Form 1100-1
Rev. 10-77

*Item*_____ *Minutes of*_____

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Madison, Wisconsin

ITEM RECOMMENDED FOR NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA

TO THE SECRETARY: C. D. Besadny *Date* November 17, 1982

FROM: James T. Addis

SUBJECT: Master Planning - Approval of conceptual Master Plan for Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County.

1. *To be presented at* December *Board meeting by* Vern Hacker.

2. *Appearances requested by the public:*

Name	*Representing whom?*

3. *Reference materials to be used:*
Memorandum dated November 16, 1982, from James T. Addis to C. D. Besadny - Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County Master Plan.

4. *Summary:*
The final draft of the conceptual master plan for this property has been prepared and is presented for review and approval. The current acreage goal for the property is 1,310 acres of which 857.18 acres have been acquired in fee title within the boundary. Two separate state-owned parcels of 76.5 and 10.0 acres, respectively, are adjacent to, but outside, of the boundary. It is recommended that the boundary be expanded to include the two properties, with the combined acreage (86.5 acres) to be subtracted from the acres yet to be acquired which would change from 452.82 acres to 366.32 if approved. (Continued on reverse side)

5. *Recommendation:*
That the master plan be approved.

APPROVED:

J. R. Huntoon, *Administrator* 11-23-82 *Date*

B. B. Braun, *Deputy Secretary* 11/24/82 *Date*

Secretary C. D. Besadny 11-24-82 *Date*

Signed:
James T. Addis, Director
Bureau of Fish Management

cc - Judy Scullion - ADM/5
Ron Nicotera - ADM/5
James Lissack - Eau Claire
Ron Poff - FM/4
Ed Faber - RE/4
Vern Hacker - Oshkosh

The task force also recommends that the acreage goal be increased by 320.0 acres, to be obtained from:

Mud Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County:	60.0 acres
Mill Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County:	120.0 acres
Monroe County Remnants:	20.0 acres
Small Lake Creation/Statewide Habitat:	120.0 acres
Total:	320.0 acres

If all recommendations in the master plan are approved, the new acreage goal will be 1,630 acres, with 686.32 acres remaining to be acquired.

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM — STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: November 17, 1982 File Ref: 2100

To: C. D. Besadny

From: James T. Addis

Subject: Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County Master Plan

Attached are the Conceptual Master Plan and the Environmental Assessment Screening Worksheet for the Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County. A public meeting regarding the master plan was held at the Cataract Town Hall on May 7, 1981, with 17 members of the public and 6 DNR personnel present. The only comments or questions raised by the public at the meeting related to the possible loss of taxes, and the lack of adequate fishery area access roads. Both questions were answered to the satisfaction of all concerned by the DNR persons present.

The Environmental Assessment Screening Worksheet for the master plan was also available to the public for an appropriate period ending November 15, 1982, and it has been approved by the Bureau of Environmental Impact. The master plan was supplied for comment to internal bureaus, and to a wide range of other interested parties. Comments from internal bureaus were considered, and revisions made where appropriate. Comments from outside reviewing agencies and DNR responses are shown in the Appendix attached to the master plan.

The Big Creek Fishery Area consists of a boundary around 4.5 miles of the main stream which is rated as a Class II trout water, and portions of 6 tributaries, including 8.0 miles of Class I and 2.6 miles of Class II trout waters and 0.3 miles of warmwater streams.

The major tributary to Big Creek is Rathbone Creek (12.71 cfs) which merges with Dustin Creek and its 3.16 cfs outside of the boundary. There are 4 impoundments on this stream that negatively influence water temperatures to such a degree that Big Creek remains a Class II stream because of them. Soper Creek, the headwaters of Big Creek proper also has 2 impoundments, both deleterious to trout life. The lands surrounding Cooper Pond on Soper Creek have just been acquired by the state as a remnant, and because it was constructed without a permit, will be removed by early 1983. The state will also attempt to acquire the remaining five ponds as remnants, and for the time being, the boundary of the fishery area will not be expanded to include them.

The current approved acreage goal is 1,310 acres, of which 857.18 acres have been acquired in fee title within the boundary and two parcels of 76.5 and 10.0 acres adjacent to, but outside of the boundary. The master plan task

force recommends expanding the boundary to include the 86.5 acres of state-owned property, and subtracting them from the acres to be acquired. If approved, the property owned in fee title within the boundary will increase to 943.68 acres, leaving 366.32 acres yet to be acquired.

Additionally, the task force recommends that the acreage goal be increased by 320.0 acres in order to adequately complete the goals and annual objectives. If that request is approved by the Natural Resources Board, the acreage would be obtained from:

Mud Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County :	60.0 acres
Mill Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County:	120.0 acres
Monroe County Remnants :	20.0 acres
Small Lake Creation/Statewide Habitat :	120.0 acres
Total	320.0 acres

If all recommendations in the master plan are approved by the Board, the new acreage goal will be 1,630 acres,with 686.32 acres remaining to be acquired.

Four additional boundary changes are recommended, with 2 changes to straighten the boundary and 2 changes to extend it to access roads. All are relatively minor in nature.

Approximately 6.5 miles of stream is in need of repair and improvement including brushing, rip-rapping or intensive improvement ranging in cost from $3,000 to $30,000 per mile.

One access road is proposed to be developed, and several roads to be used for habitat construction and future maintenance will be cleared and seeded. Wildlife management will focus on the development of upland game habitat, and forest management will include planting, thinning, pruning and the harvest of a variety of trees to complete long-range goals.

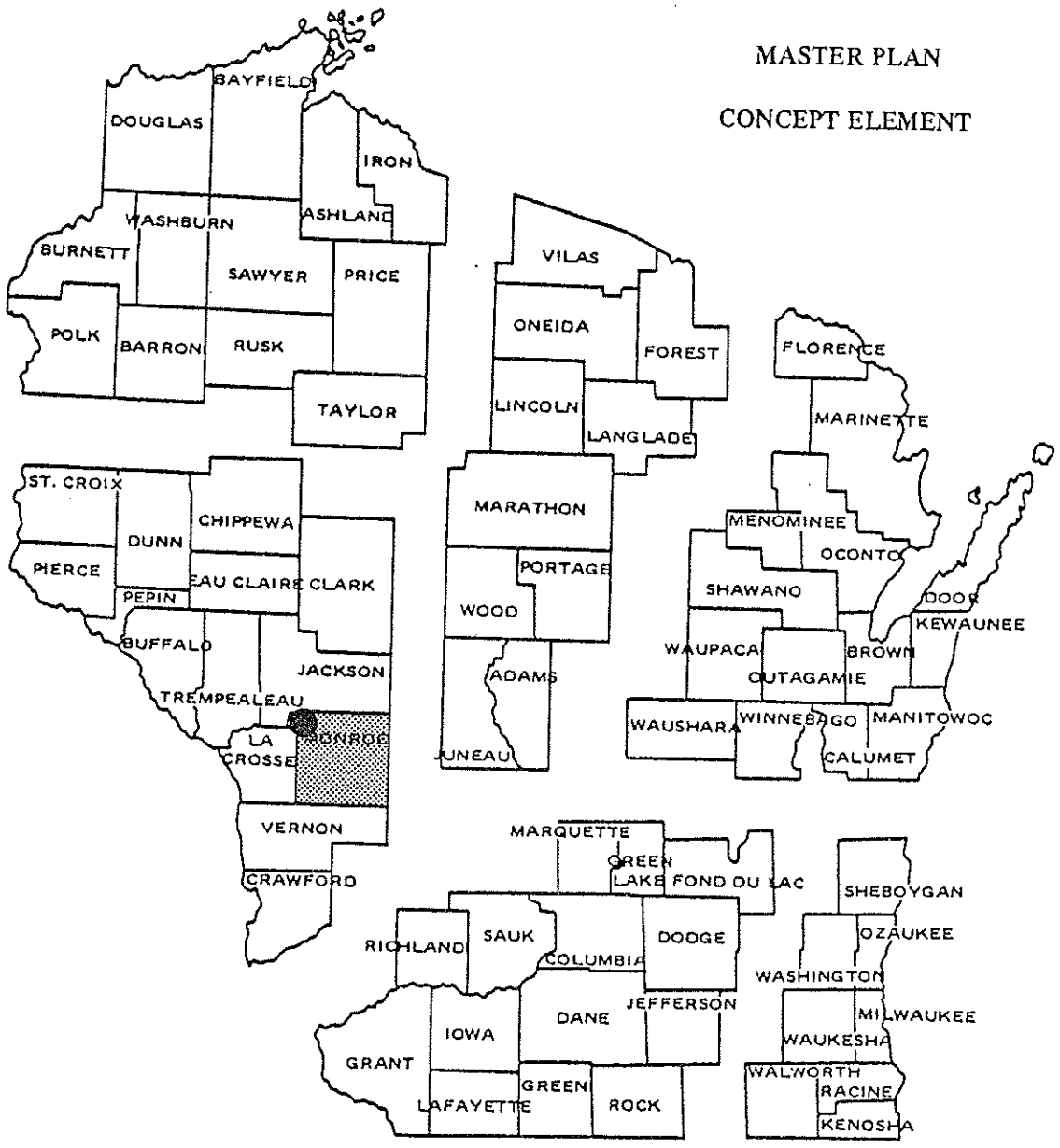
Your approval is requested to submit the plan to the Natural Resources Board at the December, 1982 meeting.

VAH:aep
Attach
cc - Judy Scullion - ADM/5
Ron Nicotera - ADM/5
James Lissack - Eau Claire
Ron Poff - FM/4
Ed Faber - RE/4
Vern Hacker - Oshkosh

BIG CREEK FISHERY AREA MONROE COUNTY

MASTER PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

Co-Leader – Kenneth J. Wright, Area Fish Manager
Co-Leader - Greg R. Mathson, Fishery Technician
Douglas W. Radke - Area Warden
Raymond E. Kyro - Area Wildlife Manager
Ronald P. Olson - Area Land Agent
John W. Halbrehder - Assistant Area Forester
Elmer O. Simonson - District Operations Coordinator

Approved by Natural Resources Board

_____
Date

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MADISON, WISCONSIN

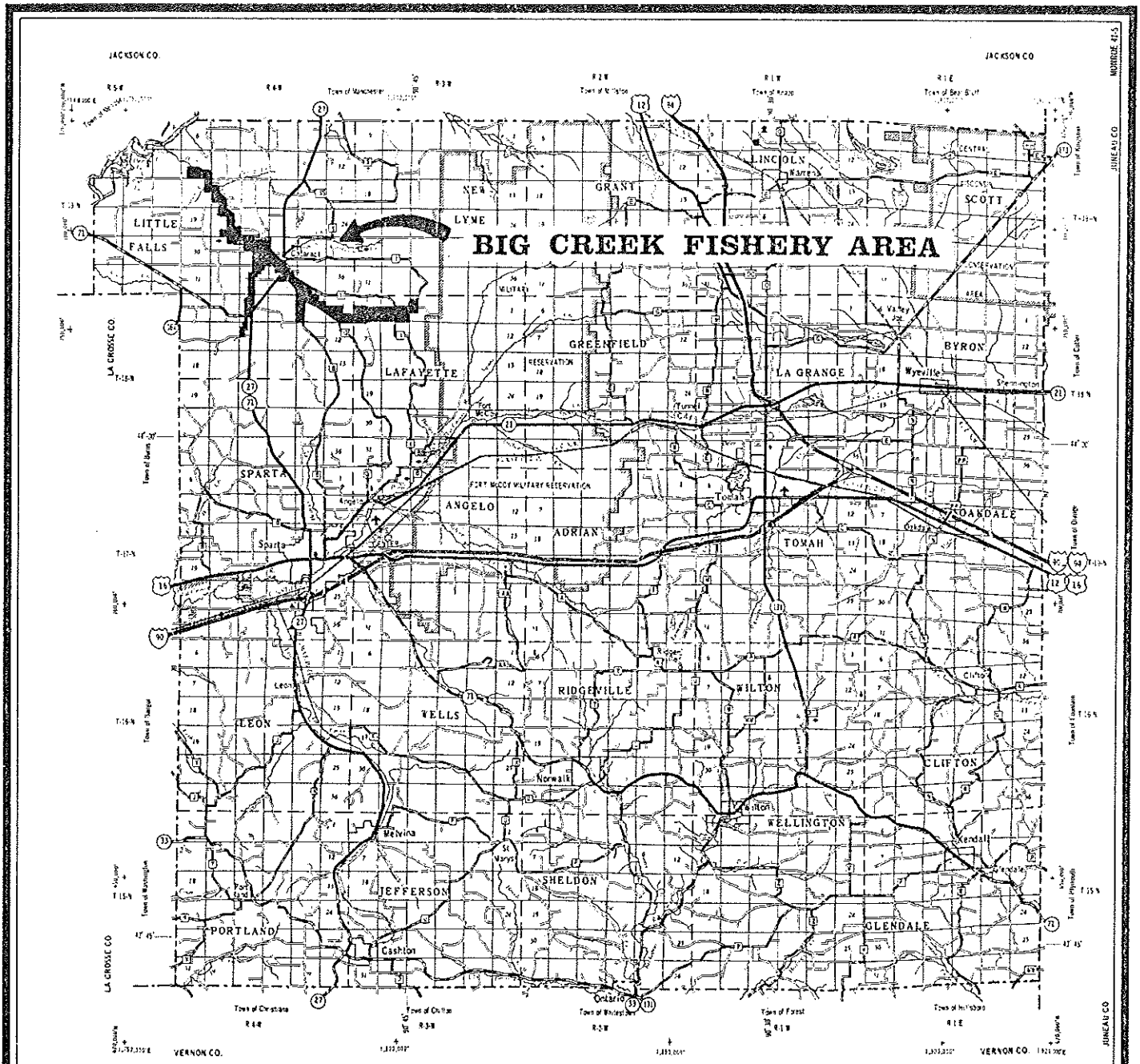


Figure 1. Location – Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County.

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SECTION I - ACTIONS

GOALS, ANNUAL OBJECTIVES, AND ANNUAL ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Goals

To obtain land control, and to manage, preserve, and protect all property within the boundary of the Big Creek Fishery Area in Monroe County; to enhance fishing and other recreational and educational activities while perpetuating or restoring the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the waterway.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for 1,500 angler days of fishing for brown and brook trout.
2. Provide 1,000 participant days of hunting for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, gray and fox squirrels, cottontails and waterfowl.
3. Manage timber lands to provide an annual allowable harvest of 30,000 board feet of lumber and provide habitat for wildlife species.
4. Provide 100 participant days of trapping for mink, muskrat, beaver, otter, raccoon, skunk, weasel, and red and gray fox.

Additional Benefits

1. Provide 1,000 participant days of other recreational and educational activities including berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, nature study, hiking, photography and cross-country skiing.
2. Provide firewood as a by-product of forestry practices.
3. Benefit nongame species native to the area.
4. Contribute to the habitat of migratory, endangered and threatened species.
5. Provide limited access to public waters.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The recommended management and develoment program for the Big Creek fishery area includes continued acquisition, stream improvement, access development and limited forest and wildlife management.

Acquisition is to proceed at the maximum rate to acquire land preferably by fee title if possible, or by perpetual easement if necessary, from willing sellers, as it becomes available. Presently, 943.68 acres of the approved acreage goal of 1,310 acres have been acquired in fee title, with 857.18 acres owned inside the present approved boundary, and 86.50 acres adjacent to, but outside of the boundary (Figure 2).

The acreage goal should be increased by 320 acres. If approved, the new acreage goal will be 1,630 acres.

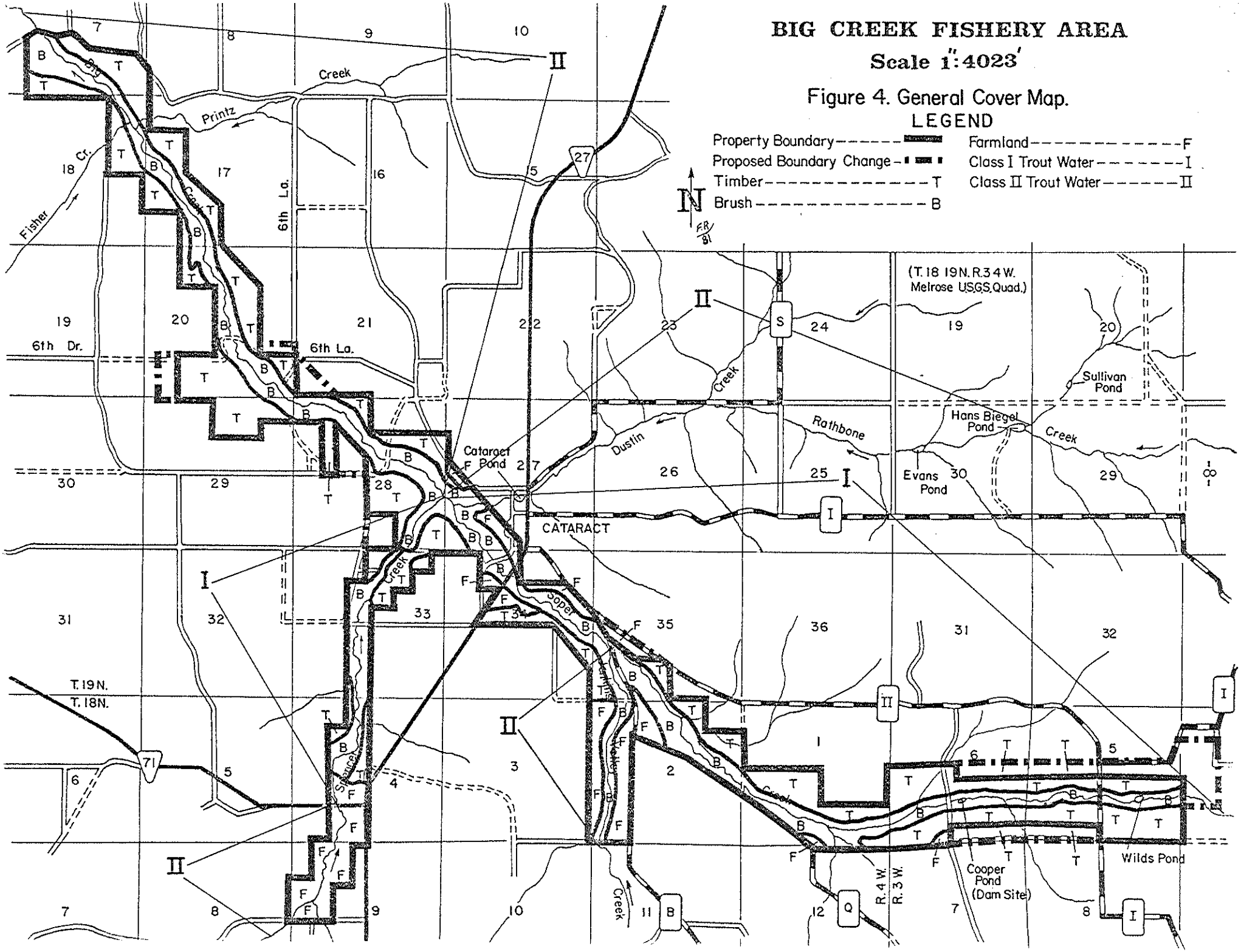
The property boundary should be expanded to include the state-owned 76.5-acre parcel outside of the boundary which is located in Section 4 and 5, Township 18 North, Range 3 West, and it should be subtracted from the acres remaining to be acquired.

Another 10-acre stated-owned property is located outside of the boundary in Section 35, Township 19 North, Range 4 West. The task force recommends expansion of the boundary to CTH "II". The property will then lie within the boundary. The 10 acres should also be subtracted from the acres remaining to be acquired.

If the addition of the 2 properties and the proposed increase in acreage goal are approved, 686.32 acres will still remain to be acquired to fulfill the acreage goal.

Four additional property boundary expansions are recommended by the task force. None will add acreage to the property. They are suggested to simplify property boundaries, to prevent trespassing on private lands, and to improve access to adjacent state lands should the sites eventually be acquired. They include:

1. Straightening of the boundary in the SW 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 28, Township 19 North, Range 4 West.
2. Straightening of the boundary in the SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 21, Township 19 North, Range 4 East.


BIG CREEK FISHERY AREA
Scale 1":4023'
Figure 4. General Cover Map.
LEGEND
Property Boundary
Proposed Boundary Change
Timber
Brush
Farmland
Class I Trout Water
Class II Trout Water
(T. 18 19N. R. 3 4W. Melrose USGS Quad.)
Big Creek
Printz
Fisher Cr.
6th La.
6th Dr.
Creek
Dustin
Rathbone
Hans Biegel Pond
Sullivan Pond
Evans Pond
Catarget Pond
CATARACT
Soper
Spencer
Hadley
Cooper Pond (Dam Site)
Wilds Pond
T. 19N.
T. 18N.
R. 4 W.
R. 3 W.

Historical and Archaeological Features

There are 2 known archaeological sites in the fishery area and probably many more yet to be discovered. The known sites include a prehistoric campsite located at the Auburn Bridge in Sections 28 and 33, T19N, R4W; and a campsite in the S 1/2 of Section 27, T19N, R4W. Neither site has been evaluated in terms of their eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Considering the types of habitat in the fishery area, the State Historical Society believes that there is a very high probability there are other historical or archaeological sites along Big Creek and its tributaries. Therefore, prior to any movement of soils or structures in the fishery area, clearance will be obtained from the State Historical Society.

Land Use Potential - Designation of Land Use Classes

Resource Protection Areas - The Resource Protection Areas identified within the boundary of the Big Creek Fishery Area are those adjacent to the roads on the exterior boundary (Figure 5). These areas are 200 feet wide and are primarily buffer zones to screen the heavily traveled hard surface roads. They will be designated as Scenic Areas - Sc.

Resource Development Areas - All lands not designated as Resource Protection Areas will be assigned Resource Development Area Land use designations - Experimental Management (RD_1) for wildlife and abandoned farmfields, Fisheries and Wildlife Management Areas (RD_2), and Forest Production Areas (RD_3).

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Private Inholdings

The public ownership within the boundary lies along the stream on most of the property. A majority of the land between the stream and the public roads are in private ownership and are posted prohibiting public use. Portions of the stream frontage are in public ownership on one bank only. The fishery area is also divided by private ownership into 3 distinct and separate parcels, making management of the entire area as one property difficult (Figure 2).

Lack of Adequate Access

At the present time much of the state-owned land is along the stream only. Access to the stream can be gained at several areas where the private-owned land borders a public road. More public access sites from main roads are needed to better utilize the resource. The last 1/4 mile of the access road off 6th Drive is privately owned. During the hunting season, this section of land is posted (Figure 2). Access should be obtained.

Tree Diseases

Dutch elm disease, oak wilt and bark beetles are present but there are presently no major problems with control. However, they could create a major control problem in the future if they are allowed to build up in areas not intensively managed.

Unauthorized Activities

Misuse such as littering, vandalism, and illegal snowmobile, motorcycle, and 4-wheel drive use are very minor problems at the present time because of the limited access to the public lands. Woodcutting without permits, camping, and using adjacent private lands occurs to a greater degree and are becoming problems.

Poor Water Quality

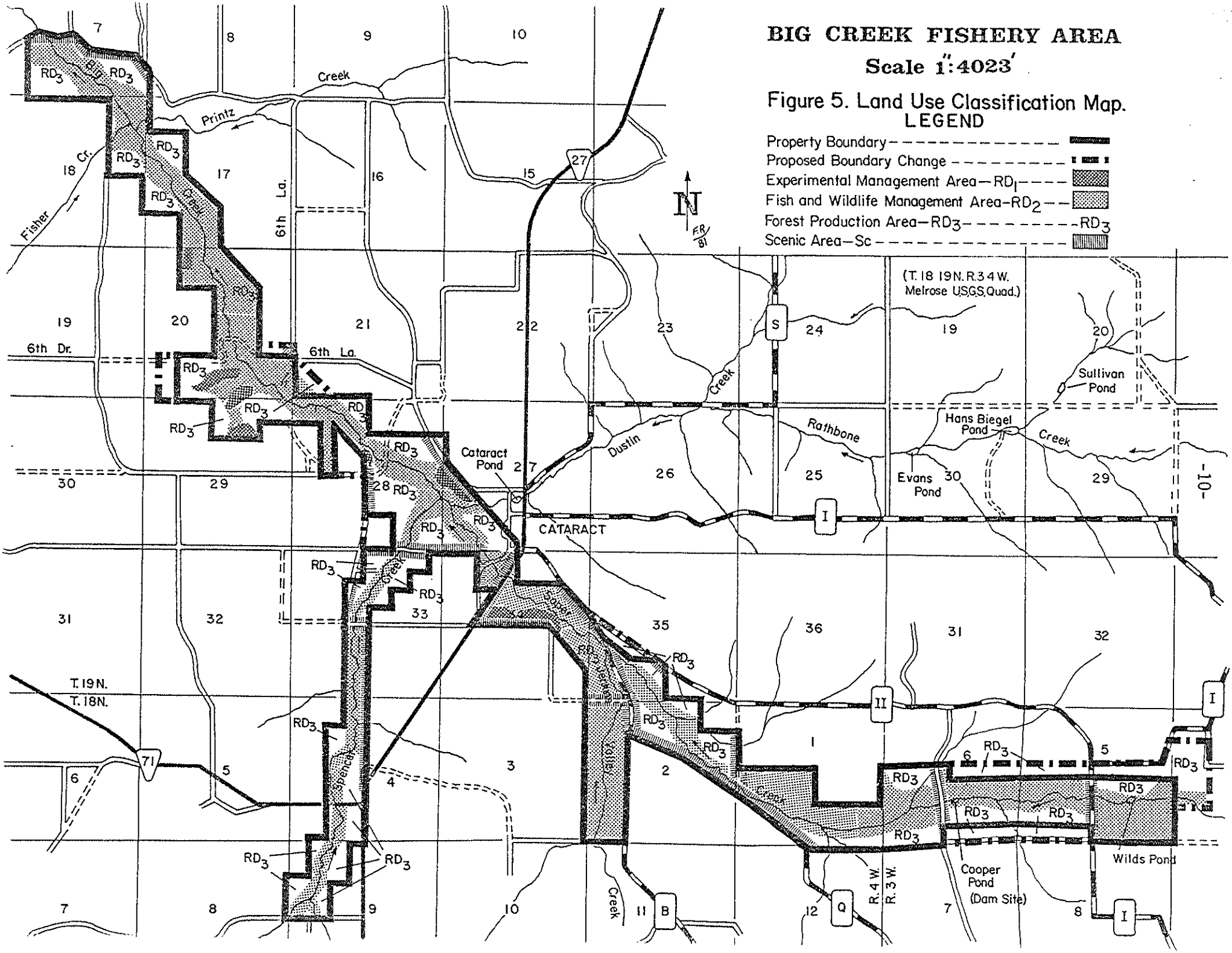
Four ponds are located on Rathbone Creek, and one large pond is present on Soper Creek, the 2 major stream tributaries to Big Creek. Spencer Creek, another tributary to Big Creek is being heavily pastured causing severe bank erosion and siltation. The water flowing from Spencer and Rathbone Creeks probably cause the Class II trout stream status of Big Creek. Soper Creek is presently a Class I trout stream, but with the recent restoration of Wild's Pond on its headwaters, the classification may change.

Difficulties in Law Enforcement

With so much private land between the public roads and public land, trespassing is occurring on the private lands which are posted against public use. When this occurs, local sheriff's personnel are contacted to check the complaint which takes time and manpower away from more important aspects of enforcement.

Difficulties in Fire Control

As noted in previous management problems, the large tracts of private land between access roads and the public land cause problems. Fire control is no exception. Access to much of the property in the event of a fire would be across private agricultural land. There are several pine plantations which pose a fire hazard during dry periods.


BIG CREEK FISHERY AREA
Scale 1":4023'
Figure 5. Land Use Classification Map.
LEGEND
Property Boundary
Proposed Boundary Change
Experimental Management Area—RD1
Fish and Wildlife Management Area-RD2
Forest Production Area—RD3
Scenic Area—Sc
(T. 18 19N. R. 34 W. Melrose USGS Quad.)
Printz Creek
Fisher Cr.
6th La.
6th Dr.
Cataract Pond
Dustin Creek
Rathbone Creek
Sullivan Pond
Hans Biegel Pond
Evans Pond
CATARACT
Spencer Creek
Wilds Pond
Cooper Pond (Dam Site)
T. 19N.
T. 18N.
R. 4 W.
R. 3 W.
-10-

Socio-Political Problems

The possible elimination or removal of the ponds located on Rathbone and Soper Creeks may well become problems in the future. Three of the ponds, Cataract, Evans, and Hans Biegel, have public access and they are well known throughout Monroe County. They are favorite fishing areas for young and old. At the present time their control structures are in poor condition and need repair. To improve water quality and the trout populations in the streams of the area it would be best to eliminate the ponds which are outside of the fishery area. But there are many people who want the ponds and would go to great lengths to have them remain. Other ponds on Rathbone and Soper Creeks are privately owned and are also harmful to water quality of the streams.

RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The Big Creek Fishery Area was established in an effort to maintain the stream for trout habitat and to protect the streambank from development.

The Big Creek Fishery Area is located in Monroe County, which is part of a 4 county area that comprises Region 4 (consisting of Monroe, La Crosse, Vernon, and Crawford Counties with a combined population of 156,700) as defined in the 1977 Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Plan. The population distribution in Monroe County is currently in the process of shifting. Prior to 1970, a majority of the county population was distributed in the rural areas compared to the population living in the incorporated communities. However, from about 1970 to date, rural distribution has shown signs of shifting to more of a city/village distribution.

The impact of the shift in population distribution will have a significant effect on the recreational resources of the county. In general, rural people create less impact on the recreational resources as they tend to use their own property for recreational activities. On the other hand, people living in the cities and villages do not have access to the large open spaces. As the population distribution becomes more oriented toward the cities and villages, more public recreation areas will have to be provided.

As a region, this portion of Wisconsin attracts one non-resident for every local resident fisherman. Much of West Central Wisconsin's appeal is the Mississippi River and the coulee topography with coldwater streams flowing through the valleys. Wisconsin's projected demand for outdoor recreation activities include increasing demands by the year 2000 for hunting (33%), nature walking (139%), and hiking (169%). Using these projections as indices, it is apparent the demand for outdoor recreational activities may unduly tax the ability of the available resource to meet these needs. The contribution this property can make towards meeting these demands must be recognized.

The surface water resource of the Big Creek Fishery Area can be protected by completing the remaining land acquisition, preferably by fee title, or by permanent easement if necessary. This will allow for intensive land management to improve the area and allow for increased public use.

Compatible public resource use will be provided for on the uplands. Several access roads to the stream will provide hunter walking trails and may also be used for hiking and cross-country skiing. Timber sales are planned in order to maintain a renewable forest crop on the larger blocks of land in the fishery area.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Do Nothing

The decision to do nothing and to leave the property "as is" would result in a split property, with private land between three public sections and private land between the roads and stream. The property would not realize the full potential for which the land was purchased. Public access and parking facility development would be considerably reduced.

The present forest growing on the property has good potential economic value. If natural succession were permitted, a mature oak and pine forest would be created. This would reduce both the value to wildlife and the potential value of the available forest products.

The coldwater habitat would probably remain as is and at a production level far less than its full potential.

Enlarge the Property

The present acquisition boundary is adequate except for the proposed boundary revisions. Increased emphasis should be given to completing land control within the boundary. Expansion of the property boundary as proposed will improve access to the interior of the property when acquisition is completed.

Reduce the Size of the Fishery Area

There is State ownership on both the west and east boundaries. With a reduction of the property, these two areas would be separated and would cause management problems. The areas along Spencer Creek and Jenkins Valley Creek could be eliminated, but the loss of two excellent Class I trout stream tributaries would occur.

RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

Soils, Geology and Hydrology

Bedrock geology of the Big Creek Fishery Area is uniform consisting of Upper Cambrian sandstone. Predominant sandstone outcrops are evident. The county contains no known direct glacial deposits.

Much of the soil in Monroe County was formed by geological weathering of two kinds of sandstone and of limestone. Many of the valleys are covered with alluvial sand and gravel while most of the uplands have varying amounts of loess.

Soil survey interpretations provided by the Soil Conservation Service indicate the soil series found on the property has severe limitations for agriculture and severe to moderate limitations for recreational developments and roads. The upland soils are best suited to conifer woodlands and/or wildlife habitat. Most of the upland soils must be heavily vegetated to prevent wind and water erosion.

The area receives an average of 31 inches of precipitation per year. The heaviest precipitation events usually occur in early summer, but the peak runoff dates are usually produced during the snow-melt period of March and April. Runoff, groundwater flow and direct channel precipitation contribute to the stream flows in the Big Creek Fishery Area.

The Big Creek watershed covers 69.57 square miles. Big Creek, Soper Creek, Jenkins Valley Creek, and Spencer Creek are the major streams within the fishery area. Rathbone Creek and its tributary, Dustin Creek also flow into Big Creek, but very little of their stream area is within the property boundary. The entire stream basin exhibits an extremely rolling topography, with the valley bottoms cut deeply into the sedimentary rocks.

Within the fishery area, the meandering stream has an average width of 20 feet and an average depth of 0.6 feet. The stream gradient of 12.0 feet per mile is not sufficient to prevent sand and silt deposition. The water source is provided by springs, groundwater seepage, and watershed runoff. Base flow is approximately 40 cfs with a low suspended silt load. The average annual flood crest is approximately 4.0 feet. Although Big Creek is navigable, it is not large enough to have a potential for use of light watercraft.

Fish and Wildlife

The fishery area is presently occupied by species of wildlife common to grass and alder marshes, streams, and disturbed forests. Common mammal species which can be managed include the white-tailed deer, gray and fox squirrel, and cottontails. Animals that are trapped for their fur or pelts include mink, muskrat, beaver, otter, raccoon, skunk, weasel, gray and red fox.

Many birds inhabit the property area including permanent and seasonal species. Common birds that would respond to management include the ruffed grouse, wood duck, and several species of song birds.

The major game fish species in the Big Creek Fishery Area are brook and brown trout with an occasional rainbow trout. Other species present in the relative order of abundance are blacknose dace, white sucker, creek chub, a predacious rough fish, the burbot, longnose dace, northern brook lamprey, Johnny darter, sand shiner, brook stickleback, and the central mudminnow. A 32-inch American eel, which evidently migrated up the Mississippi River system, was taken in a 1977 electro-fishing survey of Soper Creek. Northern pike and bullheads also migrate into the stream.

Reproduction of brook trout occurs within the fishery area, but not in sufficient quantity to sustain a native trout fishery. Streams within the area are stocked with 1,600 legal brook trout annually. Dustin, Soper, and Spencer Creeks all are Class I trout streams in the reaches above the fishery area boundary.

The common water snake, painted turtle, snapping turtle, and leopard, pickerel and green frogs are also known to be present. The pickerel frog is currently a threatened species (but is currently being considered for de-listing) and the American eel is on the watch list of DNR species for which more status information is needed.

Vegetative Cover

The vegetation covering the Big Creek Fishery Area is primarily composed of 10 cover types summarized in Table 1. These are also illustrated under the broad vegetation type headings in Figure 4. Although forest reconnaissance has not been completed, the basic cover types and acreages have been described and are presented in Table 1 for the present approved fishery area. The remaining acreage within the proposed property boundary will be assessed as soon as possible.

Table 1. Vegetation types and Acreage of the Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County.

Vegetation Type	Acreage
White Pine	210
Jack Pine	130
Red Pine	32
Scrub Oak	112
Oak	34
Swamp Hardwoods	125
Aspen	21
Lowland Brush	131
Upland Brush	22
Fields	128
Total	945

Endangered and Threatened Species

Currently, no endangered or threatened fish, wildlife, plants or nongame species except the Pickerel frog are known to exist within the property boundaries. However, if any are found in the fishery area, they will be protected and the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator consulted. DNR personnel and other qualified observers will continue to be alert to observe endangered or threatened species while on the area.

Water Resources

The fishery area boundary primarily surrounds the trout waters on Soper, Jenkins Valley, and Spencer Creeks and the combined portion of the stream system known as Big Creek. The stream originates as Soper Creek. It then picks up the flow of Jenkins Valley, the combined Dustin and Rathbone, Spencer, Printz, and Fisher Creeks. The largest volume of flow in the stream originates from Dustin-Rathbone with 15.87 cfs, followed by Soper with 11.44 cfs, Spencer (3.57 cfs) and Jenkins Valley (1.29 cfs) Creeks. Printz and Fisher Creeks contain forage species and contribute 1.88 and 0.47 cfs to Big Creek, respectively.

Big Creek is classified as a Class II brook and brown trout stream (Figure 4). The water is cool in summer, is lightly stained in color, and has soft (TA-32), slightly alkaline (pH-7.3) water.

Soper Creek is a Class I brook trout stream (Figure 4). The water is cool in summer, slightly hard (TA-39), slightly alkaline (pH-7.4), and is lightly stained in color. A large pond located on the upper reaches of Soper Creek affects water temperature in the stream below.

Jenkins Valley Creek is a Class II brook and brown trout stream tributary to Soper Creek (Figure 4). The entire stream is within the property boundary. The water is cool in summer, clear, medium hard (TA-96), and moderately alkaline (pH-7.8).

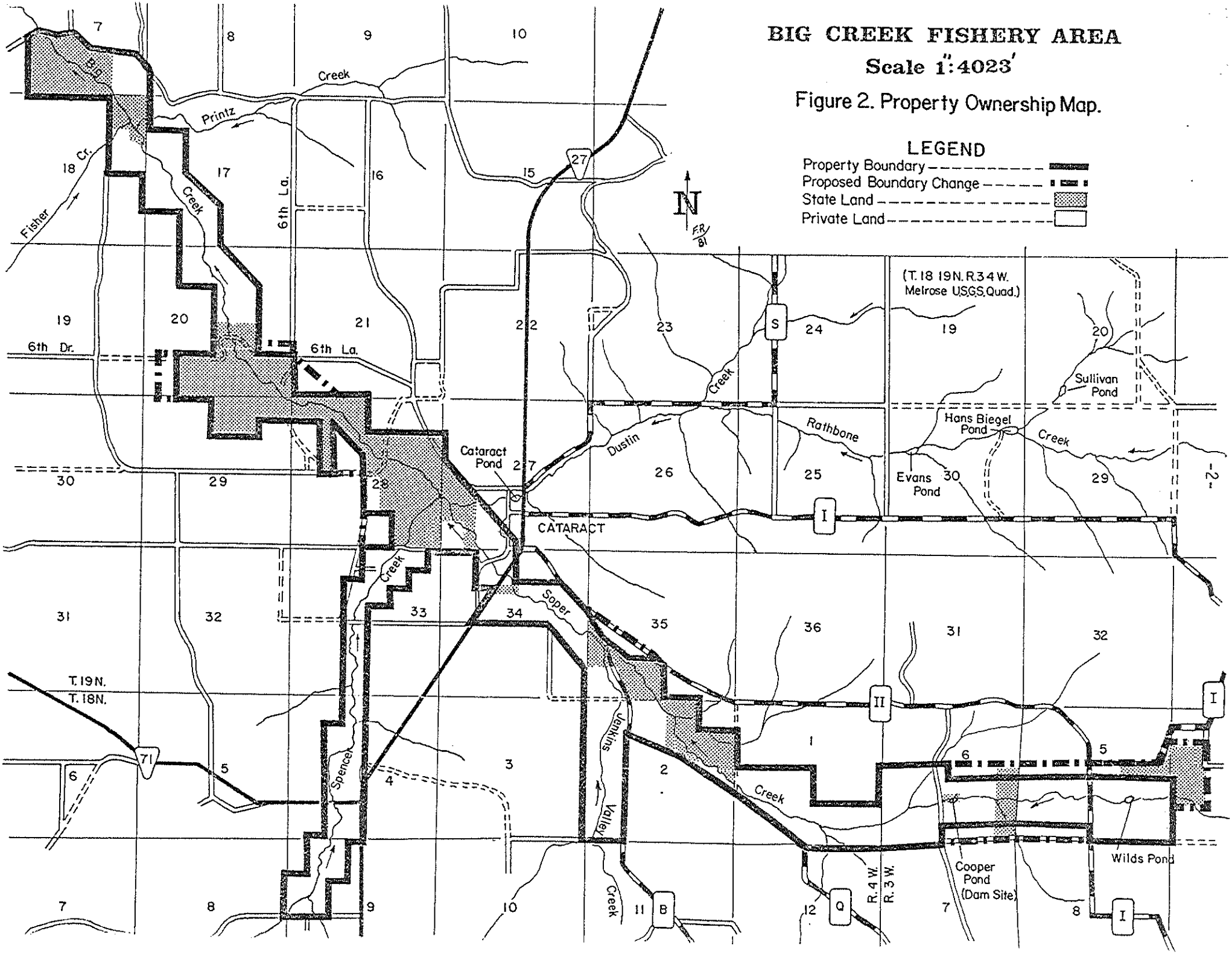
The combined Rathbone and Dustin Creeks are considered Class II brook trout streams. They enter the fishery area below Cataract Pond. Approximately 400 feet of this stream is located within the property boundary. The water is warm during summer, slightly stained, slightly hard (TA-37), and neutral with a pH of 7.0. There are four impoundments located on this stream above the boundary that affect upstream migration and negatively influence water temperatures to such a degree that Big Creek remains a Class II trout stream when it could possibly become a Class I trout stream.

Spencer Creek is a Class I and II brook trout stream which combines with Rathbone and Soper Creeks to form Big Creek (Figure 4). All of Spencer Creek is within the property boundary. It has light brown-colored water, and is slightly hard (TA-39) and moderately alkaline (pH-7.9).

Table 2 shows that a total of 15.4 miles of streams exist within the fishery boundary, and that they total 27.25 acres.

Table 2. Streams located within the Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County.

Stream	Length in Miles			Surface Acres
	Class I	Class II	Warmwater	
Big Creek		4.5		14.30
Dustin Creek		0.2		0.20
Fisher Creek			0.2	0.10
Jenkins Valley Creek		1.3		1.00
Printz Creek			0.1	0.05
Soper Creek	5.5			9.60
Spencer Creek	2.5	1.1		2.00
Totals	8.0	7.1	0.3	27.25


BIG CREEK FISHERY AREA
Scale 1":4023'
Figure 2. Property Ownership Map.
LEGEND
Property Boundary
Proposed Boundary Change
State Land
Private Land
N
F.R. 81
(T. 18 19N. R.3 4W. Melrose USGS Quad.)
Big Creek
Printz Creek
Fisher Cr.
18
17
16
15
27
6th La.
6th Dr.
19
20
21
22
23
24
S
Sullivan Pond
Hans Biegel Pond
Rathbone Creek
Dustin Creek
Cataract Pond
Evans Pond
30
29
28
27
26
25
I
CATARACT
Creek
Soper Creek
31
32
33
34
35
36
T. 19N.
T. 18N.
71
Spencer Creek
Juanita Valley Creek
II
1
2
3
4
5
6
Creek
Cooper Pond (Dam Site)
Wilds Pond
R. 4 W.
R. 3 W.
7
8
9
10
11
B
12
Q
-2-

3. The final 0.25 mile of access road off 6th Drive in Section 20, Township 19 North, Range 4 West which does not connect to the property boundary. Expansion of the boundary to include the end of the road is recommended to facilitate access should it be acquired.

4. The end of the access road off 6th Lane in Section 20, Township 19 North, Range 4 East which is outside of the present boundary. Expansion of the boundary to include the road is recommended so that it could become an access source if the property is ever acquired.

Extensive stream habitat work is planned in conjunction with previously completed projects on Big Creek and Soper Creek which are 2 major streams located within the property boundary (Figure 3). Approximately 6.5 miles of stream will undergo a variety of repair or improvement with intensive work costing up to $30,000 per mile. Badly eroded banks will be sloped and rip-rapped. Vegetation control in the form of stream bank brushing will be undertaken in areas where structures are impractical. The cost will be approximately $3,000 per mile. Specific sites for all stream improvements will be identified when the stream course can be examined in greater detail at a later date. Funding for the projects will probably be derived from Trout Stamp money.

If acquired, major developments consisting of repair and construction will take place on an access road on the west side off of 6th Drive in Section 20, Township 19 North, Range 4 West (Figure 3). Estimated costs are $3,000 (1982 prices). No developed parking areas will be constructed. Several roads along the stream used for habitat construction and future maintenance will be cleared and seeded and could be used for access by hunters, hikers, and cross-country skiers.

Wildlife management will focus primarily on the development of upland game habitat. This work will be limited to experimental cutting of mature timber along abandoned fields to create edge cover. Some dead timber will remain uncut for den and nest trees. Waterfowl nesting improvements will be limited to the placement of wood duck nesting boxes along the stream and oxbow ponds. Approximately 5 boxes per mile will be placed along the stream. Food producing vegetation will be introduced and encouraged for its effect on all wildlife including nongame species.

Forest management will be an activity including the commercial thinning of 76 acres of mature white pine, the harvest of 25 acres of mature scrub oak and 75 acres of mature jack pine, the pruning of 43 acres of white pine, and planting of 14 acres of red and white pine will be some of the forestry long-range goals. All forest management activities will take into consideration their effect on wildlife and nongame species.

Criteria for the management of forest production areas will include:

1. Forest areas will be managed to provide a sustained yield of wood products and good habitat conditions for wildlife species.

2. Timber sales, which will give adequate consideration to longtime maintenance of cover types and aesthetic values.

3. Portions of small open field areas will be planted in clusters consisting of hardwoods, conifers, and food-bearing shrubs for the protection and enhancement of game and nongame species, and for erosion control.

4. Timber-stand improvement such as pruning and thinning will be done with timber, wildlife production, and the enhancement of aesthetics as goals.

5. Some conifer stands may be converted to hardwood or open areas.

Operations currently consist exclusively of property surveillance and maintenance. Maintenance consists of litter pick-up, boundary sign inspections, fence repair, and instream habitat structure repair. General surveillance of State controlled land consists of periodic reconnaissance for possible timber trespass, public hazards, and unauthorized uses of State land. The amount of time required to carry out these activities is 3-6 days a year at an estimated total cost of $1,000.

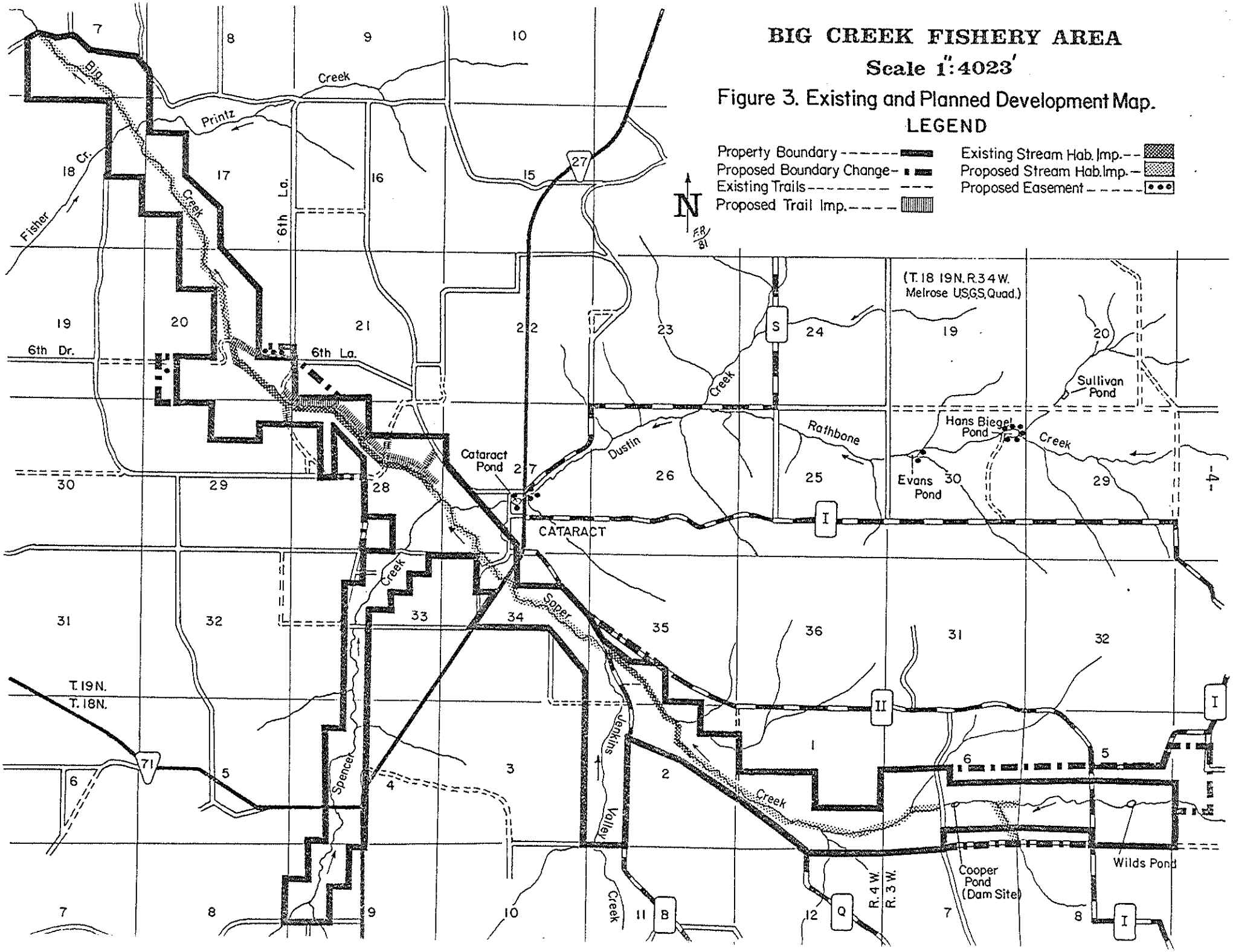
All areas proposed for development will be examined for the presence of endangered and threatened wild animals and wild plants. If listed species are found, development will be suspended until the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator is consulted, the site evaluated, and appropriate protective measures taken.

A complete biological inventory of the property will be conducted as funds permit. Additional property objectives may be developed following completion of such an inventory.

SECTION II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County (Figure 1), was originally approved by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1963. In 1969, authorization for an acreage goal of 843.55 acres and acquisition boundaries were established and approved by the Natural Resources Board, and an additional 466.50 acres were added to the acreage goal in 1970 based on information provided by fishery surveys. The present approved acreage goal is 1,310 acres.


BIG CREEK FISHERY AREA
Scale 1":4023'
Figure 3. Existing and Planned Development Map.
LEGEND
Property Boundary
Proposed Boundary Change
Existing Trails
Proposed Trail Imp.
Existing Stream Hab. Imp.
Proposed Stream Hab. Imp.
Proposed Easement
N
F.B. 81
(T. 18 19N. R. 3 4W. Melrose USGS Quad.)
Big Creek
Printz Creek
Fisher Cr.
18
17
16
15
27
6th La.
6th Dr.
19
20
21
22
23
24
S
Sullivan Pond
Hans Biegel Pond
Rathbone Creek
Dustin Creek
Evans Pond
Cataract Pond
CATARACT
30
29
28
26
25
I
Creek
Soper Creek
31
32
33
34
35
36
T. 19N.
T. 18N.
71
Spencer Creek
Jenkins Valley Creek
II
1
2
3
4
5
6
Cooper Pond (Dam Site)
Wilds Pond
R. 4 W.
R. 3 W.
7
8
9
10
11
12
B
Q
-4-

To date, a total of 943.68 acres have been acquired in fee title on, or adjacent to the property at a cost of $157,988.36. The 943.68 acres consists of 845.18 acres inside, and 86.50 acres outside of the boundary. Thirty-one privately owned parcels remain to be acquired from willing sellers within the property boundary.

Soper, Rathbone, and Spencer Creeks originate upstream from the fishery area and join below the Cataract dam. The streams, combined as Big Creek, flow into the Black River and ultimately into the Mississippi River drainage. There are 4 impoundments on the mainstream of Rathbone Creek, 2 of which the public fish intensively (Figure 3). All the ponds are destructive as relates to the quality of the trout water flowing from Rathbone Creek into the fishery area, warming the surface waters excessively in summer and cooling waters excessively in winter. There are also 2 ponds located on the upper reaches of Soper Creek which are detrimental to the water quality of that system.

In 1966, 92 single wing deflectors were installed on Soper Creek. The improvement efforts continued into 1968 with the addition of rock revetments, structures to narrow and deepen the stream, bank stabilization, brushing and removal of debris causing stream blockage. Since then, many of the structures have deteriorated, washed away, covered over, or have been left standing out of water due to meandering of the stream. No maintenance has been done on these structures since their construction.

In 1972, single wing deflectors and rock revetments were installed on 2 miles of Big Creek within the property boundary. Some maintenance has been done on these structures.

Current management emphasis within the Big Creek Fishery Area is on fish habitat protection and improvement of the property. Habitat protection includes such activities as land acquisition, water law investigations and enforcement, and cooperation with land and water management agencies and programs.

Current improvement activities include:

1. Construction of property signs and boundary posting.

2. The cutting of some of the dead and dying oak trees.

3. Planting of some of the abandoned farm fields with pine species.

4. Periodic litter clean-up, sign replacement, and fence repair.

5. The clearance of access roads on north and south sides of Big Creek for access and provide game trails for hunting.

6. The removal of two cottages and the restoration of the sites to their natural status.

7. The filling and covering of several abandoned wells to remove liability problems (completed).

8. The maintaining of some open areas for wildlife management.

9. Timber stand improvement through the pruning of selected white pine stands.

In addition to habitat protection and improvement activities, surveys of the fish population and trout stocking are also important fish management activities that have been completed within the fishery area. It is currently used primarily by fishermen and hunters. At present an estimated 1,200 man-days are expended for fishing with 600 man-days of hunting and trapping each year. These are expected to increase to 1,500 man-days for fishing and 1,000 man-days for hunting and trapping when acreage goals of the property are met.

An estimated of 500 man-days are expended presently on other recreational and educational activities that include berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, nature study, hiking, photography, cross-country skiing, and firewood cutting. Undesirable uses include illegal parties, and the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles on areas where roads do not exist.

Although not included within the boundary of the fishery area, Cataract, Evans, and Hans Biegel Ponds on headwaters streams of Big Creek attract numerous fishermen and affect Big Creek Fishery Area use. They have provided many recreational hours in past years. The water control structures on Cataract Pond and Evans Pond are in very poor condition and the lake basins are silting in rapidly. Cataract and Hans Biegel Ponds are privately-owned, with the landowners agreeing to provide access. The lower portion of Evans Pond is state-owned and is privately-owned on the upper reaches. These 3 ponds should be considered for acquisition by the Department if monies are available so the water control structures can either be removed or repaired. Public meetings will be conducted prior to these decisions. Acquisition of these pond sites will be accomplished by using Monroe County Remnant acreage goal acres.

Increase Management and Development

Public access - Acquiring access rights on the entire access road on the west side and improving the road and improving access on several areas by land acquisition should provide adequate public access. Location of additional access sites and parking areas may encourage overuse of the stream and adjoining lands.

Habitat Development - Repair and completion of habitat work on the stream and planned cutting of timber should provide conditions for the maximum production of fish and wildlife species within the area. Only so much improvement can be done before an excess occurs and production no longer increases and starts to decline.

Intensive Recreational Development Areas

1. Canoe Landings - Recreational canoeing on a large scale is not feasible due to the relatively small stream size, alder growth, and shallow depth, and it will not be encouraged.

2. Camping Areas - Camping is not encouraged by the type of land and trees of the area. There is a private camping area adjacent to the property boundary.

3. Picnic Areas - The need for these facilities within the property has not been demonstrated.

4. Trails - A justifiable need for a marked trail does not exist.

5. Cross-Country Ski Trail - The entire fishery area is open to cross-country skiing. A marked and maintained trail is not needed at this time. The Black River State Forest is within 20 miles of the property and has marked cross-country ski trails.

6. Snowmobile Trail - There are no developed or planned trails in the Big Creek Fishery Area and this use will not be encouraged.

Timber Production or Wildlife Production Only

Allowing the pine species to mature and planting of all the open areas with conifers would enhance the forest wood production but wildlife habitat would be greatly reduced. The elimination of the existing forest species and the conversion and maintenance of an early stage of succession by controlled burns or mechanical means would seriously affect economic forest production.

Combination of Alternatives (Selected Alternative)

Acquisition within the existing approved boundary should be initiated and pursued. Fisheries and wildlife management are the primary goals of the area, appropriately supported by compatible forest management. Stream habitat improvement will be accomplished with a minimum of cost and physical alteration to the stream bank and lands surrounding the stream. Access roads used for stream improvement will also be used for hunter walking trails, hiking or cross-country skiing. Access can be improved by blocking of the area through acquisition of lands bordered by roads.

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Appendix - Comments from outside reviewing agencies.

A number of comments were received from several outside reviewing agencies. Their comments, and DNR responses, where necessary, follow:

William J. Kroll, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission.

Plan appears to be consistent with regional and local plans, projects and programs in the area including the Fort McCoy EIS final report. We urge close coordination with adjacent property owners and local land use regulations.

DNR response:

The purpose of the master plan is to develop a plan for the property which is compatible with the surrounding area. Public meetings have been held and the citizens have had the chance to explain what they want. If any new projects arise and there may be controversy, a public meeting will be held.

William Schultheis, Acting Chairman, Wild Resources Advisory Council.

The Big Creek Fishery Area apparently does not have any areas that qualify under the headings of wilderness, wild, natural areas, etc. Even though the area does not have any qualifying areas, the WRAC would like to express the following thoughts on the master plan.

General Review

The Big Creek Fishery Area Master Plan Concept Element is a well devised plan. The task force is to be complimented for their strong resolve to make it work. There is no question that the property is an excellent wild resource and deserves the attention of the planners and managers. The total watershed should be in a common fishery program since, as indicated in the text, the impact of tributaries not in the fishery area program are contributing to the deterioration of the project. Unfortunately, the fishery area has several problems. Since between 60 to 70 percent of the stream is under state control, it may be difficult to realize your goal achievements by direct purchase. Perpetual or long-term easements of desired properties may have greater success. There is no question that reasonable public access to the stream is extremely important for reasons indicated by the authors of the plan.

Comments

Page 1 - Goals. WRAC thinks it wise to insert educational between the words of fishing and and.

Page 1 - Item 3. In the last part of the statement - how about inserting the word provide between and and habitat (and provide habitat for wildlife species).

DNR response: Agreed. Changes made.

Pages 1 and 3. The recommended management and development program is fundamentally sound and the WRAC endorses it with a few reservations. The property boundary expansions recommended by the task force are essential and necessary to attain the listed goals and objectives of the fishery and to alleviate the problems that happen between the property owners and the users of the stream area.

Page 3, Third paragraph. WRAC agrees with the concerns and proposals in the paragraph. The $30,000 cost per mile seems excessive if you plan on spending that much money for each mile of the project, the total amount will exceed $180,000. In 1966, stream improvement was completed. What are the results of those deflectors? Can one justify the costs.

DNR response: The cost of $30,000 per mile is the standard cost to construct instream habitat structures on a mile of stream. The whole 6.5 miles of stream will not have instream habitat structures constructed. Other forms of improvement such as bank rip-rapping and streambank brushing will be incorporated along with the instream habitat construction. These costs are lower. The structures completed in 1966 are still present and some are still working. Several severe floods have gone through the area which damaged many of the structures. These structures were the first of their kind to be tried in the area. This type of structure has been improved and they are now expected to endure longer and provide more benefit.

Page 3, paragraph 4. Last sentence. The council recommends the following revision "effect on all wildlife including non-game species."

DNR response: Agreed, Changes made.

Page 1 and Figure 2. The text states that approximately 70% of the property has been acquired. If one reads the maps (figure 2) correctly there is approximately 30% in state ownership. What has the reviewer misunderstood?

DNR response: Seventy percent of the approved acquisition goal of 1,310 acres has been completed. There are approximately 2,600 acres within the acquisition boundary.

Page 11 second paragraph, 5th line. Please correct the word disturbed. Distributed in the rural areas.

DNR response: Agreed, change made.

C. A. Morehouse for T. J. Hart, Director, Bureau of Environmental Analysis and review, Department of Transportation.

Re: Concept Element of the Master Plan for Big Creek Fishery Area-Monroe County.

We have reviewed the above-noted document and request that you coordinate your acquisition activities adjacent to State Trunk Highway (STH's) County Trunk Highways (CTH's) and Townships roads with the appropriate highway officials in each level of government. For roads that are STH, coordination should be with:

Transportation District #5
T. R. Kinsey, Director
3550 Mormon Coulee Road
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
Phone (608) 785-9022

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this document.

DNR response: Before any land around roadways is purchased, the appropriate highway officials will be notified.

Patrict J. Manion, Acting Assistant Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Twin Cities, MN.

This is in response to Mr. James Addis' memorandum of July 1, 1982, requesting our review of the Master Plan for the Big Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County, Wisconsin.

The Master Plan has been reviewed by our fisheries staff and basically we agree with the goals, objectives and/or benefits your agency has planned for the Big Creek Area. However, in Section II, Background Information, under the "Improvement Activities at Present," why was the American elm, Ulmus americana not included?

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to comment on this master plan and others the State has initiated in the past.

DNR response: Cutting of dead and dying elm was not mentioned in the improvement activities because there are very few elms present on the property. Oak is used for lumber for instream habitat structures. By the time the dying elm is discovered, it is too far gone to make good lumber.

Joe Zanter - Wisconsin Conservation Congress - Monroe County.

6. Additional Comments: (1) Regard the Cataract Pond - It was drained in 1952 or 3 and the town wells were affected. Alot of opposition is here. A bottom draw dam should be installed. (2) The landowners would like to meet with the fish biologist before work is done regarding bank work, structures, etc. - also, a food study of the streams. Also, the local Sportsman Club would like to be included in their hearing!!!

DNR response: Prior to any decision on the outcome of the ponds, if they are acquired by the department, there will be a public meeting.

The areas where streambank work is planned are all in public ownership by fee title. If some areas are purchased through perpetual easement in the future, the landowners will be informed of what actions are being planned along the stream.

The first hearing regarding the master plan was an open public meeting. Special notices were sent to adjacent landowners and announcements were published in the local newspapers and aired on the radio. It was coincidental that the night of the hearing was the same night that the Sportsman Club had its monthly meeting. Future master plan meetings will not be held on the same night as local club meetings.

(For All DNR Type II Actions, Except Regulatory)
FORM 1600-2
REV. 1-78

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DISTRICT OR BUREAU
DNR NUMBER

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING WORKSHEET
(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Title of Proposal:

Big Creek Fishery Area - Acquisition and intensive management of a fishery area. MASTER PLAN

Location: County Monroe
Township 18 & 19 North, Range 3 & 4 ~~East~~, West
Section(s) 7, 8, 18, 17, 19, 20, 21, 29, 28, 27, 33, 34, 35, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Political Town Little Falls, New Lyme

Project:

1) General Description (overview)
The Department of Natural Resources, with this action, proposes to obtain land control, preserve, and protect all property within the boundary of the Big Creek Fisher Area in Monroe County; and to enhance fishing and other recreational activities while perpetuating or restoring the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the waterway. The proposed fishery area contains 2,600 acres with an acquisition goal of 1,310 acres. 6.5 miles of stream will be improved or repaired; one access road with a turn around will be constructed; access roads along the stream will be cleared, seeded, and maintained as trails; wood duck houses will be set up along the stream; experimental cutting of mature timber along abandoned fields. Forestry will be ongoing. Some 920 acres of the 1310 acre goal are currently in Wisconsin DNR ownership.

2) Purpose and Need (include history and background as appropriate)

To provide a recreation area where fish and wildlife, forest products, and people are managed to the ultimate of the availability of the resource.

To improve and enhance the environment so future generations have a place to enjoy the resources.

Authorities and Approvals:

1) Statutory Authority to Initiate

2) Permits or Approvals Required - Authorization from the Bureau of Water Regulation and Zoning for a state project.

3) Participants notified of above requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No

4) Does this proposal comply with floodplain and local zoning requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Estimated Cost and Funding Source:

Estimated construction and acquisition costs are approximately $433,000.00. Funding will come from Trout Stamp, Duck Stamp and ORAP.

Time Schedule:

The project began in 1962 and is an ongoing project.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

1) Physical (Topography-soils-water-air-wetland types)

The entire stream basin exhibits an extremely rolling topography, with the valley bottoms cut deeply into the sedimentary rocks. Much of the soil in Monroe County was formed by geological weathering of two kinds of sandstone and of limestone. Many of the valleys are covered with alluvial sand and gravel. Much of the uplands have varying amounts of loessial soil. The soil series found on the property have severe limitations for agriculture and severe to moderate limitation for recreational developments and roads. The upland soils are best suited to conifer woodlands and/or wildlife habitat. Most of the soils must be heavily vegetated to prevent wind and water erosion. Soper Creek is a Class I trout stream, Big Creek is a Class II trout stream, Rathbone Creek is a Class II trout stream, Jenkins Valley is a Class II trout stream and Spencer Creek is a Class I and II trout stream. Wetland types are Type 3 and Type 4, located along the stream margin. Local air quality is very good.

2) Biological

a) Flora

1. Terrestrial - Vegetation consists predominately of white pine, jack pine, red pine, scrub oak, oak, swamp hardwoods, aspen, aloe, and mixed species of shrubs, vines, and grasses.
2. Aquatic - Alder is abundant along the stream banks.

b) Fauna

1. Terrestrial - Animals known to occur in this area include whitetail deer, grey squirrels, fox squirrels, cottontail rabbits, fox, raccoon, muskrat, mink, skunk, beaver, woodchuck, and a variety of small rodents such as mice and ground squirrels. Wood ducks and mallards are found along the stream. Ruffed grouse, woodcock, and a variety of birds of prey and song birds can be found.
2. Fish species include brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, white sucker, burbot northern pike, black bullhead, and minnow species. Snapping turtles, painted turtles, American eel, leopard, pickerel, and green frogs are also known to be present. The pickerel frog is currently on the threatened list and the American eel is on the watch list of the DNR Endangered Species list.

3) Social

Of the 1,310 acres, 920 are currently in public ownership and provide an estimated 1,200 may days for fishing and 600 man days of hunting and trapping each year. Other recreational activities are berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, nature study, hiking, photography, firewood cutting, etc. Four cabins, receiving seasonal recreational use, are located within the property boundaries.

4) Economic

The property is surrounded by pine plantations and agricultural land. There are also several subdivisions which are being developed. The area has a good supply of pulp wood and oak and white pine saw logs.

Within the remaining property boundary are 380 acres of agricultural land which could possibly be acquired. Of this 350 acres are type or class 4, 20 acres is class 3 and 10 acres class 7.

5) Other (include archaeological, historical, etc.)

There are two known archeological sites in the fishery area and probably many more yet to be discovered. The known sites include a prehistoric campsite located at the Auburn Bridge in Sections 28 and 33, Township 19 North, Range 4 West, and a campsite in the S½ of Section 27, Township 19 North, Range 4 West.

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

1) Manipulation of Terrestrial Resources (include quantities – sq. ft., cu. yds., etc.)

Replacement of raw or unstable banks with rock riprap and instream habitat structures on 6.5 miles of stream.

Experimental cutting of timber along the abandoned farm fields to encourage succession. This cutting involves about 30 acres along the edges of 8 fields.

Several access trails to the stream for habitat development will be cleared and seeded and will be used for hunter walking trails, hiking, or cross-country skiing. Approximatel 1.5 miles of trails will be developed.

Seventy-six acres of white pine will be commercial thinned, harvest 25 acres of mature scrub oak and 75 acres of mature jack pine, prune 43 acres of white pine, and plant 14 acres of red and white pine.

2) Manipulation of Aquatic Resources (include quantities – cfs, acre feet, MGD, etc.)

Instream habitat structures and partial stream bank brushing on 6.5 miles of stream will be done.

The stream will be narrower in average width but deeper in average depth.

Some minor side channels may be cut off to avoid the stream later changing course into these channels. The number of channels can not be determined until a more detailed development proposal is designed.

See #4 below for a discussion of impoundments on the system.

3) Structures

Instream habitat structures will be of the type that are jetted into the stream bottom. At the present time, the exact number of structures is not determined. Approximately 6.5 miles of stream will be improved either by instream habitat structures or brush bundles from the partial bank brushing project.

4) Other

Game management is planning on putting up wood duck houses along the stream bank.

Several ponds within the boundary will either be removed or repaired depending on the condition of the control structures. Seven ponds are involved, two on Soper Creek and 5 on Rathbone Creek. The Wis. DNR owns the dam and lower end of Evans Pond on Rathbone Creek; all others are currently in private ownership and no decision will or can be made on any of them until we have better control and information as to their condition.

5) Attach maps, plans and other descriptive material as appropriate (list)

1. Boundaries of property and proposed facilities - attached.
2. Existing development - attached.
3. Public ownership - attached.
4. Urban patterns - attached.
5. Surface waters - attached.

PROBABLE ADVERSE AND BENEFICIAL IMPACTS (Include Indirect and Secondary Impacts)

1) Physical Impacts

Short term adverse impacts will result from the disturbance of the stream banks and stream flow manipulation. The topography may be temporarily damaged during timber cutting and hauling of rock riprap to the stream. The stream will be narrowed and deepened thus allowing for lower water temperatures and higher velocities. Certain forest areas will be disturbed for a short period of time during harvest and pruning activities.

2) Biological Impacts

The environment will be enhanced through forest management of the timber for wood products and wildlife habitat. Wildlife numbers should increase with better management of the forest land. Water quality should improve both in terms of lower suspended silt load and smaller temperature fluctuations. Streambanks will be stabilized by riprap or instream habitat structures, which will narrow the stream and deepen it.

Several ponds located on the stream tributaries will either be repaired or removed depending on the condition of the impoundment structures. Water quality should improve with lower temperatures occurring.

3) Socioeconomic Impacts

a) Social

The property will provide a socially acceptable high quality recreation area which is going to be needed in the future. Population trends are going from a rural community to a city or urban type of population. When this occurs, more public lands are needed for recreational activities.

Private landowners tend to become concerned and protective of their land when state hunting grounds border their land, thus private land is posted against trespassing.

b) Economic

With an increase in hunting and fishing potential, the project will help stimulate the economy. Area sport shops, service stations, restaurants, motels, etc. will experience an increase in patronage.

When the land is purchased in fee by the department, it is removed from the county tax base. Payments in lieu of taxes will be made to the local township to ease the loss of tax base.

4) Other (include archaeological, historical, etc.; if none, so indicate.)

Two known archeological sites are known to exist within the property boundary. Before any ground breaking activities occur, the State Historical Society will be contacted.

PROBABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

There will be some siltation occurring during the construction of instream habitat structures from temporary disturbance of the banks and bottom sediments.

There may be some disturbance of the topography during timber cutting operations, but this should be very minimal for the operation will be done during the winter months when the ground is frozen.

Cabins located on state lands will be removed. Relocation will be provided for the inhabitants.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

This project is not a short-term use of the environment at the expense of long-term productivity. This project is designed to enhance long-term natural productivity, both in terms of natural resources and recreational opportunities.

Purchasing the land in fee guarantees public fishing and hunting rights for future generations.

Proper management of the land and water will insure quality hunting and fishing for future generations.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES IF ACTION IS IMPLEMENTED

1) Energy

Gasoline and oil used for transportation to and from the property, and that used in construction and timber harvest, cannot be recorded.

2) Archaeological and historic features or sites

There are two known sites and probably many more yet to be discovered in the fishery area. Prior to all ground disturbing activities in the fishery area, clearance will be obtained from the State Historical Society so the resources will not be lost forever.

3) Other

ALTERNATIVES (No Action-Enlarge-Reduce-Modify-Other Locations and/or Methods. Discuss and describe fully with particular attention to alternatives which might avoid some or all adverse environmental effects.)

No action - The decision to do nothing and to leave the property "as it now exists" would result in a split property, with private land between three public sections and private land between the roads and stream. The property would not realize the full potential for which the land was purchased. Public access and parking facility development would be considerably reduced.

The present forest growing on the property has good potential economic value. If natural succession were permitted, a mature oak and pine forest would be created. This would reduce both the value to wildlife and the potential value of the available forest products.

The cold water habitat would probably remain as is and at a production level at less than its full potential.

Enlarge the property - See page 6A.

Reduce the property - There is state ownership on both the west and east boundaries. With a reduction of the property, these two areas would be separated and would cause management problems. The areas along Spencer Creek and Jenkins Valley Creek could be eliminated, but the loss of two excellent class I trout stream tributaries would occur.

Modify - See page 6B

Other locations - Projects of this type are needed throughout the state to insure future generations of public areas for recreation.

Enlarge the Property

Property Description

The present property boundary has several department-owned parcels lying outside the property boundary. Also, several major access points are not included within the property boundary. Expansion of the property boundary to include the department-owned parcels and access points will improve access to the interior of the property when acquisition is completed.

Existing Environment

Several department-owned parcels of land lie outside the present approved property boundary. One area 75 acres in size is located in the NW¼ SW¼, Section 4, Town of LaFayette. The area is all jack pine and scrub oak. No stream frontage is found on this parcel.

The other department-owned parcel is located in the NE¼ SW¼, Section 35, Town of Little Falls. This area is 10 acres in size and consists of scrub oak, oak, and brush. There is no stream frontage found on this parcel. There is agricultural land between the state land and the road.

Several access roads into the property cross private lands. They are located in the SW¼ SW¼, Section 20 and the NE¼ SE¼, Section 20, Township 19 North, Range 4 West. The access road located in the SW¼ SW¼, Section 20, is a town road except for the final ¼ mile which is in private ownership. There is a culvert located on this road which has washed out several times and has been replaced by the Department. The access road located in the NE¼ SE¼, Section 20, runs parallel to a pine plantation. A small section meanders into private land.

Two parcels of land, one in the SW¼ SE¼, Section 28, and the other located in the SE¼ NW¼, Section 28, are two privately owned pine plantations. The parcel in the SE¼ NW¼, Section 28, has Big Creek running through the NE¼. There is very limited access on this side of the property.

Proposed Changes

The two department-owned parcels of land located on Soper Creek should be included within the property boundary to simplify management.

The access road located in SW¼ SW¼, Section 20, and the access road located in the NE¼ SE¼, Section 20, are included in a property boundary change so acquisition of these roads can be undertaken. Portions of these roads are in private ownership and should be in public ownership to insure access to the property in the future.

The two parcels of land located in Section 28 are two pine plantations. They are included in the proposed boundary revision to block in the property and provide access.

Probable Adverse and Beneficial Impacts

1) Physical Impacts

No adverse impacts will result from the expansion of the property. Several access roads will be improved.

2) Biological Impacts

The environment will be enhanced through forest management of the timber for wood products and wildlife habitat.

3) Socioeconomic Impacts

With an increase in access to the property, hunting and fishing potential will increase. Problems of trespass on private lands will be solved when public ownership of these parcels occurs.

When the land is purchased in fee by the department, it is removed from the county tax base. Payments in lieu of taxes will be made to the local township to ease the loss of tax base.

Modify

Property Description

At the present time there are 2,600 acres in the approved property boundary. One-thousand, three-hundred and ten acres are presently approved for acquisition within the boundary. Since one of the objectives of this property is to increase public hunting opportunities, an acreage goal increase of 640 acres is proposed as a goal to guide future acquisition activity.

Existing Environment

At the present time, 920 acres are in public ownership. There are 290 acres of land remaining to be acquired within the approved acquisition boundary.

Proposed Changes

Of the land yet to be acquired within the property boundary, 380 acres are agricultural land. Of this, 350 acres are type 4 agricultural land, 20 acres are type 3 agricultural land, and 10 acres are type 7 agricultural land. The remaining land consists of pine, oak, aspen, swamp hardwoods, brush, and stream frontage. These lands have been more fully discussed in the original text of this EIA.

Assuming 75 percent of the 2,600 acres is purchased, a project acreage goal of 1,950 acres should be established. By increasing the acreage goal, lands could be acquired to provide for an increase in multi-use recreational opportunities.

Probable Adverse and Beneficial Impacts

Acquisition of lands within these proposed boundaries and under these acreage goals will result in no immediate environmental change. The action of Departmental acquisition immediately results in change of title to the property. No impacts occur to any endangered species, archeological sites, natural areas, wetlands, native ethnic groups, or environmental changes will occur by Departmental acquisition. Ownership of these lands by the State of Wisconsin will better protect these lands from environmental changes which may occur if these lands are in private ownership. There are no permanent residences presently located in the proposed boundary so relocation is not a factor. No controversy has occurred at our public hearing concerning these proposed boundaries. Any secondary action regarding management of the lands proposed for acquisition will be considered at the time management actions are proposed (after acquisition occurs).

EVALUATION (Discuss each category. Attach additional sheets and other pertinent information if necessary.)

1) As a result of this action, is it likely that other events or actions will happen that may significantly affect the environment? If so, list and discuss. (Secondary effects) Yes.
   1. Water quality will improve because of stream bank stabilization, and the dams on the ponds of Rathbone Creek will either be repaired or removed.
   2. The stream will have a higher carrying capacity, thus resulting in a higher fish population.
   3. Proper management for wildlife, fish, forestry, soils, and water will be insured through department ownership.

2) Does the action alter the environment so a new physical, biological or socio-economic environment would exist? (New environmental effect) Yes.
   1. The stream will be narrower and deeper.
   2. The forest will be managed so a mature pine forest will not take over.
   3. A high quality recreation area will be developed.
   4. Raw banks will be stabilized and sloped.

3) Are the existing environmental features that would be affected by the proposed action scarce, either locally or statewide? If so, list and describe. (Geographically scarce)

   There are several large stands of mature white pine located in the NW¼ SE¼, Section 28, Township 19 North, Range 4 West. While in the property boundary and in property management, these stands will be preserved. Stands of mature white pine are scarce in this part of the state.

4) Does the action and its effect(s) require a decision which would result in influencing future decisions? Describe. (Precedent setting) No.

   Each project is one of a kind. Past department policy has been to evaluate each project separately on its own merit.

5) Discuss and describe concerns which indicate a serious controversy? (Highly controversial)

   At the public information meeting which was conducted at Cataract, the public was highly concerned of what happens to the tax base once the land was bought by the department and taken off the tax roll. The people did not think the payments paid in lieu of taxes by the department were fair as compared to the taxes they paid on their land.

6) Does the action conflict with official agency plans or with any local, state or national policy? If so, how? (Inconsistent with long-range plans or policies) No.

   This project will enhance the area and supply a recreation facility which is scarce in the county.

AGENCIES, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED REGARDING THE PROJECT

DNR Personnel and Title

Date	Contact	Comments
3-10-81	Area Game Manager Area Supervisor County Forester Area Warden DFO Supervisor	Good project. Participated in Master Plan.
7-14-81	Donald White	Provided Air Quality Evaluation.
4-1-81	Monroe Co. SWCD	Good project. Participated in Master Plan.
2-20-81	Cataract Spts. Club	Good project.
3-12-81	Sparta Rod & Gun	Good project.
4-1-81	Town Chairman	Good project.
5-7-81	Local landowners	Generally in favor.

RECOMMENDATION

7-14-81	Monroe Co. SCS	Provided Ag Land Information.

EIS Not Required . . . . . ☒

Analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required before the Department undertakes this action.

Refer to Office of the Secretary . . . . . ☐

Major and Significant Action: Prepare EIS . . . . . ☐

Additional factors, if any, affecting the evaluator's recommendation:

SIGNATURE OF EVALUATOR	DATE
Lucy Mathson	7-9-81

CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WEPA	
DISTRICT OR BUREAU DIRECTOR (OR DESIGNEE)	DATE

APPROVED (if required by Manual Code)	
DIRECTOR, BEI	DATE
Louis Bechamp	11/15/82

This decision is not final until approved by the appropriate Director and/or Director, BEI.

7-23-81 Hearing advised by phone no comments

plus copy to Mathson Harder Sefer