



# ST. LOUIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

INSPECTION DATE: 12/14/2021

REPORT DATE: 12/27/2021

MEETING DATE: 1/13/2022

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

**APPLICANT NAME:** Emily Richey

**APPLICANT ADDRESS:** 1109 Two Harbors Rd., Two Harbors, MN 55616

**OWNER NAME:** Margaret Cook, Kyle Cook and Emily Richey

**SITE ADDRESS:** 1109 Two Harbors Rd., Two Harbors, MN 55616

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** SE ¼ of NE ¼, S36, T53N, R12W (Alden)

**PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):** 210-0010-06510

**NATURE OF REQUEST:** A conditional use permit for a wedding venue/event center as a Public/Semi-Public Use.

**PROPOSAL DETAILS:** The applicant is proposing to operate a wedding venue/event center. Weddings will be the main event held on the subject parcel. Approximately 30 or more weddings a year occurring on Fridays and Saturdays from April to mid-October. Weddings may host 50-125 guests. Access to a renovated dairy barn, multiple ceremony spaces, and a large tent will be offered. Food and liquor may be provided by the venue or by the renters, vendors, and caterers. Portable toilets and other waste disposal will be offered by the venue. There is ample parking available on the property. Other similar events including small parties, business meetings/workshops, and retreats may also take place on the property utilizing similar infrastructure as the weddings would. Hours of operation proposed are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 10:00pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10:00am to midnight.

## PARCEL AND SITE INFORMATION

**ROAD ACCESS NAME/NUMBER:** Two Harbors Rd.

**ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASS:** Collector

**LAKE NAME:** N/A

**LAKE CLASSIFICATION:** N/A

**RIVER NAME:** Unnamed

**RIVER CLASSIFICATION:** Trout Stream (TRO)

**DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT ON PARCEL:** There is currently a dwelling and several accessory structures on the property.

**ZONE DISTRICT:** FAM 3, RES 3

## PARCEL AND SITE INFORMATION

**PARCEL ACREAGE:** 40 ACRES

**LOT WIDTH:** APPROX. 1,320 FEET

**FEET OF ROAD FRONTAGE:** APPROX. 1320 FEET

**FEET OF SHORELINE FRONTAGE:** APPROX. 1,320 FEET

**VEGETATIVE COVER/SCREENING:** The developed area on the subject parcel is well screened from all sides. Visibility from the road is dependent on direction. From the east, screening is good. From the west, structures are partial screened, but visible. Proposed parking area is visible from the road.

**TOPOGRAPHY:** The parcel gradually slopes towards the trout stream with increased slope within the shoreland area.

**FLOODPLAIN ISSUES:** N/A

**WETLAND ISSUES:** The subject parcel contains some wetland which will not be impacted by the current proposal.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PARCEL:** Any proposed alterations to the natural topography may require a land alteration permit or may not be allowed. New structures or structure additions may be limited or not allowed if located within shoreline setback. The parcel is currently used as a CSA (community supported agriculture).

## FACTS AND FINDINGS

### A. Plans and Official Controls:

1. St. Louis County Zoning Ordinance 62, Article V, Section 5.6A allows a Public/Semi-Public use in the Forest Agricultural Management zone district with a conditional use permit.
2. St. Louis County Zoning Ordinance 62, Article V, Section 5.6D allows a Public/Semi-Public use in the Residential zone district with a conditional use permit.
3. The majority of subject parcel is designated as Forest and Agriculture within Planning Area 6 on the Future Land Use Map.
  - a. The portion of the subject parcel located within statutory shoreland area of the trout stream is designated as Natural Areas on the Future Land Use Map.
4. Goal LU-4 of the St. Louis County Comprehensive Land Use Plan states that development shall proceed in an orderly, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner. When development opportunities arise in isolated areas, such development should be self-supporting.
  - a. The request is for a wedding venue on an existing property that will utilize the current buildings and outside areas on the property. No request for public services is being requested.
5. Goal LU-7 of the St. Louis County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to provide sufficient opportunities for commercial development to serve local and regional markets throughout the county.
6. Objective LU-7.2 of the St. Louis County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to develop opportunities for neighborhood commercial sites that are compatible in scale and operation with surrounding residential development.

### B. Neighborhood Compatibility:

1. The proposal may have some impact on the neighborhood in terms of development.
  - a. An event tent may be used that may be visible from the road. Vegetative screening exists that may limit any visual impact of the tent from the road.

- b. In addition, the parking area is visible from the road.
- 2. The proposal has the potential to impact the residential properties in the area with added noise and traffic during events.
  - a. The nearest residential dwelling is located south from the subject parcel across Two Harbors Road. It is approximately 700 feet from the existing development on the subject parcel.
  - b. There are approximately eleven residential dwellings within 0.5 miles of the subject parcel.
- 3. Amplified music for the purpose of an outdoor reception or reception within a tent, may cause a nuisance to surrounding neighbors. A condition limiting hours of amplified music may lessen the impact to adjacent properties.

**C. Orderly Development:**

- 1. Many of the parcels in the area are large tracts of land that are utilized for seasonal and year-round residential development or are vacant.
- 2. The subject parcel is located in an area that is predominately FAM-3 zoning. While FAM zoning may allow other uses, the majority of parcels in the immediate area are utilized residentially.
  - a. Future development could include other uses allowed in the FAM zone district.

**D. Desired Pattern of Development:**

- 1. The underlying zoning of FAM-3 limits density due to established minimum size standards. The majority of parcels within the immediate area meet or exceed the required minimums, including the subject parcel.
- 2. Current density of the area is low and the desired pattern of development is encouraged to continue to be low density due to the underlying zoning.

**E. Other Factor(s):**

- 1. The applicant owns the adjacent property to the west of the subject parcel.
- 2. The subject parcel is adjacent to Lake County to the east.
- 3. The existing dwelling and septic system will not be used as part of the proposed wedding venue/event center use, per the applicant.
  - a. If in the future the existing dwelling or existing septic system is proposed to be used as part of the wedding venue/event center, it will need to meet all St. Louis County On-Site Wastewater SSTS standards.
- 4. If the existing septic system is not used, all waste generated will need be contained in portable toilets and wash stations.
  - a. The applicant is planning to use portable stations and contracting with a maintainer to pump them when needed.
  - b. If different waste collection is proposed in the future, all St. Louis County On-Site Wastewater SSTS standards must be followed.

**See attachments: 1. Zoning/location map 2. Air photo 3. Site sketch 4. Project picture (if applicable) 5. Other pertinent pictures or maps**

**PLANNING COMMISSION CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

- 1. Does the use conforms to the land use plan?**
- 2. Is the use compatible with the existing neighborhood?**

3. **Will the use impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding area?**
4. **Is the location and character of the proposed use considered consistent with a desirable pattern of development?**
5. **What, if any, other factors should be taken into consideration on this case?**

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS, IF APPROVED**

In the event that the Planning Commission determines that the proposal meets the criteria for granting a conditional use permit to allow a wedding venue/event center as a Public/Semi-Public Use, the following conditions shall apply:

#### Conditions Precedent:

1. The applicant shall obtain access approval from the appropriate road authority.
2. Notice of the proposal shall be sent to the local fire department.

#### Conditions Concurrent:

1. St. Louis County On-Site Wastewater SSTS standards shall be followed.
2. If liquor is allowed at an event, St. Louis County Liquor License Ordinance 28 shall be followed.
3. Lighting shall be directed in accordance with dark sky standards.
4. There shall be no on-street/road parking during events.
5. During events, no amplified music shall be played outside after 9:00 PM.
6. The applicant shall comply with all local, county, state, and federal regulations.



**ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MN  
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**Duluth**

Government Services Center

320 West 2nd Street, Suite 301  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 725-5000

**Virginia**Government Services  
Center

201 South 3rd Avenue West  
Virginia, MN 55792  
(218) 749-7103

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

**General** - This application is used to apply for a Conditional Use Permit. Applicants will need to attach the appropriate worksheet(s) in order to process. Incomplete applications will be returned. Note that the 'clock' does not begin until after payment has been processed for the application. For more information, see our website at:  
[www.stlouiscountymn.gov/BuildingStructures](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/BuildingStructures)

Enter the Primary PIN and Associated PIN (if applicable) of the property to be reviewed.

*PIN is found on your Property Tax Statement. For example, 123-1234-12345. Primary PIN: Parcel where Structure/SSTS are located. Associated PIN: Additional and/or adjacent property that you own or that is related to the project.*

County Land Explorer: <https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/explorer>

Property Lookup: <http://apps.stlouiscountymn.gov/auditor/parcelInfo2005Iframe>

Primary PIN

**210-0010-06510**

Associated PINs

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Type of Application

**Does this application apply to a Short Term Rental?****No****Is this application being submitted for a Rehearing?**

*If this application is being submitted because a previous Conditional Use Permit application was denied or disapproved, please select Yes.*

**No**


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Enter Applicant Information

I am a: **Landowner**  
 Applicant Name: **Emily Richey**  
 Address Line 1: **1109 Two Harbors Rd**  
 Address Line 2: **--**  
 City: **Two Harbors**  
 State: **Minnesota**  
 Zip: **55616**  
 Primary Phone: **(218)591-3918**  
 Cell Phone: **--**  
 Fax: **--**  
 Email: **agateacresevents@gmail.com**  
 Contact Person Name: **Kyle Cook**  
 Contact Person Phone: **(206)427-4463**

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## Mailing Address Information.

*This address can default from the address you selected. If the values defaulted are not correct, please enter the correct information.*

Same as Applicant address? **No**  
 Name: **Emily Richey**  
 Address: **1109 Two Harbors Rd**  
 City: **Two Harbors**  
 State/Province: **Minnesota**  
 Zip: **55616**  
 Primary Phone: **2185913918**  
 Cell Phone: **--**  
 Fax: **--**  
 Email: **agateacresevents@gmail.com**

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## Site Information

*If there is no site address, the application will be forwarded to 911/Communications to assign one.*

Is there a site address for this property? **No**  
 Site Address: **--**  
 Is this leased property? **No**  
 Leased From? **--**

**US Forest Service**

US Forest Service  
 Superior National Forest  
 8901 Grand Avenue Place  
 Duluth, MN 55808

**MN Power**

MN Power  
 Shore Land Traditions  
 30 West Superior Street  
 Duluth, MN 55802

**MN DNR, Area Hydrologist**

MN DNR, Area Hydrologist  
 7979 Highway 37  
 Eveleth, MN 55734

**MN DNR Land and Minerals**

MN DNR Land and Minerals  
 1201 East Highway 2  
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744

**St. Louis County - Duluth**

St. Louis County - Duluth  
 Government Services Center  
 320 West 2nd Street, Suite 301  
 Duluth, MN 55802  
 (218) 725-5000

**St. Louis County - Virginia**

St. Louis County - Virginia  
 Land and Minerals  
 7820 Highway 135  
 Virginia, MN 55792  
 (218) 749-7103

**Do you have written authorization from the leased property owner?**

*If Yes, you must attach written authorization form.*

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**How is the property accessed?****Public Road****Private Road****No****No****No**

Enter Project Information.

*If you answered 'Yes' to any of the questions below, it is required that you submit a copy of a septic permit to construct or certificate of compliance approval or municipal/sanitary district approval when applying for a land use permit.*

**Is this project on a parcel less than 2.5 acres?****No****Is this project within 300 feet of a stream/river or 1,000 feet of a lake?****Yes****Is this project adding a bedroom?**

*Include home, garage, and accessory dwelling.*

**No****Total # of bedrooms on property after project completion.****4****Does this project include plumbing or pressurized water in proposed structure?****No****If Yes, please explain:****--****Is this project connected to a municipal or sanitary district system?****No****CONDITIONAL USE WORKSHEET**

Conditional use permits are typically required on property where the owner does not reside and/or has employees and customer traffic. A CUP needs additional controls or restrictions to assure that it is in harmony with the neighborhood. They are also required for a variety of other uses.

What are you applying for?

New Business **Yes**Expansion of Existing Business **No**Replace Existing Business **No**Other **No**

If Other, please explain

**--**

How is the property currently being used?

**This property is currently a residence and working vegetable and flower farm, Agate Acres Farm.**

What type of business/use is being applied for?

*List all uses that will take place.*

**Agate Acres Events LLC will host weddings and small gatherings.**

### DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Describe the business and list business hours.

Describe the business **The following is a section of our business plan. The full business plan is attached to this application. 1.1 Product Agate Acres Events LLC offers the following products: Weddings - Agate Acres Events LLC will host 30+ weddings a year. These events will take place on Fridays and Saturdays from the end of April through mid October. Weddings will host 50-125 guests. Wedding customers will have access to our renovated dairy barn, one of three offered ceremony spaces, a large tent space (40x60), the scenic Knife River that meanders through the property, bathrooms, dressing rooms, and our highly detailed vendor list. Rentable Gathering Space - Agate Acres Events LLC's barn will be rentable for a much lower rate than a wedding for gatherings such as small parties, workshops, retreats, etc. 1.2 Customers Our customers will mostly come from MN and WI. They value the outdoors, natural spaces, water, rustic style, and local food systems, as well as a good time and creating meaningful and magical events. These folks will use our space to get married and hold a reception, or to host a smaller gathering. 1.3 What Drives Us Agate Acres Events LLC is driven by helping create meaningful and magical events for our community. We want to help bring people together to celebrate eventful moments in their lives, however big or small. 2. COMPANY DESCRIPTION 2.1 Mission Statement Agate Acres Events LLC facilitates gatherings, welcomes all, and supports our clients' vision and creativity. 2.2 Principal Members Kyle Cook - Founder and Owner Emily Richey - Founder and Owner 2.3 Legal Structure Limited Liability Corporation**

M-F Hours **8am - 10pm**  
Saturday/Sunday Hours **10am - 12am**

### TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND/OR DOCKAGE

Will the proposal generate an increase in traffic?

*Boat, snowmobile, truck, bus, car, etc.*

**Yes**

If Yes, what is the estimated increase

**> 25 vehicles**

Does the proposal require parking?

*Please include employees, visitors, and other parking.*

**Yes**

How many parking spaces are available on the property?

**100**

### SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

Does your proposal include signage?

*Include any off-site signs.*

**Yes**

Please list number of signs, size, location, and illumination of each sign

**We will be hanging one sign at the end of our driveway that says Agate Acres (our logo). This sign will be on our private property, on a sign post that is 6ft tall and lit with a small light.**

Will there be lighting (including security lighting) that may be visible from roads, waterways, and adjacent properties?

**Yes**

If Yes, please explain

**A light at the end of our driveway to illuminate the entry to the property.**

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### OUTDOOR BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Will there be any outdoor work or storage areas such as: rock piles, assembly sites, tank storage, equipment parking, etc.?

**No**

If Yes, please explain

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### WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Will wastewater be generated?

**No**

If Yes, what type of system will be used to handle wastewater treatment?

Private Septic System **No**

Municipal **No**

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### SOLID WASTE

Check all types of waste generated and describe how you will collect and store waste generated from the business below. Additional information may be required based on the scope of the project.

Household Garbage **Yes**

Oil and Grease **No**

Other Automotive Fluids **No**

Animal Waste **No**

Chemicals **No**

Medical **No**

Hazardous **No**

Demolition Waste **No**

Wood and Sawdust **No**

Radioactive **No**

Other **No**

If Other, please explain --

Please describe collection and disposal: **We will contract with a local garbage company for weekly dumpster service. For our bathrooms, we will be buying 2 luxury portable bathroom trailers (four stalls). This is the product: <https://www.cheryindustrial.com/collections/all-products/products/bastone-2-private-stalls-portable-restroom>. These units will have a holding tank that is serviced after each event by a local septic company. We will build a septic in phase 3 of our business plan execution (see business plan for details).**

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### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Will there be more than one (1) acre of altered surface?

*If Yes, please attach your NPDES permit.*

**No**

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By submitting this application, I certify and agree that I am the owner or the authorized agent of the owner of the above property, and that all uses will conform to the provisions of St. Louis County. I further certify and agree that I will comply

with all conditions imposed in connection with the approval of the application. Applicants may be required to submit additional property descriptions, property surveys, site plans, building plans, and other information before the application is accepted or approved. ***Intentional or unintentional falsification of this application or any attachments thereto will make the application, any approval of the application and any result invalid.*** I authorize St. Louis County staff to inspect the property to review the application and for compliance inspections. Furthermore, by submitting this application, I release St. Louis County and its employees from any and all liability and claims for damages to person or property in any manner or form that may arise from the approval of the application or any related plans, the issuance of any resulting permit or the subsequent location, construction, alteration, repair, extension, operation or maintenance of the subject matter of the application.

*If your name, contact information or email address have changed, you should update your contact information in the portal by selecting 'Maintain Contact Information' at the top of this page.*

Submitted By: **Emily Richey**  
Address: **1109 Two Harbors Rd**  
City: **TWO HARBORS**  
State: **MN**  
Postal Code: **55616**  
Email Address: **agateacresfarm@gmail.com**

I have read and agree to the statement above.

**I agree**

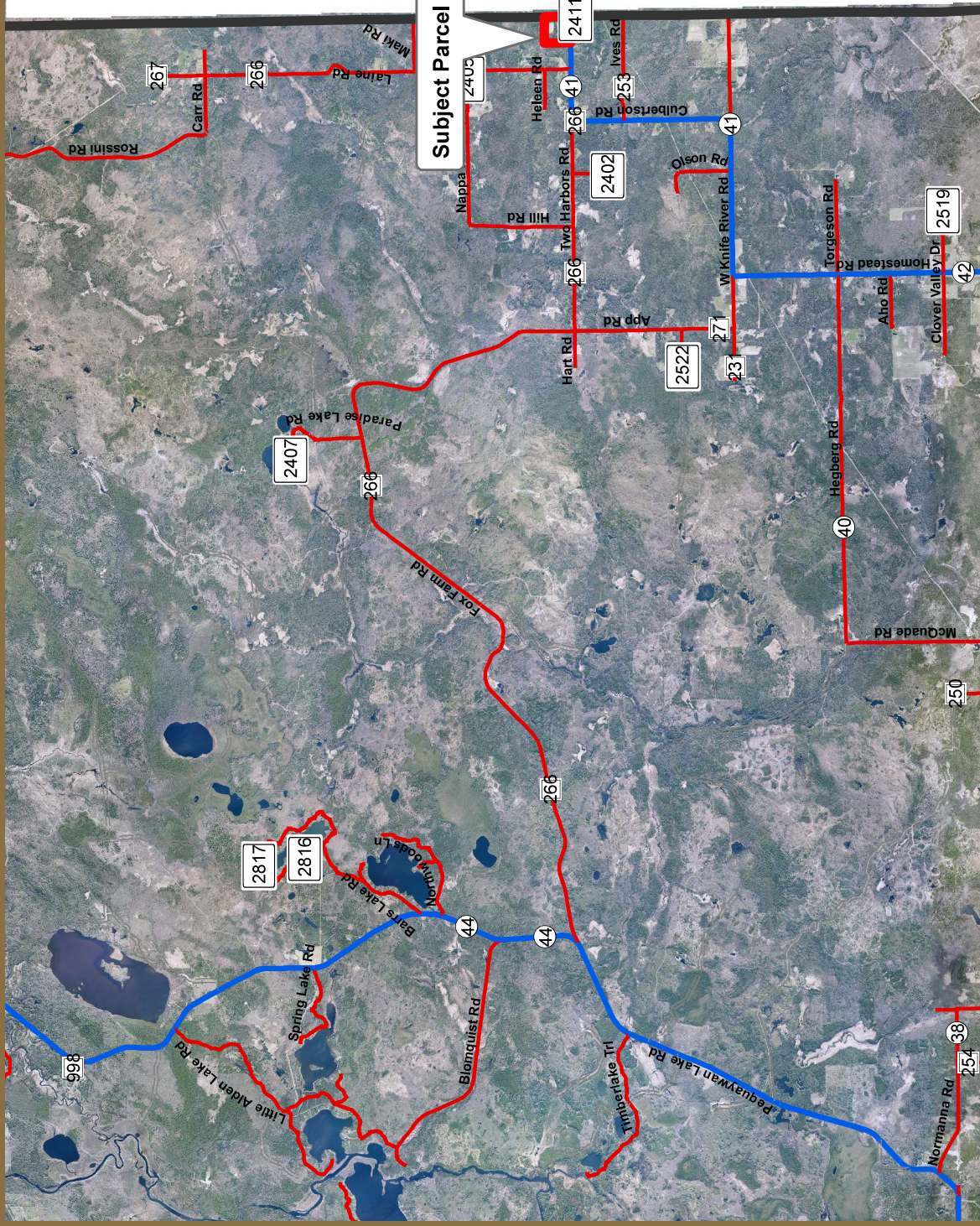




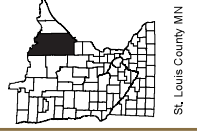
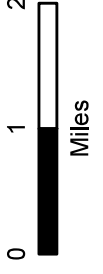


# St. Louis County

January PC Meeting



Lake County



**Emily Richey**  
Location Map

PIN: 210-0010-06510



Prepared By: **Planning & Community Development**  
(218) 728-3000  
[www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)  
Source: St. Louis County

Map Created: 12/8/2021

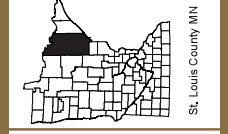
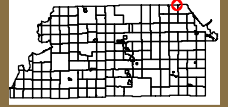
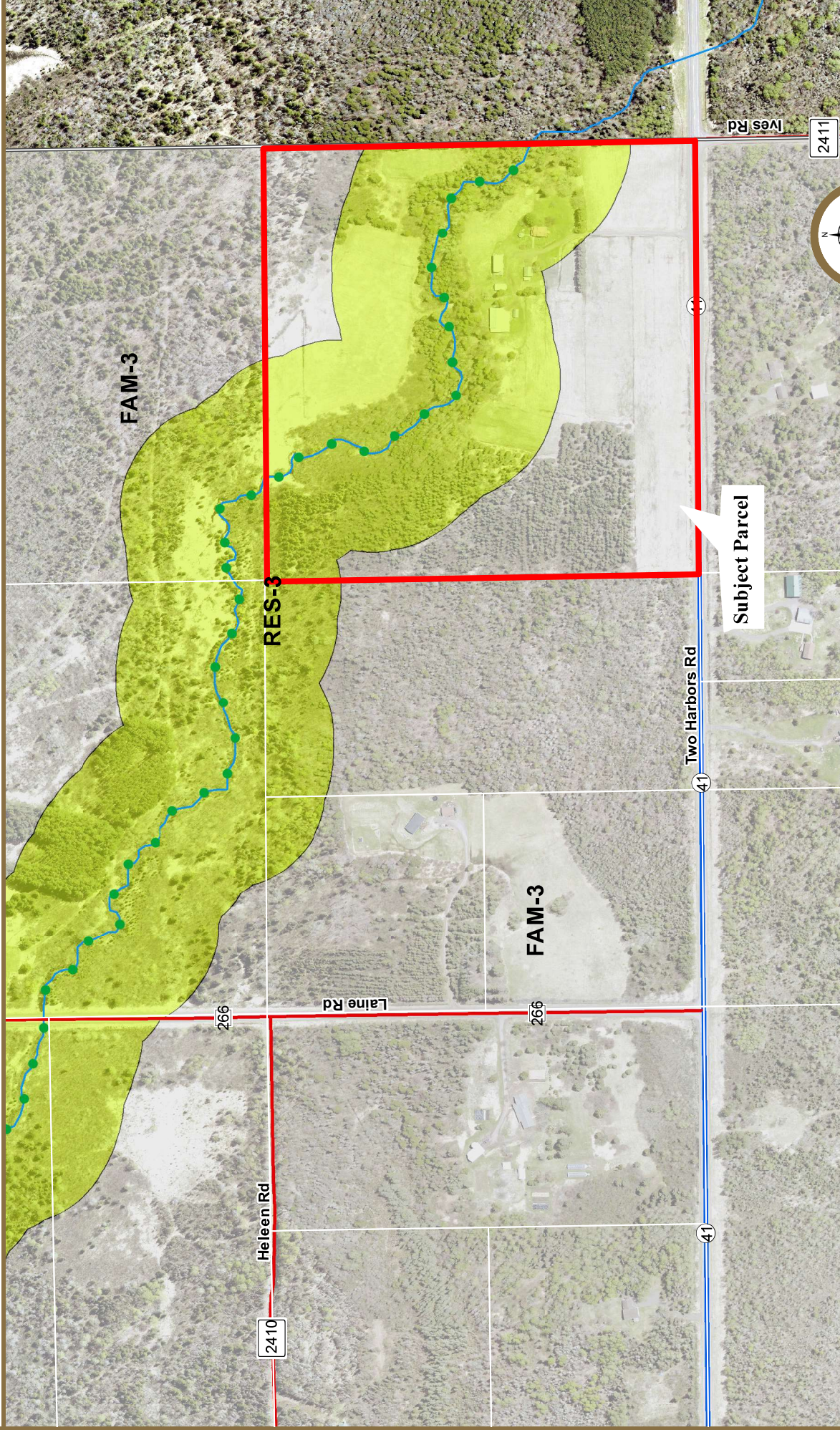
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# St. Louis County

January PC Meeting



Prepared By: **Planning & Community Development**  
 (216) 723-5000  
[www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)

Source: St. Louis County

Map Created: 12/28/2021

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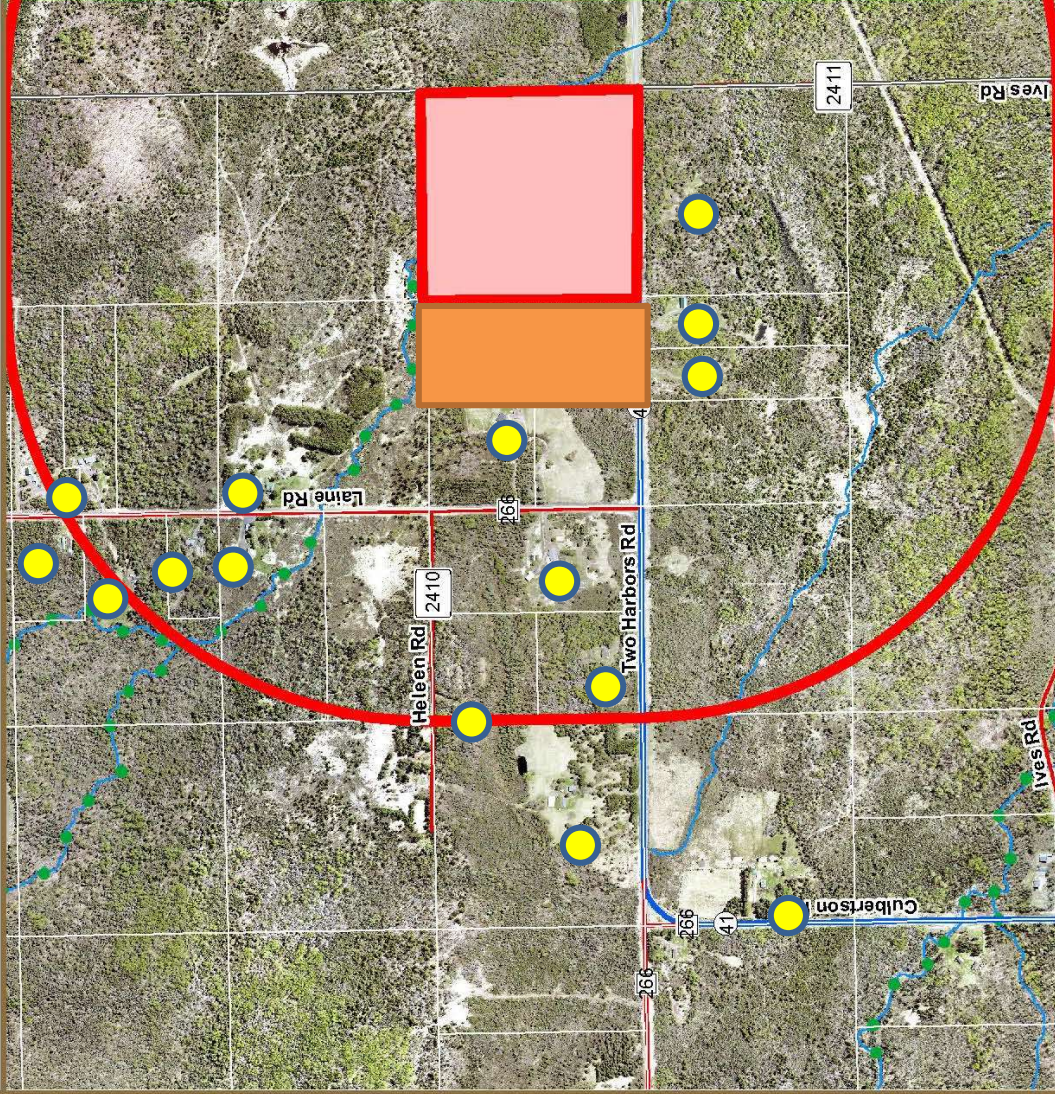
**Emily Richey**  
 Zoning Map  
 PIN: 210-0010-06510





# St. Louis County

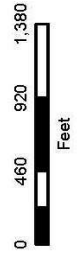
January PC Meeting



Lake County

## Legend

- Subject parcel
- Common ownership
- Residential uses
- Half-mile buffer



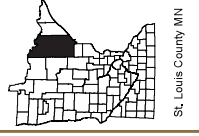
**Emily Richey**  
**Area Map**  
PIN: 210-0010-06510

Prepared By: Planning & Community Development  
(216) 725-3000  
[www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)

Map Created: 12/20/2021  
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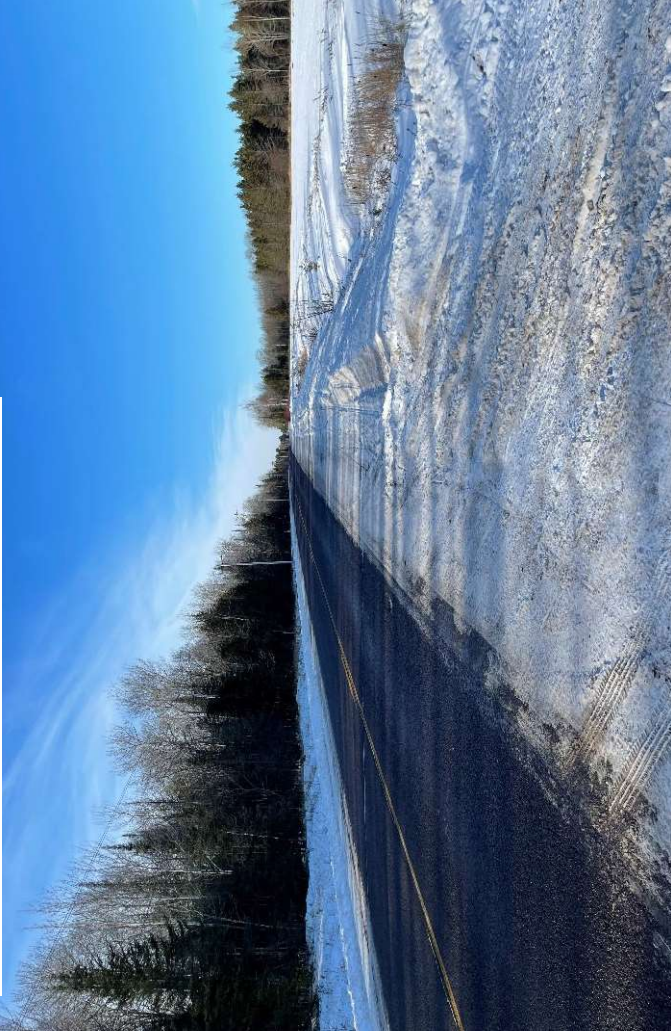


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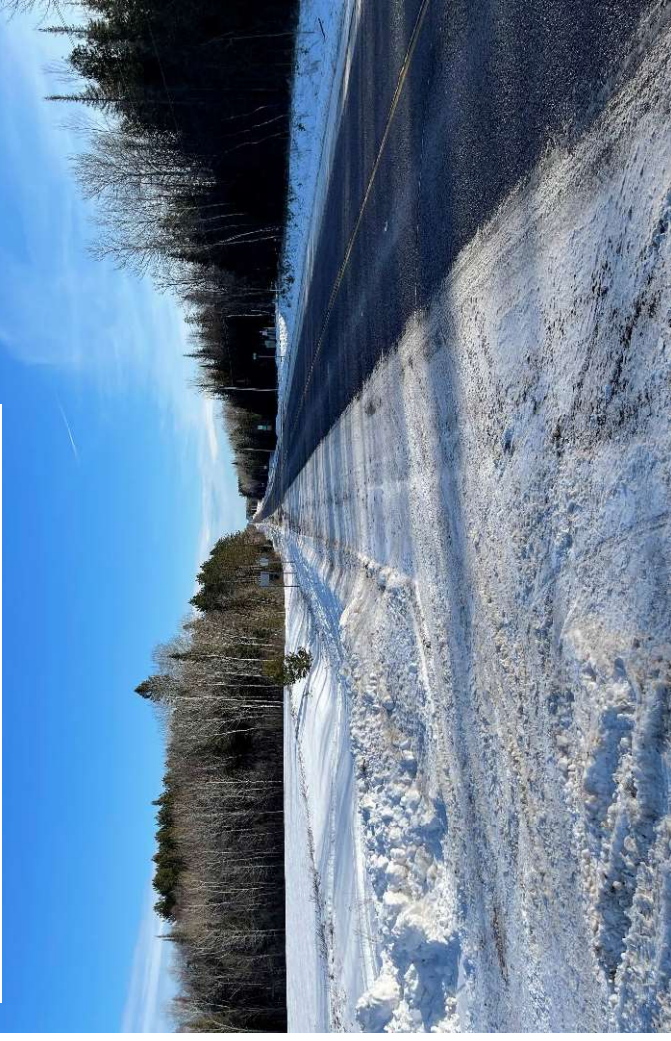
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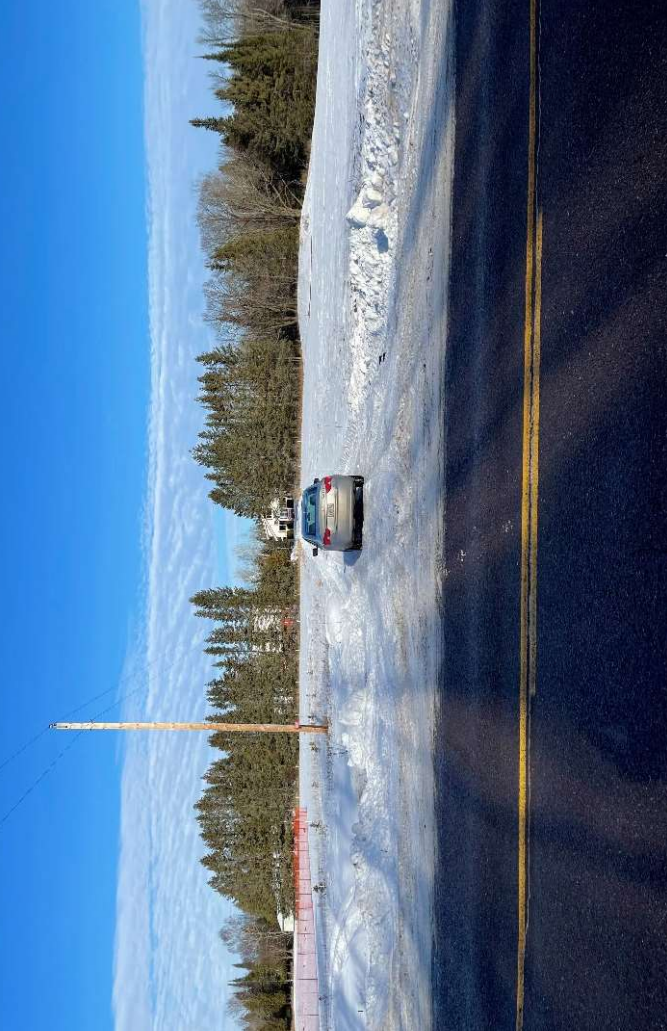
West on Two Harbors Rd



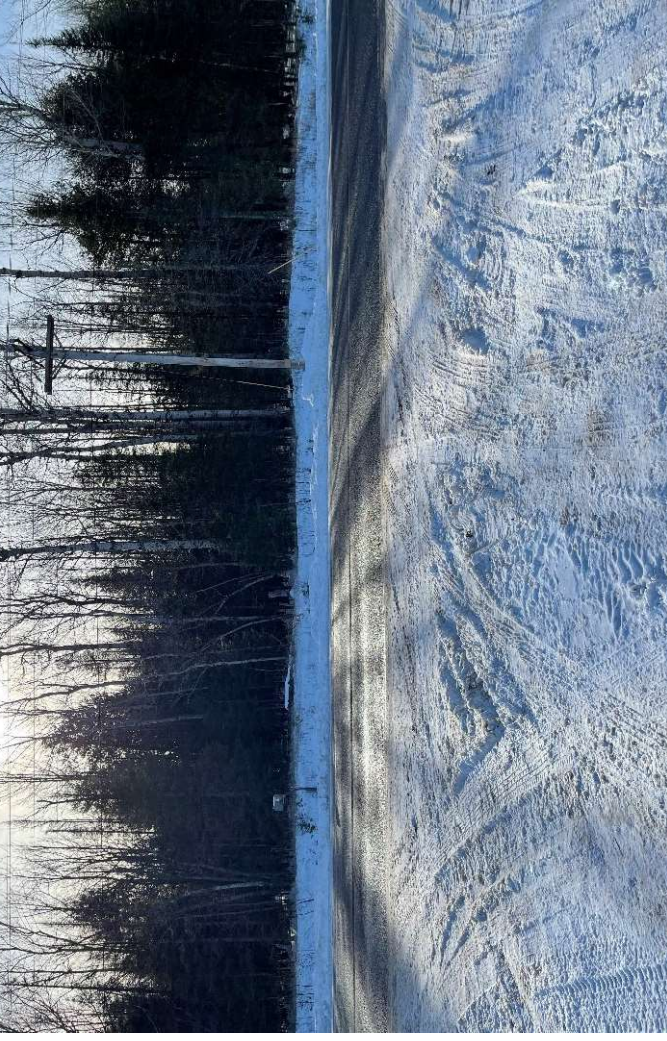
East on Two Harbors Rd



North into subject parcel



South from subject parcel entrance





Parking area



Barn to be used as part of events



South towards Two Harbors Rd



Field north of dwelling across the stream





# **Agate Acres Events LLC**

## **Business Plan**

**Kyle Cook & Emily Richey**

**November 2021**

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Product**

Agate Acres Events LLC offers the following products:

Weddings - Agate Acres Events LLC will host 30+ weddings a year. These events will take place on Fridays and Saturdays from the end of April through mid October. Weddings will host 50-125 guests. Wedding customers will have access to our renovated dairy barn, one of three offered ceremony spaces, a large tent space (40x60), the scenic Knife River that meanders through the property, bathrooms, dressing rooms, and our highly detailed vendor list.

Rentable Gathering Space - Agate Acres Events LLC's barn will be rentable for a much lower rate than a wedding for gatherings such as small parties, workshops, retreats, etc.

### **1.2 Customers**

Our customers will mostly come from MN and WI. They value the outdoors, natural spaces, water, rustic style, and local food systems, as well as a good time and creating meaningful and magical events. These folks will use our space to get married and hold a reception, or to host a smaller gathering.

### **1.3 What Drives Us**

Agate Acres Events LLC is driven by helping create meaningful and magical events for our community. We want to help bring people together to celebrate eventful moments in their lives, however big or small.

## **2. COMPANY DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Mission Statement**

*Agate Acres Events LLC facilitates gatherings, welcomes all, and supports our clients' vision and creativity.*

### **2.2 Principal Members**

Kyle Cook - Founder and Owner

Emily Richey - Founder and Owner

### **2.3 Legal Structure**

Limited Liability Corporation



### **3. MARKET RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Industry**

Pre-COVID-19, the wedding industry was seeing a gradual decline in the number of weddings each year, with around 2,216,000 couples in the US marrying in 2019, down from a high of 2,250,000 in 2016. (The Wedding Report, Inc. 2021, 4)

US Wedding industry revenue as a whole declined 34% in 2020 (IBIS World 2021), and likely would have taken a larger hit if couples had not needed to pay in order to retain their vendors for a future date.

The 2021 US Wedding Market Report predicts a spike in the number of weddings in 2022 and 2023, up to almost 2,250,000 weddings in the US in 2022 (The Wedding Report, Inc. 2021, 4) as many couples finally host their rescheduled ceremonies and receptions, and couples who postponed engagements start planning their events. Agate Acres Events LLC plans to begin hosting weddings in the summer of 2022, and will be able to catch this initial surge in demand as many couples may need to seek out new venues to find availability.

Threat of future COVID-19 outbreaks may continue to make couples hesitant to schedule large events, but outdoor wedding venues may see increased advantage over indoor venues, as outdoor gatherings continue to be encouraged by the CDC as the preferred way to hold large group events. With a largely outdoor venue like Agate Acres Events LLC, couples will have more peace of mind that their event will be able to take place, even in the event of an increase in COVID-19 cases.

In 2020, the average US wedding venue hosted 59 weddings, with an average sale of \$3,638 per wedding. Average gross revenue for wedding venues in the US was \$214,642. (The Wedding Report, Inc. 2021, 13)

In St. Louis County specifically, The Wedding Report Cost Estimator predicts that during the summer of 2022, couples will spend an average of \$4,020 on their wedding venue and \$2,226 on rentals for tents, tables, chairs, and other facility items, which Agate Acres Events LLC plans to include in its pricing. This places Agate Acres Events LLC's pricing very competitively in the local market.

#### **3.2 Customers**

Agate Acres Events LLC aims to target three different types of customers. The first are our wedding customers. These customers will be usually from within a 200 mile radius of the farm, with most from the North Shore, Duluth, and the Twin Cities. The couple will most likely be looking for an outdoor and rustic vibe to their wedding day. Rustic and outdoors doesn't mean they have to skimp on the fancy however if they don't want to - Agate Acres Events LLC is a beautiful backdrop for any style wedding.



The second type of customer we will have here at Agate Acres Events LLC are (mostly) local people from Two Harbors and Duluth looking for a place to celebrate something - renew vows, birthdays, bat/bar mitzvahs, retirement parties, etc. These customers want to rent our barn space for a small gathering.

### **3.3 Competitors**

In the Two Harbors area, our main competitors will be Grand Superior Lodge, Larsmont Cottages, and The Little Cloquet Cove. Both Grand Superior Lodge and Larsmont Cottages are resort style venues on Lake Superior that are in a higher price bracket than Agate Acres Events LLC. The Little Cloquet Cove, an outdoor venue with a few outbuildings for bridal preparation and photos will be our nearest competitor with comparable rustic aesthetic and similar pricing.

Other venues situated in Minnesota's northwoods include Lutsen Resort, Gunflint Lodge, and YMCA Camp du Nord. For most of these venues, hosting weddings is not their primary business, and therefore have limited availability and services.

Other farm, barn, and other rustic/outdoor venues include:

- The Grainery at Lake Valley Farm in Poplar, WI
- The Atrium in Solon Springs, WI
- Pinewood Weddings and Events in Cambridge, MN
- Northern Pacific Center in Brainerd, MN
- Willow Brooke Farm in Red Wing, MN
- Pondview Farm in Cambridge, MN
- The Barn at Stoney Hills in Cushing, MN
- Canosia Grove in Canosia, MN

All of these venues have a similar aesthetic to Agate Acres Events LLC, with barns or rustic buildings and outdoor event spaces with forest or field scenery. None of these similar style venues are located along Minnesota's North Shore, and for many of them, Minneapolis/St. Paul is the closest metropolitan area for accessing vendors and services, not Duluth or Two Harbors.

### **3.4 Competitive Advantage**

Agate Acres Events LLC is located on the North Shore of Lake Superior, a very desirable area. With quick access to Two Harbors and Duluth, we are in close proximity to accommodations, restaurants, caterers, cosmetologists, and other events vendors. Customers can get the barn wedding they dream of, but also enjoy the fantastic beauty of the North Shore. No other barn events venues are within 30+ miles.

Many couples hoping to have their weddings on the North Shore may be held back by budget, as the resort venues on the lakeshore are typically priced over \$10,000. Agate Acres Events LLC will offer another option to those looking for a lower price point that still allows for an easy 10 minute drive to Lake Superior for photography, restaurants for rehearsal dinners, and beautiful hikes and sightseeing for enjoying extra time with their guests.

When compared with its nearest competitor, The Little Cloquet Cove, Agate Acres Events LLC has many advantages. Agate Acres Events LLC has better accessibility to Two Harbors and Duluth, more space options (Little Cloquet Cove lacks a barn or other large structure for holding a party of 100 or more,) and will have the added value of including tent rental, something that Little Cloquet Cove does not provide.

When wedding resource websites, like The Knot and WeddingWire, survey the couples that use their services, many cite unclear pricing and complex pricing structures as one of their top complaints about their wedding venue search. Most of Agate Acres Events LLC competitors do not post their pricing online, and/or have a long menu of options, each one adding to the overall price of the venue rental. Agate Acres Events LLC will use clear, all-inclusive pricing that will be refreshing for some couples who are overwhelmed by choice and those who are looking for an unambiguous amount to add to their overall wedding budget.

Lastly, Agate Acres Events LLC offers a unique opportunity that it is also a working farm. Clients can buy flowers and veggies from the farm for their events.

### **3.5 Regulation**

Agate Acres Events LLC will get the necessary Conditional Use Permit from St Louis County and will comply with all local building codes during our phased execution (see section 6). Alcohol may be sold at events, but only by a licensed caterer.

## **4. PRODUCT/SERVICE LINE**

### **4.1 Pricing Structure**

Here is the basic pricing structure for Agate Acres Events LLC Events:

#### **WEDDING**

*Friday: 10am - Midnight \$4500 (20% off for year 1)*

*Saturday: 10am - Midnight \$5500 (20% off for year 1)*

Agate Acres Events LLC will primarily be a wedding venue. We hope to host 30+ weddings a year between April and October. These prices include the complete package - we do not nickel and dime our customers. The rental price gives customers access to the barn, one ceremony area, space to put up a large party tent, bathrooms, dressing areas, tables and chairs, and the parking area. Weddings will generally have 50-125 guests. Weddings will be able to happen after phase 1 of execution is complete (see section 6).

#### **SMALL EVENT**

*Sunday - Thursday*

*8am - 10pm*

*1-25 guests: \$300*

*25-60 guests: \$800*

The Agate Acres Events LLC barn will be available Sundays through Thursdays, April through October. The rental will include the barn space, parking area, and bathrooms. Customers can rent the space for a plethora of different events such as a birthday party, retreat, meetings, workshops etc. If customers want to rent the space for more than one day, discounts will be available. Small Events will be able to happen after phase 1 of execution is complete (see section 6).

#### **4.3 Product/Service Life Cycle**

Agate Acres Events LLC Events is a seasonal business. Our season runs from the end of April until mid October.

#### **4.4 Intellectual Property Rights**

The intellectual property of Agate Acres Events LLC Events are the name, logo, domain, and brand.

#### **4.5 Research & Development**

There are hundreds of barn/farm venues across the country. We have been looking at websites of companies we admire. Winter of 2022 we will visit a few of these spaces. Finding information about pricing, business structures, venue designs, etc in the wedding industry is fairly accessible as the businesses want their customers to learn all about their business easily. Several consolidation websites have been very helpful such as TheKnot.com and WeddingWire.com.

We have been working with local contractors for quotes on building projects.

### **5. MARKETING & SALES**

#### **5.1 Sales Strategy - Increasing Demand**

The land at Agate Acres is beautiful and easily sells itself. People love the barn, the river, the rolling fields, and the vegetable farm backdrop. Once people come to this place, they see the beauty and potential to have a fantastic event. So, the easiest way to sell our event space is to get people to it!

To get people to Agate Acres we will share the space with friends, invite potential local business partners, and encourage people to stop by. We will make these connections with people via outreach, social media, and advertising. We will encourage past customers to tag us in their online photo sharing of their event here at Agate Acres.

We will also target our wedding customer audience by attending local wedding industry events.

## **5.2 Growth Strategy**

Agate Acres Events LLC's growth will be very quick to start. We plan to host 8 weddings in the fall of 2022, and 20+ weddings in the 2023 season. Our growth is limited by our physical space and time, since our service is renting the space. However, we plan to add more small events on weekdays. We will add just a couple small events to the calendar in 2022, building more in each year.

## **5.3 Communication**

Social Media - Instagram, Facebook, TikTok accounts. Social Media is a FANTASTIC place to showcase events venues with quality photography.

Newspaper - We will ask the local newspapers to come to our opening!

Television - We will ask the local TV stations to come to our opening and to other events we host over time.

Radio - We will take out low cost radio ads on radio stations in the Duluth and Twin Cities areas.

Logo Swag (t-shirts, stickers, etc) - We will make clothing, stickers, and other items with our logo on them.

Tabling at area Industry Conventions - We will attend the Duluth Wedding Show and other similar events.

Physical space - Potential customers will drive by our farm every day!!

Word of mouth - SO POWERFUL! If someone has a great event at Agate Acres Events LLC, we will encourage them to tell their network!

Cross Marketing - We will partner with other local businesses as vendors for gatherings, promote the great work they are doing, and hope they will do the same with our business.

SEO - We will build our SEO to be the best when customers are searching the internet for North Shore Wedding Venues!

## **5.4 Prospects**

We already have people asking us to book dates for weddings at Agate Acres Events LLC! We will attend such events as the Duluth Wedding Show and other wedding industry events in MN and WI.

We are reaching out to local businesses to partner with for cross marketing, event collaboration, and to add to our preferred vendor list. These relationships will help build our brand, offer cross pollinated marketing, and lead us to clients.

We also have relationships with other small businesses that are eager to use our space for events!

We plan to occasionally donate our space to local community groups in need of event space. This will expand our reach!

## **6. EXECUTION STRATEGY**

### **6.1 Phased Execution & Costs Associated**

#### **Phase 1: (2022)**

Barn Refab and Update

Barn Deck

Tables and Chairs

Bathrooms

Dressing Areas

Trail Building

Parking Area

Gazebo Moving

Native Tree Planting

#### **Phase 2: (2023)**

Gazebo Refab into Bar Area

### **6.2 Capital Fundraising Goals**

\$100,000