

Date: February 6, 2013
From: Anthony B. Hall, PhD, OD
To: Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes
Re: Senate Bill 78

Mister Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask that you approve Senate Bill 78 and refer it to the Senate for consideration. I am a resident of Kipling and own camp property near Rock. I have hunted for over 50 years. Part of my education includes a PhD degree awarded by North Carolina State University in 1980 with a specialization in Plant Physiological Ecology. I feel I am qualified to comment on the Biodiversity Stewardship Areas (BSA) project and the harm it would cause to hunters in the State if implemented.

Under the BSA project, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sought to set aside vast tracts of land within the State to preserve various ecosystems. Although the DNR states that they would "conserve" these areas, that word does not describe their goal of protecting these areas from citizens and taxpayers of the State.

In the DNR document entitled "BSA Overview" dated 11/15/2010, they stated "...land uses that promote or do not impact or detract from conservation of Michigan's biological heritage (biodiversity) are acceptable within DNRE-managed portions of BSA's". Further the DNR stated "...uses may be allowed if they will not detract from the ability to achieve the desired results of the BSA". Under this guideline, the DNR could exclude all human activities within the BSA's since any human activity could impact the BSA. This appears to be the ultimate goal of the BSA or Living Legacy project.

Draft reports issued on the BSA project resulted in objections from hunters, anglers, forest product companies and anyone who understands the concept of conservation and the wise use of our State resources. In reaction to these objections, former DNR director Stokes issued a memo dated 7/12/2011 directing that to "refocus" the project. It is my understanding that Director Creagh has called for the project to be abandoned completely.

The BSA project was misguided at best and in conflict with the DNR's core mission of encouraging the use and enjoyment of our natural resources. Further since the DNR is funded primarily with hunter, angler and user group money, they misused this revenue in pursuit of the BSA project.

Senate Bill 78 will remove the threat of the DNR returning to this project in the future. This bill allows for the protection of truly unique and sensitive areas without the danger of prohibiting human activity from vast areas. I ask again that you approve this Bill and refer it to the Senate. Thank you for your consideration.