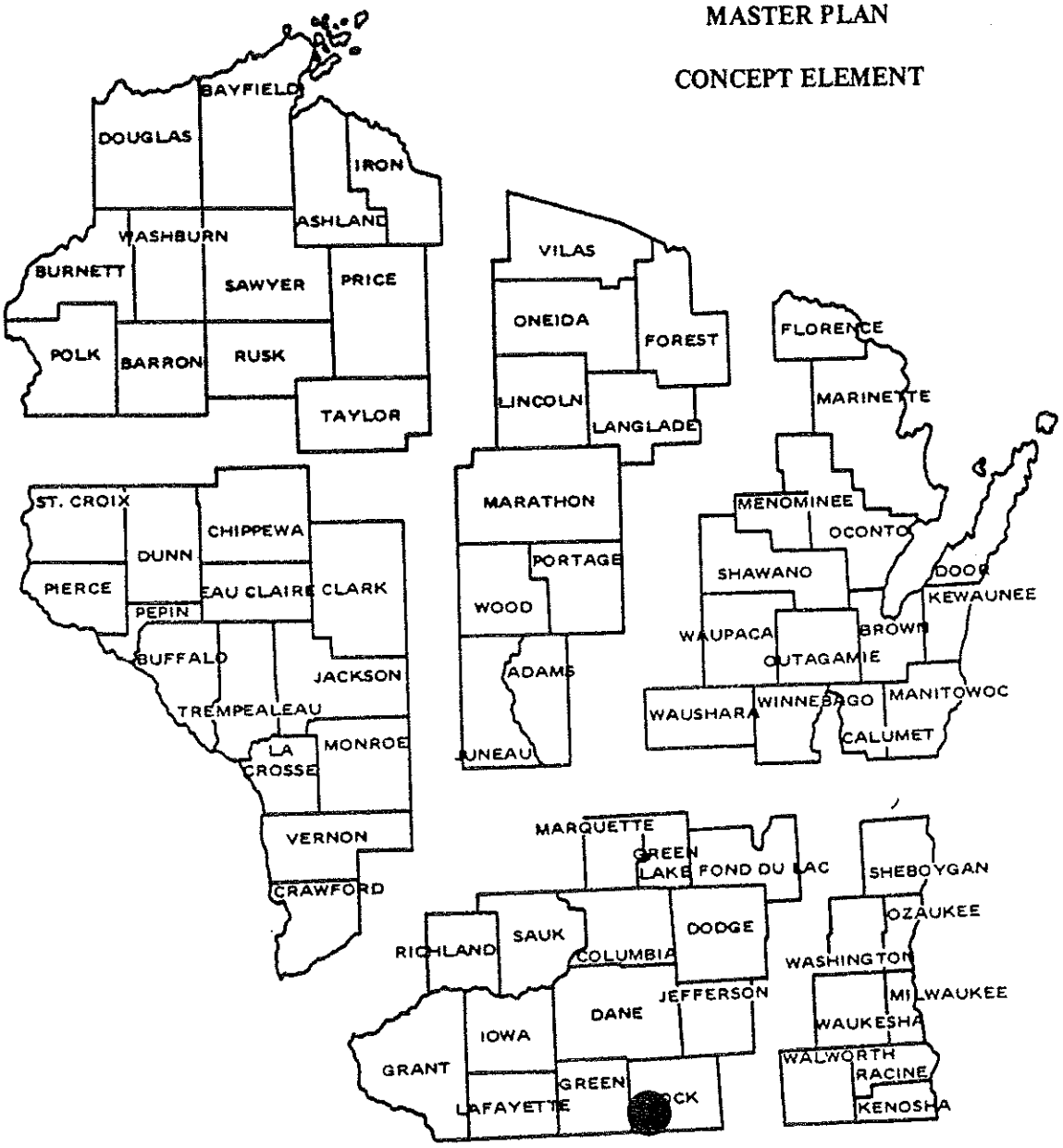
AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA

MASTER PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Approved By: D. R. Hustad

Date: 6/9/86

Property Task Force

Leader: Bruce Folley, Wildlife Manager
Reynold Zeller, Park Manager
Ray Amiel, Forester
Donald Bush, Fish Manager
Charles Horn, Conservation Warden

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MADISON, WISCONSIN

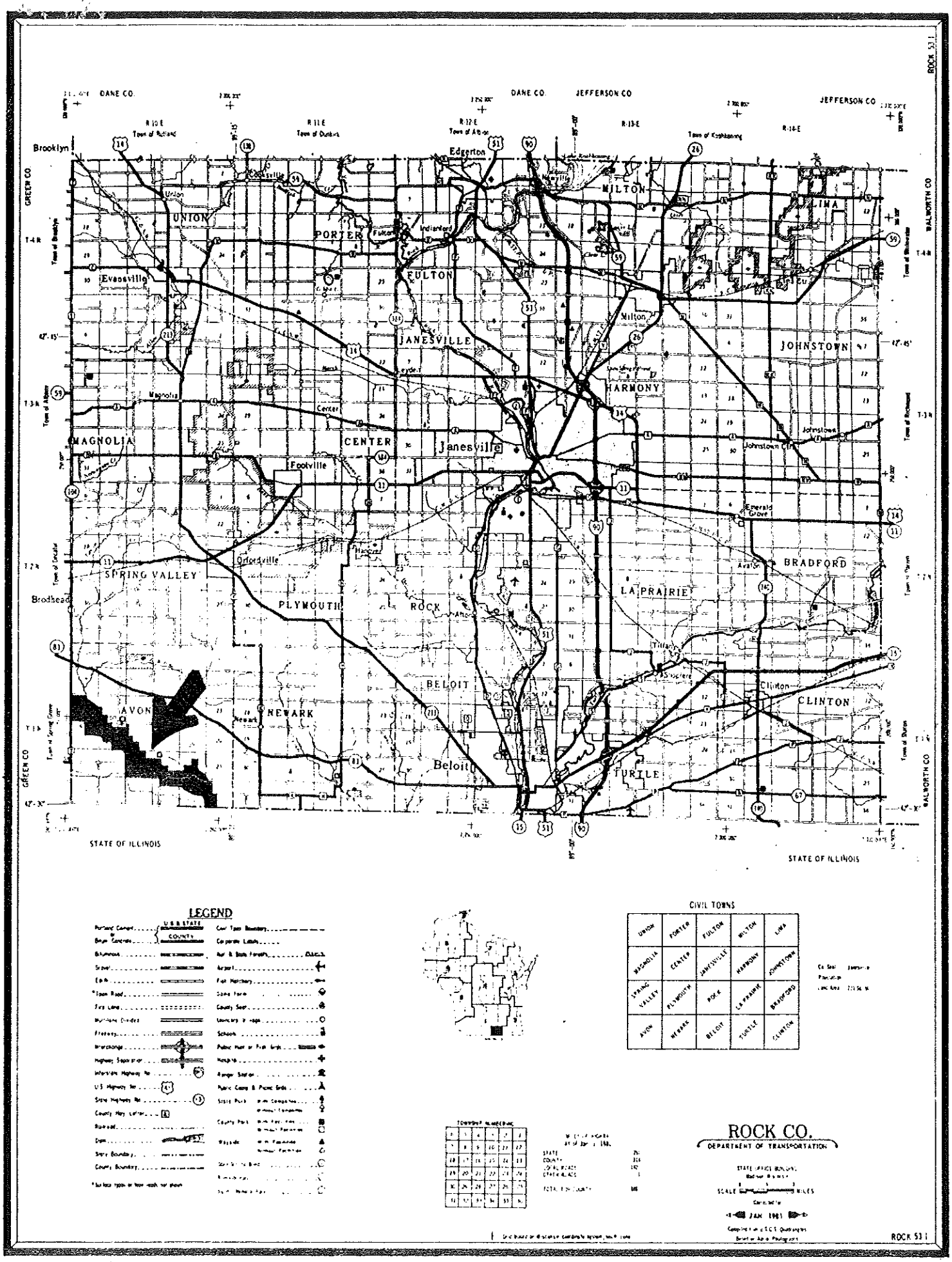


FIGURE - I LOCATOR MAP AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA

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Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area

Section I - Actions

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OTHER BENEFITS

Goal

To manage a state-owned and leased wildlife area for public hunting and provide fishing, trapping and other compatible recreation and education.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide 10,300 participant-days of hunting opportunity as follows:

Activity	Participant-days
Deer (bow and gun)	1,000
Ducks	2,000
Pheasants	5,000
Other small game	2,300

2. Provide 1,000 participant-days of warm water fishing.
3. Protect and maintain 80 acres of Scientific Area.

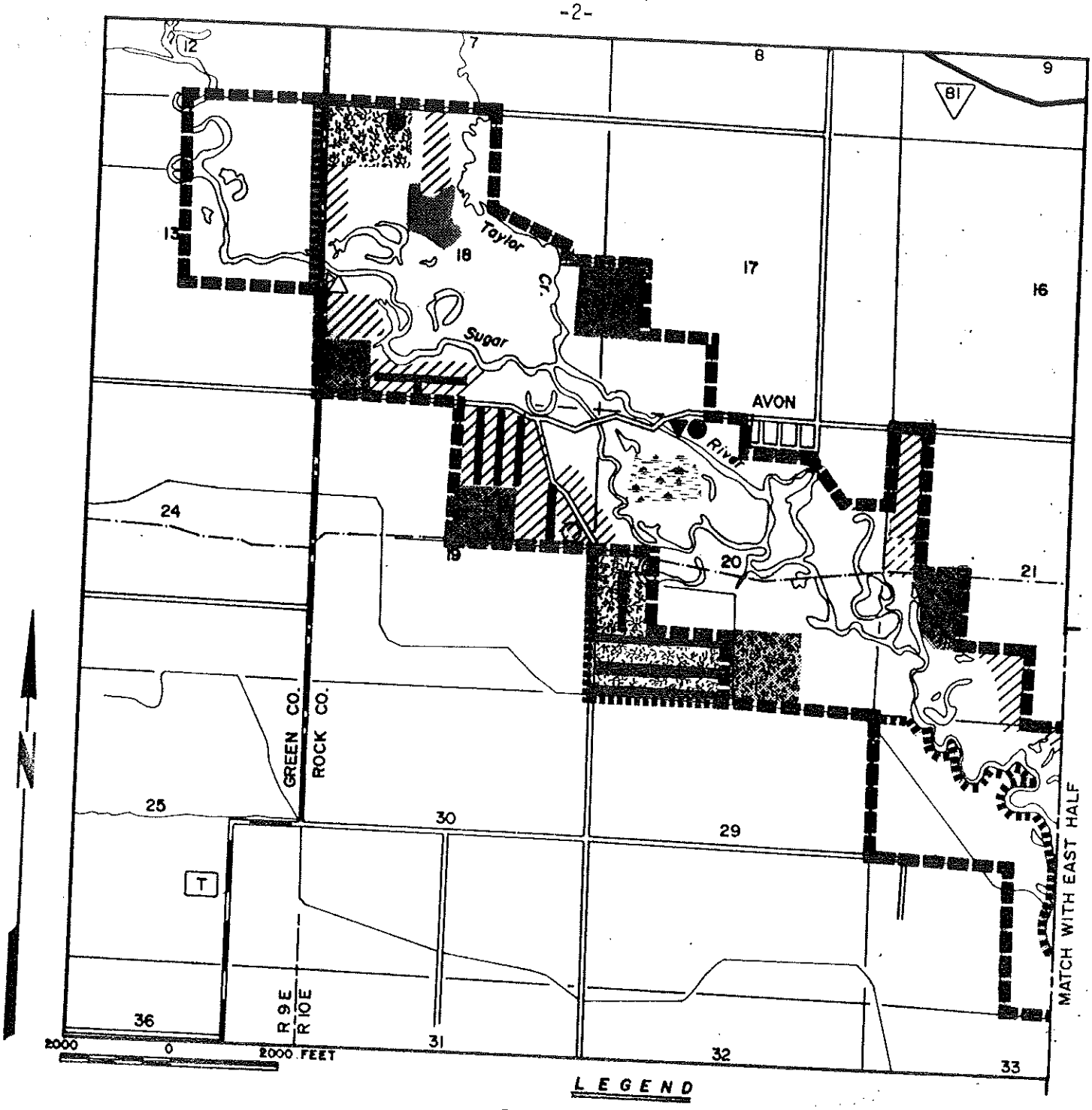
Annual Additional Benefits

1. Accommodate 4,000 participant-days of other recreation including trapping, hiking, boating, canoeing, cross-country skiing, nature observation and outdoor education.
2. Benefit other wildlife including migratory endangered and threatened species.
3. Harvest 100 cords/year of merchantable timber.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
(Figure 2)

Management and development of the wildlife area will focus on practices beneficial to pheasants, bobwhite quail, gray partridges and ducks. These practices will also benefit other game and nongame wildlife with similar habitat requirements.

Dense nesting cover (DNC) will be established on approximately 300 acres of upland/cropland in 20-40-acre blocks. A mixture of prairie species such as switchgrass, big bluestem and Indiangrass, will be seeded. DNC will provide more secure nesting sites for ducks, upland game birds and a variety of



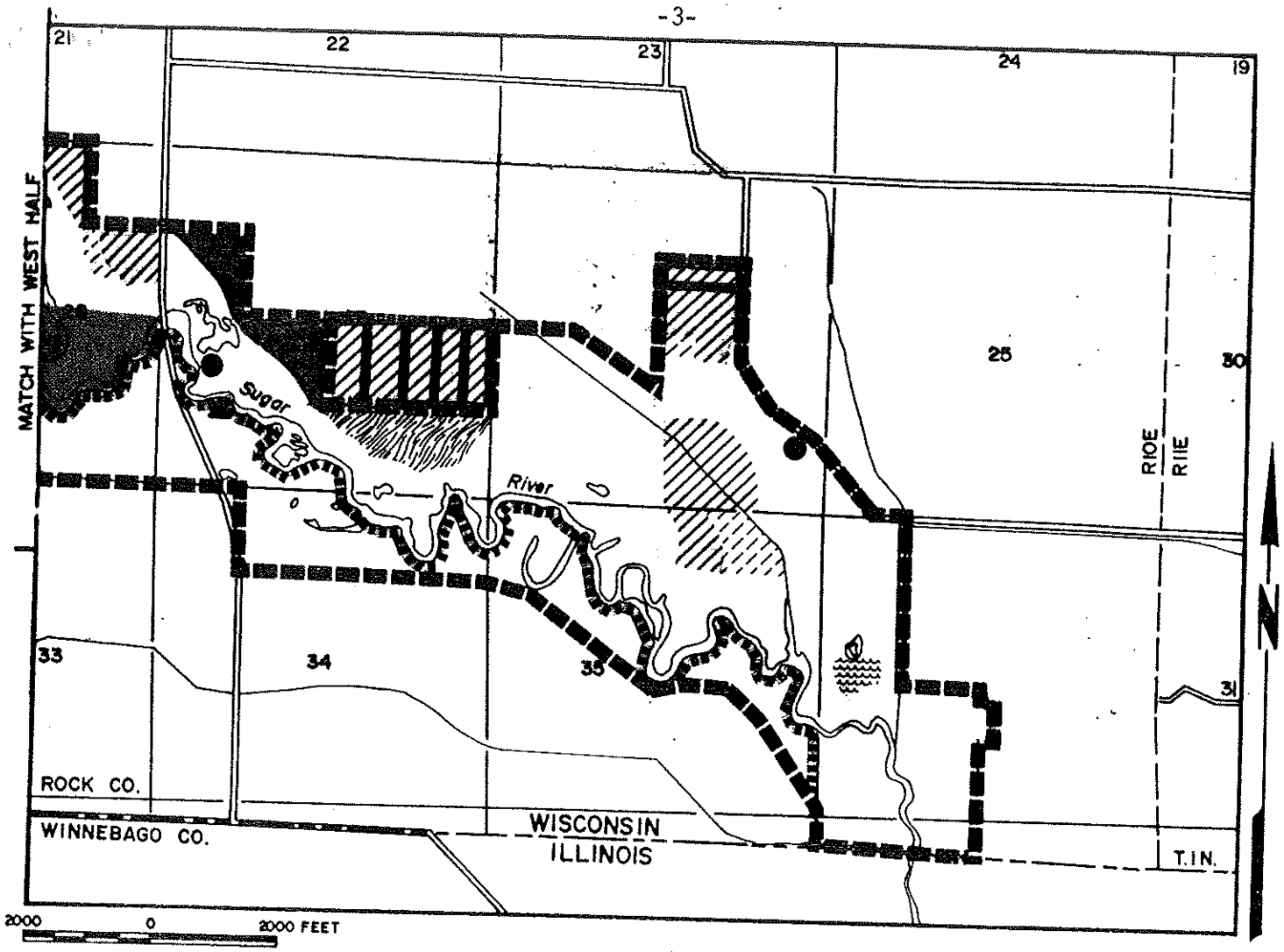
LEGEND

BOUNDARY

EXISTING	PROPOSED	
		BOUNDARY
		SHARECROP
		DENSE NESTING COVER
		HEDGE ROW
		FOOD PATCH
		SCIENTIFIC AREA
		BOAT RAMP
		PARKING LOT
		WET GRASS
		CUT BRUSH
		POND

AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA
(WEST HALF)

FIGURE - 2a. DEVELOPMENT



LEGEND

BOUNDARY

EXISTING	PROPOSED	
		BOUNDARY
		SHARECROP
		DENSE NESTING COVER
		HEDGE ROW
		FOOD PATCH
		SCIENTIFIC AREA
		BOAT RAMP
		PARKING LOT
		WET GRASS
		CUT BRUSH
		POND

AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA
(EAST HALF)

FIGURE - 2b. DEVELOPMENT

nongame birds, and small mammals. The remaining cropland (340 acres) will be sharecropped. Sharecrop agreements will provide for a crop rotation of corn, soybeans and cool season grasses in accordance with sound agricultural practices. The cool season grasses will be left uncut to provide hunting cover as well as additional nesting opportunity for upland game and waterfowl. The row crops and cool season grasses will also provide hunting cover.

Food patches one to two acres in size will be established by either Department personnel or sharecroppers. Crops planted for food patches will be corn, sorghum, and/or lespedeza. These crops will provide emergency winter food for pheasants, quail, gray partridges and a variety of other wildlife.

Sharecropped land will be divided into 10-20 acre fields. Hedgerows consisting of food producing shrubs and conifers will be planted between fields for wildlife travel lanes, loafing and escape cover. Brush invasion into open fields and wet pasture areas will be controlled with prescribed burning, mowing and herbicide treatment.

Additional pheasant hunting opportunity will be provided by releasing about 1,400 cock pheasants and expanding the leased public hunting ground (PHG) program. There are currently 255 acres leased for public hunting adjacent to the wildlife area. The PHG program should be expanded to about 1,800 acres to provide additional lands for hunting, allow a higher return rate on stocked pheasants and reduced conflicts between hunters on state lands and adjacent landowners. Project boundaries and the interior will be posted with the appropriate signs. As more lands are acquired within the boundary, one additional 10-car parking lot will be developed.

A land trade between DNR and Rock County Parks will be pursued. A 40-acre parcel owned by Rock County and lying within the boundary of the Evansville Wildlife Area would be exchanged for the existing DNR boat launch in the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area which adjoins a 15-acre county park. This trade would be beneficial to DNR because Rock County is better able to maintain the boat launch site and to the county because the launch would complement the adjoining park.

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

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

All areas of future development will also be investigated for the presence or absence of historical or archaeological sites and appropriate protective measures taken to protect significant sites. Should any sites be found during development, construction will be suspended until the State Historical Preservation office is consulted.

Two 40-acre tracts will be designated as Scientific Areas (Figure 2). The Swenson Prairie is representative of a wet prairie. The area was grazed in the 1950's and current management consists of mowing and burning. The Avon Bottoms Scientific Area is wet mesic forest dominated by silver maple. Two species, beak grass (Diarrhena americana), and wild chervil (Chaerophyllum procumbens), a member of the parsley family, reach the northern limit of their range in this area.

A canoe launch will be developed in Section 18 on the east side of County Highway T to provide additional access to the Sugar River for canoeists. Off-road parking for 5-6 cars will eliminate traffic hazards alongside the county highway.

Hiking, cross-country skiing, nature observation and outdoor education will be allowed, although no trails will be constructed to accommodate these activities. Trails maintained specifically for hiking and skiing require frequent maintenance to insure the safety of the users. DNR budget and manpower limitations prevents providing the level of trail maintenance required to provide this public service and eliminate the associated liabilities to the state.

The overall quality of the timber resource is average to poor. Abused soils have lowered the potential quality of the forest resources. Black oak, with scattered pockets of oak wilt dominates the uplands. Timber management will be site specific. Some sites will be intensively harvested, as well as prescribed burned to release young oak and aspen; other sites will undergo no harvest to allow natural developments. Harvest by either firewood or timber sales will depend on the marketability and accessibility of the products. Avon Bottoms contains many mature swamp white oaks of near record size that should not be harvested.

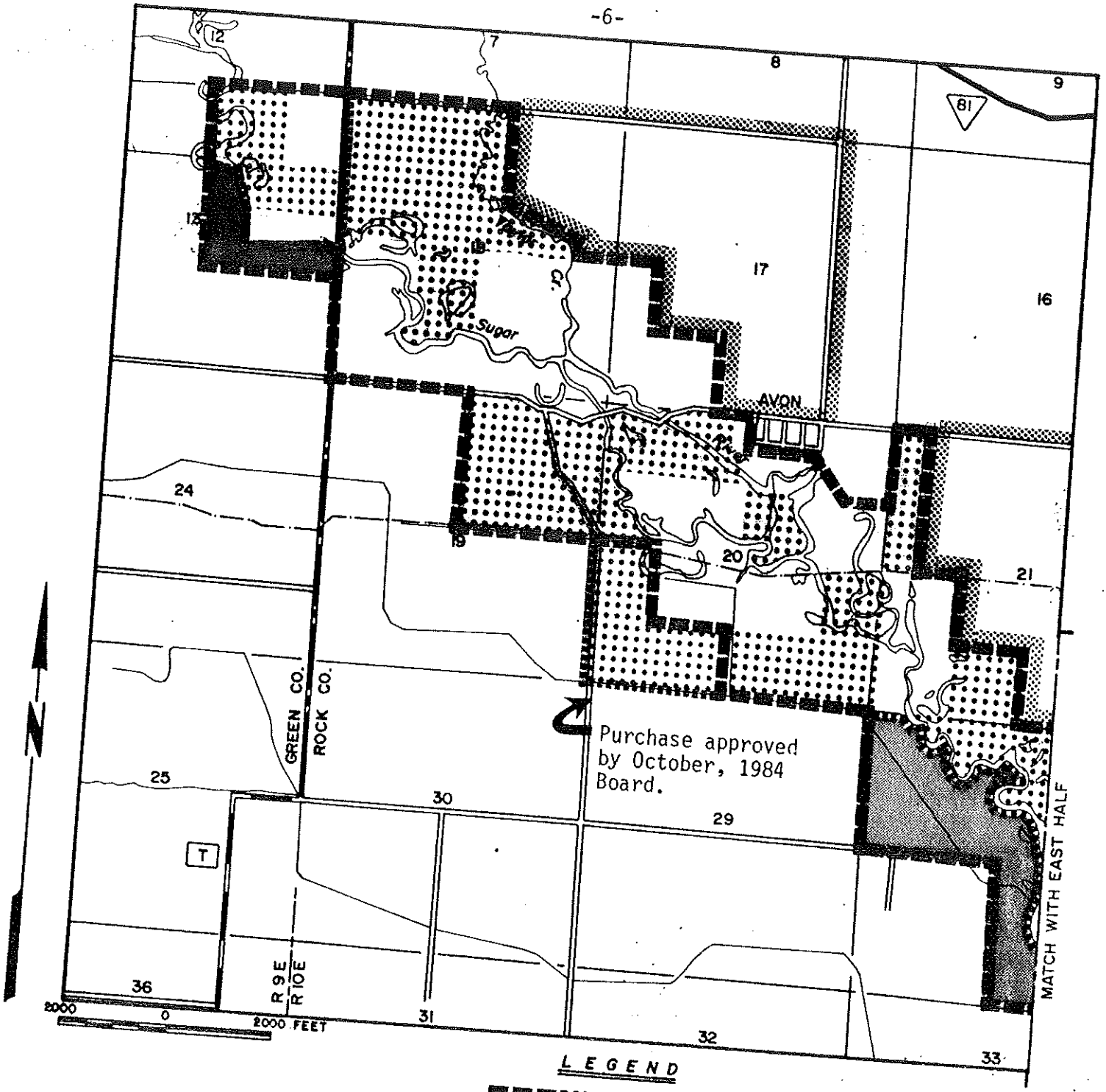
All acquisition has been and will continue to be from willing sellers. All property to be acquired will be appraised by the Department to estimate fair market value. State purchase of improvements will be avoided whenever possible. If unavoidable, improvements will be traded for other lands within the property boundary or sold.

The Department currently owns 1,735.45 acres. Several changes in the boundary (Figure 3) are recommended which will bring the approved boundary in line with the land purchase goal and fulfill the proposed goal and objectives of the property.

A linear strip south of the Sugar River should be deleted. Cover types on these areas are primarily bottom land timber (185 acres) and cropland (170 acres) and contribute little value to the property.

Additions include 110 acres of cropland/pasture in Section 20 (approved by October, 1984 Board) and 80 acres of pastureland in Section 27.

The recommended boundary modifications will then result in a decrease in the acquisition goal by 54.60 acres from 2,764.60 to 2,710 acres.



LEGEND

BOUNDARY

STATE - OWNED

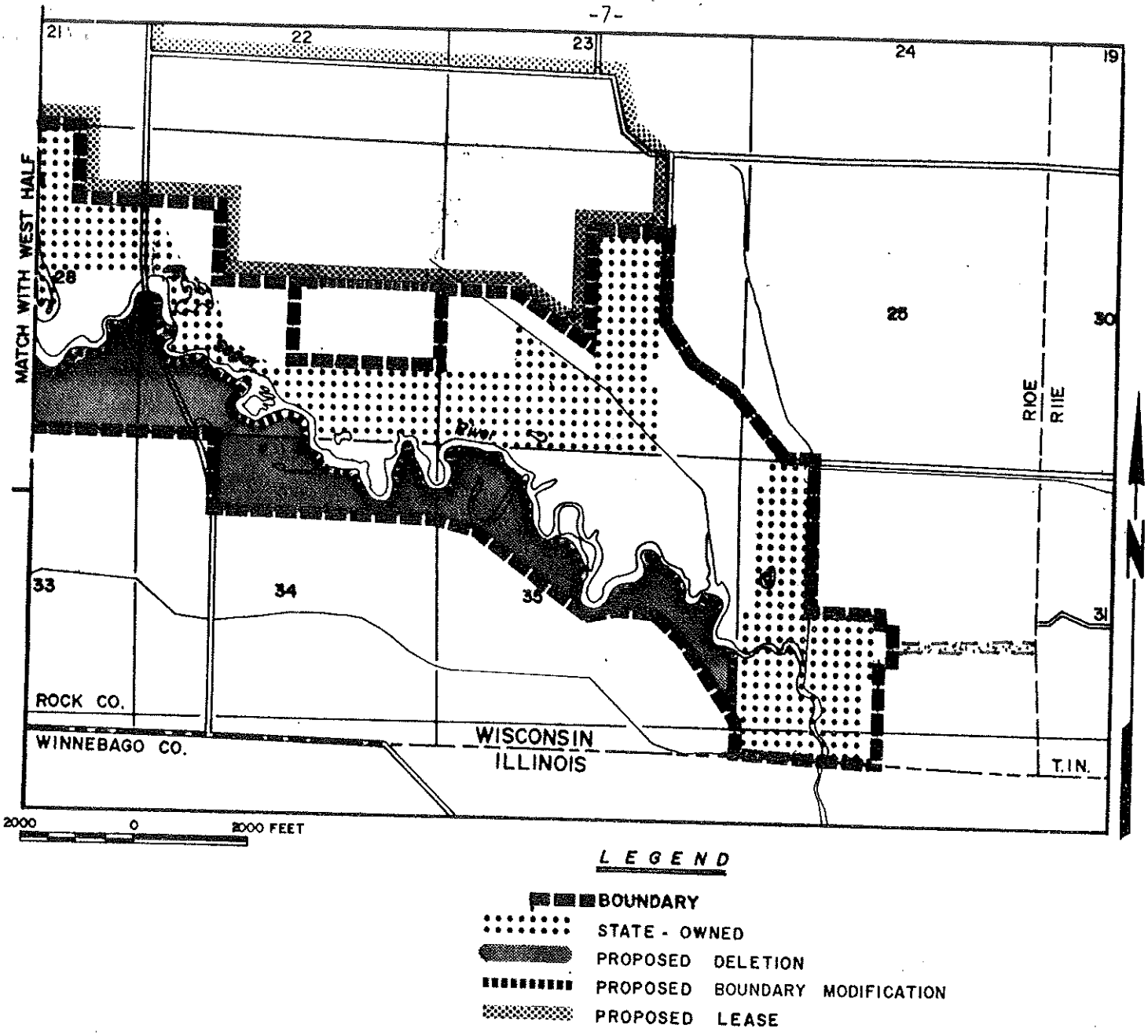
PROPOSED DELETION

PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATION

PROPOSED LEASE

AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA
(WEST HALF)

FIGURE - 3 a. LAND CONTROL



AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA -
(EAST HALF)

FIGURE - 3b. LAND CONTROL

Acquisition Summary

Current acreage goal - 2,764.60
Ownership - 1,735.45
New acreage goal - 2,655.00

Estimated costs associated with recommended acquisition, development and maintenance are itemized as follows:

Items	Initial Cost	Annual Maintenance
Acquisition (919.5 acres at 1,000/acre average)	$919,500.00	
DNC (300 acres at $125/acre)	37,500.00	
PHG leases (1,800 acres at $0.60/acre)		$ 100.00
Hedgerows (2 miles)		1,080.00
Food Patches (6)	400.00	
Maintenance (posting, litter pickup, mowing, etc.)		600.00
Parking lot (10-car)		2,000.00
Sharecropping	3,000.00	
Woody vegetation control	-	50.00
Stocking	-	150.00
		300.00
		200.00
Totals:	$930,450.00	$4,480.00

Section II - Support Data
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Physical Setting

The Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area is located within Avon township in extreme southwest Rock County, 22 miles southwest of the Department's field office in Newville. The area lies within the Sugar River floodplain running southeast from the Rock-Green County line to the Wisconsin-Illinois state line. The Sugar River, which bisects the property, originates in Dane County, Wisconsin and flows into the Pecatonica River in Illinois.

Beloit and Janesville lie 10 and 15 miles east of the wildlife area. Rockford, Illinois and Madison, Wisconsin are within a one hour's drive of the area. Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois are 2-3 hours away. Access to the wildlife area is provided by State Highways 11 and 81.

Dominant land use in Avon Township is agriculture. Corn and soybeans are the major cash crops and dairying is common. Much of the land in and around the wildlife area is subject to annual flooding.

Land Control

The wildlife area was established in 1960 as a Federal Aid in Fish and Wildlife Restoration Project to provide public hunting and to produce ducks

and pheasants. The area delineated for acquisition at that time was 2,434.51 acres. Subsequently, the acquisition goal was increased to 2,764.60 acres of which 1,735.45 acres have been purchased. An additional 255 acres of private land are leased for public hunting.

Current Management

Management of the area is currently aimed at pheasant production and providing public recreation. Pheasant management has focused on establishing nesting cover and food patches through sharecrop agreements. Public recreational facilities are limited to parking areas and one boat ramp. The Rock County Parks Department owns 2 parcels of land totalling 32 acres. Fifteen of these acres are maintained as a park with picnic and boat launching facilities.

Dense nesting cover consisting of a mixture of switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem and Indiangrass has been planted on 30 acres. This mixture does very well on the droughty sandy upland soils of the area and results in cover beneficial to upland gamebirds, waterfowl and nongame songbirds.

Sharecrop agreements (345 acres) provide for a crop rotation of corn, soybeans and 2-3 years in cool season grasses. The Department receives one-third of the annual crop from these lands as payment for farming rights. The Department's share is traded for food patches or services performed by the sharecropper (mowing, grading roads, etc.) or remitted to the state.

A pond 10-12 feet deep with steep side slopes was constructed 10-15 years ago in the floodplain on the eastern side of the wildlife area (Figure 2b). The pond was originally intended to be managed for fish. However, invasion of carp from the Sugar River has reduced or eliminated any sport fishery the pond may have had. The steep side slopes and carp also render the pond virtually worthless for duck production. As a result, the pond will not receive maintenance.

The wild pheasant population is currently supplemented annually with 560 rooster pheasants from the Poynette Game Farm. The wildlife area also receives approximately 500 rooster pheasants from the Rock County Day Old Chick Program. The Poynette Game Farm pheasants are released weekly beginning one week prior to the opening of pheasant season and continuing until Thanksgiving.

Other activities include maintenance of parking lots (mowing and grading), boat launch, access roads and gates as well as boundary and regulatory posting. Brush invasion into open fields is curtailed through prescribed burning, cutting and herbicide treatments. No timber management has occurred.

RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

Fish and Wildlife

The wildlife area produces a wide variety of both game and nongame wildlife. Major game species produced on the wildlife area ring-necked pheasant,

bobwhite quail, gray partridge, woodcock, woodduck, white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, fox and gray squirrels, raccoon, beaver, and muskrat. The area is also used by at least 20 species of migrating waterfowl.

More than 150 species of birds inhabit the wildlife area; the more common groups include meadowlarks, flycatchers, woodpeckers, warblers, hawks, owls, northern oriole and sparrows. A variety of reptiles and amphibians occur on the area including bullfrogs, tree and green frogs, American toads, fox and garter snakes.

At least 54 species of fish are known to inhabit the Sugar River. However, the portion extending through Avon Township has never been intensively surveyed. The sport fishery includes smallmouth bass, black and white crappies, channel catfish, brown and black bullheads, northern pike, and carp. The Sugar River is regarded as one of the best channel catfish streams in Wisconsin and most fishing pressure is directed toward this species.

Endangered and Threatened Species

With the exception of 2 species of gravel chubs and 2 starhead species of topminnows in the Sugar River, there have been no reported endangered or threatened wildlife in the wildlife area. Massasaugas have been reported in parts of the Sugar River floodplain and may be present in Avon Township.

Geology and Soils

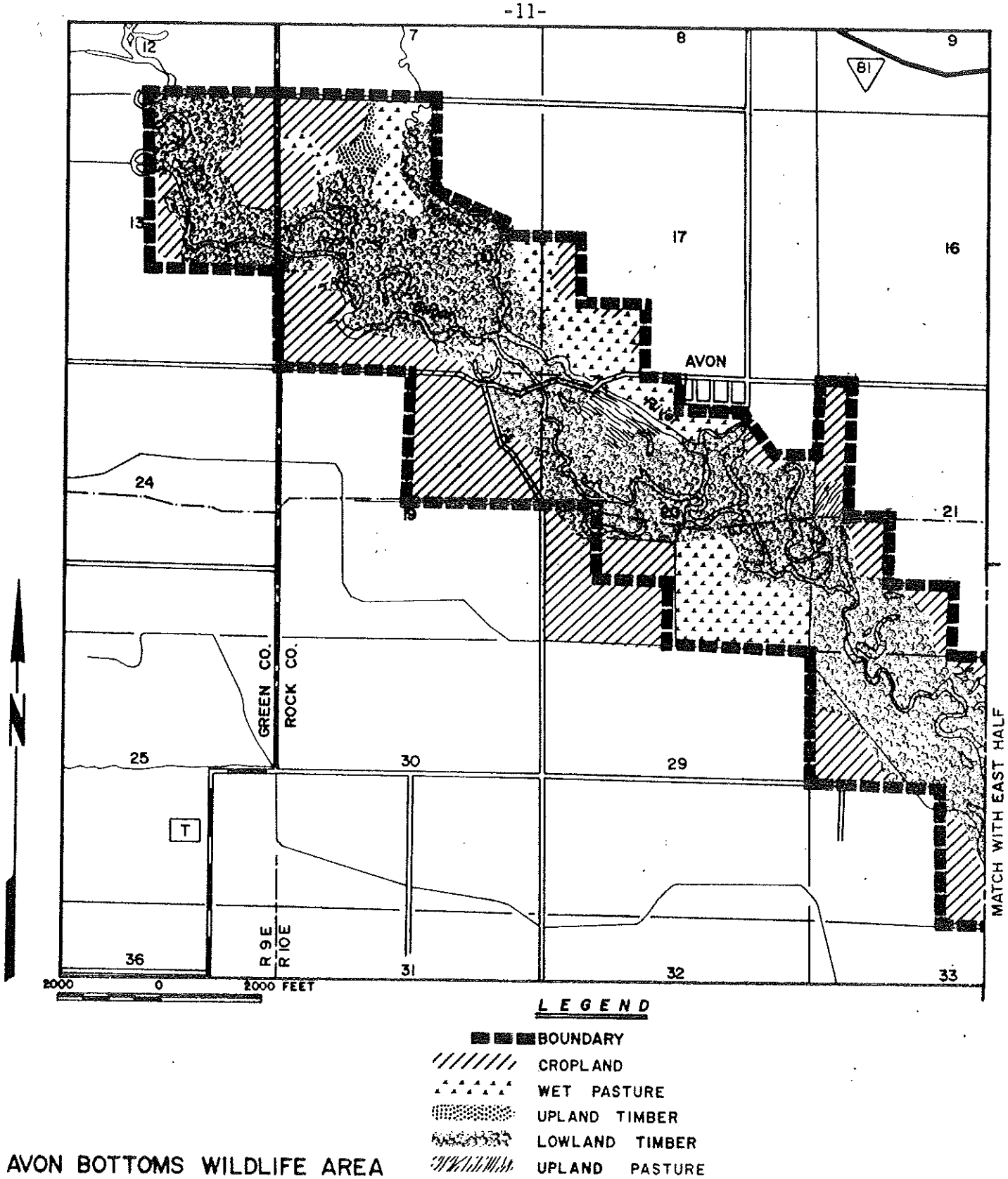
Avon Township lies in the physiographic region termed the Western Upland Providence. This Providence is characterized by deep valleys and high ridges formed in bedrock with a thin soil or glacial drift veneer. Rock County is underlain by a thick section of sedimentary rocks of Cambrian and Ordovician age that consist largely of sandstone, a lesser amount of dolomite and some shale.

The soils of the wildlife area are of the Marshen-Gotham-Dickman Association. The Marshen soils are in the lowest parts of outwash plains and terraces, are nearly level and are poorly drained. Gotham soils are on outwash plains and terraces, are nearly level and gently sloping and are somewhat excessively drained. Dickman soils are on terraces, are nearly level and gently sloping and are somewhat excessively drained.

In general, these soils are wet all or most of the year, are poor building sites, have a low natural fertility, a low available moisture capacity and are susceptible to severe erosion when tilled. With some ditching and or irrigation, these soils are capable of producing row crops, small grains or hay.

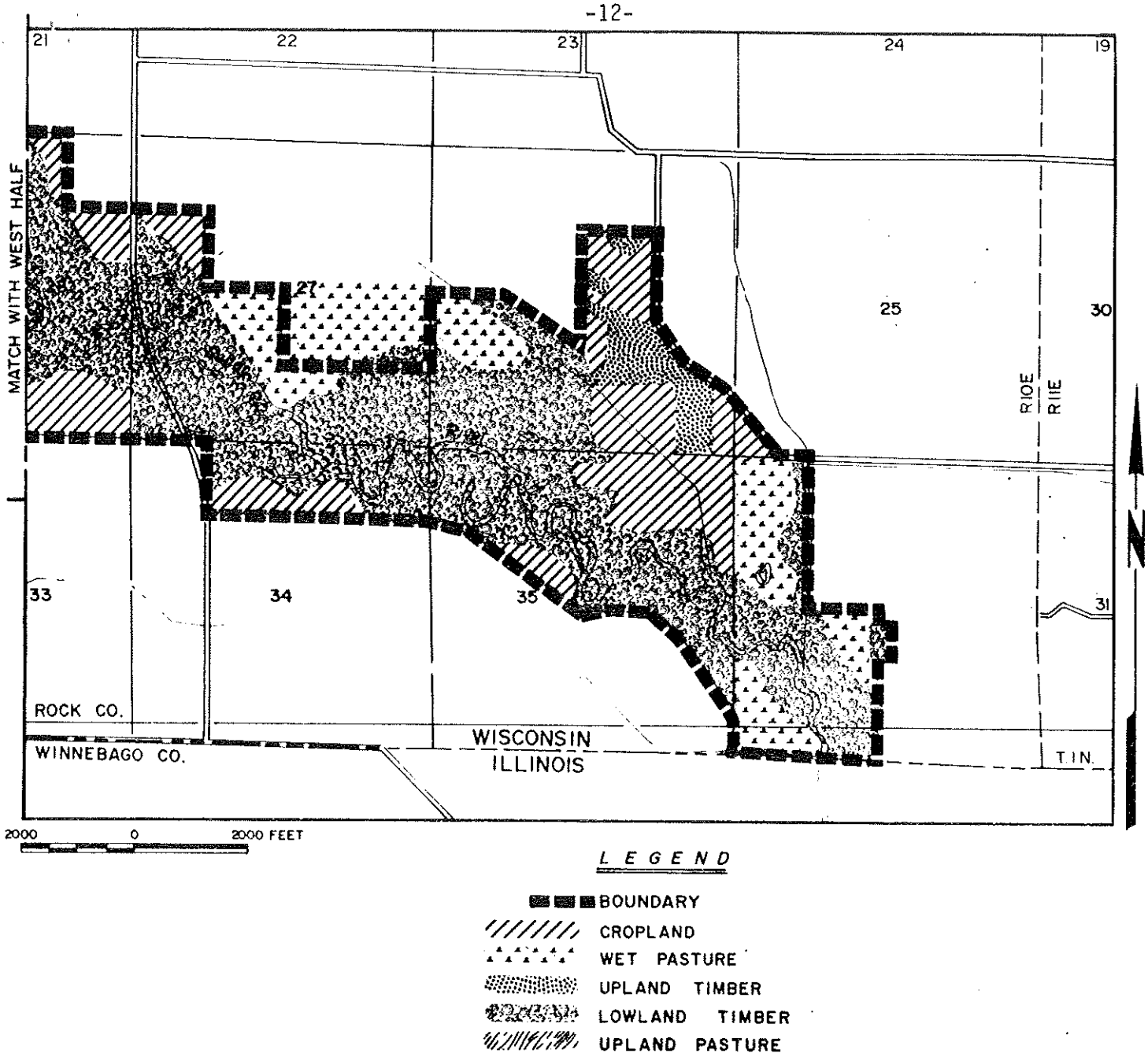
Climate

Average annual precipitation at Brodhead, Wisconsin is 32.96 inches, most of which occurs as rain from June through September. In an average year, there are 66 days with rain. Mean annual temperature at Brodhead is 48°F.



AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA
(WEST HALF)

FIGURE - 4a. VEGETATION



AVON BOTTOMS WILDLIFE AREA
(EAST HALF)

FIGURE - 4b. VEGETATION

Vegetative Cover (Figure 4)

Table 1 below shows the approximate acreages of the major vegetative types within the wildlife area boundary. The most important type is bottomland timber, accounting for slightly more than half of the acreage within the boundary. Next in importance are cropland and wet pasture.

Wet pasture vegetation consists of reed canary grass, bluejoint grass, big and little bluestem, Indiangrass, sedges and numerous forbs. Tree species include black oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, basswood, silver maple, sycamore, and shagbark hickory. Red osier dogwood, and various willows are common, especially in disturbed areas. Poison ivy and poison sumac are common in the bottoms and make accessibility difficult and somewhat hazardous.

Table 1: Vegetative Types

Type	State-owned	Private Acres Within Boundary	Rock County Park Land	Total
Cropland	455.5	343.5		799.00
Wet Pasture	217.5	159.0		376.50
Upland Pasture	24.95	0		24.95
Upland Timber	182.5	0		182.5
Bottomland Timber	813.5	1,026.78	27.5	1,867.78
River	41.5	45.0		86.50
Totals:	1,735.45	1,574.28	27.5	3,337.23

Surface Water Resources

The Sugar River flows 10.6 miles through the wildlife area. It is a drainage and seepage fed stream which flows from northwest to southeast. It is classified as a warmwater stream characterized by high silt loams and nutrient overloading. This is caused in part by agricultural runoff and in part by the underlying dolomite bedrock. The river gradient is 1.4 feet per mile. The pH of the river varies between 7.35 and 8.6. Average total alkalinity is 220 grains ($CaCO_3$). Average nitrates (ppm) increased from 1.86 in 1965-1966 to 2.36 in 1967-1968.

Taylor Creek flows for approximately 3/4 of a mile through the wildlife area to its confluence with the Sugar River. The creek has a gradient of 9.85 feet per mile. Taylor Creek is a warmwater creek which has been ditched throughout much of its length.

Historical and Archeological Features

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has been contacted regarding possible sites of historical or archeological importance. The rich history of Rock County suggests the plausibility of archeological sites though none have yet been reported. The Historical Society will be notified of any archeological discoveries.

Current Use

The primary recreational uses of the wildlife area are hunting, trapping, and fishing. Most hunting is for pheasants, ducks and deer (both gun and bow). Other hunted game species include cottontail rabbits, fox and gray squirrels, gray partridge, and raccoon. Muskrats are popular with trappers for their fur value. Beaver populations have increased in recent times, but low fur value has reduced trapping efforts. Red fox and raccoon are also trapped.

The most popular nonharvest recreation is canoeing on the Sugar River. There are 2 launch sites on the wildlife area and another site one mile south of the Wisconsin state line. Birdwatchers and amateur botanists use the area, which is also used for cross-country skiing, and general natural study.

Estimates of hunting, trapping and fishing participant-days are: pheasant 2,400; ducks 500; other small game 1,000; deer 500; muskrat 500; beaver 100; other furbearers 200; and fishing 1,000. Estimated nonharvest recreation participant-days are: canoeing 600; cross-country skiing 500 and other uses including pleasure boating, nature observation and outdoor education account for about 500 participant-days of recreation.

Land Use Classification

The entire wildlife area will be designated as a Resource Development, Fisheries and Wildlife Management Area (RD_2), with the exception of the 2 Scientific Areas (S). If any sites of historical or archeological significance are found, they may be designated as Historical and Archaeologist sites (HA).

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

1. Natural Succession

Encroachment of woody vegetation into open fields is a continuous problem. Increased use of prescribed burning and limited use of herbicides, will be required to maintain fields.

2. Vandalism and Litter

Vandalism and litter are continuous problems. The addition of a second conservation warden have helped reduce the problems and the issuance of Special Conservation Warden credentials to 2 wildlife management personnel in Rock County.

3. Spring Flooding

Annual spring flood events damage or destroy boundary fences. Boundary fence maintenance is an annually recurring activity.

4. Beaver

Beaver control on the property when crop or road damage occurs is expensive and time consuming. This problem should be reduced when pelt prices are high and trapping pressure increases. Trapping contracts may be used when trapping seasons are not adequate for controlling beaver populations.

5. Other Problems

Unethical hunter behavior, trespass and illegal parking are increasing problems. These problems can best be dealt with through the enactment of local or county ordinances and mandatory hunter education courses.

RECREATION NEEDS

The wildlife area is located within an hour's drive of several major Wisconsin and Illinois cities. Rock County's population has increased from 51,203 at the turn of the century to 131,970 in 1970. Between 1950 and 1970, the proportion of Rock County's population living in urban and rural nonfarm areas increased from 84.2 percent to 92.1 percent. Since Rock County is located along the rapidly expanding Madison-Rockford urban corridor, these population trends are expected to continue.

Given the population trends projected above, coupled with increasing transportation costs, recreational demands on public lands in Rock County will increase. Acquisition and development in the wildlife area will help meet this demand.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A

Manage and develop the wildlife area for public hunting and compatible outdoor recreation with no further acquisition or additional public hunting ground leases.

This alternative will maintain the wildlife area as status quo. Ownership (1,735.45 acres) within the boundary is fragmented and stretches along approximately 6 miles of the Sugar River. The value of the area for public hunting is reduced by the small sizes of the individual tracts. Management and development under this alternative would be similar to those cited in Section I, but at a reduced rate.

Under this alternative about 4,400 participant-days of hunting opportunity could be provided as follows: 500 days each of deer and duck hunting, 2,400 days of pheasant hunting, and 1,000 days of other small game hunting. An additional 1,000 participant-days of fishing and 2,400 days of trapping, hiking, boating, canoeing, cross-country skiing, natural observation and outdoor education could be accommodated.

This alternative would preclude purchase and protection of the Avon Bottoms Scientific Area. Costs associated with this alternative are as follows:

Costs	Initial Cost	Yearly Cost
DNC (100 acres at $125/acre)	$12,500.00	$ 50.00
PHG leases (281 acres annually)		169.00
Hedgerows (1 mile)	200.00	
Food patches (2 annually)		200.00
Maintenance		1,000.00
Sharecropping		100.00
Woody vegetation control		200.00
Pheasant stocking		100.00
Totals:	$12,700.00	$1,819.00

While this alternative is more economical than that recommended, it does not address the recreational needs of Rock County or southern Wisconsin. As transportation costs and populations increase, the recreational demand will far exceed the property's capabilities.

Alternative B

Manage Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area for public hunting and intensive outdoor recreation.

Under this alternative, development aimed at hiking, camping, picnicking, cross-country skiing, and similar nonhunting uses would be completed. It would include a camping and picnic area at the site of the present boat landing and a network of trails in the northwest and southeast portions of the wildlife area. Land purchase and short-term leasing would be identical to that recommended in Section I.

This alternative is impractical with present staffing. Time required to maintain camping and picnic areas in an aesthetically pleasing and safe manner is not available at current wildlife staffing levels. The travel distance from the Newville office escalates time and cost of intensive maintenance.

Alternative C

Acquire all land within the current boundary.

Under this alternative, the acquisition goal would be 3,300 acres, an increase of 535.5 acres. Over half the acreage within the current boundary is wooded bottomland which has relatively little value for public hunting and is flooded much of the year and generally inaccessible. Acquisition of additional bottomlands would not increase participant-days of recreation. Therefore, this alternative is not recommended.

Alternative D

Abolish Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area and liquidate all state-owned lands.

This alternative was recommended by residents of Avon Township. However, such an alternative would curtail or eliminate all recreational activities currently provided, and conflict with the Fish and Management Comprehensive Planning System and Natural Resources Board policy.

Although abolition of the property might reduce such hunter-related problems as trespass, illegal parking and other unethical behavior, these problems will probably never disappear due to the wild nature of the Sugar River bottoms and its proximity to Beloit and Janesville.

Selected Alternative.

Combining alternatives by eliminating lands not needed for management from the purchase boundary, adding strategic tracts which will significantly improve public benefits and focusing development on hunting and trapping recreation is recommended and presented in detail in Section I.

APPENDIX A

Informational Meeting Summary

An informational meeting on Avon Bottoms Master Plan was held at Avon Town Hall on June 28, 1983. The meeting was set up with the Town Board to gather input. About 25 private citizens also attended.

Questions and answers are as follows:

1. Do you intend to post the interior boundaries of the wildlife area? Answer: Yes, the boundaries will be posted on 4 x 4 posts with "Public Hunting Grounds", "Boundary" and "Private Lands Ahead" signs.

2. Does the land leased for public hunting come off the tax rolls? Answer: No, all that the DNR leases are hunting rights. There is no tax break given. The current lease rate is $0.60 per acre.

3. Property Taxes? This topic raised lots of questions. The brochure repeated attempts to explain how the payment in lieu of taxes works did not seem to satisfy a number of people. The Madison Area Land Agent will be asked to explain the procedure to the township. This should rectify the situation.

4. Comment: Living next to a Public Hunting Grounds is not enjoyable due to unethical hunters and their associated poor behavior. Response: We are attempting to improve hunter behavior through hunter education and increased law enforcement on the property. You should write your legislator regarding mandatory hunter safety training as a requirement for purchasing a hunting license.

5. Why are we not draining swamps to get rid of insects causing malaria, poison ivy, and green water? Answer: The importance of wetlands for flood prevention, water filtration, and general ecology were explained.

6. Why is more trespass and parking enforcement not done? Answer: The DNR has no authority over either violation, but recognize the problem. Rock County should consider decriminalizing trespass.

7. What is being done to control beaver? Answer: The season has been extended and control permits are issued. The high beaver population is due to low pelt prices. When the fur price increases, the population will decrease.

8. Why does DNR not maintain drainage ditches? Answer: In most cases we are receiving no benefit. We normally share in cost only if Department lands receive a benefit, i.e., we are farming lands that benefit.

9. What percent of township is in DNR ownership? What percent of other townships is in DNR Ownership? Unable to answer.

10. What is the procedure for fencing common boundaries? Answer: DNR is legally responsible for half of the boundary line fence.

11. Comment: DNR should be responsible for maintaining public roadway and their shoulders if they own the adjacent land.

12. Another alternative is for DNR to sell all its holdings.

The attitude of the people present was generally negative towards the Master Plan. A show of hands vote showed 0 in favor and 19 against the recommended management and development plan. A vote on Alternative A (no further acquisition) showed 15 in favor and 0 opposed.

The Town Chairman, Mr. Ray Marden, concluded the meeting saying that the biggest complaint was trespass, road hunting and the fact that DNR land was never increased in value for tax payment purposes. The meeting was generally friendly even though the crowd was opposed to the plan.

0935B

APPENDIX B

Master Plan Comments

By: Thomas G. Krautz
Representing: Rock County Highway Department
Parks and Conservation Office

Mr. Hanewall of the Transportation Committee attended a DNR Master Plan meeting at 7:00 p.m. on June 28, 1983. He restated the events of that meeting to the other members of the Rock County Transportation Committee and the Parks, Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee at their meeting of June 30, 1983.

The committees have no adverse comments on this project from their point of view; however, it is hoped it would be possible to include in their management plan the "Trading of Parcels with Rock County" to better serve all the people in the area. This would involve "trading lands" of "similar charter and nature" so that both DNR and Rock County would have a "more consolidated and continuous ownership." This would allow for recreation development and improvements of one county parcel at "Avon" and the trading of county land on "Nelson Road" to the DNR or this could involve other parcels that are consistent with the goals of both the DNR and Rock County.

DNR Response: Text modified to reflect these concerns.

APPENDIX C

Master Plan Comments

By: Steve Schraufragel
Representing: Rock County Planning Department
Date: November 11, 1985

Good, detailed information prepared on the Sugar River bottoms area. Well presented. Rock County has recently approved a Park and Outdoor Recreation Plan. It appears that the proposals in the Master Plan coincide with the Park Plan. Consistency between the plans is important.

Good job!

DNR RESPONSE: The Department appreciates the comments and support of the Rock County Planning Department.

By: Cynthia A. Morehouse, Director
Representing: Department of Transportation
Date: October 25, 1985

We have reviewed the Master Plan for the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area in Rock County. We have determined that the Recommended Management Program would not have a significant adverse effect on our transportation facilities or interests. We recommend, however, that you coordinate with the appropriate county or township officials when acquiring an interest in lands which abut the right-of-way of county or township roads.

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

DNR RESPONSE: The appropriate county or township official will be contacted in the event land acquisition abuts the right-of-way of county or township roads.

By: Douglas R. West
Representing: Federal Aid Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Date: November 22, 1985

The Master Plan describes commendable management efforts to enhance the stated wildlife and recreation objectives. Including about 75 acres in Sections 4 and 5, T.1N, R.10E, included in our W-131 records, 954.98 acres were purchased with Pittman-Robertson funds. The Master Plan generally reaffirms the original management goals outlines in the early project proposals for Federal funding of land acquisition. The selected alternative is supported. Our records show some tracts acquired with P-R funds are not shown as state-owned on your Figures 3a and 3b. See attached photocopy.

1. Your efforts to alleviate the "people problems" are encouraged. 2. We assume the P-R acquired lands proposed for deletion from the unit will be traded for lands you wish to acquire within the unit. 3. The Plan does not state if there will be any land use restrictions on the proposed Scientific Areas which are located on lands acquired with P-R funds.

DNR RESPONSE: Hunting is not restricted on scientific areas, however, use of herbicides for vegetation management is.

By: Stanley Nichols
Representing: Wisconsin State Geological and Natural History Survey
Date: December 2, 1985

Page 1, Last Paragraph--planting a mixture of species for dense nesting cover is a better idea than past practices of planting only swite grass. Fig. 3a and 3b--It appears unwise to delete land in Sections 28, 33, 34 and 35. This deletion interrupts blocking patterns which may increase user conflict. It also limits access to the South-West bank of the river for those people coming in by water. It also looks like some valuable sloughs in Section 34 and 35 are being eliminated. Page 5, par. 5--It would seem that the problems in the pond could be easily fixed with a bulldozer and a little filling. Page 7, par. 2--Must be near the northern limit for native sycamore in Wisconsin. Page 7, par. 3, Sentence 3--Should probably read "high silt load". Page 8, par. 2--Boat launches not shown on map.

DNR RESPONSE: Efforts to grade the slopes of the pond would not be cost effective for the insignificant waterfowl production that would result. Boat launches are shown in figures 2a and b. Appropriate text corrections have been made.

By: Forest A. Stearns, Chairman
Representing: Scientific Areas Preservation Council
Date: January 7, 1986

We have reviewed the concept master plan for Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area and we have general recommendations.

First the area which has been designated a state scientific area for many years still retains a good southern wet-mesic forest natural area type, though it remains in private ownership. We hope you can acquire this tract to insure protection. Second, natural area inventories in 1985 located another very good natural area of similar type just upstream in S 1/2 SW 1/4 Section 21, and N 1/2 NW 1/4 of Section 28, east of the Sugar River. This tract is mostly state-owned and we recommend that this approximately 60 acre tract be identified in the plan as a potential (scientific) state natural area as insurance in the event the historical designation is lost.

We are concerned with the project boundary reduction on the south and west bank of the streams in the lower reaches of the project near the Illinois state line. We suggest that it would increase management problems to have the project boundary follow the stream channel rather than including both banks. Since increase of statewide DNR land acquisition goals is being considered by the Natural Resources Board we hope that decision on reduction of the project area will be delayed until the acreage goal determination is completed.

DNR RESPONSE: The Department feels that protection of the southern wet-mesic forest tract under floodplain zoning regulations precludes any need for inclusion in the wildlife area's acquisition goal. Rather, limited Bureau Funds and land yet to be acquired under state goals better justifies use of funds and acquisition elsewhere in the state.