

From: Mark Herwig <mefsherwig@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, February 20, 2023 12:57 PM

To: Kara Josephson

Subject:[EXTERNAL] Written testimony for tomorrow's SF 1573 hearing

Dear Committee members:

My wife and I have owned 44 acres of recreation land and a camp for 10 years on the southern border of the Fon Du Lac (FDL) State Forest (6 miles west of Mahtowa on Co. Rd. 4). For many reasons, we fully support the \$4 million requested by the FDL Band in concert with the MDNR and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to reintroduce wild elk to their native habitat on both the FDL state forest and reservation.

Elk were native to this region before extirpated, so we owe it to the ecosystem and ourselves to restore elk to their rightful place. Elk are an important part of the ecosystem. The elk will come from Minnesota's NW herd and will be closely checked and monitored for any diseases. Elk are part of human culture.

These elk are habituated to wolves in NW Minnesota and will be able to handle NE Minnesota wolves too (as elk do in nearby Wisconsin). There is very little agriculture in the FDL area, but any losses from elk depredation will be compensated. The U of M's objective research found 70 plus percent support for elk reintroduction in the FDL area, and why not, elk will increase tourism and, down the road, hunting opportunities with its influx of local spending. The elk can be controlled with hunting when needs be.

There's plenty of quality habitat in the FDL area for these elk, a study found. The elk are welcome to browse/graze my place anytime!

Me, I'm 67. I'll probably never live long enough to hunt these elk. All I dream of is hearing a bull elk bugling when I'm grouse hunting the FDL! That would be awesome!

Anyway, thanks for your support.

Mark Herwig, 1958 Florence St., White Bear Lake, MN, 55110, 612.382.8782.