

SUBJECT: Land Donation – Glacial Habitat Restoration Area – Winnebago County

FOR: MAY 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Nature Conservancy has offered to donate 320 acres of land to the Department for the Glacial Habitat Restoration area (GHRA) in Winnebago County.

The Department proposes to accept a 320-acre gift of land from The Nature Conservancy that is located in the Town of Nepeuskun about 13 miles southwest of the City of Oshkosh. The gift includes two non contiguous parcels; both located within the GHRA project boundary and helps meet bird habitat needs. The property includes 600 feet of frontage along Rush Lake and a large complex of 4 drainage ditches. Rush Lake is a large wetlands complex, important for waterfowl hunting and migrating birds. The state has existing ownerships and conservation easements surrounding these properties. The topography is low/wet and relatively flat with mostly reed canary grass, cattails and brush. Accepting the gift will allow wildlife management for grassland birds and waterfowl hunting by maintaining the natural condition of the land. Sedge meadow habitat will be encouraged by sharecropping the canary grass portions for marsh hay. This cooperation with local farmers will minimize management workload. The property will also provide for hunting and trapping opportunities for the public. The Department has held an easement on most of the land since 1995.

The Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) was established in 1990 to restore 38,600 acres of grasslands and 11,000 acres of wetlands to increase populations of ring-necked pheasants, waterfowl, and grassland songbirds in 24 townships in Dodge, Fond du Lac, Columbia, and Winnebago Counties. The project uses a landscape scale approach to habitat management that incorporates a patchwork of wetland and grasslands with cropland to create habitat conditions more favorable for self-sustaining wildlife populations in the glacial moraines of east central Wisconsin. The intent is to widely scatter suitable habitat throughout the area, rather than concentrating the habitat in one area. The mix of agricultural land, grasslands, and wetlands is the key to productive wildlife populations.

The need for the GHRA is based on a documented decline in grassland and wetland wildlife populations. Reductions in habitat quality and quantity because of land use changes have contributed to the decline of grassland nesting wildlife populations. Also, wetland loss or degradation has been an important factor in the decline of many wetland wildlife species. Applying the habitat management practices that restore and enhance grasslands and wetlands will create more favorable conditions for self-sustaining populations of blue-winged teal, mallards, ring-necked pheasants, and non-game grassland birds. Accepting the 320-acre gift will allow management of the area for wildlife, to allow continued restoration efforts, and provide additional opportunities for public recreation and education.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board accepts the donation of 320 acres of land for the Glacial Habitat Restoration program, that a certificate of appreciation be sent to The Nature Conservancy and that an expression of appreciation be made 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 J. Steffes - LF/6

Date

4-13-12

Administrator, Kurt Thiede - AD/8

Date

4-23-12

Secretary, Cathy Stepp - AD/8

Date

5/7/12

cc: S. Miller - LF/6
R. Steffes - LF/6
L. Ross - AD/5
T. Hauge - WM/6
J. Romback-Bartels - NER

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 13, 2012
 TO: Natural Resources Board
 FROM: Cathy Stepp
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Donation, The Nature Conservancy
 Tract, File # WM 60168

FILE REF: WM 60168

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Glacial Habitat Restoration Area
 Winnebago County

Grantor:

The Nature Conservancy
 Attn: Stephanie Judge
 633 West Main Street
 Madison, WI 53703

Acres: 320 **Please note: Assessor records show these parcels totalling 290.11 acres, however plat maps indicate ownership of 320 acres due to receding of Rush Lake since the government lots were first surveyed.

Price: N/A Gift of land

Interest: Donation of fee title

Improvements: None

Location: The tract is located in Winnebago County 7 miles south of Omro

Land Description: The subject land is low and level.

Covertypes Breakdown:

Type	Acreage
Wetland	320
Total:	320

Zoning: Conservancy

Present Use: Wildlife habitat

Proposed Use: Public outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat

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 Department proposes to accept a 320-acre gift of land from The Nature Conservancy that is located in the Town of Nepeuskun in Winnebago County about 13 miles southwest of City of Oshkosh for the Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) project area. The gift includes two non-contiguous parcels; both fall completely within the GHRA project boundary and meets the grassland bird nesting model. The property includes 600 feet of frontage along Rush Lake and a large complex of 4 drainage ditches. Rush Lake is a

includes 600 feet of frontage along Rush Lake and a large complex of 4 drainage ditches. Rush Lake is a large wetlands complex, important for waterfowl hunting and migrating birds. The state has existing ownerships and conservation easements surrounding these properties. The topography is low/wet and relatively flat with mostly reed canary grass, cattails and brush. The Department recommends accepting the gift to allow wildlife management for grassland birds and waterfowl hunting by maintaining the natural state. Sedge meadow habitat will be encouraged by sharecropping the canary grass portions for marsh hay. The property will also provide for pheasant and deer hunting opportunities for the public.

The Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) was established in 1990 to restore 38,600 acres of grasslands and 11,000 acres of wetlands to increase populations of ring-necked pheasants, waterfowl, and grassland songbirds in 24 townships in Dodge, Fond du Lac, Columbia, and Winnebago Counties. The project uses a landscape scale approach to habitat management that incorporates a patchwork of wetland and grasslands with cropland to create habitat conditions more favorable for self-sustaining wildlife populations in the glacial moraines of east central Wisconsin. The intent is to widely scatter suitable habitat throughout the area, rather than concentrating the habitat in one area. The mix of agricultural land, grasslands, and wetlands is the key to productive wildlife populations.

The Department is using perpetual easements, fee title acquisition, other agency programs, volunteer agreements, and cost-share activities with a goal to establish grassland nest cover and to restore wetland within the 24 township project area. The need for the GHRA is based on a documented decline in grassland and wetland wildlife populations. Reductions in habitat quality and quantity because of land use changes have contributed to the decline of grassland nesting wildlife populations. Also, wetland loss or degradation has been an important factor in the decline of many wetland wildlife species. Applying the habitat management practices that restore and enhance grasslands and wetlands will create more favorable conditions for self-sustaining populations of blue-winged teal, mallards, ring-necked pheasants, and non-game grassland birds.

The Department recommends accepting the 320-acre gift to allow management of the area for wildlife, to allow continued restoration efforts, and to provide additional opportunities for public recreation and education.

3. FINANCING:

No funding is required for this transaction. The Nature Conservancy acquired this land in 1992 & 1993 for \$9,200 (no state dollars involved.) TNC donated a conservation easement to DNR in the past but now desires to convey fee title.

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE GLACIAL HABITAT RESTORATION:

Established: 1990
Acres Purchased to Date: 16,321.14
Acquisition Goal: 28,400 acres
Percent Complete: 57.47 %
Cost to Date: \$13,956,989.55

RECOMMENDED:


Richard E. Steffes, Real Estate Director

4-13-12
Date


Kristin A. Hess, Bureau of Legal Services

4/16/12
Date


Kurt Thiede, Land Division Administrator

4/23/12
Date

RES:

Acknowledgment of Gift

This is to certify that at its May 2012 meeting, the Natural Resources Board gratefully accepted gift of 320 acres of land in Winnebago County for the Glacial Habitat Restoration from

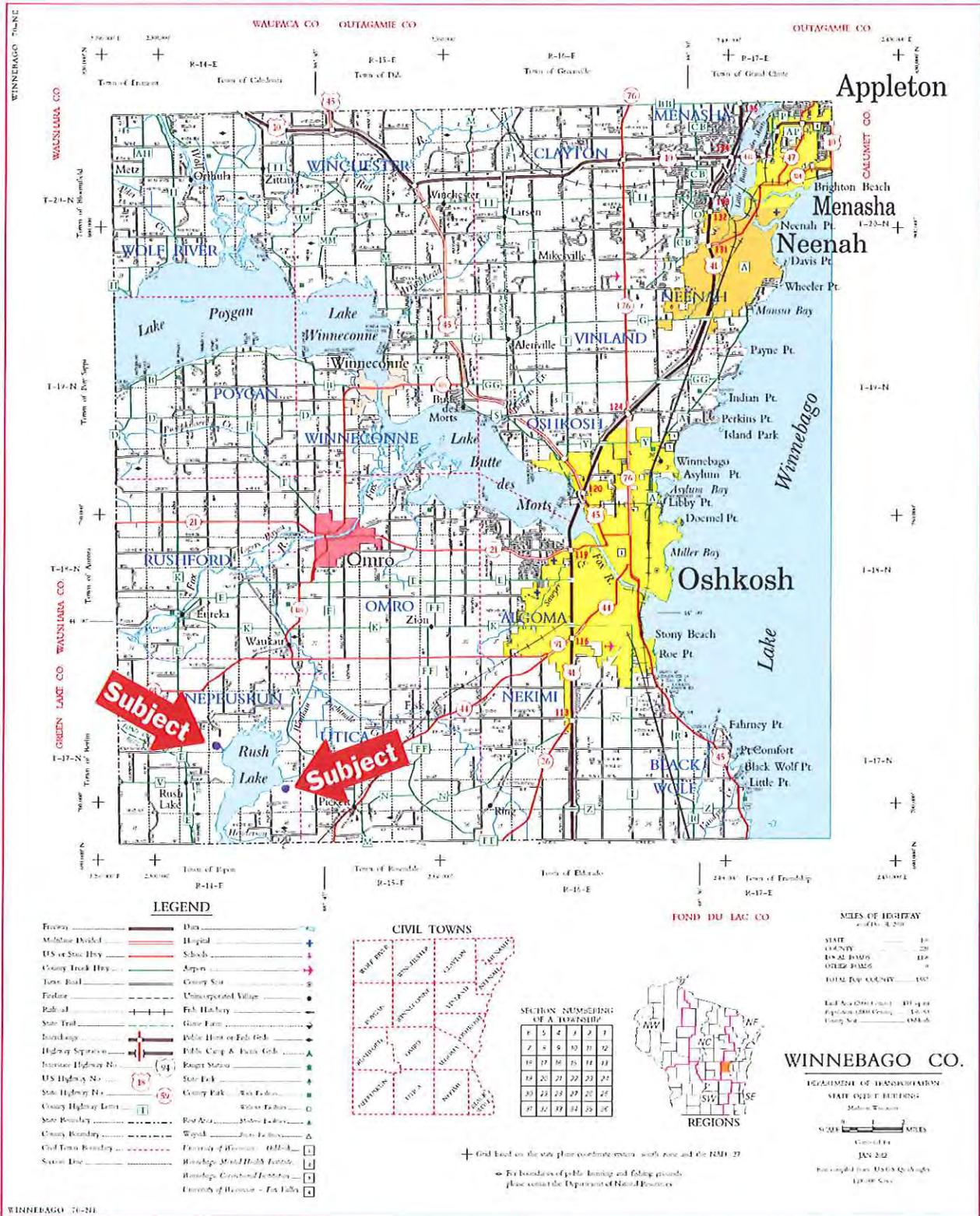
The Nature Conservancy

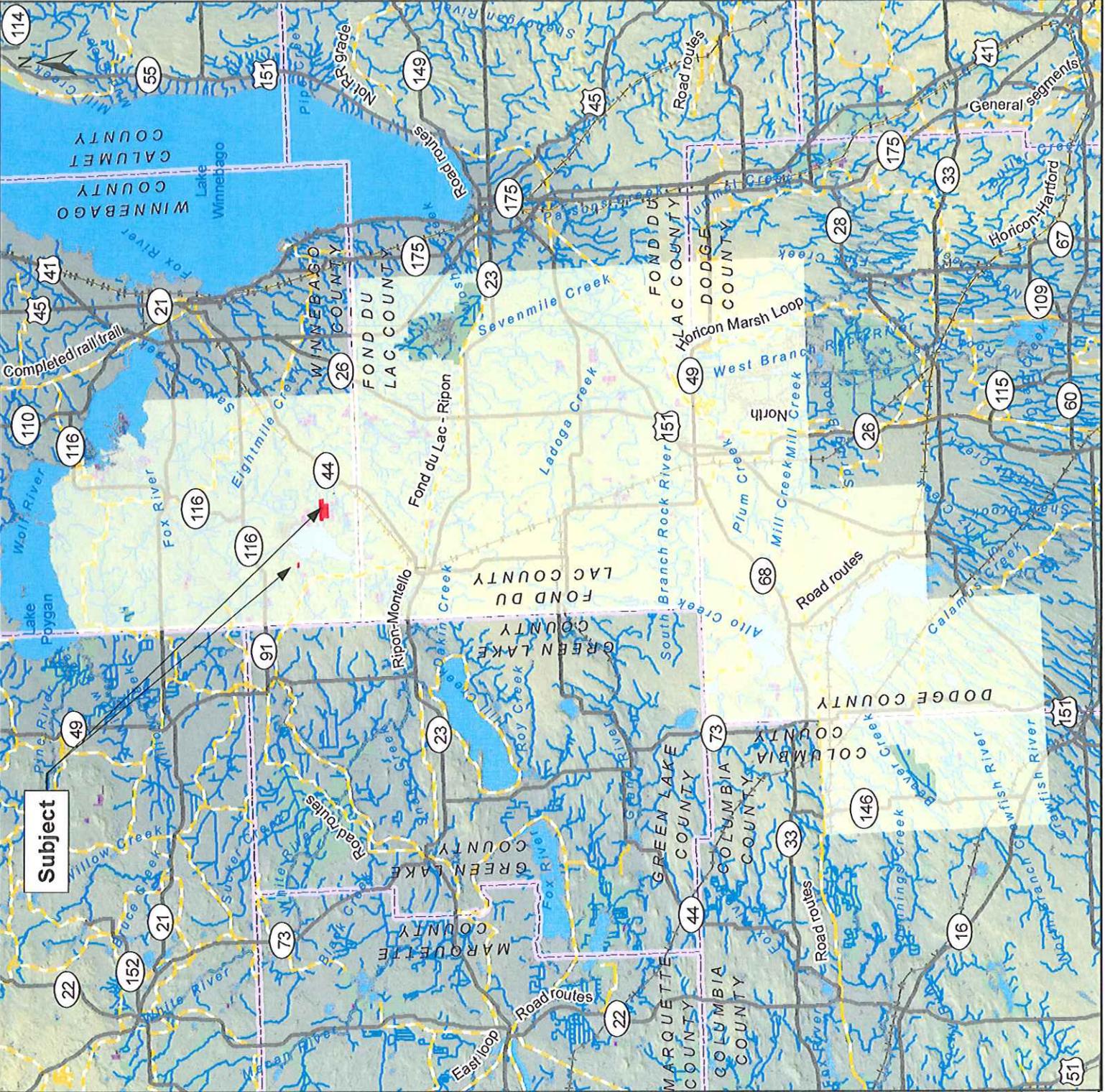
It is significant that organizations such as yours are interested in helping protect Wisconsin's natural heritage and contribute materially toward this end.

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

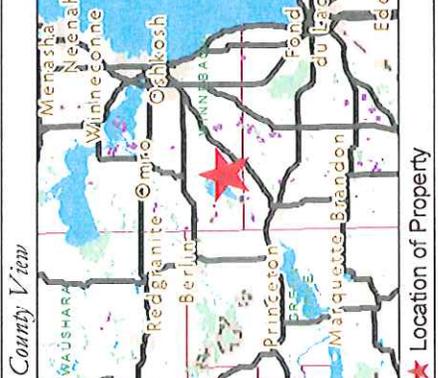
David Clausen, CHAIR





The Nature Conservancy - Gift
Glacial Habitat Restoration Area
WM 60168
 T17N R14E Sec 15, 25 & 30
 Town of Nepeuskun
 Winnebago County
 320 Acres
Subject Parcel

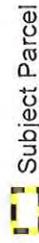
- Glacial Heritage Restoration Area
- WDNR Owned
- WDNR Easement
- County Forest Land
- Recreation Trail



The Nature Conservancy - Gift Glacial Habitat Restoration Area

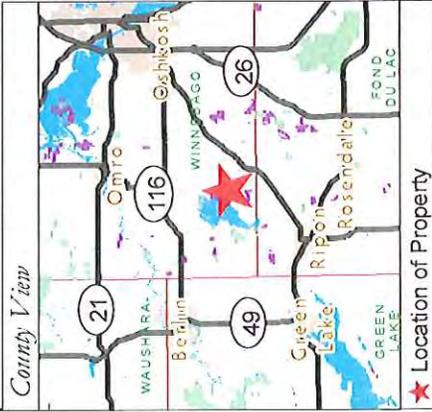
WM 60168

T17N R14E Sec 15, 25 & 30
Town of Nepeuskun
Winnebago County
320 Acres



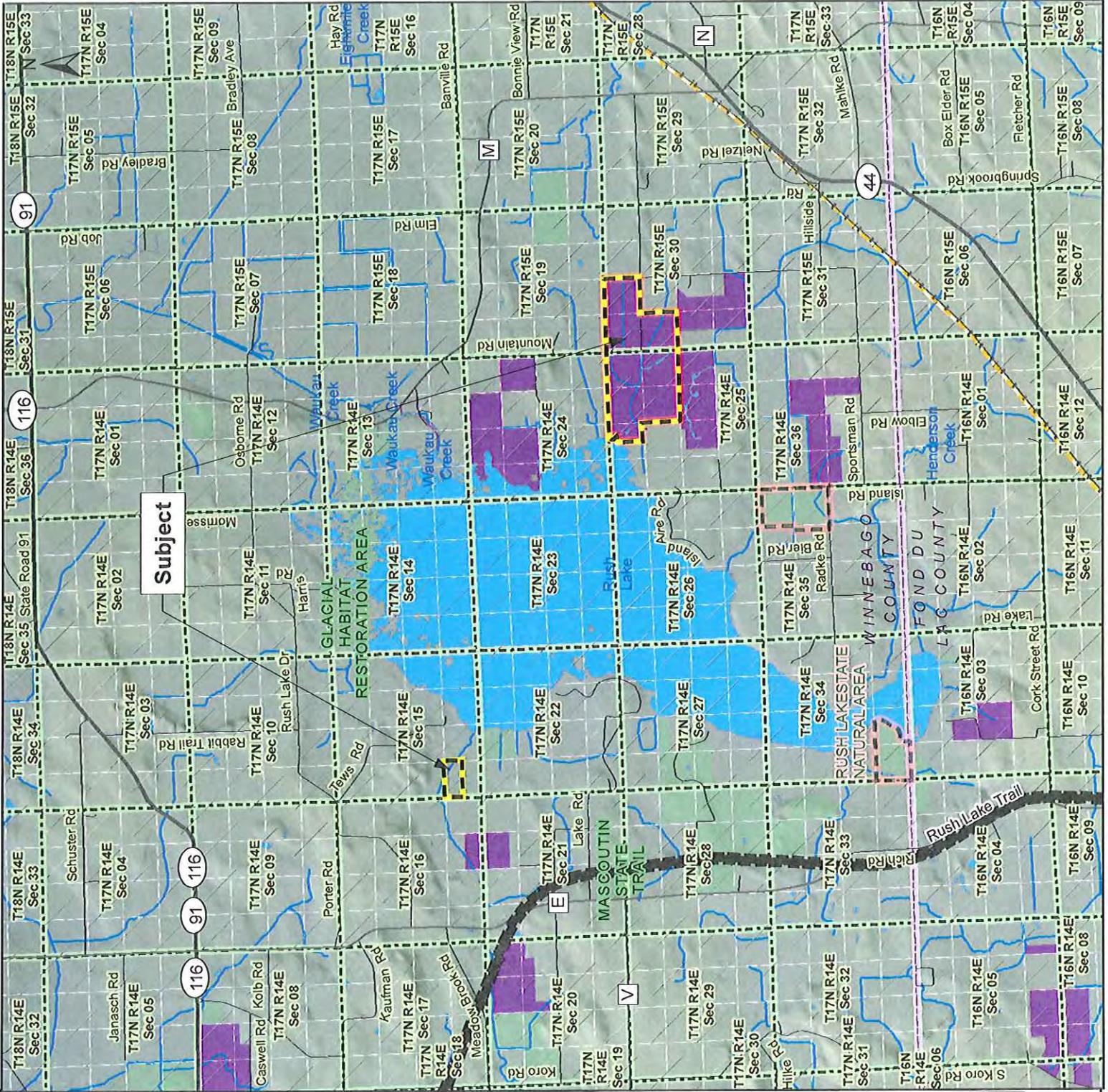
- WDNR Owned
- WDNR Easement
- DNR Project Boundary
- State Natural Area
- Recreation
- Trail
- PLSS Section Line
- QQ Section Boundary

0 600
Feet



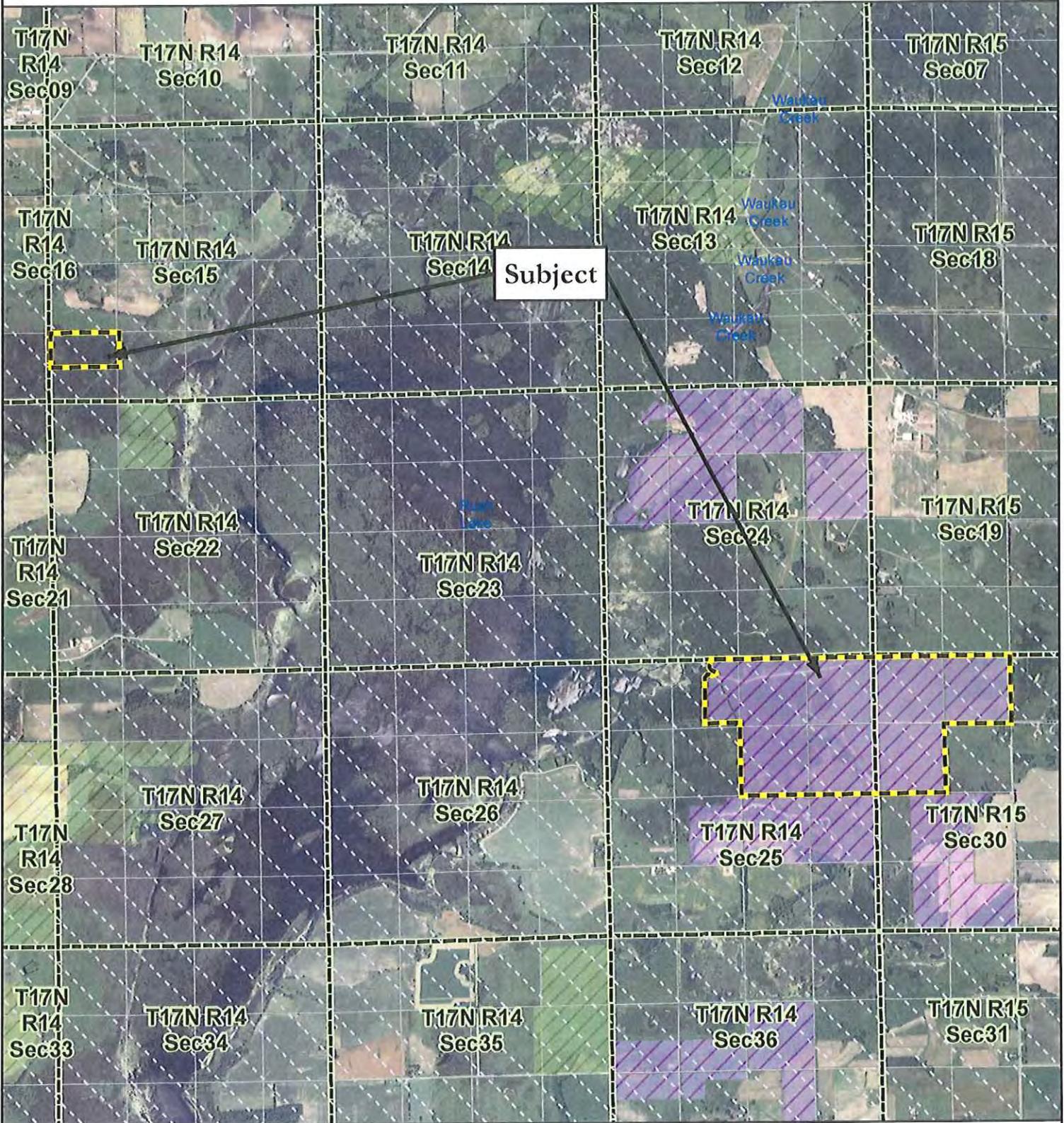
★ Location of Property

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bureau of Facilities of Lands
Map Created: Apr. 02, 2012 kmh



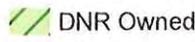
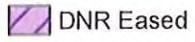
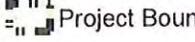
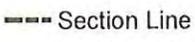
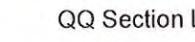
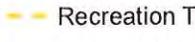
The Nature Conservancy - Gift

T17N R14E Sec 15, 25 & 30, Town of Nepeuskun, Winnebago County



Glacial Habitat Restoration Area

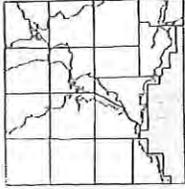
 Subject Parcel

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

 0306000 Feet



 Apr 02, 2012 kmb
 Real Estate Section
 Bureau of Facilities and Lands



NEPEUSKUN and RUSHFORD (SE) T.17N. - R.14E.



2012 Plat: 299.3 acres

