

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION - STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA - SPUR LAKE, ONEIDA COUNTY; JAY CREEK STATE NATURAL AREA, JACKSON COUNTY; CREX MEADOWS WILDLIFE AREA, BURNETT COUNTY; WHITE RIVER FISHERY AREA, BAYFIELD COUNTY; NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST, ONEIDA COUNTY

FOR: AUGUST 2007 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an agreement to purchase 628.35 acres of land from Plum Creek Timberlands for \$1,322,300 in five separate parcels for its Statewide Natural Areas Program-Spur Lake, Oneida County; Jay Creek Natural Area, Jackson County; Crex Meadows Wildlife Area, Burnett County; White River Fishery Area, Bayfield County; Northern Highland-American Legion (NHAL) State Forest, Oneida County. Each parcel lies within the project boundaries. The Crex Meadows property is eligible for a U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant protecting Karner Blue butterfly habitat for 75% of the cost of that parcel, with Stewardship covering the balance of the cost. Department ownership of these lands will provide long-term protection of the natural features and values in addition to providing opportunities for timber and wildlife management as well as serve many public recreational needs.

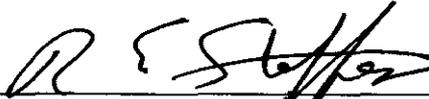
Property	County	Acres	Cost
Statewide Natural Area - Spur Lake SNA	Oneida	37.65	\$ 59,500
Jay Creek State Natural Area	Jackson	80.0	\$168,000
Crex Meadows Wildlife Area	Burnett	320.0	\$600,000
White River Fishery Area	Bayfield	80.0	\$195,000
NHAL State Forest	Oneida	110.7	\$299,800
Totals		628.35	\$1,322,300

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 628.35 acres of land for \$1,322,300 for the Statewide Natural Areas Program-Spur Lake, Jay Creek State Natural Area, Crex Meadows Fishery Area, White River Fishery Area, and the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest.

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

7-16-07
Date


Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/5

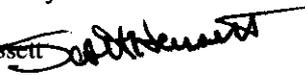
7/17/07
Date


Secretary, Scott Hassett - AD/5

7/20/07
Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/5
S. Holtz - ER/6
T. Hauge - WM/6
R. Mather - FR/4
M. Staggs - FH/4
J. Gozdziński - NOR/Spooner
S. Humrickhouse - WCR/Eau Claire

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 16, 2007 FILE REF: NA-909 & 910, W-1715, FI-2878, AND NF-850
 TO: Governor Doyle
 FROM: Scott Hassett 
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Plum Creek Timberlands, File # NA-909 & 910, W-1715, FI-2878, and NF-850 - Approval Requested by September 1, 2007

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Statewide Natural Area-Spur Lake
 Oneida County

Jay Creek State Natural Area
 Jackson County

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area
 Burnett County

White River Fishery Area
 Bayfield County

Northern Highland-American Legion (NHAL) State Forest
 Oneida County

Grantor:

Plum Creek Timberlands
 c/o Dan Lemke, Senior Land Asset Manager
 1411 North 4th Street
 Tomahawk, WI 54487

File No.	Property	County	Acres	Cost
NA-909	Statewide Natural Area - Spur Lake SNA	Oneida	37.65	\$ 59,500
NA-910	Jay Creek State Natural Area	Jackson	80.0	\$168,000
W-1715	Crex Meadows Wildlife Area	Burnett	320.0	\$600,000
Fi-2878	White River Fishery Area	Bayfield	80.0	\$195,000
NF-850	NHAL State Forest	Oneida	110.7	\$299,800
	Totals		628.35	\$1,322,300

Acres: 628.35

Price: \$1,322,300

Appraised Value: \$1,299,300; \$1,408,500

Interest: Purchase in fee.

Improvements: None

Location:

Statewide Natural Area-Spur Lake: The 37.65-acre parcel is located in eastern Oneida County about 12 miles northeast of Rhinelander.

Jay Creek Natural Area: The 80-acre parcel is located in southeastern Jackson County, 10 miles southeast of the community of Millston.

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area: The 320-acre property is located in western Burnett County two miles east of St. Croix River and six miles north of the Village of Grantsburg.



White River Fishery Area: The 80-acre parcel is located in east-central Bayfield County, 13 miles south of the City of Bayfield.

NHAL State Forest: The 110.7-acre property is located in central Oneida County, five miles southeast of the Village of Lake Tomahawk.

Land Topography and Covertypes Description:

Spur Lake SNA: Lowland wetlands sloping upward to upland waterfront consisting of 26 acres wetland grasses and brush, and 11.35 acres of upland woods. The legal description includes additional acreage of submerged land.

Jay Creek SNA: Level to gently rolling land that is comprised of 80 acres of upland woods.

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area: Gently rolling land with a mix of upland woods, 100 acres, and grassland considered sparse tree-covered barrens, 220 acres.

White River Fishery Area: Level lands sloping to water, 78 acres lowland woods and two acres submerged riverbed.

NHAL State Forest: Rolling terrain, consisting of 44 acres of upland woods and 66.7 acres of wetlands

Zoning:

Spur Lake SNA: Forestry

Jay Creek SNA: Forestry/Limited Agriculture

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area: No comprehensive zoning

White River Fishery Area: Forestry

NHAL State Forest: Forestry/Recreation

Present Use:

Spur Lake SNA: Recreation/Surplus Lands

Jay Creek SNA: Industrial Forest

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area: Timber production

White River Fishery Area: Timber production /vacant

NHAL State Forest: Timber management/Reclaimed gravel pit

Proposed Use: Resource Protection, Wildlife Management, Timber Management and Public Recreation

Tenure: Plum Creek acquired more than 500,000 acres including these parcels in two large transactions four and six years ago.

Property Taxes:

Spur Lake SNA: \$73.25 (MFL)

Jay Creek SNA: \$156.00 (MFL)

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area: \$266 (MFL)

White River Fishery Area: \$66.40 (MFL)

NHAL State Forest: \$1,049.70

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department recommends the acquisition of 628.35 acres of land from Plum Creek Timberlands for \$1,322,300 for its Statewide Natural Area-Spur Lake, Oneida County; Jay Creek State Natural Area, Jackson County; Crex Meadows Wildlife Area, Burnett County; White River Fishery Area, Bayfield County; and the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, Oneida County. Each parcel lies within its designated project boundary. The Crex Meadows property is eligible for a U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant protecting Karner Blue butterfly habitat. This grant would cover 75% of the cost of the 320-acre parcel bringing the state dollars in this transaction with Plum Creek to \$872,300. Department ownership of the property will provide opportunities to restore and protect wildlife habitat, promote timber management, and provide additional opportunities for public recreation and education, and provide resource protection.

The Statewide Natural Area Program was established in 1972 to protect the best remaining examples of Wisconsin's native vegetation as well as habitat for endangered and threatened plants and animals. Natural areas will help protect the natural diversity of the landscape and preserve for future generations a living history of the past. Natural areas are used for study by elementary to college age school groups and

researchers as well as the general public. Other recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting are also popular.

Also, the 37.65-acre **Spur Lake Natural Area** property in eastern Oneida County consists of two non-contiguous parcels, which have approximately 37 acres of unsubmerged land and 38 acres land submerged under Spur Lake. Thus, the actual total acreage that will be conveyed to the Department on this property is 75.65 acres. The northwestern tract is 35.65 acres in size and includes 1,100 feet of frontage of Spur Lake shoreline, and is about 70% lowland swamp/bog. The 40-acre parcel on the east side contains about 1,400 feet of shoreline and about 38 acres of submerged land. There are about two acres of upland along East Stella Road. Purchase of the land will protect the natural values of the site, help consolidate state ownership in the area, and provide for public recreation.

Spur Lake is a 113-acre muck-bottomed, soft-water drainage lake that supports dense beds of emergent, submergent, and floating-leaved aquatic plants. Wild rice is the dominant emergent species and annually harvested. Native Americans used the property for centuries and there is an old campsite on the lakeshore. Other plants include white water-lily, bullhead water lily, large-leaved pondweed, ribbon-leaf pondweed, common pondweed, common bladderwort, pickerel weed, and soft-stem bulrush. The lake possesses a three-foot maximum depth and is subject to freeze out. Wetlands including open bog, alder thicket, and black spruce-tamarack-white cedar swamp surround the majority of the lake's shoreline. Along the northeast corner is a small stand of old-growth hemlock hardwoods and a floating bog mat. The outlet stream, Twin Lakes Creek, flows southward, joining the Pelican River, which in turn flows to the Wisconsin River. Spur Lake is a "wild lake" with no development on the shores. The lake and surrounding wetlands provide habitat for black ducks, ring-necked ducks, osprey, and common loons. Migratory waterfowl is heavy. Currently, the Department owns 71 acres on the south side of Spur Lake.

The Spur Lake Natural Area project boundary of 480 acres also contains about 200 acres owned by Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. It is anticipated that this land will be acquired in the future leaving about 80 acres to acquire. The property is mainly used for hunting, canoeing, rice harvest, and trapping. Acquisition of the Plum Creek land will provide closer road access to the lake.

The 80-acre Plum Creek parcel located in the **Jay Creek State Natural Area**, is in southeastern Jackson County. Presently, the property is used as a working industrial forest and is enrolled in the Department's MFL program. The property comprises of a small 30-year old recently thinned red pine plantation, twenty-two acres of clear cut forest land, residual stand with some scattered white pine with a nice understory of sapling white pine, and the remaining area is sapling and pole size lowland hardwoods, jack pine, and white pine. A small intermittent stream drains through the property into Jay Creek. Scattered forested wetlands are present. However, the property would be considered buildable since some soils would appear to support a conventional septic system. The west side of the property contains road frontage and the east side of the property borders department land.

Jay Creek Natural Area is a diverse mix of dry to wet pine woods lying in the flat, poorly drained bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The uplands are northern dry-mesic forest of white and red pine, red maple, and white oak. Most significant is the excellent white pine-red maple swamp on gently sloping wet sand along Jay Creek, an unusual community found only within the bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Winterberry dominates the shrub layer with some blueberry, huckleberry, and alder present. The understory is dominated by chest-high expanses of cinnamon fern on a dense mat of sphagnum moss with three-leaved gold-thread, American starflower, Canada mayflower, and yellow bluebead lily. Two rare plant species, northern long sedge and the Massachusetts fern, disjunctive here from its nearest population in Pennsylvania, are also common in low pockets. Jay Creek is a fast, cold soft water stream inhabited by brook trout with plant species including American eelgrass and floating-leaved bur-reed. Black spruce is a common component near the stream with paper birch, yellow birch and occasional tamarack. Bird life includes northern goshawk, broad-winged hawk, pileated woodpecker, veery, ovenbird, red-breasted nuthatch, and pine, Canada, and black-throated green warblers. Jay Creek Pine Forest was designated a State Natural Area in 1990.

The Jay Creek Natural Area project boundary of 1,259 acres contains 360 acres of department land. Department land is mainly used for hunting and nature appreciation. Acquisition of the Plum Creek land will provide public access from the west to the current DNR land, provide for increased public use, provide

increased nesting habitat for forest interior birds, and preserve additional habitat for this rare community type of white pine-red maple swamp. Over time, the pine plantation and clear cut area will be converted or succeed to native forest cover.

The Crex Meadows Wildlife Area was created in 1947 with a goal of 30,098 acres. Located in northwestern Wisconsin midway between the large population centers of the Twin Cities (70 miles) and Superior/Duluth (75 miles) Crex provides for a wealth of recreational opportunities including hunting, trapping, bird watching, hiking, fishing, cross-country skiing and nature photography. Excellent wetland habitat for waterfowl and furbearers is also found at Crex. Many of the wetland areas on the property have been restored and enhanced through the creation of three flowages. Wildlife is abundant, diverse, and highly visible at Crex Meadows. Vegetation types consist of grass marsh, prairie, and upland forest.

The 320-acre Plum Creek subject property abuts Department lands on much of its north, south and east sides. Approximately 70 percent (220 acres) of this 320-acre tract is relatively open barrens, as the result of a timber sale followed by a failed pine planting in the 1980's, when the land was owned and managed by Consolidated Papers. Acquisition in fee title of this land will ensure that this land remains in barrens habitat, and will protect the existing wild lupine and Karner Blue butterfly populations on the site. Acquisition will also allow future barrens restoration on the remaining 30 percent (100 acres) that will complement current barrens management on Crex Meadows State Wildlife Area, which surrounds this parcel on three sides. Habitat management will increase the population numbers not only of the Karner Blue butterfly, but will benefit numerous other barrens dependent wildlife and plant species, including several endangered, threatened, and rare species. These characteristics make it eligible for a 75% USFWS cost-share grant to protect Karner Blue butterfly habitat. The shape of the subject parcel and proximity to existing state ownership will block well with the ongoing management of the barrens communities at Crex.

The White River Fishery Area in Bayfield County was established in 1961 and was expanded in 2004 to include a stretch of the river in western Ashland County. The White River Fishery Area protects the White River, one of the outstanding inland trout-producing streams in northwestern Wisconsin. The river has excellent water quality and good natural reproduction of brook and brown trout. The stream flows through a wild and natural setting with very little development or pollution. From its origin, the White River flows easterly, directly into Lake Superior and the Great Lakes drainage near the City of Ashland. The goals of the project are to manage and protect the water and fishery resources of the area and to provide opportunities for public recreation. The public uses the land for fishing, hunting, hiking, watching wildlife, and snowshoeing.

The subject 80-acre parcel is almost entirely forested and provides good wildlife habitat for grouse, deer and woodcock. In addition, it includes about 2,150 feet, the combined total of two-banks, of the meandering frontage along the White River. The Department recently acquired approximately 122 acres to the northwest of this parcel from Gerald Curtis.

The Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest is located in north-central Wisconsin. The nearest cities are Woodruff/Minocqua, Rhinelander and Eagle River. The area is a tourist destination for visitors from the population centers of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The forest encompasses an area of 291,037 acres, of which 220,000 acres are state-owned. An important use of the forest is for silvicultural practices and the growth of recurring forest crops. In addition, the forest project area protects scenic values and provides outdoor recreation, including hunting, wildlife watching and hiking. Each year approximately 45,000 cords of pulpwood and 1.5 million board feet of sawlogs are harvested in the forest, which contributes to area employment and provides commodities essential to consumer needs. There are numerous state-operated campgrounds, boat landings, hiking, and ski trails, providing recreational opportunities to 2,000,000 campers and visitors to the state forest each year. The beautiful lakes, streams, and woods found here, together with recreational opportunities and other amenities, make this area one of the leading tourist attractions of northern Wisconsin.

The 110.7-acre Plum Creek parcel is located in central Oneida County within the state forest boundary and is bisected by Highway 47. The parcel abuts department forest lands on the north, west and south. A portion of the property west of the highway was a former gravel pit that has been reclaimed with topsoil and grasses. Adjacent to the Highway 47 right-of-way is a red pine plantation approximately 23 acres in size. The remainder of the property is lowland, wetlands or swamp conifers, wetland brush, and grasses. A

former railroad grade crosses the northeast corner of the property, which is currently used as a recreational trail for snowmobile traffic.

The Department recommends the purchase of the all of the above-described properties totaling 628.35 acres to allow management for wildlife habitat and sustainable forest production, to provide public access for recreation, and provide resource protection. All parcels block in well in with existing department lands and will consolidate department ownership within the project boundaries.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds and USFWS funds are anticipated:

Program	Funds Allotted to Program	Balance After Transaction
Natural Areas	\$1,500,000	\$ 789,387
Wildlife	\$6,524,000	\$2,200,636
Fisheries	\$2,000,000	\$1,694,244
Northern Forests	\$8,811,358	\$2,278,100
USFWS Karner Blue	\$1,470,000	\$ 66,375

4a. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA PROGRAM:

Established: 1972
Acres Purchased to Date: 37,136.98
Acquisition Goal: 41,000 Acres
Percent Complete: 90.6%
Cost to Date: \$22,064,317

4b. AQUISITION STATUS OF THE JAY CREEK STATE NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1991
Acres Purchased to Date: 361.0
Acquisition Goal: 1,253 Acres
Percent Complete: 28.8%
Cost to Date: \$429,400

4c. AQUISITION STATUS CREX MEADOWS WILDLIFE AREA PROGRAM:

Established: 1946
Acres Purchased to Date: 27,698.92
Acquisition Goal: 30,097.58 Acres
Percent Complete: 92.0%
Cost to Date: \$1,068,621

4c. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE WHITE RIVER FISHERY AREA PROGRAM:

Established: 1961
Acres Purchased to Date: 3,555.78
Acquisition Goal: 10,754 Acres
Percent Complete: 33.1%
Cost to Date: \$794,334

4d. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST:

Established: 1929
Acres Purchased to Date: 56,874.06
Acquisition Goal: 61,124.00 Acres
Percent Complete: 93.1%
Cost to Date: \$9,408,011

5a. APPRAISAL - Spur Lake Natural Area Parcel:

Appraiser: Kyle S. Zastrow (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: September 13, 2006
Appraised Value: \$59,500
Highest and Best Use: Recreation

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 37.65 acres @ \$1,580 per acre: \$59,500 (Rounded)
- b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,205 to \$1,876 per acre

Appraisal Reviews: Richard Steffes – October 10, 2006

5b. APPRAISAL - Jay Creek Natural Area Parcel:

Appraiser: Rod Bush (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: March 30, 2007
Appraised Value: \$168,000
Highest and Best Use: Recreation/Timber Production

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 80 acres @ \$2,100 per acre: \$168,000
- b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,979 to \$2,645 per acre

Appraisal Review: Ron Olson – April 19, 2007

5c. APPRAISAL – Crex Meadows Wildlife Area Parcel:

Appraiser: Tom Olson (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: March 25, 2007
Appraised Value: \$600,000
Highest and Best Use: Recreation

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 320 acres @ \$1,875 per acre: \$600,000
- b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,700 to \$2,000 per acre

Appraisal Reviews: Ron Olson – April 20, 2007

5d. APPRAISAL – White River Fishery Area Parcel:

Appraiser: Ed Steigerwald & Jonathan Long (Private Appraisers)
Valuation Date: May 7, 2007
Appraised Value: \$195,000
Highest and Best Use: Recreational

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 80 acres @ \$2,437.50 per acre: \$195,000
- b. market data approach used, five comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,671 to \$3,738 per acre

Appraisal Reviews: Phil Lepinski – June 2, 2007

5e. APPRAISALS – NHAL State Forest Parcel:

Appraiser: Patricia Matula (Private Appraiser)

Valuation Date: July 18, 2007

Appraised Value: \$276,800*

Highest and Best Use: Recreation/Forestry

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 110.7 acres @ \$2,500 per acre: \$276,800
- b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$2,195 to \$2,550 per acre

Appraiser: Craig Solum (Private Appraiser)

Valuation Date: July 14, 2006

Appraised Value: \$386,000*

Highest and Best Use: Rural Residential/Recreational

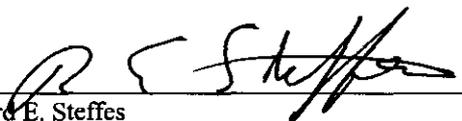
Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 110.7 acres @ \$3,486 per acre: \$386,000
- b. market data approach used, six comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$3,287 to \$3,647 per acre

Appraisal Reviews: Phil Lepinski – February 2007

*Comments – The reviewer felt the Matula appraisal was superior in that it better justified the value established with its market comparable sales data being more similar to the subject property. However, the Solum appraisal, while acceptable by the reviewer, considered the property as having a highest and best use of residential with recreation and, thus, placing a higher value on this 110.7-acre property. \$299,800 was the best negotiated price between the two appraisals.

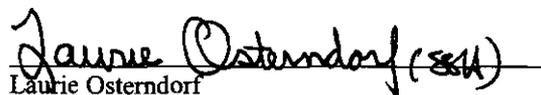
RECOMMENDED:


 Richard E. Steffes

7-16-07
 Date


 Bureau of Legal Services

7/17/07
 Date


 Laurie Osterdorf

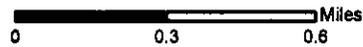
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RES:ch

Plum Creek Property

Spur Lake - Statewide Natural Area

-  Subject Property
-  WDNR Owned
-  WNDR Eased
-  WDNR Leased
-  Ice Age Trail
-  Project Boundary
-  Open Water



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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:

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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 9, 2007



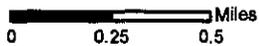
Plum Creek Property

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Plum Creek Property

Jay Creek
State Natural Area

-  Subject Property
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-  WDNR Eased
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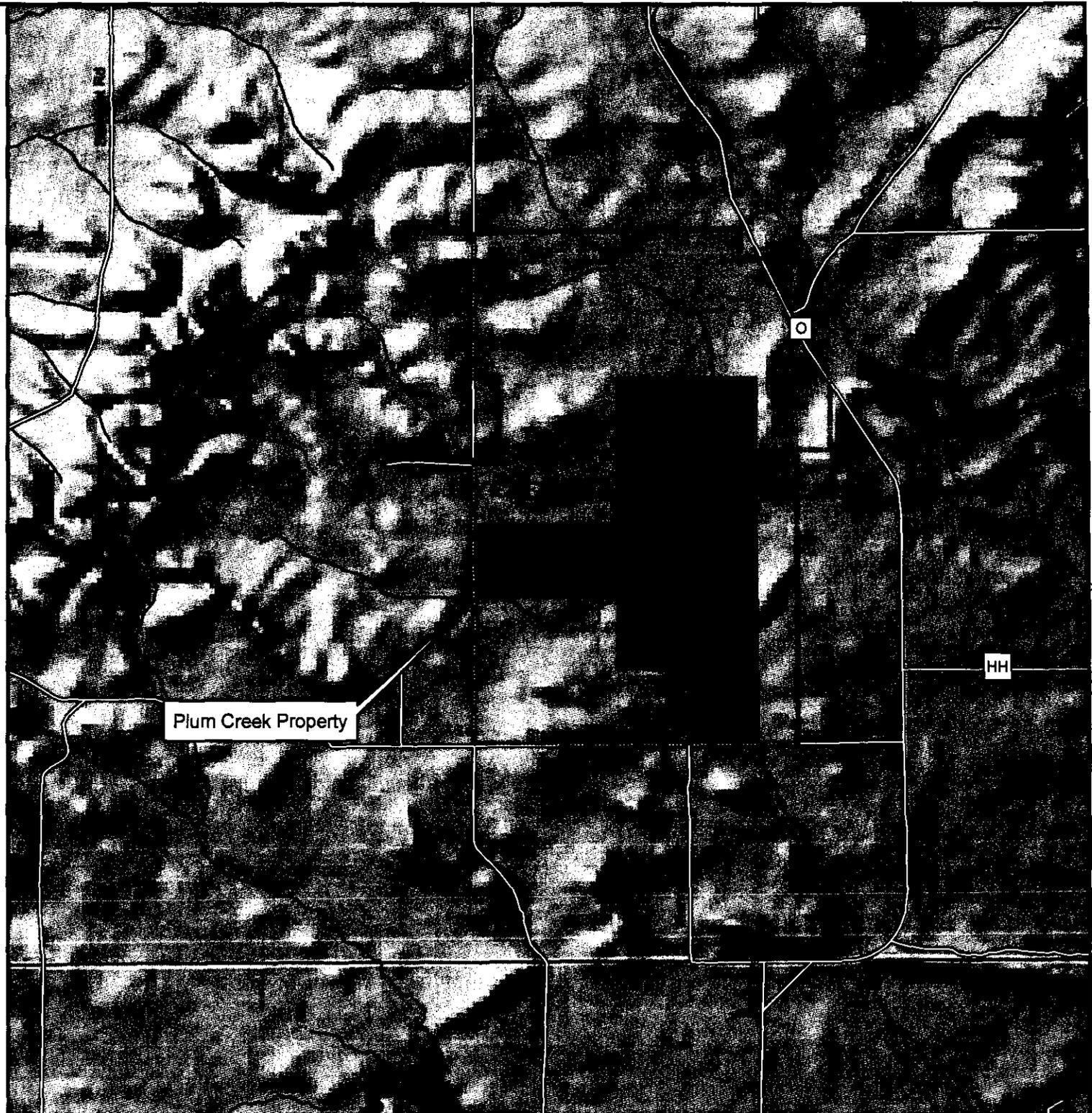
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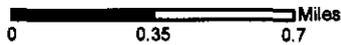
July 9, 2007



Plum Creek Property

White River Fishery Area -
Bayfield

-  Subject Property
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-  WDNR Eased
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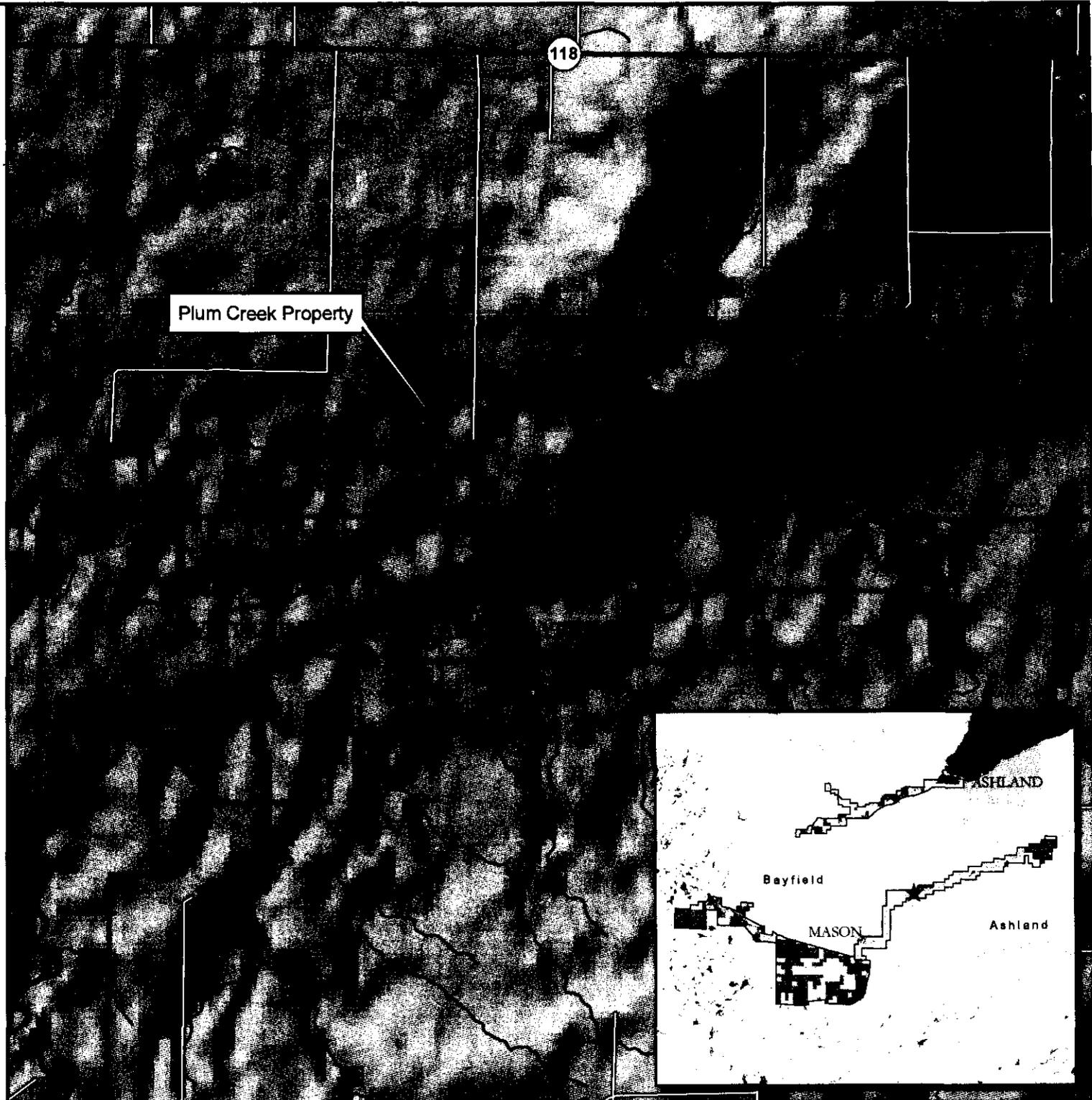
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STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of Facilities and Lands

July 9, 2007



Plum Creek Property

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area

-  Subject Property
-  WDNR Owned
-  WNDR Eased
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-  Ice Age Trail
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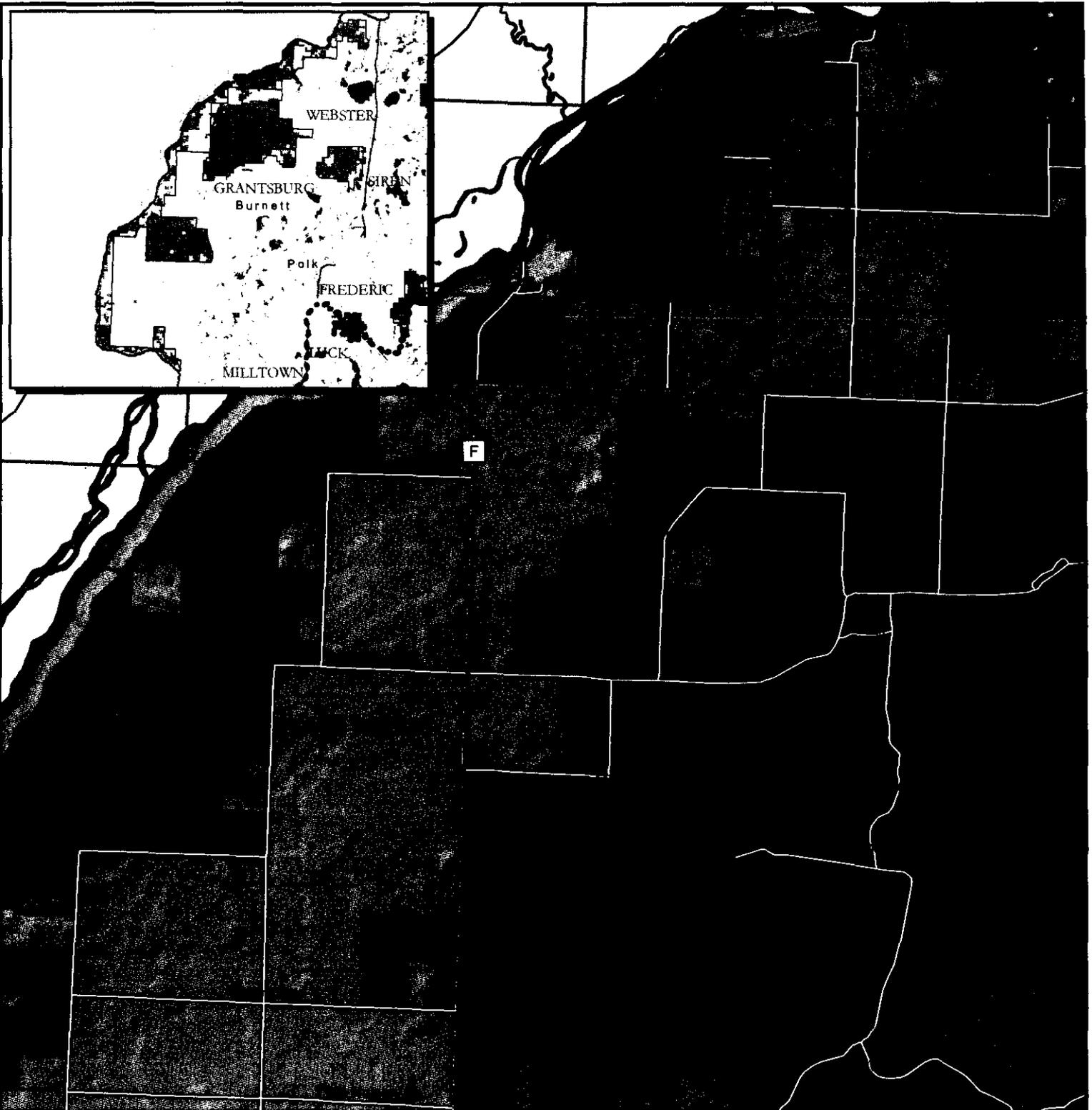
Updates to this data set are ongoing, and will be incorporated into future versions when available.

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of Facilities and Lands

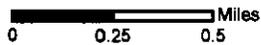
July 10, 2007



Plum Creek Property

American Legion State Forest

-  Subject Property
-  WDNR Owned
-  WNDR Eased
-  WDNR Leased
-  Ice Age Trail
-  Project Boundary
-  Open Water



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, easement or lease rights. This data set is a spatial representation of the Oracle Land Records System maintained by the DNR, Bureau of Facilities and Lands (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 represented in this data set may not be open to the general public, or may have specific limitations or restrictions on public use. 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/caer/ce/servicecenter/locations.htm>

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July 9, 2007

