

File# FI 308 – Rusk County - 116.5 acres

The Department acquired this parcel for \$3,100 in 1962. Forestry staff had been preparing for a pending timber sale on this property; however, this work was suspended as this parcel is under review for possible sale. The Department has also made investments in electrofishing in Big Weirgor Creek in this area to characterize gamefish populations in a stream currently designated as a Class 3 trout water.

The property has approximately 2,650 feet of two-bank frontage along Big Weirgor River, a class three trout stream. In the Northern Rivers Initiative, Big Weirgor Creek ranked 6th among Rusk County streams and in the top 10% of 1494 stream segments in 20 northern counties. These were rated by federal, state, and county resource managers by 26 quantitative and subjective variables that described the streams' cultural, recreational, and natural resource values.

Estimates of fishing pressure on Big Weirgor Creek in 1984 were 14 angler-hours (5 trips), based on information voluntarily recorded in angling diaries, and 107 angler-hours (51 trips) projected from an opening weekend creel survey. Contemporary polls have documented substantial declines in trout angling participation.

Rusk County Forestry Department currently owns and manages a large tract bordering the west boundary of this parcel for timber production and recreation. With those shared conservation objectives, Rusk County is an ideal candidate to purchase and manage this property for timber production and outdoor recreation to ensure the property continues to provide timber for regional markets and is used by the public.

The Department recommends that the Natural Resources Board offer this land for sale under the authority granted by s. 23.145 Wis. Stats., and the land be only offered to Rusk County, subject to a stream bank easement that grants management rights to the Department and a deed restriction requiring the land remain open to the general public for all five NBOA's in perpetuity.

