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Aitkin County, Minnesota Designated as the Forest Guild's Newest Model Forest

(Aitkin, MN) - Forests within Aitkin County, Minnesota and managed by the Aitkin County Land Department have been designated as the newest Model Forest through a program of the Forest Guild.

"The designation of the Aitkin County Model Forest was a unanimous decision made by the local field reviewers and the national review committee," reported Mike DeBonis, Executive Director of the Forest Guild. "The Cornish and Libby forests in Aitkin County are managed to produce marketable forest products on a sustained basis, balancing timber harvest and growth, and community needs."

The Guild has designated 20 Model Forests across the United States. Aitkin County is the first Model Forest in the Lake States region of the upper Midwest.

"The designation was a multi-step process including an on-site field evaluation by Forest Guild members from our region," said Mark Jacobs, Land Commissioner for the Aitkin County Land Department. "We are pleased with the recognition of the work we do as public land managers and hope that this designation helps to highlight the overall high-quality forest management practiced in the Lake States region"

The Forest Guild is a professional organization of forest stewards, associated natural resource professionals, and affiliates who are passionate about restoring and sustaining the integrity of our forests while meeting the needs of the communities that rely on them. The Forest Guild Model Forest program recognizes places, people, and relationships that foster sustainable forest management and demonstrate successful silviculture.

"This recognition clearly demonstrates the exemplary skills, dedication and commitment Aitkin County Land Department and the Forest Advisory Committee employs in their responsibilities toward Aitkin County's forests, citizens and future generations," commented Anne Marcotte, Aitkin County Commissioner.

Two areas of Aitkin County forests have been designated as model forests, including the Cornish Model Forest and Libby Model Forest. These areas have significant conservation values including rare ferns, salamanders, and birds or generally have high value as wildlife habitat. These areas also have value as demonstration areas for educational purposes, both for the general public and natural resource professionals.

"Aitkin County has a strong track record of responsible forest management, and this designation is an important recognition of their commitment and the quality of the forest management," stated Kathryn Fernholz, Executive Director of Dovetail Partners, a Minneapolis-based non-profit, and Forest Guild Board Member.

More information about the Aitkin County Model Forest is available at: <http://www.forestguild.org/Aitkin.html>

About the Forest Guild

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