

SUBJECT: LAND DONATION - STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA- DANE COUNTY

FOR: AUGUST 2011 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) has offered to donate 201.13 acres of land for the Statewide Natural Area program.

The 201.13 acres consists of three properties purchased by NHLT: 30 acres from the Borke family, 73.28 acres from the Carpenter family and 97.85 acres from the Koltjes family. The properties are located in the Town of Westport, Dane County about 1 mile east of the Village of Waunakee. These parcels are contiguous and surround the DNR land at Empire Prairies State Natural Area - Westport Drumlin Prairie Unit. The land is needed to provide additional prairie habitat and to protect the natural area. These properties contain a mix of remnant prairies, cropland and grassland with level to rolling terrain. The existing DNR land is at the core of the donated properties and offers scenic views in all directions.

The Empire Prairies State Natural Area originated by the purchase of 14 acres at Westport Drumlin Prairie in the 1970's. Westport Prairie Drumlin contains dry-mesic prairie and small oak openings containing bur oaks and diverse prairie with more than 100 native plant species. The most significant feature is the drumlin, which was glacially sculpted and contains rounded boulders and limestone bedrock fragments. The management goals of the Natural Area are to manage for prairie and oak opening habitats, and restore mesic prairie habitat for associated species, while protecting the unique features as an ecological reference area. The Prairie Enthusiasts, a non profit conservation organization, has managed prairie remnants on the Koltjes property for more than 20 years and will be assisting the Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Department with restoration and management of the natural area. The natural area is also important for educational and recreational opportunities in an area just outside the City of Madison.

Acceptance of this gift will protect the unique natural and scenic values of the Westport Drumlin Prairie, in addition to providing opportunities for important grassland restoration and protection of Wisconsin's largest population of the federally threatened and state endangered prairie bush clover. These properties will contribute to the recovery of prairie bush clover and will help delist prairie bush clover from the federal threatened and state threatened lists. In addition to helping preserve this plant species in Wisconsin, delisting will help farmers and others in conducting their work in areas where this plant occurs.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board accept the donation of 201.13 acres of land for the Statewide Natural Area program, that a certificate of appreciation be sent to the donor and that an expression of appreciation be made a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board.

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 |

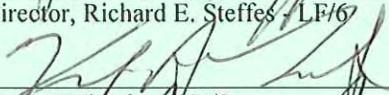
APPROVED:



Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6

7-8-11

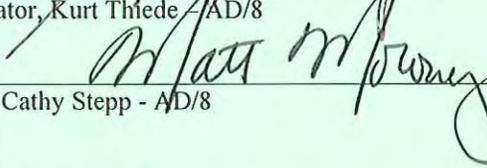
Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

7-12-11

Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

2-14-11

Date

cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
L. Osterndorf - ER/6
L. Eagan - SCR/Fitchburg

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 13, 2011 FILE EF: NA 20070
 TO: Natural Resources Board
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Donation, Natural Heritage Land Trust Tract, File # NA 20070

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Statewide Natural Area
 Dane County

Grantor:

Natural Heritage Land Trust
 c/o Jim Welsh
 303 S. Paterson St. #6
 Madison, WI 53703

Acres: 201.13Price: \$0Interest: Fee titleImprovements: NoneLocation: The tract is located in Dane County one-mile east of Waunakee.Land Description: The subject land has level to rolling terrain.Covertypes Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Cropland	188.0
Grass – prairie remnant	8.13
Upland/Woodland	5.0
Total:	201.13

Zoning: AgriculturePresent Use: Habitat preservation and public recreationProposed Use: Habitat preservation and public recreationTenure: 2 yearsAgreement Date: May 11, 2011

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 Natural Heritage Land Trust has offered to donate 201.13 acres to the Department for the Westport Empire Prairies State Natural Area. The 201.13 acres consists of three properties purchased by NHLT from three separate owners: 30 acres from the Borke family, 73.28 acres from the Carpenter family and 97.85 acres from the Koltes family. The properties are located

in the Town of Westport, Dane County about 1 mile east of the Village of Waunakee. These parcels are contiguous and surround the DNR land at Empire Prairies State Natural Area - Westport Drumlin Prairie Unit. All the properties are within the boundary of the State Natural Area. These properties contain a mix of remnant prairies, cropland and grassland with level to rolling terrain. The Westport Drumlin is at the core of these surrounding properties and offers scenic views in all directions.

The Westport Empire Prairies State Natural Area originated by the purchase of 14 acres of the Westport Drumlin Prairie in the 1970's. Oriented on a northeast to southwest-oriented glacially sculpted ridge the dry-mesic prairie and oak opening contain more than 100 native plant species. A small area of oak opening, with open-grown bur oaks, occupies the western point of the ridge. Although the drumlin wears a thin mantle of glacial till, as evidenced by rounded boulders scattered about, limestone bedrock fragments and small outcrops at the drumlin's summit attest to the limited terra-forming action of glacial ice on this ridge. Several showy plant species are present including pasque flower, cream wild indigo, rough blazing-star, yellow coneflower, shooting-star, bird's-foot violet, compass plant, rosinweed, goldenrods, and asters. Dominant grasses are big and little bluestem, Indian grass, side-oats grama, needle grass, and prairie drop-seed. The largest population of the federally threatened prairie bush clover (over 1,400 plants in recent counts) is found at Westport Drumlin Prairie. The rare prairie false dandelion and the red-tailed prairie leafhopper, a state endangered insect that feeds exclusively on prairie dropseed, are also present.

The management goals of the Natural Area are to manage for prairie and oak openings while protecting the unique features as an ecological reference area. The long-term goal is to restore cropland to mesic prairie to benefit the associated species especially grassland birds and prairie bush clover. Restoration of mesic prairie is high priority since only 100 acres remain of the original 800,000 acres of mesic prairie found in southern Wisconsin. The natural area is also important for educational and recreational opportunities in an area just outside the City of Madison.

Acceptance of this gift will protect the unique natural and scenic values of Westport Drumlin Prairie, in addition to providing opportunities for mesic prairie restoration, and protection of prairie bush clover habitat. Protection and restoration of these properties will contribute to the recovery of prairie bush clover and will help delist prairie bush clover from the federal-threatened and state-endangered lists.

3. FINANCING:

No funding is required for this transaction. The land trust received funding assistance from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship program as well as from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Dane County.

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA

Established: 1972

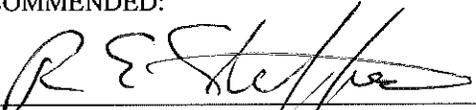
Acres Purchased to Date: 47,095.59

Acquisition Goal: 41,000

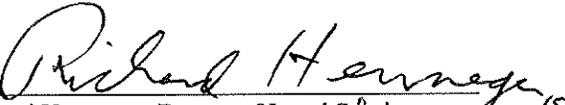
Percent Complete: 114.87 %

Cost to Date: \$28,671,984.80

RECOMMENDED:


Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

7-13-11
Date


Richard Henneger, Bureau of Legal Services

7-13-11
Date


Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

7/13/11
Date

Acknowledgment Of Gift

This is to certify that at its August 2011 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted gift of 201.13 acres of land in Dane County for the Statewide Natural Area from
Natural Heritage Land Trust

It is significant that organizations such as yours are interested in helping protect Wisconsin's natural heritage and contribute materially toward this end.

An expression of our appreciation is a part of the official records of the Natural Resources Board. We present this certificate of sincere appreciation on behalf of present and future generations to thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

Natural Resources Board

David Clausen, CHAIR

Natural Heritage Land Trust Fee Gift

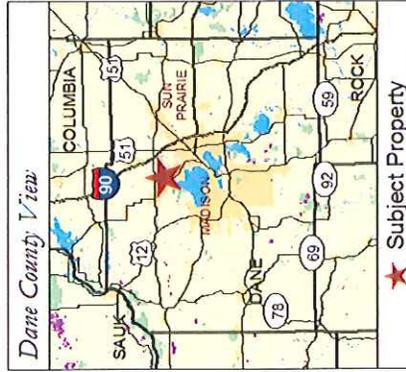
Statewide Natural Area

NA 20070

T08N R09E Section 11
Town of Westport
Dane County
(201.13 acres--option)

 Subject Parcel

-  Project Boundary
-  WDNR Owned
-  WDNR Easement
-  State Natural Area
-  PLSS Section Line
-  QQ Section Boundary



 Subject Property

 WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Map Created July 17, 2011 .amr

