

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition – Ice Age Trail – Columbia County

FOR: MARCH 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 20 acres of land from Donald Horton for \$176,000 for the Ice Age Trail in Columbia County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

The property is needed for the Ice Age Trail and is located in the Town of West Point. It is located about 20 miles northwest of the City of Madison and five miles northwest of the City of Lodi in the hills and bluffs south of Lake Wisconsin. The parcel is mostly upland woodlands with open grassland, a pond and former farmstead. In 2007, the Department, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, acquired 92 acres of land from Mr. Horton for the IAT. As part of the 2007 transaction, Mr. Horton retained the 20 acres with the homestead for his primary residence. The east side of this 20 acre Horton property borders his former ownership, now IAT land and part of the former Columbia County Richmond Memorial County Park also known as Gibraltar Rock. The property is the last remaining Horton ownership associated with the Gibraltar Rock feature.

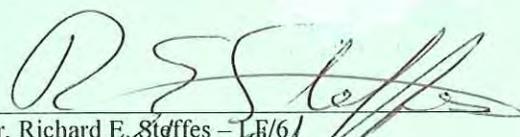
If acquired the Department would manage the Horton property as sustainable trail lands. The farmstead includes a house, barn and several sheds. The buildings are in poor condition and will likely be sold for salvage or razed. This area may then be used for parking lot, wayside, or interpretive site to feature the unique glacial outcropping of Gibraltar Rock. The Town of West Point Chairman sent a letter supporting the acquisition. The Gibraltar Rock area, adjoining the former Horton ownership's east side, was transferred by Columbia County to the Department in 2007. Since that land is open to hunting, it is consistent for this land to be open to hunting as well.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 20 acres of land for \$176,000 for the Ice Age Trail in Columbia County and approve public use of the property for hunting during all established seasons.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

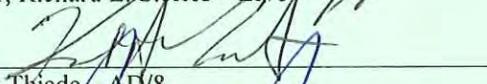
- | | |
|--|--|
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Attached |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> Background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

APPROVED:


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

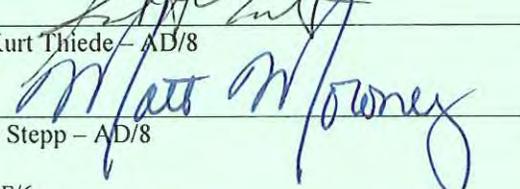
Date

2-15-12


Administrator, Kurt Thiede – AD/8

Date

2-17-12


Secretary, Cathy Stepp – AD/8

Date

2-18-12

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6
 R. Steffes – LF/6
 L. Ross – AD/8
 D. Schuller - PR/6
 M. Aquino – South Central Region

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 20, 2012

TO: Scott Walker

FROM: Cathy L Stepp

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Donald Horton Tract, File # PR 40128
Option Expires May 19, 2012

FILE REF: PR 40128

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Ice Age Trail
Columbia County

Grantor:

Donald Horton
c/o Forrest Hartmann
PO Box 443
Baraboo, WI 53913

Acres: 20Price: \$176,000Appraised Value: \$176,000Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: House, barn, outbuildings (no value)Location: The property is located in Columbia County 5 miles northwest of LodiLand Description: The subject land is rolling to hilly upland.Covertypes Breakdown:

	Type	Acreage
Upland Woodland		14
Grass		3
Water		1
Building Site		2

Total: 20

Zoning: AgriculturePresent Use: Idle, former residenceProposed Use: Public outdoor recreationTenure: 80+ yearsProperty Taxes: \$4,140.14Option Date: January 20, 2012

Stewardship Land Access: This property will be open to the public for permitted nature based outdoor recreational activities to include hiking, hunting and cross country skiing. Fishing is not prohibited but there are no fishable waters present. Trapping is not currently permitted under state law in state parks.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department proposes to purchase 20 acres from Donald Horton located in the Town of West Point in Columbia County for the Ice Age Trail. The parcel is within the project boundary, located about 20 miles northwest of the City of Madison and five miles northwest of the City of Lodi in the hills and bluffs south of Lake Wisconsin. The property is mostly upland woodlands with open grassland, a pond and former farmstead. In 2007, the Department, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, acquired 92 acres of land from Mr. Horton for the IAT. As part of the 2007 transaction, Mr. Horton retained the 20 acres with the homestead for his primary residence but he no longer occupies the property. The east side of this 20 acre Horton property borders his former ownership, now IAT land and part of the former Columbia County Richmond Memorial County Park also known as Gibraltar Rock. The property is the last remaining Horton ownership associated with the Gibraltar Rock feature. The county park was transferred to the Department in 2007.

The Ice Age Trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in 1980 by Congress. It is one of only eleven national scenic trails in the United States and when completed, will run for over a thousand miles through much of Wisconsin. The trail route extends from Door County, south through the Kettle Moraine to Janesville, and then north through Devil's Lake State Park to northwestern Wisconsin. The trail provides opportunities to observe a large number of landforms that are unique to continental glaciation such as eskers, kames, drumlins and kettles, as well as many other features and places of natural beauty.

In 1987, the Wisconsin Legislature passed legislation that established the Ice Age State Scenic Trail as a state project and directed the Department to develop a trail to promote public awareness and appreciation of Wisconsin's glacial heritage, to preserve and protect significant glacial features and other natural and cultural features associated with the period of glaciation, and to provide a continuous off-road trail for recreational use. The Ice Age Trail (IAT) is a cooperative project between the Department, the U.S. National Park Service, the Ice Age Trail Alliance (collectively known as the Triad) and its various volunteer groups around the state, and the counties through which the trail passes. Management, development and maintenance of the trail is shared between the Department and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The trail is intended for low impact uses such as hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, and in suitable areas, cross-country skiing. To date, about half of the trail has been completed in numerous segments. The Natural Resources Board approved a Triad-developed "Corridor of Opportunity" for the Ice Age Trail through southern Columbia County in 2000. At its March 2004 meeting, the Natural Resources Board approved implementation steps of the Land Legacy Plan, placing a high priority on Ice Age Trail land acquisition.

If acquired the Department would manage the Horton property as sustainable trail lands. It would provide recreational opportunities for the public; proposed public uses are hunting, hiking and cross country skiing. Trapping is not currently permitted under state law in state parks and there are no fishable waters present. This is consistent with current Nature Based Outdoor Activities on the adjacent Gibraltar Rock IAT lands. As hunting currently is allowed on the adjoining land, the Natural Resources board is approving public use for hunting. This is in accord with NR10.275(4)(c) of the recently enacted Administrative Code. The farmstead includes a house, barn and several sheds. The buildings are in poor condition and will likely be sold for salvage or razed. This area may then be used for parking lot, wayside, or interpretive site to feature the unique glacial outcropping of Gibraltar Rock. The Town of West Point Chairman sent a letter supporting the acquisition and offering assistance to secure these lands.

Purchase of the 20 acre Horton property for the Ice Age Trail is recommended to provide opportunities for public recreation while protecting the natural and scenic character within this corridor.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$3,000,000	\$1,386,167

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE ICE AGE TRAIL:

Established: 1988
Acres Purchased to Date: 7,770.49
Acquisition Goal: 9,673
Percent Complete: 80.33 %
Cost to Date: \$13,614,803.13

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Paul Stone
Valuation Date: November 28, 2011
Appraised Value: \$176,000
Highest and Best Use: rural residential

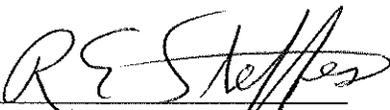
Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 20 acres @ \$8,800 per acre: \$176,000
- b. market data approach used, 3 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$8,444 - \$8,928 per acre

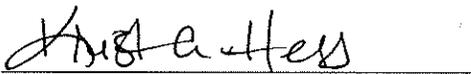
Appraisal Review: Gregory Markus, 1/3/2012

Comments: The appraiser did not assign any value to the improvements due to poor condition. The unadjusted value range was \$7,343 to \$10,500 per acre.

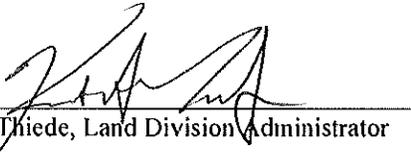
RECOMMENDED:


Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

2-15-12
Date


Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

2/16/12
Date


Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

2/17/12
Date

RES:

Donald Horton - Fee

Ice Age Trail

PR 40128

T10N R7E Sec 13
Town of West Point
Columbia County
20 acres

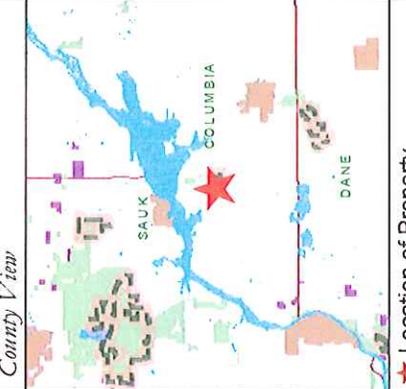


Subject Parcel

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

0300 Feet

County View



Location of Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities of Lands
Map Created: Jan 31, 2012 kmh

