

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION AND PROJECT BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS – STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA – MONROE COUNTY**

**FOR: AUGUST 2009 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 99.95 acres of land from Barbara Hart for \$350,000.00 for the Statewide Natural Area Program, Eureka Maple Woods. The item is being submitted because the purchase price is greater than \$150,000 and to provide for a boundary change.

The Eureka Maple Woods State Natural Area was established in 1989 to protect an area of very high quality southern mesic forest. As one of the rarest native communities in Wisconsin, the southern mesic forests are not being maintained in large blocks and are being severely fragmented and isolated by human activities. At present, the Department owns approximately 40 acres in the project. Natural areas are used for study by school groups of all ages and researchers as well as by the general public. Other recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting are also popular. Eureka Maple Woods lies on a steep, north-facing slope above Timber Coulee Creek, a tributary of Coon Creek. The Coon Creek Fishery Area adjoins the natural area's north side and the Portland Maples Natural Area is to the northeast on the upland woods between branches of the trout stream. The forest is dominated by small to medium sized sugar maple and basswood, along with red oak, yellow birch, white ash and red elm. Large trees are uncommon. However, the herbaceous flora is exceptionally rich, containing such uncommon plants as squirrel corn, twinleaf, Goldie's fern, narrow-leaved spleenwort, walking fern, leafcup, and adam and eve orchid. Common mesic ground layer species are abundant, providing a tremendous springtime floral display. The shrub layer is also diverse with witch hazel, leatherwood, hazelnut, bladdernut, viburnums, and dogwoods. Bird species include several species sensitive to forest fragmentation such as cerulean warbler, Acadian flycatcher, ovenbird, yellow-throated vireo, American redstart, blue-gray gnatcatcher, and wood thrush. Soils are Norden loams thinly covering the steep slopes.

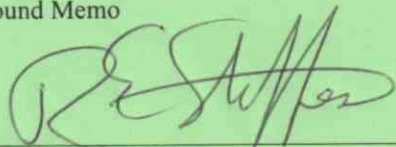
The 99.95-acre parcel is located in southwestern Monroe County and borders state property to the north. The subject connects to a town road to the southwest via a right-of-way road. The management goals of the property include preserving and maintaining a large block of southern mesic forest that over time will develop into a functioning old growth ecosystem. The large block will permit natural disturbance patterns to become established. These patterns and undisturbed community, provide habitat for a diversity of plant, invertebrate, bird and mammal species including many species of concern. The property is of higher quality than the existing State Natural Area ownership both structurally and from a compositional standpoint. The easterly 40 acres is out of the boundary, but is of excellent quality and should be added to the project. After this transaction is closed, total state contiguous ownership in this area will approximate 400 acres.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of the 99.95 acres of land for \$350,000.00 for Statewide Natural Area Program, as well as expand the boundary by 40 acres to include the entire 99.95-acre subject.

**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 |

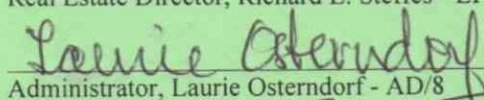
**APPROVED:**



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

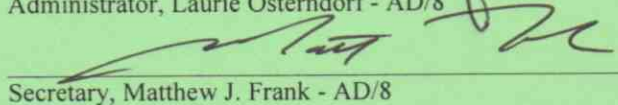
Date

7-8-09

  
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

Date

7/10/09

  
Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

Date

7-14-09

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6
- R. Steffes – LF/6
- L. Ross – AD/8
- S. Holtz – ER/6
- S. Humrickhouse - WCR/Eau Claire

## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 2, 2009  
 TO: Governor Doyle  
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank *MJF*  
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Hart Tract, File # NA 20027,  
 Option Expires October 7, 2009

FILE REF: NA 20027

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Statewide Natural Area – Eureka Maple Woods  
 Monroe County

Grantor:

Barbara Hart  
 1810 19<sup>th</sup> Street S  
 La Crosse, WI 54601

Acres: 99.95Price: \$350,000Appraised Values: \$345,000 and \$354,800Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located three miles west of the City of Cashton.Land Description: The land varies from level ridge top to steep slopes over Timber Coulee Creek.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type:</u>	<u>Acreage:</u>
	Upland Woods	99.95

Zoning: No comprehensive zoningPresent Use: Forestry and RecreationProposed Use: Natural Area Protection and Public RecreationTenure: 54 yearsProperty Taxes: \$20 (FCL)Option Date: June 9, 2009Stewardship Land Access: This property will be open to the public for all nature-based outdoor recreational activities to include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross-country skiing.2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department has obtained an option to purchase 99.95 acres of land from Barbara Hart for \$350,000.00 for the Eureka Maple Woods Unit of the Statewide Natural Area Program. Department ownership will protect the natural and scientific values of the tract and allow natural area management, allow public access to the parcel, and will consolidate state ownership in this area of the project.

The Eureka Maple Woods State Natural Area was established in 1989 to protect an area of very high quality southern mesic forest. As one of the rarest native communities in Wisconsin, the southern mesic forests are not being maintained in large blocks and are being severely fragmented and isolated by human activities. At present, the Department owns approximately 40 acres in the project. Natural areas are used for study by school groups of all ages and researchers as well as by the general public. Other recreational

