

SUBJECT: Land Donation – Quincy Bluff and Chiwaukee Prairie Natural Areas - Adams and Kenosha Counties

FOR: DECEMBER 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Nature Conservancy has offered to donate, to the Department, 1,700.74 acres of land for the Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area in Adams County and 149.52 acres for the Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area in Kenosha County. The land proposed for donation adjoins significant Department projects with management capacities in place. This allows TNC to focus on their primary conservation projects at other locations while the Department can open additional land to NBOAS. TNC is providing \$402,000 endowment funds for long-term land management.

Located in Adams County, Wisconsin, Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area (SNA) has been a cooperative project between the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for more than two decades. The State owns more than 4,700 acres adjacent to TNC's 1,700 acres at this large, landscape-scale natural area.

At this time, The Nature Conservancy offers their entire 1,700.74-acre ownership as a gift to the WDNR for continued use as a valuable conservation area offering diverse public recreation opportunities in central Wisconsin. With the gift of Quincy Bluff & Wetlands SNA to the State, TNC will also donate a permanent endowment of \$178,000 to supplement management costs at the preserve, with the funds to be managed by a qualified foundation. (a separate endowment mentioned below.)

TNC currently allows open deer and turkey hunting at this SNA while offering several public amenities including a parking lot, extensive trail system and interpretive signage. Hikers can easily reach the bluff top from TNC's trails and enjoy impressive vistas of the surrounding landscape. TNC's land also hosts a WDNR fire lookout tower which has served for decades as an important resource in the early detection of area wildfires.

The acquisition of TNC lands by the WDNR will further enhance public recreation opportunities by opening additional acreage to other forms of hunting not widely available in this part of the state. Additionally, consolidated ownership should increase landscape scale management opportunities, including use of prescribed fire, which was first reintroduced here in 1993 as a critical tool for restoring globally rare oak barrens.

Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area features a mosaic of natural communities, protecting ecologically important black oak and pine barrens, northern wet and wet mesic forest, open bog, shrub carr, sedge meadow, open cliff and sand prairie as well as at least 16 endangered, threatened or special concern species. This unique area is located in the Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape of Wisconsin on the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The site has a vast wetland complex with low sandy ridges, wetlands and seepage ponds situated between sandstone mesas and buttes that rise 100-200 feet. Quincy Bluff itself rises 200 feet and extends for approximately 2 miles, with TNC ownership covering the vast majority of this unique landform.

TNC's acreage consists of 12 separate tracts, all but 3 of which have already been dedicated as SNAs. Over the last 22 or so years, TNC paid approximately \$814,617 to acquire its holdings at Quincy Bluff, with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund contributing approximately \$354,500 toward acquisition costs and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service contributing \$52,500. The Conservancy received over \$407,000 in private gifts for the remainder of the Quincy Bluff acquisition costs.

Located in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area (SNA) has been a cooperative project between the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for more than 35 years. Designated as a National Natural Landmark and located along the shore of Lake Michigan on the Wisconsin-Illinois border, this conservation area protects a

globally rare wet prairie, dune and swale system and offers excellent landscape-scale conservation opportunities in an otherwise highly-developed area.

At this time, The Nature Conservancy offers their entire 149.52-acre ownership as a gift to the WDNR for continued use as a valuable conservation area offering diverse and accessible public recreation opportunities in southeast Wisconsin. With the gift of Chiwaukee Prairie SNA to the State, TNC will also donate a permanent endowment of \$224,000 to supplement management costs at the preserve, with the funds to be managed by a qualified foundation. The acquisition of TNC lands by the WDNR will help consolidate what is currently fragmented conservation ownership and will increase landscape-scale management opportunities, including use of prescribed fire and cooperation across state lines.

The State of Wisconsin currently owns more than 308 acres just north of TNC's 149 acres while other conservation partners, including the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and the Village of Pleasant Prairie, also hold more than 100 adjacent acres. Combined, these protected lands make up one of the largest prairie complexes in Wisconsin, the state's only lake plain prairie complex and the most intact coastal wetland in southeastern Wisconsin. Immediately south of the Wisconsin preserve, the State of Illinois, in cooperation with Lake County Forest Preserve District and other groups, has protected more than 3,200 acres. This bi-state partnership offers 4,000+ acres of coastal landscape conservation area. The site hosts at least 26 rare plant species, 10 of which are listed as endangered or threatened. More than 75 species of grassland and wetland birds have been observed during the breeding season, and even the rare Blanding's turtle makes its home here.

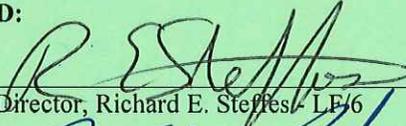
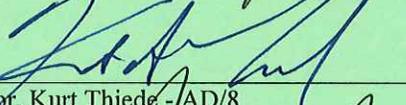
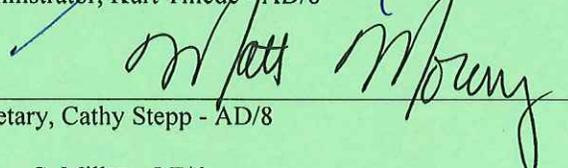
Over the last 36 years, The Nature Conservancy paid more than \$1.1 million to acquire its holdings at Chiwaukee Prairie, with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund contributing approximately \$425,805. Federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Funds will have provided about \$32,250 and an additional \$20,000 will have been provided by the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant program. Private dollars have made up the balance, with more than \$721,000 contributed by members of The Nature Conservancy.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board accept the donation of 1,700.74 acres of land for the Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area in Adams County and 149.52 acres of land for the Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area in Kenosha County; send a certificate of appreciation to The Nature Conservancy; and make an expression of appreciation 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	<u>11-13-12</u> _____ Date
 _____ Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8	<u>11/14/12</u> _____ Date
 _____ Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8	<u>11/19/12</u> _____ Date

cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/5
E. Crain - ER/6
D. Baumann - Eau Claire
E. Nitschke - Milwaukee

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 12, 2012
 TO: Natural Resources Board
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Donation, The Nature Conservancy
 Tracts, Files # NA 20094 and 20095

FILE REF: NA 20094 and 20095

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area
 Adams County

Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area
 Kenosha County

Grantor:

The Nature Conservancy
 Attn: Mary Jean Huston
 633 West Main Street
 Madison, WI 53703

Acres: 1,700.74 at Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area; 149.52 at Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach
 Natural Area

Price: Gift

Interest: Fee title donation to the state

Improvements: None

Location (QBWNA): The tracts are located in Adams County south of Adams/Friendship

Location (CPCBNA): The tracts are located in Kenosha County south of Kenosha near the state line and
 Lake Michigan

Land Description (QBWNA): The subject land is level to steep

Land Description (CPCBNA): The level to rolling

Covertypes Breakdown (QBWNA):

Type	Acreage
Grass	160
Upland Woodland	933.74
Wetland	607
Total:	1,700.74

Covertypes Breakdown (CPCBNA):

Type	Acreage
Grass	149.52
Total:	149.52

Tenure: QBWNA assembled over 22 years; CPCBNA assembled over 36 years
Option Date: November 7, 2012

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 Nature Conservancy offered to donate 1,700.74 acres of land for the Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area in Adams County and 149.52 acres for the Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area in Kenosha County to the Department.

Located in Adams County, Wisconsin, Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area (SNA) has been a cooperative project between the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for more than two decades. The State owns more than 4,700 acres adjacent to TNC's 1,700 acres at this large, landscape-scale natural area.

At this time, The Nature Conservancy offers their entire 1,700.74-acre ownership as a gift to the WDNR for continued use as a valuable conservation area offering diverse public recreation opportunities in central Wisconsin. With the gift of Quincy Bluff & Wetlands SNA to the State, TNC will also donate a permanent endowment of \$178,000 to supplement management costs at the preserve, with the funds to be managed by a qualified foundation.

TNC currently allows open deer and turkey hunting at this SNA while offering several public amenities including a parking lot, extensive trail system and interpretive signage. Hikers can easily reach the bluff top from TNC's trails and enjoy impressive vistas of the surrounding landscape. TNC's land also hosts a WDNR fire lookout tower which has served for decades as an important resource in the early detection of area wildfires.

The acquisition of TNC lands by the WDNR will further enhance public recreation opportunities by opening additional acreage to other forms of hunting not widely available in this part of the state. Additionally, consolidated ownership should increase landscape scale management opportunities, including use of prescribed fire, which was first reintroduced here in 1993 as a critical tool for restoring globally rare oak barrens.

Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area features a mosaic of natural communities, protecting ecologically important black oak and pine barrens, northern wet and wet mesic forest, open bog, shrub carr, sedge meadow, open cliff and sand prairie as well as at least 16 endangered, threatened or special concern species. This unique area is located in the Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape of Wisconsin on the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The site has a vast wetland complex with low sandy ridges, wetlands and seepage ponds situated between sandstone mesas and buttes that rise 100-200 feet. Quincy Bluff itself rises 200 feet and extends for approximately 2 miles, with TNC ownership covering the vast majority of this unique landform.

TNC's acreage consists of 12 separate tracts, all but 3 of which have already been dedicated as SNAs. Over the last 22 or so years, TNC paid approximately \$814,617 to acquire its holdings at Quincy Bluff, with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund contributing approximately \$354,500 toward acquisition costs and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service contributing \$52,500. The Conservancy received over \$407,000 in private gifts for the remainder of the Quincy Bluff acquisition costs.

Located in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area (SNA) has been a cooperative project between the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for more than 35 years. Designated as a National Natural Landmark and located along the shore of Lake Michigan on the Wisconsin-Illinois border, this conservation area protects a globally rare wet prairie, dune and swale system and offers excellent landscape-scale conservation opportunities in an otherwise highly-developed area.

At this time, The Nature Conservancy offers their entire 149.52-acre ownership as a gift to the WDNR for continued use as a valuable conservation area offering diverse and accessible public recreation opportunities in southeast Wisconsin. With the gift of Chiwaukee Prairie SNA to the State, TNC will also donate a permanent endowment of \$224,000 to supplement management costs at the preserve, with the funds to be managed by a qualified foundation. The acquisition of TNC lands by the WDNR will help consolidate what is currently fragmented conservation ownership and will increase landscape-scale management opportunities, including use of prescribed fire and cooperation across state lines.

The State of Wisconsin currently owns more than 308 acres just north of TNC's 149 acres while other conservation partners, including the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and the Village of Pleasant Prairie, also hold more than 100 adjacent acres. Combined, these protected lands make up one of the largest prairie complexes in Wisconsin, the state's only lake plain prairie complex and the most intact coastal wetland in southeastern Wisconsin. Immediately south of the Wisconsin preserve, the State of Illinois, in cooperation with Lake County Forest Preserve District and other groups, has protected more than 3,200 acres. This bi-state partnership offers 4,000+ acres of coastal landscape conservation area. In the last two years alone, partners in the lake plain have secured approximately \$1 million in competitive federal grants via the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to supplement management across the preserve, and an additional \$800,000 is expected over the next two years. A dedicated citizens' group, the Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund (CPPF), also provides valuable support by helping fund land acquisition and management in addition to hosting volunteer preserve work parties.

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association designated Chiwaukee Prairie a "Wetland Gem" in 2009, recognizing the site as one of the most outstanding wetlands in the state. With more than 400 species of vascular plants, Chiwaukee Prairie represents one of the most botanically diverse landscapes in Wisconsin and features a mosaic of plant communities ranging from southern sedge meadow, wet prairie and wet-mesic prairie in low areas, to dry-mesic prairie on the elevated sandy ridges. Portions of the site are classified as calcareous fen, while oak openings dominate higher, drier ground along the southern and western parts of the preserve. The northernmost portion, Kenosha Dunes, contains an open and stabilized dune system. This variety of habitats, coupled with their location in the extreme southeastern corner of the state, allows several rare and geographically restricted species to thrive here. The site hosts at least 26 rare plant species, 10 of which are listed as endangered or threatened. More than 75 species of grassland and wetland birds have been observed during the breeding season, and even the rare Blanding's turtle makes its home here.

TNC's acreage consists of 196 separate tracts, all of which are either dedicated or pledged to be dedicated as SNAs. Over the last 36 years, The Nature Conservancy paid more than \$1.1 million to acquire its holdings at Chiwaukee Prairie, with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund contributing approximately \$425,805. Federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Funds will have provided about \$32,250 and an additional \$20,000 will have been provided by the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant program. Private dollars have made up the balance, with more than \$721,000 contributed by members of The Nature Conservancy.

3. LAND MANAGEMENT:

TNC is providing an endowment totaling \$402,000 for the two project areas. The land currently is in good condition with most restoration work already done. Department staff manage adjoining state land and will add this to workload.

4. FINANCING:

No funding is required for this transaction. Stewardship, federal and private funds were used by TNC to acquire the land in past years.

5. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE QUINCY BLUFF AND WETLANDS NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1992
Acres Purchased to Date: 6,253.97
Acquisition Goal: 10,500
Percent Complete: 59.56 %
Cost to Date: \$5,540,074.87

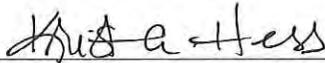
ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE CHIWAUKEE PRAIRIE-CAROL BEACH NATURAL AREA:

Established: 1985
Acres Purchased to Date: 454.62
Acquisition Goal: 400
Percent Complete: 113.66 %
Cost to Date: \$2,217,464.74

RECOMMENDED:


Richard B. Steffes, Real Estate Director

11-13-12
Date


Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

11/14/12
Date


Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

11/14/12
Date

RES:

Acknowledgment of Gift

This is to certify that at its December 2012 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted gift of 1,700.74 acres of land for the Quincy Bluff and Wetlands Natural Area in Adams County and 149.52 acres of land for the Chiwaukee Prairie-Carol Beach Natural Area in Kenosha County from

The Nature Conservancy

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

The Nature Conservancy - Fee Quincy Bluff State Natural Area

NA 20095

T16N R5E Sec 10, 14, 15, 22, 23, 26, 27
Adams County
1700.74 Acres

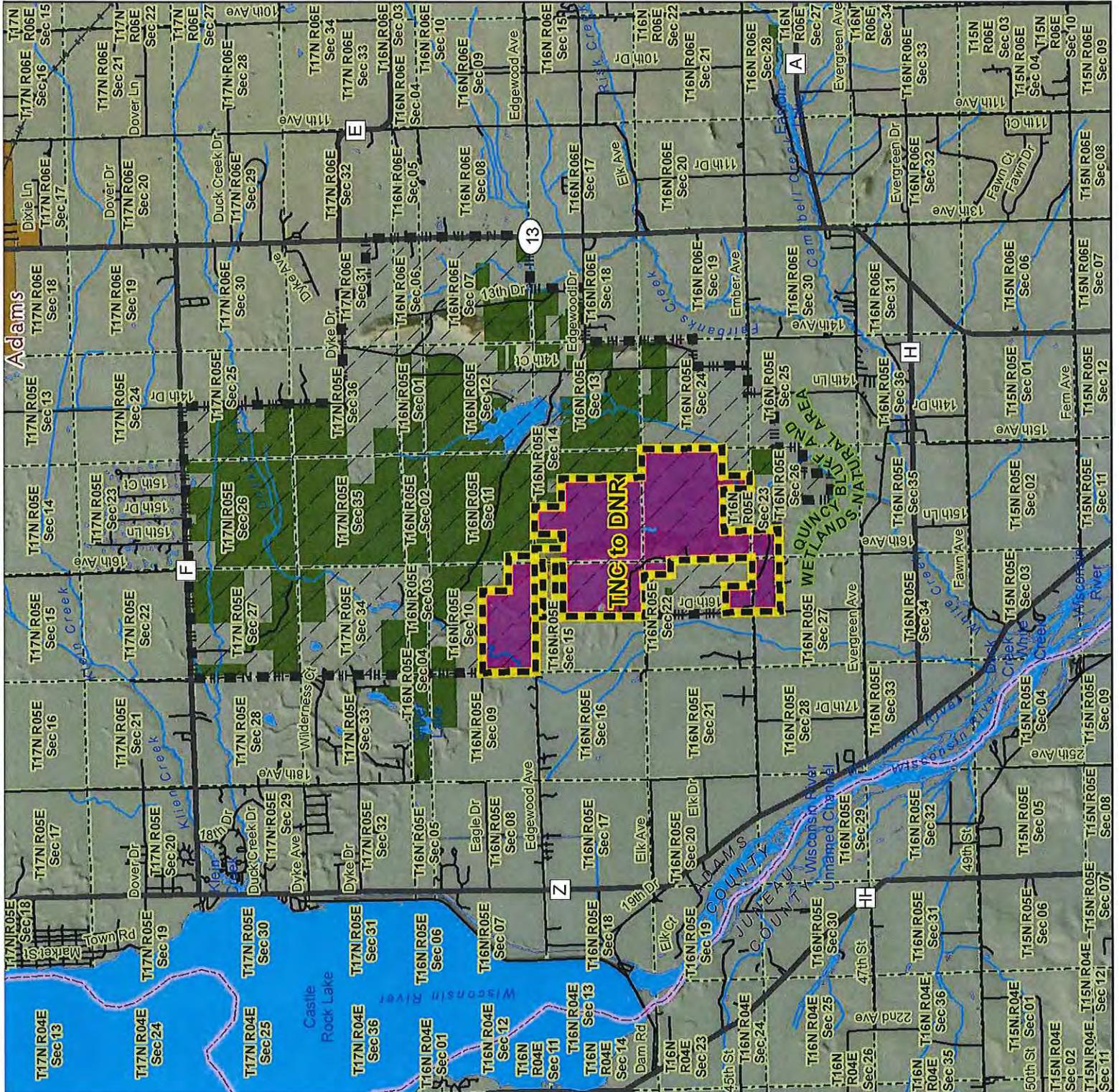


- WDNR Owned
- WDNR Easement
- DNR Project Boundary
- PLSS Section Line



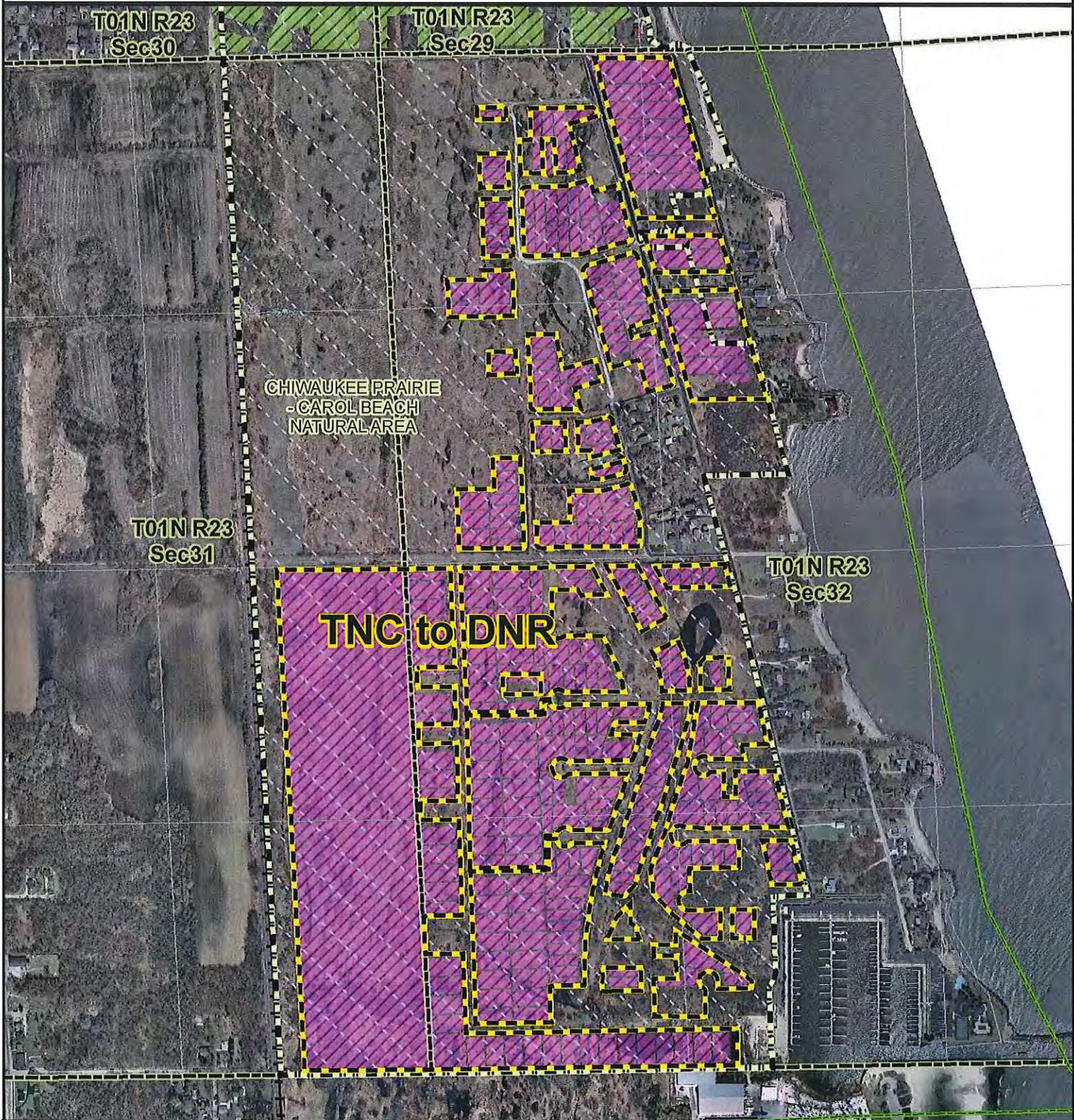
★ Location of Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities or Lands
Map Created: Nov 09, 2012 kmh



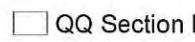
The Nature Conservancy - Fee

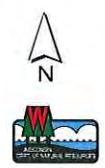
T1N R23E Sec 31 & 32, Kenosha County



Chiwaukee Prairie - Carol Natural Area

 Subject

-  DNR Owned
-  DNR Eased
-  DNR Project Boundary
-  Section Line
-  QQ Section Lines

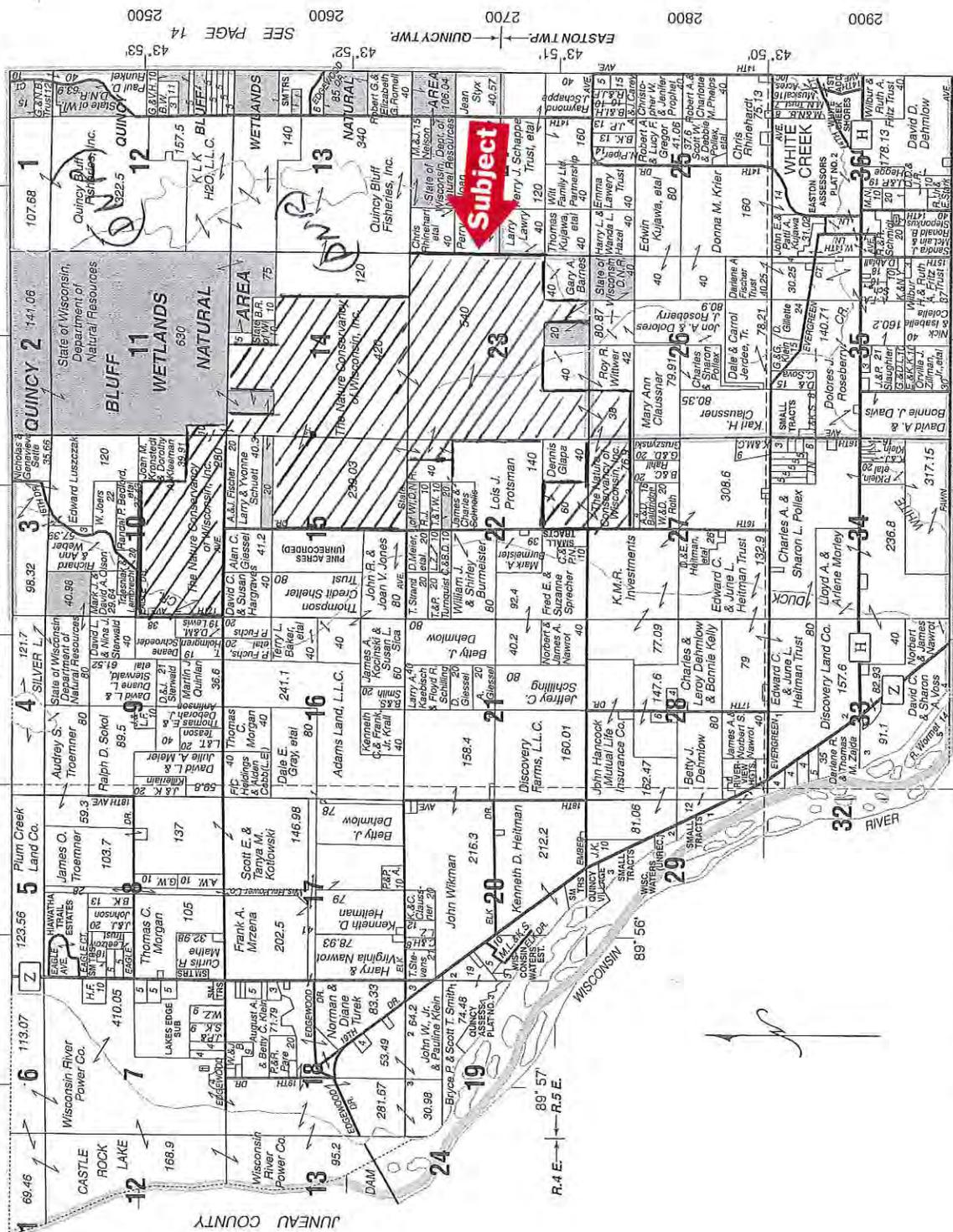


Nov 12, 2012 kmh
 Real Estate Section
 Bureau of Facilities and Lands

SOUTH PART QUINCY WEST EASTON

T.16N.-R.4-5E.

SEE PAGE 17



2900 2800 2700 2600 2500 SEE PAGE 14 43' 50' 43' 51' 43' 52' 43' 53'

EASTON TWP. QUINCY TWP.

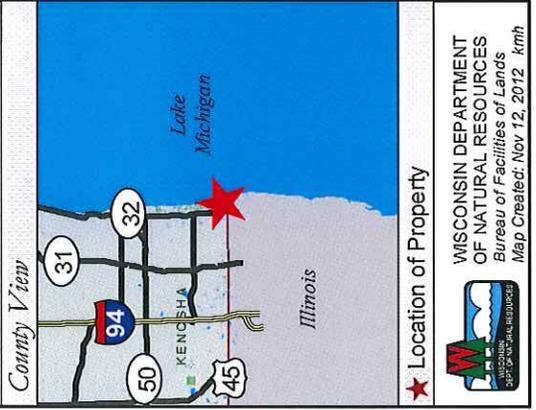
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89° 52' SEE PAGE 10 1500
89° 53' 1600
89° 54' 1700
89° 55' 1800
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The Nature Conservancy - Fee
Chiwaukee Prairie -
Carol Beach Natural Area

NA 20094
 T1N R23E Sec 31 & 32
 Kenosha County
 149.52 Acres

Subject

-  WDNR Owned
-  WDNR Easement
-  DNR Project Boundary
-  Parks
-  PLSS Section Line
-  QQ Section Boundary



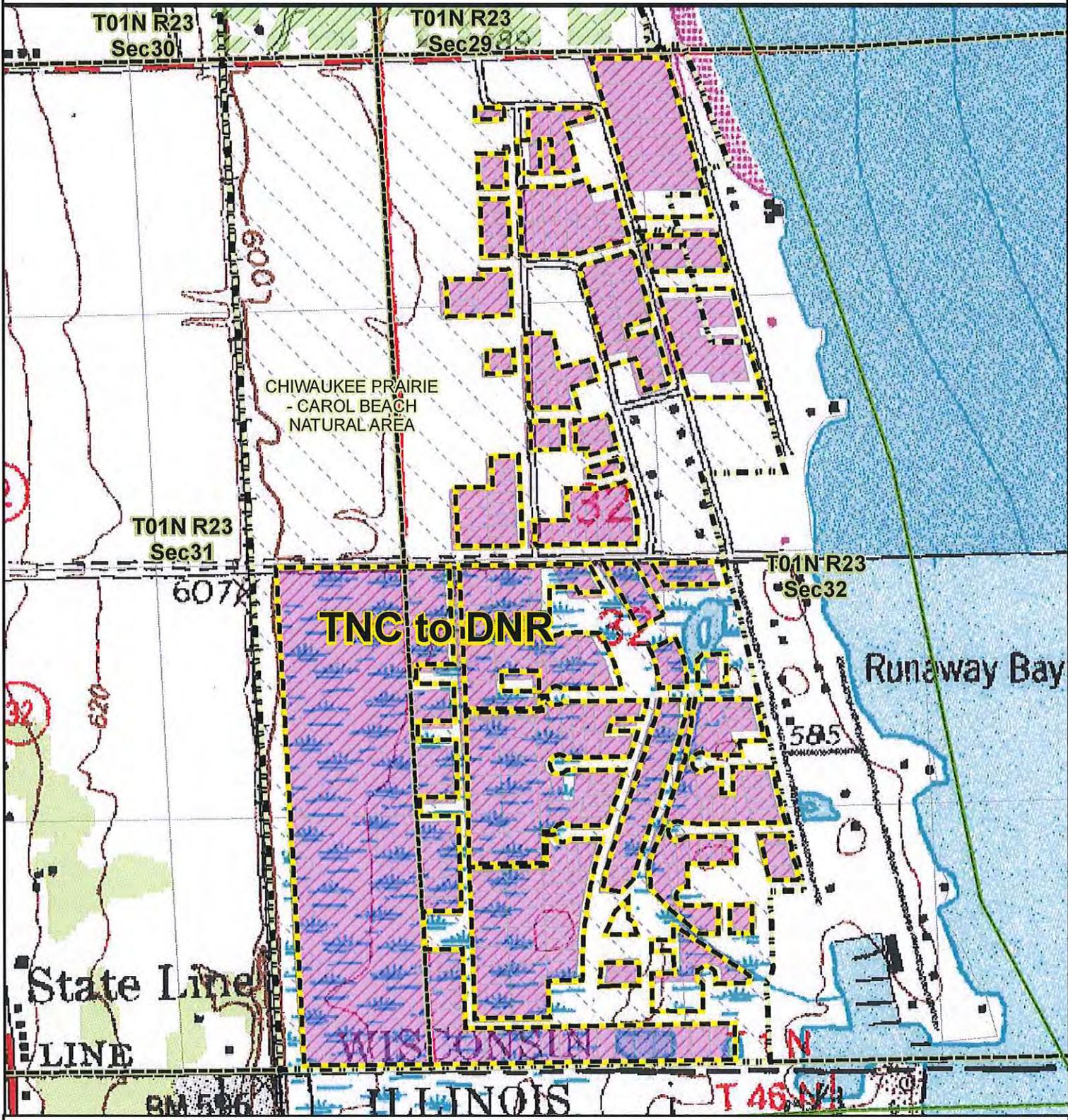
★ Location of Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
 OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 Bureau of Facilities or Lands
 Map Created: Nov 12, 2012 .kmh



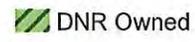
The Nature Conservancy - Fee

T1N R23E Sec 31 & 32, Kenosha County

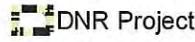


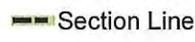
Chiwaukee Prairie - Carol Natural Area

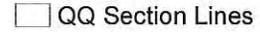
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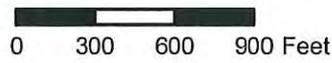
 DNR Owned

 DNR Eased

 DNR Project Boundary

 Section Line

 QQ Section Lines



Nov 12, 2012 kmh
 Real Estate Section
 Bureau of Facilities and Lands

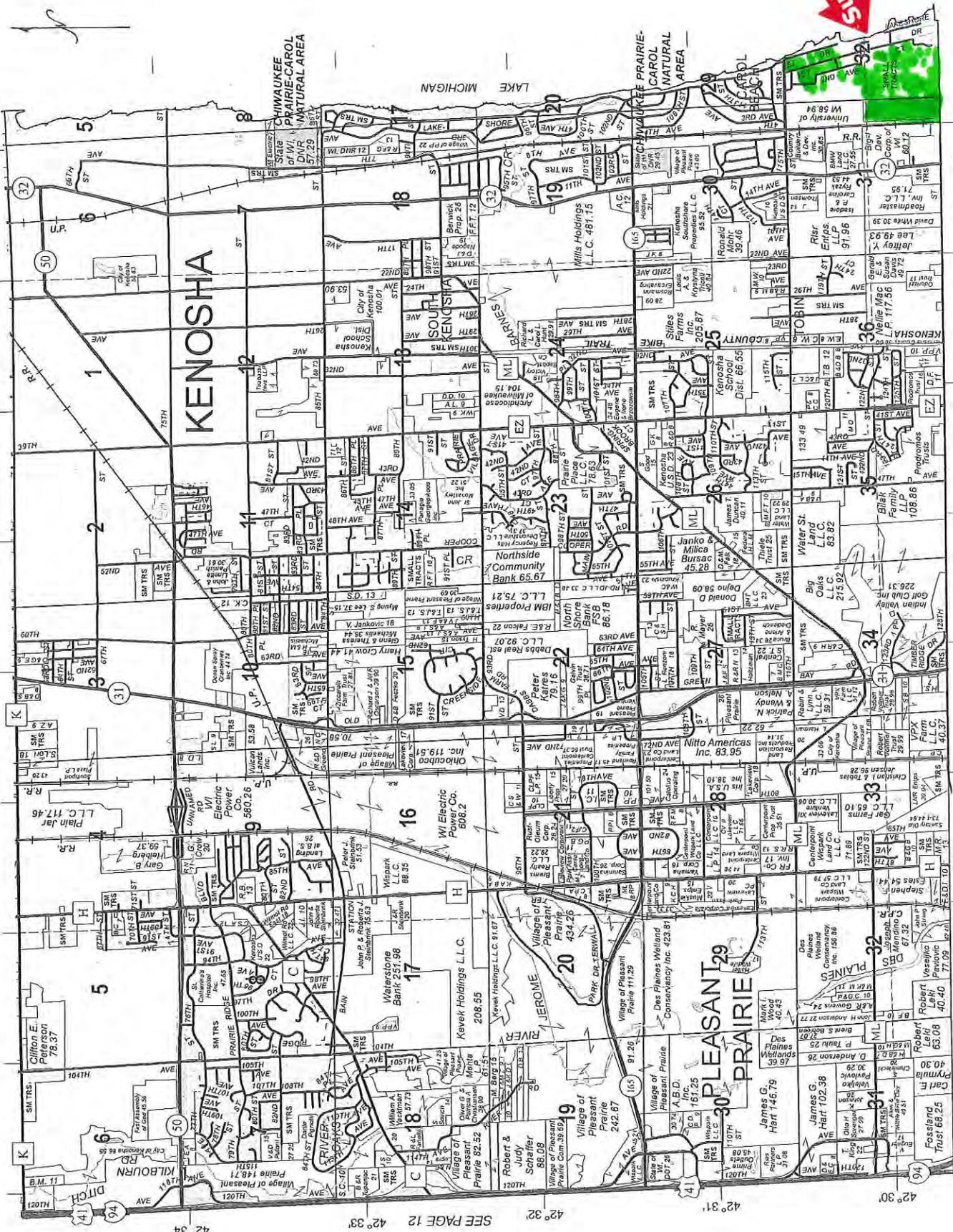


T.1N.-R.22-23E.

R.22E. ← R.23E.

SEE PAGE 22

EAST PART PLEASANT PRAIRIE VILLAGE OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE



Kenosha County, WI

87° 50'

87° 51'

87° 52'

87° 53'

87° 54'

87° 55'

87° 56'

87° 57'

STATE OF ILLINOIS

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