

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition – French Creek Wildlife Area – Columbia County

FOR: DECEMBER 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 61.59 acres of land from Paul and Marilyn Thomson for \$228,000 for the French Creek Wildlife Area in Columbia County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000. In a separate NRB action item, the Department is proposing Board acceptance of a master plan including a boundary expansion for the wildlife are to include this parcel. If that item is approved, then the Thomson parcel is proposed for purchase

The property is located in north central Columbia County approximately five miles northeast of Portage. At this writing, the property is outside the boundary for the French Creek Wildlife Area. The Columbia County Master Plan is proposed for approval at the December meeting of the Natural Resources Board and, if approved, adds this property within its proposed boundary expansion. State land borders the subject on the west and south sides. The Thomson property is primarily uplands adjacent to the Department owned wetland complex of French Creek. Acquisition will help meet Department goals of providing additional nesting habitat for waterfowl and other grassland birds, as well as opportunities for public recreation, protection and management of wildlife habitat. In addition it will consolidate Department ownership in the area and connect state ownership to the public road.

French Creek Wildlife Area is approximatly 3,500 acres in size and is located in Columbia and Marquette Counties. It contains both upland and lowland woods, marsh and open water. Major wildlife species include waterfowl, pheasants, deer, turkeys, rabbits, squirrels, sandhill cranes and furbearers. The property is readily accessible to the population of south-central and central Wisconsin and provides the public opportunities for hunting, fishing, birdwatching and other recreational activities.

The 61.59-acre property is located along CTH CM and adjacent to a Department owned parking lot accessing a DNR maintenance road. Cover types on the property include cropland, pasture, and woodland. As part of the transaction the Department has offered Mr. Thomson a share- cropping opportunity and pasture land rental through 2017. The rental rate is based on market cropland and pasture rent in the area and allows the land to remain in production until the Department has funding for vegetative restoration on the parcel. The parcel also hosts a bald eagle family that has been nesting on the property for several years. The Department will use \$65,000 in federal North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) on the purchase, reducing state funding to \$163,000.

When the Thomson property was listed for sale, a survey was conducted to split the parcel. The survey determined that a portion of the DNR's maintenance road encroaches on the private property. Acquisition of the Thomson property would resolve the encroachment issue and allow DNR staff continued access for its vegetative and wildlife management activities on the wetland complex.

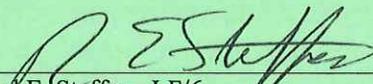
Purchase of the 61.59-acre Thomson tract will allow for wildlife habitat management, provide public recreation, protect the current access for hunting and wildlife viewing, and consolidate state ownership in the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 61.59 acres of land for \$228,000 for the French Creek Wildlife Area in Columbia County.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

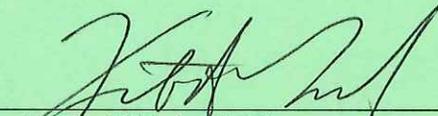
- | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:



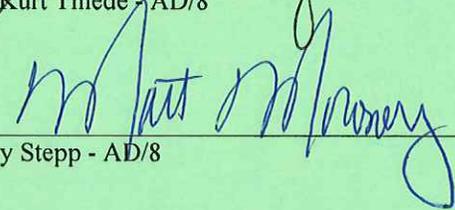
Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6

10-23-12
Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

10/25/12
Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

11/7/12
Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/8
T. Hauge - WM/6
M. Aquino - SCR

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 23, 2012
 TO: Scott Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Paul Thomson Tract, File # WM 60196,
 Option Expires February 19, 2013

FILE REF: WM 60196

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

French Creek Wildlife Area
 Columbia County

Grantor:

Paul and Marilyn Thomson
 W7802 CTH CM
 Portage, WI 53901

Acres: 61.59Price: \$228,000Appraised Value: \$228,000Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located in Columbia County 5 miles northeast of PortageLand Description: The subject land is gently rolling to rollingCovertypes Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Cropland	37
Grass / Pasture	21
Upland Woodland	3.59
Total:	61.59

Zoning: AgriculturePresent Use: Cropland/pastureProposed Use: Public Recreation and wildlife habitatTenure: In family since 1950'sProperty Taxes: \$456Option Date: August 24, 2012Stewardship 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 61.59 acres of land from Paul and Marilyn Thomson for \$228,000 for the French Creek Wildlife Area in Columbia County.

The property is located in north central Columbia County approximately five miles northeast of Portage. State land borders the subject on the west and south sides. The Thomson property is primarily uplands adjacent to the Department owned wetland complex of French Creek. Acquisition will help meet Department goals of providing additional nesting habitat for waterfowl and other grassland birds, as well as opportunities for public recreation, protection and management of wildlife habitat. In addition it will consolidate Department ownership in the area.

French Creek Wildlife Area is approximately 3,500 acres in size and is located in Columbia and Marquette Counties. It contains both upland and lowland woods, marsh and open water. Major wildlife species include waterfowl, pheasants, deer, turkeys, rabbits, squirrels, sandhill cranes and furbearers. The property is readily accessible to the population of south-central and central Wisconsin and provides the public opportunities for hunting, fishing, birdwatching and other recreational activities.

The subject 61.59-acre property is located along CTH CM and adjacent to a Department owned parking lot accessing a DNR maintenance road. Cover types on the property include cropland, pasture, and woodland. As part of the transaction the Department has offered Thomson a share-cropping opportunity and pasture land rental through 2017. The rental rate is based on market cropland and pasture rent in the area and allows the land to remain in production until the Department has funding for vegetative restoration on the parcel. The parcel also hosts a bald eagle family that has been nesting on the property for several years.

When the Thomson property was listed for sale, a survey was conducted to split the parcel. The survey determined that a portion of the DNR's maintenance road encroaches on the private property. Acquisition of the Thomson property would resolve the encroachment issue and allow DNR staff continued access for its vegetative and wildlife management activities on the wetland complex.

The Department recommends purchase of the 61.59-acre Thomson tract to allow for wildlife habitat management, to provide public recreation, to protect the current access for hunting and wildlife viewing, to safeguard needed habitat by preventing incompatible development and to consolidate state ownership in the area.

3. LAND MANAGEMENT:

Columbia County Wildlife Staff will manage the property in the near term with a sharecropping and pasture lease until 2017. After 2017, the pasture agreement may be renewed, however the croplands will be converted to grassland and managed for upland nesting habitat for waterfowl.

4. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated: for \$163,000 and federal NAWCA funds for \$65,000.

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$3,666,700	\$2,158,840

5. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE FRENCH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA:

Established: 1947
Acres Purchased to Date: 3,505.72
Acquisition Goal: 4,650.69
Percent Complete: 75.38 %
Cost to Date: \$1,086,276.46

6. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Michael Stone
Valuation Date: June 01, 2012
Appraised Value: \$228,000
Highest and Best Use: Rural Residential - Agriculture (mixed-use)

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 61.59 acres @ \$3,700 per acre: \$228,000 rounded
 - b. market data approach used, 4 comparable sales cited
 - c. adjusted value range: \$3,450 - \$3,800 per acre
- Appraisal Review: Gregory Markus – June 11, 2012

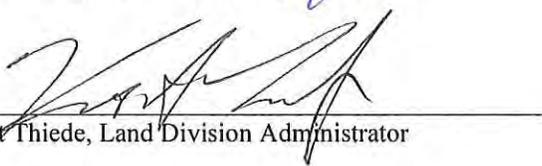
RECOMMENDED:


Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

10-23-12
Date


Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

10/23/12
Date


Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

10/25/12
Date

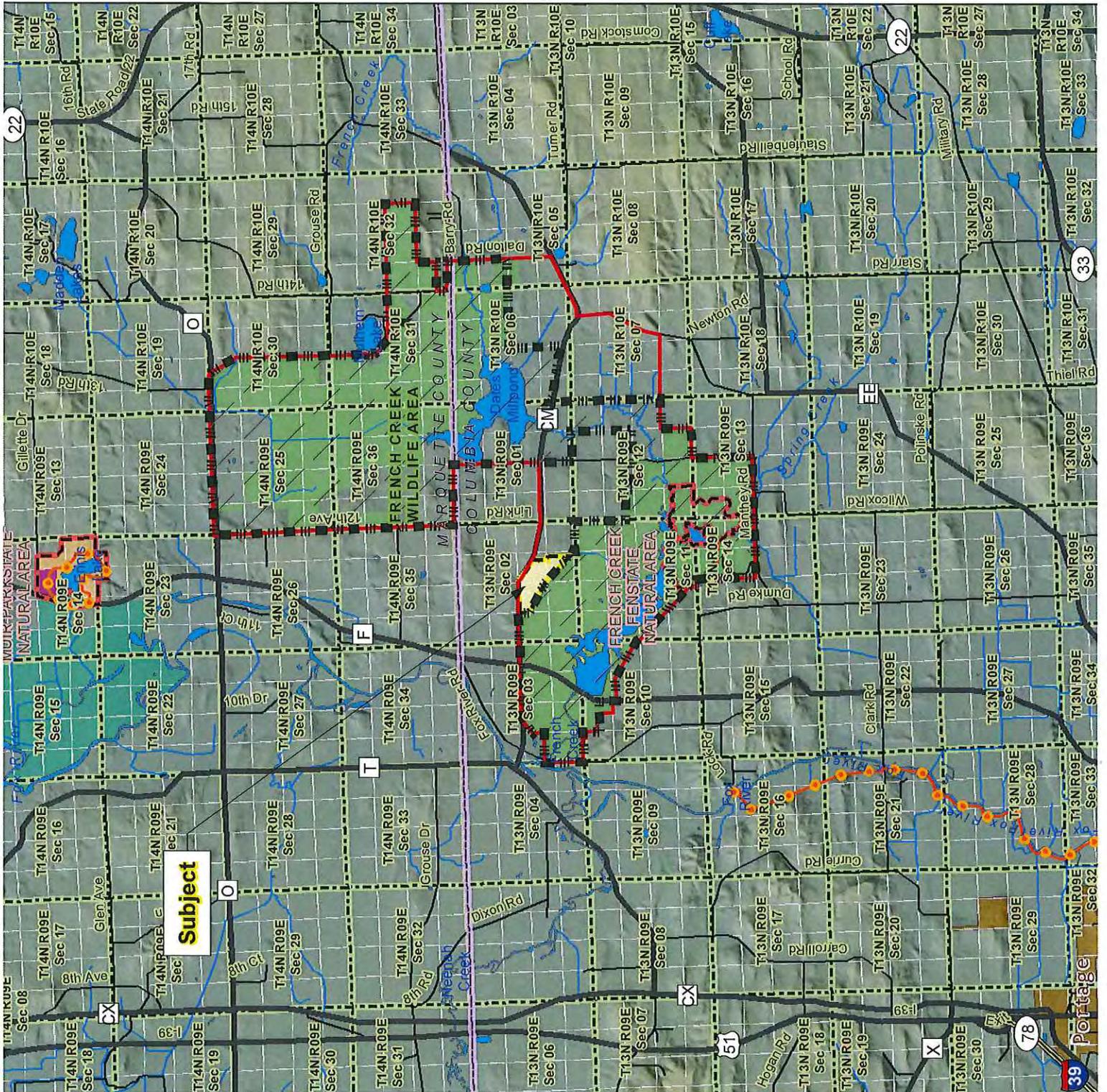
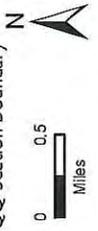
RES:

Pal Thomson
 - Fee
 French Creek
 Wildlife Area
 WM 60196

T13N R9E Sec 2
 Town of Fort Winnebago
 Columbia County
 61.59 Acres
Subject

CCPG Master Plan
Proposed New Boundary

- Ice Age Trail
- WDNR Owned
- WDNR Easement
- DNR Project Boundary
- Federal Land
- County Forest Land
- State Natural Area
- PLSS Section Line
- QQ Section Boundary

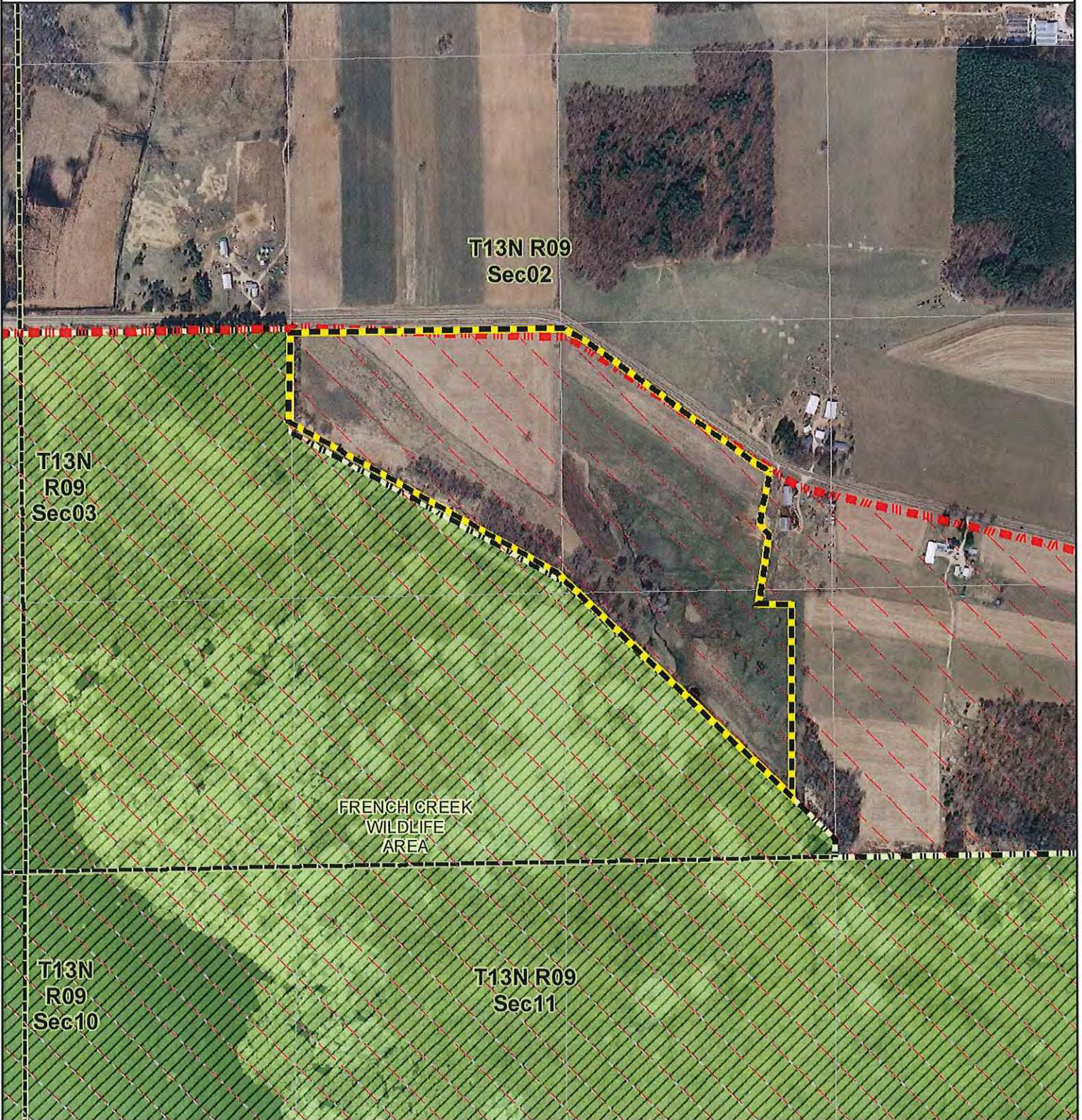


Location of Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
 OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 Bureau of Facilities of Lands
 Map Created: Oct 18, 2012 kmh

Paul Thomson - Fee

T13N R9E Sec 2 Town of Fort Winnebago, Columbia County



French Creek Wildlife Area



Subject



CCPG Master Plan
Proposed New Boundary



DNR Owned



DNR Project Boundary



DNR Eased



Section Line



QQ Section Lines



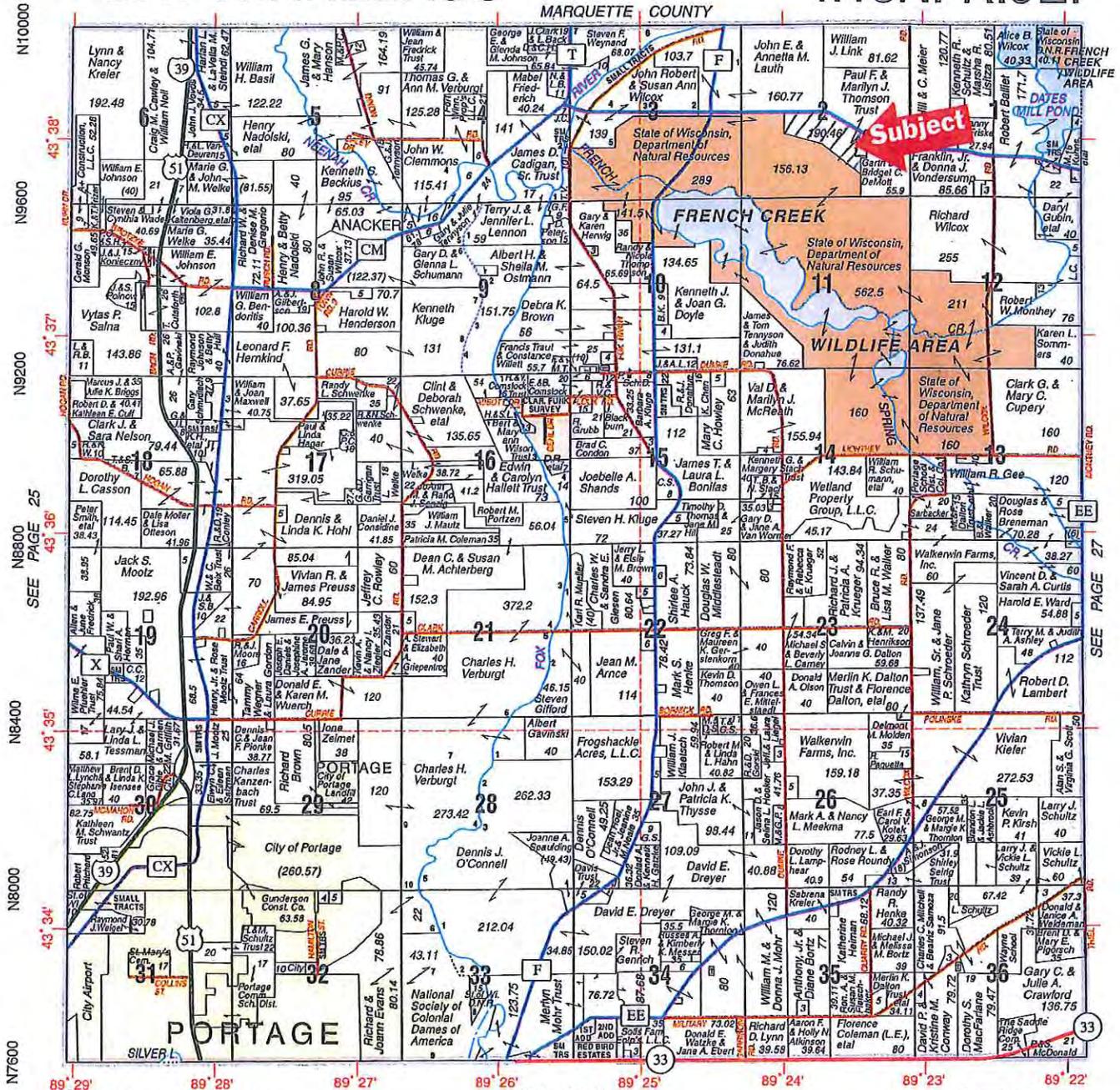
Oct 18, 2012 kmb
Real Estate Section
Bureau of Facilities and Lands



FORT WINNEBAGO

T.13N.-R.9E.

MARQUETTE COUNTY



Subject

N10000
N9600
N9200
N8800
N8400
N8000
N7600

43° 38'
43° 37'
43° 36'
43° 35'
43° 34'

89° 29' 89° 28' 89° 27' 89° 26' 89° 25' 89° 24' 89° 23' 89° 22'

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