

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA– CRAWFORD COUNTY

FOR: MARCH BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 46.57 acres of land from John Schmitz for \$166,000 for the Rush Creek Natural Area in Crawford County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The parcel is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County. The property is within the project boundary and abuts state-owned land to the south. Department ownership will protect the natural values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The Schmitz property has approximately 42 acres of wooded upland, three acres of marshland and a small area of grassland. A tributary of Rush Creek provides 1,000 feet of water frontage. The parcel has a mature stand of trees including white oak, red oak, elm, maple, cherry, basswood, and ash. Because the parcel lies within an extensive forested area, management will emphasize interior forest bird habitat.

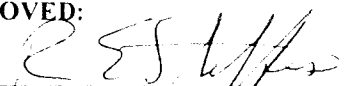
The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Silver maple, red maple, elm, and cottonwood dominate the lowland forests on the valley floors. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property. The area is used by school groups and the general public for nature study, for scientific purposes by researchers, and for recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching and hiking.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 46.57 acres of land for \$166,000 for the Rush Creek Natural Area in Crawford County.

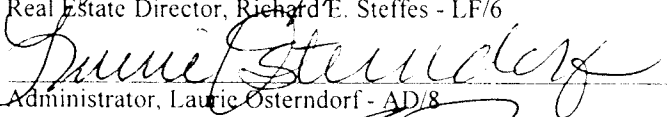
LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------|
| 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 |

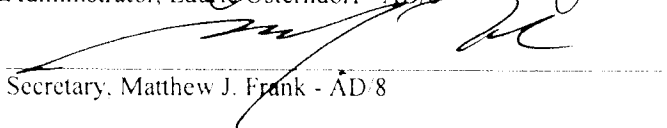
APPROVED:


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

2-4-09
Date


Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8


2/10/09
Date


Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

3/9/09
Date

- 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: February 4, 2009
 TO: Governor Doyle
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank 
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Schmitz Tract, File # NA 20016.
 Option Expires April 20, 2009

FILE REF: NA 20016

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Rush Creek Natural Area
 Crawford County

Grantor:

John Schmitz
 1110 Shorewood Drive
 La Crosse, WI 54601

Acres: 46.57Price: \$166,000Appraised Value: \$166,000Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: Pole shed

Location: The property is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County.

Land Description: The land ranges from a fairly narrow and level valley floor, which runs in a northwest to southeast direction through the property to steep, wooded hillsides bordering the valley floor.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type:</u>	<u>Acreage:</u>
	Upland/Woodland	42.00
	Wetland	3.00
	Grass	<u>1.57</u>
	TOTAL	46.57

Zoning: NonePresent Use: Private RecreationProposed Use: Resource Protection and Public RecreationTenure: 34 yearsProperty Taxes: \$590Option Date: January 20, 2009

Stewardship 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 46.57-acre Schmitz property is proposed for purchase for the Rush Creek State Natural Area and includes a 1.23-acre access easement. The parcel is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County. The property is within the project boundary and abuts state-owned land to the south. The property includes 1,000 feet of frontage along a small feeder stream that eventually flows into Rush Creek. It lies within an



extensive forested area. Lawrence Ridge Road, a gravel-surfaced town road runs in a northwest to southeast direction along the west side of the area. The transaction includes an access easement over the 40 acres being retained by Mr. Schmitz, as well as over other land to the town road. In addition, an old logging road extends to the more eastern part of the property. Both roadways provide good public access to the parcel. Department ownership will protect the natural and scientific values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership, and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The Rush Creek State Natural Area, which is located 30 miles south of the City of La Crosse in Crawford County, was established in 1980. The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry and dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Silver maple, red maple, elm, and cottonwood dominate the lowland forests on the valley floors. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property. The area is used by school groups and the general public for nature study, for scientific purposes by researchers, and for recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching and hiking.

The Department recommends acquisition of the 46.57-acre Schmitz property to protect the land in its natural condition for scientific and educational purposes and to provide opportunities for public recreation.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$1,900,000	\$1,106,620

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1980
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,540.83
Acquisition Goal: 7,775.00
Percent Complete: 32.68
Cost to Date: \$2,371,031.54

5. APPRAISAL:

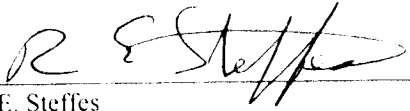
Appraiser: John Raatz
Valuation Date: August 16, 2008
Appraised Value: \$166,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreational Rural Residential

Allocation of Values:

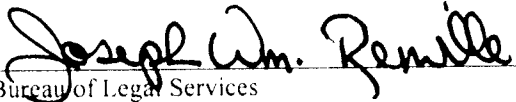
- a. land: 46.57 acres @ \$3,564.53 per acre: \$166,000
- b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$3,562 to \$3,576

Appraisal Review: Ronald Olson - November 1, 2008

RECOMMENDED:


Richard E. Steffes

2-4-09
Date


Bureau of Legal Services

2/5/09
Date


Laurie Osterndorf

2/10/09
Date





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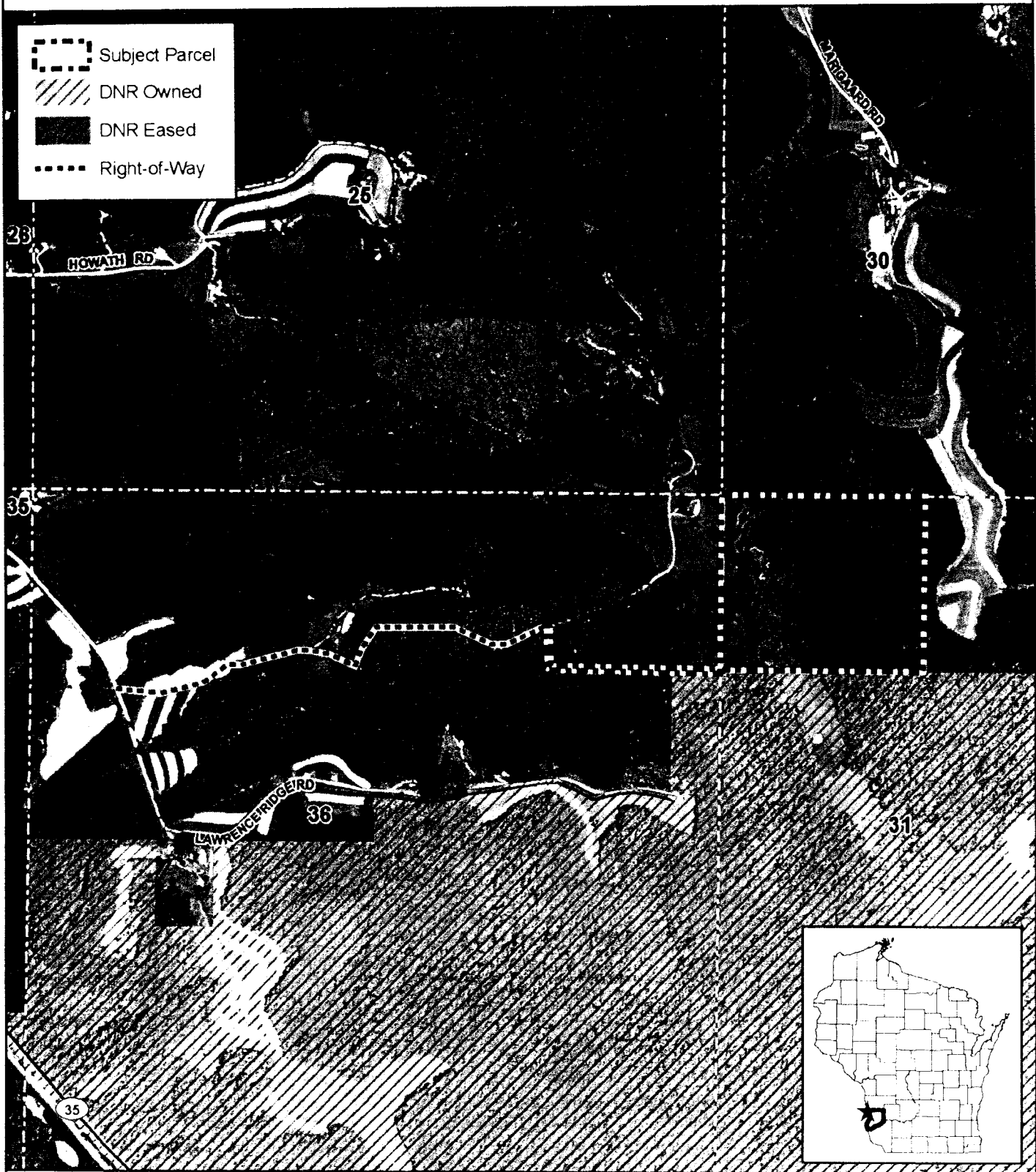
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**Please contact laurie.ross@wisconsin.gov
for a hard copy of this document.**

John J. Schmitz Property

T11N R08W Sec 31, Town of Freeman, Crawford County

-  Subject Parcel
-  DNR Owned
-  DNR Eased
-  Right-of-Way



Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
January 29, 2009



