

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – BARABOO HILLS RECREATION AREA - COLUMBIA COUNTY

FOR: AUGUST 2009 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 32.19 acres of land from Cynthia Davis for \$192,400.00 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Columbia County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000. Funding for this acquisition will use 50% federal LAWCON funds and 50% state Stewardship fund.

The Department established the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area as part of a 1999 partnership which includes the Governor's office, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dane County, Sauk County and The Nature Conservancy who signed a unique agreement designed to allow for the expansion of Highway 12 to four lanes to and through the Baraboo Hills region while protecting and preserving the natural resource base of the Baraboo Range.

The Baraboo Hills are valuable resource of national and international significance. Covering more than 50,000 acres, the range contains the largest block of non-fragmented deciduous forest remaining in the upper Midwest. The eastern portion of the range shows many effects of glaciation. The most recent glacier did not cover the western portion of the range. Differences in elevation, exposure and soils within the range create a significant variety of ecological habitats. At least 28 different natural communities have been identified within the range. These communities harbor 23 species that are federal or state-listed as threatened or endangered species. About half of the more than 2,200 species of vascular plants found in Wisconsin exist within the range. The range is also extremely important habitat for the preservation of neotropical migratory birds. Many of these birds are dependent on the continued existence of large tracts of deciduous forest for suitable nesting habitat. Preservation of the forest of the Baraboo Range is critical to the future health of these bird species.

More than 1,100 acres of land within a 1½-mile radius is protected either in fee or by conservation easements for the Baraboo Hills Program, and it is ¼-mile east of other department-owned lands. The owner has a draft CSM done for five lots, which does not require any zoning change. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, protect the scenic resources, and prevent this parcel's fragmentation and incompatible development in the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 32.19 acres for \$192,400 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area.

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:

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

7-9-09
Date

Laurie Osterndorf
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8

7/10/09
Date

Matthew J. Frank
Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

7-14-09
Date

- cc: S. Miller – LF/6
- R. Steffes – LF/6
- L. Ross – AD/8
- D. Schuller – PR/6
- L. Eagan – SCR/Fitchburg

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 9, 2009
 TO: Governor Doyle
 FROM: Matthew J. Frank *MJF*
 SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Cynthia Davis Tract, File # PR 40058,
 Option Expires October 14, 2009

FILE REF: PR 40058

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Baraboo Hills Recreation Area
 Columbia County

Grantor:

Cynthia Davis
 E12969 Neuman Road
 Baraboo, WI 53913

Acres: 32.19Price: \$192,400.00Appraised Value: \$192,400.00Interest: Fee Title PurchaseImprovements: Granary, well, septic, and asphalt drivewayLocation: The property is located in Columbia County nine miles west of the City of Portage.Land Description: The land is rolling to hilly.

<u>Covertime Breakdown:</u>	<u>Type:</u>	<u>Acreage:</u>
	Upland Woodland	30.69
	Building Site	1.50
	TOTAL:	32.19

Zoning: Recreational DistrictPresent Use: Investment - future subdivisionProposed Use: Scenic Protection and Public RecreationTenure: 5 yearsProperty Taxes: \$547.06Option Date: June 16, 2009Stewardship 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 32.19 acres of land from Cynthia Davis for \$192,400.00 for the Baraboo Hills Recreation Area in Columbia County. The property is within the Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area. It is primarily wooded lands and a former building site. If acquired, this parcel will add to a large block of protected land in the area. Department ownership will provide opportunities for public recreation, consolidate department ownership, and prevent incompatible development in the area. Funding for this acquisition will use \$96,200 of the remaining LAWCON funds designated for fee acquisition in the Baraboo Hills.

