

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – LOWER WOLF RIVER BOTTOMLANDS NATURAL RESOURCE AREA –
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY**

FOR: MAY 2008 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 40 acres of land from Lucille Sorenson, Stella Greely, and Sewell Greely for \$160,000 for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area in Outagamie County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area was established in 2002 to protect the Lower Wolf River and Embarrass River corridor and their important floodplain forests, and includes portions of the Lake Winnebago Pool system, which is important to many aquatic species, especially the lake sturgeon and walleye. This is an ecologically important landscape tucked away between the urban areas and agricultural communities of east-central Wisconsin and the extensive forests of northern Wisconsin. The project area is predominately open and rural with large, highly productive wetlands that are dominated by native vegetation. Agricultural areas are another predominant element of this landscape. The close proximity of the project area to the population center of the Fox River Valley makes it very popular for a multitude of recreational pursuits, especially fishing and hunting.

The 40-acre tract is located adjacent to the Deer Creek Wildlife Area, which is within the larger Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area boundary. The Deer Creek Wildlife Area is nearly 1,500 acres in size and currently has limited public access points and prohibited parking along town roads. Acquisition of this 40-acre subject would provide a safe and legal access for the public to use this block of department lands. In addition, the cover type on the property includes a large stand of harvest-ready aspen, providing excellent habitat for species such as ruffed grouse, woodcock, wild turkey, deer, and several furbearers. The parcel is currently being surveyed and the final purchase price will be determined by multiplying the total number of usable acres times \$4,000 per acre.

The Department recommends acquisition of the Lucille Sorenson, etal property to allow management of the area for wildlife habitat, to provide for public recreation and natural resources education, to consolidate state ownership in the area and to provide a safe point of access for user of the Deer Creek Wildlife Area.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 40 acres of land for \$160,000 for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

Richard E. Steffes
for Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6

5/6/2008
Date

Laurie Osterndorf
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

5/12/2008
Date

Matthew Frank
Secretary, Matthew Frank - AD/8

5/14/08
Date

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6
 R. Steffes – LF/6
 L. Ross – AD/8
 T. Hauge - WM/6
 R. Kazmierczak - NER

DATE: May 6, 2008 FILE REF: W-1744

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew Fran *MF*

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Lucille Sorenson et al Tract, File # W-1744,
Option Expires June 29, 2008

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area
Outagamie County

Grantor:

Lucille Sorenson, Stella Greely, and Sewell Greely
c/o Attorney Perry Pierre
307 South Main Street
Seymour, WI 54165

Acres: 40
Price: \$160,000*
Appraised Value: \$165,000*
Interest: Purchase in fee.
Improvements: None

*Comments: The subject parcel was advertised "For Sale by Owner" through a local attorney. The list price was \$160,000, thus, a full offer was made to Sorenson, etal. Also per the option to purchase, the purchase price will be based on the surveyed useable acres multiplied by the value of \$4,000/acre.

Location: The tract is located five miles northeast of the Village of Bear Creek in northwestern Outagamie County.

Land Description: The subject area is generally level to gently rolling.

Water: There is 775 feet of frontage on a ditched tributary to the Embarrass River

| <u>Covertime Breakdown:</u> | <u>Type</u> | <u>Acreage</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Wooded Upland | 15.0 |
| | Wooded Lowland | 24.0 |
| | Building site | 1.0 |
| | TOTAL | 40.0 |

Zoning: General Agriculture and Wetland
Present Use: Recreation
Proposed Use: Wildlife Management and Public Recreation
Tenure: In family for over 58 years
Property Taxes: \$1,181.10
Option Date: April 30, 2008

Stewardship Land Access: This parcel will be open to hunting, trapping, hiking and all other nature-based outdoor recreation and will facilitate increased public hunting access to the Deer Creek property.



2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department proposes to purchase the 40-acre Lucille Sorenson, etal tract for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area. Department ownership of the property will allow for wildlife management and habitat restoration, will protect the natural values of the property, and will provide opportunities for public recreation and education. The property is located in the Town of Deer Creek in Outagamie County.

The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area was established in 2002 to protect the Lower Wolf River and Embarrass River corridor and their important floodplain forests, and includes portions of the Lake Winnebago Pool system, which is important to many aquatic species, especially the lake sturgeon. This is an ecologically important landscape tucked away between the urban areas and agricultural communities of east-central Wisconsin and the extensive forests of northern Wisconsin. The project area is predominately open and rural with large, highly productive wetlands that are dominated by native vegetation. Agricultural areas are another predominant element of this landscape. The close proximity of the project area to the population center of the Fox River Valley make it very popular for a multitude of recreational pursuits, especially fishing and hunting. Land uses in the area are quickly changing and development pressure is increasing. The Department currently owns and manages approximately 31,000 acres in this area, which is important for migrating waterfowl and other birds. Approximately ten percent of the world's tundra swans migrate through the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area in the spring, along with other waterfowl numbering in the tens of thousands.

The 40-acre tract is located adjacent to the Deer Creek Wildlife Area, which is within the larger Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area boundary. The Deer Creek Wildlife Area is nearly 1,500 acres in size and currently has limited public access points and parking is prohibited along the abutting town roads. Acquisition of this 40-acre subject would provide a safe and legal access for the public to use this block of department lands. In addition, the cover type on the property includes a large stand of harvest ready aspen, providing excellent habitat for species such as ruffed grouse, woodcock, wild turkey, deer, and several furbearers. The parcel is currently being surveyed and the final purchase price will be determined by multiplying the total number of usable acres times \$4,000 per acre.

The Department recommends acquisition of the Lucille Sorenson, etal property to allow management of the area for wildlife and habitat, to provide for public recreation and natural resources education, to consolidate state ownership in the area and to provide a safe point of access for user of the Deer Creek Wildlife Area.

3. FINANCING:

Stewardship bonds funds are anticipated.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Funds allotted to program: | Balance after proposed transaction: |
| \$7,624,000 | \$34,704 |

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE LOWER WOLF RIVER BOTTOMLANDS NATURAL RESOURCE AREA:

Established: 2002
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,794.92
Acquisition Goal: 45,000.0 Acres
Percent Complete: 6.2%
Cost to Date: \$6,137,185.75

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Lynne Tomlinson (Staff Appraiser)
Valuation Date: February 5, 2008
Appraised Value: \$165,000*
Highest and Best Use: Recreation with potential building site

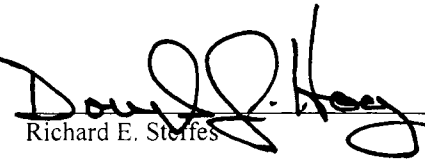
Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 40 acres @ \$4,125 per acre: \$165,000 (Rounded)
- b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$3,903 to \$4,336 per acre

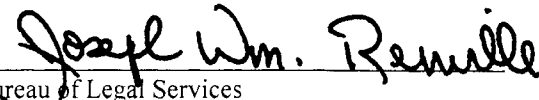
Appraisal Review: Paul Scott – April 4, 2008

*Comment: The subject parcel was advertised "For Sale by Owner" through a local attorney. The list price was \$160,000, thus, a full offer was made to Sorenson, etal.

RECOMMENDED:

for 
Richard E. Steffes

5/6/2008
Date


Bureau of Legal Services

5/7/08
Date


Laurie Osterndorf

5/12/08
Date

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