

**NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Naming DNR owned parcel commemorating deceased Aircraft Pilot - Heath van Handel

**FOR:** OCTOBER 2010 BOARD MEETING

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Secretary, Matthew J. Frank

**SUMMARY:**

On April 8, 2009 Heath van Handel lost his life while providing overhead support to wildland firefighting operations near Pittsville, Wisconsin. Heath gave his life in performing his job. It is appropriate to commemorate him and towards this end we propose naming this property the "Heath van Handel Memorial Forest". Jennifer van Handel has indicated her support of this project.

The property is one of three separate parcels purchased from the "Institute of Paper Chemistry" in 1998 by the Division of Forestry. The parcel is located along County Highway JJ, west of Appleton - Heath's hometown. Legal description: Section 1, T21N, R16E, Town of Greenville, Outagamie County (39.6 acres).

The Northeast Region, Lakeshore Area, Tree Improvement Program and Bureau of Forest Protection are all supportive of this effort.

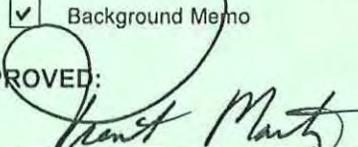
**RECOMMENDATION:** The Board approve a resolution naming the described property as the "Heath van Handel Memorial Forest".

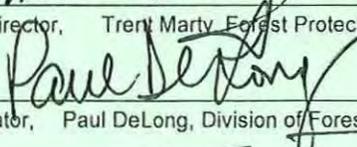
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

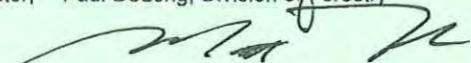
- No  Fiscal Estimate Required
- No  Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required
- No  Background Memo

- Yes  Attached
- Yes  Attached
- Yes  Attached

**APPROVED:**

  
 Bureau Director, Trent Marty, Forest Protection

  
 Administrator, Paul DeLong, Division of Forestry

  
 Secretary, Matt Frank

09/01/2010  
 Date

10/14/2010  
 Date

10-14-10  
 Date

## **Heath Van Handel Memorial Forest**

### **Honoring a Fallen Public Servant**

Heath Van Handel, an experienced Department of Natural Resources aircraft pilot, died on April 8, 2009 when the aircraft he was piloting crashed in Wood County while he was flying as part of the Division of Forestry's response to a wildfire in Wood County. Heath, who was only 36 at the time, was survived by his wife, Jennifer Van Handel, and two sons, Matt and Brett.

Heath and his family lived in his hometown of Appleton, where he graduated from high school before attending the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Ecology in 1996. He went on to receive his Associate and Professional Pilot Degree at Kansas State University, where he worked as a flight instructor, in 1999. Heath also worked as a commercial pilot for several years before joining the DNR.

Heath began his work as a DNR pilot in January of 2006. Because it gave him an opportunity to combine his passion for flying with his deep respect for natural resources, he referred to it as his "dream job". He had a great love of life and of nature, and a generosity of spirit that compelled him to share much of himself with those he loved. He had many interests and talents, among them music, photography, electronics, and enjoying the great outdoors.

Heath is the only DNR air attack pilot who has died in the line of duty. Heath was dedicated to public service, and he died protecting both our citizens and our natural resources, which are core values of our agency. In recognition of Heath's dedication and to honor his sacrifice, the Department of Natural Resources is seeking approval from the Natural Resources Board to name in Heath's honor a parcel of land purchased by the Division of Forestry in 1998 in Heath's hometown of Appleton.

The "Heath van Handel Memorial Forest" will serve as a living reminder to current and future generations of Wisconsinites that the natural resources they enjoy every day are protected and maintained through the dedication and hard, sometimes risky, work done by individuals such as Heath Van Handel. We must never take for granted the importance of that work and the price that has been paid by Heath Van Handel in service to the people of Wisconsin.