

Squaw Lake AEA

**Polk and St. Croix Counties
Towns of Alden, Farmington, Somerset and Star Prairie**

PART II. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR AEA

DATCP will evaluate petitions under s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., and will consider information provided in response to the following questions.

1. What are the agricultural land use and development goals of the proposed AEA?

Include a discussion of proposed agricultural uses and agricultural-related uses, including a discussion of relevant infrastructure in the AEA. Explain how the proposed AEA will advance the state's goal of agricultural preservation and development. Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

The concept of creating pilot Agricultural Enterprise Area's (AEA) around the state of Wisconsin for farmland preservation and agricultural economic development is an exciting concept. The following short introduction will give many reasons why the Squaw Lake Watershed area should be declared as one of the initial AEA pilots in the State of Wisconsin.

The Squaw Lake AEA is comprised of over 10,000 acres located on the Polk-St. Croix County line in the Towns of Alden and Farmington in SW Polk County, and Towns of Somerset and Star Prairie in NW St. Croix County. These two counties have experienced dramatic population growth over the past 15 years from the Metropolitan Twin Cities region located approximately 30 minutes from the Squaw Lake AEA and it lies within close proximity of the designated 7 county Metropolitan Twin City region.

The land base of the Squaw Lake AEA is comprised of primarily class 1, 2, and 3 soils with the transition from family run dairy operations converting to more cash crop or larger livestock operations. This area contains some of Polk County's best soils and some of the most progressive operators. These producers have demonstrated their commitment to the protection of natural resources through the St. Croix Priority Watershed involving Squaw Lake. The Squaw Lake Priority Watershed exercise started with farm operators in the early 1990's responding with conservation tillage and use of no till planting to minimize runoff and soil loss, careful winter spreading of animal waste, use of fertilizers to meet crop needs through nutrient management plans, and programs utilizing wildlife habitat improvement. The Squaw Lake Watershed boundary is the primary boundary of the AEA with adjacent landowners interested in participating outside of the original designated area.

It has also been interesting to watch the evolution of producers in the Squaw Lake AEA moving into value added products and away from the commodity approach. One farm has transitioned into organic dairy and organic vegetable production, 3 operators now produce non-GMO soybeans and winter rye for the Asian market, one operation raises sunflowers for the bird seed market, one operation has transferred from dairy to providing boarding and stabling for pleasure horses. It is very likely other value added production is also occurring in the neighborhood, the above list includes only a few.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the Squaw Lake AEA is being part of a regional attempt at becoming a more sustainable region for food and fuel. The Osceola Village and Osceola School District are leading a community effort to become 100% self sufficient by 2025 for food and fuel. This is a very ambitious goal of meeting the needs for approximately 10,000 residents and will require wise use of all lands in terms of food, energy, and biomass production along with wildlife habitat and protection of natural resources.

The long term intent of the Squaw Lake AEA is to guarantee the ability of transitioning current production capabilities to the next generation of producers and the generations to follow. It is uniquely located with a history of committed producers for resource protection, top level management practices, and evolving into value added production.

The producers view the 15 year FPP contract as an initial step into preserving the farmland of the Squaw Lake Watershed for several generations to come. In addition, the designation of the Squaw Lake AEA could also serve as an impetus for additional farmland in the Polk-St. Croix area to pursue an AEA creation.

The following is a summary of additional land use and development goals for this area:

1. Maintain sustainable Prime Agricultural Soils (Class I, II, III)
 - 64% of proposed AEA is Prime Ag Soils
2. Continue to improve 303d listed watershed by implementing agricultural BMPs
3. Secure quality agriculture land for the Osceola sustainable community effort
 - Hoping to be 100% energy independent by 2025
 - Canola Oil, Soy Oil and Sunflowers for liquid energy production, etc.
 - Expansion of locally sourced food for food independence
4. Stimulate local agricultural community
5. Wildlife habitat enhancement
6. Agriculture related development
 - Implement dealers, vet clinics, Ag. Co-ops, Food Co-ops, Creameries, Farm supplies
7. Slow urban development pressure from the Twin Cities, MN
8. Create an opportunity for a more sustainable agriculture community where commodities are marketed locally and other forms of economic development occur such as agro-tourism, locally grown products, energy production, etc.

2. What activities are planned in the proposed AEA to achieve the agricultural preservation and development goals?

Describe any planned activities within the AEA, including grants, development incentives, cooperative agreements, land or easement purchases, land donations, promotional activities, public outreach or other actions that will help achieve the stated goals. Identify other individuals and entities involved in these efforts and their level of commitment. Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

This proposed AEA has a significant history of proactive programs to promote the adoption of agricultural and conservation best management and public outreach. These programs demonstrate the ability of local producers to work cooperatively amongst themselves and with supporting agencies to achieve common goals for the area.

Past and current examples include:

- Producers in the proposed AEA have shown effectiveness in public outreach and promotion of agriculture literacy. For example, one of the petitioning dairy farms hosts tours yearly for the Osceola Elementary School to see a working farm. Another landowner operates a farmstead store to directly market his products.
- Presence of the Squaw Lake Rehabilitation District, which will be updating its lakes management plan in 2010
- The proposed AEA falls within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation management plan for waterfowl habitat protection. Preserving agricultural lands from development can enhance their habitat protection efforts. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate an area where agricultural use and waterfowl habitat management are complimentary and not competing land uses.

- UW-Extension has been involved in land use education in the proposed AEA for over a decade. Examples include:
 - *Western Wisconsin Working Lands Workshop*; On March 11, 2009, collaborated with St. Croix County and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to design and deliver an educational event regarding land use and agriculture preservation. This event also elicited public input regarding the next steps for working lands initiative in Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce. Most comments fell into the broad categories of education and communication/collaboration
 - *Celebration honoring the Paul and Sherrill Schottler Family*; Over the past decade, there have been numerous efforts by Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix County individuals and agencies to provide information and education to landowners and public officials about the need to protect farmland and open space. This event was intended to capture the momentum of these efforts by providing an opportunity to learn valuable insight from local landowners and to share thoughts and ideas with fellow citizens; 2009
 - *Rural Living Guide*; Educational piece adapted from CRD Educator Mike Kornmann for new Polk County residents and used by 11 units of government as part of the implementation element of their Comprehensive Plans; 2008
 - *In 2008, Polk County Comprehensive Planning educational programs*; hosted and taught by UWEX Agents included a monthly newsletter sent to plan commissioners (60 recipients each received 12 newsletters), 4 countywide educational programs (total attendance of 80) and over twelve meetings with individual town boards or plan commissions. Education for these programs focused on online mapping resources, comprehensive plan development, plan commission responsibilities, and integrating the elements of a plan.
 - *Land Use Tour to Dakota County, MN*; In collaboration with Al Singer, Director of the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program (FNAP), this group of educators hosted a one-day educational bus tour to Dakota County, Minnesota. The objectives of the bus tour were to increase understanding of the FNAP program, build networks between individuals and organizations interested in protecting farmland and natural areas as well as increase knowledge of the necessary steps needed to take at the local level. The tour included an overview of the leadership process in designing Dakota County's FNAP as well as a bus tour of properties participating in the program. Overall, 42 people attended representing 11 Wisconsin counties. Participants included producers, planners, developers, local elected officials, citizens and educators
 - *2008 Ultimate Land Use Tour*; organized by CNRED agent Bob Kazmierski and co-sponsored by Polk County. Five Polk County participants, went on to enroll in the October 2008 Ultimate Land Use Tour, organized by CNRED agent Mike Koles and co-sponsored by Polk County
 - *The Polk County Comprehensive Planning Process---An Eight Step Checklist and Planning Resource Directory*; Researched, gathered data and developed two educational pieces for and distributed to 89 town, village, city and county plan commissions members; 2006
 - *Population Growth Projections and Polk County Trends*; Developed and delivered a power point to educate the public at public input hearings for Polk County's Comprehensive Planning Program; 2008-2009
- In recent years producers in the proposed AEA have participated in listening sessions for town and county comprehensive plans, a Dakota County MN land use tour, conservation easement celebrations, and local workshops focusing on working lands. Some of these producers were so passionate about this effort that they have gone on to form the Western Wisconsin Land Resources Alliance (WWLRA).

Future initiatives proposed are:

- UW-Extension will develop and deliver programs to promote long term viability of agricultural production in the area. Economic viability of agriculture will be a key to maintaining the farms in the AEA for future generations. The programs will emphasize suitability, development of new marketing avenues, and development of new farm enterprises. Examples include:
 - Agro-tourism Opportunities for Farm Diversification
 - Value added crop production
 - Transferring the farm in a high stakes era: a workshop for farm succession
- Incorporate information on the AEA and local land use goals into the Rural Living Guides for both Polk and St. Croix Counties. The Rural Living Guide is available to all residents, and many new residents request the guide to learn more about services, ordinances, etc., in the area.
- Signage on major roads informing travelers of the AEA.
- Provide information about the AEA at Farm City Days and the Polk and St. Croix County Fairs.

The WWLRA has expressed interest in expanding their educational efforts to include PACE and TDR programs.

3. How will the AEA location promote agricultural preservation and development?

Explain what is special about this location. Include why the proposed AEA is geographically well "targeted" for agricultural preservation and development. Explain how the geographic distribution of existing agricultural uses and related infrastructure helped determine the location (see next). Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

The Squaw Lake AEA is located approximately 30 miles from the outer limits of the Twin Cities Metro Area of Minnesota. Due to the close proximity to the city, this area has experience very high development pressure in the last 20 years. Development pressure on this area is concerning for many reasons. This area is likely the most productive area in Polk County from a soil quality standpoint. More than 60% of the soils in this proposed AEA are classified as prime agricultural soils with little to no limitations for agriculture. Large tracts of contiguous row crops, fantastic soils fertility and many young farming families are valuable assets of this area. For this, there is a great need to maintain this productive farming community for many years to come.

If protected from the pressure of development this area could capitalize on the development around it by locally marketing its products to the development nearby. This idea would add even more value to this area as the nearby populations of people would be depending on this area for locally grown or produced goods.

In addition, this area has a number of environmental benefits to gain if this area was to be preserved as productive farmland and open space. Squaw Lake was added to the Wisconsin DNRs 303(d) list of impaired waters in 1998. Since then great accomplishments have been made to improve the water quality of Squaw Lake through conservation practices. However, new threats have presented new challenges in the area and the watershed could benefit greatly by the soil and water conservation standards participants in the AEA would be required to implement.

The following list of items is unique to this area and is not mentioned above.

1. Area holds a very strong interest in Ag. Land preservation through the Working Lands Initiative
2. Two existing FPP contracts in Polk County and EAZ in St. Croix County showing a

commitment to farmland preservation.

3. Area may promote Ag. And Eco. Tourism with close proximity to Twin Cities
 4. Other interest for farmland preservation exists nearby; this proposed AEA could "Plant Seed" for the development of others in the area.
 5. Much Conservation tillage and No-till exists in this area (1998 WLWCA – State Conservation Farmer of the year operates in this area)
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4. How did you determine the size and the boundary of the proposed AEA?

Explain why the size and boundaries are appropriate, and will help "focus" preservation development efforts. As part of the explanation, include a discussion of agricultural uses and infrastructure, unique land resources, soil productivity, proximity to viable farm markets or processing facilities, and other relevant factors. Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

The process of designating the proposed AEA started with landowner interest for the Working Lands Initiative in the area of Squaw Lake. Landowners expressed interest in this program to local agencies and the agency representatives began working with the interested parties to develop the boundary. As it turned out the foundation for this boundary already existed in the form of the Squaw Lake watershed. This watershed boundary was expanded slightly to include surrounding sections. Once interest for this AEA idea was evaluated in the expanded area the final boundary was developed based on petitioners and their land base.

The proposed Squaw Lake AEA boundary has all the critical AEA components we had hoped for. These include;

- Close proximity to development pressure of the Twin Cities of Minnesota.
- Large tracts of productive cropland made up of a large percent of prime agricultural soils.
- Land owner interest in the Working Land Initiative demonstrating a value for preserving agriculture land.
- An area that included a natural resource that could be benefitted by conservation programs, economic development and wildlife habitat enhancement opportunities associated with the AEA.

This area is approximately 10,306 acres with approximately 8,859 acres as agricultural land. This area is operated by forward thinking producers that hope to one day create a self sustaining agriculture community. Critical components for a self sustainable AEA that already exist are;

- Conservation minded producers
 - Nearby agriculture service providers
 - Viable farming operations with long term goals in agriculture
 - Many next generation operators are present
 - Nearby Ag. Lime Quarry
 - Goals of producing commodities that can be both food and fuel
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5. What are the current land uses within the proposed AEA?

Provide documentation to show that the proposed AEA is primarily in agricultural use. Describe the percentage and distribution of agricultural and agriculture-related uses; residential uses; transportation, utility, energy and communications uses; undeveloped natural resource and open space uses; and other uses as applicable. Identify the principal types of agricultural use and describe

the location, geographic scope, size, significance and compatibility of those agricultural uses. Describe current trends and emerging issues within the proposed area. Attach a land use map for the area to support this explanation (at the town or county scale).

See attached zoning maps

- Town of Alden, Appendix A
- Town of Farmington, Appendix B
- Town of Somerset, Appendix C
- Town of Star Prairie, Appendix D

Land Use/Cover

Agriculture	7,653 Acres	74 % of Total Acres
Wetlands	571 Acres	6 % of Total Acres
Woodlands	1,858 Acres	18 % of Total Acres
USFWS/DNR Public Lands *	627 Acres	6 % of Total Acres
Water	207 Acres	2 % of Total Acres

* Included into Agriculture Acres.

Squaw Lake Agricultural Enterprise area land cover map can be referenced in appendix J.

Future land use maps for the applicable towns may be referenced in appendix H (Page 1-3).

Principle types of agriculture uses within this proposed Squaw Lake AEA.

1. Row Crop Production
2. Dairying
3. Forestry including a considerable area in MFL.
4. Large horse training and recreational riding facility.
5. Raising of non-GMO food grade soybeans.
6. Raising breeding dairy replacement cattle.
7. Beef cow/calf and feeder/finishing of cattle.
8. USFWS Prairie restorations.

6. How is the proposed AEA consistent with your other local land use plans?

The entire proposed AEA must be located within a farmland preservation area designation in the county's certified farmland preservation plan (please document). Explain how the proposed AEA is consistent with existing county and local land use plans. If there are inconsistencies, explain how they will be reconciled. Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

The proposed AEA is entirely included within the Polk and St. Croix county farmland preservation plans. Maps from the appropriate county farmland preservation plans have been attached in the appendix (appendix E & F). Major subdivisions and lands listed in the 1980 plan as land to be excluded from farmland preservation agreements have been removed temporarily from the AEA in an effort to keep the area consistent with each plan. These areas will be re-evaluated when revisions to the county farmland preservation plans take place.

Each town listed in this petition has completed a comprehensive plan. High points from the Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resource elements related to this question can be referenced in the appendix (appendix G).

7. What nonagricultural development trends affect the proposed AEA?

Explain current development trends affecting the proposed AEA. Describe the likelihood that land in the AEA will transition out of agriculture in the foreseeable future (note that an AEA may not include any area planned for nonagricultural development within the next 15 years). Attach supporting documentation, where appropriate.

To date, the proposed Squaw Lake AEA has been able to maintain the majority of its most productive farmland. The development pressure this area is experiencing is not urban but slow development of rural lands into rural, non-farm residences. Thus far, with the exception of a few major subdivisions, minimal fragmentation of agricultural lands has taken place. The following are a few examples of rural, non-farm development trends in the four applicable towns in the last 20 years.

Farmington

The Town of Farmington has 60 percent of its land assessed as agricultural land and 18 percent assessed as forested lands. The Town lost 23 percent of its assessed agricultural acres between 1987 and 2007 while assessed forest land decreased by almost 28 percent. The Town experienced a 146 percent increase in improved residential parcels and a 280 percent increase in assessed residential acres since 1987.

Alden

The Town of Alden has significant agricultural activity, with 48 percent of its assessed land assessed as agriculture. About one-fifth of the assessed land in the Town is assessed as forest. The Town lost 23 percent of its assessed agricultural acreage and 19.5 percent of its assessed forest acreage between 1987 and 2007. The town contains several lakes and is traversed by the Apple River. The town contains more assessed residential acreage (4,698 acres) than any other community in Polk County. From 1987 to 2007, assessed residential acreage increased by 251 percent while the number of improved residential parcels increased by 51 percent. Average residential parcel size increased from a little over an acre to 2.6 acres over this period.

Somerset

The Town of Somerset has about 41 percent of its assessed land assessed as agricultural and 15 percent as forest. The Town has lost about 42 percent of assessed agricultural land and 32 percent of assessed forest land between 1987 and 2007. During the same period the Town experienced a 169 percent increase in improved residential parcels and a 133 percent increase in assessed residential acreage. The Town ranks second in the county in assessed residential acres (7,328 acres).

Star Prairie

The Town of Star Prairie has 40 percent of its assessed land assessed as agricultural, 24 percent as residential and 18 percent assessed as forest. The Town has lost over half of its assessed agricultural land, but almost doubled (93% increase) assessed forest land between 1987 and 2007. The Town has numerous lakes and streams consisting of about 768 total acres or 3.8 percent of the total area of the Town. Many of these water bodies have significant shoreland development, particularly around Cedar and Squaw Lakes, and the Apple River. The Town experienced an increase of four and a half times in improved residential parcels and a 145 percent increase in assessed residential acreage between 1987 and 2007.

Due to the economic downturn, the development pressures have temporarily eased in this area. This lag in pressure has given us the opportunity to catch up in terms of planning land uses in the area and actually be able to implement it before the pressure builds again.

Future development is inevitable. Currently, plans exist for rebuilding and expanding the Hwy 64 bridge into Stillwater, which would open up a high-quality direct link from the Twin Cities to this area,

thus making it more appealing for development. This may trigger a second push in development pressures.

The towns and counties of which this AEA includes have all designated this area for future agriculture use in some way. St. Croix County has implemented Exclusive Agricultural Zoning in the sections within the AEA. The Town of Alden in Polk County has included sections 16, 21, 28 and 33 as exclusive agriculture land use in their Comprehensive land use plan.

For more information as it relates to future land use in these areas please refer to the excerpts from the towns' comprehensive plans agricultural, natural, and cultural resource elements in the appendix (appendix G pgs. 1-9). In addition, future land use maps have been included in the appendix as well (appendix H pgs. 1-3).

8. How will current or proposed land use controls support the proposed AEA?

Describe current and proposed land use controls such as zoning ordinances (farmland preservation, shoreland, wetland), farmland preservation agreements, easements, subdivision ordinances, natural area protections or other similar controls. If the area is zoned, attach a zoning map for the area (at the town or county scale). Attach documentation, where appropriate.

The proposed Squaw Lake AEA has an assortment of land use controls already implemented. Currently, on the Polk County side of the AEA there are two Farmland Preservation program agreements in effect. In the St. Croix section of the AEA farmland preservation is being achieved by Exclusive Agricultural Zoning. Both Polk and St. Croix have certified farmland preservation plans. These plans will be revised and updated by 2012 to reflect current land use goals. In addition to farmland preservation land use controls, the following list is a collection of other plans and ordinances with some degree of land use control and where they can be referenced.

- Shoreland Zoning Ordinances are in effect - <http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/ordinances.asp>
- Polk County has a Subdivision Ordinance- <http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/ordinances.asp>
- Polk County Comprehensive Land Use Plan - <http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/PlanningCompPlan.asp>
- Town of Alden Land Use Ordinance - <http://www.twp.alden.wi.us/ordinances.htm>
- Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan - <http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/PlanningCompGrant.asp>
- USFWS St. Croix Wetland Management District Comprehensive Conservation Plan - <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/stcroix/>

In addition, zoning maps are attached in the appendix (appendix A-D).

9. How will the proposed AEA promote compliance with the state's soil and water standards for nonpoint source pollution?

Farmers in an AEA who enter into a farmland preservation agreement must meet the following state standards (ATCP 50, Wis. Adm. Code), to claim a tax credit. Please indicate whether any of the petitioners are already in compliance with these standards. Explain how the proposed AEA will promote compliance with conservation standards. Attach documentation, where appropriate.

- Control of soil erosion
- Nutrient management planning
- Prevention of direct runoff from feedlots or stored manure into state waters
- Prevention of overflowing manure storage structures

- *Repair of failing and leaking manure storage structures and closure of abandoned manure storage structures*
- *Construction of new or substantially altered manure storage structures to technical standards*
- *No stacking of manure in unconfined piles in water quality management areas*
- *Diversion of clean water from feedlots, manure storage areas and barnyards in the water quality management area*
- *Maintenance of self-sustaining sod cover along waterways*

Agriculture producers within the proposed agricultural enterprise area have had a history of being very proactive in implementing conservation practices. All of the petitioners have already developed conservation plans and are currently implementing them. Some conservation plans may need updating. Some of the petitioners have developed a nutrient management plan at some point with a certified crop consultant or the Polk County LWRD. One of the petitioners has a CNMP and others have CRP contracts. The county land and water conservation departments have also designed and installed a number of barnyard runoff control and manure storage structures since the Squaw Lake priority watershed project began in 1997. Many times follow-up operation evaluations are lacking due to the presence of other priority projects. The proposed AEA and the annual compliance certifications would allow for follow-up on previously implemented practices and maintain an open line of communication for new compliance requirements and program opportunities.

Upon approval of the AEA the county land and water conservation departments will evaluate the petitioners to determine full compliance with state soil and water conservation and NR 151 standards. At that time if there are certain items that an operation will need to address the county conservation departments will assist in bringing these operations into full compliance. It is unlikely that any of the petitioners operations are far out of compliance due to the past conservation efforts in the Squaw Lake watershed. As a result, conservation efforts in this area will be more about maintaining conservation practices rather than entire farm updates for compliance.

10. How will the proposed AEA promote agricultural and related investment?

Describe current and proposed investment within the AEA. Identify key current and potential investors and their level of commitment. Explain how the AEA will promote or facilitate agricultural and related investment. Attach documentation, where appropriate.

Ultimately, an AEA designation would help insure agricultural opportunity for the present and future generations. It is important to note that a few of the producers in the proposed AEA moved here from the Twin Cities area because of development pressures from the west. These producers can tell you first hand the hardships of having to relocate the family farm with each generation, and have expressed concerns over doing it again if action is not taken. Implement dealers, veterinarians, supply cooperatives and the like would also benefit from the added security of knowing there will be an agriculture customer base in the future.

As stated in question #2, one of the proposed initiatives for this area is to facilitate the creation of a long term sustainable agriculture economy in the area. Efforts are already underway to expand the use of locally sourced foods into the Osceola Schools. Another initiative already underway is to achieve 100% food and fuel independence by 2025 in the Osceola area. Wise use of cropland, such as that presented in the proposed AEA, will be necessary to produce the food and energy required for this initiative. The agriculture resources in this area are prime to evolve from a commodity based marketing system to one where both food and energy are locally produced and utilized.

11. How will the proposed AEA support economic activity within the community?

Explain how the AEA will promote economic activity between agricultural enterprises or between agricultural and nonagricultural enterprises. This may include, for example, joint marketing opportunities, purchase of feed, shared facilities and equipment, custom manure spreading or other opportunities. Attach documentation, where appropriate.

The establishment of an AEA in this area could have phenomenal impacts on the economic viability of this community. Maintaining all types of working land for various recreational, agricultural and employment opportunities creates a solid foundation for economic development. The following are just a few examples of enterprises, both agricultural and non-agricultural, that would prosper with the help of the proposed AEA.

- Implement dealers, Veterinarians, Lenders, Co-Ops
- Agro-Tourism
- Markets for Organic Products and Community Supported Agriculture as well as local farmers markets.
- Custom Planting, harvesting, hauling services
- Sporting and recreation opportunities (hunting, fishing)
- Markets between operations within the AEA for trade or sale of services or commodities locally (ex. Sharing equipment, selling feed/livestock to neighbors, raising young stock, etc)
- Timber production

12. What is the level of cooperator support for this petition?

Describe the level of support by other farmers, and by affected businesses, community organizations, and government entities. Attach cooperator "signature pages," if any.

1. Fifteen Squaw Lake AEA petitioners
2. Letters of support:
 - Wisconsin DNR
 - USDA-NRCS
 - Polk County LWRD
 - St. Croix LWCD
3. Cooperator List of signatures:
 - Seven Landowner cooperator signature pages
 - Star Prairie Land Trust
 - USFWS
 - Countryside Co-op
 - Burnett Dairy
 - Star Prairie Fish and Game Inc.
 - Cedar Lake District
 - Polk County Economic Development
 - West Wisconsin Land Trust (WWLT)
 - Federated Co-ops Inc.

Are there any other compelling reasons to choose this AEA proposal from among competing AEA proposals? Explain, and attach documentation where appropriate.

With the exploration of energy and food independence by a neighboring community by the year 2025, this proposed AEA now has epic importance. With agriculture lands as the base of food production and now agricultures potential in providing energy sources, the preservation of Agricultural lands has never been more significant. The proposed AEA, if approved, will provide the staple for this energy and food independence by the year 2025 project. Please see the Osceola Energy and Food independence project flyer in the appendix (appendix I).

The following list includes additional reasons this proposed AEA will complement all aspects of agriculture preservation in this area:

1. Improvement and protection of 303d listed water resource.
 2. Much development pressure from Twin Cities
 3. Future expansion of Twin Cities is east (New Hwy 64, New Stillwater bridge)
 4. Exhibits prime agricultural lands in the area and all components of a sustainable agriculture community nearby:
 - Markets
 - Lime
 - Co-Ops
 - Implement dealers
 - Veterinarians
 - Livestock haulers
 - Seed dealers
 - Infrastructure
 - Very committed and motivated producers
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PART III. MAP AND SPATIAL LOCATION DATA

Please send all of the following information, in electronic form, to: DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov (enter "AEA Petition" in the subject line):

1. A map of the proposed AEA that shows:
 - The proposed AEA boundary.
 - The boundaries of all land parcels within the proposed AEA.
 - Labels to identify farm parcels owned by persons signing this petition.
 - Major features such as roads and surface water resources.
 - Political boundaries lying within the proposed AEA, including any boundaries of counties, towns, villages, cities or drainage districts.
2. The spatial location data used to create the map. Please follow the attached MAP AND SPATIAL DATA GUIDELINES.