

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION AND DONATION – WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA –  
POLK COUNTY**

**FOR: SEPTEMBER 2010 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes**

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 70.0 acres of land from Irvin and Janet Elkin for \$199,500.00 for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) in Polk County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The land is within the boundary of the project and is located in south-central Polk County. A NAWCA (federal funding) grant has been secured to fund \$75,000 of the acquisition price. In addition, \$20,000 of Ducks Unlimited (DU) restoration match funds has been secured and allotted to help fund this acquisition. An additional gift of \$40,000 will be made by The Conservation Fund in partnership with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The net cost to the Department's Stewardship fund is \$64,500.

The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Project was established in 1999 and encompasses 350,000 acres within 15 townships in St. Croix and Polk Counties. The acreage goal of 15,000 acres will permanently protect approximately 10% of the historic grassland acreage within this project. The goal of the WPHRA project is to provide a landscape complex of grasslands and wetlands for wildlife populations, biological diversity, and providing land for public recreation and education. General landscape focus areas have been identified within the larger WPHRA boundary to help focus land conservation efforts to best fulfill the objectives of the project.

The subject consists of approximately 57 acres of upland, six acres of wooded wetland, and a seven-acre seepage pond. Road access is available on the north, west, and south sides of the parcel. The property is located less than two miles from over 1,000 acres of waterfowl production areas and state wildlife areas. In addition to being within the project boundary of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, the property is also within the Prairie Conservation Opportunity Area as outlined in the State Wildlife Action Plan and within the Star Prairie Grassland Focus Area as identified in the St. Croix Wetland Management District Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The property is mostly open, agricultural land that will be converted to prairie and dense nesting cover for waterfowl, pheasants, and songbirds. Its wetland area consists of a seven-acre pond, which will provide a brood area for waterfowl. The nearby state and federal ownerships, along with the Elkin parcel, serve as a matrix of wildlife habitat land in an agricultural area.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of a 70.0-acre parcel for \$199,500.00 for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area and that the Board accept the contributions of \$20,000 from Ducks Unlimited and \$40,000 from The Conservation Fund in partnership with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

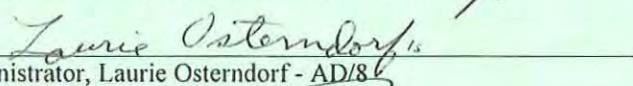
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

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

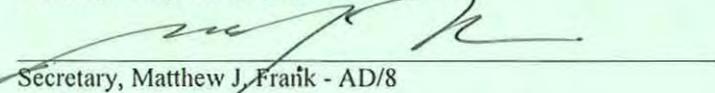
**APPROVED:**

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

9-3-10  
Date

  
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

9-3-10  
Date

  
Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

9-9-10  
Date

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| cc: S. Miller – LF/6 | T. Hauge – WM/6             |
| R. Steffes – LF/6    | J. Gozdialski – NOR/Spooner |
| L. Ross – AD/8       |                             |

## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 3, 2010  
 TO: Governor Doyle  
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank *MJF*  
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Elkin Tract, File # WM 60102,  
 Option Expires November 29, 2010

FILE REF: WM 60102

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area  
 Polk County

Grantor:

Irvin and Janet Elkin  
 153 Arch Street  
 Amery, WI 54001

Acres: 70.0Price: \$199,500.00Appraised Value: \$199,500Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located in south-central Polk CountyLand Description: The subject land is level to gently rolling.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	Type:	Acreage:
	Cropland	57.0
	Water	7.0
	Lowland Woodland	<u>6.0</u>
	TOTAL:	70.0

Zoning: AgriculturePresent Use: AgricultureProposed Use: Wildlife Habitat and Public RecreationTenure: 17 yearsProperty Taxes: \$263.77Option Date: August 2, 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 Department has obtained an option to purchase 70.0 acres of land from Irvin and Janet Elkin for \$199,500.00 for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area in Polk County. The land is within the project boundary of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) and is located in south-central Polk County. A NAWCA (federal funding) grant has been secured to fund \$75,000 of the acquisition price. In addition, \$20,000 of Ducks Unlimited (DU) restoration match funds has been secured and allotted to help fund this acquisition. An additional gift of \$40,000 will be made by The Conservation Fund in partnership with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The net cost to the Department's Stewardship fund is \$64,500.

The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Project was established in 1999 and encompasses 350,000 acres within 15 townships in St. Croix and Polk Counties. The acreage goal of 15,000 acres will permanently protect approximately 10% of the historic grassland acreage within this project. The goal of the WPHRA project is to provide a landscape complex of grasslands and wetlands for the purpose of benefitting associated wildlife populations, improving biological diversity, and providing land for public recreation and education. General landscape focus areas have been identified within the larger WPHRA boundary to help steer acquisition efforts to best fulfill the objectives of the project. In addition, a system of evaluating individual parcels of land to determine which ones can best help to meet the objectives of the project was developed in conjunction with a Citizen Advisory Committee. This Site Suitability Index (SSI) takes into account many factors, including, but not limited to, the size of the parcel, the openness of the parcel and the surrounding landscape, the presence and quality of wetlands and remnant prairies, whether the parcel meets one or more wildlife habitat models, the location of the parcel relative to existing public lands, and whether the parcel will provide additional natural resource benefits.

The property consists of approximately 57 acres of upland, six acres of wooded wetland, and a seven-acre seepage pond. Water levels in the pond were fairly low at the time of appraisal. A large drainage ditch is located in the north/central portion of the property. Road access and utilities are available on the north, west, and south sides of the subject. Water and sewer would require a private system. The property is located less than two miles from over 1,000 acres of waterfowl production areas and state wildlife areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also has great interest in the present acquisition being completed. They have assisted the Department in obtaining the Ducks Unlimited funds to aid the present purchase. The property is located within multiple resource priority areas. In addition to being within the project boundary of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, the property also is established within the Prairie Conservation Opportunity Area as outlined in the State Wildlife Action Plan and within the Star Prairie Grassland Focus Area as identified in the St. Croix Wetland Management District Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Private ownership adjoins the subject on all four sides. It is an important parcel to acquire, however, as it is just 1.5 miles north of a block of federal land, and only a few miles away in both the northwest and northeast directions from other contiguous blocks of department land. This property provides a very strong link to current and future public acquisitions by fact that it is located amidst a larger complex of publicly-owned wetlands and grasslands. Over 484 acres of department land and 130 acres of USFWS land lie within one mile of the subject.

The Department recommends that the property be acquired. The parcel is located within the WPHRA boundary and offers excellent opportunities to block with nearby adjacent public lands in all directions. Likewise, the subject offers good road access, immediate availability of utilities, and reasonable commuting distance to the Twin Cities of Minnesota. It lies in an area of light development, farming and year-round dwellings, and given the proximity of public land to the south, northwest and northeast, is desirable for hunting and recreation. The property characteristics lend the subject suitable for residential development, seasonal recreational cabin sites or a home site. The grants secured to help fund this acquisition will significantly reduce the amount of Stewardship funding required, and substantiate the outside interest and value in acquiring this tract.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds (FY 11) are anticipated; along with federal NAWCA (\$75,000), Ducks Unlimited (\$20,000) and The Conservation Fund (\$40,000).

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$50,702,000	\$20,499,334

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA:

Established: 1999  
Acres Purchased to Date: 1,432.48  
Acquisition Goal: 15,000 Acres  
Percent Complete: 9.55%  
Cost to Date: \$2,389,248

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Thomas Olson

Valuation Date: May 26, 2010

Appraised Value: \$199,500

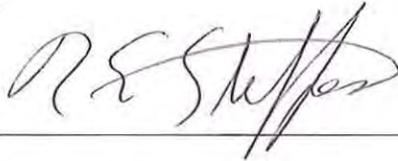
Highest and Best Use: Agriculture and Future rural residential lots

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 70.0 acres @ \$2,850 per acre: \$199,500
- b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$2,813 to \$3,225 per acre

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter – June 25, 2010

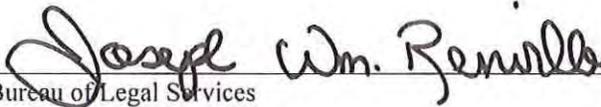
RECOMMENDED:



Richard E. Steffes

8-18-10

Date



Bureau of Legal Services

8/19/10

Date



Laurie Osterndorf

8/23/10

Date

RES:ch

## *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its September 2010 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of \$40,000 from

### **THE CONSERVATION FUND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

The donation will be used toward the purchase of 70 acres of land for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area in Polk County. It is significant that organizations like 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

## *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its September 2010 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of \$20,000 from

## **DUCKS UNLIMITED**

The donation will be used toward the purchase of 70 acres of land for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area in Polk County. It is significant that organizations like yours are interested in helping protect Wisconsin's natural heritage and contribute materially toward this end.

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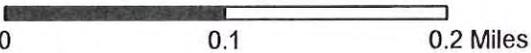
# Irvin Elkin Parcel

T32N R17W Section 22, Town of Alden, Polk County, WI (70.00 Acres)



### Legend

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



### Subject Property

WM 60102

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration

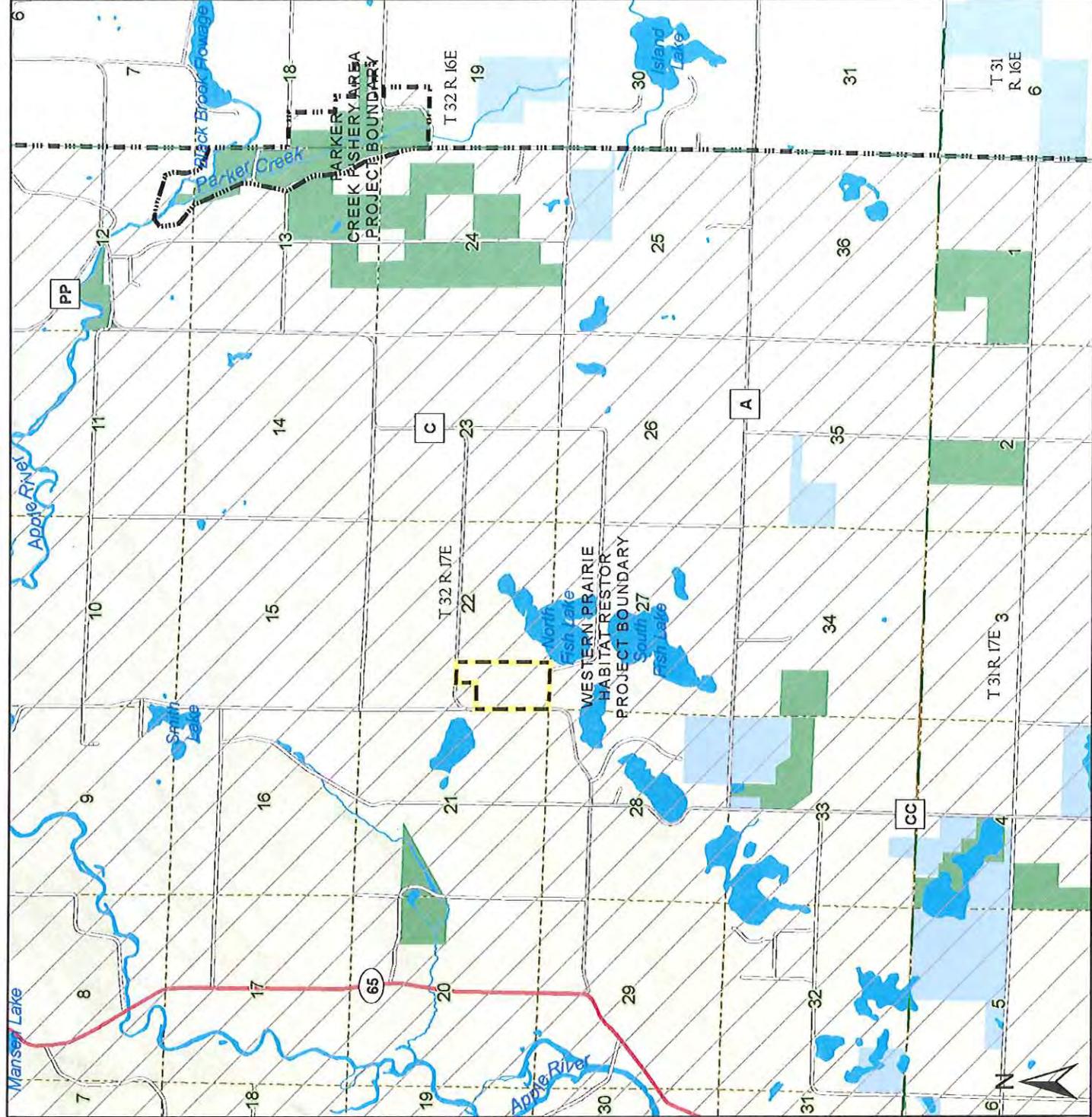
-  Fee Simple
-  Easement
-  Ingress/Egress



State of Wisconsin

August 10, 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 this 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.



**Irvin Elkin Parcel**  
**WM 60102**  
 Western Prairie  
 Habitat Restoration  
 T32N R17W Section 22  
 Town of Alden  
 Polk County, WI  
 (70.00 Acres)

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

**Legend**

- DNR Project Boundary
- State Natural Area
- PLSS Section Line
- County Owned
- DNR Owned
- DNR Easement
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife



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 dataset is a spatial representation of the Oracle Land Records System maintained by the DNR, Bureau of Facilities and Lands (L.F.), and may include errors and omissions. This data should not be used for any purpose other than general information. This data 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 land, contact the 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/cas/serv/office/locations.htm>. Updates to this data set are ongoing, and will be incorporated into future versions when available.