

**SUBJECT: LAND DONATION - STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA – SHEBOYGAN COUNTY**

**FOR: OCTOBER 2010 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, Inc. (TNC) has offered to donate 75.0 acres of land for the Statewide Natural Areas program. The property is location in Sheboygan County, in the Town of Rhine about two miles north of the City of Elkhart Lake and seven miles north of the City of Plymouth. The area is known as Muehl Springs State Natural Area. Acquisition of this parcel will provide more opportunities for public recreation, including hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping, and bird watching.

The purpose of the Statewide Natural Areas program is to protect the best remaining examples of Wisconsin's native plant and animal communities, their component species, and habitat for rare plant and animal species. Natural areas protect the natural diversity of the landscape for future generations. 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.

The property lies one mile south of the Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area and two miles northeast of the Sheboygan Marsh State Wildlife Area. The dominant features of parcel are the high quality, high volume, springs and spring-runs that are the headwaters of Muehl Creek. This spring system feeds into the Sheboygan River, which flows through the Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area. There are over 15 springs, with some eight feet deep, originating at the base of glacial moraine deposits. Springs of this size are uncommon in east-central Wisconsin. In addition, more than 20 aquatic plants are found in the creek and its spring waters create a diverse habitat for many species.

Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area has been recognized for its importance for breeding and migratory birds. Uncommon birds found at Kiel Marsh and likely at Muehl Springs include black-crowned night herons, yellow-billed and black-billed cuckoos, willow flycatchers, and veerys. Muehl Springs provides excellent wood duck woodcock, and beaver habitat. The springs provide open water habitat in winter and black ducks and great blue herons are frequently found. Acquisition of this parcel will provide more opportunities for public recreation, including hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping, and bird watching.

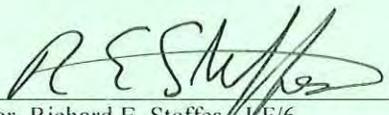
Acquisition of the 75-acre TNC property will protect and restore natural values of this site, and provide access for scientific, educational, and non-intensive recreational use.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board accept the donation of 75.0 acres of land for the Statewide Natural Area program, that a certificate of appreciation be sent to The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, Inc. and that an expression of appreciation be made a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board.

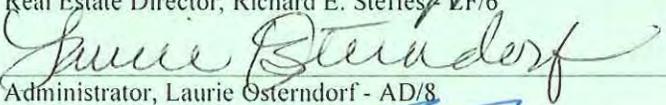
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

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

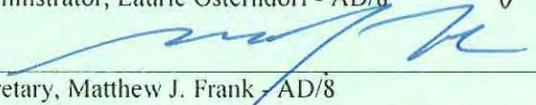
**APPROVED:**

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

9-28-10  
Date

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

10/8/10  
Date

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

10-13-10  
Date

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6  
 R. Steffes – LF/6  
 L. Ross – AD/8  
 C. Thompson – ER/6  
 G. McCutcheon – SER/Milwaukee

## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 4, 2010  
 TO: Natural Resources Board  
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank   
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Donation, The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, Inc.,  
 Tract, File # NA-20055

FILE REF: NA-20055

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Statewide Natural Area  
 Sheboygan County

Grantor:

The Nature Conservancy  
 c/o Nicole Van Helden  
 633 West Main Street  
 Madison, WI 53703

Acres: 75.0Price: GiftAppraised Value: N/AInterest: Fee Title GiftImprovements: NoneLocation: The tract is located in Sheboygan County two miles north of Elkhart Lake.Land Description: The subject land is gently rolling.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type:</u>	<u>Acreage:</u>
	Lowland Forest	26
	Wetland	29
	Upland Forest	20
	TOTAL:	75

Zoning: Lowland and Upland ConservancyPresent Use: ConservancyProposed Use: Natural Area Protection and Public Outdoor RecreationTenure: 23 yearsOption Date: June 10, 2010Stewardship 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 Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, Inc. has offered to donate 75.0 acres of land for the Statewide Natural Areas program. The property is location in Sheboygan County, in the Town of Rhine about two miles north of the City of Elkhart Lake and seven miles north of the City of Plymouth. This area is known as Muehl Springs State Natural. Acquisition of this parcel will provide more opportunities for public recreation, including hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping and bird watching.



The purpose of the Statewide Natural Areas program is to protect the best remaining examples of Wisconsin's native plant and animal communities, their component species, and habitat for rare plant and animal species. Natural areas protect the natural diversity of the landscape for future generations. 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.

The property lies one mile south of the Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area and two miles northeast of the Sheboygan Marsh State Wildlife Area. Acquisition of this parcel will provide more opportunities for public recreation, including hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping, and bird watching.

The dominant features of parcel are the high quality, high volume springs and spring runs that are the headwaters of Muehl Creek that feeds into the Sheboygan River that flows into Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area. There are over 15 springs, with some eight feet deep, originating at the base of glacial moraine deposits. Springs of this size are uncommon in east-central Wisconsin. More than 20 aquatic plants are found in the stream.

The parcel contains 55 acres of wetlands (26 acres of lowland forest, 23 acres of shallow emergent wetlands/sedge meadow/springs, and 6 acres of shrub carr) and 20 acres of upland forest. The lowland forest is dominated by tamarack, aspen, and black ash. The emergent wetlands/sedge meadow is dominated by tussock sedge and water sedge. Other sedge meadow species include swamp milkweed, Joe-pye weed, boneset, the native phragmites, and blue joint grass. The shrub carr is dominated by tag alder and willow with the native alder buckthorn, red-osier dogwood, and meadowsweet. American beech and sugar maple are dominant in the upland forest. There are no improvements on the property. Muehl Springs should be protected to preserve this sensitive habitat site. The parcel has also been submitted as match as part of a Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetland Conservation Act grant.

Kiel Marsh State Wildlife Area has been recognized for its importance for breeding and migratory birds. Uncommon birds found at Kiel Marsh and likely at Muehl Springs include black-crowned night herons, yellow-billed and black-billed cuckoos, willow flycatchers, and veerys. Muehl Springs provides excellent wood duck, woodcock, and beaver habitat. The springs provide open water habitat in winter and black ducks and great blue herons are frequently found.

Muehl Springs was donated to The Nature Conservancy by George and Herbert Roth as a memorial to their uncle Philip Mathes and their mother, Adele Mathes Roth. The Department recommends acquisition of the 75-acre TNC property to protect and restore natural values of this site, and provide access for scientific, educational, and non-intensive recreational use.

3. FINANCING:

No funding is required for this transaction.

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1972

Acres Purchased to Date: 45,966.27

Acquisition Goal: 41,000.0 Acres

Percent Complete: 112.11%

Cost to Date: \$26,776,420.30

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes *RE Steffes* 9-28-10  
Date

Bureau of Legal Services *Michael Lutz* 9-30-10  
Date

Laurie Osterdorf *Laurie Osterdorf* 10/8/10  
Date

RES:

## *Acknowledgment of Gift*

This is to certify that at its October meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of 75 acres of land in Sheboygan County for the Muehl Spring State Natural Area as part of the Statewide Natural Areas Program from

## **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF WISCONSIN, INC.**

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*

Jonathan P. Ela, CHAIR



# The Nature Conservancy Parcel

T16N R21E Section 8, Town of Rhine, Sheboygan County, WI (75.00 Acres)



### Legend

- - - PLSS Section Line
- PLSS Quarter-Quarter
- DNR Project Boundary
- County Boundary
- DNR Eased
- DNR Owned

### Subject Property

NA 20055

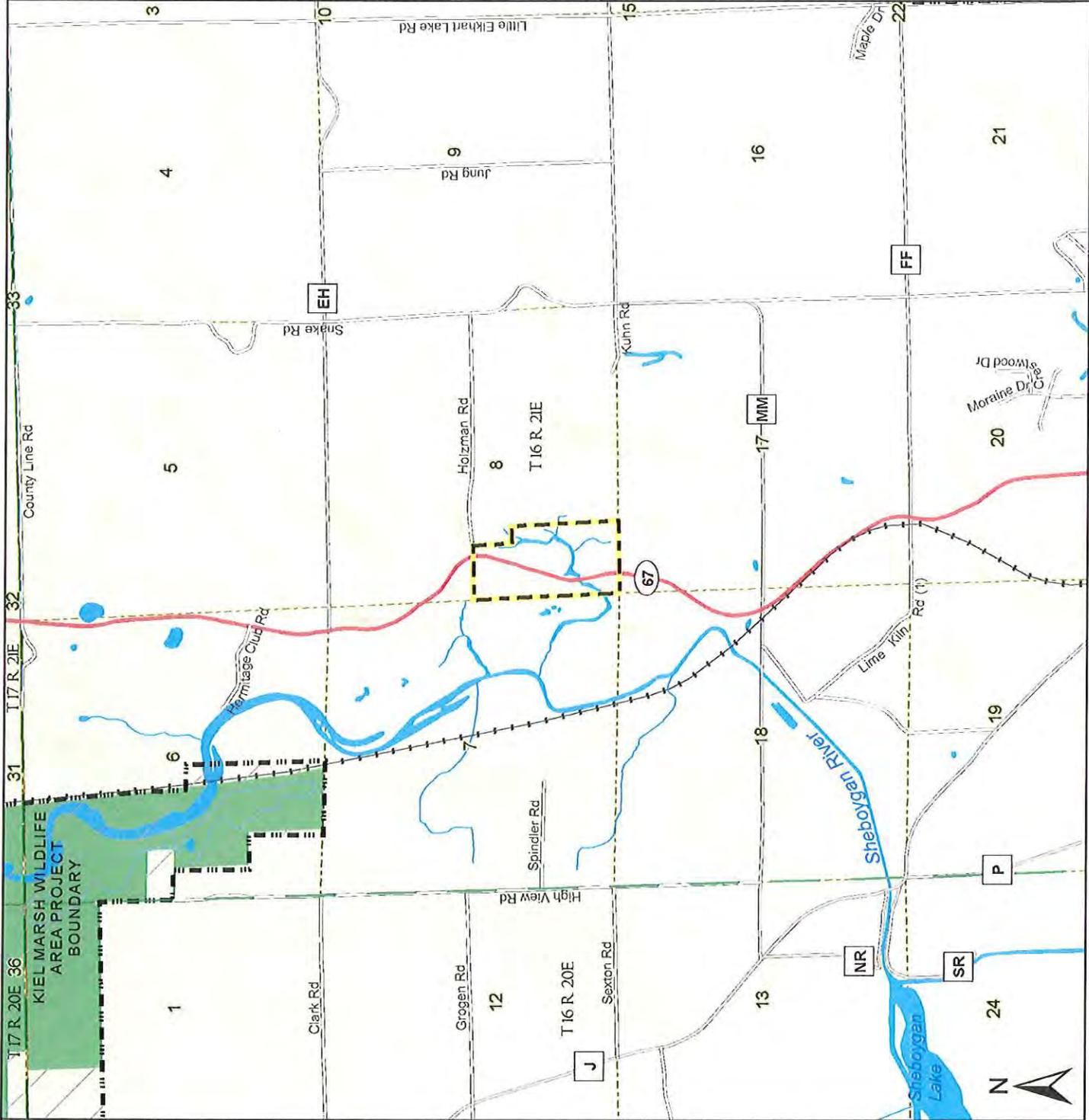
Statewide Natural Area

- Fee Simple
- Easement
- Ingress/Egress

State of Wisconsin

September - 2010  
Real Estate Section  
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

Use Advisory: Neither the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) nor any of its employees shall be held liable for any improper or incorrect use of the information and/or contained herein and assumes no responsibility for use of the information. Furthermore, no warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding accuracy, adequacy, completeness, legality, or reliability of any information. The DNR provides mapped information on an "as is" basis. The DNR has made reasonable efforts to provide accurate information, but cannot exclude the possibility of errors or omissions in source information. There is no guarantee the parcel boundaries are defined by a survey. The map user is expected to exercise reasonable use of the map information.



**The Nature Conservancy Parcel**

**NA 20055**  
 Statewide Natural Area  
 T16N R21E Section 8  
 Town of Rhine  
 Sheboygan County, WI  
 (75.00 Acres)

- Subject Property**
- Fee Simple
  - Easement
  - Ingress/Egress

- Legend**
- DNR Project Boundary
  - State Natural Area
  - PLSS Section Line
  - County Boundary
  - DNR Owned
  - DNR Easement



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 other rights. This data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and fishing. The data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and fishing. The data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and fishing. 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/oweb/central/central.htm>. Updates to this data set are ongoing, and will be incorporated into future versions when available.