

'Fargo Forum' gives Leafy Spurge to heritage opponents

July 20, 2009

Forum Editorial

FARGO - LEAFY SPURGE: To central North Dakota landowners who object to designation of a five-county area bordering the Missouri River as a national heritage area. They apparently illogically fear the federal designation will attenuate their property rights. It won't, and Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., as strong a champion of rural property rights as anyone in government, has said as much. He sponsored the legislation. The usual cast of characters, including the North Dakota Policy Council and the North Dakota Farm Bureau, has taken after Dorgan and Tracy Potter of the Northern Plains Heritage Foundation for supporting the designation. But if any tract of land in the state qualifies as a national heritage area, it surely is the Missouri River corridor between Bismarck and Washburn. Historical events of national importance occurred there. The designation does nothing to erode property rights, but offers opportunity to access funding to enhance historically important sites. It's a good deal, and the whiners and complainers have no case.