

MASTER PLAN VARIANCE OR AMENDMENT

Variance

Amendment

Property Name: Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area

Date the Current Master Plan Approved: March 23, 1995

(Changes to plans approved after 1996 must follow the requirements of ch. NR 44.04, Wis. Adm. Code.)

Proposed Change to the Master Plan (The specific master plan language changes and any change in landuse classification, with revised maps as appropriate):

The following provision is to be added to the trails section of the master plan:

A number of county-designated snowmobile trails are located within the property boundary. No new snowmobile or ATV trails are planned. The snowmobile trail accessing the TFSWA near Grant Lake is in a hazardous location. The department will work with Iron County and the local snowmobile club to make necessary improvements to reduce hazards and assure all trails meet department standards. The department will work with Iron County and the local snowmobile club to reroute approximately 1550 feet of Snowmobile Trail 10 to department land from private land which has been closed to snowmobiling.

See attached maps.

Approved: [Signature] Date: 5/9/16
Administrator, Division of Lands or Division of Forestry

(Note: a plan amendment must also be approved by the Natural Resources Board.)

Variance/Amendment Initiator or Author; Brett Bockhop

Job Title: Property Manager

Supporting Approvals

[Signature] Date: 4/29/16
Department Master Planning Manager, LF

Brett Bockhop Date: 04/12/2016
Property Manager

[Signature] Date: 4/12/2016
Regional Director, Land Leader or Basin Leader

[Signature] Date: 05.03.16
Program Bureau Director

Others with a special interest;

Signature: _____ Date; _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date; _____

Title: _____

Supporting Information

Purpose and need for the plan change (include background and history as appropriate):

Snowmobile Trail 10 existed prior to state purchase of the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area and was designated in the property master plan to remain. The Iron County Forestry Department has received notice from a private landowner that he is requiring the portion of snowmobile Trail 10 currently located on his 40 acre parcel, NWNW, Sec. 17, T42N, R3E, be removed. Since the private land is surrounded by DNR ownership as part of the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area (TFSWA), the Iron County Forestry Department is requesting the private land portion of trail be relocated onto Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area land on the north side of the private property line.

The entire length of this section of Trail 10 is approximately three miles long and a significant portion of it is already located on TFSWA property. This section connects Trail 10A on the east, reconnects to Trail 10 to the west and cuts off the portion of Trail 10 that goes by a residential area on Popko Circle Road. If this re-route isn't completed it could jeopardize the existence of the entire three miles of trail. All other trail options were explored and due to wetland issues this is the best alternative requiring the least amount of new trail construction.

A grant application for trail construction costs of \$1,965.54 has been submitted by Iron County Forestry Department to the DNR Snowmobile Program to be considered as a mandatory reroute. Trail construction will be completed by the Iron County Forestry Department consistent with other trails in the area and will include light dozing to remove rocks and saplings from the new trail. The trail will be about 1,550 feet in length and 16 feet in width, with approximately 240 feet running through an alder and willow wetland. This trail and wetland crossing will be used during frozen conditions so will not require hardening, culverts or bridges.

Construction for the 240 foot wetland portion of the trail will involve cutting the alder and willow at or near the ground level. No ground disturbance will occur in this area. Maintenance in this area will include periodic removal of vegetation as it grows back and packing the trail with snow for winter frozen ground use. Based on conversations with DNR Water Regulations and Zoning Specialist Alyssa Core it is anticipated that wetland and stormwater permits will not be required since physical ground disturbance will not occur in the wetland portion of the trail.

Maintenance of this trail will be contracted to the Mercer Sno-Goers Snowmobile Club and will be overseen by the Iron County Forestry Department. Winter maintenance will consist of grooming using Sno-Cat Tucker and/or a tractor pulling a 12' drag. Off-season maintenance will include signing and brushing using a tractor with mounted mower as needed.

An NHI review was conducted for endangered resources which resulted in one element occurrence of Lake-Shallow, Soft, Seepage – Community within 1 mile of the project. The trail construction will not affect this EO since construction will occur outside the riparian management zone and will follow BMPs for water quality. Also, per compliance with DNR Manual Code 1810.1 regarding cultural resources, DNR staff have reviewed the published screening sheets, which indicate no known cultural resources to be found in the project area.

How the proposed plan change is supported by or is inconsistent with the property vision, goals and objectives or other plan provisions:

The master plan supports the use of snowmobile trails currently on the property. The rerouting of 1,550 feet of trail which has been excluded from private land onto DNR land allows the current trail to remain open for recreational use.

This trail re-route supports one of the master plan objectives to “Maintain or enhance facilities for the diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities which are available on the flowage, including boating, canoeing, camping, hunting, trapping, nature observation and snowmobiling.”

Anticipated primary benefits of the proposed plan change (include only information not presented in the purpose and need section above):

By relocating the closed section of trail from private land to DNR land, this section of Iron County Trail 10 can remain open and be available for snowmobile use.

Additional anticipated benefits:

Iron County relies heavily on tourism for employment and income and its snowmobile trails are a large part of the recreation industry. Local businesses and resorts in the area will continue to benefit from this revenue.

Unavoidable adverse impacts (attach an Environmental Analysis if one was prepared):

A 240-foot long by 16-foot wide section of trail through a wetland will result in the alder and willow vegetation being removed to ground level.

Summary of any alternatives considered:

Alternate locations for the trail reroute were evaluated by the Iron County Forestry Department but dismissed since they involved area with considerably more wetlands.

Compatibility with statutes, codes, and department policies:

The new trail development and signing will follow the standards set forth in Administrative Code NR50.09 (4) (c) as a trail participating in the snowmobile aids program. Future trail maintenance will be compatible with Administrative Code NR50.09 (4) (d).

Federal aid limitations (cite if any federal aid moneys are involved with either acquisition or management of the property and whether the proposed plan change is compatible with the aid requirements or if a federal review of the proposal is required):

The overall TFSWA has federal LWCF interest. LWCF allows for various outdoor recreation opportunities and will not prevent the proposed action of relocating this portion of trail.

Public review process used (summary of who was notified about the proposal or otherwise reviewed the proposal and the meetings, mailings and other techniques used):

A press release in the Iron County Miner and the Ironwood Daily Globe will outline the proposal and request comments be submitted to the TFSWA property manager. A notice will also be added to the TFSWA website soliciting comments from the public for the proposed change. Iron County and Town of Sherman Government Boards will be contacted and asked to provide comment as well as seek comment from their constituents. As the TFSWA is located within ceded territory, Tribal representatives will also be contacted to provide comment or input in the proposed action.

Description of the support and/or opposition to the proposal (include reasons for the various positions taken and any unresolved issues or concerns):

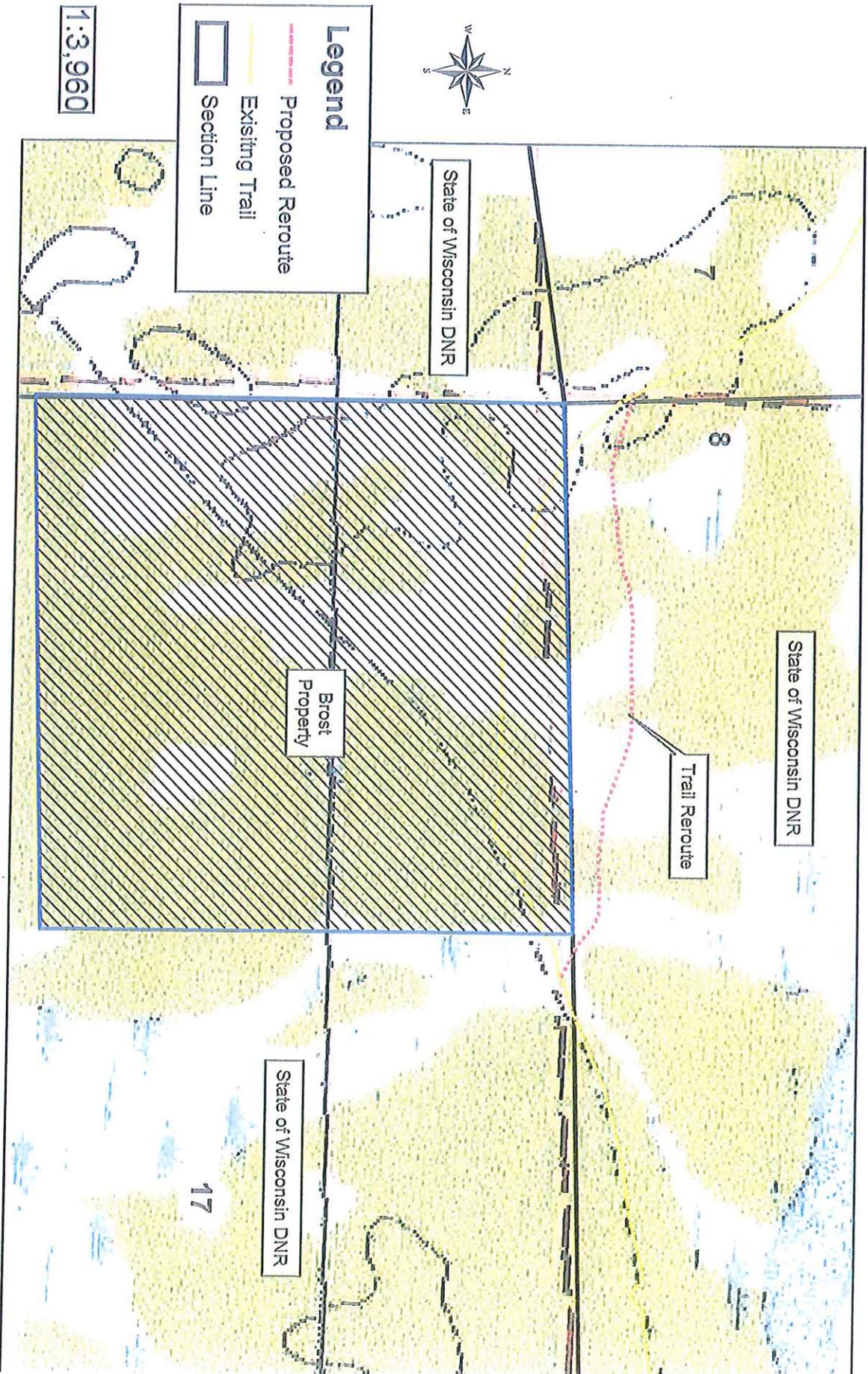
Five comments were received on the draft plan variance. Four were in support of the snowmobile trail reroute and one was neutral on the snowmobile proposal but advocated that an ATV trail be considered on the property if any changes were being made to accommodate snowmobiles.

The Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners Association Board of Directors submitted a letter of support. Their position is that the reroute is in line with the master plan because it does not create a new route, only relocates a small portion of an existing trail and the rerouted trail will allow continuation of a historical recreational use without a significant environmental impact.

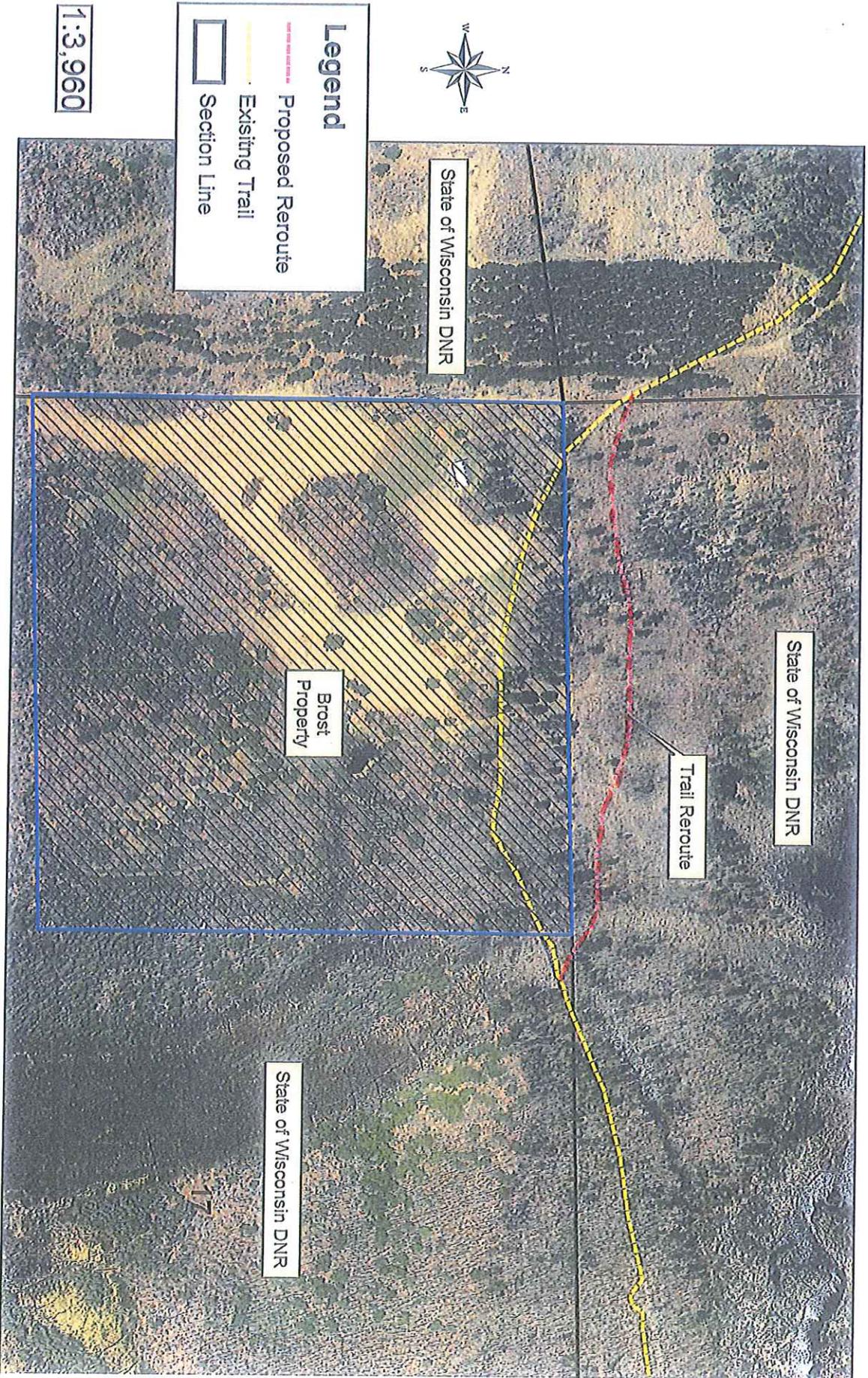
The other supporting comments favor rerouting the trail because it would maintain the current miles of snowmobile trail and its economic benefit. One commenter supports the plan variance so long as it does not open the door to an ATV trail and the new segment does not displace non-motorized trail users.

There are no unresolved issues related to this proposal.

Iron County Snowmobile Trail Reroute
Section 17 T42N R 3E
Town of Mercer

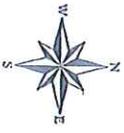


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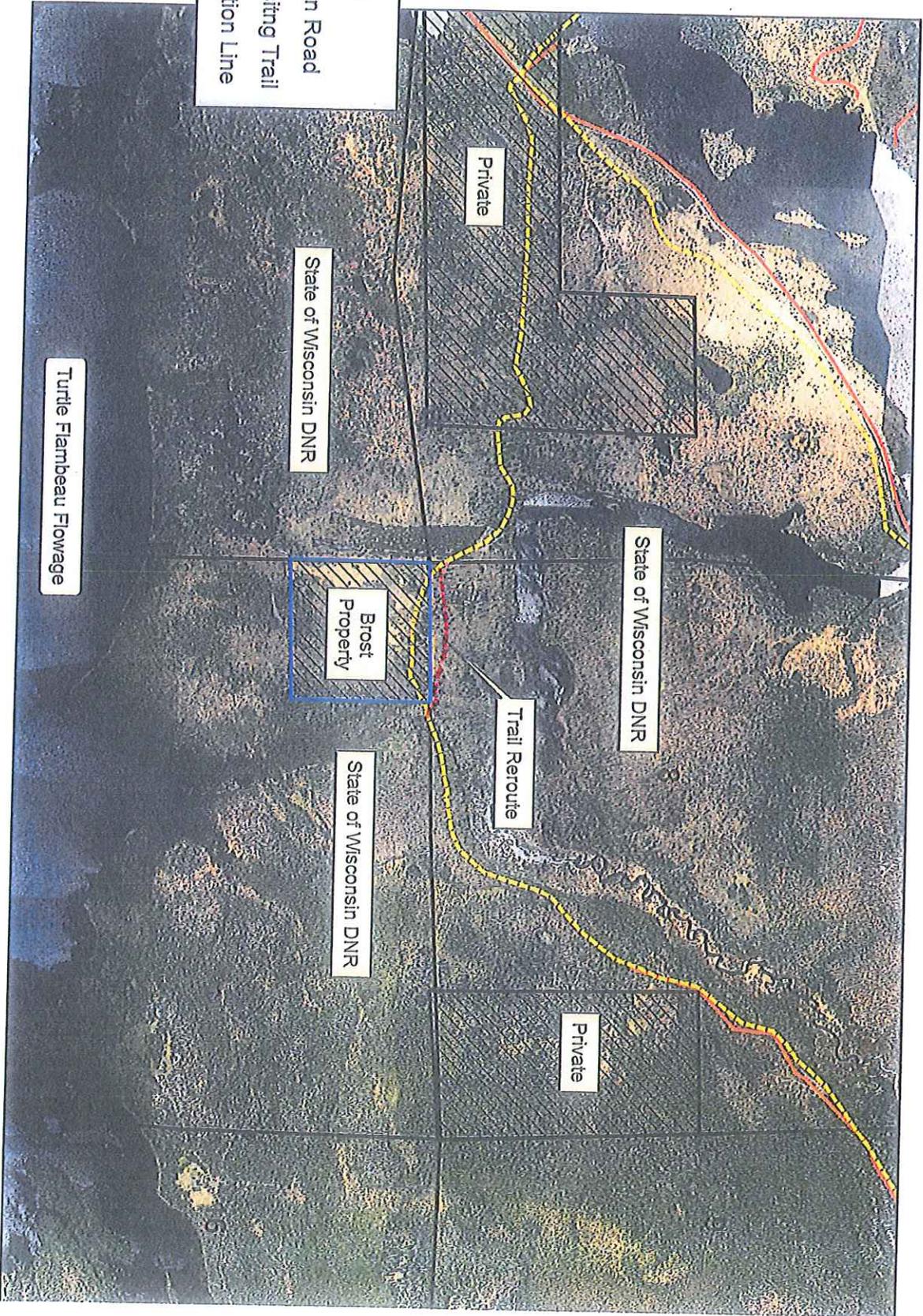
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Iron County Snowmobile Trail Reroute
Section 17 T42N R 3E
Town of Mercer



Legend

- Town Road
- Existing Trail
- Section Line



1:15,840

Turtle Flambeau Flowage