

Parent File FO 347/Sale File WM 60430 – Vilas County 116.94 Acres

The Department acquired this parcel for \$800 in 1949. The parcel is a part of the Scattered Forest Lands project and is located in the Town of Saint Germain in Vilas County.

This parcel is a part of the Northern Highlands American Legion State Forest (NHAL) exclusion zones. The NHAL Master Plan, approved by Natural Resources Board (NRB) action in 2005, included acquisition exclusion areas in and around the Towns of Manitowish Waters, Boulder Junction, Sayner, St. Germain, and Lake Tomahawk. These exclusion areas were originally removed from the Northern Highland and American Legion State Forest Administrative boundaries in 1975 by NRB action. The 1982 and 2005 NHAL Master Plans recognized this action and the continued interests of the local Towns for these areas to remain as exclusion areas and not be included in the NHAL project boundary. The intent of the 1975 action, and the two subsequent master plan actions, was to adjust the project boundary and remove lands from the NHAL project boundary, as well as the State Forest designation. The rationale for all three actions was to allow the Department the ability to divest the lands by trade or sale, for more appropriate forested lands within the NHAL and allowing the Towns to direct local growth and development in and around their communities.

The parcel is accessed by the public and the Department through Birchwood and Hemlock Roads. The Department has not made significant investments in infrastructure or habitat improvements, but has invested minimal time and cost for parcel management.

This parcel shows signs of use by hunters and trappers. There are trails and ground blinds located along natural wildlife travel corridors. Logging trails show signs of foot traffic. Recent timber management will make this parcel excellent game bird, bear, and deer habitat.

In discussions with the County, if they purchase the property, a portion of it may need to be closed to public access for the purposes of expanding their existing gravel pit operations on the adjacent land. The Department is recommending the portion not needing to be closed be deed restricted requiring the land be open to the general public for all five NBOA's in perpetuity and a no development clause.

Due to the quality and diversity of natural resources in the area and the historical recreational use of this land and surrounding county land, the land should continue in public ownership.

The Department recommends that the Natural Resources Board offer this land for sale under the authority granted by s. 23.145 Wis. Stats., and that the land be only offered to Vilas County and that a portion of the land, at least 60 acres, be subject to the deed restrictions requiring the land be open to the general public for all five NBOA's in perpetuity and a no development clause.

