

Form 1100-1  
Rev. 10-89

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** Approval of La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area master plan, La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon and Crawford Counties, with an acreage goal of 2,000 acres; and approval of acreage goal totalling 800 acres for the Remnant Areas Program in the four counties.

**FOR** January **BOARD MEETING**  
(month)

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Ron Poff

**SUMMARY:** The Department has acquired fee and easement rights for several years for fishery purposes in the four county La Crosse Area. To date, the Department has acquired 848.2 acres (329.45 acres in fee and 518.75 acres in perpetual easements) for the fishery remnant program in La Crosse, Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties. These parcels have been managed for public use as well as fishery habitat. The attached master plan reflects a comprehensive area management plan for using these parcels as the base for a named fishery area with a 2,000-acre goal. Most of the future purchases will be fishery management easements with fee purchases used for parking, rest areas and handicap accessible developments.

While the 848.2 acres of existing Department ownership is being transferred to the new La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area, the Department still needs to continue the Remnant Area Program to acquire critical habitat and springheads not included in the comprehensive plan. Thus an acreage goal of 800.0 acres should be approved for the Remnant Program in the four counties in addition to the 2,000-acre goal for the La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Natural Resources Board approve the master plan establishing the La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area with an acreage goal of 2,000 acres and secondly, approve an acreage goal totalling 800 acres for the Remnant Areas Program in La Crosse, Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties.

**APPROVED:**

Lee T. Kerney 1/3/91  
Bureau Director Lee T. Kerney Date

James T. Addis 1-3-91  
Administrator James T. Addis Date

C. D. Besadny 1-4-91  
Secretary C. D. Besadny Date

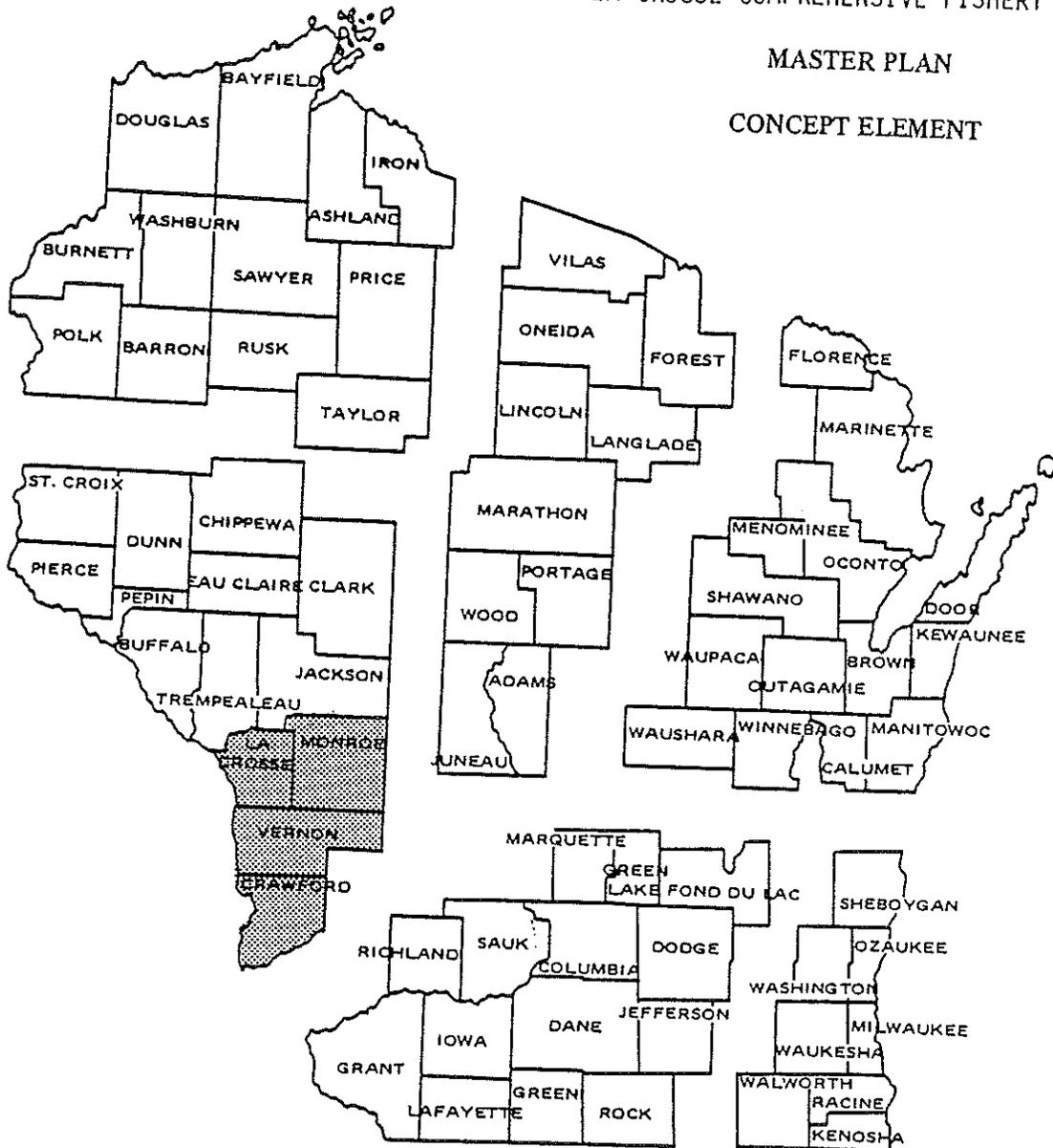
- cc: Judy Scullion - AD/5
- Jim Addis - AD/5
- Jim Lissack - WD
- Carl Evert - PM/4
- Ron Poff - FM/4



LA CROSSE COMPREHENSIVE FISHERY AREA

MASTER PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

- Co-Leader - Kenneth Wright - Area Fisheries Manager
- Co-Leader - Greg Mathson - Natural Resources Technician
- Ronald Olson - Area Land Agent
- Adrian Hagen - Area Forester
- Gary Gurske - Area Warden
- Raymond Kyro - Area Wildlife Manager

Approved by Natural Resources Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*See next page for additional Task Force members.

In addition to Department of Natural Resources members of the property task force shown on the cover sheet, the following persons participated in the preparation of the master plan. Their efforts are sincerely valued:

Glen Barstad - Vernon County Alliance  
Marc Schultz - La Crosse County Alliance  
Jeff Hastings - Vernon County Land Conversation Committee  
Al Hoff - Monroe County Land Conservation Committee  
Don Franke - La Crosse County Land Conservation Committee  
Don Daentl - Crawford County Land Conservation Committee  
Walt Coaty - Trout Unlimited  
Bob Miller - Wisconsin Wildlife Federation  
Joe Zanter - Sparta Rod and Gun Club  
Byron Evenson - Holmen Rod and Gun Club  
Jeff Kastenschmidt - Bangor Rod and Gun Club  
Lyle Anderson - Chaseburg Rod and Gun Club

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## SECTION I ACTIONS

### GOALS, ANNUAL OBJECTIVES, AND ANNUAL ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

#### Goals

To manage the proposed La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area in La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon and Crawford Counties in order to protect and improve critical habitat, maintain a high quality trout fishery, and provide public access to streams of the area which can sustain considerable fishing pressure.

#### Annual Objectives

1. Provide intensive management of a quality trout fishery to allow 20,000 participant-days of fishing for brown and brook trout.
2. Protect and restore critical habitat on 3 miles of stream using accepted habitat improvement practices.

#### Annual Additional Benefits

1. Improve water quality.
2. Reduce stocking quotas with the re-establishment of wild trout populations.
3. Provide fishing opportunities within 0.5 hour of the La Crosse metropolitan area.
4. Contribute to the habitat of migratory, threatened, and endangered species on the property.
5. Accommodate 500 other recreational participant-days for mushroom and berry picking, nature hiking, bird watching, and photography.
6. Promote watershed protection and improvement with cooperation of the 4-county Land Conservation Committees.

Within the La Crosse Area of the Department of Natural Resources, consisting of Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties, there are lands that have been acquired on 4 approved fishery areas, each with an approved boundary and acreage goal. They are Big Creek, Coon Creek, Mill Creek, and the La Crosse River fishery areas.

There are also 26 other trout streams within the La Crosse Area which exhibit great potential for improvement, having water quality, but lacking various instream attributes that limit production of fingerling trout and their carryover to the adult sizes preferred by anglers. Acquisition on those streams has been under the various county remnant programs, currently totalling 848.20 acres on 28.79 miles of streams.

This master plan introduces an entirely new concept in master planning in that the department proposes to combine the 26 streams with potential into one additional fishery area for the 4 counties, with a common acreage goal but with individual management and development objectives. Long-range acquisition, development and maintenance of lands and public waters will be specified as outlined in this master plan.

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 20, 1990 FILE REF: 3600

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: C. D. Besadny - 

SUBJECT: Proposed La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area Master Plan

A Department task force has prepared a proposed La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area Conceptual Master Plan for the four counties in the La Crosse Area. The Environmental Assessment, approved by the Bureau of Environmental Analysis and Review is attached for your review and approval. An addendum is included because the original acreage goal has been increased to promote accessible facilities to comply with 504 federal guidelines. During the public review process concerns were addressed that the proposed acreage goal of 1950 acres was too small. The revised recommended acreage goal is 2,000 acres. It is also recommended that the remnant program in the La Crosse Area not be abolished. It is extremely important to protect springheads not included in the master plan stream corridors. An acreage goal of 800 acres is recommended.

The master plan has been through 45-day reviewing and has been analyzed by a large number of in-house bureaus and outside reviewing individuals and agencies. All comments received from outside the department are included in the appendix attached to the master plan. No adverse comments were received.

The Environmental Assessment has also been made available to the public and no negative comments were submitted.

There are 192.3 miles of trout water within the proposed fishery area. This includes 51.6 miles of class III trout water. The Western District has negotiated land control on several class III trout waters resulting in upgrading the water quality and stream classification through habitat development and protection. The cost factor is insignificant compared to a put and take stocking program.

All past land acquisition along the proposed stream corridors have been through the county remnant programs. A total of 848.20 acres are under department control. The easement program has accounted for 518.75 acres and 329.45 acres have been acquired through fee title. The Bureau of Fisheries Management recommends these acres be used as a base for a named fishery area and requests approval be granted for an additional increase of 1,151.80 acres to create an acreage goal of 2,000 acres.

All land will be acquired from willing sellers. Hunting rights will not be obtained in easement areas.

Fisheries Management activities will include riprapping to control erosion and instream structures for habitat improvement. Attempts will be made to remove damaging impoundments on streams or springs, and every effort will be made to prevent future impoundments.

Beaver will be controlled using the best available methods to keep their activities to a minimum.

I wish to present this master plan to the Natural Resources Board at your January meeting.

Table 1. La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area and Remnant Program for Critical Habitat and Springheads.

A. <u>La Crosse Area Counties</u>	<u>Comprehensive Acreage Goal:</u>	<u>DNR Land Transf. to Comprehensive Proj.</u>	<u>Remaining to Be Acquired:</u>
(4)	2,000.0	848.2	1,151.8
B. Fishery Remnant Areas:			
	<u>Current Acreage Goal:</u>	<u>Current Ownership Transf. to Comprehensive Proj.</u>	<u>Acreage Goal after NRB Mtg.</u>
✓ Crawford	365.0	186.4	100.0
✓ La Crosse	110.0	198.1	200.0
✓ Monroe	301.0	132.4	100.0
Vernon	<u>353.0</u>	<u>331.3</u>	<u>400.0</u>
TOTAL	1,129.0	848.2	800.0

LTK:HLS:jmh/a:lacomp.hls  
cc: Judy Scullion - AD/5  
Jim Lissack - WD  
Carl Evert - PM/4  
Ron Poff - FM/4

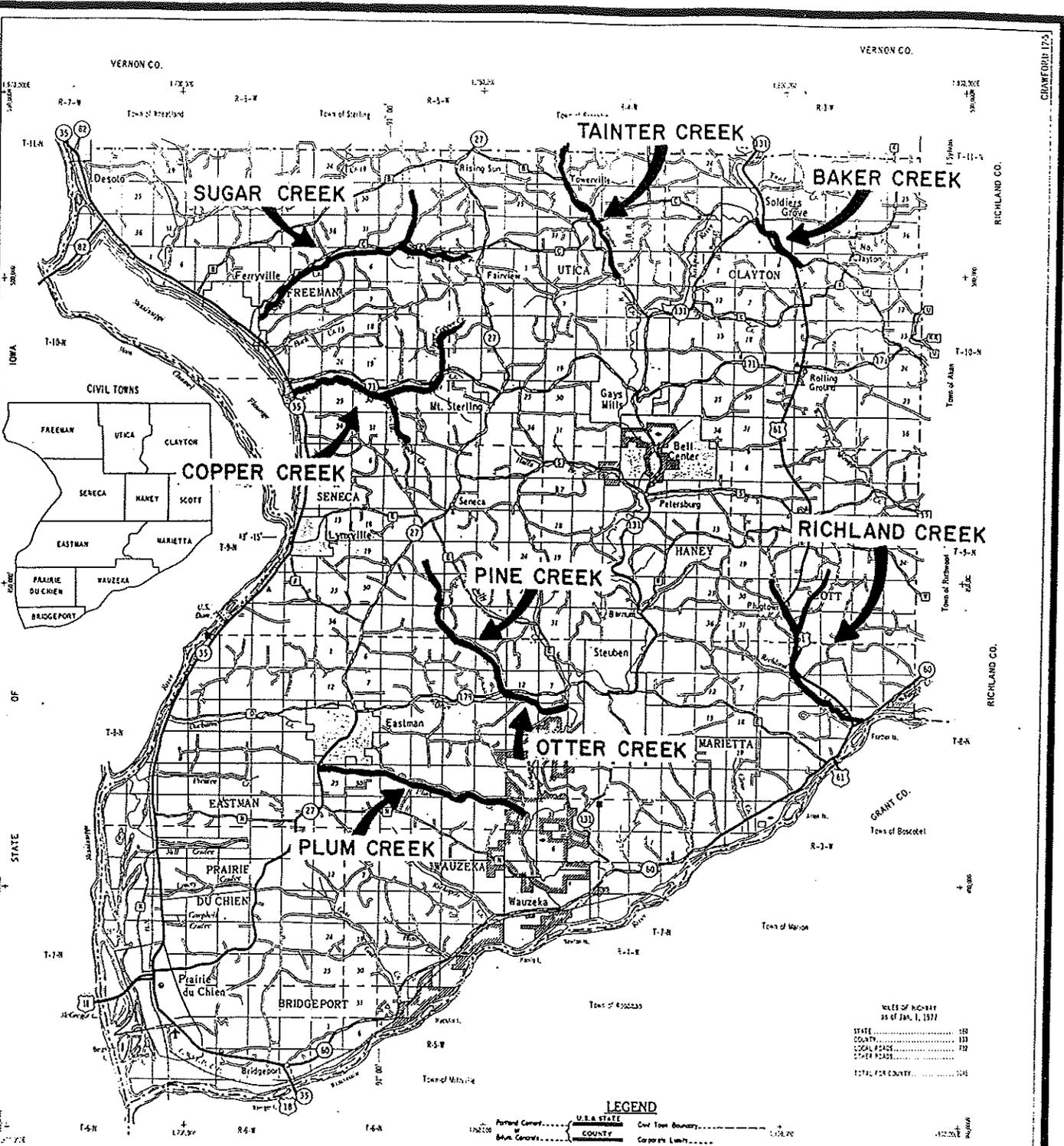


Figure 1a. Location—La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area, Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties.

TOWNSHIP NUMBERS				
6	5	4	3	2
7	8	9	10	11
18	17	16	15	14
19	20	21	22	23
26	25	24	23	22
31	32	33	34	35



- LEGEND**
- Interchange
  - Highway Separation
  - U.S. Highway No.
  - State Highway No.
  - County Hwy. Letter
  - Road
  - Dike
  - State Boundary
  - City Boundary
  - Public Med. or Fish. Grs.
  - Hospital
  - Ranger Station
  - Public Camp & Picnic Grs.
  - State Park... with Campsite
  - County Park... with Campsite
  - County Park... with Picnic Grs.
  - Wayside... with Picnic Grs.
  - Wayside... with Picnic Grs.

**CRAWFORD CO.**  
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
 STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
 JEFFERSON, WISCONSIN  
 SCALE 1" = 1 MILE  
 CORRECTED BY  
 JUNE 1973

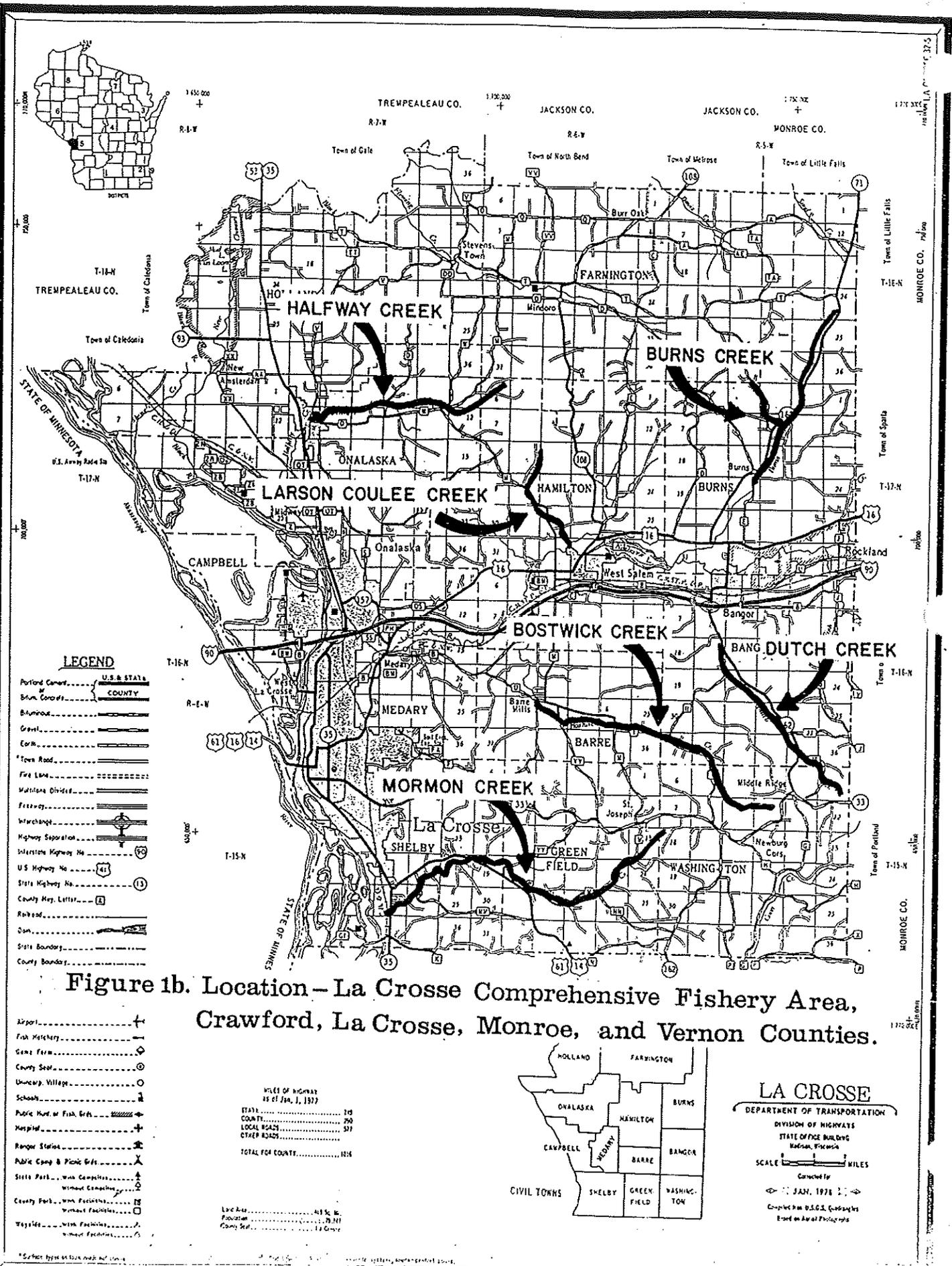


Figure 1b. Location — La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area, Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties.





It is recommended that it be named the La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area with an approved acreage goal of 2,000 acres and the boundaries shown on Figures 2a-d.

Perpetual easement will be the preferred method for meeting property goals, with acquisition in fee title as the alternative method to acquire a parcel. Fencing rights should be included in future easements, where feasible and they should also be pursued on existing easements. Fencing rights allow the department to construct fencing along the streams if a change in agricultural practices or ownership occurs, or the resource is threatened.

Acquisition should take place as soon as the present landowners are willing to sell and funds are available. All land acquisition has been, and will continue to be, from willing sellers.

The recommended management and development program for the fishery area will be the implementation of intensive habitat management. Such management of the streams is necessary to increase the biomass of the fishery and to increase fishing opportunities.

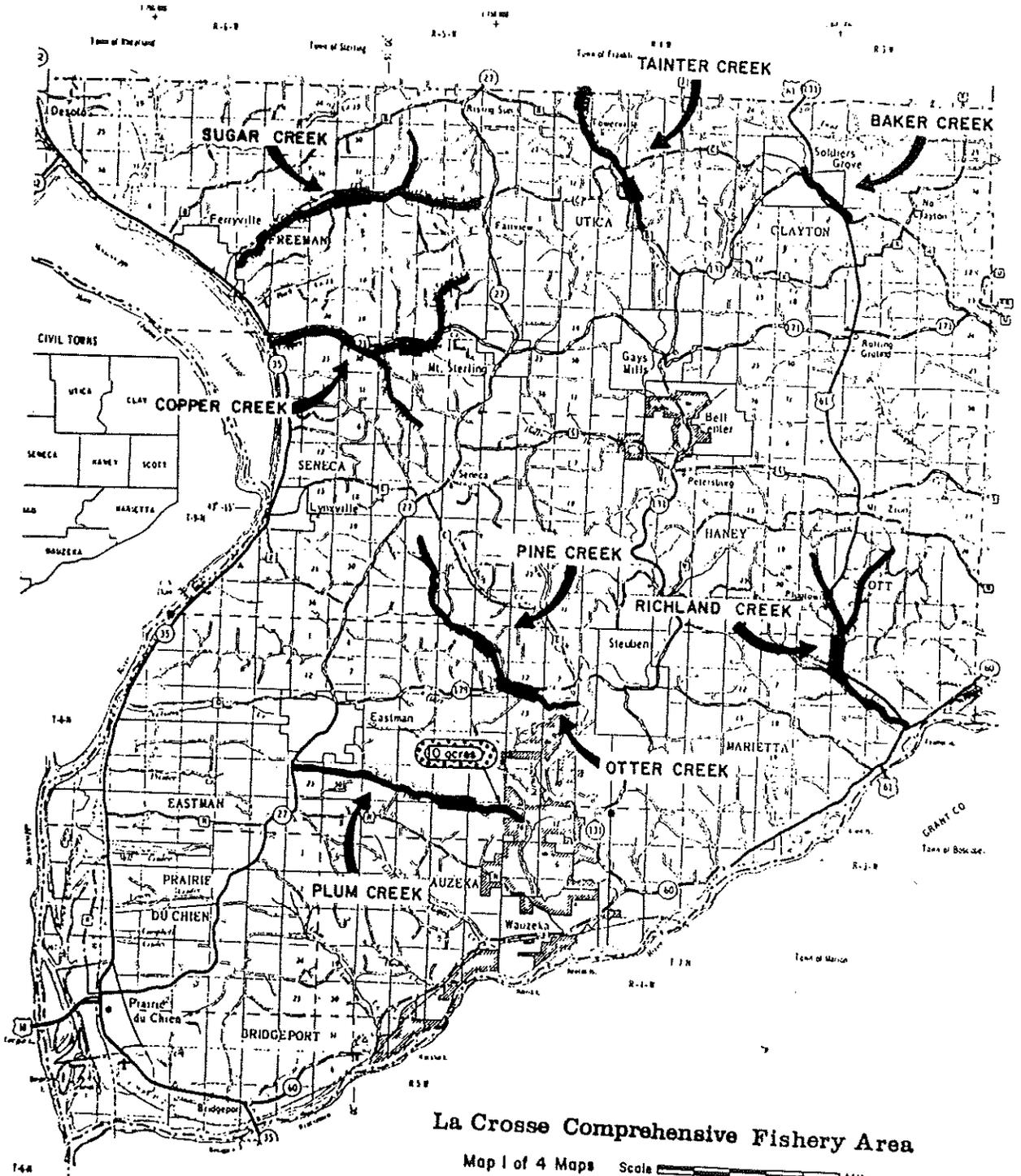
Extensive stream habitat work (Figures 3a-d) is planned and will be done on an area priority basis. The streams which will receive habitat work include Bostwick Coulee, Larson Coulee, Halfway, Burns, Dutch, and Mormon Coulee Creeks in La Crosse County; Hornby, Bishop Branch, Tainter, Frohock Valley, Billings, Cheyenne, Seas Branch, Reads, Warner, and 18-13 Creeks in Vernon County; Farmer's Valley Creek and the Little La Crosse River in Monroe County; and Sugar, South Fork of Sugar, Tainter, Baker, Richland, Pine, Plum, and Copper Creeks in Crawford County.

Habitat work will be in the form of streambank fencing, bank sloping and riprap, and instream habitat structures. Many of the fencing and bank riprap projects will be cooperative projects with County Land Conservation Committees (L.C.C.'s). Instream habitat development will be funded through Trout Stamp and County Conservation Aids programs. Projects were undertaken on Dutch Creek, La Crosse County; Tainter Creek and Billings Creek, Vernon County; and Pine Creek in Crawford County in 1988 and 1989. Similar projects on other streams will depend on the success and geographical distribution of easement acquisition in the future.

Most acreage will be acquired under perpetual easement. Because the average easement encumbers 66 feet on each bank, and the land remains under control of the landowner, forestry and wildlife management will have little impact on the property. On several areas where streambank fencing is already completed, shrubs and berry producing trees may be planted within the fence perimeter to provide food and cover for wildlife species and to add to the aesthetics of the stream corridor.

If a purchase is made in fee title, forestry and wildlife specialists will undertake responsibility for management of the resource if enough upland acreage is acquired to make this feasible. Fee title purchase will be made on tracts planned for accessibility development in accordance with federal and state law.

# CRAWFORD COUNTY



La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

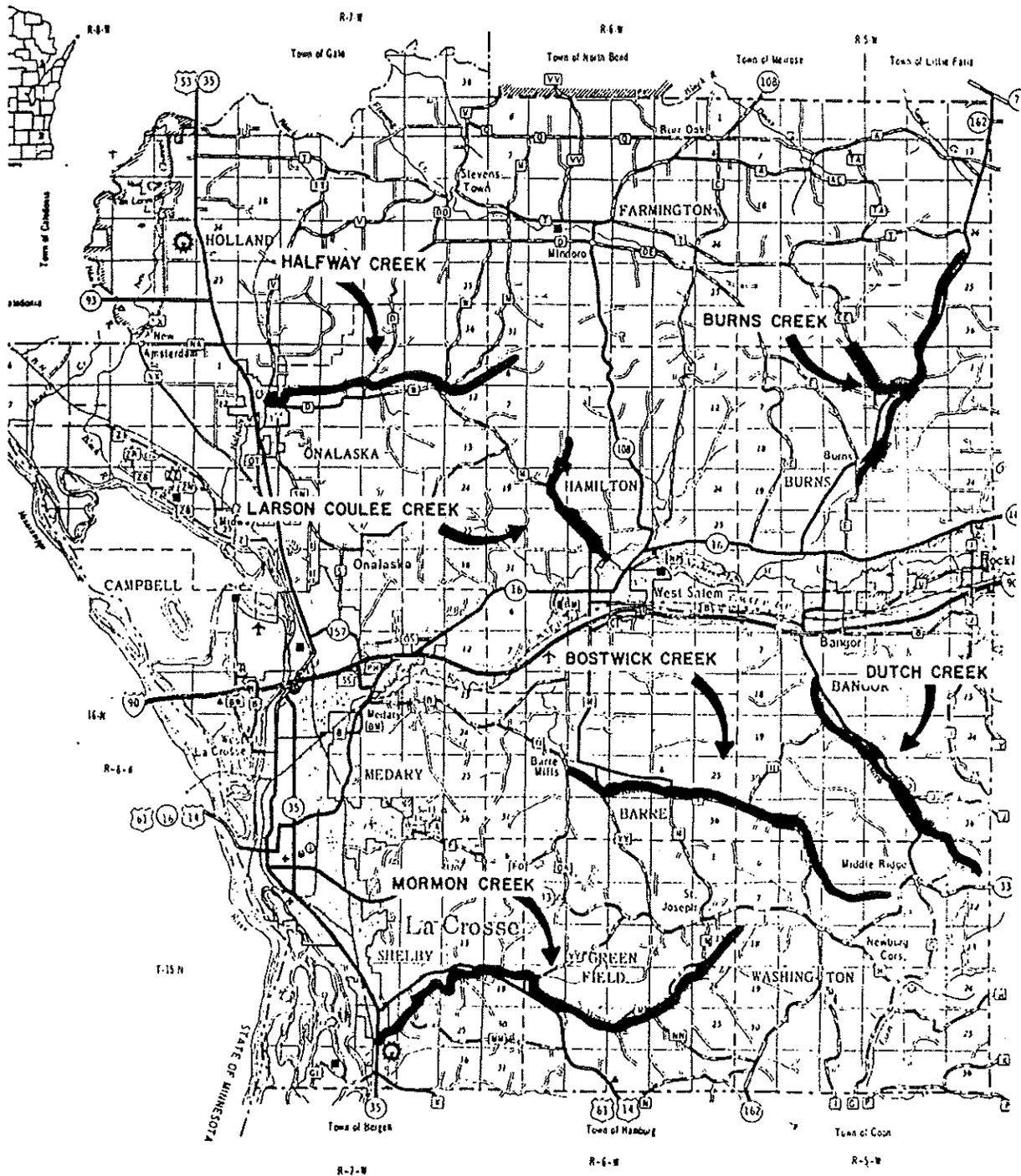
Map 1 of 4 Maps Scale 0 1 2 5 Miles

Figure 2a. Property Ownership Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary (4 Rods from each side of stream unless indicated)
- State Land Fee Title
- State Easment
- County Easment

# LA CROSSE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

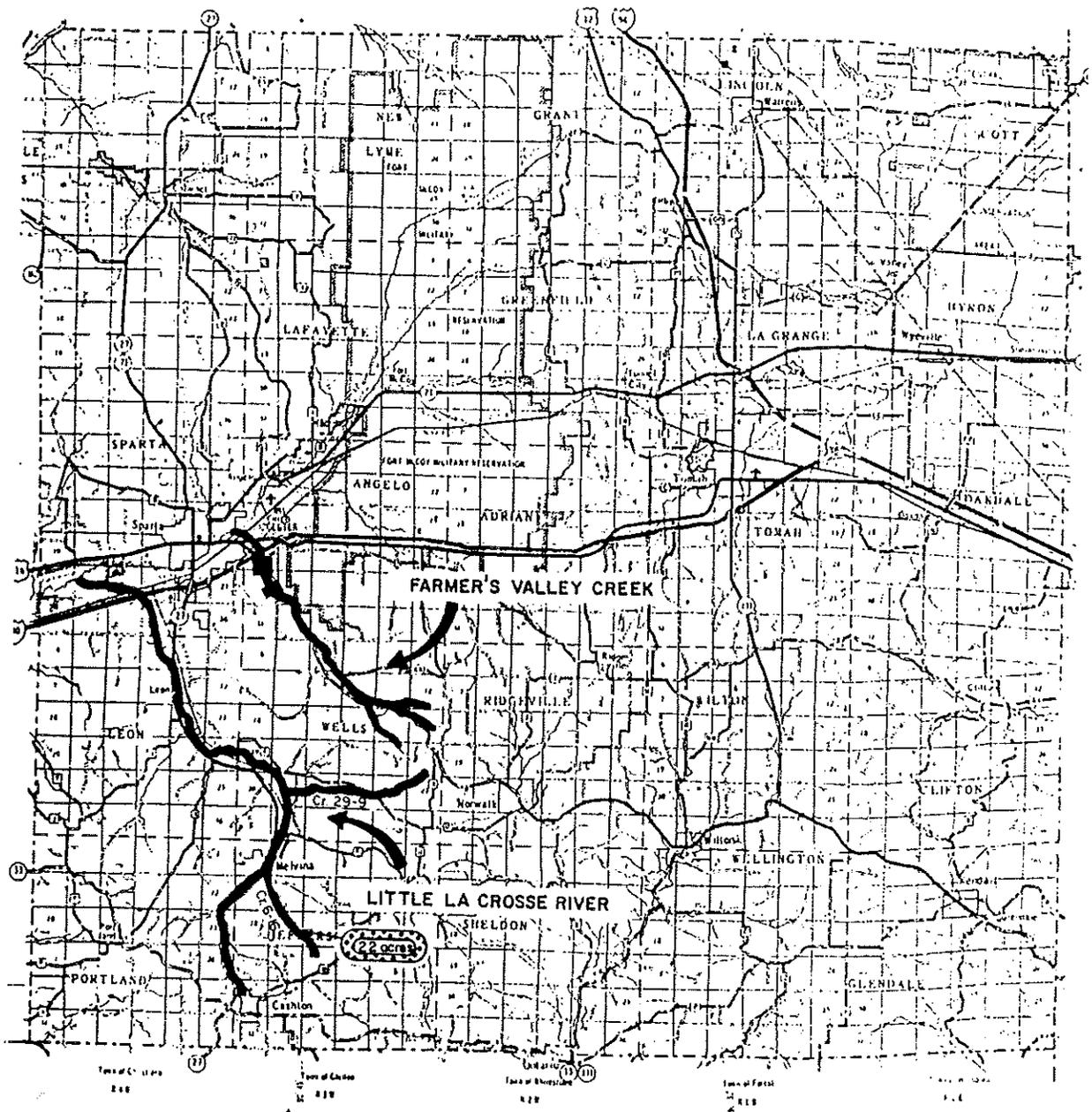
Map 2 of 4 Maps Scale 0 2.5 5 Miles

Figure 2b. Property Ownership Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary (4 Rods from each side of stream unless indicated)
- State Land Fee Title
- State Easment
- County Easment

# MONROE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

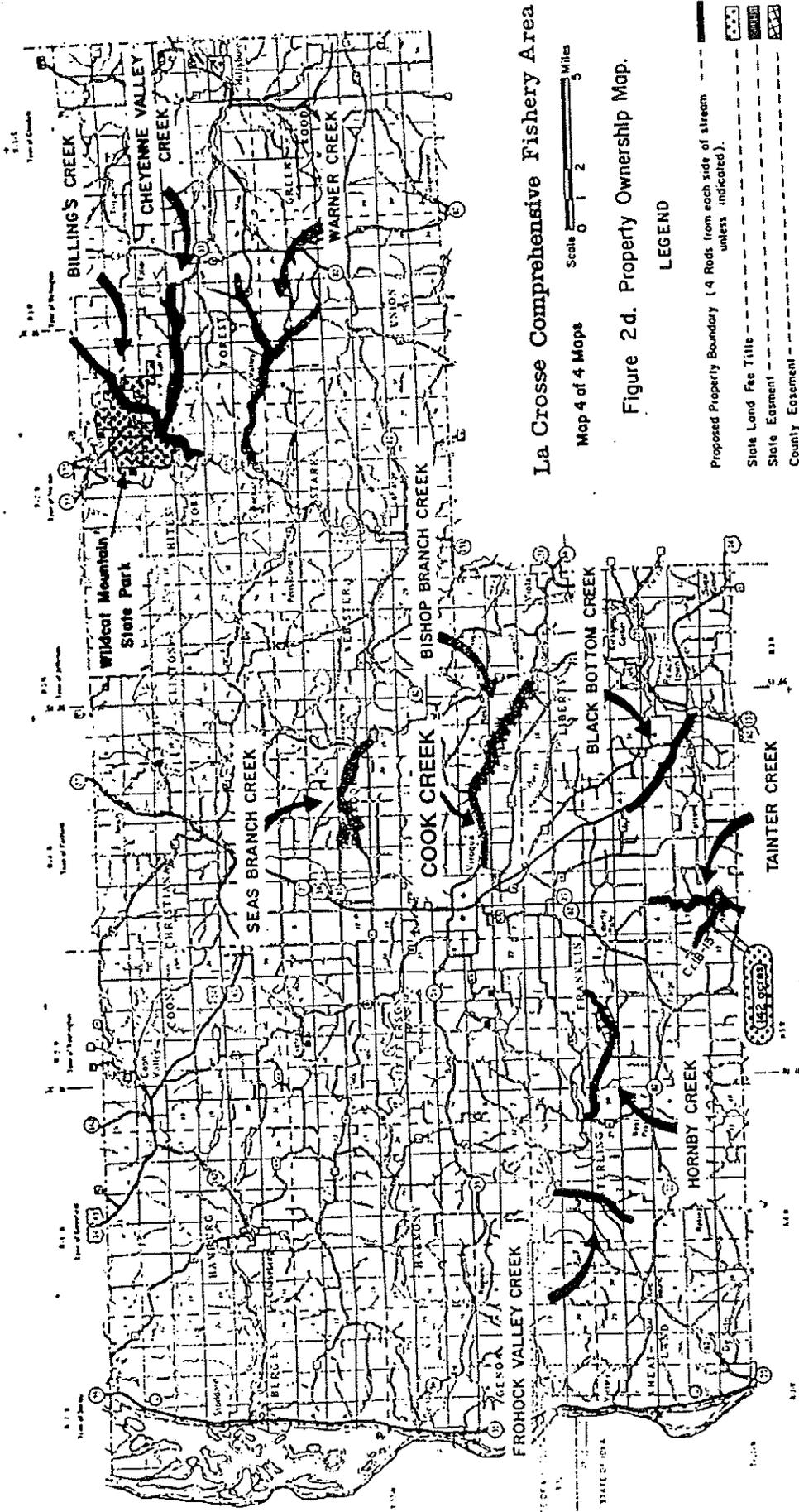
Map 3 of 4 Maps

Scale 0 1 2 3 Miles

Figure 2c. Property Ownership Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary (4 Rods from each side of stream unless indicated) - - - - -
- State Land Fee Title - - - - -
- State Easment - - - - -
- County Easment - - - - -



All areas proposed for development will be examined for the presence of endangered and threatened species of animals and 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 documented as funds permit. Additional property objectives may be developed following completion of such an inventory.

## SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The proposed La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area consists of the better trout streams scattered around the four-county La Crosse Area which are not a part of established approved fishery areas. They vary from low gradient, sand-bottomed brook trout streams to high gradient, rubble-bottomed brown trout streams. Through better watershed management, improved instream habitat conditions and protection, these streams have the potential to become excellent trout waters.

Five major watersheds are included in this fishery area. The Black, La Crosse, Bad Axe, Kickapoo, and Wisconsin rivers all flow in a southwesterly direction and eventually end in the Mississippi River.

All the streams included in the fishery area are spring-fed headwater streams originating in either La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon, or Crawford Counties.

The acquisition of fish management easements has been a successful and well-supported program on the trout streams within the proposed fishery area. Support has been expressed for the continuation of this program at increased levels by town and county officials, other resource agencies, conservation clubs and federations, and individual landowners. Club and agency input is included in this document.

Acquisition by easement has been popular for numerous reasons. No land is removed from the tax base and no subsequent in-lieu tax payments from the state are required. Present land usage often remains unchanged. Smaller acreage goals are required. (A 66-foot wide easement across a 40-acre tract encumbers only 4 acres of land), and the cost of an easement is substantially lower than fee title acquisition of a 40 (\$4,000 to \$5,000 per easement versus \$26,000 to \$28,000 fee purchase).

Streams included in this proposal are discussed below on a county-by-county basis to properly cover the history of past development:

#### La Crosse County

La Crosse County streams included in the fishery area are Larson Coulee, Dutch, Burns, Halfway, Bostwick, and Mormon Coulee Creeks. They are scattered throughout the county, but all are within a half hour drive of the La Crosse-Onalaska metropolitan area.

In the last few years, land acquisition along the streams has increased. Currently, 174.11 acres have been acquired in perpetual easements along La Crosse County streams.

Very little instream habitat work has been completed on these streams because of the short time they have been under department control. Three streams, Halfway, Dutch, and Mormon Coulee Creeks, have had limited habitat development work (Figure 3b) through cooperation with local conservation clubs. Mormon Coulee Creek has shown an increase in the trout population where this work has been completed. Even though this stream is established as Class III, the potential and resources are available to upgrade the stream once habitat development is undertaken.

Through cooperation with the La Crosse County Land Conservation Committee, stream bank fencing has been completed on several properties on Larson Coulee Creek. This is a pilot project, with hopes that similar work of this type will be developed in the county.

In 1987, habitat development was initiated on the upper reaches of Dutch Creek funded with Trout Stamp and County Conservation Aids monies. Brown trout, from a self-reproducing population of wild fish were stocked in the fall of 1987 to insure a good population to withstand the increased fishing pressure on this improved section. Numerous fishermen crossovers (safe access over barbed wire fences) have been placed on many of the easement parcels and posting signs have been placed on all of the properties.

#### Crawford County

Crawford County streams of the proposed fishery area include the Sugar, the South Fork of the Sugar, Tainter, Baker, Pine, Richland, Plum and Copper Creeks.

Acquisition of land along trout streams in Crawford County has been a slow process. Currently, 37 acres have been acquired in fee title and 142.86 acres are in perpetual easement.

No significant instream habitat work has been done on streams within the proposed fishery area. Baker Creek had a limited number of instream habitat structures installed (Figure 3a) when the Village of Soldiers Grove was relocated in the early 1980's. Approximately 1/4 mile of stream was improved.

Instream habitat development was completed for Tainter Creek and Copper Creek in 1989-1990 under the Trout Stamp program.

#### Monroe County

Monroe County streams included in the proposed fishery area are Farmer's Valley Creek and the Little La Crosse River (Leon Creek).

Many acres of land are under department control in Monroe County through fee title purchase of the land on existing fishery areas. Remnant easement acquisition along trout streams has been a slow process. Currently, 100 acres have been acquired in fee title and 25.38 acres are in perpetual easement.

No significant instream habitat work has been completed on streams included in the fishery area. Several areas along the Little La Crosse River have bank riprap installed (Figure 3c) using County Conservation Aids money. A small portion of Farmer's Valley Creek had instream habitat structures installed within the highway right of way in conjunction with a riprap project on an interstate highway bridge in the early 1970's.

#### Vernon County

Stream systems included in Vernon County are Hornby, Cook, Bishop Branch, Tainter, Frohock Valley, Billings, Cheyenne, Reads (Black Bottom), Seas Branch, Warner, and numbered stream Creek 18-13 which is a primary tributary to Tainter Creek.

Land acquisition in Vernon County along the better trout streams has been a very active program. Currently, 192.45 acres have been acquired in fee title and 176.40 acres have been acquired in perpetual easement on this fishery area.

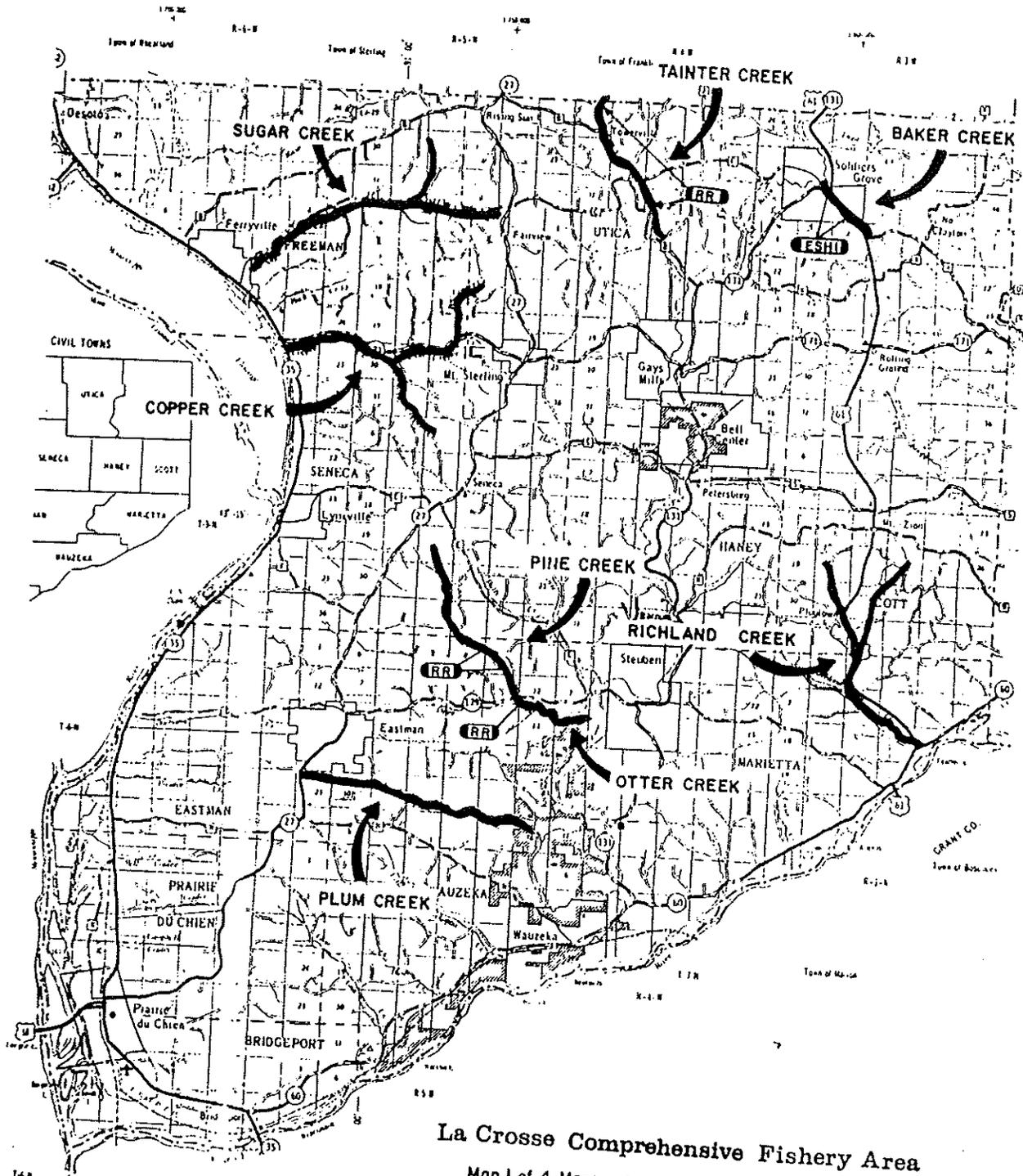
On several of the streams included in the fishery area, instream habitat development has been extensive. Hornby, Bishop Branch, and Billings Creeks have had various degrees of completed instream habitat work. The upper 1.5 miles of Hornby Creek and nearly all of Bishop Branch have been improved. These projects were started in the early 1970's before the trout stamp program was initiated. Billings Creek had about a half mile of stream improved after the 1978 flood (Figure 3d). These earlier habitat projects were installed using Vernon County Conservation Aids and then repaired or replaced using Federal Disaster Relief monies.

Early easements on Hornby and Bishop Branch Creeks were 20/20 (20 year easements with a second 20 year option) county easements. These easements will either be re-signed by the county for another 20 years or will be changed over to perpetual state easements. There are presently 12-20/20 easements on Bishop Branch and 7 on Hornby Creek. Easements on Hornby Creek were renewed in 1989 while those on Bishop Branch expire in 1991.

Because of the large investments expended on instream habitat improvement, fencing agreements are being taken in the easements. The agreements give the department the right to fence the easement area if the present land use changes or damage is occurring on the stream. Several limited grazing agreements which control the amount of time livestock can pasture easement lands, are being tested on the Coon Creek Fishery Area. Early results indicates this method of brush control by cattle is useful and could be applied to this fishery area. It appears brushing could be kept to a minimum.

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

# CRAWFORD COUNTY



La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

Map 1 of 4 Maps Scale 0 1 2 3 Miles

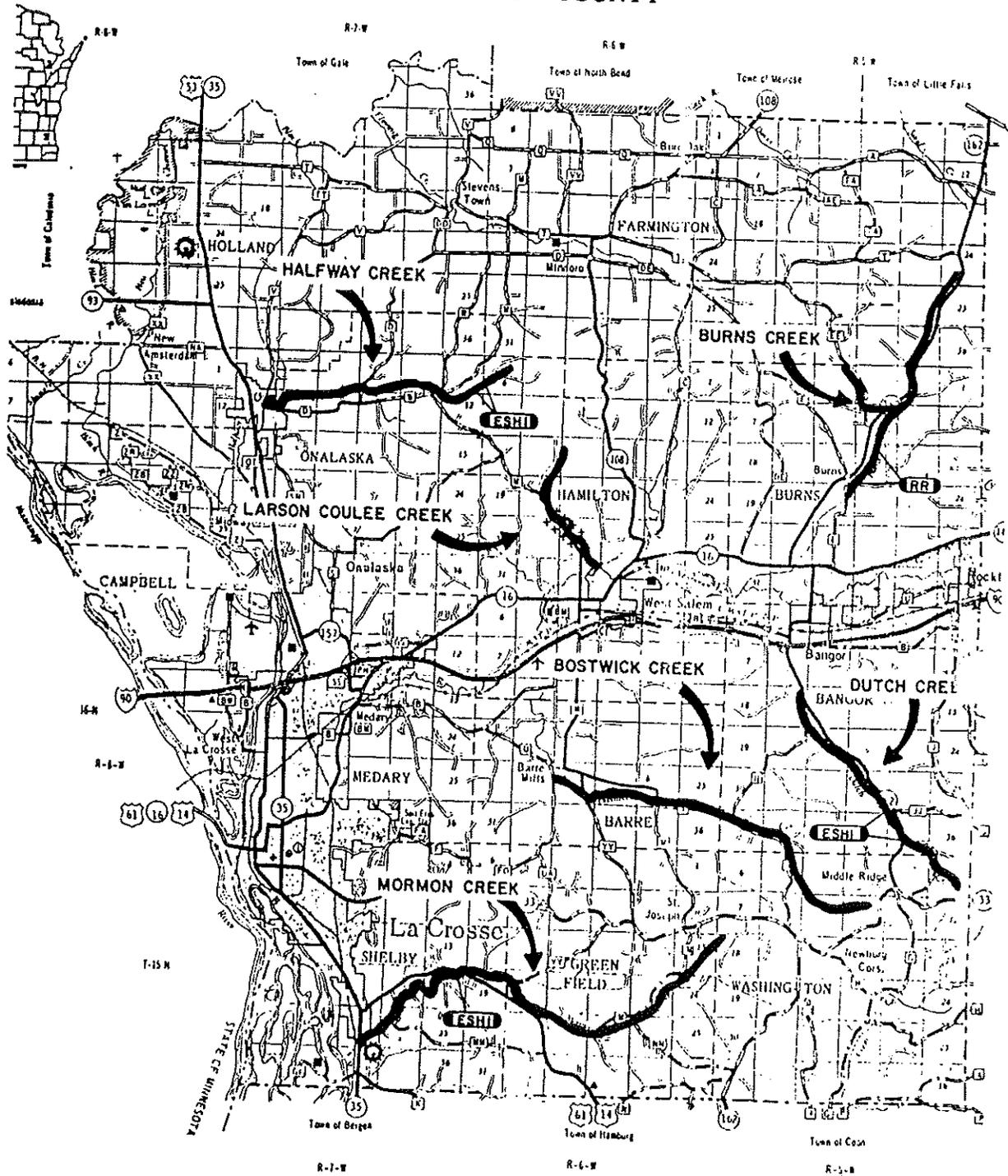
Figure 3a. Existing and Planned Development Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Existing Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - -
- Proposed Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - -
- Existing Riprap - - - - -
- Existing Fencing - - - - -
- Entire Stream Course - - - - -

ESH  
RR  
XXX

# LA CROSSE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

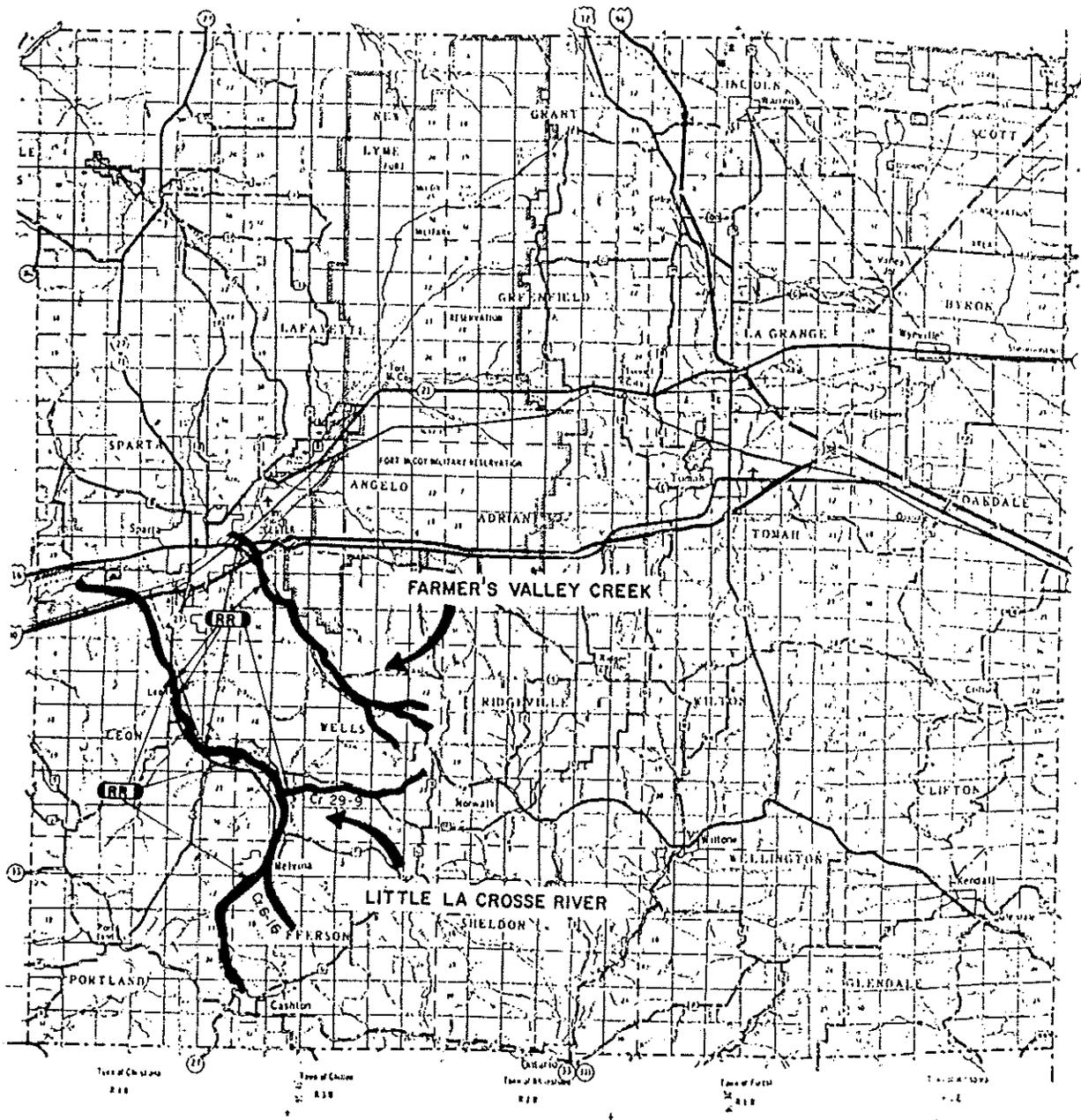
Map 2 of 4 Maps Scale 0 2.5 5 Miles

Figure 3b. Existing and Planned Development Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Existing Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - -
- Proposed Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - -
- Existing Riprap - - - - -
- Existing Fencing - - - - -
- Entire Stream Course - **ESHI**
- RR - **RR**
- R.R. - **R.R.**

# MONROE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

Map 3 of 4 Maps

Scale 0 1 2 5 Miles

Figure 3c. Existing and Planned Development Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Existing Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - - **ESH1**
- Proposed Stream Habitat Improvement - - - - - Entire Stream Course
- Existing Riprap - - - - - **RR**
- Existing Fencing - - - - - **X X X**

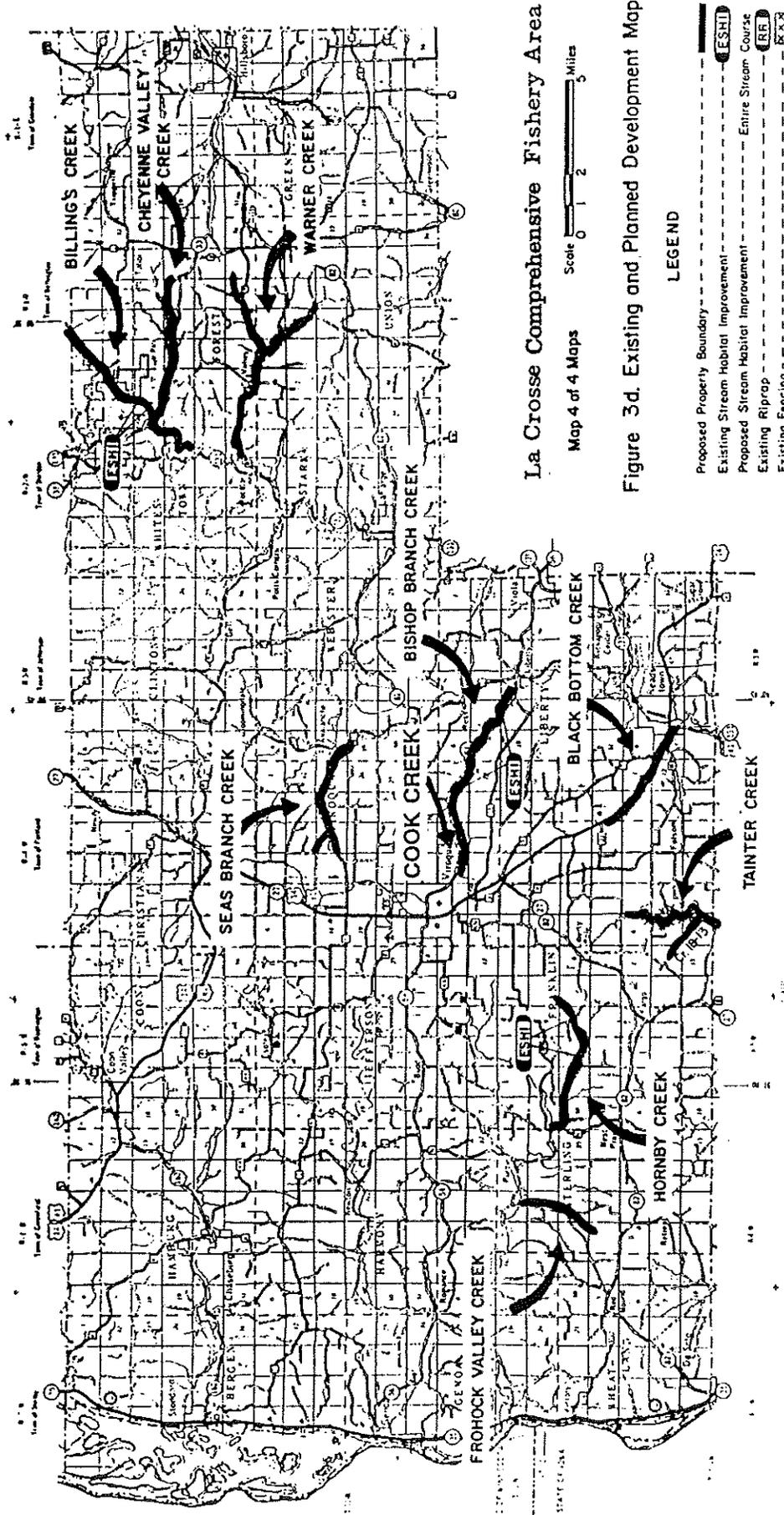


Figure 3d. Existing and Planned Development Map.

Current improvement activities include construction of property signs and boundary posting, construction of angler fence cross-overs, periodic fence repair and sign replacement, close surveillance and improvement of feedlot operations along the streams, and beaver dam removal.

In addition to habitat protection and improvement activities, surveys of the fish population and trout stocking are also important periodic fish management activities within the fishery area.

## RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

### Soils, Geology, and Hydrology

Lack of glaciation and the presence of bedrock near the land surface have greatly influenced the soils and topography of this area. Dolomite and sandstone are the two principle bedrock lithologies present. The older rock formations are Upper Cambrian sandstone. Overlying the sandstone formations is the Lower Ordovician Prairie du Chien dolomite. The Prairie du Chien Group underlies the ridges throughout most of the area.

The area in which the two main types of bedrock occur are separated into two district regions by the La Crosse River. South of the river, the bedrock is sandstone capped by the younger dolomite. North of the river, the bedrock is mostly sandstone with dolomite, where present, being thin and more aerial restricted than the south. The landforms in the two areas differ significantly. The uplands south of the La Crosse River consist mainly of the "coulee topography", characterized by long, broad ridges with narrow, steep-sided valleys and escarpments. To the north, the uplands are characterized by more broad, rounded uplands with narrow caps of the Prairie du Chien dolomite being less common.

Much of the fishery area is covered by a layer of loess (silt), spread by winds during and after glaciation. It is wholly or at least in part the parent material for many of the soils. Where the loess has been removed, several of the soils have developed from geological weathering of sandstone. Alluvium and colluvium are the parent materials of most soils found on terraces and within floodplains. Most of the soils are of mineral origin, but a few are derived from organic materials.

The area receives an average of about 32 inches of precipitation per year. The heaviest precipitation usually occurs in early summer when violent thunderstorms with high intensity rainfall occur.

### Fish and Wildlife

The major game fish species in the La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area are brown and brook trout with an occasional tiger (Brown x Brook Hybrid) or rainbow trout. Sometimes walleye, sauger, or northern pike are found in the lower, warmer reaches of the streams.

Other species present in the various streams of the fishery area include white sucker, shorthead and golden redhorse, northern hogsucker, blacknose and

longnose dace, johnny and fantail darters, bluntnose and fathead minnows, central stoneroller, bigmouth, spotfin, and sand shiners, and brook lamprey.

Natural reproduction of brown trout and/or brook trout occurs in many of the streams in the fishery area. Growth of trout is excellent.

The common water snake, painted and snapping turtles, and pickerel, northern leopard and green frogs are also known to be present on the fishery area.

The fishery area is presently occupied by species of wildlife common to lowlands and streams. Mammal species which can be found in the area are white-tailed deer, gray and fox squirrels, cottontail rabbit, mink, muskrat, beaver, racoon, skunk, weasel, and gray and red foxes.

Many birds inhabit the properties including permanent and seasonal species. Game birds found include ruffed grouse, woodcock, mallard, wood duck, and wild turkey. Many species of song birds inhabit the properties.

#### Vegetative Cover

The La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area is characterized by lowland brush, swamp hardwoods, and extensive pasture and cropland.

The area encumbered by the stream consists of a narrow strip of land on each bank of the stream. Very little can be done in the way of forestry management except for the planting of small shrubs along the stream banks. Table 1 indicates the acreage of various types of vegetation on state-owned lands.

TABLE 1. Vegetation types of acreage of state-owned lands on the proposed La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery area, Vernon, La Crosse, Monroe and Crawford Counties.

<u>Vegetation Types</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Pasture	55.0	17%
Lowland Brush and Stream	97.0	29%
Herbaceous Vegetation	34.0	10%
Northern Hardwoods	36.0	11%
Bottomland Hardwoods	12.45	4%
Oak	90.0	27%
Stream	<u>5.0</u>	<u>2%</u>
Totals	329.45	100%

#### Endangered and Threatened Species

Currently, the Cooper's hawk, wood turtle, blandings turtle, white lady's slipper, on the Wisconsin threatened list; the loggerhead shrike and Massasauga rattlesnake on the Wisconsin endangered list; and northern monkshood, a federally listed threatened species are found on or near the property.

There may be other threatened or endangered resources close to, but not within, the property boundaries. These species have been identified here because they may also occur within or benefit from habitat encompassed by the proposed property boundary.

The exact locations of these species are recorded in the files of the Bureau of Endangered Resources and the La Crosse Area Headquarters of the Department of Natural Resources.

Comprehensive endangered resource surveys may not have been completed for all these properties. As a result, data files may be incomplete. The absence of known occurrences does not preclude the possibility of their presence.

### Water Resources

The proposed fishery area boundary includes many of the good trout streams in the 4-county La Crosse Area, which are not part of an approved fishery area. Most of the streams have an abundance of springs which flow from the ground at a constant 48° F regardless of season. The waters are also usually clear, hard, and alkaline. A discussion of each of the streams in the proposed fishery area follows:

#### LaCrosse County

Bostwick Creek is presently classified as either a Class I, II, or III brook and brown trout stream depending upon location. A recent survey indicated this stream has the potential with instream habitat development to become a Class I brown trout stream.

Larson Coulee Creek is variously classified as a Class I and II brook trout stream. Presently the La Crosse County Land Conservation Committee has barnyard stabilization projects planned and underway on this stream. Siltation and a lack of instream cover are the major problems effecting this stream.

Burns Creek is classified as a Class I and II brook and brown trout stream. It has always had a good population of native brook trout. In the early 1960's, the upper reaches of this stream were posted to "No Fishing" by the Bangor Sportsmen's Club to protect spawning brook trout and provide a nursery area. This area is no longer posted. With instream habitat development, this stream has the potential to become a Class I trout stream for its entire length.

Dutch Creek is classified as a Class II trout stream. Poor instream cover has been the limiting factor for an excellent trout population. In 1987, instream habitat development was completed in the upper reaches and wild brown trout were introduced in hopes of establishing a self-reproducing strain.

Mormon Coulee Creek is presently classed as Class III trout water for its entire length. Several years ago this stream was classified as a Class III stream in the upper reaches only. Streambank stabilization and several

small habitat projects have been the influencing factors to the streams improvement. Recent problems with poor quality water being discharged from farm ponds will have to be addressed in order to further upgrade this stream.

#### Vernon County

Bishop Branch Creek is a Class II brown trout stream. Extensive instream habitat was completed in the early 1970's using county aids monies and were repaired or replaced after the 1978 flood with Federal Disaster Relief monies. In the fall of 1986, wild brown trout from Rulland's Coulee Creek were stocked expecting to establish a self-sustaining population. Recent surveys indicate they spawned successfully in 1986. The first segment of 20/20 county easement on this stream will begin expiring in 1991.

Cook Creek is a spring-fed stream tributary to Bishop Branch Creek. At one time it was classed as non-trout water. Through introductory stocks of hatchery brook trout sac fry and brook trout fingerlings, a self-sustaining brook trout population has been established. It is the most important cold water tributary to Bishop Branch Creek.

Seas Branch Creek is a Class I and II brook and brown trout stream. Some habitat work was done in the form of instream structures, streambank fencing, and spring dredging and channel restabilization. Seas Branch Pond is managed for brook trout and the stream portion below for brown trout.

Tainter Creek is a Class II brown trout stream in Vernon and Crawford Counties. A moderate trout population is present but instream cover is the limiting factor preventing higher numbers of trout. Growth of trout is excellent due to the high fertility of this stream.

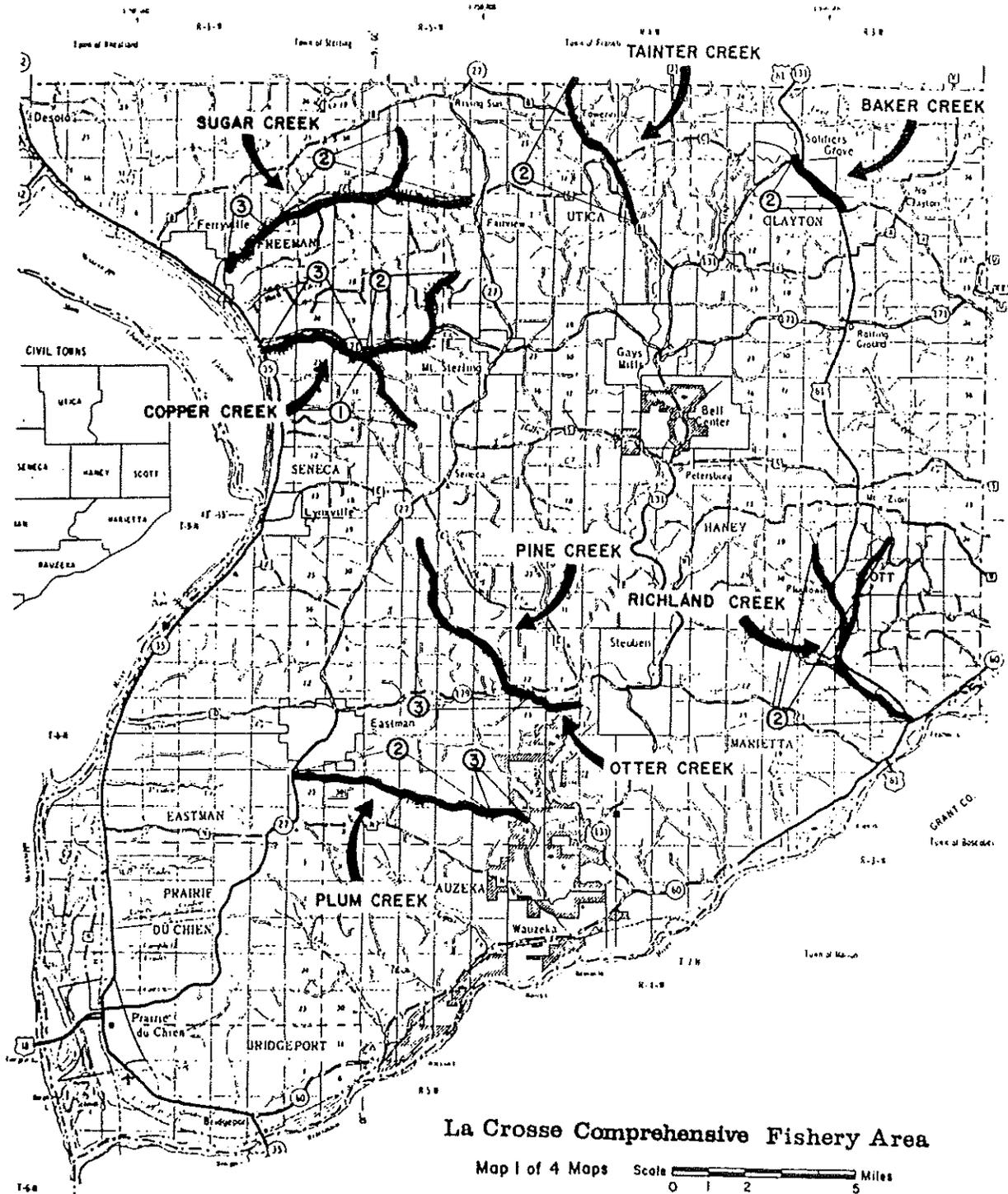
Creek 18-13 is an important spring-fed tributary to Tainter Creek in Vernon County. An introductory stocking of brook trout fingerling was the beginning of a self-sustaining Class II brook trout population in the mid-1970's. Beaver have been a major problem in recent years.

Hornby Creek is a Class I and II brown trout stream. Instream habitat development has been completed on the upper reaches of this stream with county aids and were repaired or replaced after the 1978 flood with Federal Disaster Relief monies. Beaver have been a problem in this stream in the past and continue to be in the present.

Frohock Valley Creek (Cr. 15-14) is a Class I brown trout stream. This stream is a spring-fed tributary to the South Fork of the Bad Axe River. It was classed as a non-trout water until a study of the stream conducted in the mid-1980's. Results of the survey indicated a Class I ranking was justified. Beaver may be a major problem on the lower end of this stream if not controlled.

Billings Creek is a Class II brown trout stream. Much of the stream flows through Wildcat Mountain State Park and U. S. Army Corps of Engineers lands. The factor limiting an excellent trout population is instream cover. One small easement area has 30 instream habitat structures installed in 1986 using Trout Stamp funds.

# CRAWFORD COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

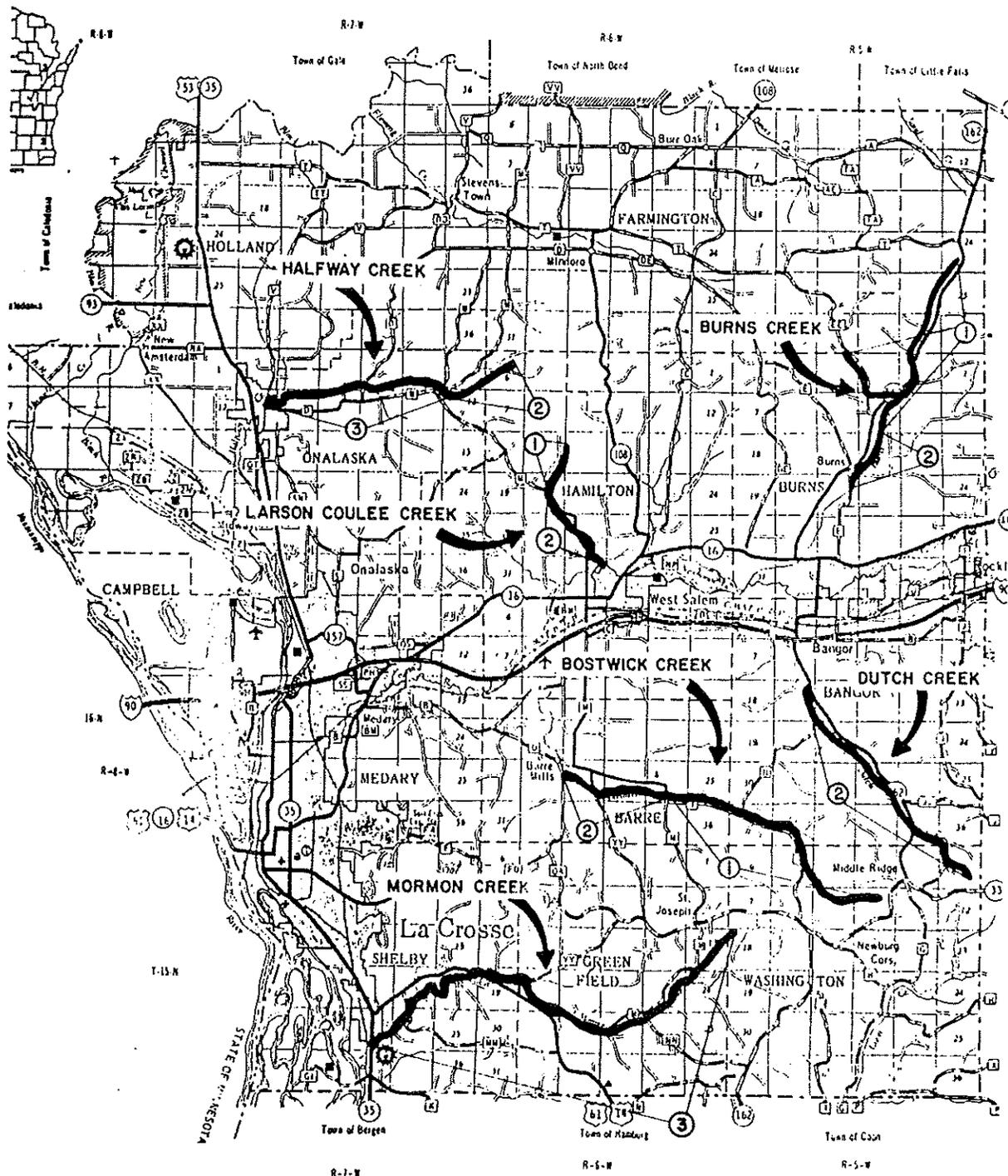
Map 1 of 4 Maps Scale 0 1 2 5 Miles

Figure 4a. Land Use Classification Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Fish & Wildlife Management Area - RD<sub>2</sub> - - - - - Entire Property
- Class I Trout Water - - - - - ①
- Class II Trout Water - - - - - ②
- Class III Trout Water - - - - - ③

# LA CROSSE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

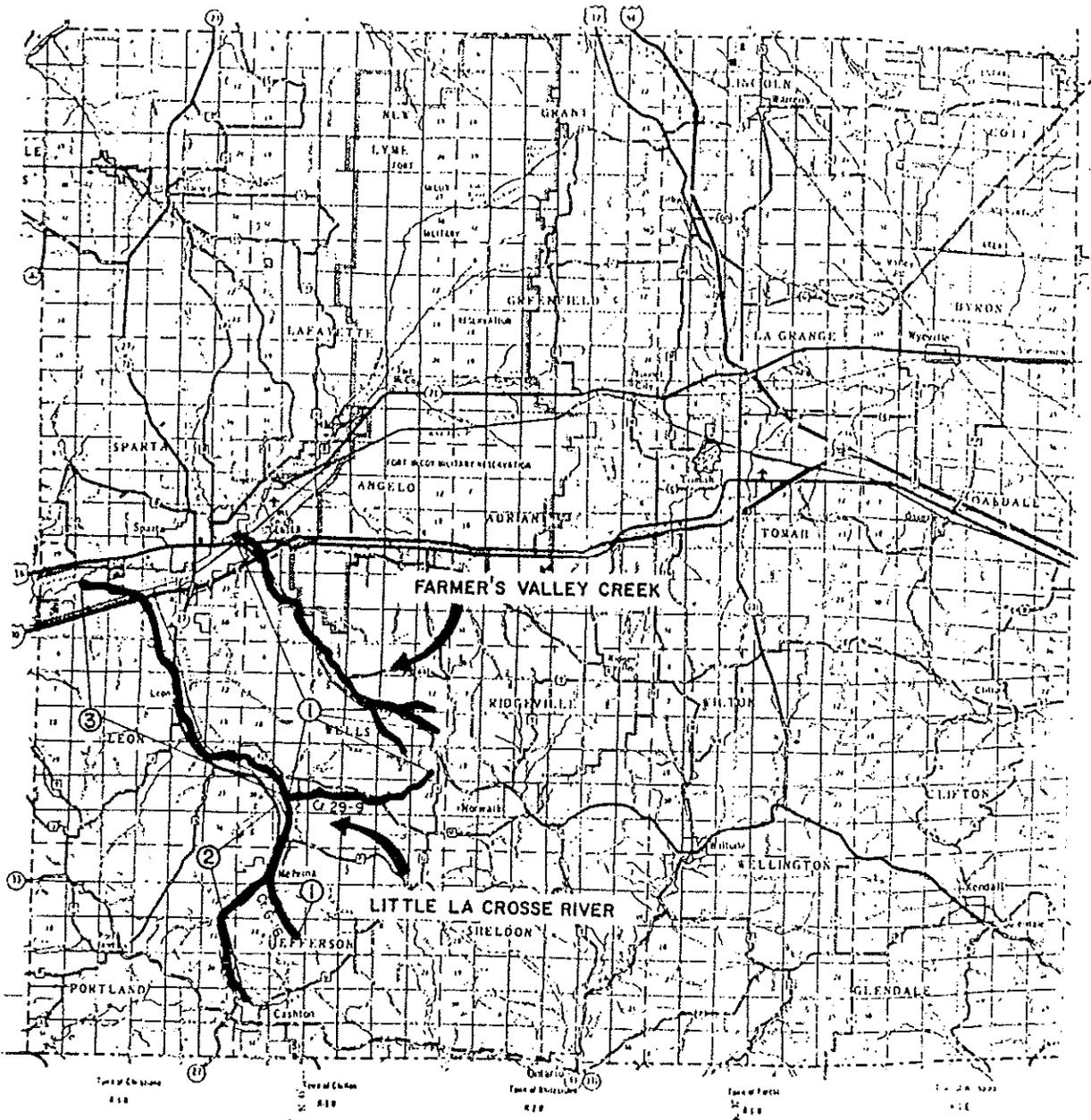
Map 2 of 4 Maps Scale 0 2.5 5 Miles

Figure 4b. Land Use Classification Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary ————
- Fish & Wildlife Management Area —RD<sub>2</sub> ———— Entire Property
- Class I Trout Water - - - - - ①
- Class II Trout Water - - - - - ②
- Class III Trout Water - - - - - ③

# MONROE COUNTY



## La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

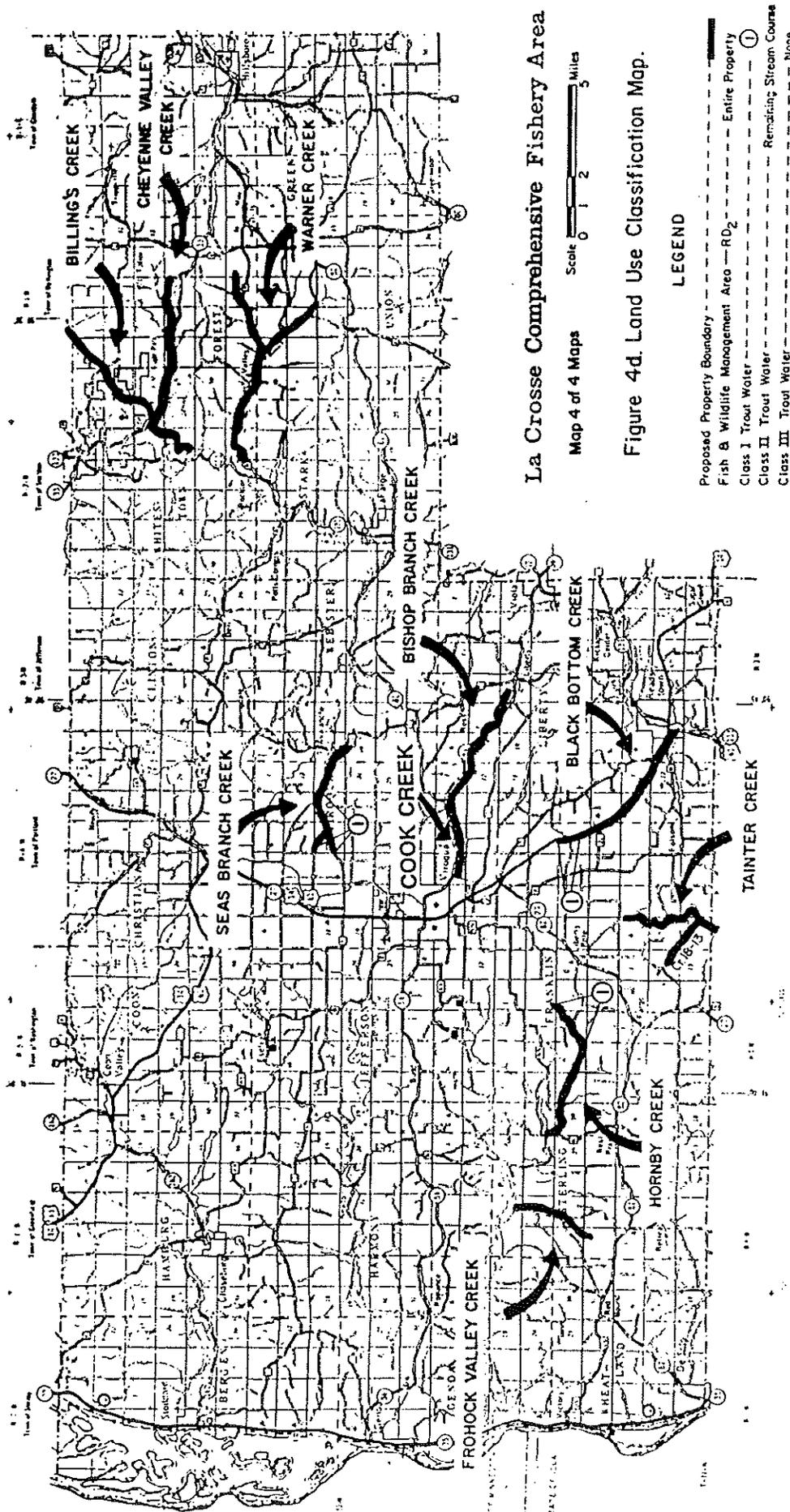
Map 3 of 4 Maps

Scale 0 1 2 5 Miles

Figure 4c. Land Use Classification Map.

### LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Fish & Wildlife Management Area - RD<sub>2</sub> - - - - - Entire Property
- Class I Trout Water - - - - - ①
- Class II Trout Water - - - - - ②
- Class III Trout Water - - - - - ③



Cheyenne Creek is a spring-fed tributary to Billings Creek and is a Class II brook and brown trout stream. Beaver have been a problem in the mid-section of this stream. With some habitat development, this stream has the potential to become a Class I trout stream. One perpetual easement has been purchased on this creek.

Reads Creek (Black Bottom) is a Class I and II trout stream. It is very fertile with good growth of trout. Lack of sufficient instream cover is the controlling factor for an excellent trout fishery.

Warner Creek is a Class II trout stream tributary to the Kickapoo River. The lower reaches flow through U. S. Army Corps of Engineers land and is a known producer of trophy brown trout.

#### Crawford County

Baker Creek is a Class II trout stream and is a tributary to the Kickapoo River. Beaver have a well-established colony in the middle reaches. Some limited instream habitat development was completed on this stream when the Village of Soldiers Grove was relocated. The lower section is influenced by the Kickapoo River.

The Copper Creek system includes the North Branch, South Branch, and Upper Copper Creek. At varying locations it is Class I, II, or III trout water. Lack of instream cover is the major problem effecting the Class II and III sections of streams. Instream habitat development is planned in 1989 on one parcel.

Pine Creek is a Class III trout stream and is very fertile with excellent growth of carry-over trout. Instream cover and an uncontrolled feedlot are the limiting factors for a good trout population. Intensive agricultural practices in the past downgraded it from a Class II to a Class III trout stream. Land acquisition and habitat improvement are needed to preserve and upgrade this resource.

Plum Creek is a Class II and III trout stream, and it is very fertile. Lack of instream cover is the limiting factor for a good trout population. Numerous springs enter this stream in the upper reaches resulting in good water quality.

Richland Creek is a Class II trout stream. This stream has improved over the years with non-agricultural uses taking the place of farming operations. With increased land acquisition and instream habitat development, this stream could be one of the best trout streams in the county.

Sugar Creek and its tributary, the South Fork of Sugar Creek, are Class II trout streams. A lack of instream cover is the limiting factor preventing it from being a Class I trout stream. Beaver are becoming a problem on the lower and middle reaches of this stream.

#### Monroe County

Farmer's Valley Creek is a Class I trout stream. This stream has the resources available to become one of the best trout streams in the county.

Currently, wherever there is instream cover, trout can be found in good numbers. Land acquisition and habitat development would insure future improvement and use of this resource.

The Little La Crosse River (Leon Creek) is a Class II and III trout stream. Several areas on this stream have been riprapped using county aid monies. With limited instream habitat development, this entire stream has the potential to become Class II or better trout water. Table 2 indicates the length in miles and acreage of various categories of trout streams within the proposed fishery area.

TABLE 2 - Streams Length in Miles and Acreage of the Various Waters in the La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area.

<u>STREAM</u>	<u>CLASS I</u>	<u>CLASS II</u>	<u>CLASS III</u>	<u>SURFACE AREA</u>
Baker Creek		2.4		
Billings Creek		7.0		
Bishop Branch Creek		4.2		
Bostwick Coulee Creek	5.0	3.0	3.1	22.4
Burns Creek	3.3	5.0	3.3	14.8
Cheyenne Creek		6.0		5.8
Cook Creek		1.5		.9
Copper Creek	5.3	5.4	3.5	14.5
Dutch Creek		9.4		20.5
Farmer's Valley Creek	10.4			11.3
Frohock Valley Creek		2.8		2.7
Halfway Creek		1.5	5.5	11.6
Hornby Creek	1.3	4.5		11.9
Larson Coulee Creek	0.5	2.9		3.3
Little La Crosse River		8.0	9.8	47.5
Mormon Coulee Creek			13.9	33.4
Pine Creek			6.5	5.9
Plum Creek		3.7	1.5	5.7
Reads Creek	0.5	6.1		9.6
Richland Creek		8.7		11.0
Seas Branch Creek	2.0	2.5		5.5
Sugar Creek		9.0		15.3
Sugar Creek		8.4	2.5	26.6
Tainter Creek		8.6	2.0	12.5
Warner Creek		1.8		1.0
Creek 18-13				
TOTAL	28.3	112.4	51.6	323.3

#### Historical, Architectural and Archeological Features

Many known archeological sites are located in the fishery area. The exact locations are recorded in the files of the State Historical Society and the La Crosse Area headquarters of the Department of Natural Resources. No architectural or historical sites are known to be present at this time. However, there may be buildings located in this area that are worthy of evaluation for eligibility in the listing of the National Register.

Considering the types of habitat in the fishery area, the State Historical Society believes it is likely there are yet undiscovered archeological sites present. Therefore, prior to any movement of soils or structures in the fishery area, advice will be obtained from that organization.

#### Ownership

Within the property boundary, 329.45 acres have been acquired in fee title and 518.75 acres are under perpetual easement. The total cost of these transactions was \$558,100. The proposed acreage goal for the property is 2,000 acres. A total of 1,151.80 acres are needed to reach the acquisition goal.

The fishery area is typified by cultivated and pastured lands. Fee title acquisition is usually difficult to justify when agricultural land is involved. The present policy of purchasing easements along the stream for the purpose of fishing or habitat protection and development is adequate in most cases.

#### Current Use

The fishery area is primarily used by fishermen now. Due to intensive agricultural programs, expanding development, and a relatively dense human population, good trout fishing areas are in demand in the La Crosse vicinity. Many of the streams are a very short drive from La Crosse and provide rewarding recreational experiences.

Because a majority of the streams in the fishery area are not improved, fishing pressure is moderate. Approximately 7,500 participant days are expended for fishing each year. Hunting and trapping opportunities are controlled by the landowner because these are fishing easements lands only. Approximately 350 participant-days of hunting and trapping occur each year on the fee title properties. Other recreational activities such as berry and mushroom picking, hiking, nature study, and photography contribute about 300 participant-days per year.

In accordance with federal and state law, disabled access will be provided in public use areas when such access is feasible and economically reasonable. Acquisition will be in fee title.

#### Land Use Classification

The La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area is a narrow strip of land along the stream approximately 66' on each bank located in a primarily agricultural area. The size and location limit the land use potential for the property. The fishery area with those features should be designated as a Fish and Wildlife Development Area - RD<sub>2</sub> (Figures 4a-4d).

## MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

### Poor Water Quality

P. L. 566 flood control structures under the control of the Soil Conservation Service are located on the upper reaches of Bishop, Seas Branch and Hornby Creeks. These were designed and constructed to be dry flood control structures, but due to a lack of maintenance, flooding and siltation are occurring. Some of the structures hold water, which is released to the streams as excessively warm water in summer and cold water in winter. These drastic changes in water temperatures seriously affect water quality, trout occupying the stream, and most seriously, winter trout egg development when embryos require constant spring water temperatures. With cooperation between the SCS and DNR, these problem structures are being modified or corrected. All structures should be effectively dry by the end of 1988.

### Water Regulatory Problems

The large number of springs located within the fishery area where trout eggs hatch most successfully are of interest to landowners as a water source for trout pond development. There are numerous inquiries about constructing trout ponds on headwater springs. Creation of trout ponds is extremely detrimental not only to the springs, but to the streams below them. Recent easements and agreements have eliminated a few farm ponds.

### Private Land

The public ownership of the fishery area follows the stream thread on a majority of the property. A high percentage of the land between the stream and the public roads are in private ownership. Access may become a problem on some of the streams.

### Lack of Access With Parking

A majority of the streams run parallel to, or flow under, road crossings. Major access points to the streams are at the bridge crossings and where the roads and streams come close together. At certain times, traffic congestion occurs at these access points and becomes a hazard.

### Tree Diseases

Dutch elm disease has destroyed most of the elm along the streams in the fishery area.

### Beaver Damage

Within the last few years, beaver have become a problem on many of the streams in the fishery area. Beaver dams located on private land sections of these streams inhibit trout movement and spawning and cause serious water quality and temperature problems.

## RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATION

The La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area was established in an effort to maintain the streams for trout habitat and to protect the streambanks.

The fishery area is located in Vernon, La Crosse, Crawford, and Monroe Counties which comprise the La Crosse Area of the 1986-1991 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The area is almost evenly divided between urban and rural residents. Major cities include: La Crosse (49,398), Onalaska (11,332), Sparta (7,553), Tomah (7,470), Prairie du Chien (5,863), Holmen (3,104), and the rural communities of Westby, Viroqua, Coon Valley, Cashton, Chaseburg, Gays Mills, and Hillsboro (combined population of 9,809). The total resident population for the four counties that comprise the fishery area is 175,774 (1986 estimates).

A total of 654.0 miles of trout streams are found in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties. The Comprehensive Fishery Area includes 192.3 miles of stream, or 29% of the 4-county total.

In the issues and actions section of the 1986-1991 SCORP plan, more land acquisition along waterways and improvement of the fishery resources were proposed as major goals to be addressed and implemented. The contribution this property can make toward meeting these goals must be recognized.

Land acquisition, habitat improvement and protection, and access development should rank as high priorities in the La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area.

## ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

### Do Nothing

To remain at status quo would result in a group of streams that have the potential to become excellent trout waters, but would remain marginal instead. The easement acquisition program would be at a standstill with no acreage available. The recreational potential would show a diminished fishery resource.

### Reduce the Property Size

The main objectives of the fishery area are to provide protection of the aquatic resource, improve habitat, and provide access to the waterway. The fishery area consists mainly of a small thread of land following the waterways to provide access for fishing and instream habitat improvement. Because the property is located in an intensively used agricultural area and the minimum amount of land needed to meet the objectives was indicated as the acreage goal, any reduction would seriously affect the fishery and the recreational experiences the properties offer.

### Intensively Manage the Area

The property meets the criteria of a fish and wildlife area. The majority of the stream frontage owned by the state is through perpetual easement, a narrow strip of land which gives the department and the public only the right to engage in fishing-related activities. Hunting rights were not granted in the easements.

The landowner still has the right to use the land as he pleases as long as the resource is not harmed.

### Enlarge Property (Recommended Alternative)

The present situation of purchasing easements under the remnant program has surpassed its original intent. The proposed fishery area with its boundary and acreage goal of 2,000 acres will enhance the available resources. If the proposed acreage goal is completed, all property goals and objectives will be achieved. The boundary encompasses many headwater springs, spring-fed tributaries, and most Class I and II trout waters in the stream systems. This proposal assures that numerous streams in the La Crosse Area will be managed as a single, major fishery area.

### Continue Remnant Acquisition Program

To continue acquiring only remnant parcels would be detrimental to the present and future welfare of the system of streams. No boundary delineating future acquisition would be available nor would there be an acreage goal to focus on priority purchases. Numerous small scattered areas of stream frontage would result with very little continuity between them. There will continue to be a need for a remnant program in each county to purchase key springs and spawning areas not identified in this master plan.

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APPENDIX - Comments of Outside Reviewing Agencies to the La Crosse  
Comprehensive Fishery Area Master Plan

A number of persons or agencies outside of the Department of Natural Resources commented on the La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area Master Plan. Their questions or comments, and DNR responses where necessary, follow:

Vernon County Conservation Alliance, Viroqua, Wisconsin

Overall view of master plan: Excellent. Effective approach toward achieving long range goals.

No significant comment. Endorse master plan as proposed.

DNR Response: Thank you

La Crosse County Conservation Alliance, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Overall view of master plan: Excellent

No significant comment. Endorse master plan as proposed.

DNR Response: Thank you

Town of Washington, Coon Valley, Wisconsin

Overall view of master plan: Good

Comments: Likes idea of permanent easements instead of fee purchase. They like the way we have conducted our easement program in the past.

DNR Response: Thank you

Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, Blue Grass, Iowa

Overall view of master plan: Excellent They are enthusiastic about the outlook for the future of the area.

Comments: Agree with recommended alternative to purchase key springs and spawning areas not specifically listed through the remnant program.

DNR Response: Thank you

Comment: Why is the Coon Creek watershed not included in the plan?

DNR Response: A separate master plan was prepared to specifically address the Coon Creek system as a Public Fishery Area.

Comment: Concerned with the lack of easements and lack of habitat work in Crawford and Monroe County.

DNR Response: Emphasis has already been shifted to outlying areas for the next biennium. The addition of an assistant fish manager has allowed us to accelerate this effort.

Comment: Strongly favor intensive habitat management. Members would gladly pay a higher trout stamp fee to support program.

DNR Response: Thank You

Comment: Do not agree with favoring areas within 0.5 hour of La Crosse over other potential areas.

DNR Response: This is a necessary and practical approach as long as funds remain scarce. If funds become more available larger and more distant projects will become more feasible.

Land Conservation Committee, Viroqua, WI

Overview of master plan: Good

Comments: Why not a different title for the plan?

DNR Response: The name was chosen after much time and discussion to best represent the intent of the plan. There were obviously other choices but the one chosen reasonably represents the intent.

Comment: Only two of 12 non-department participants in the master plan process are from La Crosse. Why not more?

DNR Response: Actually there were three. Several other groups were asked to send representatives but declined. Most said they felt confident that we would represent their needs.

Comment: Organization mistakes in text.

DNR Response: They have been corrected.

Soil Conservation Service, Viroqua, WI

Overview of master plan: Good

Comments: Organization mistakes in text.

DNR Response: They have been corrected.

Comment: This report should address water quality problems caused by nonpoint water quality sources.

DNR Response: This document is not the correct instrument to address those issues.

Wisconsin Geological Survey, Madison, WI

Overview of master plan: Good

Comments: Suggested rewrite of three paragraphs on page 14.

DNR Response: Agree to rewrite

(SEE ATTACHED FOR CHANGE)

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ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISIONS  
ON THE NEED FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT (EIS) Rev. 3-87

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Contact Person Kenneth J. Wright  
Title Area Fish Manager  
Dept. of Natural Resources  
3550 Mormon Coulee Road  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Telephone Number 608-785-9000

District or Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
WCD  
Type List Designation \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE TO REVIEWERS: Comments should address completeness, accuracy or the EIS decision. For your comments to be considered, they must be received by the contact person before \_\_\_\_\_.

Address

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant: Kenneth J. Wright, La Crosse Area Fish Manager  
3550 Mormon Coulee Road, Room 104  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Title of Proposal: La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area

Location: County La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, Crawford  
Township \_\_\_\_\_ North, Range \_\_\_\_\_ West  
Section(s) Too many to list  
County-wide implications

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. General Description (brief overview)

It is proposed to acquire ~~1528.65~~ 1950 acres of land to reach a goal of 1950 acres providing a public use area on many of the good trout streams in the La Crosse Area, emphasizing preservation, aesthetics and intensive management of its trout fishery compatible management of wildlife and forest resources and development of such other outdoor recreational and educational pursuit, as the space, characteristics and other factors of the area will allow.

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

To provide a recreation area where fish and wildlife and public use is managed to the full potential of the available resource.

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

3. Authorities and Approvals (list local, state and federal permits or approvals required)

Statutory Authority to Initiate - Chapter 23.09.

Authorization from the Bureau of Water Regulation and Zoning, Chapter 30.

4. Estimated Cost and Funding Source

Acquisition costs will be based on fair market value of the lands acquired. The cost of easements are only a percent of the fee simple value depending on rights acquired. Typically, an easement is valued from 60% to 90% of the fee simple value. Prices paid for lands in the past 5 years range from \$500 to \$700 per acre. Funding source will be Dingell-Johnson Funds and General Purpose Revenue.

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PROPOSED PHYSICAL CHANGES (More fully describe the proposal

5. Manipulation of Terrestrial Resources (include relevant quantities - sq. ft., cu. yds., etc.)

Because the entire fishery area is almost completely easement lands, very little will be done to the lands along the stream. Slight landscape changes may occur when instream habitat development is undertaken. Banks will be sloped and seeded.

6. Manipulation of Aquatic Resources (include relevant quantities - cfs., acre feet, MGD, etc.)

Approximately 139.2 miles of Class I and II trout stream could be improved. Approximately 51.6 miles of Class III trout water could be influenced by their actions.

7. Buildings, Treatment Units, Roads and Other Structures (include size of facilities, road miles, etc.)

No buildings will be involved in easement acquisition. Access roads will be constructed along the stream when instream habitat development is underway. These roads will be temporary. Once habitat development is completed, these roads will be leveled, seeded, and allowed to go back to a natural state.

8. Emissions and Discharges (include relevant characteristics and quantities)

These will be some gas and diesel exhaust emissions when instream habitat development is underway.

9. Other Changes

Private lands will become public access to trout streams. Heavily pastured lands may become dormant under state ownership, due to streambank fencing.

10. Identify the Maps, Plans and Other Descriptive Material Attached

County map showing the general area of the project.  
Site development plan.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT (Describe existing features that may be affected by the proposal  
Information Based On (check all that apply):

Personal Contacts (list in item 28)

Field Analysis By: /X/ Author / / Other (list in item 28)

Past Experience With Site By: /X/ Author / / Other (list in item 28)

11. Physical (topography - soils - water - air)

Lack of glaciation and rocks and minerals have greatly influenced the soils and topography of this area. Dolomitic limestone and sandstone are the two basic bedrocks. The areas in which the two main types of bedrock occur are separated by the La Crosse River. South of the river the bedrock is sandstone capped with dolomite limerock. North of the river the bedrock is mostly sandstone of Upper Cambria age. The land forms in the two areas differ greatly. Much of the Farley area is covered by a layer of Loess (silt), spread by winds during and after glaciation. Most of the streams in the proposed fishery area have an abundance of springs. The waters are usually clean, hard, and alkaline.

12. Biological (dominant aquatic terrestrial plant and animals species and habitats including threatened/endangered species; wetland amounts, types and hydraulic value)

Aquatic: Brown trout, brook trout, rainbow trout, tiger trout, walleye, sauger, northern pike, white sucker, shorthead and golden redhorse, northern hog sucker, blacknose and longnose dace, johnny and fantail darters, bluntnose and fathead minnows, stonerollers, bigmouth, spotfin, and sand shiners, and brook lamprey.

Terrestrial: Whitetail deer, grey and fox squirrels, cottontail rabbits, mink, muskrat, beaver, racoon, skunk, weasels, gray and red fox.

Game birds include ruffed grouse, woodcock, mallards, wood ducks, and wild turkey. Many species of song birds inhabit the properties.

13. Cultural

a. Land use (dominant features and uses including zoning if applicable)

The La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area lies within a rural but well populated area. Outdoor recreation activities, predominantly fishing, occurs throughout the property area. Most of the land around the streams is pastureland for livestock, mainly dairy cattle.

b. Socio/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups and zoning if applicable)

The entire fishery area is surrounded by agricultural land. The streams presently provide fishing recreation.

c. Archaeological/Historical

Many known archeological sites are located in the fishery area. The exact locations are recorded in the files of the State Historical Society and the La Crosse Area headquarters of the DNR. The State Historical Society believes it is likely there are yet undiscovered archeological sites present in the fishery area.

14. Other Special Resources (e.g., State Natural Areas, prime agricultural lands)

None present.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (Probable adverse and beneficial impacts including primary, indirect and secondary impacts)

15. Physical (include visual if applicable)

Short term adverse impacts will result from the disturbance of the streambanks and stream flow manipulation. The topography may be temporarily damaged during the hauling of rock riprap to the stream. The stream will be narrowed and deepened, thus allowing for lower water temperatures and higher velocities.

16. Biological (include impacts to threatened/endangered species)

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.

Carrying capacities of the streams should be reached and maintained with the placement of instream habitat structures.

17. Cultural

a. Land Use (include indirect and secondary impacts)

Land use will change very little. Instead of being private land along the streams, it will become public. Areas may be fenced to prevent pasturing of livestock along the stream banks. Recreational activities will replace agricultural activities on some of the stream areas.

b. Social/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups and zoning if applicable)

Recreation will occur on areas that were used for agriculture extensively.

Trout fishing will be pursued by all types of people. (Young, old, female, male, white, black, etc.)

Increased recreational activities will bring income to local businesses providing lodging.

c. Archeological/Historical

Considering the types of habitat in the fishery area, the State Historical Society believes it is likely there are undiscovered archeological sites present. Therefore, prior to any movement of soils or structures in the fishery area, advice will be obtained from the Society.

18. Other Special Resources (e.g., State Natural Areas, prime agricultural lands)

None present to be affected.

19. Summary of Adverse Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided (more fully discussed in 15 through 18)

Minor disturbance of streambanks and landscape will occur when hauling riprap and in the placement of instream habitat structure. Recreational activities will replace agricultural activities. Private land will become public access. Stream will be narrowed and deepened. Water will become cooler.

ALTERNATIVES (No action - enlarge - reduce - modify - other locations and/or methods

20. Identify, describe and discuss feasible alternatives to the proposed action and their impacts. Give particular attention to alternatives which might avoid some or all adverse environmental effects.

No action - To remain at status quo would result in a conglomeration of streams with the potential to become excellent trout streams, to remain as marginal trout water. The easement acquisition program would be at a standstill because of no acreage available. The fishery as a whole would show a diminished fishery resource.

Reduce the Property Size - The main objectives of the fishery area are to provide protection of the aquatic resource, improve habitat, and provide access to the waterway. The fishery area consists mainly of a small thread of land following the waterways to provide access for fishing and instream habitat improvement. Because the property is located in an intensive agricultural area and the minimum amount of land needed to meet the objectives was indicated in the acreage goal, any reduction would seriously affect the fishery and the recreational experience the property offers.

Enlarge Property - The present situation of purchasing easements under the remnant program has surpassed its original intent. The proposed fishery area with its original boundaries and acreage goal of 1,950 acres will enhance the available resources. If the proposed acreage goal is completed, all property goals and objectives will be achieved. The boundary encompasses many headwater springs, spring-fed tributaries, and most Class I and II trout waters in the stream system. This proposal assures that numerous streams in the La Crosse Area will be managed as a single major fishery unit.

Intensively Manage the Area - The property meets the criteria of a fish and wildlife area. The majority of the stream frontage owned by the state is through perpetual easement which gives the Department and the public the right only to engage in fishing-related activities. Hunting rights were not granted in the easement. The landowner still has the right to use the land as he pleases as long as the resource is not harmed.

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EVALUATION OF PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE (Complete each item)

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21. Significance of Environmental Effects

- a. Would the proposed project or related activities substantially change the quality of the environment (physical, biological socio-economic)? Explain.

Short-term adverse impacts will result from the disturbance of the streambanks and stream flow manipulation. The topography may be temporarily damaged during the hauling of rock riprap to the stream. The stream will be narrowed and deepened, thus allowing for lower water temperatures and higher velocities. Carrying capacities of the streams should be reached and maintained with the placement of instream habitat structures. Recreational activities may replace agricultural activities.

- b. Discuss the significance of short-term and long term environmental effects of the proposed project including secondary effects; particularly to geographically scarce resources such as historic or cultural resources, scenic and recreational resources, prime agricultural lands, threatened or endangered species or ecologically sensitive areas. (The reversibility of an action affects the extent or degree of impact)

Acquisition of lands by the department will protect the resources for future generations. The easements that are taken are perpetual thus the lands will be under department control forever. No geographically scarce resources, prime agricultural lands, threatened or endangered species or ecologically sensitive areas are known to be present.

22. Significance of Cumulative Effects.

- a. Discuss the significance of reasonably anticipated cumulative effects on the environment. Consider cumulative effects from repeated projects of the same type. What is the likelihood that similar projects would be repeated? Would the cumulative effects be more severe or substantially change the quality of the environment? Include other activities planned or proposed in the area that would compound effects on the environment.

More projects of this type would insure all the fishery needs and requirements would be fulfilled in the La Crosse Area.

### 23. Significance of Risk

- a. Explain the significance of any unknowns which create substantial uncertainty in predicting effects on the quality of the environment. What additional studies or analyses would eliminate or reduce these unknowns? Explain why these studies were not done.

There is very little risk involved in this project. Land acquisition along the trout streams will be from willing sellers only.

### 24. Significance of Precedent

- a. Would a decision on this proposal influence decision or foreclosure options that may additionally affect the quality of the environment? Explain the significance.

The purpose of the master plan is to establish property boundaries and outline future actions that are going to occur. A decision of not to progress with the master plan would jeopardize the future of the trout streams included in the plan.

- b. Describe any conflicts the proposal has with plans or policy of local, state or federal agencies that provide for the protection of the environment. Explain the significance.

There are no conflicts.

25. Discuss the effects on the quality of the environment, including socio-economic effects, that are (or are likely to be) highly controversial, and summarize the controversy.

This project is not controversial. Recreation of the area is being stressed more than agricultural. The small amount of land along the stream is not highly prized agricultural developable land. Streambank runoff will be eliminated or lowered substantially once improvement of the streambanks has occurred.

26. Explain other factors that should be considered in determining the significance of the proposal.

No other factors involved.

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### SUMMARY OF ISSUE IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

27. Summarize citizen and agency involvement activities (completed and proposed).

Involvement of agency and citizen task force members in meetings to formulate the Master Plan.

A public hearing is scheduled for each of the 4 counties. Agency and citizen committee members will participate in the public hearings.

28. List agencies, groups and individuals contacted regarding the project (include DNR personnel and title).

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>COMMENT SUMMARY</u>
12/5/85	All clubs invited to participate. 8 conservation clubs participated. 4 land conservation committees participated.	Asked for an assigned representative of agency or group to be a task force member.
3/19/86	All	First task force meeting to establish goals and objectives.
7/30/86	La Crosse Country Club members and LCC.	Formulate La Crosse County goals and objectives.
8/6/86	Monroe County Club members and LCC.	Formulate Monroe County goals and objectives.
8/13/86	Vernon County Club members and LCC.	Formulate Vernon County goals and objectives.
9/3/86	Crawford County Club members and LCC.	Formulate Crawford County goals and objectives.

KW:jd

Project Name: LaCrosse Fishery Plan County: LaCrosse

**DECISION (This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate authority)**

In accordance with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code, the Department is authorized and required to determine whether it has complied with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code.

29. Complete either A or B below.

A. EIS Process 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 prior to final action by the Department on this project.

B. Major Action Requiring the Full EIS Process. . . . .

The proposal is of such magnitude and complexity with such considerable and important impacts on the quality of the human environment that it constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

x	Signature of Evaluator <i>Kenneth DeSight</i>	Date Signed 3-23-89
x	Noted: Area Director or Bureau Director <i>Carlton [Signature]</i>	Date Signed 3-27-89

Copy of news release or other notice attached?  Yes  No

Number of responses to notice many - see notes - all for the project

Public response log attached?  Yes  No - see EA contact list

CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WEPa	
District Director or Director of BEAR (or designee) <i>Ruby A. Schuch</i>	Date Signed 3/30/89

**NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS**

If you believe that you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin statutes and administrative rules establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed.

For judicial review of a decision pursuant to sections 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed, or otherwise served by the Department, to file your petition with the appropriate circuit court and serve the petition on the Department. Such a petition for judicial review shall name the Department of Natural Resources as the respondent.

To request a contested case hearing pursuant to section 227.42, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed, or otherwise served by the Department, to serve a petition for hearing on the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The filing of a request for a contested case hearing is not a prerequisite for judicial review and does not extend the 30-day period for filing a petition for judicial review.

Note: Not all Department decisions respecting environmental impact, such as those involving solid waste or hazardous waste facilities under sections 144.43 to 144.47 and 144.60 to 144.74, Stats., are subject to the contested case hearing provisions of section 227.42, Stats.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 227.48(2), Stats.

AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)  
(Use separate sheets of paper if needed)

Title of Original Assessment and County (include date certified):

La Crosse Comprehensive Fishery Area 1989  
La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, Crawford Counties

District:

Western District

Describe the Nature of Proposed Amendments and the Reasons Therefore:

An increase in acreage goal from 1950 to 2000. The increased acreage is to provide for some fee acquisition in each county to comply with Federal 504 requirements dealing with handicap accessibility.

Discuss Probable Adverse and Beneficial Impacts Not Covered in the Original EA That Would be Generated by the Amended Action and Additional Alternatives Considered:

Adverse: Some minor acreage to tillable lands may be taken out of production.

Beneficial: Permanent access would be provided for handicapped. The acreage would be environmentally more suitable to fish and wildlife species.

Recommendation: Are the additional considerations on the environmental impacts of the proposed project, in conjunction with the contents of the original EA, of sufficient magnitude, complexity, or significance to change the Department's decision to write an EIS for this project?

No

Number of Public Responses to Original EA:

Evaluator:

Gary Birch

Date:

March 30, 1989

Certified to be in Compliance with WEPA:

Date:

This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate District Director or the Director of BEAR. If you believe you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Codes establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed. For judicial review of a decision pursuant to ss. 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., you have 30 days after service of the decision to file our petition for review. The respondent in an action for judicial review is the Department of Natural Resources. You may wish to seek legal counsel to determine your specific legal rights to challenge a decision. This notice is provided pursuant to s. 227.48(2), Stats.