

**SUBJECT: LAND DONATION - RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA- CRAWFORD COUNTY**

**FOR: AUGUST 2011 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Paul E. Stry Foundation has offered to donate 16.04 acres of land for the Rush Creek Natural Area in Crawford County.

The Department has the opportunity to accept a 16.04-acre gift of land from the Paul E. Stry Foundation for the Rush Creek State Natural Area. The parcel is located about 2 miles southeast of the Village of Desoto. The property is located within the Rush Creek State Natural Area project boundary and borders existing Department owned lands to the south. The parcel has a mature stand of trees including such species as white oak, red oak, elm, maple, cherry, basswood, and ash. As with other woodlands on Rush Creek State Natural Area, forest succession will be allowed to proceed with minimal human intervention. The 16.04 acre parcel is accessible via Lawrence Ridge Road, a gravel-surfaced town road running along its northwest corner. Improvements, which are vacant and in poor condition, consist of two mobile homes and a shed. These will be removed and the site restored. Department ownership will protect the natural and scientific values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry and dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property. Accepting the donation of 16.04 -acres will help protect the land in its natural condition for scientific and educational purposes, and provide opportunities for public recreation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board accepts the donation of 16.04 acres of land for the Rush Creek Natural Area program, that a certificate of appreciation be sent to the donor and that an expression of appreciation be made a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board.

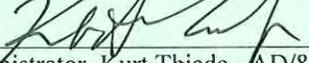
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

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

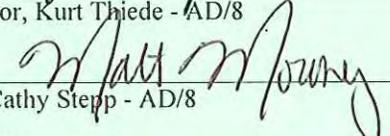
**APPROVED:**

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

6-28-11  
Date

  
Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

6-28-11  
Date

  
Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

6/29/11  
Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6  
 R. Steffes - LF/6  
 L. Ross - AD/8  
 L. Osterndorf - ER/6  
 S. Humrickhouse - WCR



## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 28, 2011  
 TO: Natural Resources Board  
 FROM: Cathy Stepp  
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Donation by The Paul E. Stry Foundation Tract,  
 File NA 20069

FILE REF: NA 20069

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Rush Creek Natural Area  
 Crawford County

Grantor:

Paul E. Stry Foundation  
 c/o Robert Skemp  
 505 King Street, Suite 300  
 La Crosse, WI 54602

Acres: 16.04Price: GiftInterest: Fee titleImprovements: 2 mobile homes and a shed in poor condition will be removed by the Department.Location: The tract is located in Crawford County 2 miles southeast of DesotoLand Description: The subject land is a flat ridge top.Covertime Breakdown:

Type	Aereage
Upland Woodland	9.64
Grass	6.40

Total: 16.04

Zoning: NonePresent Use: RecreationProposed Use: Habitat Management and public outdoor RecreationTenure: Campbell's had property for 35 years/ Stry Foundation will have property for less than a yearAgreement Date: June 1, 2011

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. (There are no water features on the property and therefore no fishing opportunities are available.)

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department has the opportunity to accept a 16.04-acre gift of the Campbell property from the Paul E. Stry Foundation for the Rush Creek State Natural Area. The Foundation has offered to



buy the parcel, then donate it to the Department. The parcel is located about 2 miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and 3.5 miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville. The property is located within the Rush Creek State Naural Area project boundary and borders existing Department owned lands to the south.

The area is used by school groups and the general public for nature study, for scientific purposes by researchers, and for recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching and hiking. The Campbell property has approximately 10 acres of upland timber, 5 acres of open ground and 1 acre of developed land. The parcel has a mature stand of trees including such species as white oak, red oak, elm, maple, cherry, basswood, and ash. As with other woodlands on Rush Creek State Natural Area, forest succession will be allowed to proceed with minimal human intervention. The 16.04 acre parcel is accessible via Lawrence Ridge Road, a gravel-surfaced town road running along its northwest corner. Improvements, which are vacant and in poor condition, consist of two mobile homes and a shed. These will be removed and the site restored. Department ownership will protect the natural and scientific values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The Rush Creek State Natural Area, which is located 30 miles south of the City of La Crosse in Crawford County, was established in 1980 with the purchase of a 1,100-acre tract from The Nature Conservancy. The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry and dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Silver maple, red maple, elm, and cottonwood dominate the lowland forests on the valley floors. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property.

The Department recommends accepting the donation of the 16.04 -acre property to protect the land in its natural condition for scientific and educational purposes, to provide opportunities for public recreation and to consolidate state ownership.

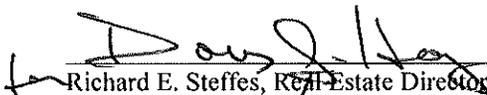
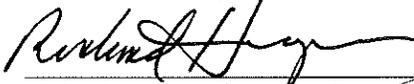
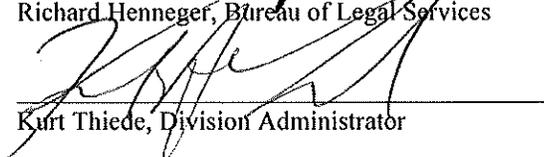
3. FINANCING:

No funding is required for this transaction.

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1980  
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,621.94  
Acquisition Goal: 7,775.00  
Percent Complete: 33.72 %  
Cost to Date: \$2,722,929.00

RECOMMENDED:

  
Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director  
  
Richard Henneger, Bureau of Legal Services  
  
Kurt Thiede, Division Administrator

6-28-11  
Date  
6/28/11  
Date  
7/12/11  
Date

## *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its August 2011 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted gift of 16.04 acres of land in Crawford County for the Rush Creek Natural Area from

**The Paul E. Stry 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*

David Clausen, CHAIRMAN



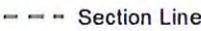
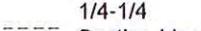
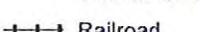
# Paul E. Stry Foundation, Inc. Fee Gift

T11N R07W Section 35, Town of Freeman, Crawford County



**Rush Creek  
State Natural Area  
NA 20069**

 Subject Parcel

-  Project Boundary
-  State Natural Area
-  WDNR Owned
-  WDNR Easement
-  Section Line
-  1/4-1/4 Section Line
-  Railroad



June 13, 2011  
Real Estate Section  
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

**Paul E. Stry  
Foundation, Inc.  
Fee Gift**

Rush Creek Natural Area

NA 20069

T11N R07W Section 35

Town of Freeman  
Crawford County  
(16.06--GIS)

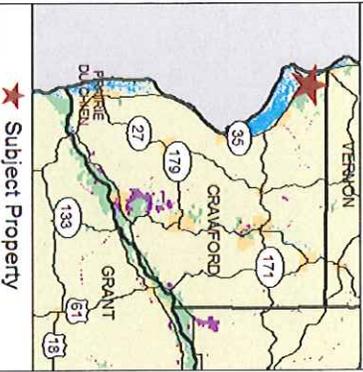


Subject Parcel

- Project Boundary
- State Natural Area
- WDNR Owned
- WDNR Easement
- Railroad
- PLSS Section Line
- QQ Section Boundary



*Crawford County View*



★ Subject Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
Map Created June 13, 2011 SWM

