

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA – JACKSON COUNTY

FOR: OCTOBER 2011 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 80 acres of land from John Houd for \$220,000 for the Statewide Natural Area Program in Jackson County. Acquisition of this parcel would complete the acquisition goal of this specific natural area known as Bauer-Brockway Barrens. The item is being submitted because purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The parcel is located in the Township of Brockway in central Jackson County and is surrounded by State and County owned land. The northern parcel fronts a town road and is crossed by Indian Grave Creek, a shallow, warm water stream. The property is generally level except for sloping lands along the creek.

The 240-acre Bauer-Brockway Barrens State Natural Area (SNA) is a blend of sand prairie and barrens on the level, sandy soils characteristic of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The barrens contain scattered jack pine and Hill's oak. American hazelnut and New Jersey tea dominate the shrub layer while sand prairie species dominate the understory with little blue-stem, June grass, western sunflower, bastard-toadflax, cream wild indigo, flowering spurge, yellow flax, pale-spike lobelia, sand primrose, and bird's-foot violet. The aster family is well represented with five species of aster, four of goldenrod, and three species of blazing-star. In places, the sandy ground is covered with earth star fungi and a crust of lichens, especially British soldiers.

The Karner blue butterfly (KBB) is federally-listed as endangered and found at the Houd parcel. Wisconsin supports the largest and most widespread KBB populations within the KBB range with about 305 occurrences being reported in 15 counties. The species has been extirpated from much of its historic national range, and thus its status in Wisconsin is critical to its continued survival. Of the 29 recovery populations recommended in the KBB Recovery Plan, 13 occur in Wisconsin, making Wisconsin a key partner in recovery of the species.

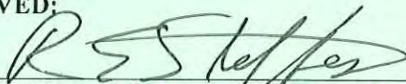
The Houd property has been of interest to Department since the creation of the Bauer Brockway Barrens SNA in 1997 because it blocks key inholdings separating the current SNA from County Forest lands that are also managed for KBB and barrens values. Acquisition of this land will complete the acquisition goal for this project and will allow for barrens ecosystem restoration that will provide ideal lupine and KBB habitat. It will also allow for management activities (prescribed burning, timber harvest, and invasive species removal) crucial to restoring and maintaining barrens habitat and its associated rare species and allow for easier access and management of the adjoining Bauer Brockway SNA that is being managed.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 80 acres of land for \$220,000 for the Statewide Natural Area in Jackson County.

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 |

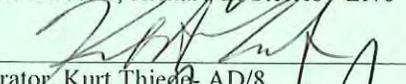
APPROVED:



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

9-6-11

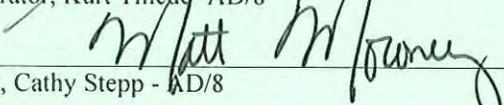
Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

9-22-11

Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

10/5/11

Date

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

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 6, 2011
 TO: Scott Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, John Houd Tract, File # NA 20073,
 Option Expires November 3, 2011

FILE REF: NA 20073

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Statewide Natural Area
 Jackson County

Grantor:

John Houd
 N5051 N. Soupbone Rd.
 Black River Falls, WI 54615

Acres: 80.00Price: \$220,000Appraised Value: \$220,000Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located in Jackson County about 3 miles east of Black River Falls.Land Description: The subject land is fairly level and sloping towards the creek.Coverture Breakdown:

	Type	Acreage
Water		1.0
Upland Woodland		76.0
Grass		3.0
Total:		80.0

Zoning: Forestry and Limited AgriculturePresent Use: RecreationalProposed Use: Public RecreationTenure: 9 years (family transfer)Property Taxes: \$2,302.00Option Date: August 05, 2011Stewardship 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 Department has obtained an option to purchase 80 acres of land from John Houd for \$220,000 for the Statewide Natural Area Program in Jackson County. Acquisition of this parcel would complete the acquisition goal for this specific natural area.



The parcel is located in the Township of Brockway in central Jackson County and is surrounded by State and County owned land. The Northern parcel fronts a town road and is crossed by Indian Grave Creek, a shallow, warm water stream. Total frontage exceeds 1500 feet of two bank frontage. The property is generally level except for sloping lands along the creek.

The 240-acre Bauer-Brockway Barrens State Natural Area (SNA) is a blend of sand prairie and barrens on the level, sandy soils characteristic of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The barrens contain scattered jack pine and Hill's oak. American hazelnut and New Jersey tea dominate the shrub layer while sand prairie species dominate the understory with little blue-stem, June grass, western sunflower, bastard-toadflax, cream wild indigo, flowering spurge, yellow flax, pale-spike lobelia, sand primrose, and bird's-foot violet. The aster family is well represented with five species of aster, four of goldenrod, and three species of blazing-star. In places, the sandy ground is covered with earth star fungi and a crust of lichens, especially British soldiers.

Many bird species of special concern have been found at the site during breeding surveys, including the Grasshopper Sparrow, Willow Flycatcher, Vesper Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, Blue Winged Warbler and Nashville Warbler. The site has an extremely diverse butterfly component including one of the most diverse moth fauna of any other barrens in the state. Wild lupine, the only food plant of the Karner blue butterfly caterpillar, has been planted in some of the restored areas to help maintain healthy numbers of this federally-endangered species.

The Karner blue butterfly (KBB) is federally-listed as endangered and found at the Houd parcel. Wisconsin supports the largest and most widespread KBB populations within the KBB range with about 305 occurrences being reported in 15 counties. The species has been extirpated from much of its historic national range, and thus its status in Wisconsin is critical to its continued survival. Of the 29 recovery populations recommended in the KBB Recovery Plan, 13 occur in Wisconsin, making Wisconsin a key partner in recovery of the species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Final KBB Recovery Plan (2003) identifies Jackson County as a recommended recovery site for the KBB. KBB populations currently occur on this land and acquisition of the Houd parcel would provide additional secure habitat for the species and contribute to recovering a viable KBB population.

The KBB population and land base on the SNA is currently too small to recover a viable KBB population. However, the adjacent lands represent an opportunity to increase the habitat and KBB population significantly. The addition of the 80 acres to the Bauer Brockway Barrens will allow for expansion of KBB habitat thereby increasing the size of the subpopulation to help meet KBB recovery goals. This private land is also known to host populations of Phlox moth and Frosted Elfyn, both of which are State listed species (see entire list of species below). Purchase of the land will also help preclude any potential threats to KBBs and other barrens species that might occur should the land be developed.

The Houd property has been of interest to Department since the creation of the Bauer Brockway Barrens SNA in 1997 because it blocks key inholdings separating the current SNA from County Forest lands that are also managed for KBB and barrens values. Acquisition of this land will complete the acquisition goal for this project and allow for barrens ecosystem restoration that will provide ideal lupine and KBB habitat. It will also allow for management activities (prescribed burning, timber harvest, and invasive species removal) crucial to restoring and maintaining barrens habitat and its associated rare species.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds of \$110,000 will be used along with \$110,000 from the KBB Habitat Conservation Plan grant through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$975,000	\$468,080

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE STATEWIDE NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1972
Acres Purchased to Date: 47,095.59
Acquisition Goal: 41,000.00
Percent Complete: 114.87 %
Cost to Date: \$28,671,984.80

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Ron Olson

Valuation Date: January 18, 2011

Appraised Value: \$220,000

Highest and Best Use: Rural Residential and Recreational

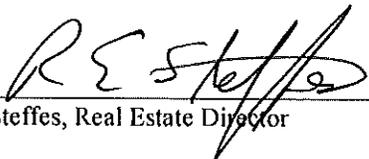
Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 80.0 acres @ \$2,750 per acre: \$220,000
- b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$1,753 - \$3,137 per acre

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter, 2/14/2011

Comments: There is a life estate held by Miles and Ladona Houd which will be removed prior to closing.

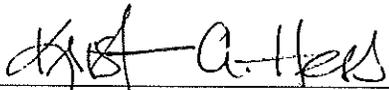
RECOMMENDED:



Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

9-6-11

Date

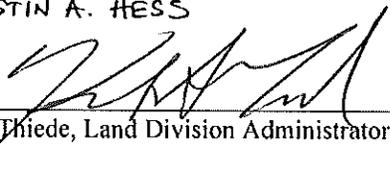


Richard Henneger, Bureau of Legal Services

KRISTIN A. HESS

9/7/11

Date



Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

9/22/11

Date

RES:sjs

John Houd Fee Acquisition

Statewide Natural Area

NA 20073



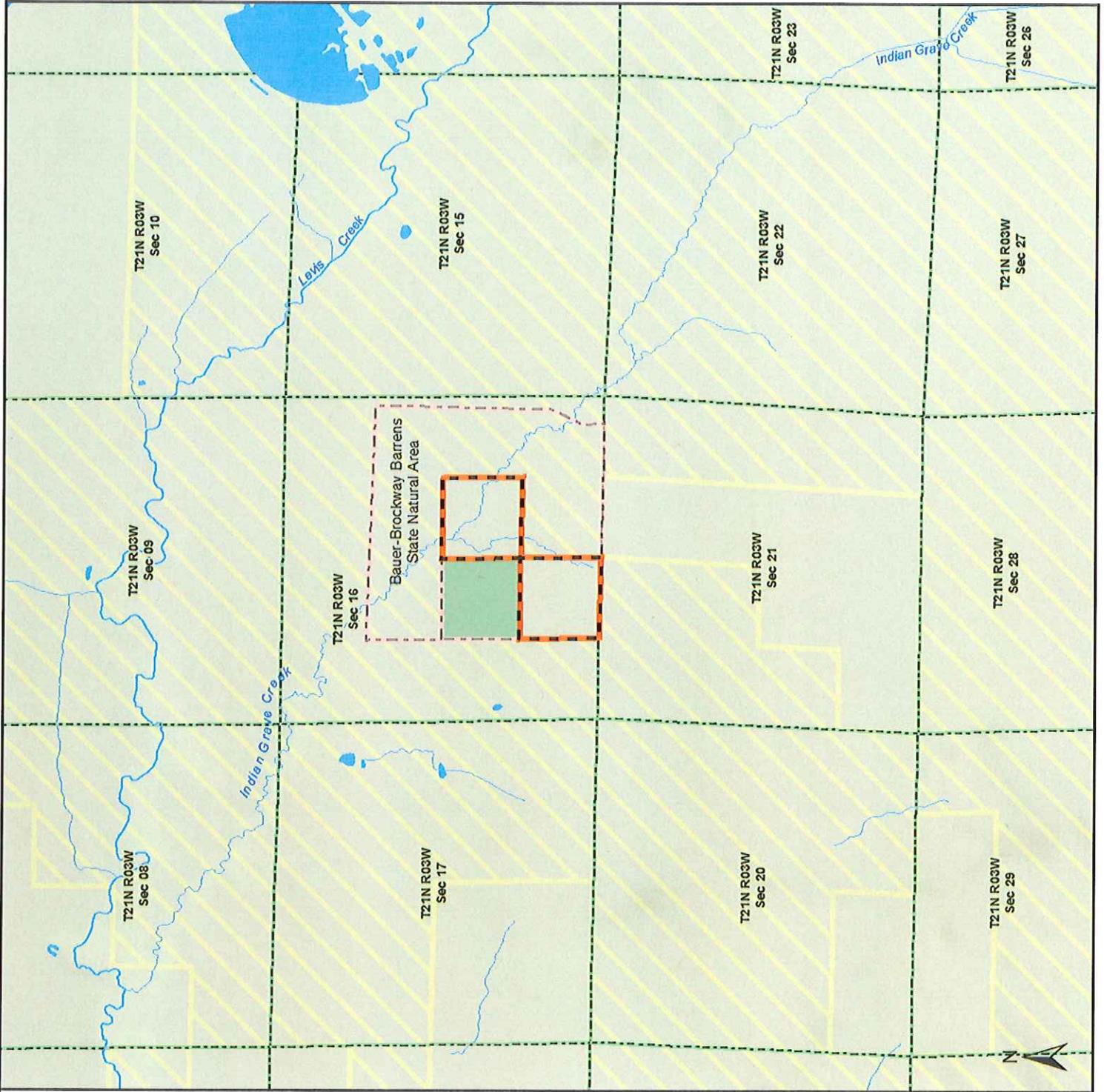
T21N R03E Section 16
Town of Brockway
Jackson County
(80.00 acres—option)

 Subject Parcel

-  Project Boundary
-  State Natural Area
-  WDNR Owned
-  County Forest
-  PLSS Section Line

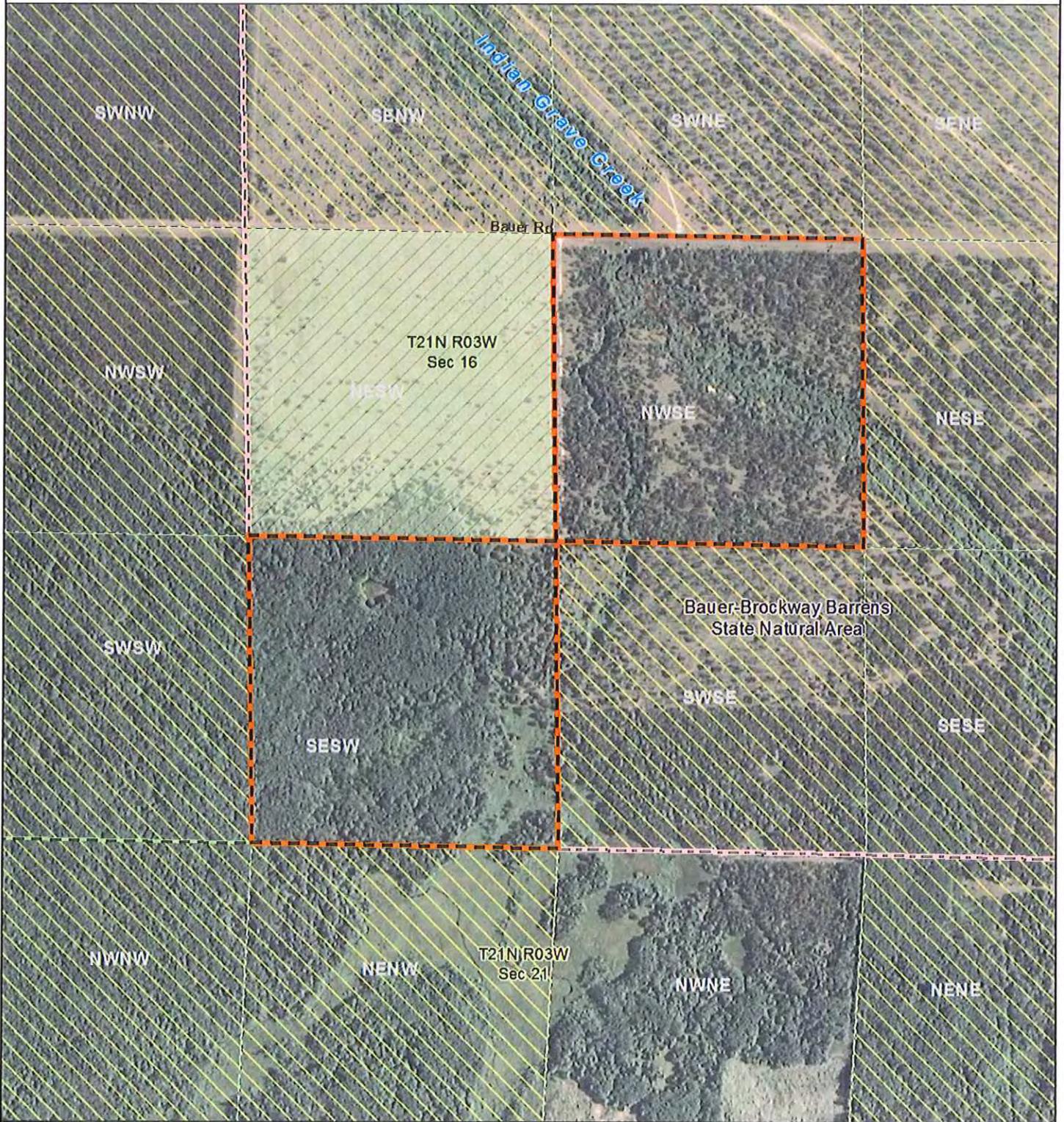


WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Map Created: August 23, 2011 .amr



John Houd Fee Acquisition

T21N R03W Section 16, Town of Brockway, Jackson County



Statewide Habitat Area NA 20073

 Subject Parcel

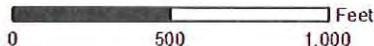
 DNR Owned

 State Natural Area

 County Forest

 Section Line

 1/4-1/4
Section Line

 Feet
0 500 1,000



August 25, 2011
Real Estate Section

Bureau of Facilities and Lands

