

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition – Northern Highland State Forest – Iron County

FOR: MAY 2014 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Douglas J. Haag

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 240 acres of land from Gary and Debra Stephenson for \$335,800 for the Northern Highland State Forest in Iron County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The Stephenson parcel contains six 40-acre parcels along the eastern boundary of Iron County in Mercer Township, approximately seven miles east of Mercer. The subject tract falls entirely within the Northern Highland State Forest project boundary. More than 75% of the subject's boundary is adjacent to Department land, which abuts the subject to the west, north, south, and part of the east. Access to the property is provided by a town road and county highway at the southern border of the subject. There is a woods road running through the subject that provides access to each 40-acre parcel. A private landowner has an easement for ingress/egress across this woods road and this road has been used by the Department to access other Department land.

Established in 1925 to protect the headwaters of the Wisconsin, Flambeau and Manitowish Rivers, the Northern Highland and American Legion (NHAL) State Forests include more than 232,000 acres in Vilas, Oneida and Iron Counties. The nearest cities are Woodruff/Minocqua, Rhinelander and Eagle River. Many visitors are from the population centers of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The primary use of the forest is for silvicultural practices and the growth of recurring forest crops with scenic values, outdoor recreation, public hunting and stabilization of stream flow as extra benefits. Each year approximately 75,000 cords of pulpwood and 2.5 million board feet of sawlogs are harvested in the forest, which contributes to employment in the woods and mills and provides commodities for local and regional markets.

The Stephenson tract has rolling topography and is 75% upland and 25% lowland/swamp. It is mostly forested with a high component of northern hardwood sawtimber. Wetlands on the property contain mostly swamp conifer poletimber. There are 180 acres of hardwood, 46 acres of swamp conifer, and 14 acres of marsh and muskeg. The property has been enrolled in MFL for many years and the timber has been managed well. The major log species are hard maple, soft maple, basswood and ash.

The property contains approximately 950 feet of frontage on the Turtle River, which eventually flows into the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage. The river is 40-50 feet wide through the subject and is slow moving. Most of the frontage on the subject is one-bank frontage but there is a small area of two-bank frontage.

A 70' x 25' cabin and a 14' x 20' cabin are located on the tract which were part of a logging camp and are in poor condition. The structures on the property may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places but they may be too far deteriorated to save. The Wisconsin Historical Society and Department Archeologist will be consulted to assess their condition and historic importance as well as consider other investigations that should be made to document the site. The buildings will be razed only upon approval of the Department's Archeologist. Estimated reclamation costs would not exceed \$10,000 for demolition and \$5,000 for review.

The Stephenson tract blocks well with Department owned property within the project. River frontage and timber value make this purchase valuable for its natural resources and for outdoor recreation. In addition, the access road through the property provides an important means of access to other DNR land for timber management and public recreation purposes.

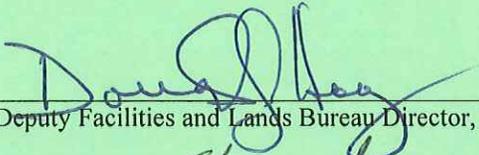
RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 240 acres of land from Gary and Debra Stephenson for \$335,800 for the Northern Highland State Forest in Iron County.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

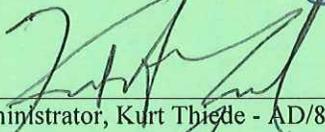
No Fiscal Estimate Required
No Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required
No Background Memo

Yes Attached
Yes Attached
Yes Attached

APPROVED:


Deputy Facilities and Lands Bureau Director, Douglas J Haag - LF/6

8-25-14
Date


Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

4-25-14
Date


Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

4/20/14
Date

cc: S. Miller - LF/6
D. Haag - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
T. Marty - FR/4
P. Bruggink - NOD - WOODRUFF

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 25, 2014 FILE REF: NF 30097
 TO: Scott Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Gary and Debra Stephenson Tract, File # NF 30097,
 Option Expires August 16, 2014

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Northern Highland State Forest
 Iron County

Grantor:

Gary and Debra Stephenson
 8177 Plum Lake Station
 Sayner, WI 54560

Acres: 240
Price: \$335,800
Appraised Value: \$335,800
Interest: Fee Title
Improvements: Two dilapidated cabins (no contributory value)

Location: The property is located 7 miles east of Mercer in Iron County.

Land Description: The subject land is level to gently rolling.

Covertypes Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Upland Woodland	180
Lowland Woodland	60
Total:	240

Zoning: Forestry 1 (F-1) & part in Shoreland District
Present Use: Forestland/Recreation
Proposed Use: Forestland/Recreation
Tenure: 13 years
Property Taxes: \$448.52 (MFL)
Option Date: April 18, 2014

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. Physical features of the property may not be conducive to all these activities.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

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Established in 1925 to protect the headwaters of the Wisconsin, Flambeau and Manitowish Rivers, the Northern Highland and American Legion (NHAL) State Forests include more than 232,000 acres in Vilas, Oneida and Iron Counties. The nearest cities are Woodruff/Minocqua, Rhinelander and Eagle River. Many visitors are from the population centers of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The primary use of the forest is for silvicultural practices and the growth of recurring forest crops with scenic values, outdoor recreation, public hunting and stabilization of stream flow as extra benefits. Each year approximately 75,000 cords of pulpwood and 2.5 million board feet of sawlogs are harvested in the forest, which contributes to employment in the woods and mills and provides commodities.

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3. LAND MANAGEMENT:

The 2005 NHAL master plan mapped this parcel in the Winegar Moraines Forest Production area. However, the area immediately to the west of the property was placed in the Hemlock Hardwoods Native Community Management Area. The parcel will be split between the two classifications based on uplands (Forest Production) and wetlands (Native Community Management). NHAL foresters are preparing plans to manage the stands to the west and this property will be actively managed to complement that.

The gated road through the property provides easement access to a private parcel. Due to the heavy soils on the property the road will remain gated and the key will be provided to the private landowner. The location of the gate may be reconsidered if the road is developed to sustain vehicle traffic. However, beyond the easement road that traverses the subject there is a privately built bridge on Department property that was permitted by the Department. This bridge could not sustain public traffic so a gate would be required to protect it. The property will be open to walk-in access to the public for all nature based outdoor activities.

4. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$825,000	\$32,650

5. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE NORTHERN HIGHLAND STATE FOREST:

Established: 1925
Acres Purchased to Date: 173,848.53
Acquisition Goal: 229,976.00
Percent Complete: 75.59 %
Cost to Date: \$21,997,916.14

6. APPRAISAL 1:

Appraiser: Lee Steigerwaldt
Valuation Date: March 16, 2014
Appraised Value: \$335,800
Highest and Best Use: Forestland/Recreation

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 240 acres @ \$1,400.04 per acre: \$335,800
- b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,261 - \$1,425 per acre

Appraisal Review:

Jolene Brod Date: 4/1/2014

APPRAISAL 2:

Appraiser: William Steigerwaldt
Valuation Date: March 6, 2014
Appraised Value: \$324,000
Highest and Best Use: Investment

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 240 @ \$1,350.00 per acre: \$324,000
- b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,200 - \$1,550 per acre

Appraisal Review:

Jolene Brod Date: 4/1/2014

RECOMMENDED:



Douglas J. Haag, Deputy Facilities and Lands Bureau Director

5-25-14
Date



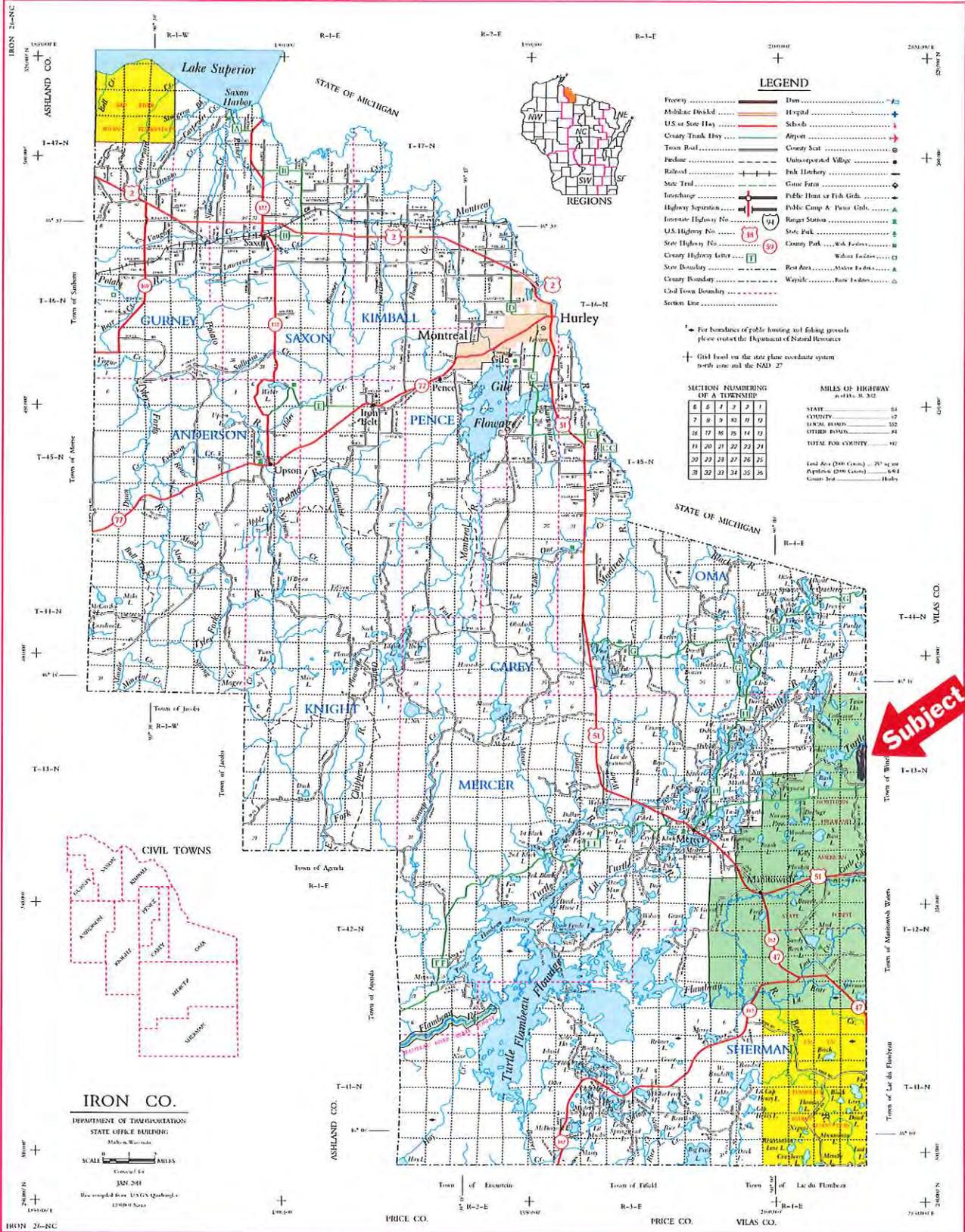
Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

4/24/14
Date



Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

4/28/14
Date



Gary Stephenson - Fee
Northern Highland
State Forest
NF 30097

T43N R4E Sec 13 & 24
 Town of Mercer
 Iron County

Subject

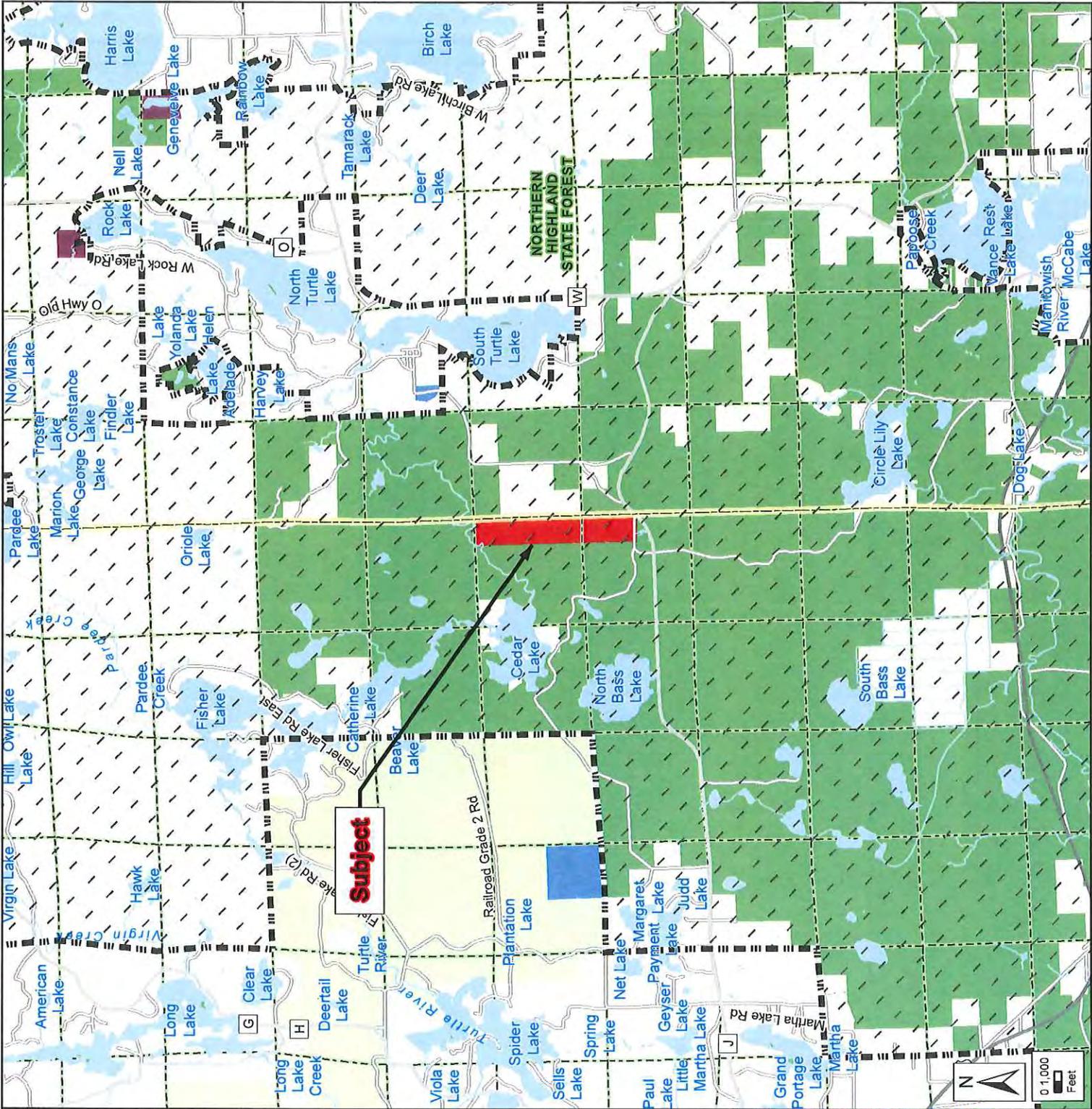
-  DNR Fee Title
-  DNR Easement
-  DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access)
-  DNR Project Boundary
-  U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
-  County Forest
-  Tribal Land
-  Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
-  National Forest
-  Public Land - Funded by Stewardship Grants
-  PLSS Section Line



 **Location of Property**

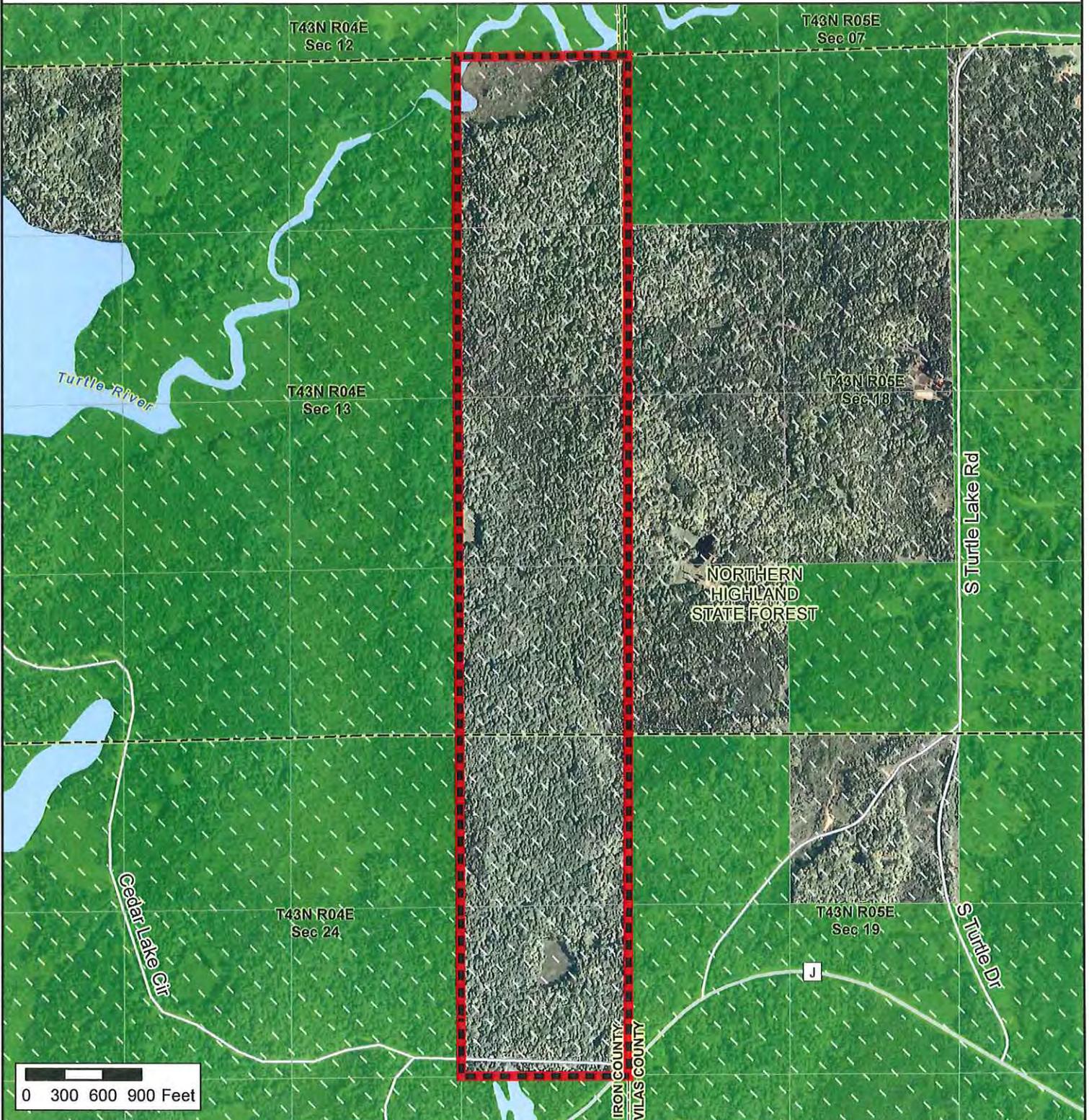
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
 OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 Bureau of Facilities of Lands
 Map Created: Apr 22, 2014 kmh

The data shown on this map have been obtained from various sources, and are of varying age, reliability and resolution. This map is not intended to be used for navigation, nor is this map an authoritative source of information about legal land ownership or public access. Users of this map should confirm the ownership of land through other means in order to avoid trespassing. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding accuracy, completeness, or legality of the information depicted on this map.



Gary Stephenson - Fee

T43N R4E Sec 13 & 24, Town of Mercer, Iron County



Northern Highland State Forest



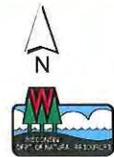
Subject

 DNR Fee Title Land

 DNR Project Boundary

 Section Line

 QQ Section Lines



Apr 22, 2014 kmh

Real Estate Section
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

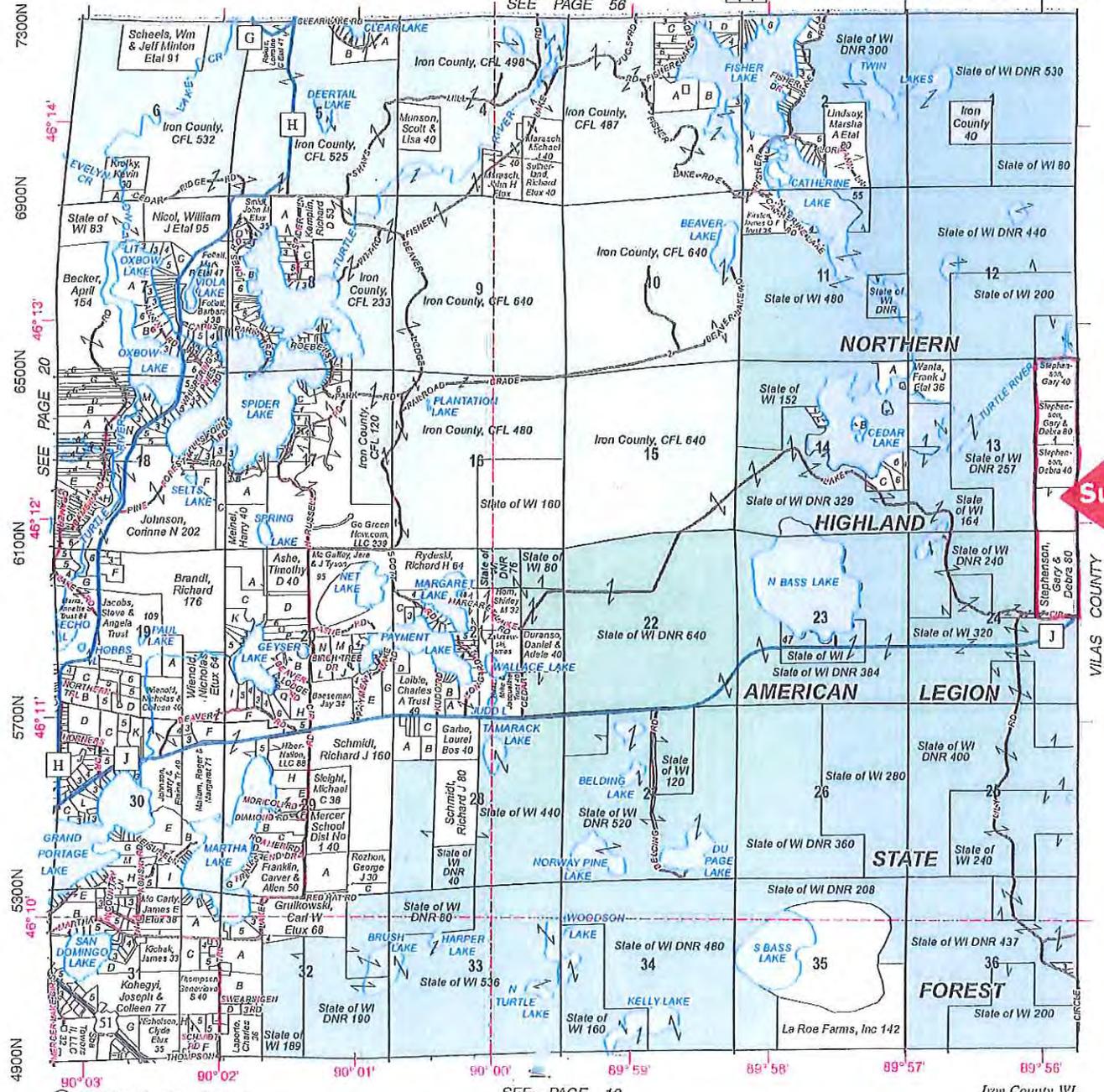
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Refer to page 70 for keyed parcels

NORTHEAST PART MERCER

T.43N.-R.4E.

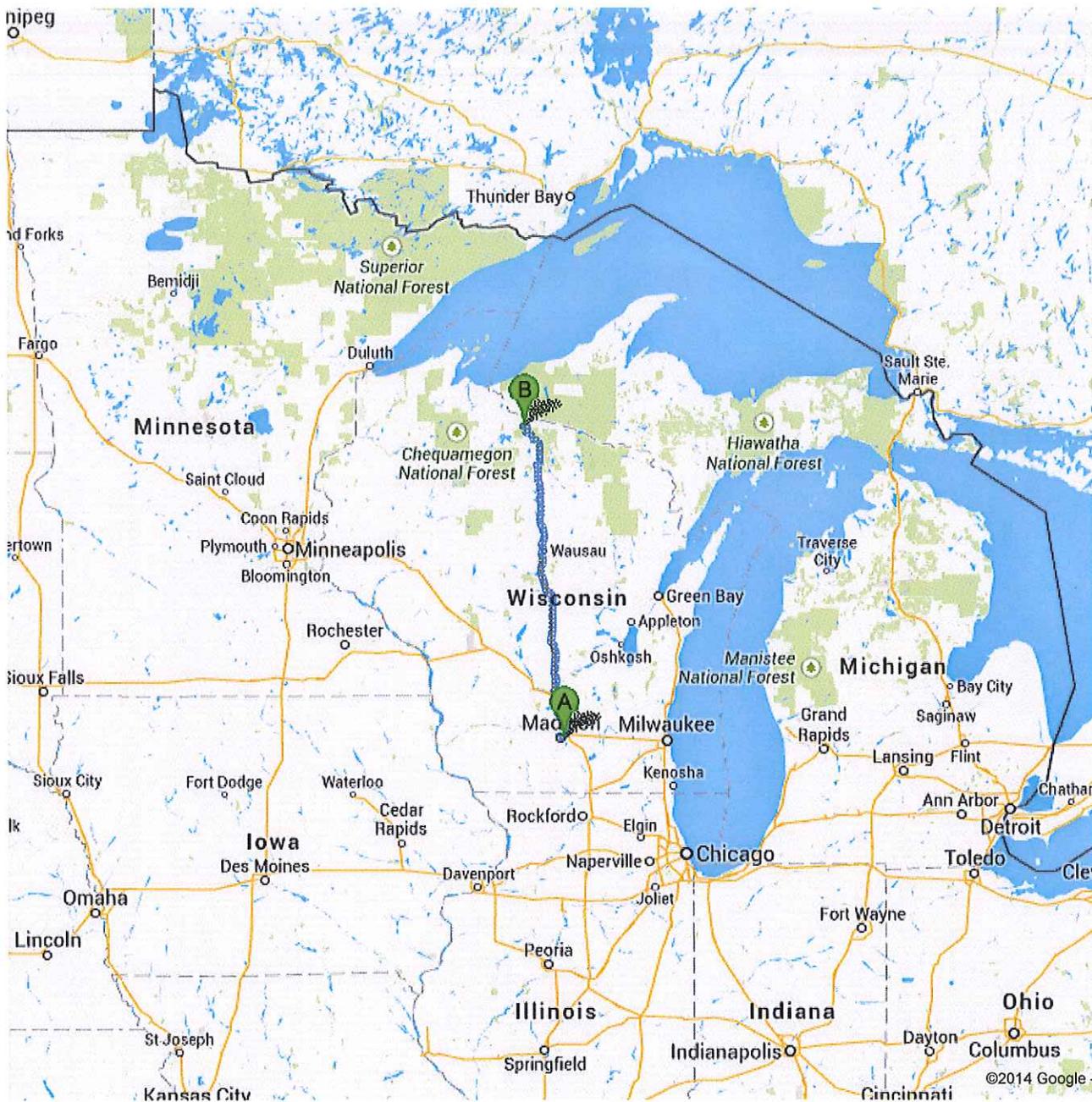
SEE PAGE 56



VILAS COUNTY



Directions to Cedar Island Rd/Cedar Lake Cir
237 mi – about 3 hours 53 mins



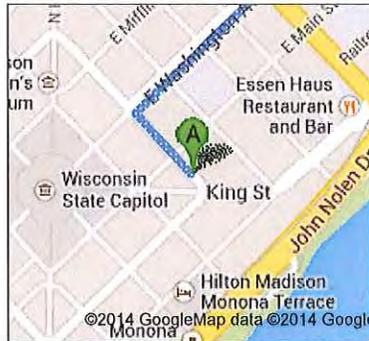
10

 101 S Webster St, Madison, WI 53703



1. Head northwest on **S Webster St** toward **E Main St**

go 0.1 mi
total 0.1 mi



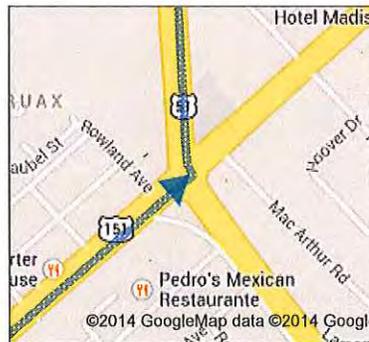
 2. Take the 2nd right onto **E Washington Ave**
About 8 mins

go 4.1 mi
total 4.2 mi



 3. Turn left onto **US-51 N/N Stoughton Rd**
Continue to follow US-51 N
About 6 mins

go 4.4 mi
total 8.6 mi



 4. Take the ramp onto **I-39 N/I-90 W/I-94 W**
About 21 mins

go 23.7 mi
total 32.2 mi



 5. Keep right to continue on I-39 N, follow signs for Wisconsin 78 Trunk S/Merrimac/US-51/Wausau/Portage
About 1 hour 30 mins



go 103 mi
total 135 mi

 6. Continue onto Hwy 51 N/US-51 N
About 1 hour 35 mins



go 95.2 mi
total 230 mi

 7. Turn right onto Co Rd W
About 8 mins



go 4.6 mi
total 235 mi

 8. Turn left onto Co Hwy J
About 4 mins



go 2.3 mi
total 237 mi

 9. Turn right onto Cedar Island Rd/Cedar Lake Cir



go 167 ft
total 237 mi

12



Cedar Island Rd/Cedar Lake Cir



These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.

Map data ©2014 Google

Directions weren't right? Please find your route on maps.google.com and click "Report a problem" at the bottom left.

13