Form 1100-1
Rev. 5-91

# NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No 3.B.10

**SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION AND DONATION – BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA – SAUK COUNTY**

**FOR: MAY 2009 BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Richard Steffes

**SUMMARY:** The Department has obtained an option to purchase 40.30 acres of land from Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Company for $262,000 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Sauk County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds the highest appraised value by $4,000.

The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and adjacent to Devil's Lake State Park and the Ice Age Trail. It is a mix of wooded lands and cropland with an intermittent stream on the eastern end of the tract. This acquisition will add to a large block of protected land in the area as well as protect the eastern boundary of Devil's Lake State Park and the Ice Age Trail, which runs along the south boundary. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, consolidate department ownership, and prevent incompatible development in the area. Funding for this acquisition will use 50% LAWCON funds designated for fee acquisition in the Baraboo Hills and 50% Stewardship dollars.

The Ice Age Trail lies just across from and parallels the south boundary line of the Devil's Head property for one-quarter mile before it crosses Highway 113 to a trailhead parking area. The south entrance to Devil's Lake State Park is across from the north line of the property. Riverland Conservancy owns and manages 1,850 acres south of the Devil's Head tract including the tract adjoining the south boundary. Sauk County's preservation program holds Baraboo Hills' protective easements on the lands on the east and north sides of the Devil's Head tract and an additional 335 acres within a two-mile radius.

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. Riverland Conservancy has offered a cash donation of $12,000 toward the purchase, reducing the Department's cost to $250,000

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board approve the purchase of 40.30 acres of land for $262,000 for Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Sauk County and accept the donation toward the purchase.

**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 — 5-6-09
Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6 — Date

Laurie Osterndorf — 5-6-09
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8 — Date

5-14-09
Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8 — Date

cc: S. Miller – LF/6
R. Steffes – LF/6
L. Ross – AD/8
D. Schuller – PR/6
L. Eagan – SCR/Fitchburg

State of Wisconsin

# CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 6, 2009 FILE REF: PR 40050

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. Frank

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Company Tract, File # PR 40050, Option Expires June 7, 2009

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area
Sauk County

Grantor:

Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Company
c/o Joseph Vittengl
S6330 Bluff Road
Merrimac, WI 53561

Acres: 40.3
Price: $262,000*
Appraised Value: $258,000
Interest: Fee title acquisition
Improvements: None

Location: The property is located about five miles southeast of Baraboo.

Land Description: The land is gently rolling.

| Covertype Breakdown: | Type: | Acreage: |
|---|---|---|
| | Cropland | 20.0 |
| | Upland/Woodland | 20.3 |
| | TOTAL: | 40.3 |

Zoning: Agricultural/Conservancy
Present Use: Agriculture and outdoor recreation
Proposed Use: Resource protection and public recreation
Tenure: 20 years
Property Taxes: $631
Option Date: February 7, 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.

*Comment: Riverland Conservancy has offered a cash donation of $12,000 toward the purchase, reducing the Department's cost to $250,000.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department is proposing to acquire 40.3 acres from Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Company in Sauk County in the Town of Merriman. The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area and adjacent to Devil's Lake State Park and the Ice Age Trail. It is a mix of wooded lands and cropland with an intermittent stream on the eastern end of the tract. This acquisition will add to a large block of protected

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land in the area as well as protect the eastern boundary of Devil's Lake State Park and the Ice Age Trail, which runs along the south boundary. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, consolidate department ownership, and prevent incompatible development in the area. Funding for this acquisition will use the majority of the remaining LAWCON funds designated for fee acquisition in the Baraboo Hills.

The Ice Age Trail lies just across from and parallels the south boundary line of the Devil's Head property for one-quarter mile before it crosses Highway 113 to a trailhead parking area. The south entrance to Devil's Lake State Park is across from the north line of the property. Riverland Conservancy owns and manages 1,850 acres south of the Devil's Head tract including the tract adjoining the south boundary. Sauk County's preservation program holds Baraboo Hills' protective easements on the lands on the east and north sides of the Devil's Head tract and an additional 335 acres within a two-mile radius.

The Baraboo Range is an extremely valuable 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 an astounding 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. As part of this interagency agreement, all of the parties agreed to work for the establishment of a $5,000,000 fund to be administered by the Department of Natural Resources and used only to purchase land and land rights in the Baraboo Hills.

The Department recommends purchase of the this 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:

LAWCON – Baraboo Hills and State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

| | |
|---|---|
| Funds allotted to program: $6,339,642 | Balance after proposed transaction: $87,624 |
| LAWCON Funds allotted to program: $1,278,250 | Balance after proposed transaction: $77,857 |

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA:

Established: 2000
Acres Purchased to Date: 2,721.74
Acquisition Goal: 950.00
Percent Complete: 286.50%
Cost to Date: $4,948,960.07

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Julie Hankes (Private Appraiser)
Valuation Date: April 2, 2009
Appraised Value: $258,000
Highest and Best Use: Rural residential

Allocation of Values:

a. land: 40.3 acres @ $6,401.99 per acre: $258,000.00
b. market data approach used, four comparable sales cited
c. adjusted value range: $5,818 to $7,525 per acre

Appraisal Review: Paul Scott -April 9, 2009

Comments: The option is $4,000 over the appraised valued due to negotiations that took place over the last two years. The updated appraisal came in at $258,000. The extra dollars needed to protect this parcel from development are justified. The parcel is critical as a buffer to Devil's Lake and to all the partnership work in this geographic area.

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes — Date: 4-23-09

Bureau of Legal Services — Date: 4/27/09

Laurie Osterndorf — Date: 4/27/09

RES:dv

# *Acknowledgment Of Gift*

This is to certify that at its May 2009 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted a gift of $12,000 from

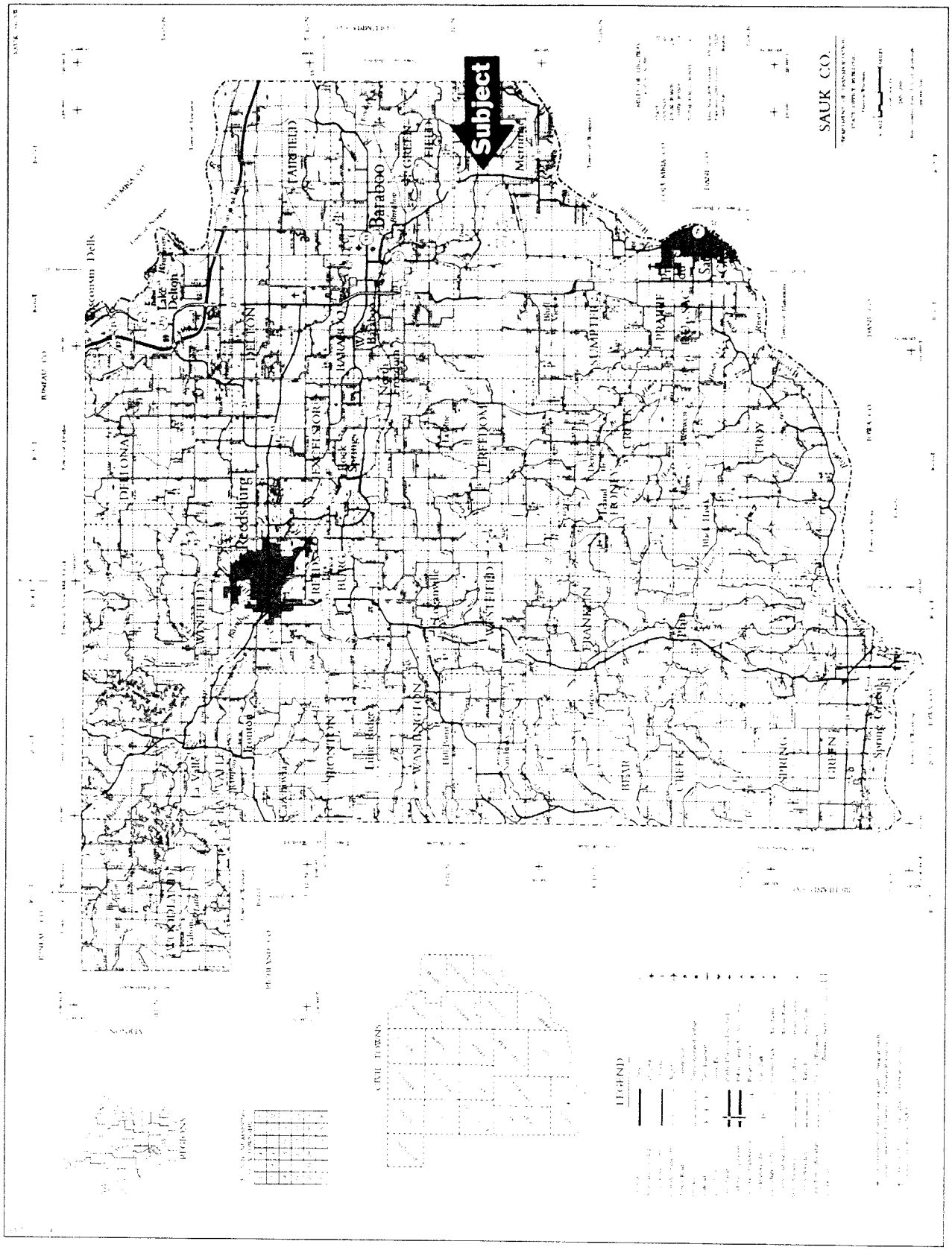
## RIVERLAND CONSERVANCY

The donation will be used toward the purchase of 40.3 acres of land for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Sauk County. It is significant that people like you 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*

Christine L. Thomas, CHAIR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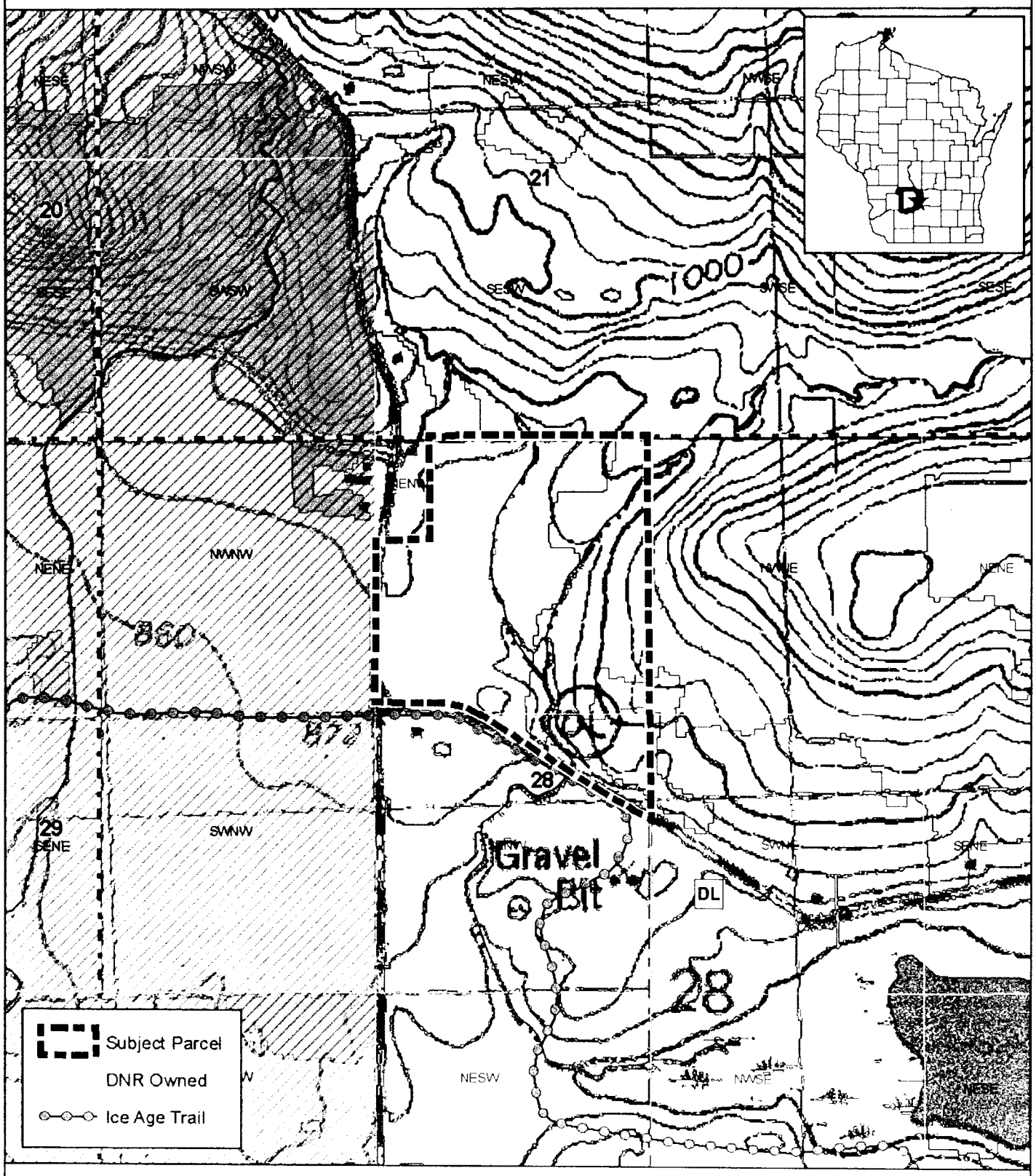
FREEDOM
SUMPTER
PRAIRIE
TROY
FRANKLIN
WASHINGTON
BEAR CREEK
SPRING GREEN
WOODLAND
LEGEND
CIVIL TOWNS

# Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Co. Property

T11N R07E Sec 28, Town of Merrimac, Sauk County



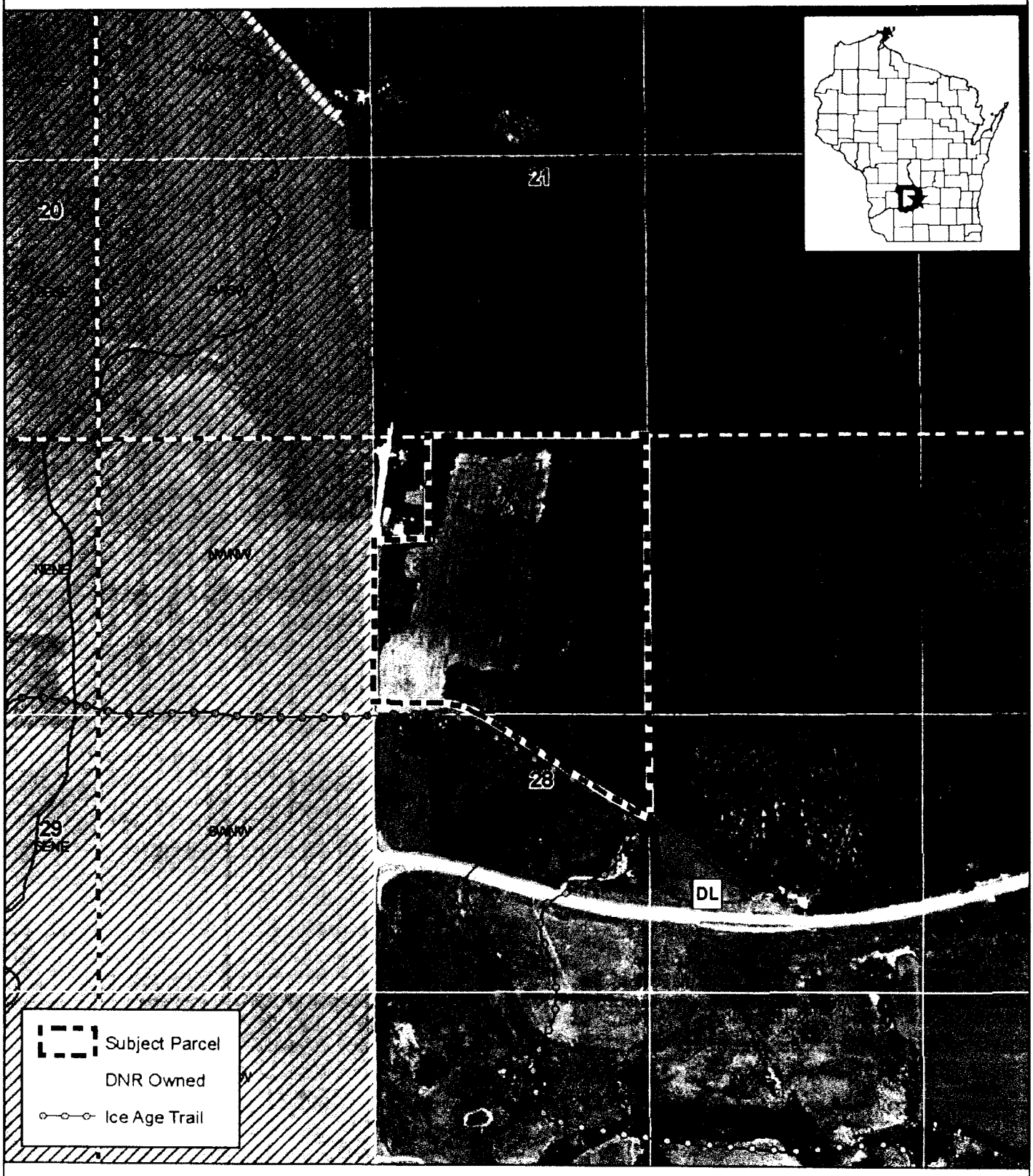

N

0 0.25 Miles

Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
April 20, 2009

# Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Co. Property

T11N R07E Sec 28, Town of Merrimac, Sauk County

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Created by Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Real Estate Section
April 20, 2009

# Devil's Head Ski Area Leasing Co. Property

*Baraboo Hills Recreation Area*

*PR 40050*

N
W E
S

Subject Property

WDNR Owned

WDNR Easement

Project Boundary

0 0.25 Mi

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 Gradie 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.

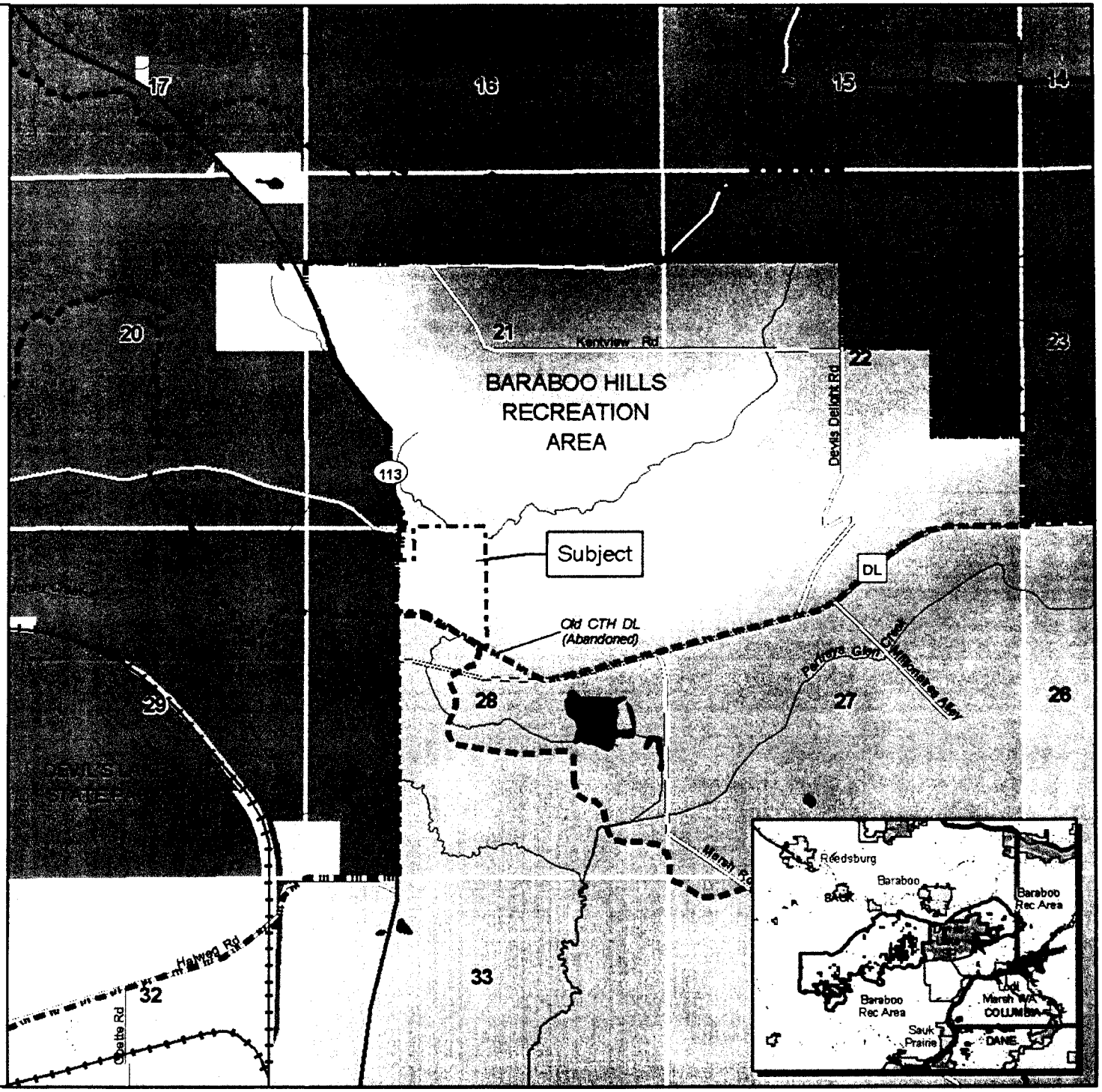
This data set does not differentiate between lands that are open or closed to the public for hunting and/or general public access. Some lands represented in this data set may not be open to the general public, or may have specific limitations or restrictions on public use. This data set is not intended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

April 20, 2009