

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION AND SALE – LOWER WOLF RIVER BOTTOMLANDS NATURAL RESOURCE AREA – SHAWANO COUNTY**

**FOR: MAY 2008 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes**

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an agreement to purchase 113.9 acres of land from The Conservation Fund (TCF) for \$678,570 for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area in Shawano County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The property is located in the Town of Waukechon in south-central Shawano County about 26 miles west of the Green Bay metropolitan area. The western ¼ of the property is level with little elevation change and then quickly drops down a 20-foot bank to a level flood plain area along the Wolf River. Improvements on the property include a house and shed that the Department intends to resell with 15 acres. Access to the subject is good as it abuts County Highway M for over half a mile. The parcel includes 3,200 feet of frontage along the west bank of the Wolf River. Funding for the purchase is being provided by Natural Resource Damage Assessment, Turkey Stamp and Stewardship funds.

The property was purchased by TCF at an auction sale in October of 2007 and held while the Department worked to line up funds. As part of this proposal, the Department is also requesting the Board approve the re-sale the house, shed and 15 acres of this property for a minimum price of \$175,000. The resale parcel does not include any river frontage and buffers the residence from huntable public land.

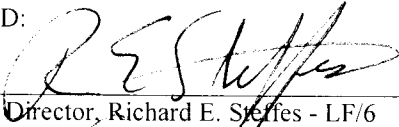
Department ownership of the property will allow for wildlife management and habitat restoration, will protect the natural values of the property, and will provide opportunities for public recreation and education.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of 113.9 acres of land for \$678,570 for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area and approve the resale of the house, shed and 15 acres for a minimum price of \$175,000.

**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 |

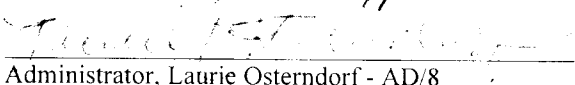
APPROVED:



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

4-15-08

Date



Administrator, Laurie Osterdorf - AD/8

Date

Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

Date

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

DATE: April 15, 2008 FILE REF: W-1742  
 TO: Governor Doyle  
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank  
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, The Conservation Fund Tract, File # W-1742,  
 Approval Requested By June 20, 2008

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area  
Shawano County

Grantor:

The Conservation Fund  
c/o Attorney Jodi O'Day  
410 Severn Ave, Suite 204  
Annapolis, MD 21403

Acres: 113.9

Price: \$678,570

Appraised Value: \$686,000

Interest: Purchase in fee.

Improvements: Residence and shed.

Location: The property is located in the Town of Waukechon in south-central Shawano County about 26 miles west of the Green Bay metropolitan area.

Land Description: The subject area is generally level sloping steeply to the floodplain.

Water: There are 3,200 feet of frontage along the west bank of the Wolf River.

<u>Coertype Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
	Lowland Woodland	38.0
	Wooded Upland	<u>75.9</u>
	TOTAL	113.9

Zoning: Residential and Open Natural Resource Preservation

Present Use: Residence and recreation

Proposed Use: Wildlife Management and Public Recreation

Tenure: TCF acquired the land in 2007 at a cost of \$635,000. Additional costs bring the current price to \$678,570.

Property Taxes: \$4,025.24

Option Date: November 19, 2007

Comments: Closing Requested by July 1, 2008

Stewardship Land Access: This property will be open to the public for all nature based outdoor recreational activities including hunting and trapping.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department proposes to purchase the 113.9-acre Conservation Fund tract for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area. The property is located in the Town of Waukechon in south-central Shawano County about 26 miles west of the Green Bay metropolitan area. The western ¾ of the property



is level with little elevation change and then quickly drops down a 20-foot bank to a level flood plain area along the Wolf River. Improvements on the property include a house and shed that the Department intends to resell on a 15-acre parcel. Access to the subject is good as it abuts County Highway M for over half a mile. 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. Minimum sale price on the 15 acres for resale is \$175,000. That portion of the property is not needed for conservation purposes.

The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resource Area was established 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.

About 44% of the funding for the purchase is being provided by Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds. This grant money is a result of environmental litigation with seven paper mills located on the Fox River for the discharge of PCB's into the river and waters of Green Bay. Funds provided by the mills are available for projects that "will restore, rehabilitate, replace and/or acquire the equivalent of any natural resource and services injured by the release of PCB's into the Lower Fox and Green Bay environment, pursuant to applicable State, Tribal and Federal laws and regulations." All proposed projects are reviewed and approved by a diverse group of trustees, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Michigan, several Tribal governments, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Eligible projects include the preservation, reestablishment or enhancement of wetlands and associated upland habitat, fisheries resource enhancement, and aquatic and near shore habitat quality improvement and other enhancement projects for natural resource based public use. Preference will be given to projects that are not already being implemented or have no planned funding under other programs and that provide long-term benefits and a broad scope of measurable benefits to a wide area or population, especially projects that benefit more than one type of resource. Wherever possible, natural habitat functions, which are self-sustaining and essential to maintaining habitat, will be restored, enhanced or protected. Projects that are related to fish and waterfowl consumption advisories on the Fox River and Green Bay will also be given priority. The 39 miles of the Lower Fox River, Green Bay and adjacent coastal wetlands, and tributary streams are also given preference.

The property is mostly wooded and will provide area for hunting turkey, grouse and deer. Its 3,200 feet of Wolf River frontage provides habitat for wood ducks and the near shore waters are used by lake sturgeon and other fish species.

The Department recommends acquisition of The Conservation Fund property to allow management of the area for wildlife and habitat, to provide for public recreation and natural resources education and to consolidate state ownership in the area.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship funds (48%), Natural Resource Damage Assessment (44%) funds, and Turkey Stamp Funds of (8%) are anticipated:

State Funds allotted to Wildlife Areas program:	State Balance after proposed transaction:
\$7,624,000	\$83,264

NRDA Funds allotted to program:  
\$880,990

NRDA Balance after proposed transaction:  
-0-

Turkey Funds allotted to program:  
\$55,000

Turkey Balance after proposed transaction:  
-0-

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

Established: 2002  
Acres Purchased to Date: 1,226.49  
Acquisition Goal: 45,000.0 Acres  
Percent Complete: 2.7%  
Cost to Date: \$2,052,011

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Dan Heath (Staff Appraiser)  
Valuation Date: October 19, 2007  
Appraised Value: \$686,000  
Highest and Best Use: Larger Residential Lots with Recreation and Timber management

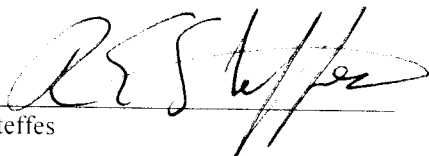
Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 113 acres @ \$5,048 per acre: \$570,500
- b. improvements: \$115,500
- c. total: \$686,000
- d. market data approach used. three comparable sales cited
- e. adjusted value range (for land): \$4,943 to \$5,326 per acre

Appraisal Review: Paul Scott - November 26, 2007

Comments: The price is \$678,570. This is based on TCF's purchase price of \$635,000, a 3% administrative fee, miscellaneous costs and 6.5% per year interest holding costs. TCF was able to secure the property at auction on October 27, 2007 for less than appraised value.

RECOMMENDED:

  
Richard E. Steffes

4-15-08  
Date

  
Bureau of Legal Services

4/16/08  
Date

  
Laurie Osterndorf

4/17/08  
Date

RES:ch

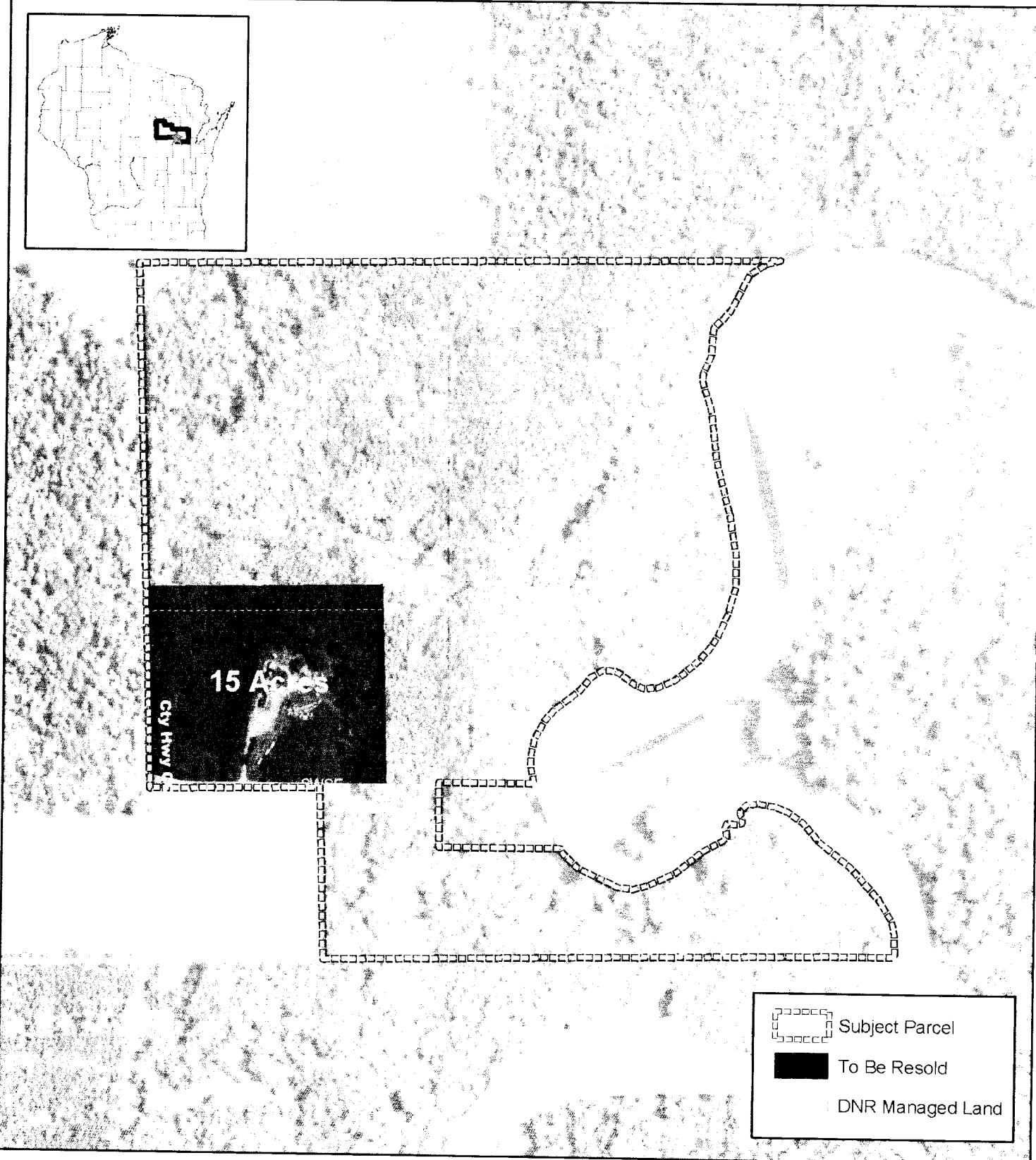
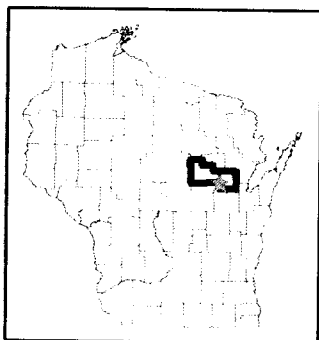




**Due to copyright laws, this page is not  
available online.**

**Please contact [laurie.ross@wisconsin.gov](mailto:laurie.ross@wisconsin.gov)  
for a hard copy of this document.**

# The Conservation Fund Property

T 26N R 16E Section 31, Town of Waukechon, Shawano County



 Subject Parcel  
 To Be Resold  
DNR Managed Land



Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands  
Real Estate Section  
April 10, 2008



