Form 1100-001N (Rev. 09/14) **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources** Item No: 3.B.1.

Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

SUBJECT: Land Sales – Phase II

FOR: FEBRUARY 2016 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Douglas J Haag, Deputy Bureau Director

SUMMARY: The 2013-15 state biennial budget directed the Natural Resources Board to make 10,000 acres of land available for sale by June 30, 2017. This new law specifies that the net proceeds from the sale of these lands will be used to repay outstanding public debt related to the Knowles Nelson Stewardship program. The new law only affects lands located outside of official project boundaries established prior to May 1, 2013. A project boundary is created by a feasibility study or master plan or other official action by the Natural Resources Board. The Department has over 600 named projects with established project boundaries. The Department owns approximately 1,515,232 acres in fee title ownership and 303,561 acres in easements.

The sale of land under this new law will allow the Department to:

- Realign land ownership for more efficient management
- Repurpose lands that don't serve the Department's mission
- Work with other organizations to meet common property and conservation goals
- Resolve boundary and access issues

To implement this new law the Department developed a subchapter to the Real Estate Handbook that outlines the process the Department and the Natural Resources Board will follow in order to comply with this law. The Department held five public information meetings on October 28th 2013 to share the draft sales policy with the public and gather comments on the new policy. The sale policy was also placed on the Department's public policy website for 3 weeks and comments were accepted during that period. The final draft of the land sale policy was presented to the Natural Resources Board for approval in December of 2013.

In addition to these efforts to involve and inform the public about this new program the Department developed a land sale webpage. This web page allows the Department to share new information about the land sale program as well as specific information about parcels being proposed for sale, parcels actually for sale, and the requirements for bidding on any specific parcel being offered for sale. The Department also shares information with the general public through Gov. Delivery. Over 6000 people have signed up to receive email updates on the land sale program in this manner.

For phase 2 of the land sale effort the Department identified 118 parcels for possible sale and placed maps of the parcels on the website for public view. In addition to the involvement of the public the Department conducted field reviews to evaluate the conservation and recreation values of each parcel. During the field review process an additional 31 parcels of land were identified for possible sale. The extensive external and internal involvement in this phase of the land sale process has led the Department to make the following recommendation to the Natural Resources Board:

- Sell 23 parcels totaling 2405 acres to municipalities and tribal nations
- Sell 35 parcels totaling 2486 acres with no legal access to a road to adjoining landowners
- Sell 24 parcels totaling 1009 acres by competitive bid.

In addition to these recommendations to sell land the Department is recommending that 35 parcels totaling 1632 acres be retained by the Department for conservation purposes and 32 parcels totaling 2195 acres be held for further study with final recommendations on these parcels to be made to the Natural Resources Board at a future meeting.

In June of 2014 the Natural Resources Board approved 1407 acres of land for sale. If the Natural Resources Board approves the Department's recommendations outlined above the total acreage approved for sale will be 7307 acres. The Department anticipates a third and final phase of field reviews this summer with recommendations to be presented to the Natural Resources Board in September of 2016. Marketing of all of the parcels approved for sale by the Natural Resources Board will be ongoing through June 30, 2017.

The Department's specific recommendation for each parcel is attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approves the Department's specific recommendations to sell 82 parcels of land totaling approximately 5900 acres under the authority of s. 23.145 Wis. Stats.

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

☐ **Background Memo** ☒ **Maps and Documents**

Approved By	Signature	Date
Craig Thompson Bureau Director	Craig D. Thompson	02.10.16
Sanjay Olson Division Administrator		2-10-16
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		2-10-16

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