

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION AND DONATION – BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA – SAUK COUNTY**

**FOR: DECEMBER 2009 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes**

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 399.02 acres of land from the Aldo Leopold Foundation for \$776,000.00 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Sauk County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000 and because there is a partial donation.

The property is about three miles east of the City of Baraboo and just northeast of Devil’s Lake State Park. It is a key parcel for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. U.S. Fish and Wildlife property borders its northwest corner.

The property is on the north slope of the Baraboo Hills. It provides outstanding views of the Range, the Narrows, and Pine Bluff. It includes about 340 acres of wooded bluff land, 40 acres of former fields that have been planted to hardwoods and several old apple orchards and prairies. There is about 2/3-mile of frontage on Boulder Creek, a Class 1 brook trout stream, and another ¼-mile on a smaller unnamed intermittent stream. There are some areas of very large timber. The stream valley is rocky and steep-sided and similar in nature to Baxter’s Hollow and other Baraboo Hills stream valleys, but not as dramatic as Parfrey’s Glen. Roads touch two corners of the property. The northwest corner has frontage on the Baraboo River. There is currently a small rented cabin and an unoccupied house and the remnants of the original Ringling summer home on the tract.

The Baraboo Range is a valuable resource of national and international significance. Covering more than 50,000 acres, the range contains the largest block of upland forest in southern Wisconsin. The range, characterized by a distinctive layer of rock known as Baraboo Quartzite, has a unique geological history. The eastern portion of the range shows many effects of glaciation. The most recent glacier did not cover the western portion of the range. The differences in elevation, exposure and soils within the range create an astounding variety of ecological habitats. At least 28 different natural communities have been identified within the range. These communities harbor 23 species that are federal or state listed as threatened or endangered species. About half of the more than 2,200 species of vascular plants found in Wisconsin exist within the range. The range is also very important habitat for the preservation of Neotropical migratory birds. Many of these birds are dependent on the continued existence of large tracts of deciduous forest for suitable nesting habitat. Preservation of the forest of the Baraboo Range is critical to the future health of these bird species.

Funding for this purchase consists of \$601,000 in state Stewardship, a partial donation of value by the Aldo Leopold Foundation and \$175,000 from the Ice Age Trail Alliance and the National Park Service. Department appraisals estimated value at \$1,117,000 (Hankes) and \$1,676,000 (Augustyn) so the purchase price of \$776,000 is well below current value.

Purchase of the 399.02-acre parcel will help meet the goals of Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area including public access. The parcel will also provide a segment of the Ice Age Trail in the future.

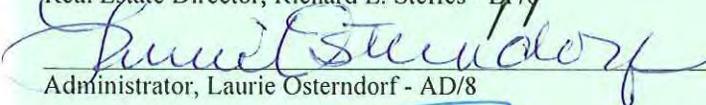
**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of 399.02 acres of land for \$776,000 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area, that a certificate of appreciation be sent to the Foundation for its partial donation of value and that an expression of appreciation be made a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board.

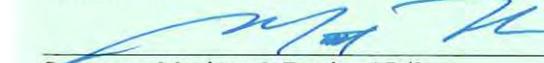
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

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

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

11-9-09  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

11/10/09  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

11/13/09  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6                      D. Schuller – PR/6  
 R. Steffes – LF/6                      L. Eagan – SCR/Fitchburg  
 L. Ross – AD/8

## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 9, 2009 FILE REF: PR 40065  
 TO: Governor Doyle  
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank  
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Aldo Leopold Foundation Tract, File # PR 40065,  
 Option Expires January 3, 2010

I. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area  
 Sauk County

Grantor:

Aldo Leopold Foundation  
 c/o Buddy Huffaker  
 P.O. Box 77  
 Baraboo, WI 53913

Acres: 399.02

Price: \$776,000\*

Appraised Value: \$1,117,000 and \$1,676,000

Interest: Fee Title Acquisition

Improvements: There is currently a small rented cabin and an unoccupied house and the remnants of the original Ringling summer home on the tract.

\*Comment: Purchase price was the best price negotiated and is considered a "bargain sale" for conservation purposes.

Location: The property is located in Sauk County three miles east of the City of Baraboo in the Town of Greenfield just northeast of Devil's Lake State Park.

Land Description: The subject land is rolling to steep.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	Type:	Acreage:
	Upland/Woodland	380.00
	Building Site	<u>19.02</u>
	TOTAL:	399.02

Zoning: Resource Conservancy

Present Use: Preservation

Proposed Use: Bluff Protection, Ice Age Trail and Public Recreation

Tenure: 9 years

Property Taxes: \$12,568

Option Date: November 4, 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.

Comment: Closing by December 31, 2009 is a condition of the transaction.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department is proposing to acquire 399.02 acres from the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Inc. (ALF) in Sauk County in the Town of Greenfield. The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and a key parcel for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. It adjoins U.S. Fish and Wildlife property on its northwest corner.

The property is on the north slope of the southern range of the Baraboo Hills. It provides outstanding views to the North Baraboo Range, the Narrows, and Pine Bluff. It includes about 340 acres of wooded bluff land, 40 acres of former fields that have been planted to hardwoods and several old apple orchards and prairies. There is about 2/3-mile of frontage on Boulder Creek, a Class 1 brook trout stream, and another ¼-mile on a smaller unnamed intermittent stream. There are some areas of very large timber. The stream valley is rocky and steep-sided and similar in nature to Baxter’s Hollow and other Baraboo Hills stream valleys, but not as dramatic as Parfrey’s Glen. Roads touch two corners of the property. The northwest corner has frontage on the Baraboo River. There is currently a small rented cabin and an unoccupied house and the remnants of the original Ringling summer home on the tract.

The Baraboo Range is a valuable resource of national and international significance. Covering more than 50,000 acres, the range contains the largest block of upland forest in Southern Wisconsin. The range, characterized by a distinctive layer of rock known as Baraboo Quartzite, has a unique geological history. The eastern portion of the range shows many effects of glaciation. The most recent glacier did not cover the western portion of the range. The differences in elevation, exposure and soils within the range create an astounding variety of ecological habitats. At least 28 different natural communities have been identified within the range. These communities harbor 23 species that are federal or state listed as threatened or endangered species. About half of the more than 2,200 species of vascular plants found in Wisconsin exist within the range. The range is also very important habitat for the preservation of Neotropical migratory birds. Many of these birds are dependent on the continued existence of large tracts of deciduous forest for suitable nesting habitat. Preservation of the forest of the Baraboo Range is critical to the future health of these bird species.

The Department has an excellent opportunity in the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area to acquire almost 400 acres of wooded land in fee title at a reasonable cost for public recreational purposes including future Ice Age Trail use. The Ice Age Trail Alliance/National Park Service are jointly providing \$175,000 to assist with the purchase. These funds came from sale of buildings and a small site at a different location.

Purchase of this 399.02-acre parcel is recommended to meet the goals of Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and provide public recreational opportunities including Ice Age Trail use.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship, a partial donation of value and Alliance/NPS funds comprise the funding plan. The Ice Age Trail Alliance/National Park Service has \$175,000 available from a recent land sale to assist with the purchase.

State Stewardship bond funds in the amount of \$601,000 from the FY10 Trails allotment are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$1,500,000	\$410,630

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA:

Established: 2000  
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,721.74  
Acquisition Goal: 950.00  
Percent Complete: 286.50%  
Cost to Date: \$4,948,960.07

5a. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Julie Hanks  
Valuation Date: April 7, 2009  
Appraised Value: \$1,117,000.00  
Highest and Best Use: Recreational

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 399.02 acres @ \$2,800 per acre: \$1,117,000.00 (Rounded)
- b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$2,710.00 to \$4,097.00 per acre

Appraisal Review: Robert Bredemus - June 2, 2009

5b. APPRAISAL:

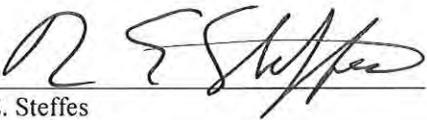
Appraiser: Michael Augustyn  
Valuation Date: March 10, 2009  
Appraised Value: \$1,676,000.00  
Highest and Best Use: Recreational/Forestry

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 399.02 acres @ \$4,200 per acre: \$1,676,000.00 (Rounded)
- b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$3,261 to \$5,106.00 per acre

Appraisal Review: Robert Bredemus - June 2, 2009

RECOMMENDED:

  
Richard E. Steffes

11-9-09  
Date

  
Bureau of Legal Services

11/9/09  
Date

  
Laurie Osterdorf

11/10/09  
Date

RES:

## *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its December 2009 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of part of the land value for lands in Sauk County for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area from the

## **ALDO LEOPOLD FOUNDATION**

It is significant that organizations such as yours are interested in helping protect Wisconsin's natural heritage and contribute materially toward this end.

An expression of our appreciation is a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board. We present this certificate of sincere appreciation on behalf of present and future generations to thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

*Natural Resources Board*

Christine L. Thomas, CHAIR

## *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its December 2009 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of \$175,000 for land in Sauk County for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area from

# **ICE AGE PARK AND TRAIL ALLIANCE AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

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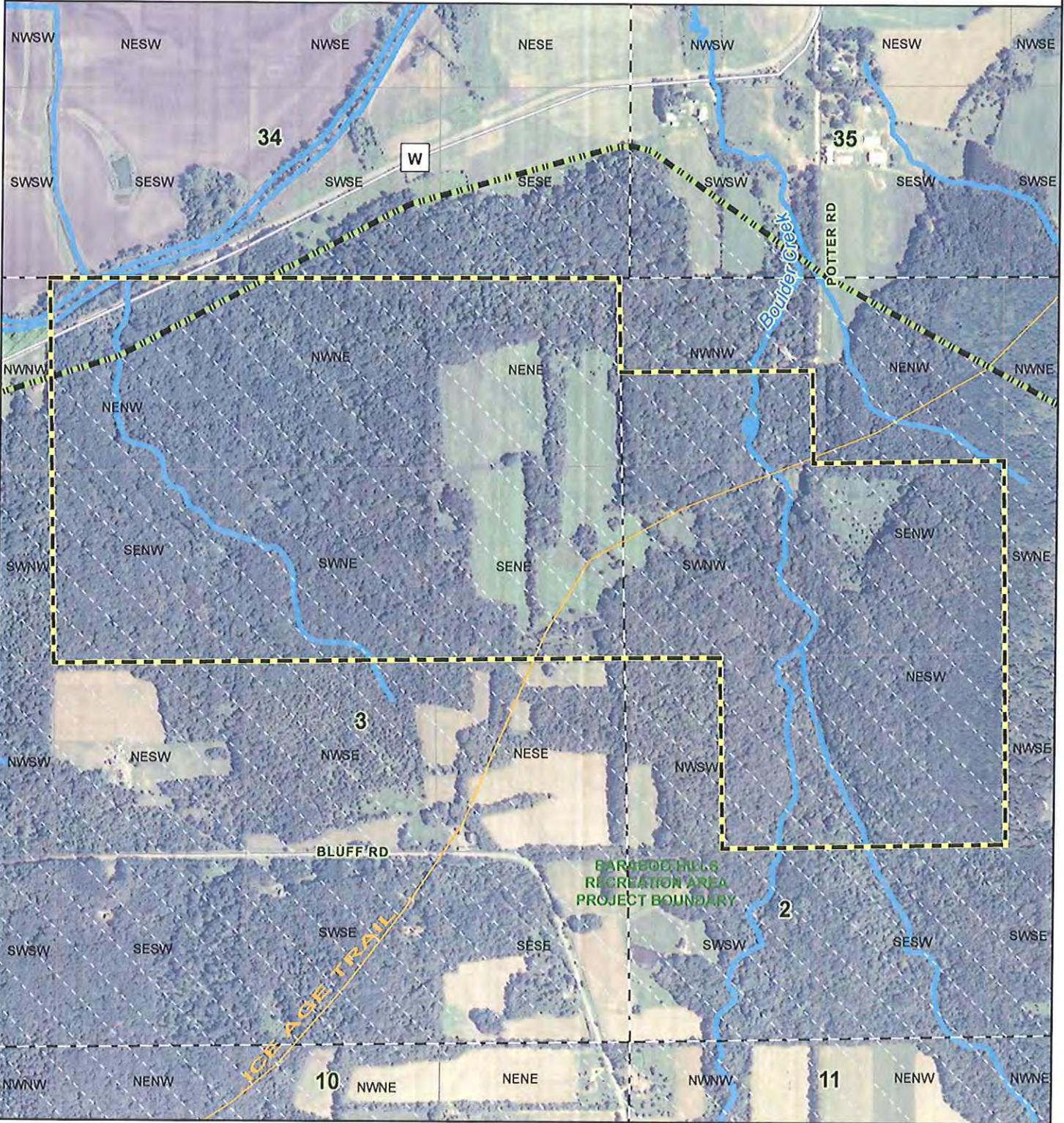
*Natural Resources Board*

Christine L. Thomas, CHAIR



# Aldo Leopold Foundation Fee Simple

T11N R7E Sections 2 & 3, Town of Greenfield, Sauk County, WI (399.02 Acres)



### Legend

- State Recreation Trail
- Ice Age Trail
- PLSS Section Line
- PLSS Quarter-Quarter
- DNR Project Boundary
- County Boundary
- DNR Eased
- DNR Owned

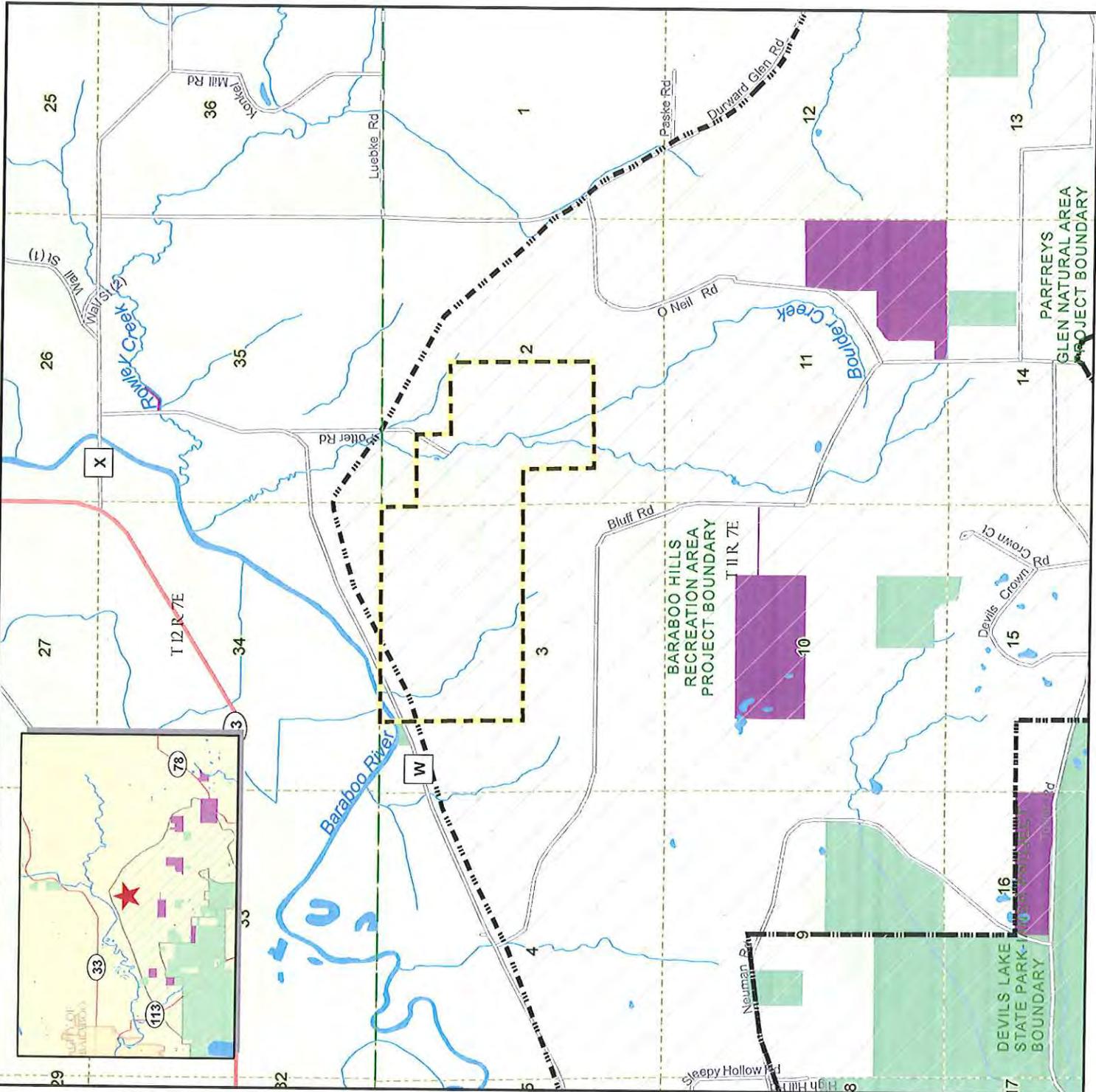
00.02505 Miles

### Subject Property PR 40065

Baraboo Hills  
Recreation Area

- Fee Simple
- Easement
- Ingress/Egress
- Farmstead
- Public Access





**Aldo Leopold Foundation Fee Simple**

T11N R7E Sections 2 & 3  
 Town of Greenfield  
 Sauk County, WI  
 (399.02 Acres)

PR 40065

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area

	PLSS Section
	Project Boundary
	WDNR Owned
	WDNR Easement
	Fee Simple
	State Natural Area



The DNR Managed Lands represent the boundaries of lands managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin DNR manages these lands through ownership. The Wisconsin DNR manages the spatial representation of the Credit, Land and Records System maintained by the DNR, Bureau of Facilities and Land (LF), 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 may be open to the general public, or may have specific limitations or restrictions that are not indicated here. 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/careers/centers/locations.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  
 November 5, 2009