

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

Item No. 3.B.22

CORRECTED

SUBJECT: Dedicating a Unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area in honor of Dick Steffes

FOR: DECEMBER 2012 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Kurt Thiede, Division of Land Administrator

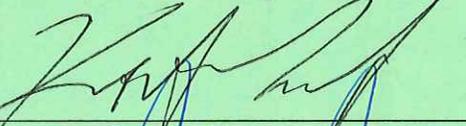
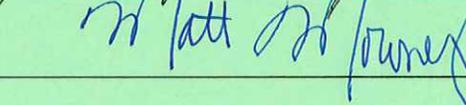
SUMMARY:

The Department is proposing to dedicate a portion of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area in honor of long-time Real Estate Director Dick Steffes. The intent of this dedication is to honor the more than 39 years of public service and outstanding contributions that Dick has made to the State of Wisconsin. If authorized, the dedicated unit will be declared on property signs and agency maps, which will be installed on a new kiosk at a canoe access site within the proposed unit.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Natural Resources Board authorize the dedication to establish the Dick Steffes Unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

- Background memo
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Approved by	Signature	Date
Steven W. Miller, Bureau Director		11-29-12
Kurt Thiede, Administrator		11-29-12
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		12/4/12

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

DATE: November 28, 2012

TO: Natural Resources Board Members

FROM: Cathy Stepp

SUBJECT: Dedication of a Unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area in honor of Dick Steffes

I am requesting that the Natural Resources Board authorize the Department to dedicate a portion of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area in honor of long-time Real Estate Director Dick Steffes. The intent of this dedication is to honor the more than 40 years of public service and outstanding contributions that Dick has made to the State of Wisconsin. If authorized, the dedicated unit will be declared on property signs and agency maps, including a new kiosk at a canoe access site within the proposed unit.

Background:

Dick Steffes began his storied career in the Department of Natural Resources Real Estate Program in February 1974, coming to DNR from the City of Madison Relocation Office. During his 39 years with the Department, Dick worked as a land acquisition agent, title closing officer, regional real estate manager, operations section chief and ultimately, for the last 14 years, the Real Estate Director. He has loved working with the real estate, wildlife, natural areas, fisheries, parks and forestry staff around the state, and openly comments what an honor it has been to follow in the footsteps of DNR's land acquisition practitioners of the past.

In his time with the program, the Department has acquired more than 834,502 acres of land in fee and easement. This is more than 1,300 square miles of land -- an area larger than Dane County -- that will be managed to protect and enhance its natural resources, and will be open for public recreation for generations to enjoy.

Dick embodies the Department's mission statement. He has maintained a laser focus, acquiring needed recreational land, rare habitats, and waterway access for the people of Wisconsin. Always aware of developing opportunities and needs, he has worked with and earned the deep respect of sellers and partners in state and local units of government, timber management businesses, non-profits and members of the public. Starting with ORAP and working through three Stewardship authorizations, he has used public funds wisely, creatively, and -- yes -- frugally to secure recreational land for future generations and to help preserve Wisconsin's landscape.

His influence and leadership in the program will leave a lasting imprint on the State of Wisconsin for generations. Some of the projects that were established during Dick's career include: Mountain-Bay State Trail (the first rails to trails purchase), Hank Aaron State Trail, Chippewa Flowage, Turtle Flambeau Flowage, Rainbow Flowage, Willow Flowage, Lakeshore State Park, Straight Lake State Park, Jefferson Marsh Wildlife Area, Dells of the Wisconsin River, Menominee River Park and Recreation Area, Centennial State Park, Gov. Thompson State Park, and the Turtle Valley Wildlife Area. He was on the ground floor for rails to trails conversions and the development of Wisconsin's storied trail system. He was a pioneer in the use of easements to secure public access while maintaining strong forests for Wisconsin's economy, and was instrumental in the negotiations and acquisitions protecting 200,000 acres of Forest Legacy land. These include some of the largest conservations purchases in state history: the Wild Rivers Legacy Forest, the Chippewa Flowage Legacy Forest, and most recently the St. Croix-Brule Legacy Forest.

Dick's integrity and his ability to relate to other people's views made him an amazing negotiator on all levels. He served under eight Wisconsin governors and eight department secretaries, continuing to promote a successful real estate program throughout. A monthly fixture at Natural Resources Board meetings, his appearance at the podium always prompted Board member smiles and attention – sometimes with a playful question, "How many do you want to get today, Dick?" Fact is he wanted them all – he brought nothing to the Board that wasn't carefully examined, negotiated hard, and a treasure worth protecting.

Property Description:

The unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area that is proposed for this dedication is about 1,900 acres in size and includes almost 8.5 miles of the Tomahawk River corridor. The nature of its acquisition exemplifies Dick Steffes' dedication to acquire land for public recreation and resource protection.

The unit is the product of his vision and perseverance. Viewing the waterscape as spectacular wild northern Wisconsin, he carefully acquired small parcels and waterfront as part of several acquisition deals in order to build state ownership. He championed acquisition of this unit as part of the Great Addition, matching state money with federal grant funding, trading of property with private owners, working with a non-profit organization to cooperatively acquire land, and working with the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. The property finally became official when Dick sponsored and presented a feasibility study to the Board.

It's a very beautiful stretch of river that has the special meaning for Dick of collaborating with regional staff to build. It's an area the Steffes family can enjoy and canoe with their kids.

As a result of his tremendous career and contribution to the State of Wisconsin, the Division of Lands would like to recognize him for his efforts by dedicating this unit in Dick's name – the "Dick Steffes Unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area".

Dick Steffes Unit of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area

-  Dick Steffes Unit
-  WDNR Owned
-  WDNR Easement
-  DNR Project Boundary
-  County Forest Land
-  PLSS Section Line
-  QQ Section Boundary
-  Access Site



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities of Lands
Map Created: Nov 08, 2012 kmh

