, according to Frelich, should they be focusing on the species he says – WILL BE GONE?

4) Why would the DNR spend millions of dollar to convert a forest (SDSF) that it spent millions of dollars creating and will be endangered to a habitat that will occur naturally and be in abundance?

So in summary we believe the DNR needs to revisit their policies and positions of:

- What is the current inventory of oak savanna on the landscape?
- Should NPC and presettlement conditions be a major factor in vegetative management decisions for the DNR?
- DNR should consider all adjacent public ownerships when making management decisions.
- The concerns with losing forests in the future to climate change should be a major component of decision making.
- Specifically for the SDSF – A significant investment has been made to create and sustain a healthy, multiage, multispecies habitat. That investment should be maintained and encouraged.

Why have we approached this group?

You are one of the holders of the purse strings and as such you, along with us, can ask these questions.