Form 110-91
Rev. 5-91

# NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. 3.B.6

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – ICE AGE TRAIL, POLK COUNTY**

**FOR: 2008 OCTOBER BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 80.0 acres of land from Marty and Laura Swerkstrom for $267,500 for the Ice Age Trail in Polk County. The item is being submitted because the price exceeds $150,000.

The 80-acre parcel is located in the Town of Luck about 3.5 miles northeast of the Village of Luck. The Swerkstrom property provides an important link for the Ice Age Trail, in addition to enhancing the Straight Lake State Park to the south and east. The parcel abuts another department tract to the west that was previously acquired for the purposes of routing the Ice Age Trail. The purchase of the Swerkstrom property would further extend this segment of the trail by serving as a connector to Straight Lake State Park.

In 1987, the Wisconsin Legislature passed legislation that established the Ice Age State Scenic Trail as a state project and directed the Department to develop a trail to promote public awareness and appreciation of Wisconsin's glacial heritage, to preserve and protect significant glacial features and other natural and cultural features associated with the period of glaciation, and provide a continuous off-road trail for recreational use. The Ice Age Trail is a cooperative project between the U.S. National Park Service, the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation and its various volunteer groups around the state, and the counties through which the trail passes. The trail is one of only eight national scenic trails in the United States and when completed, will run for over a thousand miles through much of Wisconsin. The trail route extends from Door County, south through the Kettle Moraine to Janesville, and then north through Devil's Lake State Park to northwestern Wisconsin. The trail provides opportunities to observe a large number of landforms that are unique to continental glaciation such as eskers, kames, drumlins and kettles, as well as many other features and places of natural beauty. The trail is intended for low impact uses such as hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, and in suitable areas, cross-country skiing. To date, about half of the trail has been completed in numerous segments. Management, development and maintenance of the trail will be shared between the Department and the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation.

The subject property is predominately wooded with pole and scattered small sawlog northern hardwoods. The upland area is rocky, with a very large outcropping located on the north 40. Small ridges exist throughout the property. Two small pothole ponds are located in the northwest and southeast corners of the north 40 acres. The Swerkstrom property will provide for a portion of the Ice Age Trail and provide opportunities for public recreation while simultaneously protecting the natural and scenic character of the land within this corridor. The property is adjacent to the present Straight Lake Park boundary and connects the park with other state land to the west.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of 80-acres for $267,500 for Ice Age Trail in Polk County.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No ☒ | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes ☐ | Attached |
| No ☒ | Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes ☐ | Attached |
| No ☐ | Background Memo | Yes ☒ | Attached |

**APPROVED:**

Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF 6 — Date

Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD 8 — Date 9/21/08

Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8 — Date 10/8/08

cc: S. Miller LF 6
R. Steffes – LF 6
L. Ross – AD 8
D. Schuller PR/6
J. Gozdialski NOR/Spooner

State of Wisconsin

# CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 16, 2008 FILE REF: PR 40009 *

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. Fran

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Marty and Laura Swerkstrom Tract. File = PR 40009.
Option Expires: November 23, 2008

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Ice Age Trail
Polk County

Grantor:

Marty and Laura Swerkstrom
PO Box 114
Luck, WI 54853

Acres: 80
Price: $267,500.00*
Appraised Value: $250,000 and $285,000

*Comment: Purchase price was established at $267,500, the average of the two appraised values.

Interest: Fee
Improvements: Cabin and small storage shed
Location: The property is located in Polk County 3.5 miles northeast of Luck.
Land Description: The subject land is level to gently rolling.

| Covertype Breakdown: | Type: | Acreage: |
|---|---|---|
| | Wetland | 4 |
| | Upland Woodland | 75 |
| | Water | 1 |
| | TOTAL | 80 |

Zoning: Agriculture and Shoreland
Present Use: Recreation
Proposed Use: Scenic Protection and Public Recreation
Tenure: 19 years
Property Taxes: $156.00 (MFL)
Option Date: August 26, 2008

Stewardship Land Access: This property will be open for hiking, cross-country skiing and walking. Hunting use will be gun and muzzleloader deer hunting for this season.

The Stewardship land access requirements for department land have specific exemptions in the law regarding hunting on parkland (the Ice Age Trail is categorized as parkland). The Department plans to review land acquired for the Ice Age Trail and decide on hunting potential. If suitable, it will be indicated as open to hunting via posting the property lines.

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2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department proposes to purchase the 80-acre Swerkstrom tract located in the Town of Luck in Polk County about 3.5 miles northeast of the Village of Luck. The property provides an important link for the Ice Age Trail, in addition to enhancing the Straight Lake State Park to the south and east. The parcel abuts another department tract to the west that was previously acquired for the purpose of routing the Ice Age Trail. The purchase of the Swerkstrom property would further extend this segment of the trail by serving as a connector parcel that gives the trail an inlet directly into Straight Lake State Park. The parcel is mostly wooded and will provide for varied outdoor recreational use. The Department will sell the cabin for removal and restore the site to the natural condition.

In 1987, the Wisconsin Legislature passed legislation that established the Ice Age State Scenic Trail as a state project and directed the Department to develop a trail to promote public awareness and appreciation of Wisconsin's glacial heritage, to preserve and protect significant glacial features and other natural and cultural features associated with the period of glaciation, and provide a continuous off-road trail for recreational use. The Ice Age Trail is a cooperative project between the U.S. National Park Service, the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation and its various volunteer groups around the state, and the counties through which the trail passes. The trail is one of only eight national scenic trails in the United States and when completed, will run for over a thousand miles through much of Wisconsin. The trail route extends from Door County, south through the Kettle Moraine to Janesville, and then north through Devil's Lake State Park to northwestern Wisconsin. The trail provides opportunities to observe a large number of landforms that are unique to continental glaciation such as eskers, kames, drumlins and kettles, as well as many other features and places of natural beauty. The trail is intended for low impact uses such as hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, and in suitable areas, cross-country skiing. To date, about half of the trail has been completed in numerous segments. Management, development and maintenance of the trail will be shared between the Department and the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation.

The Straight Lake Park and Wildlife Area is located in north-central Polk County. The project was established in 2002 and the property master plan is in the process of development. Presently, the Straight Lake Park boundary is defined only by the previous Brunkow Hardwoods ownership as acquired by the DNR in 2005. The master plan for this project is under development with expansion of the project boundaries being evaluated as part of the process. The Department, by means of the master planning process, seeks to preserve the pristine Straight Lake area by managing it as a low development, low impact property. There is a unique opportunity to develop the property as a silent sport type property that provides hiking, primitive camping, non-motorized boating, wildlife viewing and a variety of hunting opportunities. The master plan process will establish the uses.

The subject parcel adjoins another 80-acre tract the Department purchased from the same landowner in 2007. While that parcel adjoins the state park, wetlands on its south edge make trail development difficult without addition of the new parcel. Both properties are proposed for addition to the Straight Lake Park boundary with the upcoming master plan. The subject 80 acres will further extend this segment of the trail by serving as a critical connector parcel that gives the trail a direct inlet into Straight Lake State Park. The property now offers the Department the opportunity to connect the trail directly to the state park and provide opportunities for foot travel, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Other management objectives for the property include habitat restoration, management of the property for wildlife and fisheries, and management for public recreational opportunities. Nature-based activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, outdoor education, and photography are also permitted uses.

Purchase of the Swerkstrom property is recommended to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a portion of the Ice Age Trail and provide opportunities for public recreation while simultaneously protecting the natural and scenic character of the land within this corridor. The property is adjacent to the present Straight Lake Park boundary and connects the park with state land to the west and north.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

| Funds allotted to program: | Balance after proposed transaction: |
|---|---|
| $2,000,000 | $1,313,822 |

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE ICE AGE TRAIL:

Established: 1988
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,959.44
Acquisition Goal: 4,375.00
Percent Complete: 67.64
Cost to Date: $2,510,040.00

5a. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Rodney Bush (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: June 30, 2008
Appraised Value: $250,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreation, Residential and Timber Production

Allocation of Values:

a. land: 80 acres @ $2,450 per acre: $196,000
b. improvements: $ 54,000
c. total: $250,000
d. market data approach used, three comparable vacant land sales cited
e. adjusted value range: $2,446 to $2,580

Appraisal Review: Ronald Olson – August 22, 2008

5b. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Tom Olson – (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: 7/10/2008
Appraised Value: $285,000
Highest and Best Use: Recreation and Residential

Allocation of Values:

a. land: 80 acres @ $2,900 per acre: $232,000
b. improvements: $53,000
c. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
d. adjusted value range: $2,792 to $2,934

Appraisal Review: Ronald Olson – August 22, 2008

Comment: Purchase price was established at $267,500 the average of the two appraised values.

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes

Date

Joseph Wm. Renville

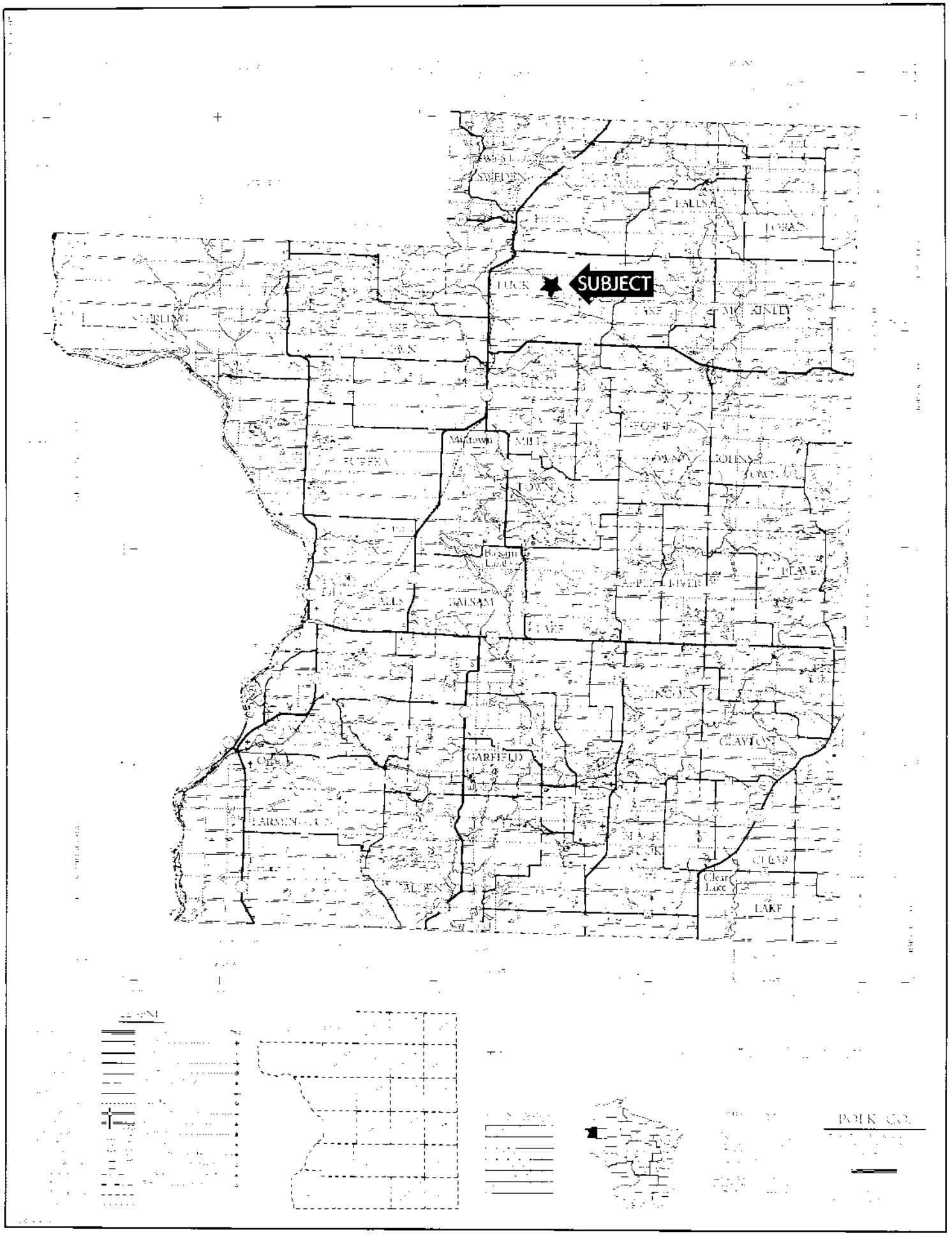
Bureau of Legal Services

Date 9/17/08

Laurie Osterndorf

Date

RES:


SUBJECT
FALLS
LUCK
MCKINLEY
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BALSAM
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# Swerkstrom Property

T 36N, R 17W, Section 11, Town of Luck, Polk County

Prepared by: Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
September 9, 2009

# Swerkstrom Property

*Ice Age Trail*

Subject Property

WDNR Owned

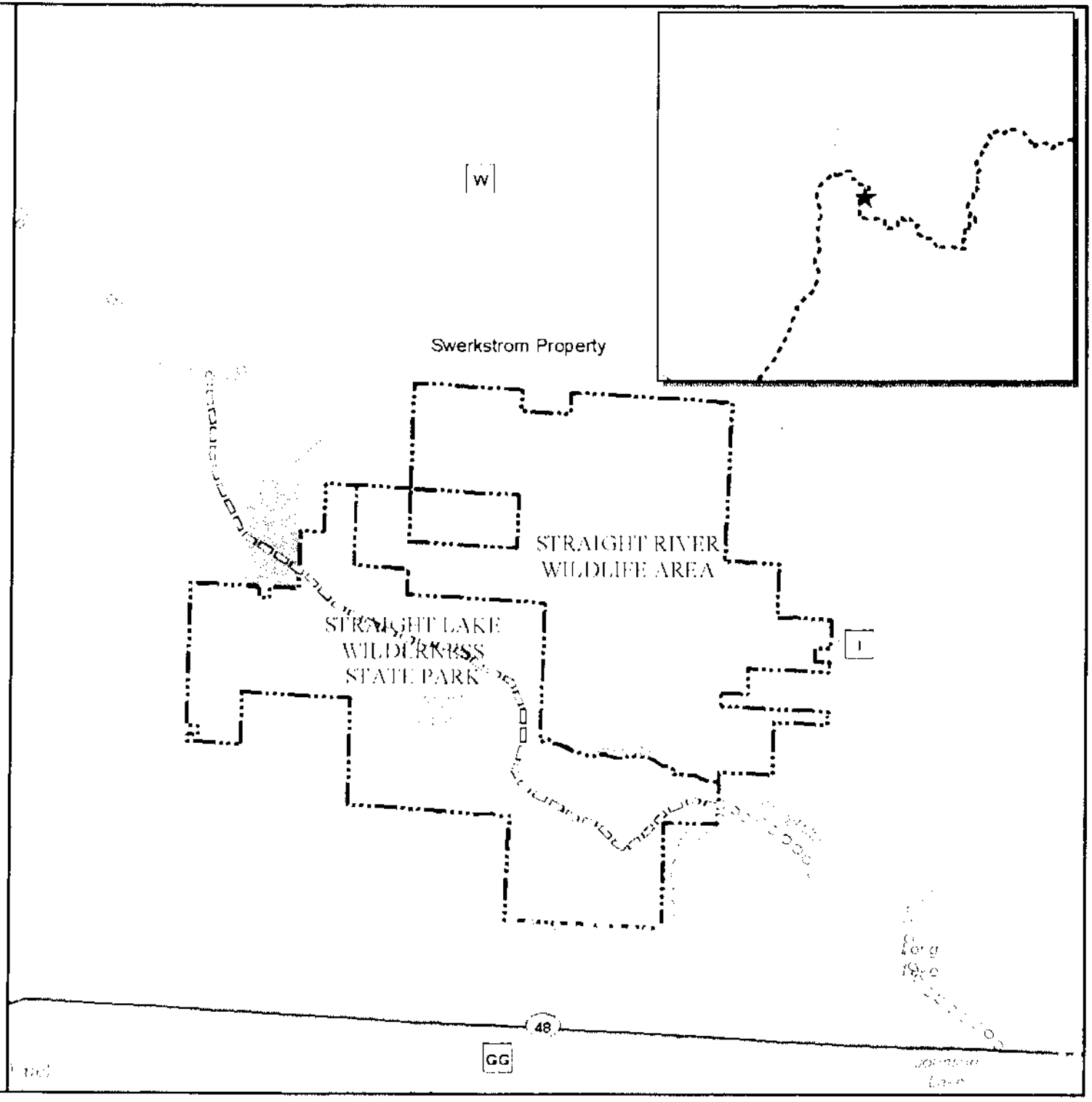
WNDR Eased

WDNR Leased

Ice Age Trail

Project Boundary

IAT Proposed Route

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Bureau of Facilities and Lands