

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition – Buena Vista Wildlife Area – Portage County

FOR: FEBRUARY 2013 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Doug Haag

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 80.01 acres of land from Edward Ciesielski for \$160,000 for the Buena Vista Wildlife Area in Portage County. The item is being submitted because purchase price is greater than \$150,000. The Department is anticipating a \$40,000 cost share grant from Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council to assist with this purchase.

The property adjoins private land to the west owned by the Dane County Conservation League (DCCL) that is managed by the DNR and open to the public through a long term lease agreement. The leased land adjoins approximately 1,600 acres of DNR ownership creating more than 2,200 acres of contiguous land managed for grassland habitat and outdoor recreation for all five of the Nature Based Outdoor Activities. The Ciesielski parcel has been kept as pasture land for the last 21 years and can easily be managed for cool season grassland with minimal resource input. Soils are also primarily poorly drained wetland soils (muck) and are not prime farmland. The property includes an agricultural ditch that is a designated Class I trout stream.

The Buena Vista WLA project is a 12,700- acre project property located in southwestern Portage County. The area is predominately grassland with some woodland. This area was formerly a marsh dominated by tamarack, black spruce and cattails. In the early 1900's it was drained for agricultural purposes. In the mid 1950's a successful partnership between the Department (DNR) and Dane County Conservation League (DCCL) and the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus was created to purchase land specifically for management of grassland habitat for the Greater prairie chicken (a state threatened species in Wisconsin) and other grassland dependent species. It is home to the largest concentration of Greater prairie chickens in Wisconsin and represents the most extensive grassland east of the Mississippi River. The property harbors a healthy population of other important grassland bird species including, but not limited to: Henslow sparrows (state threatened species), Short eared owls, Upland sandpipers, Northern harriers, Bobolinks and Eastern and Western meadowlarks. In 2006 it was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Several state natural areas are found within the borders of the property including the Buena Vista Quarry Prairie and the Buena Vista Prairie Chicken Meadow. Recreational opportunities that exist at the Buena Vista WLA include hunting, hiking, cross country skiing with no designated trails, trapping, wild edibles gathering and Wildlife viewing.

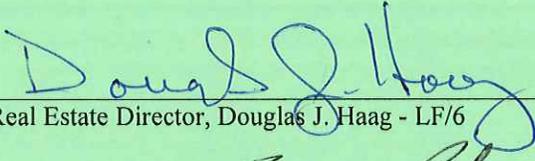
The parcel also lies within the boundaries of the large landscape-scale Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area (CWGCA) project which includes several wildlife areas. The CWGCA is a land protection project approved by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board in 2005. The primary goal of the CWGCA is to increase the amount of protected grassland habitat for grassland-dependent species, such as the state threatened Greater Prairie-chicken and is considered to be a Wildlife Priority Project in the West Central Region. This property is an important addition to the CWGCA, meeting several criteria that help identify critical lands for acquisition. The property is ¼ mile from a current booming ground and within the radius of where Greater Prairie-chicken hens will nest if bred on this booming ground if grassland habitat suitable for nesting is available.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 80.01 acres of land for \$160,000 for the Buena Vista Wildlife Area in Portage County.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

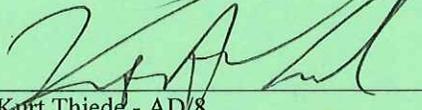
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|--|---|---|----------|
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:



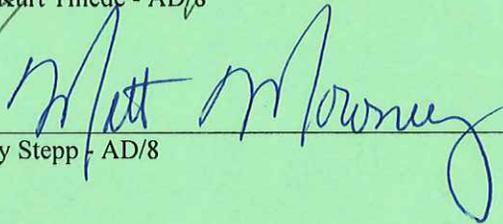
Acting Real Estate Director, Douglas J. Haag - LF/6

1-24-13
Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

1/29/13
Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

1/30/13
Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6
D. Haag - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
T. Hauge - WM/6
C. Thompson - WCR - LA CROSSE

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 24, 2013
 TO: Scott Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Edward Ciesielski Tract, File # WM 60208,
 Option Expires April 17, 2013

FILE REF: WM 60208

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Buena Vista Wildlife Area
 Portage County

Grantor:

Edward Ciesielski
 6595 County Highway "BB"
 Bancroft, WI 54921

Acres: 80.01
Price: \$160,000
Appraised Value: \$160,000
Interest: Fee Title Purchase
Improvements: None

Location: The property is located in Portage County 5 miles north of Plover

Land Description: The subject land is level.

Covertime Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Grass / Pasture	80.01
Total:	80.01

Note: Soils are muck

Zoning: County zoning is A-1, Exclusive Ag; 35-acre min lot size
Present Use: Cattle pasture
Proposed Use: Conservation and public recreation
Tenure: 21-years
Property Taxes: \$212
Option Date: December 18, 2012

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.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

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The property adjoins private land to the west owned by the Dane County Conservation League (DCCL) that is managed by the DNR and open to the public already through a lease agreement. The leased land adjoins approximately 1,600 acres DNR ownership creating more than 2,200 of contiguous land managed for grassland habitat. The parcel has been kept in pastureland grazing cattle for the last 21 years and can easily be managed for cool season grassland with minimal resource input. Soils are also primarily poorly drained wetland soils (muck) and are not prime farmland. The property includes an agricultural ditch that is a designated Class I trout stream. The 80.01-acre land parcel includes two parcels with a deeded access roadway between them and is accessible from the town road frontage on Coddington Road.

The Buena Vista WLA project is a 12,700- acre project property located in southwestern Portage County. The area is predominately grassland with some woodland. This area was formerly a marsh dominated by tamarack, black spruce and cattails. In the early 1900's it was drained for agricultural purposes. In the mid 1950's a successful partnership between the Department (DNR) and Dane County Conservation League (DCCL) and the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus was created to purchase land specifically for management of grassland habitat for the Greater prairie chicken (a state threatened species in Wisconsin) and other grassland dependent species. It is home to the largest concentration of Greater prairie chickens in Wisconsin and represents the most extensive grassland east of the Mississippi River. The property harbors a healthy population of other important grassland bird species including, but not limited to: Henslow sparrows (state threatened species), Short eared owls, Upland sandpipers, Northern harriers, Bobolinks and Eastern and Western meadowlarks. In 2006 it was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Several state natural properties are found within the borders of the property including the Buena Vista Quarry Prairie and the Buena Vista Prairie Chicken Meadow. Recreational opportunities that exist at the Buena Vista WLA include hunting, hiking, cross country skiing with no designated trails, trapping, wild edibles gathering and Wildlife viewing.

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3. LAND MANAGEMENT:

Property will be managed as part of the Buena Vista Wildlife Area by WM staff out of the Wisconsin Rapids DNR Service Center office. This property has been grazed for the last 21 years and grazing will continue as a management practice until the department is ready to convert it to permanent grassland vegetation. The SW/NE has approximately 1,320 feet of Ditch No. 3 that is a dredged and straightened waterway that is also managed by the Portage County Land Conservation office. The ditch is considered to be Class I native reproducing trout water and use will not change. There is a small area of scattered Aspen trees that are mostly dying with no market value. They will all be removed and converted to grassland to be consistent with the open grassland habitat objectives of the project.

4. FINANCING:

\$40,000 Golden RC&D USFWS – NMBCA funds are anticipated.
\$120,000 State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$4,1352,450	\$1,045,875

5. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE BUENA VISTA WILDLIFE AREA:

Established: 1988
Acres Purchased to Date: 7,885.83
Acquisition Goal: 14,000
Percent Complete: 56.33 %
Cost to Date: \$1,625,972.49

6. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Rodney Bush
Valuation Date: October 17, 2012
Appraised Value: \$160,000
Highest and Best Use: Agriculture

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 80.01 acres @ \$2,000 per acre: \$160,000
- b. market data approach used, 5 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,653.00 - \$2,231.00 per acre

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter - 12/7/2012

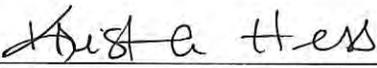
RECOMMENDED:



Douglas J. Haag, Acting Real Estate Director

1-24-13

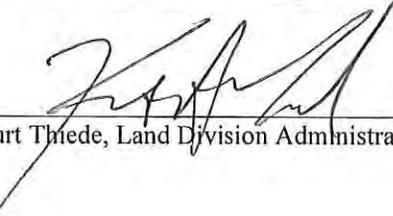
Date



Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

1/28/13

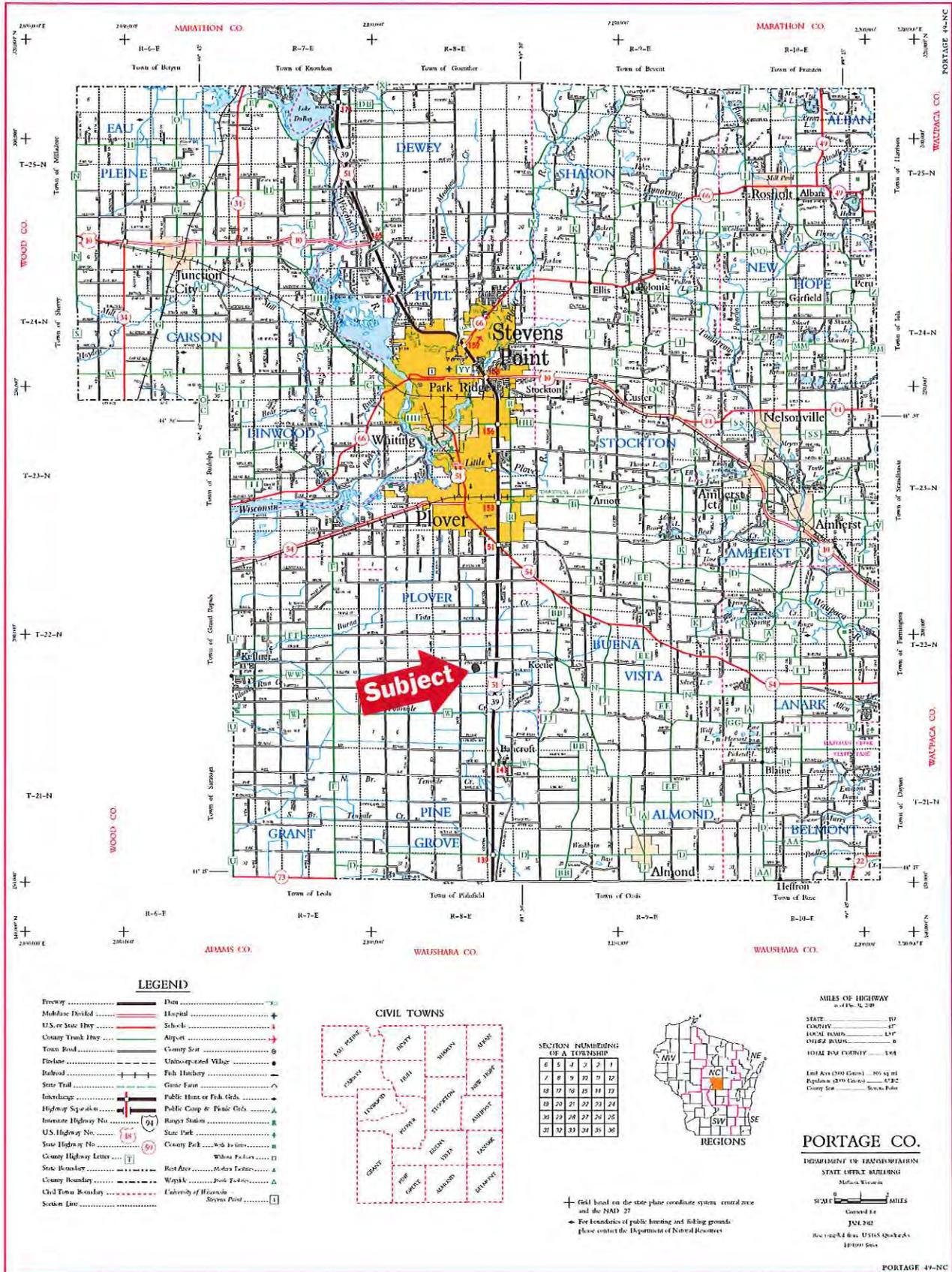
Date



Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

1/29/13

Date



Edward Ciesielski - Fee
 Buena Vista
 Wildlife Area

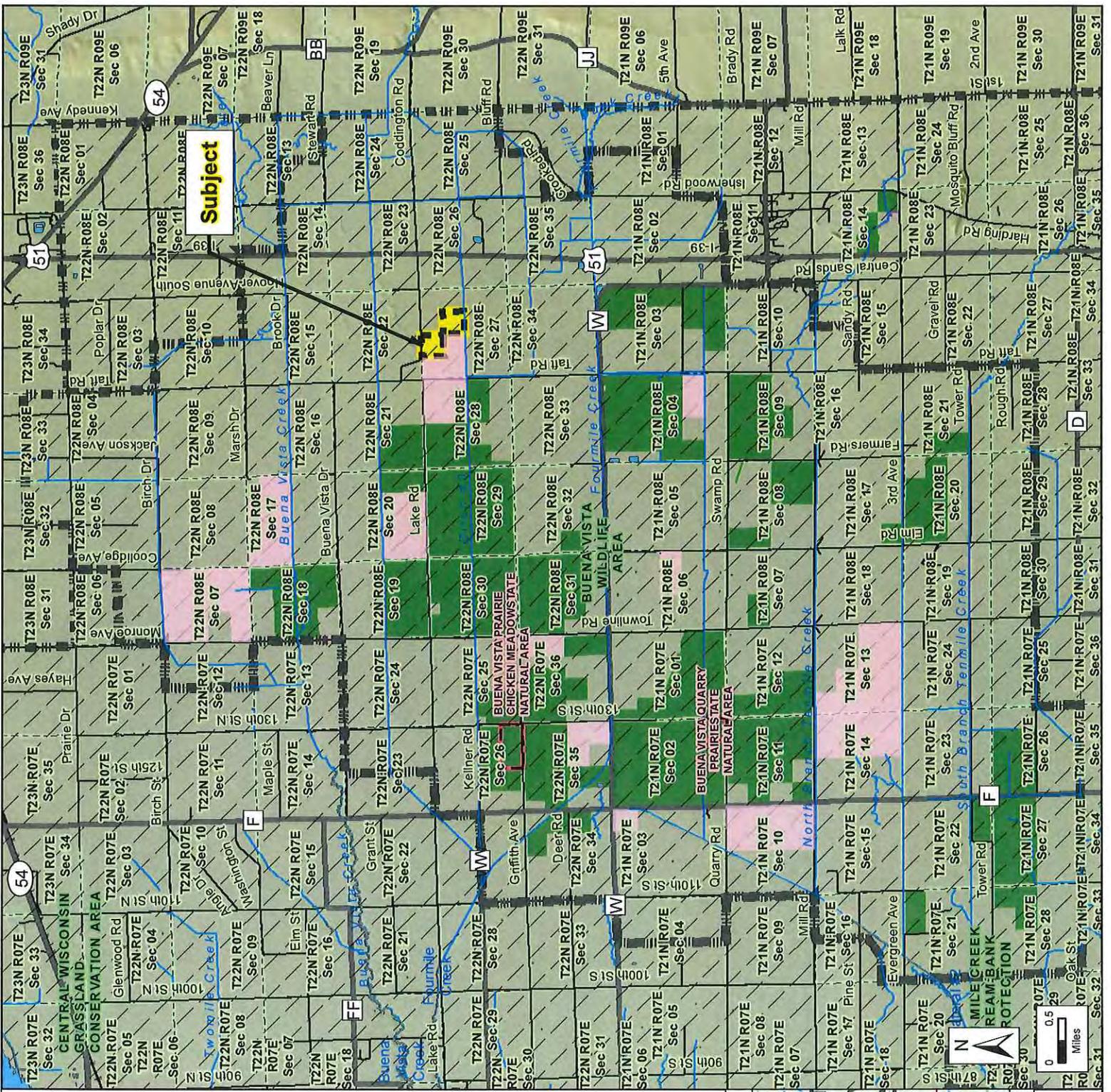
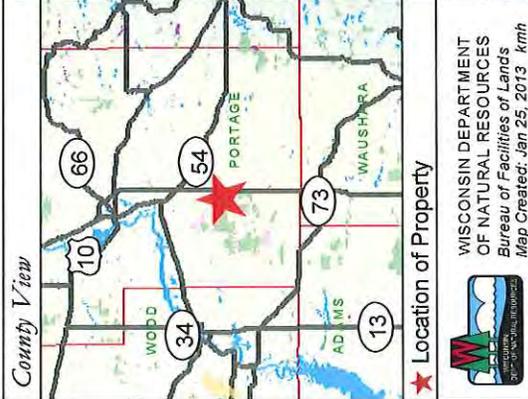
WM 60208

T22N R8E Sec 27
 Town of Buena Vista
 Portage County
 80.01 Acres



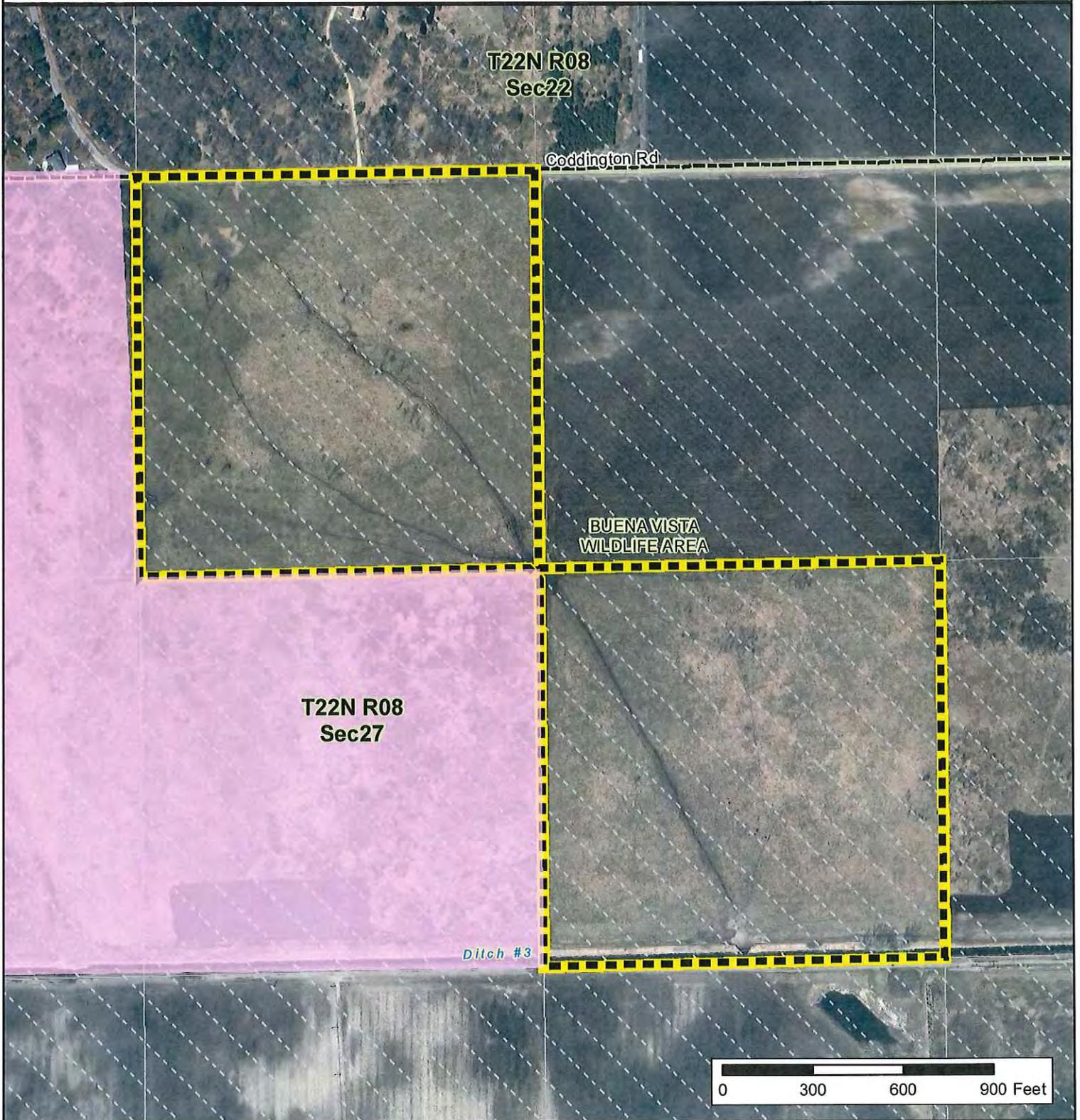
Subject

-  WDNR Fee Title
-  WDNR Easement
-  DNR Leased Lands
-  DNR Project Boundary
-  County Forest Land
-  State Natural Area
-  PLSS Section Line



Edward Ciesielski - Fee

T22N R8E Sec 27 Town of Buena Vista, Portage County



**Buena Vista
Wildlife Area**



Subject

 DNR Fee Title

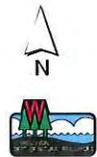
 DNR Eased

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 DNR Project Boundary

 Section Line

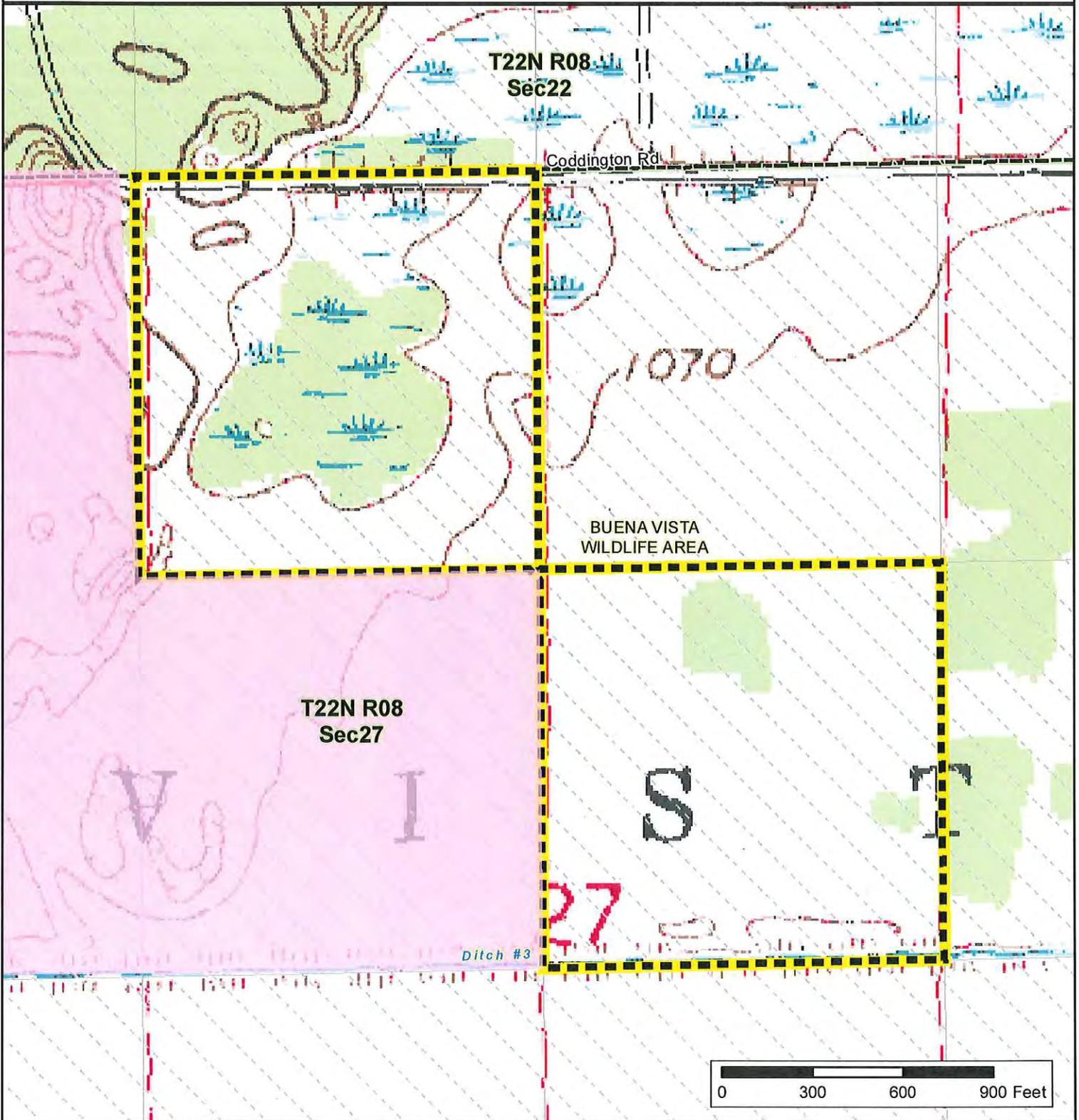
 QQ Section Lines



Jan 25, 2013 kmb
Real Estate Section
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

Edward Ciesielski - Fee

T22N R8E Sec 27 Town of Buena Vista, Portage County



Buena Vista Wildlife Area



Subject

 DNR Fee Title

 DNR Eased

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Jan 25, 2013 kmh
Real Estate Section

Bureau of Facilities and Lands