

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

**FOR: FEBRUARY 2007 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 62 acres of land from Michael and Jane Held for \$200,000 for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area in Polk County. The item is being submitted due to cost and will be fully funded by a federal NAWCA grant.

The 62-acre parcel is within the project boundary of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) and will connect to other blocks of Department ownership within the project boundary. This property is located amidst a larger complex of publicly owned wetlands and grasslands. More than 480 acres of DNR land and 130 acres of USFWS land lie within one mile of the subject. The parcel will add valuable wetland and grassland habitat to the project and consolidate state ownership.

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 the project. The project area includes prairie remnants from one of the largest prairies found in the state along with a mix of grasslands, potholes and marshes that are extremely conducive to pheasant and waterfowl production. The large, landscape scope of the project is based upon comprehensive research of biodiversity and ecosystem management practices.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of 62 acres of land for \$200,000 for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area.

**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:**

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

\_\_\_\_\_/1/23/07\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/5

\_\_\_\_\_/1/25/07\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, Scott Hassett - AD/5

\_\_\_\_\_/1/25/07\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6  
R. Steffes - LF/6  
L. Ross – AD/5  
T. Hauge – WM/6  
J. Gozdziwski – NOR/Spooner

# CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 16, 2007  
TO: Governor Doyle  
FROM: Scott Hassett  
SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Held Tract, File # W-1692,  
Option Expires April 27, 2007

FILE REF: W-1692

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area  
Polk County

Grantor:

Michael and Jane Held  
1086 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Amery, WI 54001

Acres: 62.0

Price: \$200,000

Appraised Value: \$200,000

Interest: Purchase in fee.

Improvements: None

Location: The tract is located in southern Polk County in the Town of East Alden about five miles southwest of the City of Amery.

Land Description: The area is a mildly rolling upland with a small wetland area near the northwest corner and along the east side.

<u>Covertypes Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Acres</u>
	Cropland	48
	Wetland (drained)	8
	Grass Pasture	<u>6</u>
	Total	62

Zoning: Agriculture

Present Use: Agriculture

Proposed Use: Resource Protection and Public Recreation

Tenure: 26 years

Property Taxes: \$1,105

Option Date: December 28, 2006

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department has obtained an option to purchase the 62-acre Held parcel for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Project (WRA). The 62-acre parcel is in the project boundary of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) and will connect to other blocks of department ownership within the project boundary. This property provides a very strong link to current and future public acquisitions as it is located amidst a larger complex of publicly-owned wetlands and grasslands. More than 480 acres of DNR land and 130 acres of USFWS land lie within 1 mile of the subject. The parcel will add valuable wetland and grassland habitat to the project and will be fully funded with a NAWCA grant.

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 the project. The project area includes prairie remnants from one of the largest prairies found in the state along with a mix of grasslands, potholes and marshes that are extremely conducive to pheasant and waterfowl production. The large, landscape scope of the project is based upon comprehensive research of biodiversity and ecosystem management practices. Restoration of viable grasslands and wetlands to provide habitat for waterfowl, pheasants and grassland birds is the primary objective of the WPHRA project. The intent is to widely scatter suitable habitat throughout the area, rather than concentrating the habitat in one place. The mix of agricultural land, grasslands, and wetlands is the key to productive wildlife populations. Reductions in habitat quality and quantity because of land use changes have contributed to the decline of grassland nesting wildlife populations. Also, wetland loss or degradation has been an important factor in the decline of many wetland wildlife species. Ten species of birds known to occur in this area are state-listed as endangered or threatened and 19 species are listed as special concern.

The state, local units of government, and non-profit conservation organizations currently own approximately 5,000 acres within the project boundary. These groups will continue to partner with the Department to purchase land and ultimately achieve the habitat protection and restoration goals for the project.

The 62-acre tract lies in an area of light development, farming and year-round dwellings, and given the adjacent public land to the north and east, is desirable for hunting and recreation. The property characteristics lend the subject suitable for seasonal recreational cabin sites or a home site. If the Department fails to acquire this property now, it will likely become a developed site. With state purchase, it will be managed as wildlife habitat.

The Department recommends acquisition of the 62-acre parcel to consolidate state ownership, to provide additional recreational opportunities, and to allow habitat restoration and management of the area for wildlife in conjunction with the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area project.

3. FINANCING:

NAWCA Phase 4 funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$514,400	\$224,400

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

Established: 1999

Acres Purchased to Date: 967.8

Acquisition Goal: 15,000 Acres

Percent Complete: 6.5%

Cost to Date: \$1,509,326

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Wayne Gisbon (Private Appraiser)

Valuation Date: November 1, 2006

Appraised Value: \$200,000

Highest and Best Use: Residential development

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 62 acres @ \$3,200 per acre: \$200,000 (Rounded)
- b. market data approach used; four comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$2,630 to \$3,537 per acre

Appraisal Review: Ron Olson, December 12, 2006

RECOMMENDED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard E. Steffes

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bureau of Legal Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurie Osterndorf

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

RES:dv



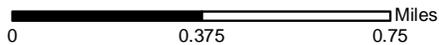
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# Held Property

## Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

-  Subject Property
-  Ice Age Trail
-  Project Boundary
-  WDNR Owned
-  WDNR Easement
-  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/cs/servicecenter/locations.htm>

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**

January 18, 2007

