

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.

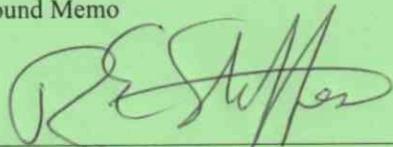
The 99.95-acre parcel is located in southwestern Monroe County and borders state property to the north. The subject connects to a town road to the southwest via a right-of-way road. The management goals of the property include preserving and maintaining a large block of southern mesic forest that over 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:

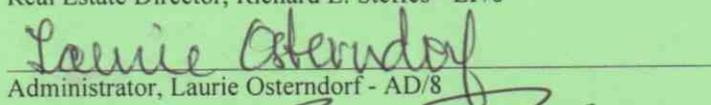
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|--|---|---|----------|
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>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

APPROVED:



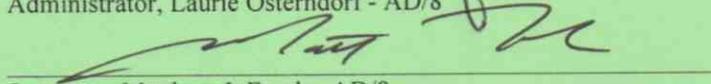
Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6

7-8-09
Date



Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

7/10/09
Date



Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

7-14-09
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: 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 19th 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

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 on its north side and Portland Maples Natural Area is to the northeast. The forest is dominated by 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 subject acreage is located in southwestern Monroe County within the project boundary of the Eureka Maple Woods State Natural Area. It borders state property to the north, and abuts private ownership along its south, east and west boundaries. A 40-acre portion of the subject falls outside of the existing project boundary. However, the parcel will be added to the boundary due to its high quality habitat. The subject connects to a town road to the southeast 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.

Department records document three threatened bird species and three plant species of special concern within the boundaries of the subject parcel. Medium sized sugar maple, red oak and basswood dominate the entire site with scattered trees also present. In addition, three plants of special concern were also discovered including a new record for showy lady's slipper. Showy lady's slipper is a species that has been nearly extirpated from the Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin and recent records are extremely rare. Also, a population of the state threatened cherrystone drop snail was also discovered and is a new record for the area. In all, the property is of higher quality than the existing state natural area ownership both structurally and from a compositional standpoint.

The Department recommends purchase of the 99.95-acre Hart property to complement adjacent protected lands, protect and restore natural values of this site, and provide access for scientific, educational, and non-intensive recreational use while providing significant educational opportunities.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to Natural Areas program (FY10):	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$2,700,000	\$52,161

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1972
Acres Purchased to Date: 39,194.18
Acquisition Goal: 41,000.0 acres
Percent Complete: 95.60%
Cost to Date: \$22,653,916.14

5a. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Ron Olson
Valuation Date: March 24, 2009
Appraised Value: \$345,000
Highest and Best Use: Recreation/Forestry

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 99.95 acres @ \$2358 per acre: \$235,600 (Rounded)
- b. timber: \$110,000
- c. total: \$345,000
- d. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- e. adjusted value range: \$1,950 to \$2,745 per acre

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter – May 14, 2009

5b. APPRAISAL:

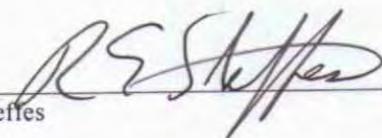
Appraiser: Tom Smith
Valuation Date: March 30, 2009
Appraised Value: \$354,800
Highest and Best Use: Forestry and Recreation

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 99.95 acres @ \$3350 per acre: \$354,800
- b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$3,020 to \$3,589

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter – May 14, 2009

RECOMMENDED:



 Richard E. Steffes

7-7-09

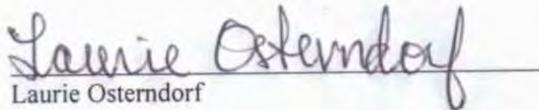
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 Bureau of Legal Services

7/9/09

 Date

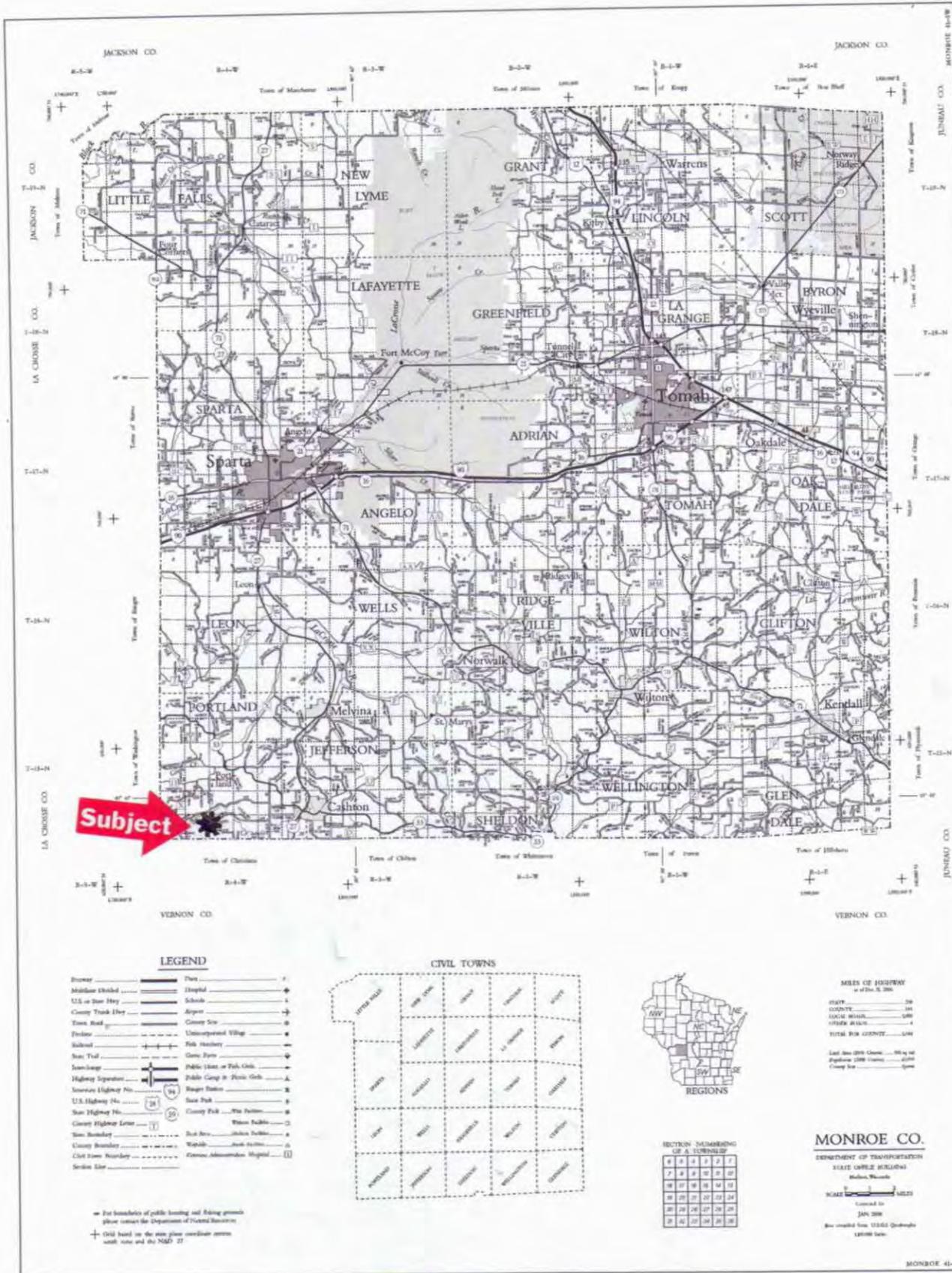


 Laurie Osterndorf

7/10/09

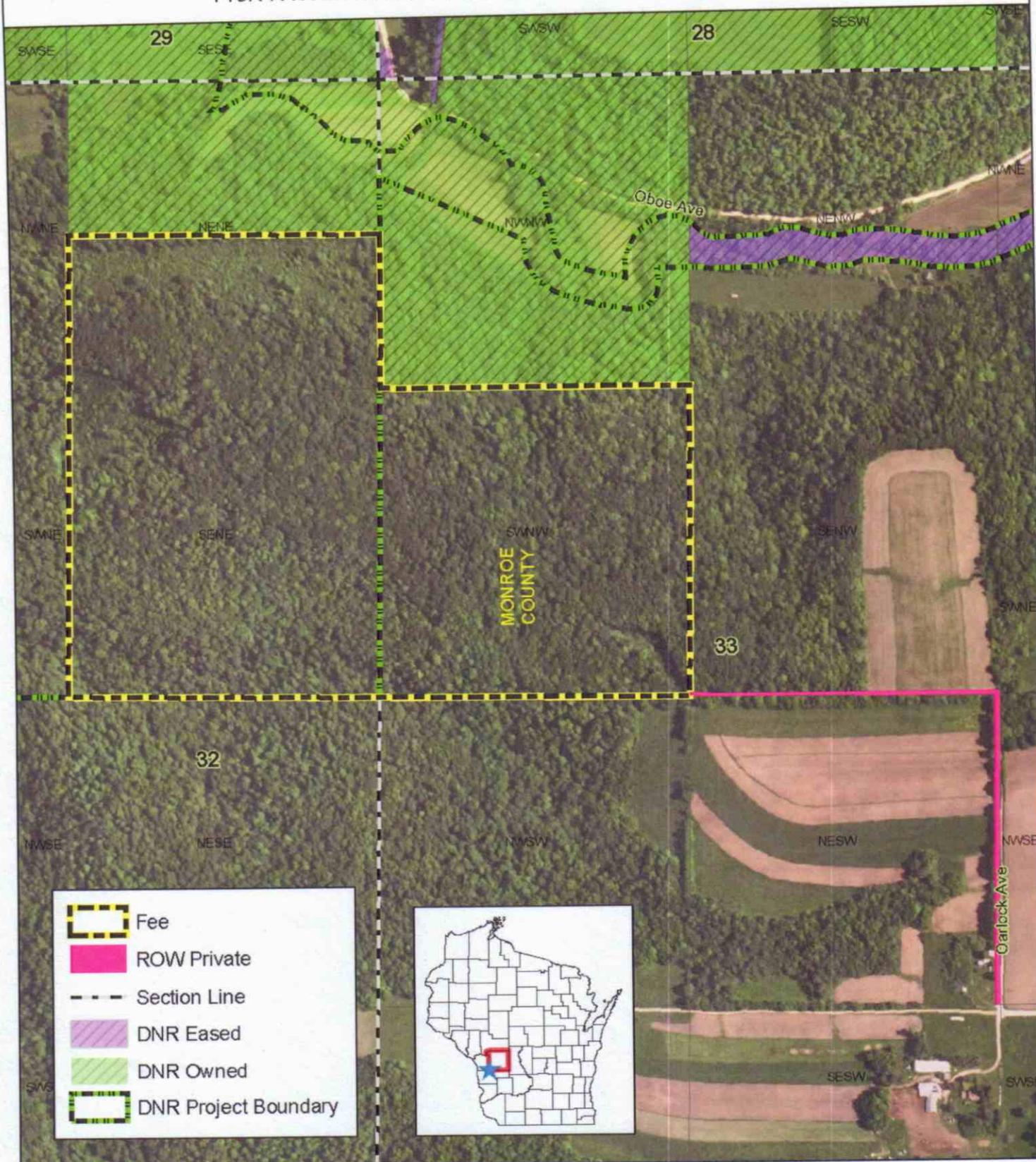
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RES:ch



Barbara Hart Fee

T15N R4W Sec. 32 & 33, Town of Portland, Monroe County, WI



-  Fee
-  ROW Private
-  Section Line
-  DNR Eased
-  DNR Owned
-  DNR Project Boundary



NA 20027
 Orthophoto
 Statewide
 Natural Area



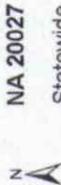
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Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
 Real Estate Section
 June 29, 2009



Barbara Hart Fee

T15N R4W Sec. 32 & 33
Township of Portland
Monroe County, WI



NA 20027

Statewide
Natural Area

	PLSS Section
	ROW Private Fee
	WDNR Owned
	WDNR Easement
	Project Boundary
	State Natural Area

0 0.25 Miles

The DNR Managed Lands represent the boundaries of lands managed by the Wisconsin DNR through ownership, easement or lease rights. This data set is a spatial representation of the Circle Land Records System maintained by the DNR, Bureau of Facilities and Lands (BFL), and may include errors and/or omissions. The data should not be interpreted as a legal representation of legal ownership boundaries.

This data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and/or general public access. Some lands represented in this data set may be open to the public. This data set is not intended for use as a land management tool; it is a listing of all DNR real estate transactions that have occurred on these lands over time.

For information about the actual management, including public use and public access of the lands, contact the nearest DNR Regional Office. Contact information for DNR Regional Offices and Service Centers is provided on the following internet site:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/centers/centerslocations.htm>
Updates to this data set are ongoing, and will be incorporated into future versions when available.

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of Facilities and Lands
July 7, 2008

