

SUBJECT: PROJECT RE-DESIGNATION AND LAND ACQUISITION – PARADISE VALLEY WILDLIFE AREA – WAUKESHA COUNTY

FOR: JANUARY 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 125.8 acres of land from Edward and Victoria Schardt for \$1,020,000.00 for the Paradise Valley project in Waukesha County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000. In addition, Board approval is required for project re-designation from a southern forest project to a state wildlife area.

The parcel is within the Paradise Valley Unit Area boundary of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. The project was established in 2009 and is just northwest of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. A 32 acre parcel was acquired in 2010; this would be the second land purchase.

In 2009, the Natural Resources Board approved expansion of the KMSF-SU to include the Paradise Valley Habitat Area. Acquisition of land within the Paradise Valley addition would provide wildlife habitat, increase public access to natural resources, and provide more outdoor recreation opportunities in the most heavily populated area of the state. The Paradise Valley project is consistent with the department's Wildlife Action Plan (2005) and Land Legacy Report (2006) for its conservation significance and recreation potential. Additionally, the project is consistent with plans written by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Waukesha County, and the Town of Ottawa that indicate the importance of preserving this area based on the priority natural resource base and the recreational opportunities afforded. There was broad support for land acquisition in the Paradise Valley area across a wide spectrum of people ranging from local residents and landowners, to government officials, to non-profit environmental groups.

Based on an evaluation of program responsibilities, priorities, and land acquisition and management capabilities, the Department requests that management of the Paradise Valley project of the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Southern Unit be transferred from the Parks and Recreation program to the Wildlife program by designating it a state Wildlife Area. As part of the acquisition process of the Schardt property, the Department requests that the formal project designation and programmatic authority is changed.

On March 25, 2009, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved adding the Paradise Valley project area to the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Southern Unit. This action expanded the state forest project boundary westward in Waukesha County, primarily in the Town of Ottawa, with a small portion in northern Town of Eagle, as identified on the attached project boundary map. The department's acquisition goal for the project area is 4,000 acres.

The feasibility study and project goals were developed through a joint effort by the Wildlife and Parks & Recreation programs in an effort to meet both the conservation and outdoor recreational needs in the area. However, the project goals are oriented more towards resource conservation and passive outdoor recreation than they are towards intensive recreational development. Much of the land management in the project area will be focused on fish and wildlife conservation, rather than developing recreational infrastructure.

In addition, recent changes to the Stewardship program, the Park and Recreation program land acquisition priorities, and the availability of federal NAWCA funds for land acquisition combine to make the Wildlife program better suited for pursuing future land purchases in the project area.

Formal management plans for the project area will be developed as part of the master planning process, which will likely not take place until 2013 at the earliest. Until that time, land within the project area will be managed in alignment with the goals of the feasibility study.

The Schardt parcel is a diverse mix of grassland, oak openings, deep marsh, tamarack bog, and southern hardwoods. The property provides desirable frontage and access to Reagons Lake, a 16-acre spring-fed warmwater lake containing healthy bass and panfish populations. The property contains oak openings within a globally important Conservation Opportunity Area as identified in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. The Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has designated one-third of this property as Primary Environmental Corridor due to the diversity and importance of its wetland plant communities. There is broad support for land acquisition in the Paradise Valley area across a wide spectrum of people ranging from local residents and landowners, to government officials, to non-profit environmental groups.

Protection of valuable upland woods and glacial features would help expand a significant sized block of woods. This covertype attracts neo-tropical birds and other species that require unbroken blocks of habitat, providing opportunities for hunters, bird watchers, and passive outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The property would also provide a portion of the route for a planned recreational trail from the WDNR's Ottawa Lake campground north to the Glacial Drumlin Trail

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve re-designation of the project to the wildlife management program and re-naming as Paradise Valley Wildlife Area and approve purchase of 125.8 acres of land for \$1,020,000.

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 |

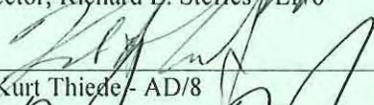
APPROVED:



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

12-19-11

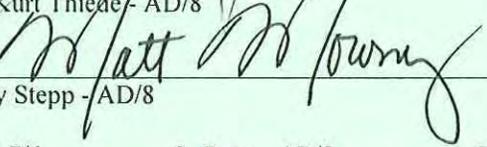
Date



Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

12-21-11

Date



Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

1/04/12

Date

- cc: S. Miller - LF/6 L. Ross - AD/8 E. Nitschke - SER/Milwaukee
 R. Steffes - LF/6 T. Hauge - WM/6

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 19, 2011 FILE REF: WM 60159
 TO: Governor Walker
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Edward and Victoria Schardt Tract, File # WM 60159,
 Approval is requested by February 28, 2012.

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Paradise Valley Wildlife Area
 Waukesha County

Grantor:

Edward and Victoria Schardt
 W370 S4835 Pine View Lane
 Dousman, WI 53118

Acres: 125.8Price: \$1,020,000Appraised Value: \$1,020,000; \$1,075,000Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: NoneLocation: The property is located in Waukesha County three miles south of the Village of Dousman.Land Description: The subject land is generally level with some lower lying wetland areas.Covertypes Breakdown:

	Type	Acreage
Wetland		65.0
Grass		27.0
Water		3.0
Upland Woodland		30.8
Total:		125.8

Zoning: Residential, Conservancy, Shoreland and Environmental CorridorPresent Use: Vacant/RecreationalProposed Use: Forest management, resource protection and public recreationTenure: 26 yearsProperty Taxes: \$6,993.73Option Date: November 16, 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 125.8 acre Schardt parcel is proposed for purchase to provide forest management and natural resource protection and public recreation. The parcel is within the Paradise Valley Wildlife Area and located in the Town of Ottawa in Waukesha County. The unit is just northwest of the Southern Unit. Established in 2009 and

re-named at the January 2012 Natural Resources Board meeting it will provide excellent wildlife habitat and area for public use.

The KMSF-SU was established in 1936 to provide recreational opportunities in the southeastern portion of the state and to protect the natural and scenic values of the Kettle Moraine landscape. The property is used by the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, cross-country skiing, camping, hiking, and other outdoor recreation. In addition, the geologic and natural values of the area are used for research and education. The KMSF-SU, an all season property, is located in southeastern Wisconsin in Waukesha, Jefferson, and Walworth Counties. The forest is located about 35 miles west of Milwaukee, within 100 miles of five million people, making it one of Wisconsin's busiest state park/forests.

In 2009, the Natural Resources Board approved expansion of the KMSF-SU to include the Paradise Valley Habitat Area. Acquisition of land within the Paradise Valley addition would allow the department to better achieve the goals of the Southern Unit by preserving additional land, increasing priority wildlife habitat, increasing public access to natural resources, and providing more outdoor recreation opportunities in the most heavily populated area of the state. The Paradise Valley project is consistent with the department's Wildlife Action Plan (2005) and Land Legacy Report (2006) for its conservation significance and recreation potential. Additionally, the project is consistent with plans written by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Waukesha County, and the Town of Ottawa that indicate the importance of preserving this area based on the priority natural resource base and the recreational opportunities afforded. There was and continues to be broad support for land acquisition in the Paradise Valley area across a wide spectrum of people ranging from local residents and landowners, to government officials, to non-profit environmental groups.

Based on an evaluation of program responsibilities, priorities, and land acquisition and management capabilities, the Department requests that management of the Paradise Valley project of the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Southern Unit be transferred from the Parks and Recreation program to the Wildlife program by designating it a state Wildlife Area. As part of the acquisition process of the Schardt property, we are requesting that the formal project designation and programmatic authority change be requested as a part of the Natural Resources Board action to acquire the property.

On March 25, 2009, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved adding the Paradise Valley project area to the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Southern Unit. This action expanded the state forest project boundary westward in Waukesha County, primarily in the Town of Ottawa, with a small portion in northern Town of Eagle, as identified on the attached project boundary map. The department's acquisition goal for the project area is 4,000 acres.

The feasibility study and project goals were developed through a joint effort by the Wildlife and Parks & Recreation programs in an effort to meet both the conservation and outdoor recreational needs in the area. However, the project goals are oriented more towards resource conservation and passive outdoor recreation than they are towards intensive recreational development. Much of the land management in the project area will be focused on fish and wildlife conservation, rather than developing recreational infrastructure.

In addition, recent changes to the Stewardship program, the Park and Recreation program land acquisition priorities, and the availability of federal NAWCA funds for land acquisition combine to make the Wildlife program better suited for pursuing future land purchases in the project area.

Formal management plans for the project area will be developed as part of the master planning process, which will likely not take place until 2013 at the earliest. Until that time, land within the project area will be managed in alignment with the goals of the feasibility study.

The Schardt parcel is a diverse mix of grassland, oak openings, deep marsh, tamarack bog, and southern hardwoods. The property provides frontage and desirable access to Reagon's Lake, a 16-acre spring-fed warmwater lake containing healthy bass and panfish populations. The property also contains oak openings within a globally important Conservation Opportunity Area as identified in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. The Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has designated one-third of this property as Primary Environmental Corridor due to the diversity and importance of its wetland plant communities. The current landowner has managed the land primarily for the benefit of wildlife through grassland, tree, and shrub plantings, and by control of invasive species. This work is evident in the abundant fish and wildlife populations that will provide exceptional public hunting and fishing in addition to other nature based recreational opportunities.

Acquisition of the 125.8 acre Schardt parcel would protect valuable upland woods and glacial features from habitat fragmentation; and expand an already significantly sized block of woods, which is attractive to neo-tropical birds and other species that require unbroken blocks of habitat, providing opportunities for hunters, bird watchers, and passive outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The property would also provide a portion of the route for a planned recreational trail from the WDNR's Ottawa Lake campground north to the Glacial Drumlin Trail

Purchase of the Schardt parcel is recommended to provide for public recreation, to prevent incompatible use, to consolidate state ownership and to achieve the goals of the Paradise Valley Wildlife area.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds (Wildlife Management) are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$ 4,660,200	\$ 2,050,157

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE – PARADISE VALLEY WILDLIFE AREA:

Established: 2009
Acres Purchased to Date: 32.3
Acquisition Goal: 4,000 acres
Percent Complete: 0.81 %
Cost to Date: \$66,110

5. APPRAISALS:

APPRAISAL 1:

Appraiser: Steven Vitale
Valuation Date: October 26, 2011
Appraised Value: \$1,020,000
Highest and Best Use: Low density residential subdivision development

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 125.5 acres @ \$8,127.49 per acre: \$1,020,000
- b. market data approach used, 7 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$7,543 - \$16,614 per acre

Appraisal Review: Gregory Markus, 11/10/2011

APPRAISAL 2:

Appraiser: Philip Vander Male
Valuation Date: October 27, 2011
Appraised Value: \$1,075,000
Highest and Best Use: Large residential estate parcels

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 125.5 acres @ \$8,565.74 per acre: \$1,075,000
- b. market data approach used, 6 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$7,940 - \$9,068 per acre

Appraisal Review: Gregory Markus, 11/10/2011

Comments: Final acreage to be purchased is 125.8 acres due to a re-configuration of the homesite to be retained by the seller. No price adjustment was warranted for the small change from the appraised parcel.

RECOMMENDED:

RES Steffes
Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

12-19-11
Date

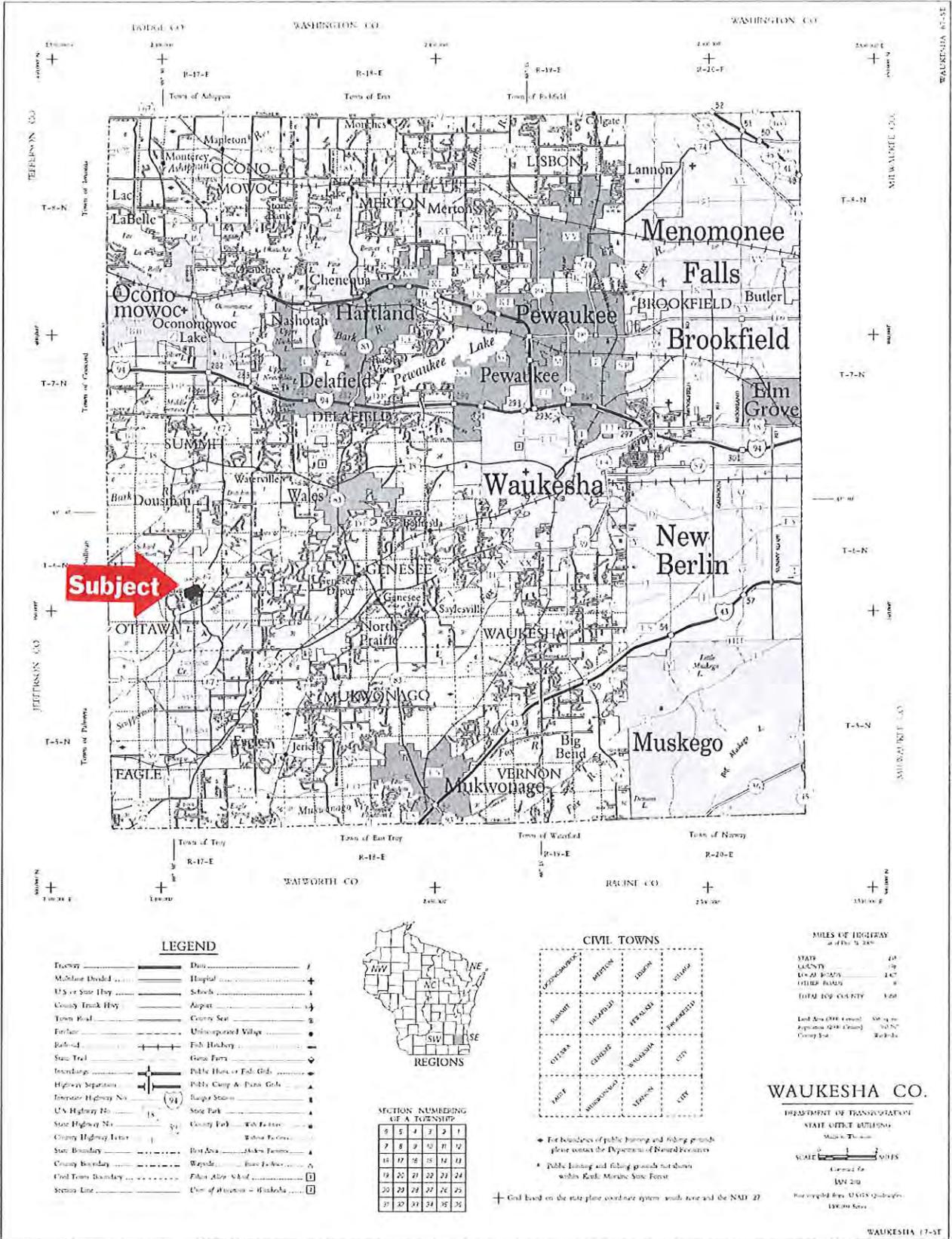
Kristin Hess
Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

12-20-11
Date

[Signature]
Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

12-21-11
Date

RES:sjs



**Edward & Victoria
Schardt - Fee**

Paradise Valley
Wildlife Unit

WM 60159

T6N R17E Sec 21, 22 & 28
Town of Ottawa
Waukesha County
125.50 acres

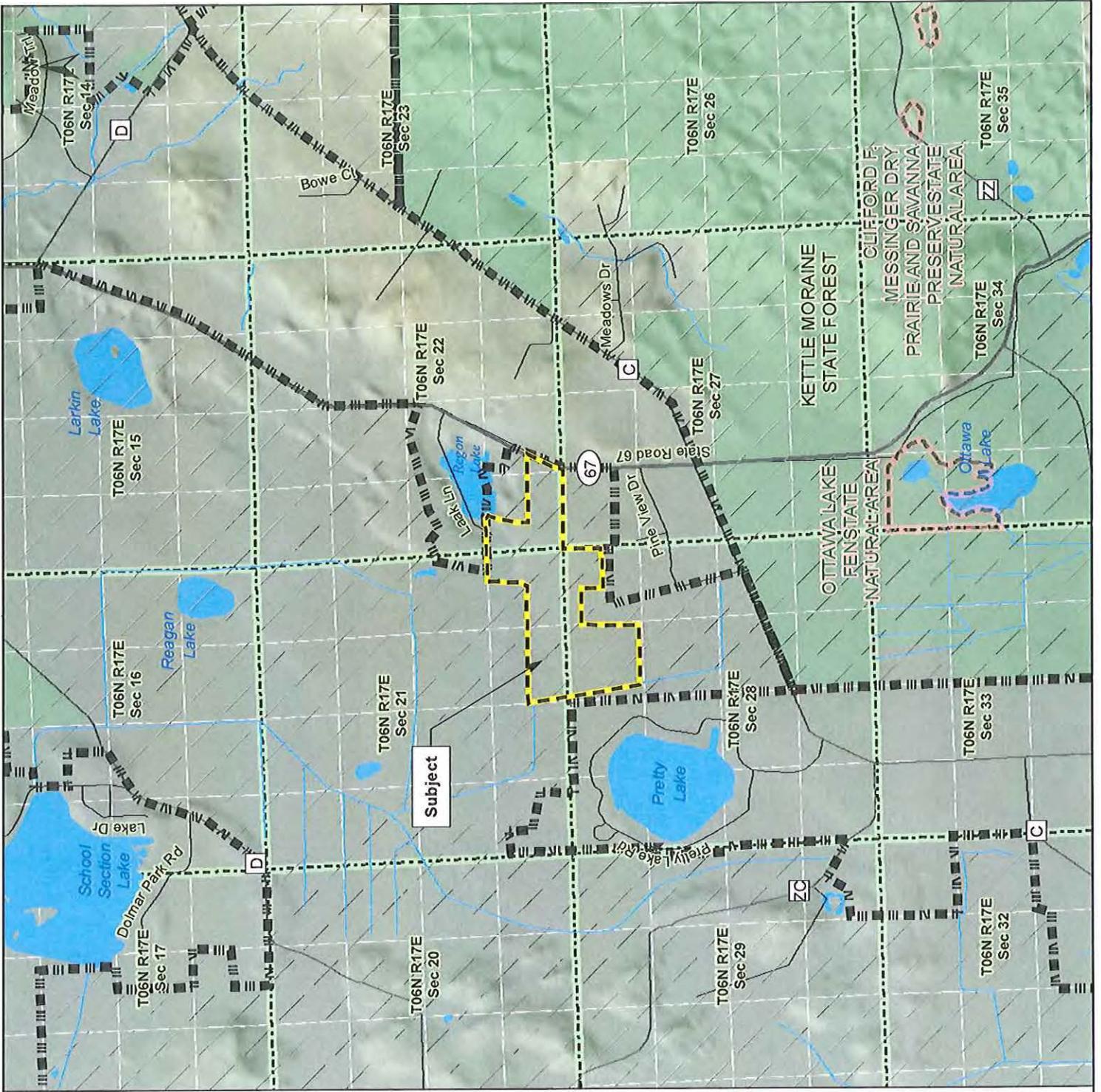
 Subject Parcel

-  DNR Project Boundary
-  WDNR Owned
-  State Natural Area
-  PLSS Section Line
-  QQ Section Boundary

0 600
Feet

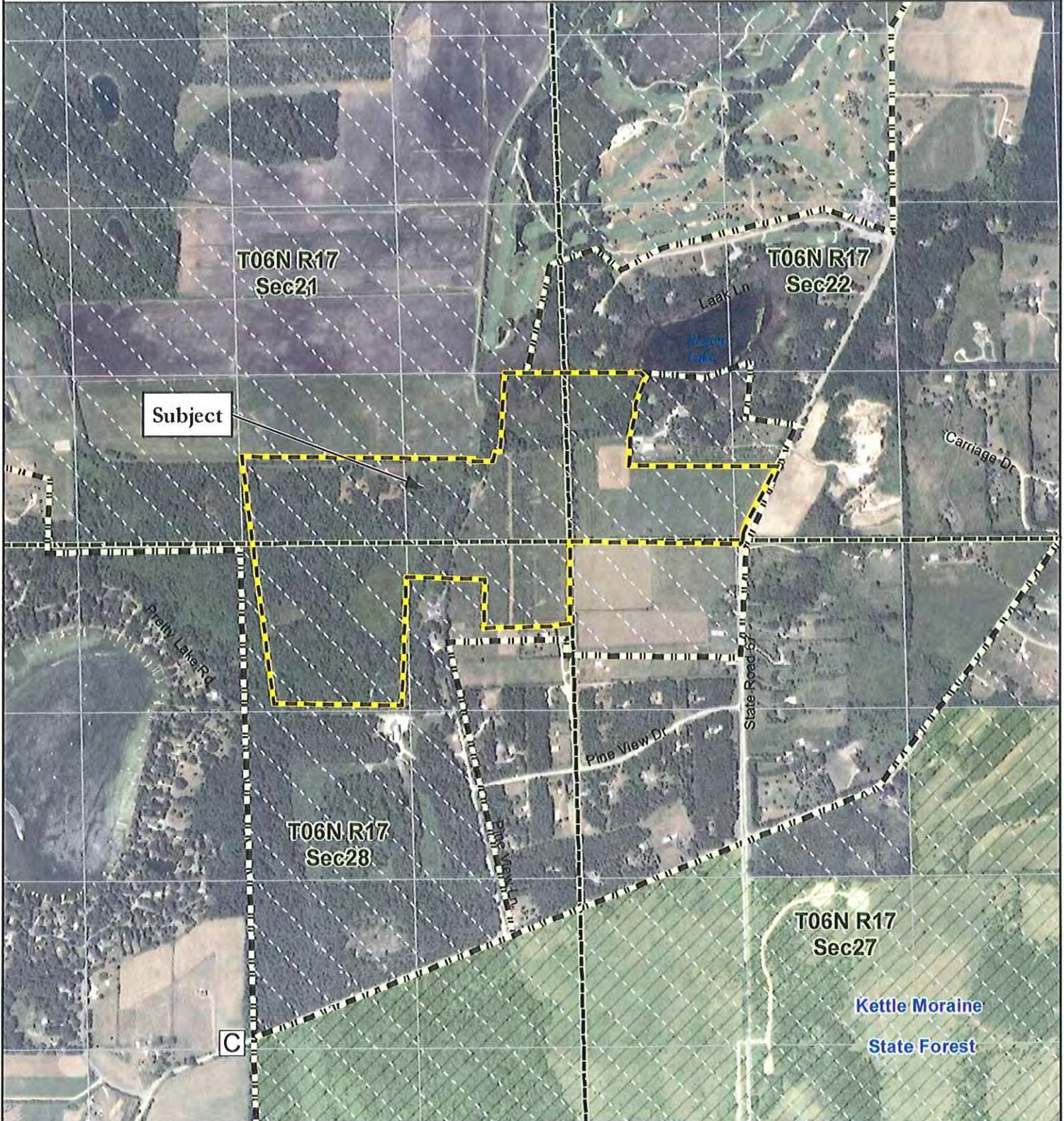


 WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities of Lands
Map Created: Dec 19, 2011 kmh



Edward & Victoria Schardt - Fee

T6N R17E Sec 21, 22 & 28, Town of Ottawa, Waukesha County



**Paradise Valley
Wildlife Area**

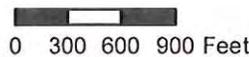
 Subject Parcel

 DNR Owned

 DNR Project Boundary

 Section Line

 QQ Section Lines



Dec 19, 2011 kmh
 Real Estate Section
 Bureau of Facilities and Lands