

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition – Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area – Burnett County

FOR: APRIL 2015 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Doug Haag

SUMMARY:

The Friends of Crex, Inc. (FOC) has offered to sell a 320 acre property located within the boundary of the Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area, located in Burnett County. The parcel is surrounded on four sides by Department owned land within the boundary of the Amsterdam Sloughs State Wildlife Area. The 320 acre parcel shares three and one quarter miles of common boundary with the wildlife area. Friends of Crex, Inc. purchased the subject property in June 2014 for \$400,000, after nearly 24 months of unsuccessful negotiations between the DNR and the former landowner. The Department’s offer of \$360,000 has been accepted by FOC, with the difference of \$40,000 to be recognized as a donation by FOC.

Natural Heritage Inventory records show several occurrences of listed species and ecological communities on the subject property including black crowned night herons, bald eagles and tamarack (poor) swamp. Woodcock and abundant waterfowl utilize the area, including swans, ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, rails, herons and a variety of other marsh birds. Public access is available off Bruss Rd. which ends at the north property line. There is currently an area at the end of the road that could be improved as a parking area and for which there is a proposal to develop and maintain a one-mile, moderately developed, hunting and wildlife viewing trail network (barrier-free), and access point for the land. The 320 acre property includes several shallow ponds connected by narrow channels. Scattered small islands of scrub oak and sawtimber and scattered stands of aspen, oak and mixed hardwoods provide an interesting contrast to the scattered wetlands and open water ponds on the property, providing for exceptional wildlife habitat and excellent recreational opportunities including hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing. The ponds and waterways that link them are suitable for canoe and kayak travel and provide a unique chance to access and enjoy the property. A series of gravel trails located throughout the property offer additional access to interior portions of the property.

Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area is the smallest among the Glacial Lake Grantsburg (GLG) properties which also include Crex Meadows and Fish Lake Wildlife Areas. Collectively the GLG properties contain magnificent vistas inside a mosaic of 48,000 acres of wetlands and oak/pine barrens within the St. Croix River watershed, in a predominantly remote setting in Burnett County. Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area (approximately 5,000 acres) is located east of Crex Meadows and includes Blomberg Lake State Natural Area. Development of the property began in 1968 when dike construction created the 500-acre Black Brook Flowage. Since then, additional smaller flowages were constructed. Seventy-five potholes, averaging 1/10-acre in size function as waterfowl breeding ponds. With over half of the property covered by wetlands, much of the interior is accessible only by foot, in part across 2.5 miles of dikes. Maintenance includes dikes, five water control structures and nine impoundments. Several miles of firebreaks facilitate the prescribed burning that restores and maintains the native barrens landscape. Prairie grass restorations provide nesting cover for waterfowl. Access (with parking) is primarily from perimeter roads. The department maintains 15 gravel or grass parking areas. Parking is permitted seasonally along the shoulders of most town and county roads.

Glacial Lake Grantsburg properties provide an important recreational resource and economic benefit to the region. They are an integral component of an ecotourism corridor that exists from the Twin Cities, MN to Bayfield, WI. **The Crex Meadows Wildlife Education and Visitor Center**, supported in part by the Friends of Crex, has well over 14,000 annual visitors; a mere subset of the many thousands of visitors who use these properties annually. Situated close to the town of Grantsburg, the center serves as a focal point for a large percentage of visitors from out-of-state, and provides a wide range of information about the recreational and natural resources of the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 320.00 acres of land for \$360,000.00 for Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area in Burnett County and recognize a \$40,000 bargain sale donation from the Friends of Crex, Inc.

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 |

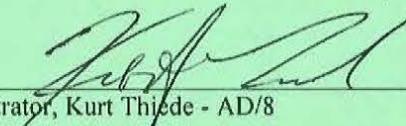
APPROVED:



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

3-11-15

Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

3/10/15

Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

3/18/15

Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6
D. Haag - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
T. Hauge - WM/6
K. Fitzgerald - NOR - MADISON

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2015
 TO: Scott Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Friends of Crex, Inc. Tract, File # WM 60271,
 Option Expires

FILE REF: WM 60271

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area
 Burnett County

Grantor:

Friends of Crex, Inc.
 102 East Crex Ave
 Grantsburg, WI 54840

Acres: 320.00Price: \$360,000.00Appraised Value: \$360,000.00Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located in Burnett County 4 miles northwest of the Village of Siren.Land Description: The subject land is level.Covertypes Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Scattered islands of scrub oak poles and sawtimber	58
Medium to well stocked aspen saplings under larger oak and mixed hardwoods	32
Medium to well stocked oak and mixed hardwoods over smaller white pine saplings and poles	13
Open marsh and water	208
Upland grass	9
Total:	320.00

Zoning: F-1, ForestryPresent Use: RecreationalProposed Use: RecreationalTenure: 8 monthsProperty Taxes: \$2,865.66Option Date: March 8, 2015

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:

The Friends of Crex, Inc. (FOC) has offered to sell a 320 acre property located within the boundary of the Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area, located in Burnett County. The parcel is surrounded on four sides by Department owned land within the boundary of the Amsterdam Sloughs State Wildlife Area. The 320 acre parcel shares three and one quarter miles of common boundary with the wildlife area. Friends of Crex, Inc. purchased the subject property in June 2014 for \$400,000, after nearly 24 months of unsuccessful negotiations between the DNR and the former landowner. The Department's offer of \$360,000 has been accepted by FOC, with the difference of \$40,000 to be recognized as a donation by FOC.

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3. LAND MANAGEMENT:

The general land management goal will be to manage the property for wetland habitat and waterfowl production as is currently the case. Management plans will mirror those of the surrounding lands on Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area. The subject tract is largely functioning according to Department objectives for the project, thereby reducing costs that might otherwise be incurred. Upon property acquisition and an opportunity for a more thorough assessment of the property will be completed to determine whether additional opportunities exist to restore areas to original pre-settlement vegetation. The abundance of sedge marsh presently established on the property will be left intact.

Management will also include restoring drained wetlands and brush-prairie if such areas are identified. In addition, reconnaissance work will be completed on the forested acreage with a focus on maintaining a diversity of forested

areas to improve habitat for forest wildlife. Management for a mix of habitat types will provide habitat for a wide variety of species and recreational uses.

The primary management objective at Amsterdam Sloughs is to restore portions of the original pre-settlement vegetation and the wildlife associated with it. This includes restoring drained wetlands and brush-prairies which grew into jack pine/oak forest. Management focuses on maintaining diversity of forested areas to improve habitat for forest wildlife. The mix of habitat types provides habitats for a wide variety of species.

4. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$1,490,000.00	\$1,011,394.00

5. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE AMSTERDAM SLOUGHS WILDLIFE AREA:

Established: 1956
Acres Purchased to Date: 6,139.13
Acquisition Goal: 7,233.30
Percent Complete: 84.87 %
Cost to Date: \$978,970.50

6. a. APPRAISAL 1:

Appraiser: Craig Solum
Valuation Date: October 07, 2014
Appraised Value: \$390,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Residential and Recreational

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 320.00 acres @ \$1,218.75 per acre: \$390,000.00
- b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,161.88 - \$1,305.94 per acre

Appraisal Review:
Peter Wolter Date: 2/19/2015

b. APPRAISAL 2:

Appraiser: Robert Karl
Valuation Date: August 05, 2014
Appraised Value: \$400,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreational

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 320 acres @ \$1,250.00 per acre: \$400,000.00
- b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$900.00 - \$1,345.42 per acre

Appraisal Review:
Peter Wolter Date: 2/19/2015

c. APPRAISAL 3 – Reviewer’s Opinion of Value:

Appraiser: Peter Wolter
Valuation Date: August 05, 2014
Appraised Value: \$360,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreational

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 320 acres @ \$1,125.00 per acre: \$360,000.00
- b. market data approach used, 5 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$900.00 - \$1,563.00 per acre

Note: Both appraisers used the sale and purchase of the subject parcel by FOC as a comparable sale. The reviewer appraiser selected the five best sales from the appraisals, excluding the sale of the subject, to determine the final opinion of value and purchase price.

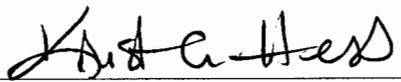
RECOMMENDED:



Douglas J Haag, Deputy Facilities and Lands Bureau Director

3-11-15

Date



Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

3/12/15

Date



Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

3/18/15

Date

**Friends of Crex, Inc.
(former Bruss parcel) - Fee**

Amsterdam Sloughs
Wildlife Area
WM 60271

T39N R17W Sec 27 & 34
Towns of Lincoln
Burnett County

 **Subject**

-  Pending DNR to Burnett County (Land Trade)
-  DNR Fee Title
-  DNR Easement
-  DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access)
-  Project Boundary Not Subject to Act 20
-  County Forest
-  Public Land - Funded by Stewardship Grants
-  PLSS Section Line
-  QQ Section Boundary

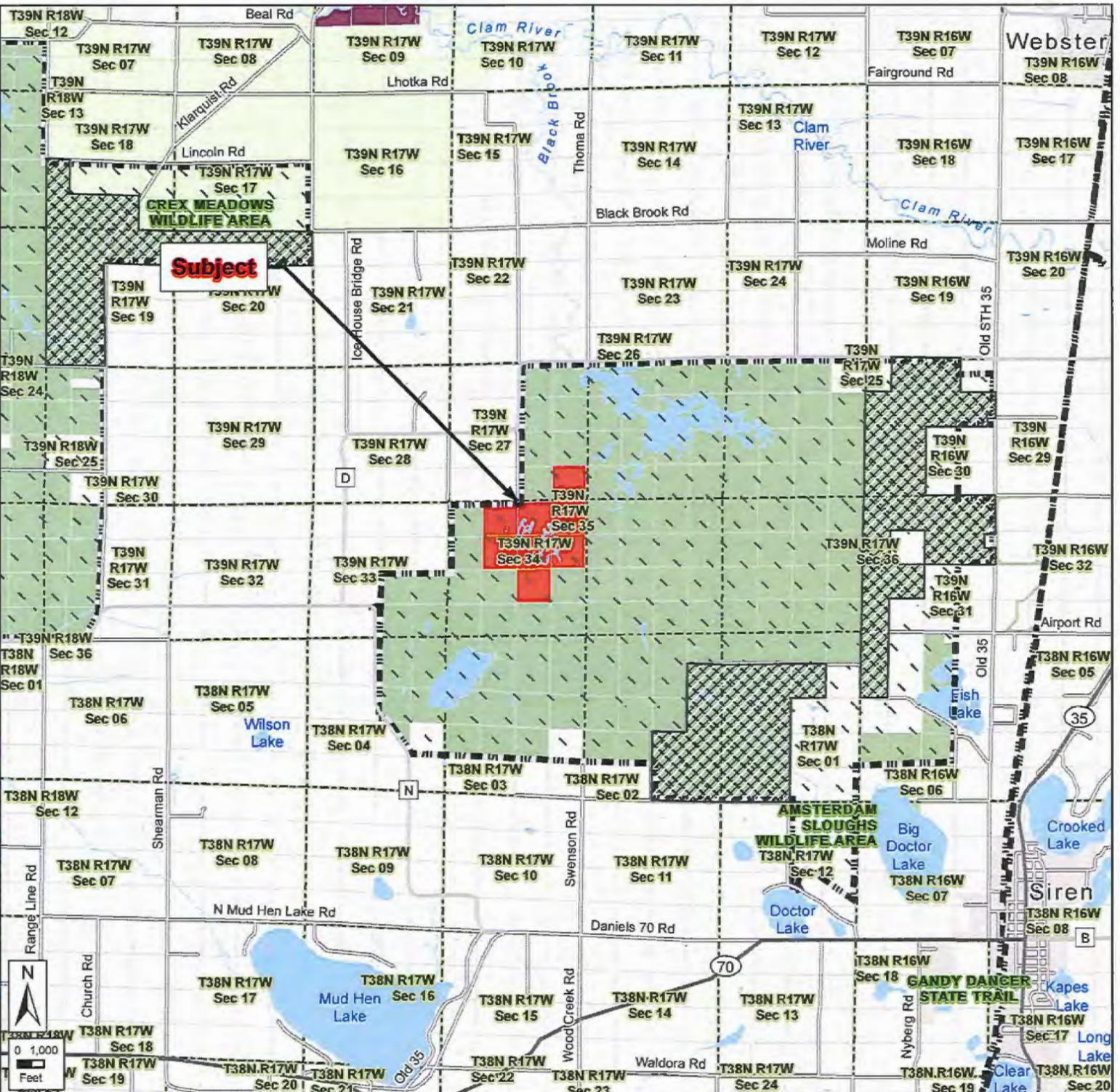
Regional View



 Location of Property



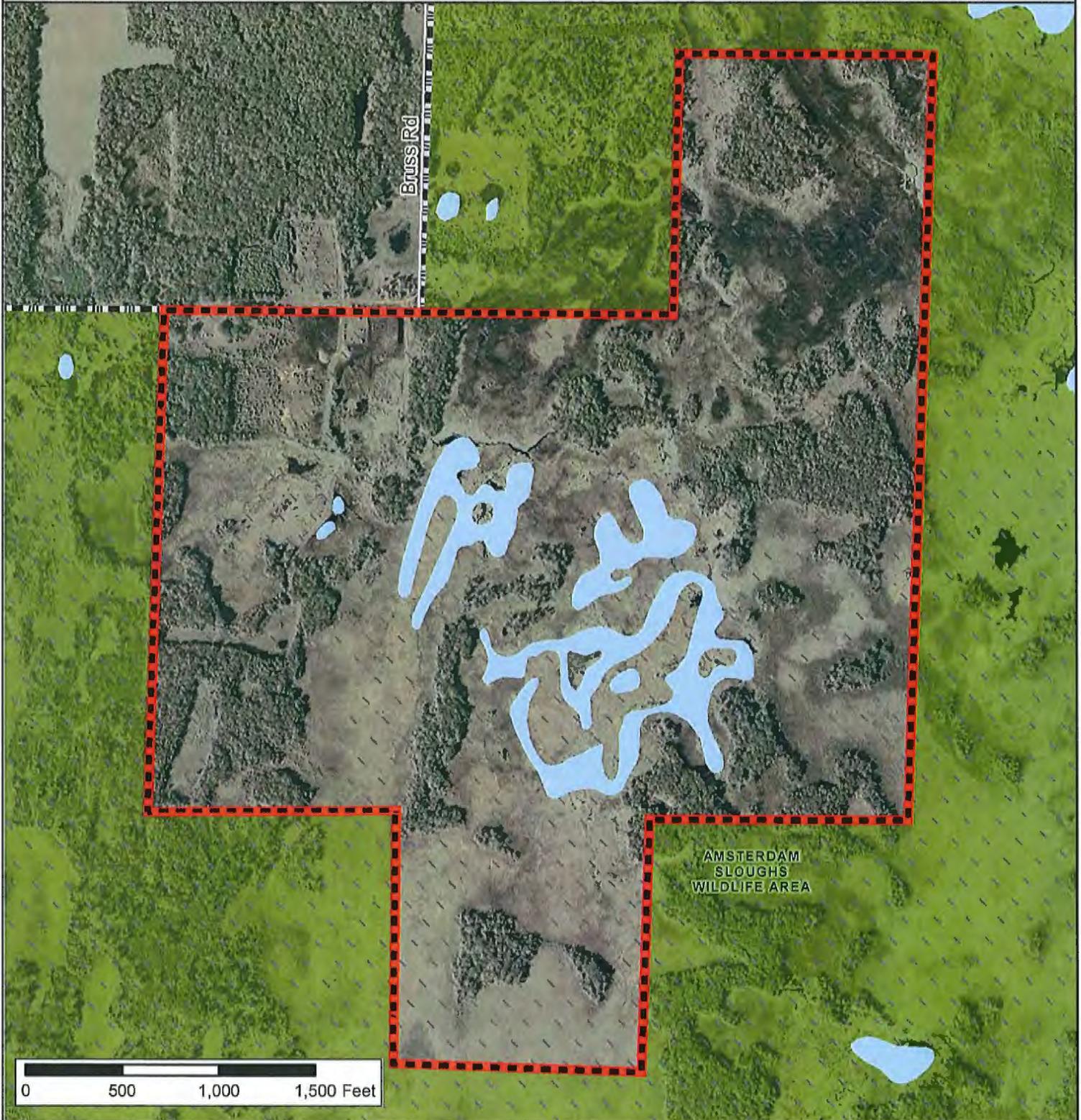
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities of Lands
Map Created: Mar 10, 2015 kmh



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Friends of Crex, Inc. (former Bruss parcel) - Fee

T39N R17W Sec 27 & 34, Towns of Lincoln, Burnett County



**Amsterdam Sloughs
Wildlife Area**

 **Subject**

 DNR Fee Title Land
 Project Boundary Not
 Subject to Act 20

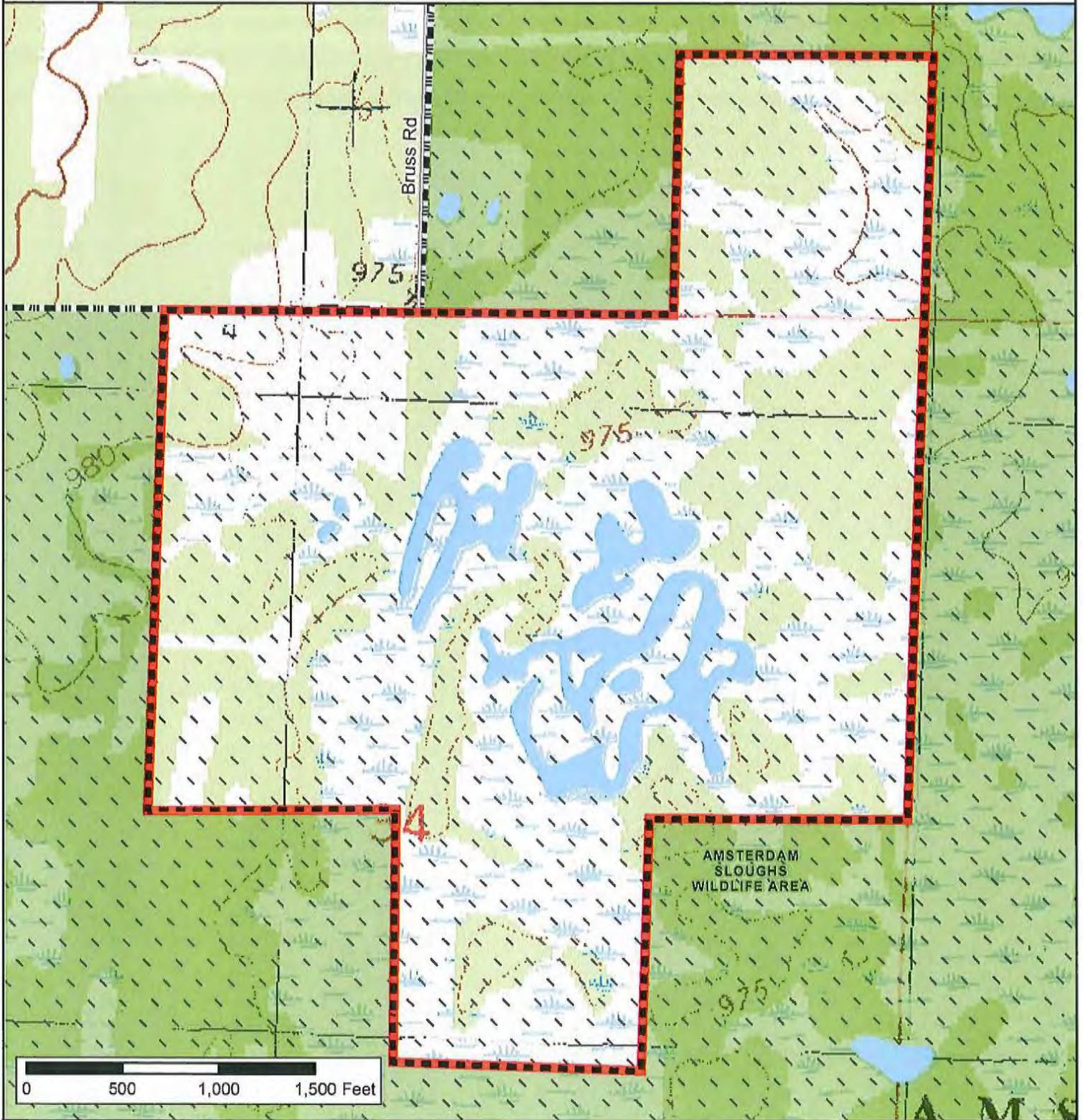


Mar 10, 2015 kmh
Real Estate Section
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

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T39N R17W Sec 27 & 34, Towns of Lincoln, Burnett County



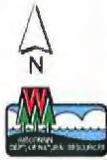
Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area



Subject

 DNR Fee Title Land

 Project Boundary Not Subject to Act 20



Mar 10, 2015 kmh

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