

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSIONER'S SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA ORDER NO. 31
UNDESIGNATING WACOUTA SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
AMENDING COMMISSIONER'S ORDER NO. 6

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on March 9, 1983 regarding the proposed undesignation of the Wacouta Scientific and Natural Area; and

WHEREAS, following the hearing the hearing moderator made findings of fact, conclusions and a recommendation; and

WHEREAS, upon reviewing the record containing the results of intensive studies that have recently been performed by the Department's Natural Heritage Program, and the recommendations of the hearing moderator, I concur with her findings, to wit:

1. State Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) must embrace natural features of exceptional scientific and educational value including but not limited to:

(a) natural formations or features which significantly illustrate geological processes;

(b) significant fossil evidence of the development of life on earth;

(c) an undisturbed plant community maintaining itself under prevailing natural conditions typical of Minnesota;

(d) an ecological community significantly illustrating the process of succession and restoration to natural condition following disruptive change;

(e) a habitat supporting a vanishing, rare, endangered, or restricted species of plant or animal;

(f) a relict flora or fauna persisting from an earlier period; or

(g) a seasonal haven for concentrations of birds and animals, or a vantage point for observing concentrated populations, such as a constricted migration route.

2. The Wacouta SNA does not meet these criteria in that it has extensive evidence of past disturbance including an area of oak-elm-hickory forest heavily disturbed by logging and grazing, several old grassy fields, a gravel pit, a red pine plantation, an old barnyard, a livestock pond, an old building foundation, an old field where corn was planted until 1978, two separate transmission lines, two access roads into the property, and approximately 17 acres of nice maple-basswood forest previously logged in the 1890's and heavily grazed prior to becoming a SNA.

3. A comprehensive inventory of the Wacouta SNA completed in 1979 did not locate any animal or plant species proposed as state endangered or threatened species.

4. The Natural Heritage Program of the Department of Natural Resources has evaluated the Wacouta SNA in light of the "element occurrence" data base maintained by the Heritage Program and there are no element occurrences known at this site to conclude that Wacouta SNA is of statewide significance.

5. The Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Scientific

and Natural Areas has recommended that the Wacouta SNA be undesignated due to evidence of extensive modifications by human activities.

6. The Scientific and Natural Areas Program has concluded that in view of extensive modifications to the site, and the lack of plant or animal resources of statewide significance, the Wacouta SNA does not meet the legislative requirements of Minn. Stat. § 86A.05, subd. 5.

7. The record indicates that the Wacouta SNA has good potential for administration as a wildlife management area with management directed to enhancing habitat values in the wetland and old field portions of the area and the area is at present providing valuable production cover for ringneck pheasants, rabbits, ground nesting birds and small mammals; further, additional wildlife management projects proposed will benefit other wildlife and the general public.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Joseph N. Alexander, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to authority vested in me by law, do hereby undesignate the Wacouta Scientific and Natural Area as described in Order No. 6.


Dated this 22 day of July, 1983.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

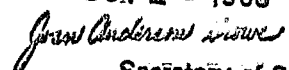

JOSEPH N. ALEXANDER, Commissioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND EXECUTION

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, III
Attorney General


C. PAUL FARACI
Deputy Attorney General

34877
STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FILED
OCT 28 1983


Secretary of State