

NOTICE OF DECISION
Determination of need for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the
Elm Island RV Park Proposal, Aitkin County, Minnesota.

On June 10, 2025 the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners approved the citizen's petition and ordered an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) be completed for the proposed Elm Island Lake RV Park.

A copy of the record of decision is available on the Aitkin County website at: www.co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/env/. For additional information or hard copies of the record of decision, please call (218) 927-7342.

Aitkin County Planning and Zoning

By Commissioner: Westerlund

20250610-072

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A CITIZEN'S PETITION REQUESTING AN EAW FOR THE PROPOSED ELM ISLAND LAKE RV PARK

WHEREAS, a citizens petition requesting the preparation for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed planned unit development of "Elm Island Lake RV Park" was submitted by Tyler Stevens on April 30, 2025 with 179 signatures. The petition was verified by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and assigned to Aitkin County as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) to decide the need for an EAW on April 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, no governmental approvals may be given to the project named in the petition, nor construction initiated, until the need for an EAW has been determined. Construction includes any activities which directly affect the environment, including the preparation of land. If the decision is to prepare an EAW, approval must be withheld until either a Negative Declaration of the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is issued or an EIS is completed (per MN Rules 4410.3100); and

WHEREAS, the proposed Elm Island Lake RV Park includes 11.13 total acres, of which 5.81 are useable acres. The proposal includes 465.29 feet of shoreline on Elm Island Lake, which is classified as a Recreation Development Lake located Nordland Township, Aitkin County. The proposed project would be developed on a portion of Lot 1, Block Five of Kellar's Addition on Oriole Avenue (PIO 24-1-123102, 103, 104). The developer, Russell Sampson, is proposing to create a 16 lot recreational vehicle park of individually owned lots and a common interest community (CIC); and

WHEREAS, the project, as currently proposed, does not meet the mandatory threshold for an EAW according to MN Rules 4410.4300, and therefore the decision on the need for an EAW is subject to the discretion of the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) as per MN Rules 4410.1000 subpart 3, Item B.

Significant Environmental Impact Findings of the Aitkin County EAW Committee:

Findings for a Discretionary EAW:

1. The Committee agrees that the proposal will increase storm water run-off and a more-detailed stormwater pollution prevention plan needs to be in place.
2. The Committee agrees that the proposal will effect erosion and soil stabilization and a more-detailed erosion control plan needs to be in place.
3. The Committee has safety and usage concerns of this riparian development.

Increased run-off and threat to fish population. Although a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) has been initiated to include water infiltration basins with rainfall event routing diagrams, filtration berms are currently presented on the site plan drawings, and do not include rainfall event calculations. The Committee questions the capacity of the filtration berm to retard and/or properly divert heavy storm water run-off, with a berm size of 12 inches high, a base width of 24 inches, and constructed of 70% sand & 30% organic top soil make-up. Questions about where the storm water will proceed beyond the filtration berm along the lakeshore side, and who will provide for the long-term maintenance of this filtration berm. The length of the filtration berm in vicinity of Wetland D is in question as to if it will capture storm water to the southeast. The Committee questions the storm water run-off capacity from the road surface that is in close proximity to Wetland C and Wetland D and also questions whether a guttering system will be needed to handle the anticipated rain events. The Committee is requesting SWPPP best management practices material quantities, more detail on SWPPP maintenance, more detail of SWPP notes, and more detail on the SWPPP narrative. The Committee questioned the site plan proposal that includes temporary erosion control and filtration berm(s) located within wetlands, which should be avoided and minimized according to the

Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The Committee believes the above mentioned concerns could have potential for significant environmental impacts. In referencing the creation of the RV Park threatening the fish population on Elm Island Lake, Aitkin County acknowledges the potential threats to the fish population, however this determination would fall under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota **DNR** Division of Fisheries.

Erosion. At the time of the EAW Review Committee meeting on June 2, 2025, Aitkin County had not yet received soil excavation quantities that would include cubic yards volume estimates or soil analysis that would identify soil makeup. These are requirements of the Shoreland Management Ordinance Section 5.32, and which are part of the erosion and sedimentation control plan. The Committee questions the effectiveness and sufficiency of the proposed erosion control plan to stabilize sediment from entering drainageways, which eventually discharge to the surface waters or wetland areas. The lack of detailed plans and further erosion concerns that grubbing of roots be kept to a minimum, ditch grades that exceed 5% require rock check dams, culvert inlet/outlet protection, as well as winter stabilization of the site are all erosion concerns that will require more information. The Committee believes the above mentioned erosion concerns could have potential for significant environmental impacts.

DNR status as a restoration lake and outstanding lake of biological significance. The DNR lake health designation given to Elm Island Lake is similar to other lakes in Aitkin County and the Committee acknowledges these concerns, however would rely on the expertise of Minnesota DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources.

Excessive riparian development. The Committee has concerns of how proposer will be protecting the required 50% "Open Space" in accordance with Section 7.82G of the Shoreland Management Ordinance, and that the site plan has no graphical representation of its boundaries. Currently there are 118 parcels on Elm Island Lake with building values over zero. Adding 16 seasonal RV park sites would bring potential users to 134, and to an overall increase of 14%. The Committee believes the proposed road turn-around in the vicinity of sites of 11 through 16 and located in Tier 1, may pose a challenge to larger recreational vehicles which have significant turning radius. Finally, concerns of road weight-bearing capabilities, questions of insufficient turn-around radius for fire, first responder, and septic pumping vehicles could lead to driving off the road surface and have the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Disruption to trumpeter swans. The Committee acknowledges the concerns related to the trumpeter swans, however would rely on the expertise Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Division.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, based on information submitted in the project application, on the written submissions, and given all of the above findings, the project may have the potential for significant environmental effects. Any effects to the environment will be mitigated through an EAW and the normal public hearing and permitting process. Therefore Aitkin County, as the responsible government unit, approves the citizen's petition for an EAW for the proposed planned unit development of "Elm Island Lake RV Park."

Commissioner Sample seconded 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}

I, John Welle, County Engineer, Aitkin County, Minnesota do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in the Administration Office of Aitkin County in Aitkin, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said Board on the 10th day of June 2025, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and seal this 10th day of June 2025

John Welle Digitally signed by John Welle
Date: 2025.06.11 06:20:34 -0500

John Welle
County Engineer