Form 1100-1
Rev 5-91

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No 3.B.6

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA– CRAWFORD COUNTY

FOR: MARCH BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 46.57 acres of land from John Schmitz for $166,000 for the Rush Creek Natural Area in Crawford County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds $150,000.

The parcel is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County. The property is within the project boundary and abuts state-owned land to the south. Department ownership will protect the natural values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The Schmitz property has approximately 42 acres of wooded upland, three acres of marshland and a small area of grassland. A tributary of Rush Creek provides 1,000 feet of water frontage. The parcel has a mature stand of trees including white oak, red oak, elm, maple, cherry, basswood, and ash. Because the parcel lies within an extensive forested area, management will emphasize interior forest bird habitat.

The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Silver maple, red maple, elm, and cottonwood dominate the lowland forests on the valley floors. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property. The area is used by school groups and the general public for nature study, for scientific purposes by researchers, and for recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching and hiking.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 46.57 acres of land for $166,000 for the Rush Creek Natural Area the in Crawford County.

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:

Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6 — Date 2-4-09

Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8 — Date 2/10/09

Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8 — Date 3/9/09

cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
S. Holtz - ER/6
S. Humrickhouse - WCR/Eau Claire

State of Wisconsin

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 4, 2009

FILE REF: NA 20016

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. Frank

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Schmitz Tract, File # NA 20016, Option Expires April 20, 2009

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Rush Creek Natural Area
Crawford County

Grantor:

John Schmitz
1110 Shorewood Drive
La Crosse, WI 54601

Acres: 46.57
Price: $166,000
Appraised Value: $166,000
Interest: Fee Title Purchase
Improvements: Pole shed

Location: The property is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County.

Land Description: The land ranges from a fairly narrow and level valley floor, which runs in a northwest to southeast direction through the property to steep, wooded hillsides bordering the valley floor.

Covertype Breakdown:	Type:	Acreage:
	Upland/Woodland	42.00
	Wetland	3.00
	Grass	1.57
	TOTAL	46.57

Zoning: None
Present Use: Private Recreation
Proposed Use: Resource Protection and Public Recreation
Tenure: 34 years
Property Taxes: $590
Option Date: January 20, 2009

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:

The 46.57-acre Schmitz property is proposed for purchase for the Rush Creek State Natural Area and includes a 1.23-acre access easement. The parcel is located about two miles southeast of the Village of Desoto and three miles northwest of the Village of Ferryville in the northwestern Crawford County. The property is within the project boundary and abuts state-owned land to the south. The property includes 1,000 feet of frontage along a small feeder stream that eventually flows into Rush Creek. It lies within an

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extensive forested area. Lawrence Ridge Road, a gravel-surfaced town road runs in a northwest to southeast direction along the west side of the area. The transaction includes an access easement over the 40 acres being retained by Mr. Schmitz, as well as over other land to the town road. In addition, an old logging road extends to the more eastern part of the property. Both roadways provide good public access to the parcel. Department ownership will protect the natural and scientific values of the land, allow natural area management, consolidate department ownership, and provide opportunities for public education and recreation.

The Rush Creek State Natural Area, which is located 30 miles south of the City of La Crosse in Crawford County, was established in 1980. The goals of the Rush Creek project are to protect and manage native plant and animal communities and provide opportunities for public recreation and natural history education. The project contains a series of dry and dry mesic prairies surrounded by upland forest on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Red and white oak dominate the upland forests. Silver maple, red maple, elm, and cottonwood dominate the lowland forests on the valley floors. Several state-threatened species are protected within the project, and several forest-interior bird species nest at the site. Turkey, deer, squirrel, and ruffed grouse are also found on the property. The area is used by school groups and the general public for nature study, for scientific purposes by researchers, and for recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching and hiking.

The Department recommends acquisition of the 46.57-acre Schmitz property to protect the land in its natural condition for scientific and educational purposes and to provide opportunities for public recreation.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
$1,900,000	$1,106,620

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE RUSH CREEK NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1980
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,540.83
Acquisition Goal: 7,775.00
Percent Complete: 32.68
Cost to Date: $2,371,031.54

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: John Raatz
Valuation Date: August 16, 2008
Appraised Value: $166,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreational/Rural Residential

Allocation of Values:

a. land: 46.57 acres @ $3,564.53 per acre: $166,000
b. market data approach used, three comparable sales cited
c. adjusted value range: $3,562 to $3,576

Appraisal Review: Ronald Olson - November 1, 2008

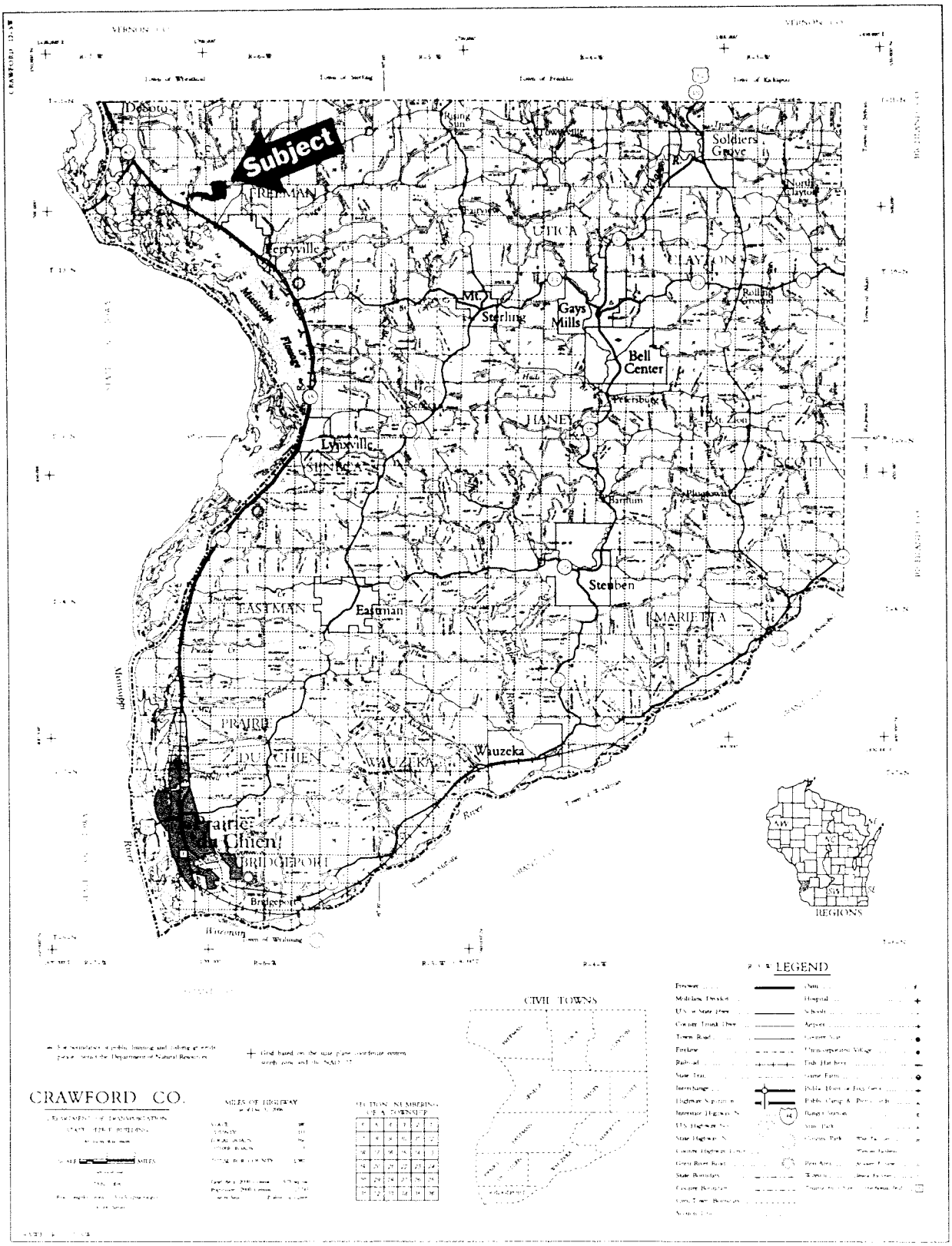
RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes — Date: 2-4-09

Bureau of Legal Services — Date: 2/5/09

Laurie Osterndorf — Date: 2/10/09

RES:dv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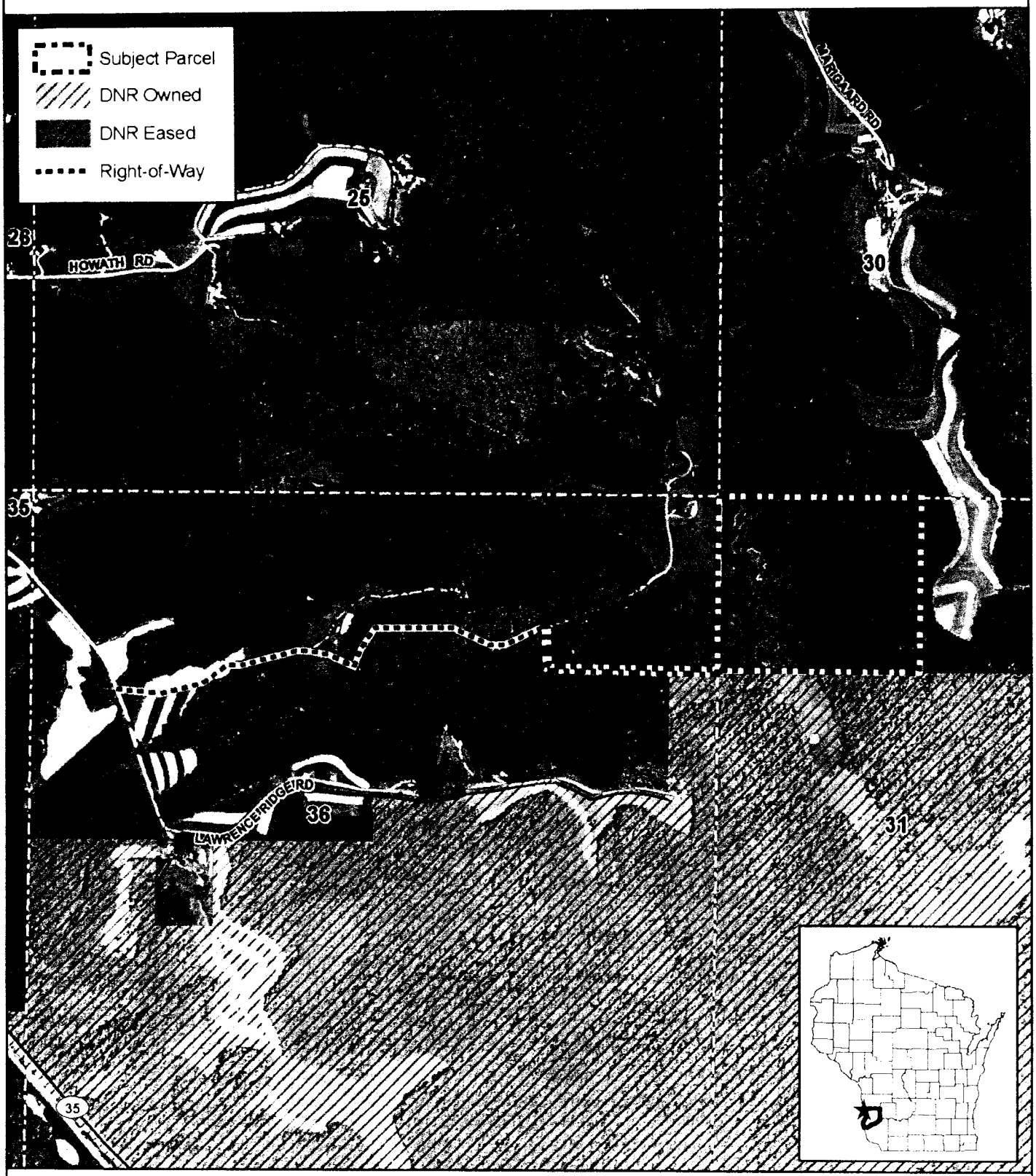
John J. Schmitz Property

T11N R08W Sec 31, Town of Freeman, Crawford County



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Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
January 29, 2009

John J. Schmitz Property

Rush Creek Natural Area

Subject Property

WDNR Owned

WDNR Easement

Project Boundary

0 0.25 Miles

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.

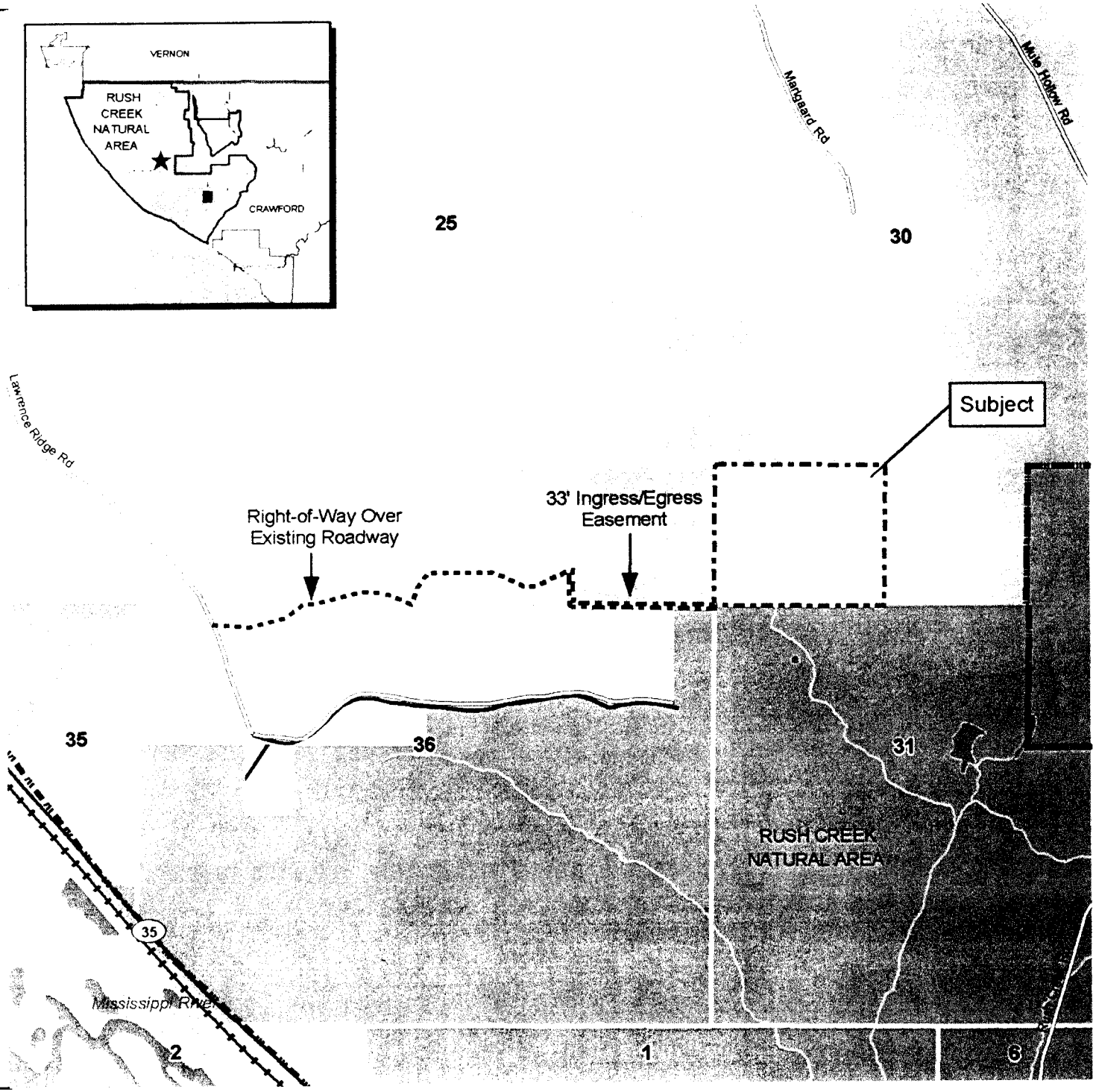
This data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and/or general public access. Some lands represented in this data set may not be open to the general public, or may have specific limitations or restrictions on public use. This data set is not intended 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/service/centerlocations.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 29, 2009