Form 1100-1
Rev. 5-91

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. 3.B.5

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA – SAUK COUNTY

FOR: MARCH 2008 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 121.93 acres of land from the Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago for $585,300 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Sauk County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds $150,000.

The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and adjacent to Devil's Lake State Park. It is a mix of wooded lands with a closed canopy and grass/brush. This acquisition will add to a 1,000+-acre block of protected land east of Highway 12 and adjacent to the western boundary of Devil's Lake State Park. This property includes 74 acres of hardwood forest, which is enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program and former cropland that was converted to prairie/grass/brush. Additionally, it includes 2,125 feet of frontage on both banks of Skillet Creek, a warm water creek, which eventually runs northwest to the Baraboo River. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, will consolidate Department ownership, and prevent incompatible development in the area.

The Baraboo Range is a valuable natural resource of national and international significance. Covering more than 50,000 acres, the range contains the largest block of non-fragmented deciduous forest remaining in the upper Midwest. The range, characterized by a distinctive layer of rock known as Baraboo Quartzite, has a unique geological history. The eastern portion of the range shows many effects of glaciation. The most recent glacier did not cover the western portion of the range. The differences in elevation, exposure and soils within the range create a large variety of ecological habitats.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 121.93 acres of land for $585,300 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No ☒	Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No ☒	Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No ☐	Background Memo	Yes ☒	Attached

APPROVED:

R E Steffes — 2-5-08
Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6 — Date

Laurie Osterndorf — 2/7/08
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/5 — Date

Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/5 — Date

cc: S. Miller – LF/6
R. Steffes – LF/6
L. Ross – AD/5
W. Smith – PR/6
L. Eagan – SCR

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: February 5, 2008 FILE REF: P-1920

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. Frank

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago, File # P-1920, Option Expires April 13, 2008

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area
Sauk County

Grantor:

Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago
Attn: Jack Gorby
1116 West Columbia Avenue, #3W
Chicago, IL 60626

Acres: 121.93
Price: $585,300
Appraised Value: $585,300 (Michael Stone); $622,000 (Julie Hankes)
Interest: Purchase in fee.
Improvements: None

Location: The tract is located in east-central Sauk County near three state parks. Mirror Lake is about eight miles north of the property, Devil's Lake State Park borders the subject along the east property line and Natural Bridge State Park is about nine miles southwest of the property. Baraboo is two miles north of the parcel.

Land Description: The subject area varies from level to hilly.

Covertype Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Wooded Upland	74.00
Prairie	47.93
TOTAL:	121.93

Zoning: Resource Conservancy
Present Use: Recreation
Proposed Use: Resource protection and recreation
Tenure: 20 years
Property Taxes: $1,106
Option Date: December 13, 2007

Stewardship Land Access: As part of the 07-09 Biennial Budget, Stewardship land access was emphasized. This land will be open for all nature-based outdoor recreation activities, including hunting, fish and trapping.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department is proposing to acquire 121.93 acres of land from the Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago in Sauk County in the Town of Baraboo for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area. The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and adjacent to the western property line of Devil's Lake State Park. It is a mix of wooded lands along with former croplands that are now in prairie, grasslands and brush. The wooded area has a mix of maple, oak, hickory, ash and elm of various ages. Additionally, it

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includes 2,125 feet of frontage on both banks of Skillet Creek, a warm water creek, which eventually runs northwest to the Baraboo River. This acquisition will add to a 1,000-acre block of protected land east of Highway 12 and adjacent to the western boundary of Devil's Lake State Park. Land and Water Conservation Grant dollars that are designated for the Baraboo Hills will be used to fund part of this acquisition. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, will consolidate department ownership, and prevent incompatible development in the area.

The Baraboo Range is a valuable natural resource of national and international significance. Covering more than 50,000 acres, the range contains the largest block of non-fragmented deciduous forest remaining in the upper Midwest. The range, characterized by a distinctive layer of rock known as Baraboo Quartzite, has a unique geological history. The eastern portion of the range shows many effects of glaciation. The most recent glacier did not cover the western portion of the range. The differences in elevation, exposure and soils within the range create a large variety of ecological habitats. At least 28 different natural communities have been identified within the range. These communities harbor 23 species that are federal or state listed as threatened or endangered species. About half of the more than 2,200 species of vascular plants found in Wisconsin exist within the range. The range is also extremely important habitat for the preservation of neotropical migratory birds. Many of these birds are dependent on the continued existence of large tracts of deciduous forest for suitable nesting habitat. Preservation of the forest of the Baraboo Range is critical to the future health of these bird species.

In March of 1999, the Governor's office, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dane County, Sauk County and The Nature Conservancy signed a unique agreement designed to allow for the expansion of Highway 12 to four lanes to and through the Baraboo Hills region while protecting and preserving the natural resource base of the Baraboo Range. Since the agreement, the various partners to the agreement have done land protection work with fee title [illegible] exceptional purchases, as well as easements to protect habitat of the Baraboo Range.

The Department recommends purchase of the Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago parcel for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area to protect the natural and scenic resources in the area, preclude activities that are incompatible with the goals of the project and protect the unique and valuable nature of this one-of-a-kind landscape.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated as well as LAWCON funds:

	Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
Stewardship (Parks)	$2,210,000	$46,640
LAWCON (Baraboo Hills)	$1,278,250	$155,859

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA:

Established: 2000
Acres Purchased to Date: 1,231
Acquisition Goal: 950.0 Acres*
Percent Complete: 129.6%
Cost to Date: $2,427,810

*Comment: The acreage goal will be revisited after additional study of the long-term land protection needs for the project.

5a. Appraiser: Michael Stone (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: September 27, 2007
Appraised Value: $585,300
Highest and Best Use: Residential and Outdoor Recreation

Allocation of Values:
a. land: 121.93 acres @ $4,800 per acre: $585,300
b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
c. adjusted value range: $4,012 to $4,831 per acre

Appraisal Review: Ron Olson — November 9, 2007

5b. APPRAISALS:

Appraiser: Julie Hankes (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: October 25, 2007
Appraised Value: $622,000
Highest and Best Use: Large acreage rural residential sites

Allocation of Values:
a. land: 121.93 acres @ $5,100 per acre: $622,000 (Rounded)
b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
c. adjusted value range: $5,069 to $6,773 acre

Appraisal Review: Ron Olson — November 9, 2007

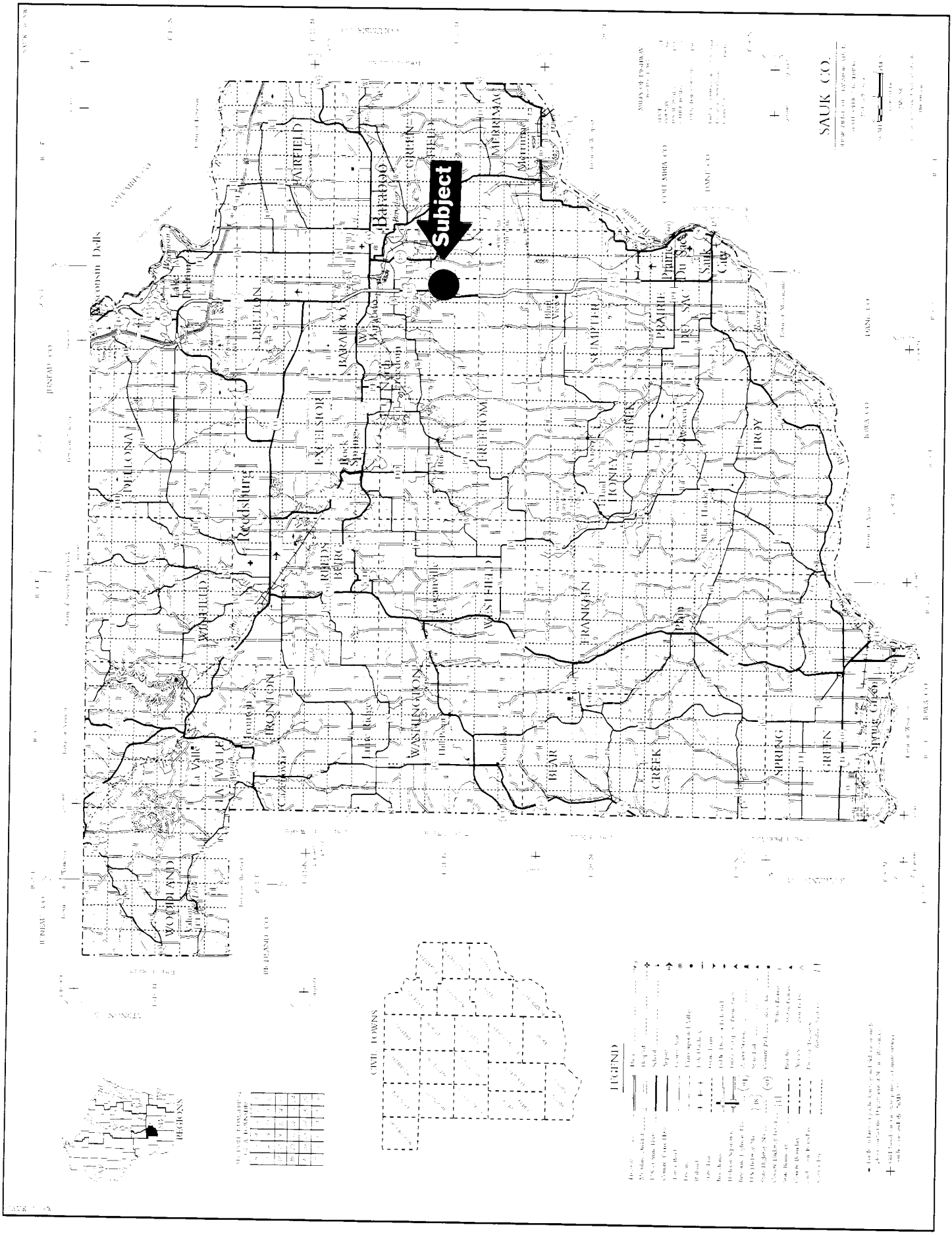
RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes — Date: 2-5-08

Bureau of Legal Services — Date: 2/7/08

Laurie Osterndorf — Date: 2/7/08

RES:dv


Subject
SAUK CO.
Baraboo
Reedsburg
Prairie Du Sac
Sauk City
Wisconsin Dells
Lake Delton
FAIRFIELD
GREEN FIELD
MERRIMAC
DELTON
BARABOO
EXCELSIOR
FREEDOM
SUMPTER
PRAIRIE DU SAC
TROY
PELLONA
WINFIELD
REEDSBURG
WESTFIELD
FRANKLIN
IRONTON
WASHINGTON
LA VALLE
BEAR CREEK
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LEGEND

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Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago Property

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area

Subject Property

WDNR Owned

WNDR Eased

WDNR Leased

Ice Age Trail

Project Boundary

Open Water

Miles

0 0.5 1

The DNR Managed Lands represent the boundaries of lands managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin DNR manages these lands through ownership, easement or lease rights. This data set is a spatial representation of the Oracle Land Records System maintained by the DNR, Bureau of Facilities and Lands (LF), and may include errors and/or omissions. The data should not be interpreted as a legal representation of legal ownership boundaries.

This data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and/or general public access. Some lands represented in this data set may not be open to the general public, or may have specific limitations or restrictions on public use. This data set is not intended for use as a land management tool, it is a listing of all DNR real estate transactions that have occurred on these lands over time.

For information about the actual management, including public use and public access of the lands, contact the nearest DNR Regional office. Contact information for DNR Regional Offices and Service Centers is provided on the following internet site:

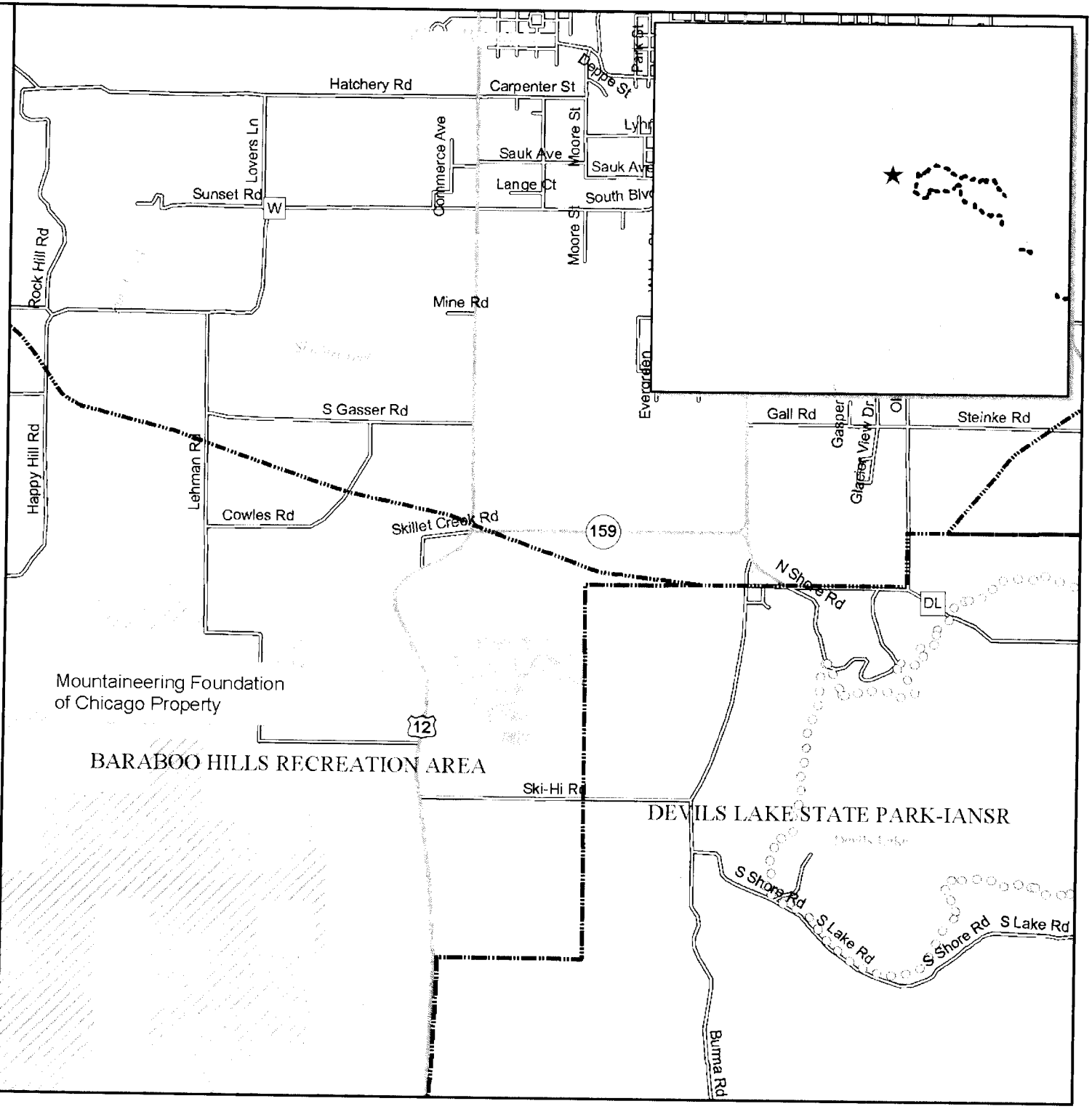
http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/visitorcentre/locations.htm

Updates to this data set are ongoing, and will be incorporated into future versions when available.

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

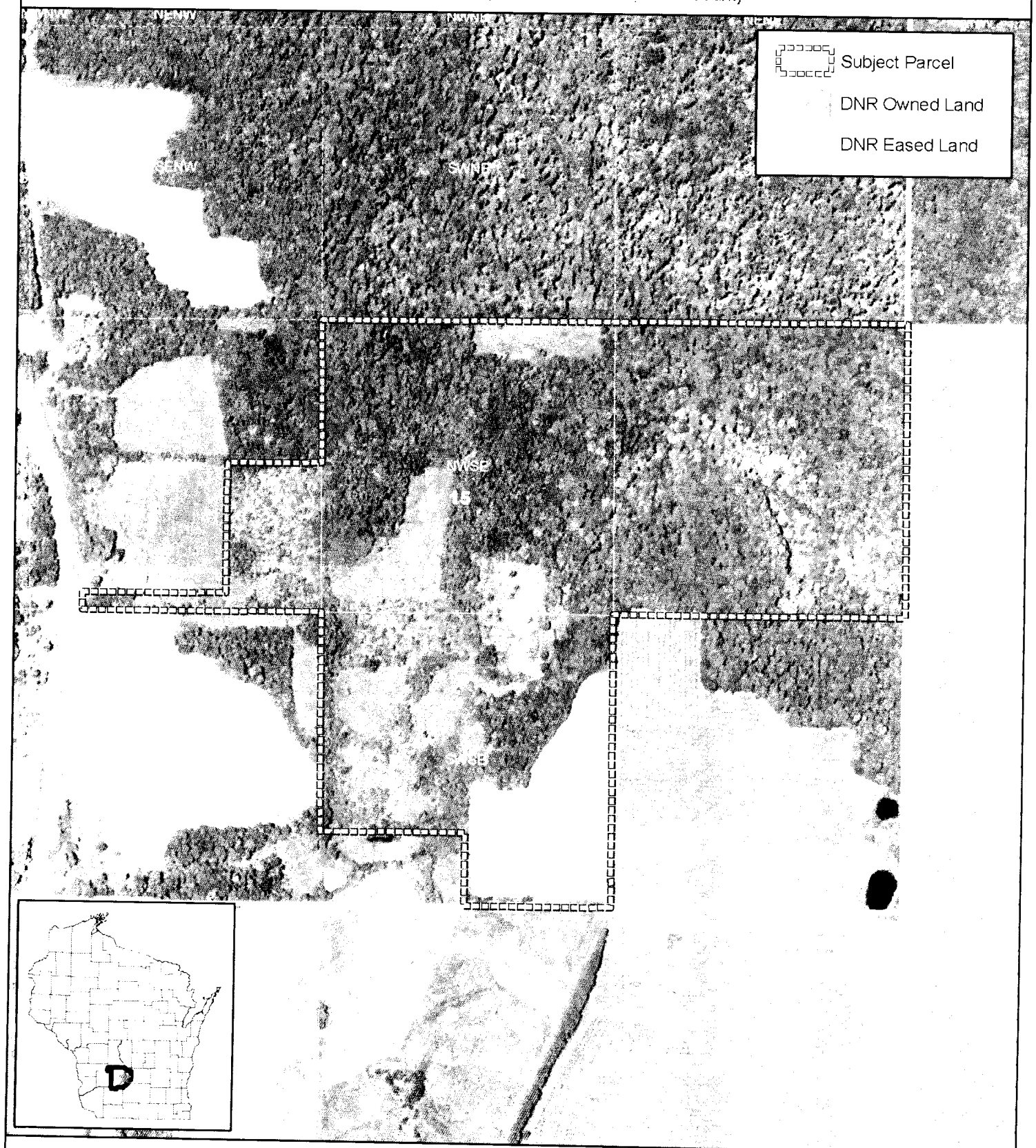
Bureau of Facilities and Lands

January 9, 2008



Mountaineering Foundation of Chicago Property

T 11N R 6E Section 15, Town of Baraboo, Sauk County



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Real Estate Section
January 7, 2008