

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. _____

11-82

SUBJECT: MASTER PLANNING - Approval of the master plan for the Proposed Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area, Columbia County., with an acreage goal of 988.69 acres.

FOR February, 1984 **BOARD MEETING**
(month)

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Lee T. Kernan

SUMMARY: The final draft of the Proposed Rocky Run Creek, Columbia County Fishery Area is presented for review and approval. Currently, 611.69 remnant acres are owned adjacent to the stream. The master plan task force recommends that 567.69 of the remnant acres be used as a keystone for a new fishery area on the stream, with 40.0 acres retained for grading purposes and 4.0 acres to be sold.

Additionally, the task force recommends transferring 421.0 acres to the proposed property from various Southern District fishery areas, to give the proposed fishery area an acreage goal of 988.69 acres within the boundary proposed. Thus, with the 567.69 acres currently owned, the acreage goal would be 57.4 percent complete, with 421.0 acres yet to be acquired.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the proposed Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area be approved which includes (a) an acreage goal of 988.69 acres; (b) transfer of 567.69 acres from the Columbia County Remnant Fish Habitat program to the Rocky Run Fishery Area.

LIST OF ATTACHED REFERENCE MATERIAL:

- Fiscal Estimate Required
- Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required
- Background Memo

- Yes Attached
- Yes Attached
- Yes Attached

APPROVED:

James T. Addis 12/28/83
 Regional Director James T. Addis Date

James R. Huntoon 2-2-84
 Administrator James R. Huntoon Date

G. D. Besadny 2-6-84
 Secretary G. D. Besadny Date

- cc - Judy Scullion - ADM/5
- Doug Morrisette - SD
- Ron Nicotera - OENS/4
- Ed Faber - RE/4
- Carl Evert - OL/4
- Vern Hacker - Oshkosh
- Ron Poff - FM/4

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: January 28, 1984

File Ref: 2100

To: C. D. Besadny

From: James T. Addis 

Subject: Proposed Rocky Run Creek, Columbia County Fishery Area Master Plan.

Attached are the conceptual master plan and the environmental assessment screening worksheet for the proposed Rocky Run Creek, Columbia County fishery area master plan. A public meeting regarding the master plan was held at the Poynette village hall on April 5, 1983 with 36 persons in attendance. A number of persons at the meeting objecting to the proposed fishery area also submitted letters which are included in the appendix attached to the master plan.

An environmental assessment screening worksheet regarding the master plan was made available to public scrutiny during the 45 day review period, and it has been approved by the district and bureau of Environmental Impact, where it is on file. The master plan was supplied to many interested parties and internal bureaus during the 45 day review period. Comments from outside agencies and DNR responses are shown in the appendix attached to the master plan.

The state currently owns 611.69 remnant acres adjacent to Rocky Run Creek. The task force proposes to utilize 567.69 of those acres within a proposed boundary to create the Rocky Run Creek, Columbia County Fishery Area, and requests approval of the Natural Resources Board to do so.

In addition, the task force proposes to transfer an additional 421.0 acres to the Rocky Run Fishery Area from a number of other Southern District fishery areas. They are:

| <u>Property</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Acres</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Cherokee Marsh | Dane | 81.21 |
| Door Creek | Dane | 80.00 |
| Dorn Creek | Dane | 155.70 |
| Flynn Creek | Dane | 32.00 |
| Nevin Hatchery | Dane | 2.27 |
| Sabin Springs | Richland | 2.63 |
| Upper Waubesa Lake | Dane | <u>67.19</u> |
| | Total | 421.00 |

With the 567.69 remnant acres and 421.0 transferred acres, the task force proposes an acreage goal for the new fishery area of 988.69 acres, currently 57.4% complete.

Of the remaining 44.0 acres adjacent to, but outside of the recommended boundary, (which would be retained in the Columbia County remnant project) 40.0 acres would be reserved for future trading purposes and a 4.0 acre strip would ultimately be sold.

The proposed fishery area is located within a short distance of high population centers, where the demands for this type of recreational lands are high. Multiple use management will be followed on all acquired Department lands as prescribed in the master plan.

Your approval is requested to submit the master plan for approval to the Natural Resources Board at the February, 1984 meeting.

VAH:aep

cc - Judy Scullion - ADM/5

Ron Nicotera - BER/4

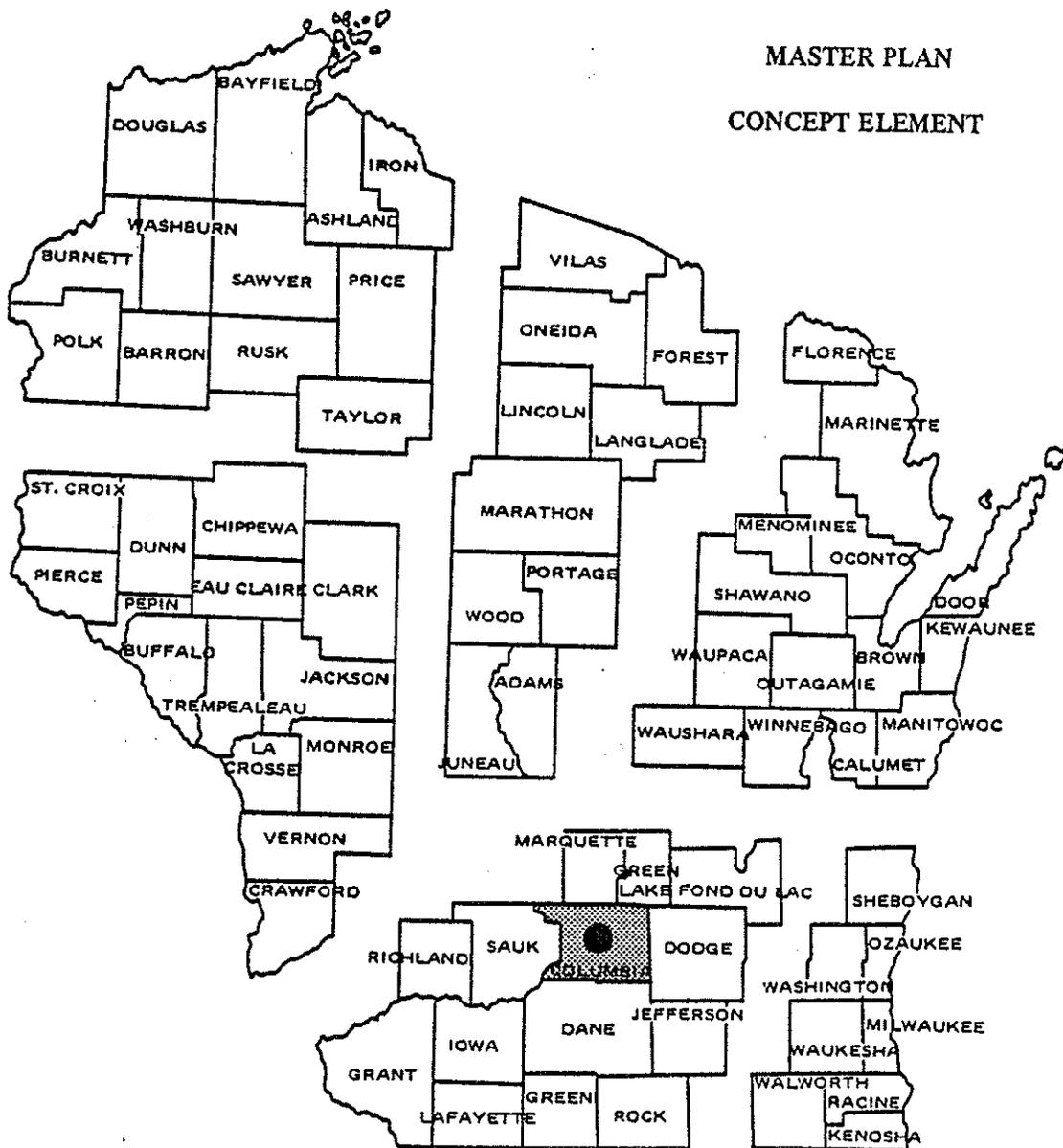
Ron Poff - FM/4

Vern Hacker - Oshkosh

Attach.

PROPOSED ROCKY RUN CREEK
FISHERIES AREA, COLUMBIA COUNTY

MASTER PLAN
CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

Leader - Tim Larson - Fish Manager
Dennis Mahy - Forester
Patrick Kaiser - Wildlife Manager
Paul Scott - Real Estate Agent

Approved by Natural Resources Board

Date

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SECTION I - ACTIONS

GOALS, ANNUAL OBJECTIVES AND ANNUAL ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Goals

To manage, preserve and protect all property within the boundary designated for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area in Columbia County so as to enhance trout fishing and other recreational and educational activities, while perpetuating the aesthetic qualities of the area.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for 1,100 angler days of quality trout fishing.
2. Provide opportunities for 2,250 participant-days of hunting for white-tailed deer, waterfowl, pheasants, ruffed grouse, woodcock, gray and fox squirrels and cottontails.
3. Provide opportunities for 100 participant-days of trapping to harvest muskrats, raccoon, fox, mink, and beaver.
4. Reserve and manage a 50-acre natural area containing native dry prairie grasses and a scenic bluff for educational and aesthetic qualities.

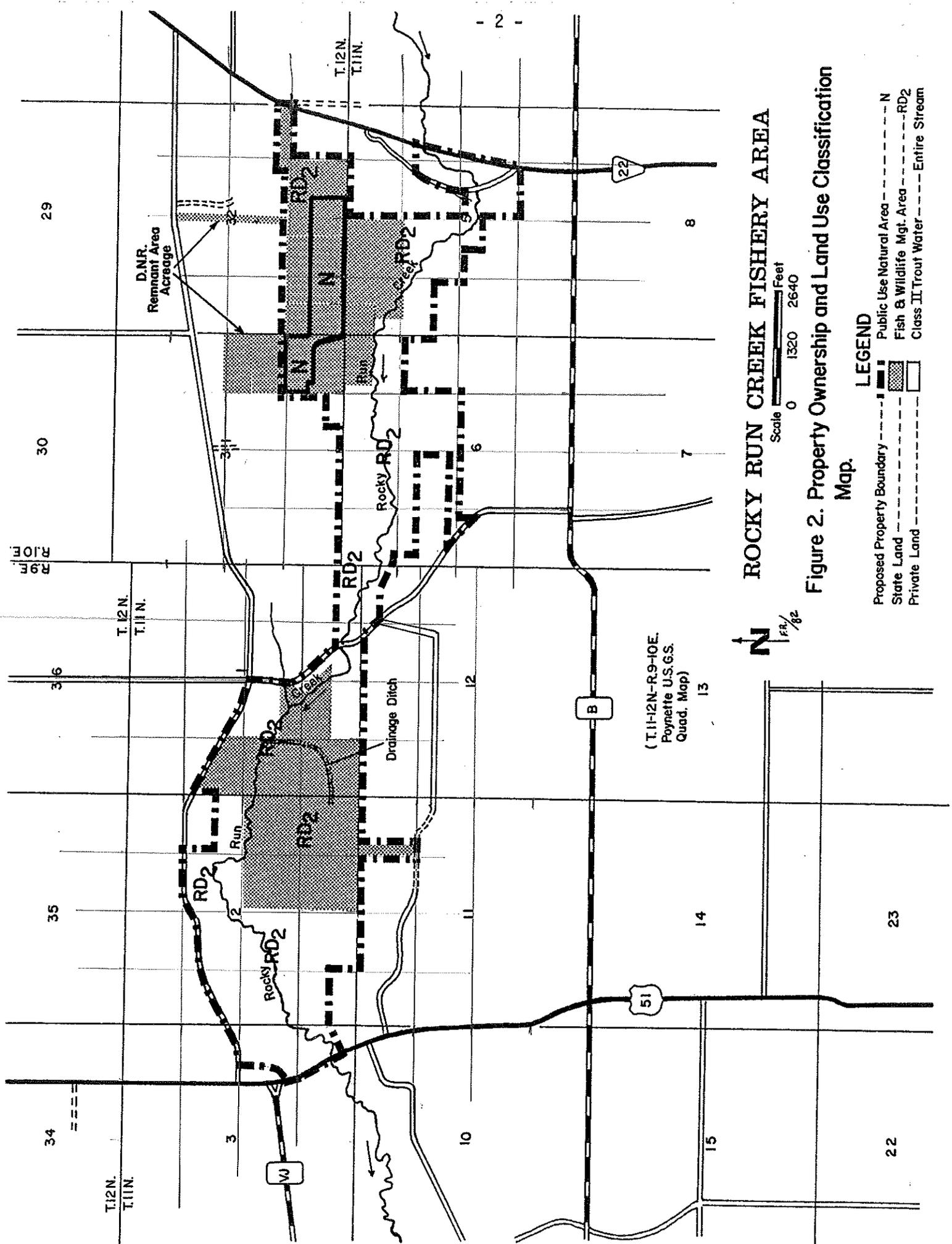
Annual Additional Benefits

1. Provide opportunities for 1,000 participant-days of other recreational and educational activities including mushroom and berry picking, hiking, cross-country skiing, photography, nature study and bird watching.
2. Preserve the habitats of native nongame species of wildlife including that of one endangered species known to inhabit the area, the ornate box turtle. Two other endangered species, the bald eagle and osprey and 3 threatened species, the red-shouldered hawk, loggerhead shrike and Blanding's turtle may be present and benefit by preservation of habitat on the area.
3. Manage timber lands for their high aesthetic appeal and enhancement of wildlife populations, while harvesting firewood, pulpwood and logs.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Recommended Management and Development Program for the proposed Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area, Columbia County (Figure 1), is designed to improve angler opportunities for a quality trout fishing experience. The proposed property boundary (Figure 2) allows for public access to the stream, protection and enhancement of the trout fishery, management of wildlife habitat and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the stream corridor.

Acquisition on this property in the past has been under the Columbia County Remnant Fish Habitat Program and current state ownership adjacent to Rocky Run Creek is 611.69 acres. A total of 567.69 of those acres are within the



ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Figure 2. Property Ownership and Land Use Classification Map.

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
 - State Land - - - - -
 - Private Land - - - - -
 - Public Use Natural Area - - - - - N
 - Fish & Wildlife Mgt. Area - - - - - RD2
 - Class II Trout Water - - - - - Entire Stream

Scale 0 1320 2640 Feet

1/8/82

(T.11-12N-R.9-10E.
Poyntette U.S.G.S.
Quad. Map)

proposed boundary of the fishery area, 40.0 acres will be used for trading purposes, and a 4.0 acre strip will be sold. It is recommended that the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area be established from the portion of the remnant with an acreage goal of 988.69 acres and the boundary shown. Therefore, acquisition would be 57.4% complete.

If the recommendation to create the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area is approved by the Natural Resources Board, using the proposed boundary, the following actions will be necessary:

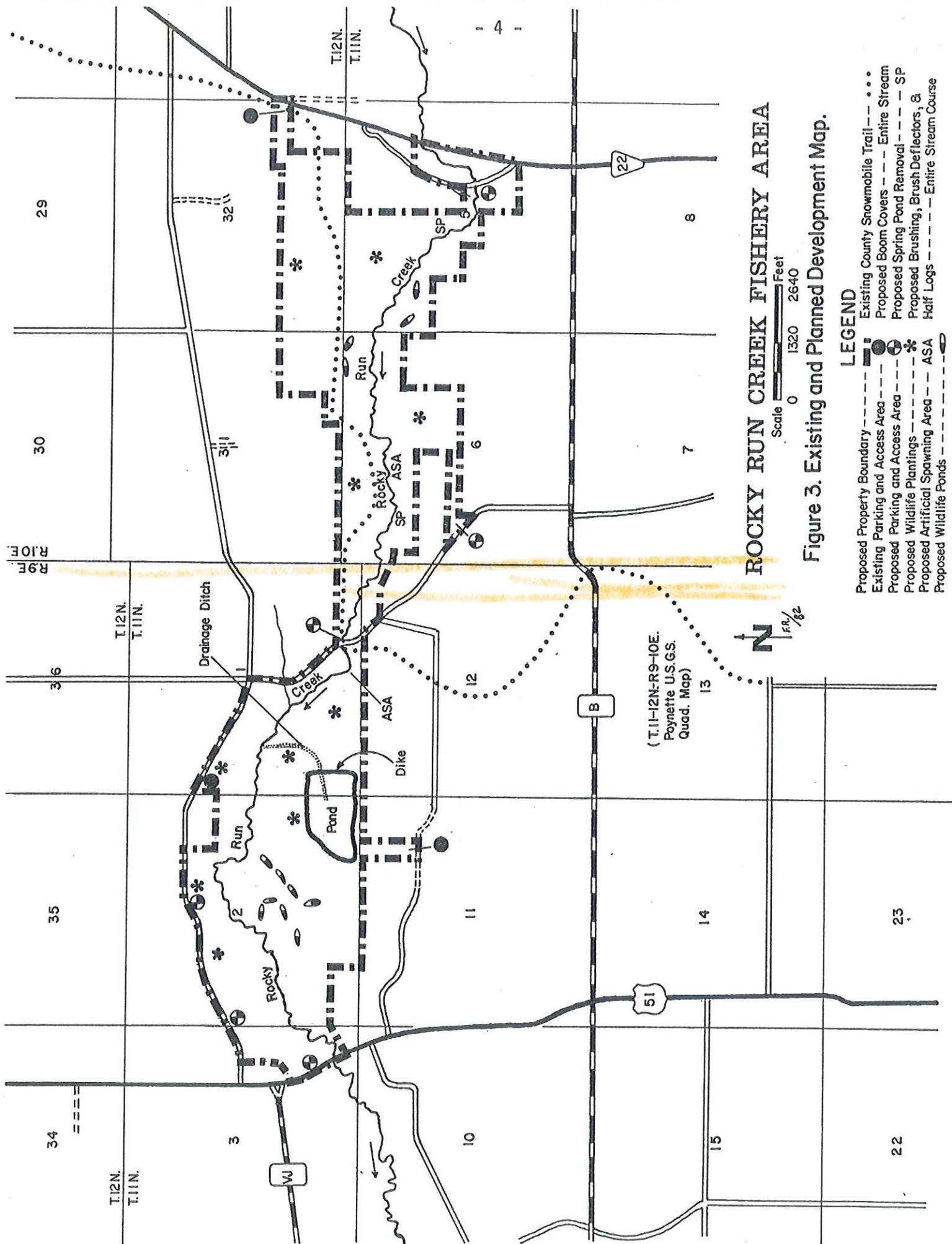
1. Natural Resources Board establishment of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area with an acreage goal of 988.69 acres.
2. Transfer of 567.69 acres from the Columbia County Remnant Fish Habitat Program to the Rocky Run Fishery Area. The 44.0 acres outside of the proposed boundary will remain in the Columbia County Remnant Program.
3. Reduction of the acreage goal of Columbia County Remnant acres by 567.69 acres.
4. Reduction of the acreage of the properties listed below for transfer to the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area:

| <u>Fishery Area Properties</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Acres</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Cherokee Marsh | Dane | 81.21 ✓ |
| Door Creek | Dane | 80.00 |
| Dorn Creek | Dane | 155.70 |
| Flynn Creek | Dane | 32.00 <i>Abandon</i> |
| Nevin Hatchery | Dane | 2.27 ✓ |
| Sabin Springs | Richland | 2.63 ✓ |
| Upper Waubesa Lake | Dane | 67.19 ✓ |
| | TOTAL | 421.00 |

All past and future land acquisition has been, and will continue to be, from willing sellers. Preferably all parcels should be purchased in fee title, but acquisition in perpetual easement will be considered if necessary. Acquisition priorities will be determined, with those parcels having stream frontage of highest priority. A few high priority parcels contain improvements. They will be purchased as is, if necessary, and improvements will be sold, removed, or traded for other properties at a later date.

At least a 30-year period will be required to complete acquisition of most parcels. Since no large scale development is planned, habitat development can be completed as acquisition proceeds. As parcels are acquired, habitat development planned for those lands would follow.

The estimated cost to complete acquisition of this property is \$336,800 (421 acres at an overall estimate of \$800/acre - 1983 dollars). The estimated development cost is \$50,000-\$100,000 over a 20-year period (1983 dollars). Maintenance and operations costs are estimated at \$1,000 per year.



ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Figure 3. Existing and Planned Development Map.

LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Existing County Snowmobile Trail - ·····
- Existing Parking and Access Area - - - - -
- Proposed Boom Covers - - - - -
- Proposed Parking and Access Area - - - - -
- Proposed Spring Pond Removal - - - - -
- Proposed Wildlife Plantings - - - - -
- Proposed Artificial Spawning Area - - - - -
- Proposed Brushing, Brush Deflectors, & Half Logs - - - - -
- Proposed Stream Course - - - - -

(T.11-12N-R9-10E.
Poyntette U.S.G.S.
Quad. Map)

The management and development of this property will be designed to enhance the wild nature of the stream valley (Figure 3). Those lands which are presently farmed or grazed will be revegetated to provide a natural setting. Design and location of parking lots and access ways will be such as to minimize visual intrusion on the wild setting. Development generally will be minimal.

Access to the property would be provided by 9 small parking areas (6 new, 3 existing; Figure 3) and cost \$400/each. Each lot will hold 5 cars and be located on the perimeter of the property, just off township roads and highways. Adequate user access from the parking areas to the stream presently exists. These accessways, along with permitted passage through private properties, will also provide routes for management and development activities. Large fishery area signs will be located at the most heavily used access sites. Approximately 4 miles of fences will be required to mark those boundaries adjoining agricultural lands if cattle grazing occurs. Other boundaries will be marked only with signs and corner posts. Efforts will be made to maintain boundary signs along the public lands, thereby helping to reduce trespass on adjoining public lands.

Trout habitat development will be conducted on Rocky Run Creek. Included will be brushing to remove dense overhanging alder, establishment of grasses on the streambanks, installation of half-logs, brush bundle deflectors, boulder retards, bankcover devices, and beaver dam removal. Cost for such activities is estimated at \$10,000/mile. Habitat development will not be intensive in nature. Experimental artificial spawning beds (\$1,000/each) may be installed as close to springwater sources as possible to evaluate the potential of these devices for improving natural reproduction. Existing dams that create ponds on springheads will be removed or converted to bottom draw discharge to provide normal springwater temperatures of inflowing water.

Habitat development for wildlife will include the establishment of nesting cover for waterfowl and pheasants. Reseeding 200 acres (65%) of current crop and pasture land to native grass species will be accomplished through sharecrop agreements where possible. The soil types and their capabilities to produce native grasses will determine locations. Recommended is some combination of switchgrass, big bluestem, Indiangrass, little bluestem, sideoats gramma, and porcupine grass. Once the native grass seedings have been established, maintenance of this cover type will be by fire to retard or eliminate brush invasion.

On several upland field sites, drainage patterns provide excellent situations for planting of shrubs to enhance the control of erosion and at the same time provide escape cover for birds and animals. Shrub planting, such as grey dogwood, along the borders of the open areas will provide an edge effect. Such a shrub edge is a transition area that is highly attractive to numerous songbirds and small mammal species. Approximately 10-15 acres (2-3%) of the present grass and cropland should be converted to shrubs. Species such as highbush cranberry, red osier dogwood, grey dogwood, white cedar, thornapple and wild plum are recommended.

Planting of food plots along the edges of the open field areas is desirable for wintering resident wildlife species. Songbirds, pheasant, and deer particularly benefit by food plot plantings of corn, sorghum, and millet. Approximately 10-15 acres of such plantings are desirable. Where possible these plantings should be completed via use of sharecrop agreements, which require that portions of the grassed areas will be planted to field corn by the sharecropper.

The extensive wetland areas adjacent to Rocky Run Creek currently lack shallow openwater areas desirable for breeding and nesting waterfowl, particularly mallard, wood duck, and blue-winged teal. Shallow ponds (3 feet deep) approximately 1 to 2 acres in size should be created near the upland nesting areas of native grass plantings and tree cavities which favor wood duck nesting. These ponds would serve as breeding territories for adult birds and as brood rearing areas for ducklings. The ponds would be created by dredging during the winter when the marshlands are frozen. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service indicates that movement of groundwater through these ponds and adjacent wetlands will occur so slowly that the temperatures of groundwater and springflow to the stream will not be affected. Aesthetics of the area will be considered when the specific placement of the waterfowl ponds is determined.

Also, restoration of a small wetland area (approximately 15-20 acres) on a warmwater feeder ditch to Rocky Run Creek would enhance use of that area by waterfowl. The earthen dam which would close the drainage ditch, creating a flowage would be small. Overflow from the flowage would occur by natural drainage through an adjacent wetland thereby negating any warming influence on the tributary to Rocky Run Creek.

Wood duck production on the area depends on the existence of trees with natural cavities suitable for nesting. The existing timber should be managed to provide numerous mature trees near the wetland area. Where natural cavities are not abundant, wood duck nesting boxes should be placed at suitable locations.

Where the timber areas include oak and/or hickory, sufficient trees of mast producing age should be maintained for providing good supplies of nuts and acorns. These mast products are important as food items to squirrels, chipmunks, wood ducks, and numerous songbirds. In some parts of the management area, sandy soil conditions require the planting of coniferous trees (red pine, white pine, spruce, etc.). During the early stages of growth these plantings provide good escape and winter cover for wildlife. After approximately 25 years such areas should be harvested and replanted. Rotational planting will allow for diversity of sizes present at any given time.

Woodlands of the area are generally in poor condition due to past cutting and grazing. Management of these predominant oak stands will be to improve and perpetuate the oak type. Management practices will be modified to take advantage of opportunities to improve wildlife and aesthetic values. Areas that have adequate desirable reproduction would be released to form the new stand by clearcutting the present overstory. This can be accomplished by timber and/or fuel wood sales. Wooded areas that lack reproduction will be treated to try and establish desirable reproduction. This would include such methods as, shelterwood cuts, seed tree cuts, patch clear cuts and planting.

Hardwoods such as ash, oak and walnut will be planted on idle fields of the better soils over a period of years to provide a variety of age classes. These plantings would mainly be adjacent to existing woodlands. Clump planting of spruce and white cedar will be made along margins of the stream and lowland areas to enhance wildlife and aesthetics. When aspen clones occur, shearing or clearcutting of the clone will be done to regenerate the aspen. This added diversity in the forested area is beneficial to wildlife.

Within the proposed 50-acre natural area, the dry prairie will be managed to perpetuate this unique vegetation type. The natural area boundary will exclude any stands of existing mature oak to allow for continued management of the oak cover type. Recent State acquisition has eliminated grazing from the area and signs of recovery by native grasses are already evident. Removal of invading cedar and scrub oak trees would also stimulate the prairie environment. Periodic control burns will help maintain the prairie grasses. Because of the extremely light, fragile soils of this natural area, vehicle use should be eliminated and human use restricted. Special management or protective measures as necessary, will be taken to protect those sites of archaeological significance. Management, as later determined desirable, to protect or enhance habitat for threatened and endangered species will be implemented. Maintenance of existing sand blow areas will be provided for turtle reproduction. A county snowmobile trail presently runs the length of the property between Dunning Road and Highway 22. Unless lack of maintenance or use conflicts result, the existing trail should be continued.

All areas proposed for development will be examined for the presence of endangered and threatened wild 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.

It is recommended that a complete biological inventory be conducted on the property as soon as funds permit. Additional property objectives may be developed following completion of such an inventory.

SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

With the surrounding landscape dominated by agricultural use, the wetlands and wooded corridor along the stream allow for a very aesthetic area in which to pursue a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The large size of the stream and solitude experienced while fishing provide a setting sought by trout anglers.

The proposed fishery area is located in central Columbia County, approximately 25 miles north of Madison (Figure 1). Highway access from Madison is available on U.S. Highways 51 and 22 or by Interstate 90-94. U.S. Highway 16 provides access from the east, approximately 2 miles from the boundary.

Rocky Run Creek is a long, low gradient stream which originates from a marsh known as Mud Lake in Lowville Township and first flows northward and then westerly to the Wisconsin River, a major tributary of the Mississippi River. The broad stream valley is generally bordered by steep valley slopes, which isolate it from surrounding land uses. Road access is limited, creating a semi-wild setting along the stream. The stream valley contains a diversity of land types, and plant and animal communities.

Parts of the upper portion of Rocky Run Creek above the proposed fishery area were channelized in 1947 to drain wetlands for agricultural use. In 1954, attempts were made to form a drainage district. The proposed drainage project was opposed by the Conservation Commission and the district was not approved. Drainage by individual landowners continued and is currently active in the wetlands upstream from Highway 22.

In 1959, a wildlife management project was proposed in order to acquire wetlands east of Highway 22 near the present property boundaries. This project was not approved. In 1961, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission approved the Columbia County Remnant Habitat Program which called for an acreage goal of 1,375 acres. Subsequent revisions in the acreage goal have occurred for various reasons since 1961. To date 947 acres have been acquired under this program. With the recent approval of the master plan for nearby Rowan Creek creating a fishery area and conversion of allotted acres from the Remnant Program to that area, 909 acres remain in the remnant program of which 772 have been acquired to date.

Initial acquisition of public lands under the Remnant Program on Rocky Run Creek was made in 1969 when 185 acres were purchased. In 1974, a 35-acre parcel adjoining the initial acquisition was acquired. In June, 1979, a purchase of 301.8 acres was made, and a 90.69-acre parcel was obtained in December, 1979, bringing total acres owned by the State, all in fee title, to 612. Present ownership totals 59% of the proposed acreage goal of 1,032 acres, but it only accounts for 25% of the stream frontage.

Management of Rocky Run Creek in the past has primarily been limited to trout stocking. Fingerling brown and brook trout were stocked from 1936-1952. Yearling and legal-size fish stocking began in 1937. Put and take stocking of legal-size fish has been the predominant management technique since 1953. Brook trout were last stocked in 1974. From 1974 to 1980, the quota consisted of both fingerlings and legal sized brown and rainbow trout. Since 1980 an annual quota of 6,000 fall fingerling brown trout have been stocked. In general, survival of fall stocked fingerling brown trout has been good. Recent land purchases have allowed for a wider distribution of stocked fish on State lands with a reduction in stocking at road crossings which were the primary planting locations in the past.

Past development activities have included boundary marking and maintenance, old fenceline removal, construction of one parking lot (2 other parking areas required no construction) and erection of 2 property signs. Also 0.75 mile of stream has been subject to habitat improvement. Streambank brushing, instream installation of brush bundles to deflect current and location of 50 half logs to provide cover have been accomplished. As a result the wide, shallow, sterile nature of the stream has been altered and now contains more bends, deeper water with more exposed gravel and a greater amount of suitable cover

for large trout. A 170' length of stream has also been converted to an artificial spawning riffle. Use of the area by spawning brown trout has been observed. Much of the improvement work to date has been done in cooperation with a local Trout Unlimited group.

Use of the State property along Rocky Run Creek is considered heavy. No estimate of fishing pressure is available, but trout population estimates within the improved stream section show a rate of 90% total annual mortality indicating heavy fishing. Hunting pressure for all species on the State lands is also considered high. Use of the public lands for other outdoor recreational pursuits also occurs. The McKenzie Environmental Center at Poynette routinely utilizes the property for outdoor education purposes.

RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

General Description of Area

Rocky Run Creek is unusual in that it originates from the Mud Lake Marsh and has a warmwater flow for 10 miles before receiving sufficient spring flow to make conditions suitable for trout. The middle 8 miles from Highway 22 to the railroad tracks 0.5 mile west of Highway 51 are considered trout water. Thereafter, the stream again supports a warmwater fishery, eventually flowing into a backwater slough of the Wisconsin River.

The stream course is low gradient (8 feet/mile). However, steep bluffs arise at various locations. Over 2,000 acres of alder, willow or grass wetlands border the stream. Woodlands are generally of oak- hardwood species. In recent years, many acres of nearby land have been converted to recreational use when low quality farm lands have been planted with trees or allowed to return to natural vegetation. The stream corridor within the proposed boundary offers an aesthetic outdoor experience in an otherwise highly developed area.

Soils and Geology

Located in the terminal moraine of the Wisconsin glacier, the soils of the fishery area are composed of glacial till material and residue from water tolerant plants. Soil types are of 5 major associations.

The soils immediately adjacent to Rocky Run Creek are classified in the Houghton-Adrian association. These are nearly level, organic and poorly drained. When drained they are used for muck farming, although when cultivated, they are highly susceptible to wind erosion. Left undrained they provide for wildlife habitat and are effective in slowing down and holding runoff along drainageways.

The upland soils consist mainly of 2 types, the Kidder-Wyocena and the Plainfield associations. They are well drained, sandy loam soil, underlain by sand or glacial till. The Kidder-Wyocena type provides for better agricultural usage, though both associations are limited by their low water holding capacity. Plainfield soils are more sandy and, if put into production, best suited for pine plantations. Blowouts (sand pockets caused by wind erosion) are common in these soil types.

The other 2 associations found within the property are Grellton-Friesland and Boyer-Dresden soils. Both associations are well drained, sandy loam soils which are used for farm crops, pasture, or woodlands. Grellton-Friesland types are particularly susceptible to erosion on cultivated areas. Boyer-Dresden soils are potential sources of sand or gravel supplies.

Because of steep slopes within the valley and the generally sandy and muck type soils within the proposed area, the land is best suited for pasture, forestry, or wildlife/recreational use. Better cropland is found adjacent to the property.

Fish and Wildlife

No specific study has been undertaken to date to identify the fauna of the Rocky Run Creek area. However, an environmental impact statement was written for the nearby Columbia Generating Station. Because of the close proximity of the generating station, (one mile) and the similarity of habitat types, it is felt that these species listed are probably typical of animal populations found in the proposed fishery area.

The Columbia studies indicated that 39 mammal species inhabit that area. Game and furbearer species are muskrat, raccoon, red fox, mink, white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrels, and cottontails.

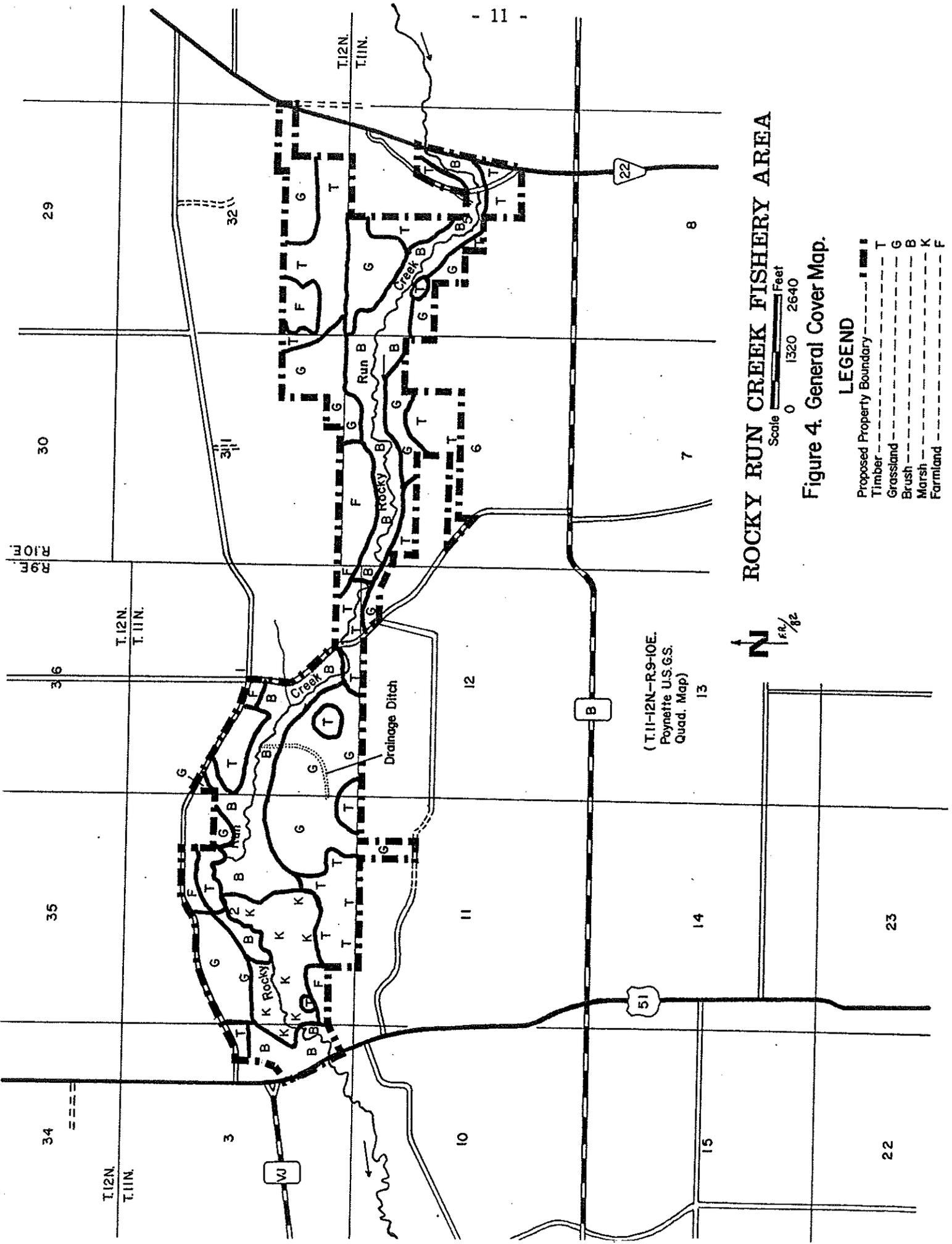
The presence of 153 bird species have been documented in the area of the Columbia Plant. Game birds include ring-necked pheasant, woodcock and ruffed grouse. Various species of migratory waterfowl use the marshlands along Rocky Run Creek which also offers excellent breeding grounds for sandhill cranes.

The most recent electrofishing survey (1976) of Rocky Run Creek within the proposed fishery area documented the presence of 33 species of fish. Included were brook, brown, and rainbow trout. Other cool or coldwater species found were brook stickleback, central Johnny darter, northern hog sucker, burbot, and smallmouth bass. Warmwater species included predators such as largemouth bass, walleye, northern pike, and bowfins, panfishes including black and yellow bullheads, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, and rock bass, and a number of darters including the blackside, rainbow, fantail, and logperch. Other warmwater species found included the American brook lamprey, stonecat, tadpole madtom, and white sucker, stonerollers, hornyhead chubs, common shiners, creek chubs, and blacknose dace.

Ten species of amphibians and eight species of reptiles are found at the nearby Columbia plant, and the list of those species is on file in the Poynette Fish Management Office. Their presence is probable on the proposed fishery area.

Vegetative Cover

Because of the diversity of land and soil types in the proposed area there is a corresponding diversity of vegetative cover types. A forest reconnaissance survey has been completed for state-owned lands and detailed vegetation types are shown on Table 1. Figure 4 illustrates the major vegetation types on the proposed fishery area.



ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Figure 4. General Cover Map.

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
 - Timber - T
 - Grassland - G
 - Brush - B
 - Marsh - K
 - Farmland - F

TABLE 1. Cover types on state-owned lands, adjacent to, and inside the proposed Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area, Columbia County.

| <u>Cover Type</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Fir/spruce | 2.4 | 0.3 |
| White pine | 3.2 | 0.5 |
| Scotch pine | 9.8 | 1.6 |
| Red pine | 8.0 | 1.3 |
| Cedar | 10.0 | 1.6 |
| Oak | 194.6 | 31.9 |
| Central Hardwoods | 5.0 | 0.8 |
| Aspen | 18.5 | 3.0 |
| Lowland Brush | | |
| Alder | 60.5 | 9.9 |
| Dogwood | 20.0 | 3.3 |
| Willow | 39.0 | 6.4 |
| Grass | 150.0 | 24.6 |
| Marsh | 36.0 | 5.9 |
| Farm | 46.0 | 7.5 |
| Sand blow | 2.99 | 0.5 |
| Pond | 2.0 | 0.3 |
| Stream | 3.7 | 0.6 |
| | <u>611.69</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

Man's activities have altered the vegetation types on most of the area. Only the alder-grass marsh types remain in essentially a natural condition. Most of the land dry enough and level enough to farm has been used for row crop cultivation. Much of the lower quality farm land has been abandoned and is reverting to natural vegetation or has been planted to conifer plantations.

Most of the woodlands within the stream valley that contained saleable sawtimber have been cut in the last 10-15 years. This high grade type of cutting has left mainly mature, poor quality trees. Grazing has also reduced the regrowth of oak and other desirable tree reproduction on much of woodlands. Management to perpetuate these hardwood stands is recommended. It will primarily be oriented to wildlife production and aesthetics. Mast production and an adequate abundance of large trees providing habitat for cavity nesting birds and mammals are important considerations.

Endangered and Threatened Species

The ornate box turtle is the only endangered species to be officially documented on the area and sand-blow areas will be maintained to provide areas suitable for natural reproduction. It is possible that the bald eagle and osprey, both endangered species, and the threatened red-shouldered hawk and loggerhead shrike may use the property. Maintenance of the wild nature of the area will retain its attractiveness to these predatory birds. Other likely inhabitants are the threatened Blanding's turtle and glass lizard. The wetlands and sandblow areas on the property are important factors of their habitat requirements. No endangered or threatened species of fish, molluscs or wild plants are known to be present on the property.

Water Resources

Rocky Run Creek is a long (21.7 miles), low-gradient stream originating from a marsh in the Mud Lake Wildlife Area. It flows northerly, then west before joining the Wisconsin River in west central Columbia County. The drainage area is 38 square miles and the stream contains a water surface area of 10.9 acres. Average gradient of the stream is 8.6 feet/mile. It has a total alkalinity of 323 ppm CaCO₃. The water is clear except during periods of runoff.

Much of the stream course above Highway 22 has been straightened for agricultural drainage, with subsequent conversion of many acres of marsh to farm land. The stream is dammed in Section 2, Township of Lowville, forming a 15-acre pond. Such activity is known to raise the temperature of the streams in summer and lower it near freezing in the winter. Prior to man's alteration of the land this upstream area quite likely supported brook trout.

Base stream flow increases ten times between Highways 22 and 51. Readings on August 19, 1970, at both sites, following several weeks of no rainfall, were 0.8 cfs at Highway 22 and 8.0 cfs at the 51 bridge. Q_{7,10} measurements (lowest flow during a seven day period within ten years) are 0.7 cfs at Highway 22 and 6.5 cfs at 51. As the total drainage area only increases from 25 square miles to 32 square miles between these locations, the increase in stream flow results from over 90 springs entering this eight mile stretch of stream. The accumulation of such inflow results in more stable water temperatures capable of supporting trout.

The stream section which supports trout is characterized by long, slow moving sections (50%), interspersed with riffles (40%) and deep pools (10%). Bottom type is predominantly sand (64%) with scattered gravel-rubble areas (36%). Gravel suitable for spawning is limited, though some natural reproduction of both brook and brown trout occurs. Average stream width is 13 feet. Summer water temperatures are normally in the mid 60's but during extreme warm weather the 70's are reached in some areas. Most of the stream becomes ice covered in the winter. Streambanks are generally stable with some undercut banks present. Instream cover consists primarily of logs and root tangles and instream vegetation is relatively scarce. Dense overhanging alder grows along many sections of the stream.

Below U.S Highway 51, the water temperature again exceeds the range for trout survival. However, occasional large brown trout are caught there. Warmwater species are common. Marshes in this section are inundated by flood waters from the Wisconsin River and are known to be used by northern pike for spawning, by furbearers and waterfowl.

Historical and Archaeological Features

Based on a recent architectural survey of Columbia County undertaken by the State Historical Society, there are no known buildings in the fishery area considered to be of architectural importance.

Though this part of Columbia County has never been systematically archaeologically or historically surveyed, State Historical Society records indicate that the proposed fishery area is known to contain 6 sites of archaeological significance. Evidence has been found which indicates use of one area by prehistoric man and others used as Indian campsites or burial mounds. Many more sites would likely be found if the area were systematically surveyed by an archaeologist.

These sites and any others of significant importance discovered on the proposed property will be considered in management practices and development plans. The State Historical Society will be contacted for advice prior to any movement of soils or structures and appropriate protective measures will be taken.

Land Use Potential

Almost all of the land within the proposed boundary would be classified Resource Development Areas - Fish and Wildlife Management - RD2 (Figure 2). Present habitat conditions definitely have potential for improvement to create conditions more conducive to wildlife and fish reproduction and carrying capacity.

A 50-acre tract located in the SE 1/4, Section 31 and the SW 1/4 of Section 32, Township 12 North, Range 10 East, which includes a steep hillside with a southern exposure will be designated as a Resource Protection - Public Use Natural Area - N (Figure 2). This area offers a unique dry prairie environment as well as a scenic view of the valley from a bluff arising 100 feet above the stream bed. A deep ravine with rocky outcroppings cutting through the hillside also provides for additional user interest. The natural area boundary will exclude any stands of existing mature oak to allow for continued management of the oak cover type.

The archaeological and historic sites may deserve special classification after more intensive study.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Poor Wildlife Habitat

Habitat presently limits fish and wildlife populations. Shortage of gravel spawning substrate limits natural reproduction of trout. Spawning has occurred on a recently installed experimental gravel bed, although the eggs did not survive; however, given a less severe winter successful hatching may occur. Trout carrying capacity is limited by lack of hiding cover.

The water temperature of the stream approaches the upper limit for trout survival during extreme periods of prolonged summer drought. Extremely cold water temperatures during the winter also cause a longer period for egg development and a more stressful overwinter period for fingerling survival. Agricultural ditching of wetlands upstream from Highway 22 and impoundments of spring heads along the stream course have aggravated these problems. Continued actions will further degrade the water quality. Trout evidently find sanctuary during periods of stress in areas of the stream receiving spring inflow.

Existing grassland areas provide poor habitat for wildlife use. Numerous non-native grass species (ie. quackgrass, bluegrass, bromegrass, and orchardgrass) predominate in such open field areas. These fields should be reseeded to native grass species. Habitat diversity could be greatly enhanced by plantings of shrubs and food plots. On the very sandy Plainfield soils, where native grasses will not grow, rotational planting of pines on a 25-year basis is recommended.

Extensive cutting of saleable hardwoods has occurred in the past. Overgrazing of such areas has inhibited natural reproduction of desirable tree species. If left in its present state, many areas will be devoid of woodlots once the remaining overmature trees die.

Water Regulatory Problem

State statutes do not regulate drainage of wetlands for agriculture purposes and no control exists to prevent such drainage of marshes. Much strengthened laws protecting wetlands are needed to prevent further drainage of the lands adjacent to the stream. Public ownership of the wetlands is another alternative to prevent drainage.

Public Overuse

Because of its close proximity to population centers, heavy public use of the proposed area is to be expected and could become a significant problem. Present use of public land in Columbia County reaches or exceeds desirable levels, particularly on weekends. Crowding reduces the quality of the outdoor experience. Acquisition and development of additional public lands will help spread user pressure. Overharvest and poor reproduction of pheasants will probably make stocking necessary to maintain huntable populations. Heavy fishing pressure reduces quality of the fishery, necessitating habitat improvement and stocking. More restrictive fishing regulations may be necessary to reduce angler impact on the fishery.

A county snowmobile trail weaves for 2 miles through the proposed boundary (Figure 3). Location of the trail does not now appreciably conflict with resource management of the property. However, if misuse of the trail occurs, discontinuation may be necessary.

Private Development Encroachments

Drainage of upstream marshes for farming will reduce water quality and the potential carrying capacity for trout. Recreational residences within property boundaries will reduce aesthetic quality, increase acquisition costs and disturb wildlife habitat.

Private ownership within the property boundaries will also limit further development and public use of the property until acquisition is completed. Several parcels which were purchased for private recreation may not be available for a long period of time. Private ownership within the boundary will create landowner-user conflicts and property lines will be difficult to delineate.

Land Acquisition

Constraints on the acreage available to create the fishery area acreage goal along Rocky Run Creek have caused the recommended boundary to be reduced. Thus, the boundary bisects some landowners total ownership. However, such landowners often wish to sell their entire acreage and are not willing to sell only the land within the boundary. Therefore, acquisition of the entire parcel may be necessary with lands not needed being offered for sale or exchange.

Beaver Control

The stream is plagued with the presence of beaver. Trappers remove some each year, but it appears to be impossible to eliminate them from the stream. The marshes of the Mud Lake Wildlife Area and the backwater slough of the Wisconsin River act as reservoirs to repopulate the stream within the proposed area. Currently (1983) pelt prices are so low that very little beaver trapping is occurring. It is recommended that all dams, both active and inactive, be removed each spring following the trapping season. As trout waters are limited in this portion of the State, any damage caused by beaver dams is significantly detrimental to the trout resource.

Plant or Animal Diseases

The most significant disease affecting the biota of the area is oak wilt. It's presence is patchy but slowly expanding. Firewood sales should be used to clear infected areas to inhibit further spread of the disease.

RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

Trout streams are a relatively scarce commodity in southern Wisconsin. Consequently, protection, development and provision of public access to these streams should receive highest priority.

There are 8 trout streams in Columbia County with a total mileage of 48.5 miles. Rocky Run Creek contains 16% of the trout water in the county. The best quality trout water on Rocky Run Creek is contained in the proposed property boundaries of the fishery area. The stream offers the trout angler an opportunity to catch trophy size brown trout within a secluded, natural setting. Greater public ownership of the stream will allow habitat improvement to be undertaken, thereby increasing productivity of the stream to provide a greater amount of fishing opportunities.

Close proximity of Rocky Run Creek to the Madison area and the aesthetic quality of the area have made lands adjacent to the stream highly desirable private recreational properties. As such ownership has increased, public access to the stream has become less available. Private development of these properties will result in adverse effects on the aesthetic quality of the stream environment. Construction of recreational residences within the proposed boundary would destroy the essentially wild nature of the stream valley.

The diversity of land types within the boundary supports a diverse plant and animal population. The potential for nature study is high. The area would be

well suited for hiking and cross-country skiing because of the long narrow nature of the proposed area and hilly terrain. The opportunity to provide recreational facilities in a semi-wild setting in close proximity to population centers in southern Wisconsin is limited, but could be provided by the proposed area. With proper planning and development, the semi-wild characteristic of the area will be protected and enhanced.

The proposed fishery area is located close to major population centers and has excellent highway access. A total of 562,614 people were estimated to live in Columbia County and its 7 immediately adjacent counties in 1982, according to Department of Administration records. The immediate vicinity has many tourist-resort type attractions (i.e. Devil's Lake, Lake Wisconsin, Wisconsin Dells) which bring thousands of people through the area.

Columbia County is located in Wisconsin Outdoor Recreational Planning Region 2 with Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, and Rock Counties. The recreational plan states, as relates to the need for fishing waters: "The problem of accommodating increased fishing participation (in the Region) can be solved by improving and increasing public access to the fishery (e.g., boat launching sites, improved transportation systems), by improving water quality and by improved and intensified fishery management techniques. To minimize the disparity between the supply of, and the demand for quality surface water resources in this region, governmental agencies must be committed to preserving lake and river frontage wherever it is available."

It is anticipated that recreational demand will increase significantly in this area in the immediate future. To meet it and provide quality recreational opportunities, increased acreages of public lands will be needed. As energy sources become an increasing problem, recreational lands in southern Wisconsin will become immensely important.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Property Boundary Alternatives

The recommended Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area boundary was designed primarily as a fish management property due to the limited available fish management acreage quota. The recommended property boundary is much reduced from that which would allow for the development of a multi-use recreational area. Alternatives considered for the proposed fishery area included:

1. Maintain the existing state ownership of 567.69 acres within the recommended property boundary and acquire a 9 rod fish management (only) easement along both banks of privately owned stream frontage between Highways 22 and 51 (163 acres) under the existing Columbia County Remnant Program. This option would provide an estimated 1,100 user days of trout fishing, 1,250 user days of hunting, 50 user days of trapping and 800 user days of other recreational opportunities. Stream habitat improvement could be conducted but this alternative would not prevent encroachment from private development. Preservation of existing water quality would be in jeopardy. Property boundaries would be difficult for public users to identify.

2. The recommended alternative is that the Natural Resources Board establish the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area with an acreage goal of 988.69 acres (Figure 2). This boundary will include all stream frontage and enough adjacent lands to provide a buffer along the stream and prevent further encroachment of private development. The 50-acre scenic natural area is included. Sufficient access to the property will be provided, although boundaries will be irregular. The recommended alternative will provide 1,100 user days of trout fishing, 2,250 user days of hunting, 100 user days of trapping and 1,500 user days of opportunities for other types of outdoor recreational and educational activities.
3. Propose that the Natural Resources Board consider establishment of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area with an acreage goal of 3,082 acres. This boundary would contain additional uplands adjacent to the recommended property and wetlands upstream from Highway 22. Alternative 3 would provide 1,100 user days of trout fishing, 5,200 user days of hunting and 250 user days of trapping opportunity. In addition 13,000 user days of other outdoor recreational and educational opportunities would be provided. The purchase of the upstream wetlands would prevent drainage and protect water quality. Purchase of lands within the stream valley slopes would prevent private development and maintain the semi-wild quality. Roads would primarily define boundaries, thus maintenance problems would be minimized and conflict with adjacent private owners much reduced.
4. Propose that the Natural Resources Board consider establishment of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area with an acreage goal of 3,882 acres. Added would be additional uplands adjacent to the Alternative 2 boundary and wetlands adjacent to Rocky Run Creek downstream from Highway 51 to the backwaters of the Wisconsin River. The boundaries of Alternative 2 would be better defined (i.e., roads) and the potential impact of private development more reduced. It includes acquisition of a marsh area used for spawning of Wisconsin River northern pike which is also utilized for waterfowl production. This alternative provides for 1,100 user days of trout fishing, 5,600 user days of hunting, 400 trapper opportunity days and 13,800 user days of other recreational and educational uses.
5. Propose that the Natural Resources Board consider establishment of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area combining Alternatives 2, 3 and 4. The acreage goal would be 5,932 acres. Provided would be 1,100 trout fishing day opportunities, 8,800 user days of hunting, 550 trapper user days and 23,000 days of other outdoor recreational and educational opportunities.
6. Propose that the Natural Resources Board consider in addition to the option of state land acquisition (fee title or easement) some type of cooperative program with landowners. This would allow public access and possibly low cost stream improvement work to be done on stream sections which are difficult to acquire, until such time when they can be acquired. Such a program would also allow benefits to the many miles of trout streams which are not included within DNR

property areas. Possibly such a cooperative program could be accomplished through reduced property taxes similar to the Woodland Tax Program or programs such as the wildlife Project Respect, or that relates to animal damage could be adapted to meet fishery needs.

Impact to existing land use would be greater with Alternatives 3 and 4 versus Alternative 2. Agricultural lands occupy 100 acres or 8% of lands with the recommended boundary. Agricultural usage of Alternative 3 is 703 acres (22%) and for Alternative 4, 1,082 acres (28%). If acquired by the State most of the farm land would be converted to wildlife habitat. State acquisition will negatively impact private recreational use of lands within the boundary, however, much needed public outdoor recreational opportunities will increase.

Property Development Alternatives

The objective of the recommended management program is to enhance the wild nature of the stream valley while increasing recreational opportunity.

Two alternatives to the recommended development of the property were considered: 1) reduction of proposed development, and 2) more intensive development. Since the proposed management of this property calls for a low level of development, Alternative 1 would essentially be that of no development. The impact of this alternative would be:

1. Poor public access to the property and little provision for use.
2. Fish and wildlife habitat of poor quality which would produce below its potential. A over-mature, disease prone forest resource would result.

The second alternative with an increased level of development would result in impact of:

1. Greater provision for public use and subsequent greater use of the property, resulting in loss of wild character of the stream valley, plus increased maintenance and public use facilities costs for trails, fences, parking lots, etc.
2. Increased production of fish and wildlife, but under more artificial conditions. Expansion of forest management activities would involve economic practices which would not necessarily be compatible with wildlife management, endangered and threatened species or aesthetics of the area.

Appendix - Master Plan comments by outside reviewing agencies or persons.

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

Water Blewett, Route 1, Box 259A, Poynette, Wisconsin

As we told you we are sorry we do not expect to be able to attend your meeting on April 5th. We do want to make a few comments particularly on the map, "Figure 3".

You indicate removal of our "Spring Pond". This pond was installed about twenty years ago at a cost of over \$2,000.00 including hooks for removing the stop logs. No surface water enters. We have a "Class C" license and have had two successful stockings of rainbow trout and now have largemouth bass which are reproducing. The map shows the county snowmobile trail at the north edge of our property and the township line. This trail is across the south edge of the field marked for "wildlife planting". It is at the top of the ridge just north of the creek.

DNR Response: Damming of springheads leading to trout water is detrimental in that cumulative actions could warm the stream in summer and cool it in winter beyond the temperature tolerance limit for trout. Bottom draw discharge from ponds usually negate this effect. This factor would certainly be considered before money would be spent for removal. The snowmobile trail route has been changed on the final map per your correction.

Mr. Blewett: The present road on the south of the property we think is only about one rod wide and insufficient for parking.

DNR Response: Noted. Acquisition of additional area at Dunning Road will be necessary in order to allow for off road parking.

Mr. Blewett: We realize this draft is a very preliminary plan and we would like to receive a copy of the "Final Concept Plan".

The \$800 per acre mentioned is far from the worth of the property. There is almost nothing available at any price on the market in this area with natural water on it.

DNR Response: The \$800/acre figure is an overall estimate. Parcels would be appraised on an individual basis at current market value. It is expected many tracts depending on size, aesthetics, development potential, road and utility access, etc., would be appraised at higher values.

C.J. Sendelback, Trout Unlimited, 141 Ingalsbe Street, Columbus, Wisconsin

I have fished and worked on this area and believe it is one of the best situated areas I have seen for this type of improvement.

Tanis Cuff, private land holder, 5858 Anthony Place #204, Madison, Wisconsin 53716

A good plan to protect the area above and beyond Columbia County Zoning regulations, but further study needed (see last 2 comments, for example) to prevent severe damage during implementation.

Ms. Cuff: Page 1: "Annual Objectives" #4, #5, and "Annual Additional Benefits" #2 presently carried out by private landowners.

DNR Response: #4; Timber on some of the area has not been managed in the past. Cropping of only the high market value trees and overgrazing has left the present forests in poor condition. #5; The natural area, until purchase by DNR, was grazed. #2; Proposed wildlife plantings will offer additional habitat for nongame species, as will the future preservation of existing lands. The plan objectives are an estimate for optimal public use. It is recognized a certain amount of private use and management is presently occurring on those lands.

Ms. Cuff: Page 3, paragraph 4: \$800/acre may be unrealistic.

DNR Response: See response to same question by Walter Blewett.

Ms. Cuff: Page 5, paragraph 1: Present "public hunting" signs face private land. More effective would be "end fishery area" signs facing the public land.

DNR Response: Agreed. A sign facing the public land and advertising the boundary of public lands may be more visible. Cooperation by private landowners in posting the common boundary with "NO TRESPASSING" signs would be helpful.

Ms. Cuff: Page 6, paragraph 4: "...clearcutting present over story...shelter wood cuts, seedtree cuts, patch clear cuts..." I hope these will be done in a manner compatible with "perpetuating the aesthetic qualities of the area (see p. 1, Goals)".

DNR Response: A certain degree of disturbance is associated with all types of logging operations. The most appropriate logging methods will be used so to limit disturbance.

Ms. Cuff: Page 6, paragraph 5: Shearing of aspen clones...as in paragraph 4, is this compatible with aesthetics? And is a regenerating aspen stand, with all trees at the same stage of maturity, any less susceptible to a sudden infection or infestation than the original stand?

DNR Response: Aspens require open areas for regeneration. Shearing is an economical method of creating this situation. Aesthetically in one year, regrowth will be 2-3' tall. Downed trees would be pushed in windrows or brush piles for wildlife habitat. Young vigorous trees are much less susceptible to disease than old age stands.

Ms. Cuff: Page 6, paragraph 6, onto page 7: On "removal of invading cedar trees" and "the extremely light, fragile soils of this natural area", on which "vehicle use should be eliminated and human use restricted": I hope this means hand cutting rather than machine dragging of the cedars, and I challenge the DNR to develop practical restrictions on use of the prairie area.

DNR Response: Yes. Use of heavy equipment for cedar removal would be very restricted, if used at all. Soil and existing plant growth will be considered when managing for enhancement of the native grasses. Caution signs describing the fragile nature of the area would be the only economically feasible method of restricting human use of this area. However, such posting may serve to attract more attention to the area. Such use will never be any more detrimental than cattle usage which occurred prior to DNR ownership.

Ms. Cuff: Page 12: Endangered and Threatened species". How much habitat degradation will occur under the large number of man-days listed in "Annual Objectives" #1, 2 & 3? A growth of dwarf iris may be buried by pond excavation spoils. People familiar with the area feel the Columbia Generating Station fish and wildlife survey (page 10) does not apply well to the fishery area, particularly the eastern half.

DNR Response: Other than more evident user trails, overall habitat degradation is not expected from public use. Such degradation is certainly less severe than the presence of livestock, which may occur if in private ownership. Further analysis of specific areas will be done prior to pond creation with benefits to waterfowl versus any detrimental factors evaluated. Should funds become available, a survey of fauna and flora on the property will be conducted. In lieu of such a survey, the Columbia area is the best data available. The Columbia area contains a wide diversity of vegetation types. However, it is recognized vegetation such as cropland is lacking.

Ms. Cuff: Page 13, paragraph 3: Considering the large number of springs in the area, might the digging of shallow ponds (end page 5 to top page 6), with accompanying disturbance of the admittedly shallow water table, result in the same type of problem with spring-pond drainage as presently on the Roland property. Again, aesthetics are at jeopardy as well. All risks should be carefully weighed for this venture.

DNR Response: Such waterfowl ponds will not be dug very close to the stream nor would they be anticipated to have a discharge. Warming of the groundwater as it moves through the pond would be expected to be undetectable. Your point is well taken concerning aesthetics of such ponds. Any open water creation will be further evaluated before being developed.

Art and Roseanne Woodward, R.R. 1, Rio, Wisconsin

We are sending you a letter in regards to the Rocky Run Fishery Area even though we attended the meeting in Poynette on Tuesday, April 5.

We hope you got the message that most of the people, who attended the meeting, and all the land owners are not in favor of the proposal for the Rocky Run Area.

We (as land owners) are opposed to the plan for buying land and making it into a recreation and hunting area. We are not opposed to fishing or upkeep of stream banks, etc. or erosion control. However, we don't feel it needs to be done on such a broad scale, i.e., acquiring so much land for example.

The development of this area for hunting and recreation purposes would so compound existing problems as to make it hazardous and even dangerous to those of us living in this area. This area is already hunted to the maximum especially during deer season. Additional hunters would cause a great safety problem. As far as trespassing -- we have a problem there also. It is one offense that is hard to do anything about. We can't be patrolling it 24 hours a day. These people (trespassers) can't read signs even though we keep the land posted.

As land owners we don't want to see this area opened up to anymore of the general public (just fishermen) than we have now.

Hunting and outdoor recreation is not a right. It is a privilege!

DNR Response: In light of the need for public outdoor recreation areas the DNR is delegated with such responsibility as associated with various laws, i.e., Section 23.09(2)(d)(3), Wis. Stats., provides legislative authority and direction for the acquisition and management of fisheries areas. The primary purpose as stated in this Statute is to provide "areas in which any citizen may hunt, trap or fish". Section 23.11(1), Wis. Stats., provides for the general care, protection and supervision of state lands. Section 23.30, Wis. Stats., deals with the provisions of the outdoor recreation program.

While the Rocky Run Creek Area is primarily being acquired for its valuable trout resource, public ownership of property away from the stream itself is valuable from the standpoint of aesthetics, water quality protection and multiple use concepts. Disrespect for private property is a problem not unique to public use areas. Adequate posting of land and education through programs such as hunter safety which emphasizes user ethics are current attempts at addressing the trespass problem. Trespass violations are difficult to enforce.

Walter Bauman, Chairman, Dane County Regional Planning Commission, City-County Building, Madison, Wisconsin

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Master Plan for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area. While this fishery area is located on Columbia County, it would appear that the Master Plan may have substantial impacts on Dane County through reductions in acreage goals for Dane County fishery areas.

We have discussed potential implications with Southern District staff. Of the total acreage goal of 1,033 acres for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area, 418 acres (40%) are to be obtained by reducing the acreage goals for several Dane County fishery areas (see attached table). Nearly all of the remaining 615 acres are to be obtained by reallocating fishery area acreage goals within Columbia County. As the table indicates, the potential impact of the acreage goal reduction could be substantial, particularly for the Door Creek, Dorn

Creek, Flynn Creek and Upper Waubesa fishery areas. The specific impacts of the acreage goal reallocation are impossible to determine, since master plans or management plans for these specific fishery areas are not yet completed.

While we have no objection to the establishment of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area, the proposed acreage goal reallocations do cause us concern. First of all, we have in the past urged the Department to place greater emphasis on resource protection and recreation programs located in the more populous areas of the state, where the needs and pressures are greatest. Removing over 400 acres from Dane County fishery area goals do not seem consistent with this objective.

Secondly, the effect of the reallocation is to remove acreage from proposed acquisition of wetland acreage associated with warmwater fisheries, and to transfer that to acquisition of coldwater (trout) fishery areas. While we agree that protection and improvement of coldwater fisheries is important, we also believe that wetland protection and warmwater fishery goals should be vigorously pursued.

Finally, we would like the opportunity to assess the impact of the acreage reductions on the specific Dane County fishery areas affected, and to allow towns and other affected local units of government the opportunity to review and discuss those impacts. This process would be greatly enhanced by the availability of master or management plans for those fishery areas, which we understand are now being prepared. We would like to review those plans with towns and other local units of government, and to assess the impacts of any proposed acreage reductions as part of that process.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area Master Plan. While we are not opposed to the establishment of this fishery area, we do hope that it could be accomplished without serious detrimental impact to resource protection and outdoor recreation objectives in Dane County, and that we and local governments have the opportunity to review more specific plans for fishery areas in Dane County before substantial changes are made.

SUMMARY OF FISHERY AREA TRANSFERS FROM DANE COUNTY

| <u>Dane County Fishery Area</u> | <u>Previous Acreage Goal</u> | <u>Transfer to Rocky Run Area</u> | <u>New Acreage Goal</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Cherokee Marsh | 1,027.00 | 81.21 | 945.79 |
| Door Creek | 80.00 | 80.00 | 0 |
| Dorn Creek | 299.30 | 155.70 | 144.30 |
| Flynn Creek | 32.00 | 32.00 | 0 |
| Nevin Hatchery | 343.14 | 2.27 (40.00 to Lodi) | 300.87 |
| Upper Waubesa | 538.00 | 67.19 (206.49 to Rock Co. Spring Cr.) | 264.32 |

Total Acreage goal for Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area 1,032.69 Acres.

418.37 from Dane County
611.69 from Columbia County
2.63 Other

DNR Response: Your comments point out the need for increasing the acreage quotas in the southern portion of the State, where use is the greatest. Currently a committee is evaluating the shift in acreage quotas from the north to the south. The Southern District administration has determined the existing acreage quota to be best used on trout streams rather than wetlands associated with lakes. Such wetlands are protected under floodplain zoning laws. Lands along trout streams allow for stream habitat improvement thereby enhancing the fishery and access to the streams allowing for more use.

Earl L. Little, Trout Unlimited, 133 E. Burnett Street, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

The Rocky Run Master Plan is a thorough plan which takes in all the considerations for the best use of this resource. This Plan is in the best interest of not only the public user, but also the private landowners, and all who might use the area, whether they be in the immediate area, or some miles away. The Plan also compliments this very important area.

Russel Smith, Landowner and Farmer, Route 1, Box 228, Rio, Wisconsin

We aren't interested as we have enough of the public coming on our land and hunting from the public hunting of the land across the creek.

DNR Response: Your joint property boundary with DNR land is very difficult to post, being a tag alder marsh. In the future, the open high ground on the DNR north side of the marsh will be posted advising that the boundary line is in the marsh.

Forest Stearns, Chairman, Scientific Areas Preservation Council

We have completed our review of the Rocky Run Fishery Area Concept Master Plan and have several recommendations.

The classification of public use natural area in Section 31 is appreciated. We have recently field checked the site and recommend that the boundary be extended on the east to include valuable prairie and barrens habitat. The recommended boundary is SE 1/4 SE 1/4 of Section 31 and S 1/2 S 1/2 SW 1/4 of Section 32, totalling 80 acres more or less.

DNR Response: The natural area boundary will be redesigned recognizing your comments. However, the natural area boundary will exclude any areas of existing, mature oak stands. They will be managed to perpetuate the oak type. The S 1/2 of the SE, SE Section 31 will also be deleted to allow for harvest of the existing pine stand. Once the pines are harvested a portion of this sand blow area will be reestablished for turtle reproduction.

Mr. Stearns: We suggest that a native prairie mix of Wisconsin ecotypes be used, especially since plantings are planned within a mile of the native prairie.

DNR Response: Assume you are referring to the native grass plantings in the nearby pastured quack grass fields. Native grass of Wisconsin ecotypes will be used if available, however, no spreading of such native grass plantings on other areas has been observed.

Mr. Stearns: The planned dredging of ponds for waterfowl seems questionable in relatively undisturbed wetlands along the trout stream. What is the expected impact of this disturbance on stream water quality and aesthetics?

DNR Response: See prior response to the same question.

Mr. Stearns: Since the area supports natural oak savanna, we suggest use of prescribed burns to maintain the open stands as habitat for wildlife such as box turtles rather than planting pine as suggested on page 6 of the plan.

Management proposed for the public use natural area is reasonable except that planting of forbs is generally not recommended within this classification. Prescribed fire and control of encroaching woody vegetation to maintain open sand blows and the savanna is preferred.

DNR Response: In a natural community some forbs exist in the soil types of the proposed natural area. Selectivity of forbs for the site will occur naturally.

Adding pine to some parts of the existing open areas does allow for some diversity to the property. Extensive blocks greater than 5 acres are not recommended. Plantings will not occur in sand blow areas.

Cynthia A. Morehouse, Director Bureau of Environmental Analysis and Review,
Department of Transportation, Madison, Wisconsin

We have determined from our review of the Concept Element of the Rocky Run Fishery Area Master Plan, that neither U.S.H. 51 nor S.T.H. 22 would be significantly affected by the proposals in the Master Plan. Both highways have relatively good alignments and cross-sections and should not require additional right of way for minor improvements. The long term probability is, however, that some of the bridges and box culverts on U.S.H. 51 will be rehabilitated or replaced in the future as their current sufficiency ratings (below 50) continue to decline.

We concur in the decision to place the proposed access and parking lot on the westerly end of the fishing area and not on U.S.H. 51.

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

DNR Response: Since the preliminary draft, a parking lot has been added at U.S.H. 51 because considerable angler use occurs at the U.S.H. 51 right-of-way for entry to the stream. The off-road parking lot on U.S.H. 51 is designed to eliminate parking along the roadway. District 1 DOT personnel have inspected and given verbal approval to the designated area for road entrance/exit onto U.S.H. 51.

Kenneth W. Wood, Goose Pond Sanctuary, Route 1, Box 128A, Arlington, Wisconsin
53911

I wish to submit this letter as comment to the proposed master plan for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area in Columbia County. I write as chairman of the board of directors of the Goose Pond Sanctuary at Arlington, Wisconsin. The Sanctuary is funded by the Madison Audubon Society, a 2,000 member chapter of National Audubon.

Our organization thoroughly approves the purchase of properties such as this for public use. Such properties, besides providing opportunity for diverse forms of recreation, preserve habitats for native flora and fauna. We have sponsored a number of hikes by small groups to the area for purposes of environmental education and hope to continue to do so in the future.

Of particular interest to us have been the dry prairie remnants along the bluff north of Rocky Run Creek. By their nature, these sandy, open soils favor the ornate box turtle and several native and unusual prairie plants including the prairie dandelion and Hill's thistle. Major stands of these plants occur on the bluffs to the east of the gorge. We hope that the natural area can be extended to the east to include them. We also hope that management of the area will be aimed at reducing tree cover. If it is appropriate, it may be possible for certain members of the Madison Audubon Society to assist in this project.

DNR Response: See comments to Forest Stearns. It is intended to maintain the existing open prairie areas as such regardless of whether or not they are designated as natural areas. Given limited budgets and manpower, such prairie management is not high priority for fish and game funds. Volunteer help will be needed to manage these prairie areas.

Mr. Wood: The contrast of the xeric habitat on the bluffs with the skunk cabbages, marsh marigolds, etc. of the nearby alder thickets makes the area a rich and useful site for outdoor education activities. We hope that use of the property will favor such "passive", i.e., non-vehicular, forms of recreation.

DNR Response: Agreed, such additional benefits to the property are noted in the plan.

Phillip Hutchinson, Route 2, Poynette, Wisconsin 53955

I mainly dislike the multiple recreational purposes proposed for this "Fisheries Area."

DNR Response: The Natural Resources Board has directed that all state properties be managed for multiple use.

Mr. Hutchinson: The Rocky Run Creek Fishery Plan as presented seems to contain many opportunities for the "public". As a private landowner in the prescribed area, I am upset with the plan. The lines as drawn contain some 20 to 30 acres of the 65.5 acres I own. The creek flows through a much smaller part of the land. I purchased the land six years ago with the idea of leaving the wild parts wild and using approved forest and land management on the rest. I have three children between the ages of eight and thirteen who are lovers of the lands we own -- they are not going to want to sell it. If they have children I would guess they will feel the same way.

I am not pleased with the public's disregard for private property at the present time and can only feel this will get worse so that if a portion of my land was DNR's, the remainder would not be respected as private property. A person is trespassing if they are on private property without permission. Our trespass laws will have to be made stronger and will have to be enforced. Why is Wisconsin a state where "No Trespassing" signs have to be seen on every farm's woodlot? Let's make the law read that all lands are off limits unless otherwise posted.

DNR Response: Noted. See response to similar comments by Art Woodward.

Mr. Hutchinson: I live near the Rowen Creek DNR improvement area and do not see an additional need for another public area so close to this area. I do not observe a large number of trout fishermen presently using this area. I do realize that trout stamp money has been collected and "must be spent". I do hope that there will not be undue pressures on landowners to sell their land and that we can expect cooperation from DNR personnel to make it clear where the public land boundaries are.

DNR Response: Both Rowan and Rocky Run Creeks are highly valued trout streams in a heavily populated portion of the state where our trout resource is relatively sparse. A 1979 census survey of Rowan Creek documented heavy angler use, 650 angler hours/mile of stream. Trout Stamp money is used to improve stream habitat to provide quality fishing in the face of such high angler use. Other comments noted.

Mr. Hutchinson: I also see the large area of state owned land at Mud Lake -- this is in close proximity to the proposed area. Why must the people who have chosen to live in the rural areas of Wisconsin have to put up with yet another public area and the influx of more city dwellers that you are inviting to come out to this area. Can't you let them drive a few miles farther north and buy your public lands in a less populated area. The orange coats of November are extremely thick now. I would hate to be responsible for putting anymore in this area with another public hunting area in a "corridor" of land that I feel is not conducive to safe public hunting.

At the annual meeting of the Township of Lowville, April 5, 1983, a motion was passed without a dissenting vote to oppose the Rocky Run Fisheries Area. The sentiment of the assemblage seemed to be that we've already given more than our fair share (2,187 acres) to public recreational purposes.

DNR Response: The purpose of the Mud Lake Area is primarily for waterfowl hunting, whereas the Rocky Run Creek Area is proposed primarily for trout fishing. The DNR Board has directed greater effort be made for developing public outdoor recreation lands in the southern portion of the state nearest the population centers, with emphasis on multiple use.

Mr. Hutchinson: We attended the public hearing or meeting on the Rocky Run Fisheries Area. Mr. Jim Condon, Fish Manager whose home base is Horicon "ran" the meeting. There was a free exchange of viewpoints and questions answered. However, I was very disappointed when later in the meeting Mr. Condon stated that he's been to enough of these meetings that he really didn't have to come tonight to know what the land owners were going to say. After a remark like that, I just hope he was able to hear what the landowners and others present were saying. (I guess I would have preferred some verbatim recorded rather than Mr. Mahy's notes to make sure whoever reads the notes would capture the true feelings brought out.)

With 2,187 acres of DNR land in Lowville and 4,054 acres of DNR land in Dekorra, I was shocked to hear there are NO management plans for these DNR owned lands. I believe the lands DNR already owns should be evaluated and used to their full potential -- the duck hunting, cross-country skiing, and deer hunting proposed for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area seem misplaced. Why not incorporate them on some of the 6,000 plus acres already owned? Mr. Condon did state that the committee would have preferred the title Rocky Run Recreational Area but due to bureaucracy, this title couldn't be used.

As a landowner, I feel strongly that I'd like to allow my land to remain truly natural.

DNR Response: Objections voiced by adjacent landowners to public lands are not unique to Rocky Run Creek. Master plans are currently being developed for all DNR properties. Demand for public outdoor recreation is great in southern Wisconsin. Existing areas do not presently meet the need.

David Olson, Property Owner, Route 1, Poynette

Well prepared, commendable for action to restore and preserve a beautiful little stream.

However, as a landowner, I shall never sell to the DNR. This land has a greater personal and intrinsic value to me. I also do not believe this would benefit many people, nor would they respect it. I feel that by not posting my property (which is generally disregarded anyway) I am doing my philanthropic duty.

DNR Response: Noted.

Stanley A. Nichols, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, 1815 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin

Page 3, Number 4. It is not well explained here why there is a need to reduce acreages or other properties to establish the Rocky Run Fishery Area.

DNR Response: The DNR is under an ultimate acreage ownership quota of 1.3 million acres statewide. Current ownership is approximately 1.0 million acres. It is felt the resource associated with Rocky Run Creek allows better use of the remaining acreage than those areas from which acreage was reduced.

Mr. Nichols: Page 15, paragraph 1. Native prairie grass should grow well on sandy soils. They will probably grow better than pine trees.

DNR Response: It is not intended to convert all previously grazed pasture lands back to a native prairie. While stands of native grasses provide better wildlife cover than existing conditions, the added diversity of small pine stands breaks large areas of open fields offering additional cover and scenic value.

Francis W. Murphy, Chairman, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, P.O. Box 92, Portage, Wisconsin

I would urge that the DNR consider the adoption of alternative 4. It seems to me that this would best represent the maximum use of the area involved, but it also represents the best protection for the area on into the future. It also is consistent with the Congress position, of trying to provide additional acreage, for those areas adjacent to the metropolitan areas, such as Madison.

DNR Response: The larger acreage alternatives were not considered the best overall use given the remaining, limited statewide acreage quota.

| |
|--------------------|
| DISTRICT OR BUREAU |
| DNR NUMBER |

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

Title of Proposal:

Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area
Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area Master Plan

Location: County Columbia
Township _____ North, Range _____ East, West
Section(s) _____
Political Town Dekorra, Lowville, Wyocena

Project:

1) General Description (overview)

It is proposed to create a named land acquisition and development project on Rocky Run Creek with an acreage goal of 1034 acres. The department currently owns 612.69 acres which were purchased under Columbia County Remnant Project. The development project includes stream habitat improvement, boundary marking, construction of parking lots, access trails, development of wildlife habitat and food plots, wildlife ponds, removal of existing spring ponds. The objective of the project is to provide trout fishing, hunting, outdoor recreation and to protect and enhance the wild nature of the stream valley.

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

The purpose of this project is to provide the public with opportunity to trout fish, hunt for deer, pheasant, ruffed grouse, woodcock, and squirrel, and trap for fur-bearing animals. Project will also provide opportunity for mushroom and berry picking, hiking, cross-country skiing, photography, nature study and birdwatching. This project will contribute to the habitat and protection of three endangered species; bald eagle, osprey, ornate box turtle and three threatened species (red-shouldered hawk, loggerhead shrike, Blanding's turtle). It will also benefit non-game species indigenous to the area. Trout streams are a relatively scarce commonality in southern Wisconsin. Consequently, protection, development, and provision of public access to these streams should receive high priority. There are 8 trout streams in Columbia County with a total

Authorities and Approvals: (see attached sheet 1a.)

1) Statutory Authority to Initiate

2) Permits or Approvals Required Natural Resources Board approval required

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:

\$300,000 (1980 dollars) for acquisition, \$85,000 for development
Lawcon, ORAP, and General Operations Funds

Time Schedule:

Complete acquisition and development by 2000

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

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

Properties within the proposed boundary will be purchased in fee title. Acquisition priorities will be determined according to stream frontage. Those parcels which have stream frontage are of highest priorities. Several high priority parcels contain improvements. These parcels will be purchased as is, if necessary, and improvements will be sold, removed, or traded for other properties at a later date.

A 20 year period will be required to complete acquisition of all parcels. Since no large scale development is planned, development can be completed piecemeal as acquisition proceeds. As parcels are acquired, development planned for those lands, would be completed. A 20 year period is anticipated to complete developments included in this plan.

The management and development of this property will be designed to enhance the wild nature of the stream valley. Those lands which are presently farmed or grazed will

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

Trout habitat development will be conducted on Rocky Run Creek. The development will include brushing to remove dense overhanging alder, establishment of grasses on the stream banks, installation of half-logs, deflectors, and bank cover devices. Habitat development will not be intensive in nature. Artificial spawning beds will be installed to evaluate the potential of these devices for improving natural reproduction.

Existing ponds constructed on springheads will be removed to improve water temperature of inflowing water.

3) Structures

None

4) Other

None

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

PROBABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

A small acreage of agriculture land would be converted to wildlife/recreation use. Construction of access trails and parking area may have adverse effect on vegetation in small area. Private ownership and use would no longer exist.

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

The purpose of this project is to provide public recreation facilities and to maintain and enhance the long-term productivity of the stream and stream valley. Long-term productivity will be enhanced by the proposed project.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES IF ACTION IS IMPLEMENTED

1) Energy

Energy required for planned developments would be irretrievable.

2) Archaeological and historic features or sites

None

3) Other

None

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)

No.

- 2) Does the action alter the environment so a new physical, biological or socio-economic environment would exist? (New environmental effect)

No.

- 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)

Wild nature of the stream valley is a relatively scarce situation in southern Wisconsin. Trout streams are a limited resource in southern Wisconsin.

- 4) Does the action and its effect(s) require a decision which would result in influencing future decisions? Describe. (Precedent setting)

No.

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

None

- 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.

County: Rocky Hill Chamberlain

NOTIFICATION

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.

Refer to Office of the Secretary.....

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

Request EIR.....

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

Evaluator authored the master plan.

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| SIGNATURE OF EVALUATOR <i>Jim Larson</i> | DATE <i>10/14/82</i> |
| NOTED: AREA SUPERVISOR OR BUREAU DIRECTOR | DATE |

Number of responses to public notice see attached memo, Jim Larson

Public response log attached?..... yes

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WEPA DISTRICT DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR OF BEI (OR DESIGNEE) <i>Edward O. Reymann</i> | DATE <i>5-16-83</i> |
|---|------------------------|

This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate District Director or the Director of BEI.

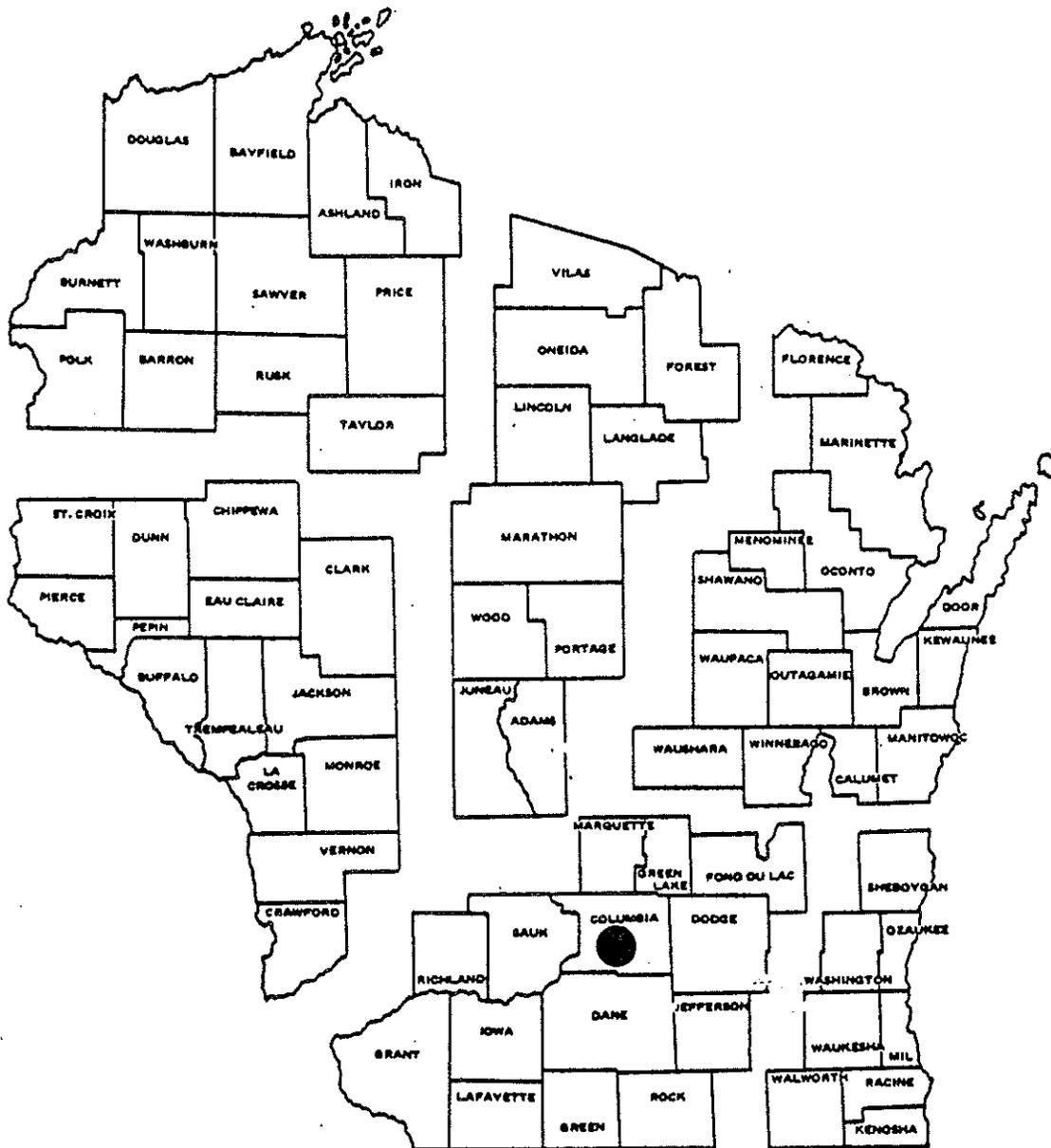


Figure 1. Location of Proposed Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area.

2) Purpose and Need, contd.

mileage of 48.5 miles. Rocky Run Creek contains 16% of the trout water in the county. All of the trout water on Rocky Run would be contained in the property boundaries.

The close proximity of Rocky Run Creek to the Madison area and the aesthetic quality of the area have made lands adjacent to the stream highly desirable private recreational properties. As private recreational ownership has increased, public access to the stream has become less available. Private development of these properties will result in adverse effects on the aesthetic quality of the stream environment. Construction of recreational residences within the proposed boundary would destroy the essentially wild nature of the stream valley.

Rocky Run Creek can provide quality trout fishing if fishing pressure is not excessive. If publicly owned, habitat management could be undertaken to increase productivity of the stream to provide a greater amount of fishing opportunity. Public ownership would prevent agricultural and recreational development of the stream valley.

The potential value of the proposed area for wildlife and other recreational uses may exceed the fishery value. Because of the diversity of land types the area supports a diverse plant and animal population. The potential for nature study is high. The area would be well suited for hiking and cross-country skiing because of the long narrow nature of the proposed project and hilly terrain.

The opportunity to provide recreational facilities in a semi-wild setting in close proximity to population centers in southern Wisconsin is limited, but could be provided by the proposed project. With proper planning and development the semi-wild characteristic of the area will be protected and enhanced.

It is anticipated that recreational demand will increase significantly in the next 10 years. As user pressure increases, private lands will become increasingly unavailable for public use. To meet this recreational demand and provide quality recreation experience, increased acreages of public lands will be needed. As energy sources become an increasing problem, recreational lands in southern Wisconsin will become increasingly important.

The purpose of the master plan is to plan the term acquisition and development of lands on the Rocky Run Creek Remnant Area, Columbia County. This is in accordance with the Natural Resources Board Policy on master planning adopted July 19, 1974 which requires the development of a master plan to assure that the basic purpose of the property is achieved, and that as many other public needs as possible be met while being consistent with the purpose of the property. The master plan "shall reflect the public interest in all ecologic, economic and social benefits that may be derived from the property, consistent with its natural resource capabilities and the statutes under which it was acquired (DNR Manual Code 2103.2)."

2) Purpose and Need, contd.

The purpose of the master plan is to insure sound, long range, comprehensive planning and development of Department-owned lands.

The purpose of the master plan for Rocky Run Creek project is essentially two fold: (1) to establish Fishery Area boundaries for remnant lands adjacent to Rocky Run Creek, and (2) as described above, to develop a plan to guide acquisition and development of the lands.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

To obtain land control, and to manage, preserve and protect all property within the boundary designated for the Rocky Run Creek Fishery Area in Columbia County; to enhance fishing and other recreational activities, while perpetuating the aesthetic qualities of the area.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for 1,100 angler days of trout fishing.
2. Provide opportunities for 1,750 man days of hunting for both gun and bow deer hunting, and for pheasant, ruffed grouse, woodcock and squirrel..
3. Provide opportunities for 75 man days of trapping to harvest muskrat, raccoon, red fox and mink.
4. Manage timber lands for their high aesthetic appeal, while harvesting firewood, pulpwood and logs.

Additional Benefits

1. Provide opportunities for 1,000 man days of non-consumptive day use activities including mushroom and berry picking, hiking, cross-country skiing, photography, nature study and bird watching.
2. Contribute to the habitat and protection of three endangered species; the Bald Eagle, Osprey and Ornate Box Turtle, and three threatened species; the Red-shouldered Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike and Blanding's Turtle.
3. Benefit non-game species indigenous to the area.

In 1959, a wildlife management project was proposed for acquisition of wetlands east of Highway 22 near the present property boundaries. This project was not approved.

In 1961, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission approved the Columbia County Fish Remnant Habitat Project which called for an acreage goal of 1,375 acres. The goal was later revised to 931 acres in 1969.

Initial acquisition of public lands on Rocky Run Creek was made in 1969 under the remnant project when 185 acres were purchased. In 1974, a 35 acre parcel adjoining the initial acquisition was purchased. In June, 1979 a purchase of 301.8 acres was made, and a 90.69 acre parcel was purchased in December 1979 bringing total acres owned by DNR to 612.69.

2) Purpose and Need, contd.

The current department ownership on Rocky Run Creek is 612.69 acres, 36 of the proposed acreage goal of 1034 acres. All lands would be acquired in fee title. Those lands presently in public ownership are all used for fish and wildlife management. Approximately 75% of the stream frontage in the property boundary is in private ownership. Only 15% of the lands within the project boundary are suitable for farming. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the lands are suitable only for forestry or wildlife/recreation.

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

The soils except those immediately adjacent to the stream, are well drained and generally sandy. Wooded lands are of generally oak-hardwood. In recent years considerable acreage of land has been converted to recreational use and low quality farm lands have been planted with trees or allowed to return to natural vegetation. The stream is bordered by 2,200 acres of alder, willow, or grass wetlands. Soils in the lowlands are organic in nature.

Rocky Run Creek is capable of supporting trout in the stream section from Highway 22 downstream to the railroad tracks one-half west of Highway 51. Abundant springs lower water temperature sufficiently for survival of trout. Natural reproduction of brook and brown trout occurs in this section of stream. Presently, the stream is listed to have 6 miles of Class II and 2 miles of Class III trout water.

Parts of the upper portion of Rocky Run Creek above the proposed fishery area were channelized in 1947 to drain wetlands for agricultural use. In 1954 attempts were made to form a drainage district. The proposed drainage project was opposed by the conservation commission and the district was not approved. Drainage by individual landowners continued and is currently active in the wetlands upstream from Highway 22.

Soils and Geology

The property is located in the terminal moraine of the Wisconsin glacier. The soils are formed of glacial till materials.

Soil types in the area fall into five soil associations, two of which comprise the majority of the soils. Including the Kidder-Wyocena, and Plainfield associations. These soils, are in general, well drained, sandy loam soils underlain by sand or glacial till. Both soil associations are found on level to steeply sloping terrains.

The Kidder-Wyocena association is generally used for farm crops, with steeper slopes being used for pasture and woodlands. Crop yields are limited by low or medium available water holding capacity.

The Plainfield association soils are more sandy with low available water holding capacity. Though used for farm crops, they are best suited for woodland or wildlife habitat. These soils are well suited for pine tree plantations. Blow outs (sand pockets caused by wind erosion) are common on these soils types.

The soils immediately adjacent to Rocky Run Creek are classified in the Houghton-Adrian association. These are nearly level, organic and poorly drained. Soils in this association when drained are used for muck farming. Undrained areas are used for wildlife habitat and are effective in slowing down and holding runoff along drainage ways.

The other two associations found in the project area are Grelton-Friesland and Boyer-Dresden soils. Both associations are well drained, sandy loam soils which are used for farm crops, pasture, or woodlands. Grelton-Friesland types are particularly susceptible to erosion on cultivated areas. Boyer-Dresden Soils are potential sources of sand or gravel supplies.

Because of the steep slopes on the river valley and the generally sandy type soils most of the lands in the project area are best suited for pasture, forestry, or wildlife-recreational use. Those areas with less steep gradient are used for farm crops.

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

The soils in the wetlands adjacent to the creek would be good croplands if drained. Drainage is being undertaken in the marshland east of Highway 22. If not drained, these lands are best suited for wildlife-recreational use.

Water Resources

Rocky Run Creek is a long, low-gradient stream which originates from a marsh area. The stream drains approximately 38 square miles. The total length of the stream is estimated at 19 miles and it falls 164 feet (8.6 ft/mile) from its origin at Mud Lake to the Wisconsin River. Of the total, 8 miles located between U. S. Highways 22 and 51 are capable of supporting trout. From Mud Lake to Highway 22, water temperatures are too high for trout. An abundance of spring flow sufficiently stabilizes water temperature downstream from Highway 22.

The stream section which supports a trout population (Figure 4) is predominantly sand bottom (64%) with scattered gravel-rubble areas (36%). The gradient in this section averages 6.2 ft./mile. The stream is characterized by long slow moving sections (50%) interspersed by riffles (40%) and deep pools (10%). Gravel suitable for spawning is limited, but some natural reproduction of both brook trout and brown trout occurs. This section averages 13 feet wide. (Table 1)

The water temperature regime is such that a trout population is sustained. Maximum summer temperatures reach the low 80 degree range and the stream becomes ice covered during the winter in some sections. The abundance of springs provides refuge for trout when extreme temperatures occur.

Stream banks are generally stable with some overhanging banks present. There is instream cover in the form of logs and brush piles. Instream vegetation is relatively scarce. Very dense overhanging alder grows along much of the stream banks.

Above the fishery area, in sections 33 and 34, Town of Wyocena, the stream has been straightened for agricultural drainage. A number of connecting agricultural ditches have been constructed to convert the marsh to farm lands. The stream is dammed to form a pond in section 2, Town of Lowville. The drainage and impoundment both have a negative effect on water quality downstream in the fishery area.

Below U. S. Highway 51 the water temperature again exceeds the range for trout survival. However, occasional large brown trout are caught there. Warm water species are common. Marshes in this section are inundated by flood waters from the Wisconsin River and are known to be used by northern pike for spawning.

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

Table 1. Physical characteristics of
Rocky Run Creek, Columbia County

| | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Watershed Area | 38 | square miles |
| Total Length of Stream | 19 | miles |
| Length of Trout Water | 6.99 | miles |
| Average Width | 12.9 | feet |
| Surface Area/Mile | 1.56 | acres |
| Total Surface Area | 10.9 | acres |
| Gradient (Trout Water) | 6.22 | feet/mile |
| Flow (average) | 8.3 | cfs |
| Bottom Type | 64% | sand, silt, detritus |
| | 36% | gravel, rubble, boulders |
| Water Characteristics | 50% | slow moving |
| | 40% | riffles |
| | 10% | deep pools |
| Inflow of Springs | 94 | springs |
| | 2,459 | gallons/minute |
| Conductance | 536 | mho |

2) Biological a) Flora, contd.

Man's activities have altered the vegetation types on most of the area. Only the tag alder--grass marsh types remain in essentially a natural condition. Most of these lands dry enough and level enough to farm have been used for row crop cultivation. Much of the lower quality farm land has been abandoned and is reverting to natural vegetation or has been planted to conifer plantations.

Woodlands located on the steeper slopes have remained, but most high grade timber has been removed. Some marketable timber does remain. With management, the wooded areas would produce small volumes of timber products, mostly of lower grade quality. The wooded areas contain trees of large enough size to have high aesthetic appeal. Management of the timber resource would be primarily oriented to wildlife production and aesthetics.

Table 2. Cover type of land within proposed boundaries of Alternative II

| <u>Land Type</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>%</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Agricultural land | 153 | 14.8 |
| Pine plantation | 39 | 3.8 |
| Timber | 289 | 27.9 |
| Grassland | 159 | 15.4 |
| Marsh | 204 | 19.7 |
| Brush | <u>190</u> | <u>18.4</u> |
| Total | 1034 | 100% |

2) Biological b) Fauna, contd.

deer, fox squirrel, gray squirrel, and cotton tail rabbit.

The presence of 153 bird species has^{been} documented in the area. Those of interest for hunting purposes would include ring-neck pheasant, woodcock and ruffed grouse. Various species of migratory waterfowl are found immediately below the recommended property boundaries. Of major interest is the probable presence of the Bald Eagle and Osprey, both endangered species, and the threatened Red-Shouldered Hawk and Loggerhead Shrike. Recognition of their status, and other endangered or threatened species including those documented now, or in the future, is included in the recommended management program of this master plan.

Recent surveys of Rocky Run Creek have documented the presence of 33 fish species, Rocky Run Creek is best suited for management as a cold water fishery for brook and brown trout.

Rocky Run Creek is classified as a class II trout stream. Some reproduction of brown and brook trout occurs. The heavily utilized trout fishery is supported primarily by stocked brown trout. High fishing mortality of stocked fish occurs shortly after fish are stocked. However, fish not immediately caught exhibit good growth.

Fish Management studies on Rocky Run Creek indicate that trout stocked in stream sections with poor public access and low fishing pressure incur much reduced mortality rates. These studies have also indicated good over-winter survival of fall stocked fingerling trout. These studies are the basis for changes in management practices for this stream. Starting in fall 1980 only fall fingerling trout will be stocked. These fish will be distributed throughout the stream section. Stockings near road crossings will be much reduced. It is anticipated these changes will result in a higher quality fishery producing more angler days of recreation.

Ten species of amphibian and 8 species of reptile have been documented in the area. Of particular importance is the presence of an endangered species, the Ornate Box Turtle, and a threatened species, Blanding's Turtle. Lists of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles documented for the area are maintained in the Horicon Area Headquarters.

3) Social, contd.

The population of Columbia County is 40,150 (1970 census). Portage, the nearest city, located 6 miles north, has a population of 7,821. The project is located 25 miles north of Madison. According to King (1975)* this project would be accessible to 200,000 people within a 1/2 hour driving time, and 6,000,000 within a 3 hour driving time.

5) Other

Though this part of Columbia County has never been systematically surveyed, State Historical Society records indicate that the Fishery Area contains an unusually dense concentration of archeological material. The sites presently listed in the State Inventory for this area are as follows:

- Co-153: A prehistoric campsite located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3, T11N, R9E.
- Co-154: A prehistoric campsite located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3 and the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4, T11N, R9E.
- A village site located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R9E.
- Co-44 A burial mound located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4, T11N, R10E.
- Co-45: A village site located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4 and the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R10E.
- Co-46: A campsite located in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R10E.
- Co-47: A burial mound located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R10E.
- Co-48: A campsite located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R10E.
- Co-49: A burial mound located in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, T11N, R10E.

The above sites probably represent only a fraction of the archeological material actually present. Many more sites would probably come to light if the area were systematically surveyed by an archeologist.

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

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

~~Properties~~ will be revegetated with native species to provide a natural setting. Design and location of parking lots and access trails will be such as to minimize visual intrusion on the wild setting. Development generally will be minimal. Improvements on acquired properties will be removed.

Access into the property will be provided by four miles of foot trails. Seven (7) parking lots (5 car) will be located on the perimeter of the property. No motor vehicle access will be allowed other than for management purposes.

Approximately 4 miles of fences will be required to mark those boundaries adjoining agricultural lands. Other boundaries will be marked only with signs and corner posts.

The dry prairie area will be managed to perpetuate this unique vegetation type. Special management or protective measures as necessary, will be taken to protect those sites of archeological significance. Management, as later determined desirable, to protect or enhance habitat for threatened and endangered species will be implemented.

(cont'd 2g.)

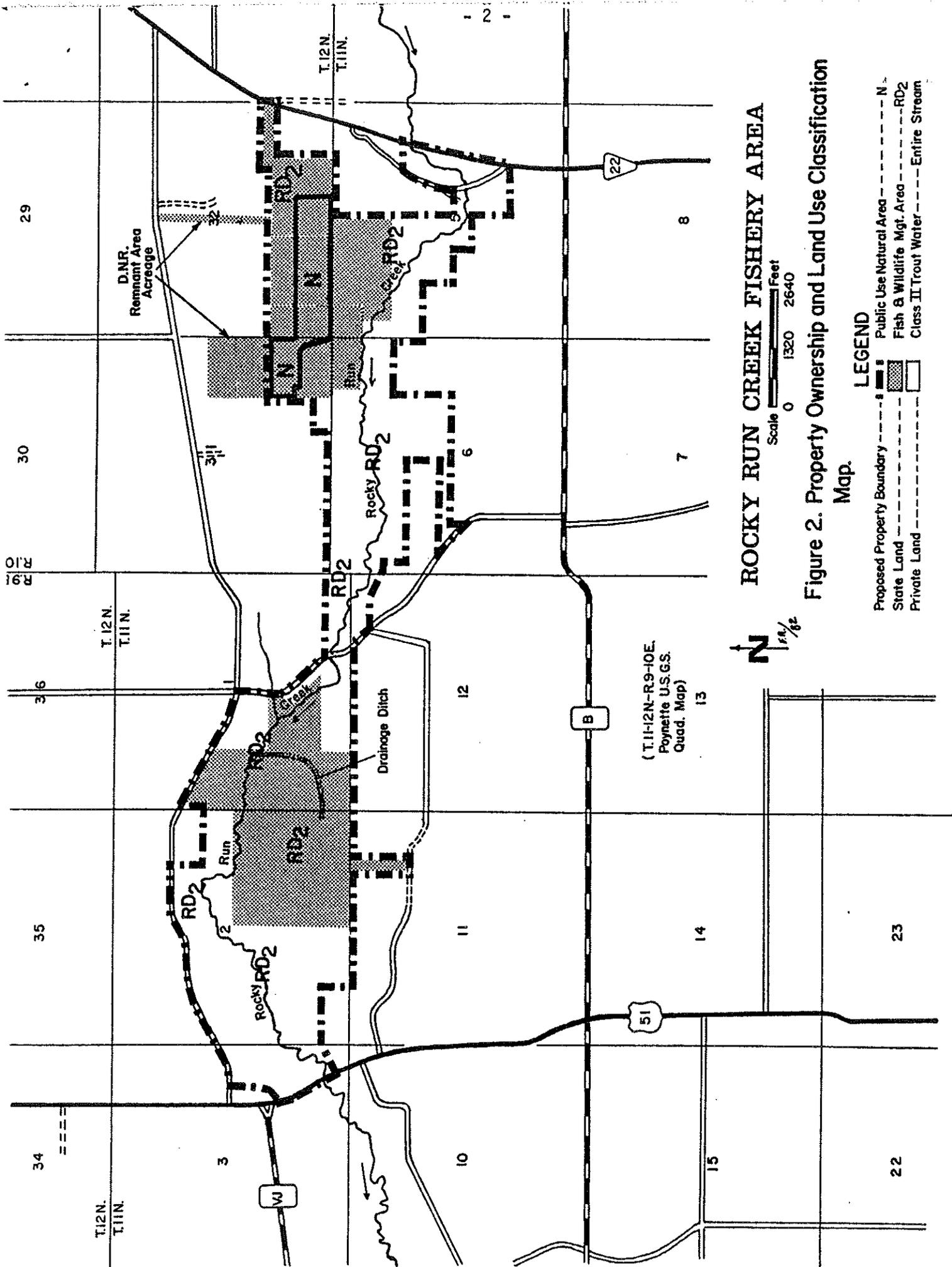
*King, O.B. 1975. An Investigation of the Accessibility of Wisconsin Lakes and Streams. DNR Publication.

1) Manipulation of Terrestrial Resources, contd.

Wildlife management activities will consist primarily of the establishment of 250 acres nesting cover on those lands currently being farmed and open fields. Other activities will include establishment of food plots and construction of 7 (seven) wildlife ponds for waterfowl and wood duck nesting boxes for nesting purposes.

As demand requires, limited hiking trails and cross-country ski trails will be established. No other development for these uses is anticipated.

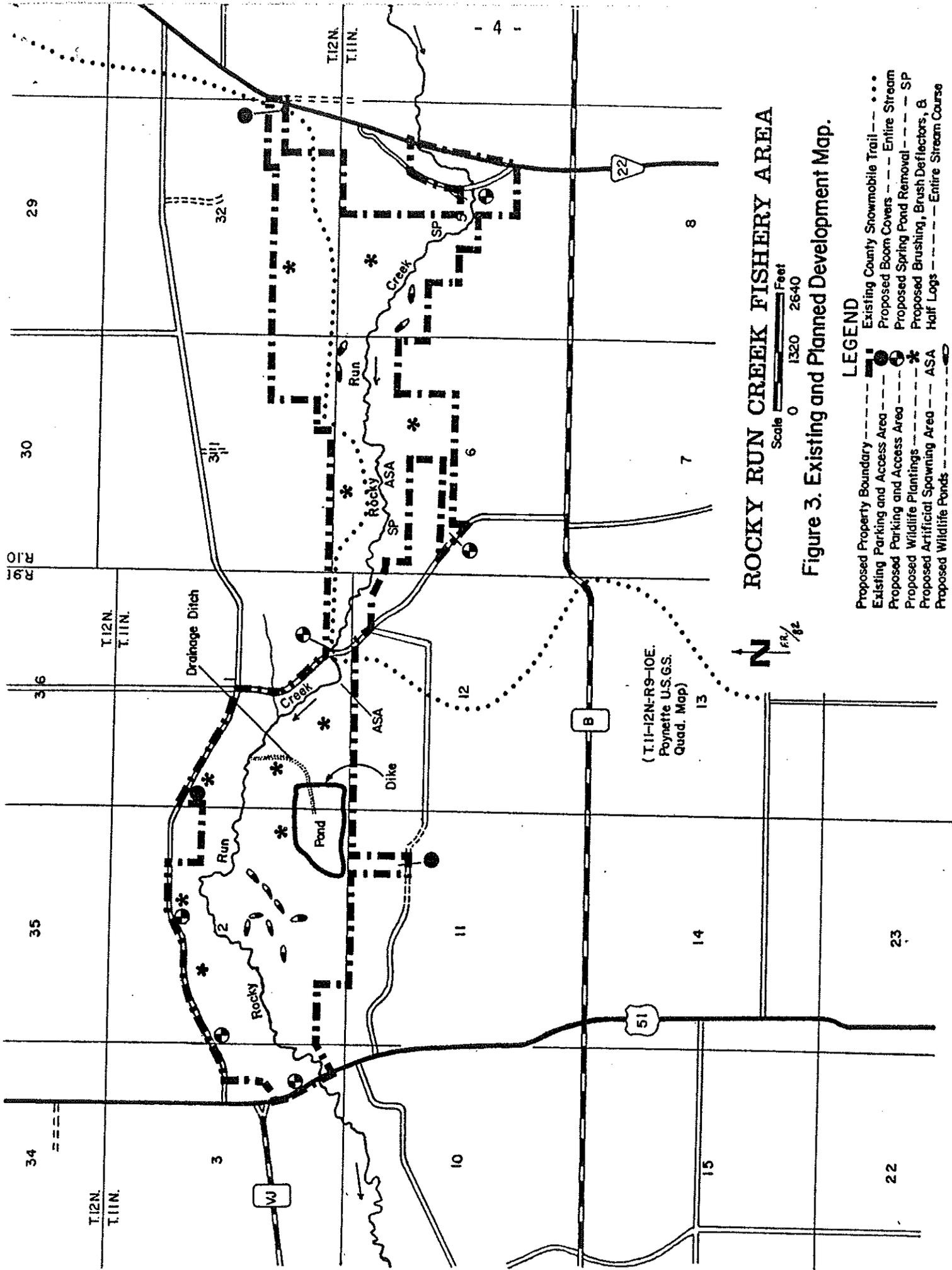
Only limited timber management is anticipated. Quality of the hardwood forest is generally low. Management of the established pine plantations within the property boundary will be required.



ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Figure 2. Property Ownership and Land Use Classification Map.

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
 - State Land - [Stippled Box]
 - Private Land - [Unshaded Box]
 - Public Use Natural Area - [Stippled Box]
 - Fish & Wildlife Mgt. Area - [Cross-hatch Box]
 - Class II Trout Water - [Wavy Line Box]
 - Entire Stream - [Wavy Line]

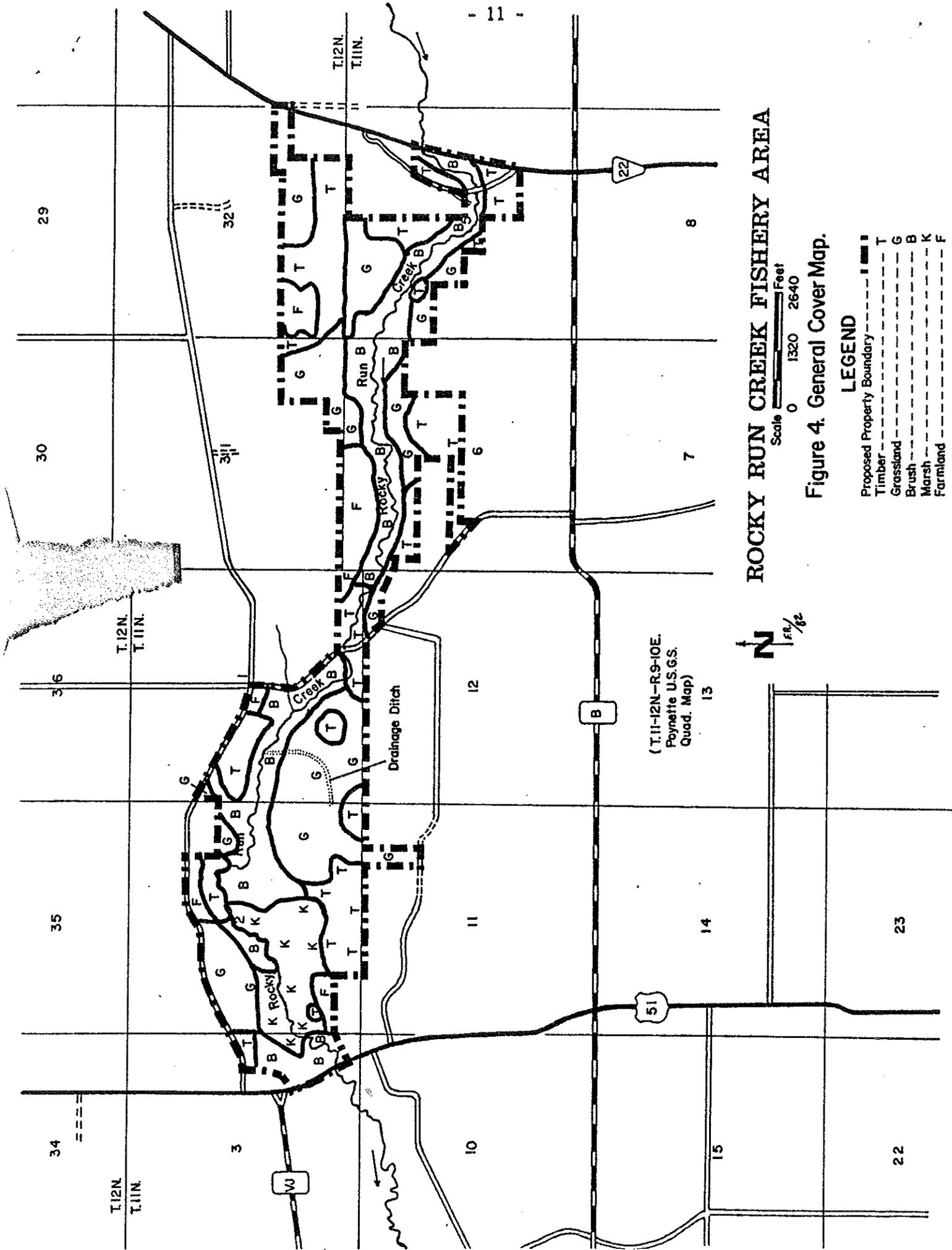


ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Figure 3. Existing and Planned Development Map.

LEGEND

- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
- Existing Parking and Access Area - - - - -
- Proposed Parking and Access Area - - - - -
- Proposed Wildlife Plantings - - - - -
- Proposed Artificial Spawning Area - - - - -
- Proposed Wildlife Ponds - - - - -
- Existing County Snowmobile Trail - - - - -
- Proposed Boom Covers - - - - -
- Proposed Spring Pond Removal - - - - -
- Proposed Brushing, Brush Deflectors, & Half Logs - - - - -
- Entire Stream Course - - - - -



ROCKY RUN CREEK FISHERY AREA

Scale 0 1320 2640 Feet

Figure 4. General Cover Map.

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Property Boundary - - - - -
 - Timber - - - - - T
 - Grassland - - - - - G
 - Brush - - - - - B
 - Marsh - - - - - K
 - Farmland - - - - - F

(T.11-12N-R9-10E.
Paynette U.S.G.S.
Quad. Map)

