

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** July 10, 2013

**Agenda Item:** Big Lake WMA North East Access Road Easement

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Endorse Course of Action

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

### **Background**

In November 2012, FWP acquired 1,110 acres along the eastern boundary of Big Lake WMA in Stillwater County. This brought most of the lake shoreline into FWP ownership and management. The WMA has two public access points along its west side. However, access to the east shore and east side of the WMA is by boat or waders only when the basin fills with water. The east shore and north shore provide quality waterfowl hunting opportunities but access is very difficult. This proposed access would provide vehicular access to a parking area in the northeast corner of the WMA, thus making the east side and north end much more accessible to waterfowl hunters and other recreationists. A traversable road currently exists in this location. The property boundary runs down the center of the road. Both adjacent landowners have expressed a willingness to pursue a public access easement.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

An EA and subsequent public involvement will be conducted pending commission endorsement of this project.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposed Action: FWP proposes to purchase an approximately one-mile-long permanent road easement, from two landowners, across private land to provide permanent public access to the north end and east side of Big Lake WMA. FWP would secure permanent public access to this land for hunting as well wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreational activities.

No Action alternative: FWP would forgo the opportunity to purchase a needed access easement. There would be no guarantee of reasonable public access to the north end and east side of Big Lake WMA.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends commission approval to proceed. This project will provide public road access in perpetuity to a portion of Big Lake WMA that is currently difficult for sportsmen and recreationists to access, especially during years when the lake basin is full of water.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the commission endorse FWP's recommendation to begin negotiations for this permanent road access easement to provide additional public access to Big Lake WMA.