August 18, 2014

TO: Keith Creagh, Director

INFORMATION: Natural Resources Commission

Transaction: Release from a Farmland and Open Space Preservation Agreement Conservation Easement Saginaw County Conservation Easement File #73-PR2212-123199

Release: 3.05 acres

Description: Saginaw County, Spaulding Township, T11N, R04E, Section 2. At the intersection of M-13 and the Birch Run Drain.


Notice: This item will appear on the Department of Natural Resources (Department) September 2, 2014, calendar, and is eligible for approval on September 9, 2014.

Purpose: The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) received a request from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to remove a 3.05-acre parcel from a permanent conservation easement in Saginaw County. The 3.05-acre parcel is needed for replacement of two bridges, one over the Flint River and the other over the Birch Run Drain.

The conservation easement was purchased by MDARD from Mr. John Leach on March 28, 2000. The conservation easement protects 243 acres of farmland from development while allowing for the continued farming of the land. The protected farm is located in Spaulding Township, Saginaw County.

An MDOT project has been proposed to replace the bridges on the Flint River as well as the Birch Run Drain outlet. The two bridges are located on M-13 and are relatively close together. The replacement of the bridges is necessary because they are deteriorating and the position and size of the bridges results in flooding and scouring of the river banks.

In order to improve the hydraulics of the two bridges, it is necessary to elevate the road surface six to eight feet and to increase the size of the Birch Run Drain Outlet Bridge. The property protected by the conservation easement is located on the west side of M-13. If the proposed bridge improvements were located within the existing M-13 right-of-way, three homes located east of M-13 would no longer be able to access M-13 because of the six to eight foot elevation increase.
Recommendation: It is recommended that the request for the release of the 3.05 acres be approved.
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

James L. Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

William O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

Mark H. Hoffman
Chief Administrative Officer

I approve the staff recommendations.

Keith Creagh
Director

Date Approved
9/11/14