



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

TO: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
THROUGH: Robert L. Tetens, Director
FROM: Agricultural Lands Preservation Advisory Committee (ALPAC)
DATE: August 13, 2013
RE: **Recommendation: Schneider Property – Salem Township**

Background:

In October 2011, two parcels of property located in Lodi Township were nominated for consideration by the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program. As primarily farmland the nomination was reviewed by the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee as part of Round 12. The parcel is owned by the Rubena Schneider Trust and comprises approximately 69 acres on the southeast corner of the intersection of Parker and Scio Church Roads.

Discussion:

Staff to the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee visited the property and identified farmland as the predominant feature, in addition to wetland habitat. The property has a significant history of productive farming, and all 68.9 acres are prime, unique or locally important agricultural soils (as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service). The land is undeveloped and includes no structures or drives. Wetland habitat at the northwest corner of the property is a popular stopover for migratory birds and waterfowl in addition to providing plant and amphibian diversity.

In addition to the valuable features of the Schneider Property as high quality active farmland, proximity to a number of other protected properties is a significant benefit. Adjacent property across Parker and Scio Church Roads is already protected under perpetual conservation easements. A conservation easement on the Schneider Property would mean creating a block of 170 acres of protected farmland. Brauer Preserve is located less than a half mile south on Parker Road. Several additional properties are protected along Parker Road.

The Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee identified the Schneider Property as a high priority for acquisition of a conservation easement. An appraisal report, prepared by Williams & Associates, Inc., identified a value of a conservation easement as \$2,300.44 per acre, or \$158,500 for the 68.9-acre Schneider Property.

Recommendation:

Based upon the review by the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee and staff it is my recommendation that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize preparation of a purchase offer for a conservation easement on the Schneider property (Lodi Township) at a price of \$158,500 (\$2,300.44 per acre), contingent upon the completion of all necessary due diligence and the Commission's final approval.

Attachments