DRAFT

Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis:

Totogatic Wild River Lands Area, Washburn/Douglas Counties

April 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to all who contributed to this document and process, especially Kathy Bartilson, William Smith, John Pohlman, Ann Runyard, Nancy Christel, Jim Pearson, Ryan Magana, Mark Dudzik, Jamison Wendel, Rhonda Kenyon, and Tim Miller.

INTRODUCTION: THE FEASIBILITY STUDY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PROCESS

This is a combined Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis (EA) that includes the required information for both types of studies to avoid duplication. Both the Feasibility Study and the EA function to provide the public and decision-makers with a factual, unbiased analysis of a proposal, and must identify reasonable alternatives in order to help make an informed decision.

A Feasibility Study is used to determine whether it is feasible to establish, acquire, develop, and manage new property. The study takes into account the physical and biological environment and its capabilities, the views of the public and of landowners adjoining the property, and the availability of funding and staffing to accomplish the project's purpose adequately. Furthermore, a Feasibility Study presents boundary alternatives, general land management strategies, and ensures integrated ecosystem management principles are considered.

The Feasibility Study also must meet the requirements of the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) and its implementing codes. Certain DNR actions require an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Totogatic Wild River Lands Area feasibility study, with project boundary establishment, requires an EA under NR 150 of Wisconsin's Administrative Code. The EA process is used to evaluate the likely impacts of a proposed project on the human environment. The EA also helps determine whether an activity's impacts will be significant so as to warrant a full Environmental Impact Statement process.

Prior to the start of the feasibility study process the Department held meetings with partner organizations and agencies on October 12 & 18, 2010 plus an open house informational meeting on November 4, 2010 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Minong Town Hall. Approximately 25 people attended this meeting and were generally supportive of continued efforts to protect the Totogatic Wild River. Additional comments were received during the two week comment period largely in support of quiet sport activities and continued resource protection.

During summer 2011 there will be additional species inventories done on the Totogatic Wild River and Totogatic Wild River Lands Area. This data will be incorporated into the study and an additional public meeting will be held to review the completed draft feasibility study prior to final revisions and consideration by the Natural Resources Board.

Questions and comments on the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area property should be directed to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This feasibility study considers the establishment of a project boundary for the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area in Washburn and Douglas counties. The existing property consists of 2,113.72 acres split into seven different blocks, spread over three townships and two counties. The parcels are mostly in northwestern Washburn County along the lower reaches of the Totogatic River, from the outlet of the Minong Flowage downstream to the Washburn-Burnett County line. Additional acreage is in Douglas County near the upstream end of the Minong Flowage. The proposed project boundary would add XXX acres to property and would connect several existing parcels offering many advantages for resource protection, land management and public use.

The current property, purchased in fall 2010, is former Wausau/Mosinee Paper land and is approximately 90% upland woods and 10% lowland and swamp. Several town roads intersect the blocks creating points of access to the land and two additional easements have been obtained for access as well.

Need for this project focuses on the opportunity to create a common property boundary and protect the pristine character of the Totogatic Wild River while improving public recreation. With the urban centers of Minneapolis-St. Paul and Duluth-Superior an easy drive from northwestern Wisconsin, the potential for development, whether permanent or seasonal, exists. The proposed project area contains acreage in parcels greater than 40 acres. Purchasing medium to large parcels of wild land from willing sellers will reduce the potential for forest fragmentation. Maintaining large blocks of forest and relatively undeveloped lands within the proposed boundary expansion area will slow the trend toward a rural-urban interface and will have long-term direct benefits for the forest resource, wildlife and public recreation.

Department management goals include the possibility of improving wildlife habitat by providing a mix of forest and barrens habitat, as well as an expansion of traditional forest management and recreational opportunities. This action will benefit Wisconsin's wildlife species of greatest conservation need and is consistent with the conservation actions recommended in the Department's Land Legacy Report, Statewide Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan, and Wildlife Action Plan.

Through acquisition the Department can:

- manage portions of the property to support sharp-tailed grouse (present on the Namekagon Barrens only a couple miles from the property), waterfowl and many game or non-game species;
- restore, protect and enhance acres of wetland and miles of river corridor habitat;
- facilitate species movement through blocking;
- improve property management capabilities;
- expand recreation opportunities for hunting and trapping as well as compatible uses such as wildlife viewing, bird watching and photography; and
- improve public access for both hunting and non-hunting use of the property.

Comments received during the pre-study meeting on November 4, 2010 were in favor of continued protection and land acquisition, but potential changes in Department acquisition through Stewardship funding in fiscal year 2012 (loss of payment in lieu of taxes) may impact public support for additional purchases. The Department will hold an additional public meeting in 2011 to discuss the proposed boundary alternatives. The Department with determine the project's ultimate feasibility following information gathered from resource specialists and received from through additional public comment periods.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Project Description

The Department is proposing to establish a project boundary for the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area, Washburn and Douglas Counties, to improve wildlife habitat and public recreational opportunities on the property. The current property consists of 2,113.72 acres split into seven different blocks, spread over three townships and two counties. The proposed project boundary would add XXXXXX, COST? and would be funded utilizing Knowles-Nelson Stewardship funds or other appropriate funding sources.

The Totogatic Wild River Lands Area is located within the Northwest Sands ecological landscape with soils that are predominantly deep sands, low in organic material and nutrients. (Refer to "Regional Perspective" section for more information on ecological landscapes.) The property is approximately 90% upland woods and 10% lowland and swamp. The woodland has varying amounts of timber harvest, from clear cut to select cuts and topography varies from rolling to steeply sloping along the river. The property provides important habitat for diverse populations of wildlife including forest interior bird species and natural plant communities. There may be potential for some pine barrens restoration. Pine barrens found in Wisconsin are globally significant due to their distinctive ecological characteristics, restricted range and range-wide rarity.

Four flowages occur along the Totogatic River (Nelson Lake, Totogatic Flowage, Colton and Minong Flowages) and were excluded from the portions of the river that were granted the State Wild River status due to development. The Totogatic River flows through many of the existing land blocks and the property provides about six miles of the two-bank frontage of the Totogatic. In addition, the current tract provides ½-mile of two-bank frontage on Five Mile Creek and ¼-mile frontage on Minong Flowage. Adding additional acreage out from and along the river and upstream of Five Mile Creek will allow the state to preserve the river from development and maintain its high water quality while protecting the scenic view shed as seen from the Totogatic River.

Access to the property exists from county roads and established easements (see Appendix for maps). The Douglas County parcel can be accessed from Smith Bridge Rd or the Minong Flowage. The Washburn County parcels can be accessed from County Hwy I, Kimball Lake Rd, Twin Lakes Rd, Banks Lake Rd, County Line Rd, and two designated easements. Expanding the project boundary out to roadways or property lines allows for continued ease of access and recreation opportunities for the public.

Project Goals

In 2009, 70 miles of the lower Totogatic River were designated as a State Wild River by State Statute 30.26(2)3m. The intent of the legislation allows for the public to enjoy rivers in a free flowing condition, preserve them from development and to protect and enhance the river's natural beauty and its unique recreational and inherent values. The 2010 Totogatic Wild River Lands Area purchase protects the river by securing river frontage and associated undeveloped shoreline and uplands. The property provides important habitat for diverse populations of wildlife and natural plant communities while maintaining access for public outdoor recreation. By creating an expanded project boundary the Department can better fulfill the goals listed below.

Through acquisition the Department can:

- manage portions of the property to support sharp-tailed grouse (present on the Namekagon Barrens only a couple miles from the property), waterfowl and many game or non-game species;
- restore, protect and enhance acres of wild rice habitat, wetlands and miles of river corridor habitat;
- facilitate species movement through blocking;

- improve property management capabilities;
- expand recreation opportunities for hunting and trapping as well as compatible uses such as wildlife viewing, bird watching and photography; and
- improve public access for both hunting and non-hunting use of the property.

Property Designation

Wisconsin State Statutes section 23.09(2)(d) provides legislative authority and direction for the acquisition and management of lands and waters for use in various designations such as state forests, recreation areas, habitat areas, or wildlife areas. With consideration to the management goals for this property it is recommended this project be designated as a wildlife area as the objectives of property management align well with the role of wildlife areas as outlined in code. While the recommendation to have the project be a wildlife area is considered, the naming of the property will have to remain a "lands area" as not to confuse the public with the Totogatic River Wildlife Area in Sawyer County. Administrative code N.R. 1.51 designates the purpose and use of State Wildlife Area properties. The Department's authority to manage fish and wildlife populations is found in State Statutes 29.011 and 29.014. The properties are managed for optimum production of forest and wetland wildlife, production of timber products, and to provide opportunities for compatible recreation and education activities. Upland hunting, waterfowl hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing are significant draws for recreation users.

Need

The potential for land fragmentation and recreational development in the area could threaten the health of the wild river. Establishing a project boundary that adds additional acreage to the existing parcels contributes to improved resource and property management, improved public access and increase recreational opportunities. This action will benefit Wisconsin's wildlife species of greatest conservation need, will protect the water quality and aesthetics of the Totogatic Wild River, as established in NR 302, and is consistent with the conservation actions recommended in the final draft of the *Washburn County Comprehensive Plan*, the Department's *Land Legacy Report*, and *Wildlife Action Plan*.

<u>Resource Management</u>

Enlarging the project boundary increases the ability of the Department to protect the Totogatic River watershed as larger blocks of undeveloped land offer the best habitat protection. Expanding the property boundary also increases the opportunities for the Department to create and maintain pine barrens, upland forests and high quality wetland habitats that are required for a host of wildlife species listed as threatened, endangered or special concern on a local, state, national or global level. A Department staff inspection indicated that the western portion of the property has a flood plain forest that may have red shouldered hawk habitat (Magana 2011). Previous mussel surveys on the river found paper shells (rare for the upper river) and purple wartyback, an endangered mussel, near the mouth of Chicog Creek. There is also very abundant and diverse shell fish in the river (Bartilson 2011). Additional surveys to be conducted during 2011 will more clearly identify species present on the project site.

Managing these habitats will result in greater security for not only special concern species, but also those that are relatively abundant and common. Other species that will benefit include the sharp-tailed grouse, waterfowl, raptors, fox, coyote, wolves and bear, owls, numerous song bird species, and reptiles and amphibians.

With the relative close proximity to the Namekagon Barrens a portion of the Totogatic parcel could be managed to support sharp-tailed grouse. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Department began sharp-tailed grouse management in northern Wisconsin in response to concerns of diminishing habitat. Sharp-tailed grouse require a specific habitat for dancing grounds, nesting areas, brood areas, and

wintering sites. This habitat ranges from prairie with grasses and forbs; to brush prairie with small, low shrubs and open woodland; to woodlands with young forests containing coniferous trees like jack pine and deciduous hardwoods like aspen. To date, the state's sharp-tailed grouse habitat exists in patches separated by large areas of unsuitable habitat. There is a high probability that the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape is significantly associated with sharp-tailed grouse and restoration of the landscape could improve conditions for the species (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Grouse 2010).

General management opportunities outlined for the Northwest Sands Ecological landscape include increasing the extent of dry jack pine-northern pin oak forest and white and red pine restoration; restoration of oak-pine barrens and wetlands (sedge meadows, marshes and bogs) to benefit many rare birds, herptiles, plants, butterflies and moths, and other invertebrates; management to include wolves and other mammals plus grassland/shrubland birds; and maintenance or restoration kettle lakes, wild rice lakes, streams, springs or spring creeks, and conifer swamps (WDNR Landscapes 2006).

Property Management

The proposed project boundary allows for the joining of currently separate pieces of state land which will simplify property management. Performing land management activities such as controlling invasive species, marking/monitoring property boundaries, inspecting parcels for trespass or litter, and conducting prescribed burns or forestry operations is more easily controlled on larger parcels. Department staff indicated that is more time and cost effective to manage large block tracts of land compared to multiple small parcels.

Recreation Potential

Expanding the project boundary improves both staff and public access to the property and increases the recreational opportunities. During pre-planning meetings Department staff and public citizens stated the area is being used extensively for hunting and some trapping. Traditional wildlife opportunities such as hunting and trapping will continue to be available as will the growing non-consumptive use activities of wildlife observation, bird watching and photography. While the heavily vegetated and sometimes steep banks don't allow for easy access to the river itself the potential for hiking trails with scenic viewpoints could be considered in the future. Any developments will comply with all required permits and approvals and will be consistent with the goals outlined in this study as well as NR 302 regulations near the river. Public input at this stage indicates that motorized uses on the property would not be consistent with management goals. All terrain vehicle use will not be permitted at this time, but an existing snowmobile trail that crosses a portion of the property as part of the Washburn County snowmobile trail system will remain for winter use (see map in Appendix for location).

Washburn County is a busy recreation destination. The Totogatic Wild River Lands Area is located approximately two hours from the Minneapolis-St Paul region, a one-hour and a half hour drive north from the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls area and less than an hour south of Duluth-Superior area. Refer to the *Regional View* map in the Appendix.

Management Goals

The primary management goals for this project include protecting the Totogatic Wild River in its natural wild state, protecting the sensitive shoreline areas from erosion while keeping water quality high, preserving the wild viewshed as seen from the Totogatic River, protecting wetlands and wild rice beds, and encouraging large block management of parcels owned by the Department for habitat management and public recreation. Management of the property will continue to allow for the basic five nature based outdoor activities: hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and cross country skiing. The Department will have

to work with partners on concerns of erosion at river access points that are not on state managed lands. Over time the current pine plantations will be managed to improve diversity with the potential for 6-7 trees per acre with a mix of jack pine and oak for good wildlife cover (see comments in *Public Involvement Log* in Appendix).

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Property Perspective

Physical

Through use of the WDNR WebView mapping program (2011), the proposed project boundary lies within the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape. Within Northwest Sands the project falls on the following three landtype associations: Gordon Rolling Barrens (212Ka11), Webb Lake Collapsed Barrens (212Ka05), and Lower Namekagon Rolling Barrens (212Ka15). Both the Gordon Rolling Barrens and Lower Namekagon Rolling Barrens landtype associations are characterized by rolling outwash plain with predominantly excessively drained sand over acid sand outwash. The Webb Lake Collapsed Barrens landtype has rolling collapsed outwash plain with lakes common and predominantly excessively drained loamy sand (WDNR Landscapes 2006). Refer to the *Landtype Association* map in the Appendix.

An initial review of the NRCS Web Soil Survey (2010) shows a large proportion of soils in the project area that are "somewhat to very limited" to development for buildings and recreational development. The susceptibility to areas of erosion can be witnessed along the river banks particularly at access sites that are under county jurisdiction near the project area. Concerns about soil erosion in the area were also expressed during the public involvement period (see *Public Involvement Log* in the Appendix).

Fivemile Creek and Chicog Creek flow into the Totogatic within the Wild River designated portion of the river. According to the Departments Surface Water Data Viewer (2010) both Fivemile and Chicog Creeks are considered Area of Special Natural Resource Interest (ASNRI) waters. Fivemile Creek is considered an ASNRI water because of its classification as a Class II trout water under Chapter NR 1.02(7), Wisconsin Administrative Code. Chicog Creek is considered an ASNRI water due to the presence of purple wartyback, an endangered mussel, near the mouth of the creek.

Biological

During the summer of 2011 the Department will be conducting species assessment surveys on the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area and the Totogatic Wild River. The following surveys will be conducted: rare plants/communities, birds (breeding bird survey), herptiles, raptors, mussels, and terrestrial/aquatic invertebrates (Magana 2011). In addition, Department forestry staff will be evaluating the forest composition on the property (Pearson 2011).

Wildlife species present include many small mammals, songbirds, raptors, bears and many other game and non-games wildlife species. The property is excellent deer, bear, ruffed grouse, woodcock, gray squirrel, and snowshoe hare habitat, and is heavily used by a variety of furbearers due to its close proximity to the Totogatic River and Fivemile/Chicog Creeks. The pines provide breeding habitat for many songbird species, and many additional non-game species are present throughout the parcel (Christel 2011). Healthy and mostly undisturbed habitats in and along the river support a range of forest and river edge plants and animals. Bald eagles and osprey fish the river waters and nest in the trees along it. Painted, wood, spiny soft-shell and Blanding's turtles bask on fallen logs, feed in the river, and nest along its banks. Timber wolves, fisher, raccoons and river otter hunt the shoreline and uplands. Rare purple

wartyback and other mussels inhabit the rivers substrate. Interesting vegetation includes bottled gentian, joe-pye weed, jewelweed, purple fringed orchards and royal ferns (Haack 2011).

The Department's data from the Natural Heritage Inventory (2009) shows that in the townships where the majority of the project is located contain the following species of interest: Gary Wolf (federally endangered), Blanding's and Wood Turtles (threatened), Lake Sturgeon (special concern), Bald Eagles (fully protected), Osprey (threatened), Least Darter (special concern), Gilt Darter (threatened), plus Elktoe and Round Pigtoe mussels (protected), Purple Wartyback mussels (endangered), and the Pygmy Snaketail dragonfly (threatened).

The table below illustrates a sampling of the diverse species present in the Totogatic River. Lake sturgeon were known to make spawning migrations up the Totogatic above where the dam currently is but the river is too small for adults to reside there year round. The lake sturgeon is listed as a rare species in the United States. Walleye from the Minong Flowage use portions of the Totogatic above the flowage extensively for spawning. The gilt darter is listed as threatened by the state and is common in the Totogatic and Namekagon (Wendel 2011).

Fish Species in the Totogatic River	
Common Name	Status
Smallmouth Bass	Common
Northern Pike	Common
Walleye	Common
Shorthead Redhorse	Common
White Sucker	Common
Blackside Darter	Common
Johnny Darter	Common
Rock Bass	Common
Burbot	Common
Northern Hog Sucker	Common
Chestnut Lamprey	Common
Golden Redhorse	Common
Slimy Sculpin	Common
Gilt Darter	Threatened
Lake Sturgeon	Rare

Cultural

Initial results of a Department check on the cultural resource data base indicated that none of the existing parcels under Department ownership, purchased in 2010, are co-incident with *reported* archaeological site or historic structure locations (Dudzik 2011). Any future purchases will be analyzed for potential cultural resources at the time of proposed purchase.

Regional Perspective

Ecological Landscapes

Washburn County is comprised of three ecological landscapes: Northwest Sands (46.4%), Forest Transition (27.7%), and North Central Forest (25.9%). The Totogatic Wild River Lands Area is located in the northwestern part of Washburn County in the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape. Landforms of the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape consists of flat plains or terraces along glacial meltwater channels, and pitted or "collapsed" outwash plains containing kettle lakes. Soils are deep sands, low in organic material and nutrients.

According to the Department's Ecological Landscapes (2006) historic vegetation at the time of the General Land Office survey was dominantly jack pine and scrub oak forest and barrens. White and red pine forests were also a sizable component of the Ecological Landscape. Numerous barrens occurred in the southwest half of the Ecological Landscape, and a few large barrens within the northeast half. Most of the trees in the barrens were jack pine, but oak savannas also occurred in the south central part of the Ecological Landscape. Current vegetation is a mix of forest, agriculture, and grassland with some wetlands in the river valleys. Pine, aspen-birch and oak equally (27% each) dominate the forested area of the Ecological Landscape. The maple-basswood, spruce-fir, and lowland hardwood forest type groups occupy small percentages of the Ecological Landscape. Within the open lands, there is a relatively large proportion of grassland and shrub land, a small but locally significant amount of emergent/wet meadow and open water, and very little row-crop agriculture.

The North Central Forest Ecological Landscape occupies much of the northern third of Wisconsin and while not included directly in the lands area is close in proximity in the county. Its landforms are characterized by end and ground moraines with some pitted outwash and bedrock controlled areas. Kettle depressions and steep ridges are found in the northern portion. Two prominent areas in this Ecological Landscape are the Penokee-Gogebic Iron Range in the north extending into Michigan, and Timm's Hill, the highest point in Wisconsin (1,951 feet) in the south. Soils consist of sandy loam, sand, and silts. The vegetation is mainly forest, with many wetlands and some agriculture, though the growing season is not as favorable as it is in southern Wisconsin. Lake Superior greatly influences the northern portion of the Ecological Landscape especially during the winter season, producing greater snowfall than in most areas in Wisconsin (WDNR Ecological Landscapes 2006).

The historic vegetation was primarily hemlock-hardwood forest dominated by hemlock, sugar maple, and yellow birch. There were some smaller areas of white and red pine forest scattered throughout the Ecological Landscape, and individual white pines trees were a component of the hemlock-hardwood forest. Harvesting hemlock to support the tanneries was common at the turn of the century, and the species soon became a minor component of forests due to over-harvesting and lack of regeneration. Currently, forests cover approximately 80% of this Ecological Landscape. The northern hardwood forest is dominant, made up of sugar maple, basswood, and red maple, and also including some scattered hemlock and white pine pockets within stands. The aspen-birch forest type group is also relatively abundant, followed by spruce-fir. A variety of wetland community types also are present, both forested and non-forested (WDNR Ecological Landscapes 2006).

Land Use and Ownership

In late 2004 the final draft of the Washburn County Comprehensive Plan was created, but to date has not been adopted by the Washburn County Board. The plan remains available for reference on the Washburn County website and contains useful land use data. Similar to most northern Wisconsin counties, the overall land use and development pattern in Washburn County has been heavily influenced by tourism and recreational home development. Washburn County remains predominantly rural with the highest population densities concentrated cities and villages, with a generally low overall population density in the rural areas except along certain lakes. Most home development within Washburn County has occurred in the rural areas (Washburn County Planning Committee 2004). A breakdown of existing land use and acreage follows as provided in the plan:

WASHBURN COUNTY EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE (Unincorporated Areas)	
EXISTING LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES
Agriculture	62,977.1
Communications/Utilities	33.4
Commercial	176.8
County Highways	1,153.6
County Roads	250.1
Farm	76.4
Federal Highways	709.5
Government/Institutional	84.8
Industrial	327.0
Local Roads	6,204.2
Mobile Home Park	3.2
Open Space	1,689.3
Park & Recreation	291.1
Residential	3,565.0
Shed	35.3
State Highway	444.6
Water	32,439.1
Woodlands	425,347.9
Total	**535,808.3**
Source: Northwest Regional Planning Commission GIS Inventory, 2002; included in the Washburn County Comprehensive Plan 2025 (2004).	

The descriptions used in the determining the land use categories above define "agriculture" as croplands, livestock grazing, and dairy farming lands and "woodlands" as forested lands under private and public ownership. Washburn County's rural nature is confirmed by looking at these land use patterns as woodlands, agriculture, and water make up the three largest categories.

Washburn County is fortunate to have over 148,000 acres managed through the Washburn County Forest program, the fifth highest total of the 29 Wisconsin counties that contain county forests. Large tracts of county forest land in the northeast corner of Washburn County results in a lower human population density in that portion of the county. The forest is comprised of a wide variety of forest types ranging from the Pine Barrens in the northwest; to the large unbroken tracts of aspen, hardwood, and swamps in the northeast; to the rolling oak hills and pothole lakes in the southeast. The management of this forest makes a wide variety of recreational uses in Washburn County possible Washburn County is a managed forest. The forest provides revenue to the County while practicing sustainable forestry, supporting recreational uses and providing environmental protection (Washburn County 2006).

That total land area of Washburn County is 810 square miles. The land base is divided into 67% forested with aspen as the leading timber type, 27% non-forested, and 6% surface water. Land ownership is categorized as 29% publicly owned, 65% privately owned, and the remaining land is waterways (Spooner Advocate 2011). According to the 2010 Census data Washburn County has a population of 15,911 which is a drop in population from the previous census in 2000 of 16,035 people. An average of 19.6 people live per square mile in the county with the highest density of people in Spooner, the largest city, of 2,682 people while the county seat is Shell Lake with a population of 1,347.(Department of Administration 2011).

Distribution of development in Washburn County shows the highest residential development densities are experienced along lakes. Many of these structures are seasonal and recreational homes and cottages, which may not be continuously occupied. Residential development within the county is also found in the rural forested and agricultural portions of the county. Much of this growth is single-family housing, occupied on a permanent basis (Washburn County Planning Committee 2004).

Socioeconomics

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's 2009 Washburn County Workforce Profile indicates Education and Health; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and Manufacturing make up the top three major industries in the county. This report also highlights the importance of the Education and Health sector to the county as it pays some of the higher paying positions in the county and employs a large number of workers. Five of the ten largest employers in Washburn County fall under this sector heading. The annual average wage in Washburn County, $31,286, is less than the State average of $39,520.

Data indicates that agriculture continues to be important in the county as well. Agriculture and agri-businesses in Washburn County created 970 jobs totaling 12.2% of the county's employment. Agriculture activities contribute $42.5 million or 15.3% of the county income. Farms as principal occupation are dropping, but part-time small operations are growing. Farmers are uncovering ways to diversify in order to remain viable including organic dairy milk operations, raising grass fed beef, bio-diesel operations and other innovative ideas (Spooner Advocate 2011).

The natural resources of Washburn County continue to be a draw for tourism revenue. In 2009 visitors spent $58 million in Washburn County. This money, spent largely on visitor services (lodging, dining, etc), results in approximately 1,345 jobs for the county. The benefit of tourism spending in the county extends past those in tourism related occupations (Spooner Advocate 2011).

Existing Recreation Opportunities

With the County Forest covering over 148,000 acres and over 10,000 more acres in State and Federal ownership, the recreation opportunities in Washburn County are diverse. There are numerous opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping, along with bird watching and other nature based outdoor activities. The county is fortunate to have nearly 6% of its area surface water including 961 lakes (475 of them named) covering 31,498 acres with 866 miles of lakeshore. The Namekagon River, part of the St Croix National Scenic Riverway, and the Totogatic Wild River, a state designated wild river, plus miles of additional rivers and streams add to the water recreation opportunities.

The Wild Rivers, Tuscobia, and Ice Age Trails provide various motorized or non-motorized recreation depending on the trail and location. Over 240 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, over 100 miles of all-terrain vehicle trails, 100 miles of hiking trails, and 30 miles of horse trails results in people coming from around the nation to recreate and enjoy Washburn County's natural resources.

While there are not any state parks in Washburn County there is a variety of camping, swimming, and picnicking options available through the County Forest, city parks, St Croix National Scenic Riverway and many private campgrounds and resorts.

PROPOSED COSTS

Boundary Expansion Costs

The Department anticipates using fee title for the purchase of any parcels within the proposed project boundary with funding from Stewardship. Based on the current market value of $1800 per acre for

upland and $1200 per acre for wetland, the total project cost estimate for the XXXX-acre boundary expansion project is $$$ million. **All land acquisition is on a willing-seller basis with costs spread out over many years as owners have interest in selling and funds are available.**

It is not likely that the Department would attempt to acquire all the private property within the proposed project boundary. Many private landowners and the county forest administrators are already managing their land consistent with the Department's overall management goals for the Totogatic Wild River and Totogatic Wild River Lands Area. The counties long ago recognized the quality and value of the river and have been protecting it with zoning setbacks and special classification for decades. However, owners of large parcels or key parcels along the river may be willing to consider selling their land or other property rights to the state in future years. We expect that it would be a long-term process to acquire land within the new proposed project boundary if approved by the NRB.

Staffing and Operation Costs

Existing Department wildlife, endangered resources and lands staff assigned to work in Washburn County will be regularly involved with land management activities on the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area. To date that includes one wildlife biologist, one wildlife technician, one lands technician, one regional ecologist, and two wildlife limited-term employees. Additional staff from within Washburn County or other parts of the region will assist on special projects such as forestry projects or prescribed burns. The chart below is adapted from the Pershing Wildlife Area Boundary Expansion Project from 2008 and was shared with Department staff. It was stated that it is difficult to assess costs for activities such as burning, but this chart could be used as a point of reference.

Current cost estimates for common management activities:	
Prescribed burning	$20-30 per acre
Warm-season grass establishment	$150-200 per acre
Parking lot construction (50' X 60')	$2,000-3,000 each
Road building (16' graveled and ditched)	$8,000-10,000 per mile
Fencing, posts & wire	$3,000 per mile
Boundary & information sign posting	$300-400 per mile
Brush mowing	$12-15 per acre
Aerial herbicide application	$75 per acre
Permanent fire break construction	$3,000 per mile
Adapted from Department of Natural Resources. 2008. *Proposed Boundary Expansion for the Pershing Wildlife Area, Taylor County*. Madison, WI.	

Recreation Development Costs

At this time there is limited recreation development is being planned. Potential development may include improvements for parking areas, trails and trailheads, and scenic viewpoints near to the river (within allowances of NR 302). Any developments will comply with all required permitting and approvals. Refer to above table for potential costs of development.

Funding Sources

A variety of funding sources will likely be used to purchase, develop, and maintain the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area. Wildlife management work can be funded through the Segregated Fish and Wildlife Account derived from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. Stewardship funds can be used for supplies and services needed to identify property access and boundary lines as well as the posting of land.

Some habitat maintenance work can also be conducted using Stewardship monies. Additional funding sources will be researched and pursued as available.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A purpose included in conducting a feasibility study is to gather public opinion about the project and investigate the publics' concerns and desires for the property. In 2010 the following meetings were conducted: Department staff input meeting on October 12, 2010, county government and partner agency input meeting on October 18, 2010, and a public open house on November 4, 2010 with an additional comment period through November 19, 2010 (comments received outside the comment period also included in the *Public Involvement Log* in the appendix).

Invitations to the public open house on November 4th were sent by email to a list of Totogatic Wild River partners, a list of interested citizens and the St Croix Basin Partner Team. A direct mailing invitation was sent to all landowners bordering the Washburn County Totogatic Wild River Lands Area parcels and all riparian owners on the Totogatic River between the Minong Flowage dam and the Burnett County line. County board members and area legislators were also contacted as well as a news release submitted to the local media. Approximately 25 people attended the public open house to discuss the recently acquired parcels and explore ideas of management in order to gain support to proceed with the feasibility study request.

To view the comments received during the public involvement process refer to the Appendix for the *Public Involvement Log* and summary. The majority of comments received were in favor of continued protection of the Totogatic Wild River through acquisition of additional lands from willing sellers and management of the parcels for quiet sport activities. There was one concern that this area may not be heavily used and therefore questioned the additional expense of acquisition and management. Hunting, trapping, and fishing access remains a priority with concern over soil erosion at the river banks if any access is developed in the future. All terrain vehicle use was suggested to be prohibited in this area, but the existing Washburn County snowmobile trail that crosses a portion of the project area should remain.

An additional public meeting will be held in 2011 after additional scientific data has been collected and incorporated into the study. Following the public meeting and any recommended revisions, the Department will present this study to the Natural Resources Board for their review and consideration.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

Environmental Effects and Their Significance

The potential long-term environmental effects of the proposed Totogatic Wild River Lands Area project boundary outweigh any short-term environmental effects associated with management practices. Expanding the boundary between the existing units will create continuity for more efficient long- term property management and administration. The property boundary associated with the expansion will have fewer perimeter miles to sign and/or fence and will improve public accessibility. The expanded property boundary will also allow Department staff to more easily carry out management activities.

Expanding the property boundary increases the potential for the Department to create and manage for specialized habitats. The Department has the opportunity to expand the property from its original purchase and potentially manage a portion for pine barrens habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. Increasing the habitat for this species no only is beneficial for the population viability and security of sharp-tailed grouse, but also for other grassland species, water fowl and many non-game species.

Long-term beneficial impacts associated with protecting wetland areas affect many vertebrate and invertebrate species. The Department's "Reversing the Loss" report (2000) notes the importance of Wisconsin wetlands for providing critical habitat for wildlife, water storage to prevent flooding and protect water quality, and providing recreational opportunities.

In order to management habitats, the Department anticipates using a variety of management tools including cutting and/or herbicide application to control invasive species, potentially mowing and prescribed burning. Any negative short-term environmental effects associated with these management tools will be minimized by following the appropriate Department Manual Code (Pesticide Application-Manual Code 4230.1; Prescribed Burn Handbook 4360.5). Precautions will be taken to avoid disturbances during the breeding season.

Results of a Natural Heritage Inventory screening indicate several endangered resources documented within and around the project area, especially in the wetland habitats. Department acquisition would not negatively impact these resources. Management will follow Department best management practices to minimize impacts to any wetlands and waterways.

At this time there was no indication from the Department's Archeologist that there were any sites requiring protection within the existing parcels. Any future purchases will be analyzed for potential cultural resources at the time of proposed purchase.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

Establishing an expanded project boundary for the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area and managing the parcels in large block forest management would have positive cumulative effects on wildlife, water quality, and recreation. The project fills a gap of between the Burnett County Forest and the Washburn County Forest lands ensuring continued protection of the Totogatic Wild River from development and preserving the scenic view shed from the river while maintaining large tracts of habitat for woodland and wetland species.

Managing for pine barrens or pine forest uplands will require periodic burning or disturbance by other method every several years. Prescribed burning is an effective land management technique with many benefits: improvement of wildlife habitat by creating edge and increasing productivity; controlling vegetative competition; restoration of fire dependent plant and animal communities; control of forest insects and diseases; and control of non-native invasive species. Wetlands also benefit from occasional prescribed burns, which reduce invasion of shrubs and invasive species and improve native wildlife habitat.

Significance of Risk

Managing the land base of the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area focuses on maintaining and enhancing diverse habitats such as upland forest, pine barrens, wetlands, and open water areas. Some of the management activities pose potential risks, however, those risks are minimized by following Department approved procedures and management practices. While the use of fire for prescribed burns carries the potential risk of wildfire, the benefits associated with this established land management technique exceed the risk. Forestry staff indicates that large blocks should have periodic disturbance. Performing prescribed burns and working with the county forest as partners in management will be necessary. Additionally, forestry management practices that involve thinning or harvesting will be conducted following established Best Management Practices and performed during times of the year that have the least amount of impact on the terrain while limiting impacts of recreation activities. Risks in all land management activities will be minimized by following established best management practices and receiving any necessary approvals or permits.

Significance of Precedent

The proposed project boundary establishment and management are not precedent setting. Through acquisition from willing sellers the Department can manage habitat for diverse populations of wildlife including game species such as grouse and white-tailed deer and many non-game species; restore, protect and enhance acres of shoreline, scenic view shed, and miles of river corridor habitat; improve property management through blocking; and improve public access and recreation opportunities. Management will be consistent with goals outlined in this study and will not conflict with local, state or federal agencies.

Significance of Controversy

On November 4, 2010, the Department held an open house informational meeting at the Minong Town Hall. Department staff gave a brief presentation, shared maps and information, and were available for discussion and questions. Flip charts were used to record comments and concerns and are included in the *Public Involvement Log* in the Appendix. Approximately 25 people attended this meeting and were generally supportive of continued efforts to protect the Totogatic Wild River. Additional comments were received during the two week comment period largely in support of quiet sport activities and continued resource protection.

ALTERNATIVES

The primary management goals used to determine the proposed project boundaries include protecting the Totogatic Wild River in its natural wild state, protecting the sensitive shoreline areas from erosion while keeping water quality high, preserving the wild viewshed as seen from the Totogatic River, and encouraging large block management of parcels owned by the Department for maximum habitat protection and recreation opportunities. While working to establish the Totogatic Wild River and the subsequent land purchase, the Department worked closely with partner agencies and organizations in the region. In continuing to protect the watershed, the department will work with and support partner agencies, such as the county forestry departments, in land acquisitions that they pursue within their project boundaries adjacent to or nearby the Totogatic River. Considering these goals as priority the following boundary alternatives were determined:

Alternative A

Look at increasing the project boundary to include the banks of the river plus the 400’ adjacent to the river from the Washburn/Douglas County line to the confluence of the Totogatic and Namekagon Rivers, excluding frontage on the Minong Flowage. Consideration will be given to parcels that establish an easily managed boundary such as property lines or roads. This alternative allows for Department management of the 400’ protection zone as outlined in NR 302.02 (4). This addition of limited acreage along the shoreline has shown to be extremely difficult to manage at State fishery areas. This could make future land acquisitions extremely difficult as sellers may not want to see only the 400’ along their shoreline and be left with the remaining upland acres. It will also be more costly to survey out these smaller meandering parcels along the water. Adding a limited amount, such as the 400’ buffer would also restrict the recreational opportunities on the land when the public can only go back 400’. Hunting or recreating in these smaller parcels will not be as accessible or even possible in some cases. Small meandering parcels makes managing for invasive species difficult as the amount of edge increases and the habitat becomes fragmented. Access for staff and the public will be difficult without clearer access points or block parcels. This option would protect the immediate waters edge, but would not assist in achieving the management goal of large block habitat management for optimum wildlife habitat, recreation, and wild river protection.

Alternative B

A broader project boundary, allowing for the addition of immediately adjacent contiguous parcels of land to the existing parcels, would protect the wild river viewshed and create more contiguous blocks of public land for expanded public recreation and conservation. Large-block parcel management allows the Department to enhance lands for the management of wildlife species and forest resources while controlling invasive species and providing opportunities for public use. Larger parcels also reduce trespass issues and increase the ability of the Department to manage for healthy habitats for our fishery and wildlife species (which is part of what draws the users to the wild river). This also allows for better access for both the public and staff.

Alternative C

Protect the watershed and wetlands by purchasing parcels out to access points and forming blocking boundaries from the banks of the Totogatic River and up of the course of key tributaries to protect critical habitat. Through acquisition, the Department can promote improved resource and property management, improved public access and increased recreational opportunities. As highlighted in the above study Fivemile Creek and Chicog Creek are Area of Special Natural Resource Interest waters. Obtaining parcels up these creeks helps protect these ASNRI waters, the species within them (trout, rare mussels, etc) and continues to protect the water quality of the Totogatic River. This also maximizes the public's ability to hunt, trap, and fish on the property as access is easier and parcels are larger for maximum habitat potential. The cost to purchase and manage larger parcels is usually less than multiple small individual ones. Landowners are more likely to sell parcels in whole segments instead of breaking them into smaller pieces. From a management standpoint simple property boundaries are more cost effective to maintain and more useful for monitoring (reduced boundary checking, trespass control). Habitat work for invasive species is also more effective on larger parcels compared to smaller parcels due to less edge and fewer neighboring landowners impacting the property. Finally, management techniques of timber sales and prescribed burning are easier to conduct on larger consecutive parcels.

Alternative D

The Department could take no additional action and establish the project boundary at the current level of ownership with no additional purchases made. However, several landowners have approached the Department with interest in selling adjacent parcels in the future. Department research and County planning efforts indicate Washburn County water frontage is at risk of development due to recreational pressure and residential housing (primary or secondary homes). Not pursuing additional lands and allowing habitat fragmentation and development would impact both the river and the existing state parcels through potential reduction in water quality (increase runoff from lawns, less upland cover, etc.), less recreational satisfaction due to smaller disjointed parcels, loss of ecological values through protecting a contiguous river corridor, increased costs to the Department due to inefficiencies of managing scattered parcels (more sites to post, monitor, handle trespass issues, etc.).

PROJECT FEASIBILITY DETERMINATION

Project feasibility will be determined based on review and additional input from the public during summer 2011.

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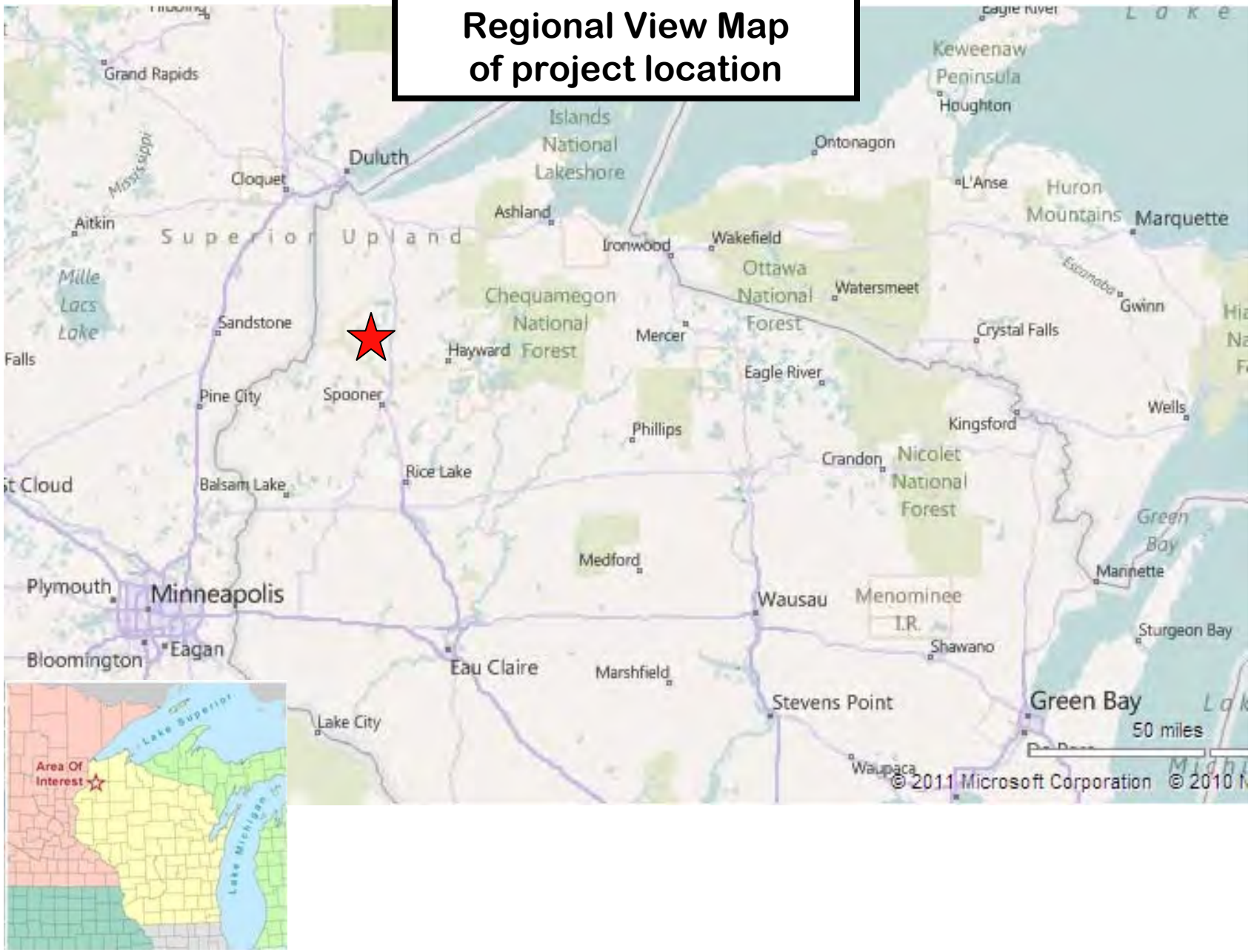
APPENDIX

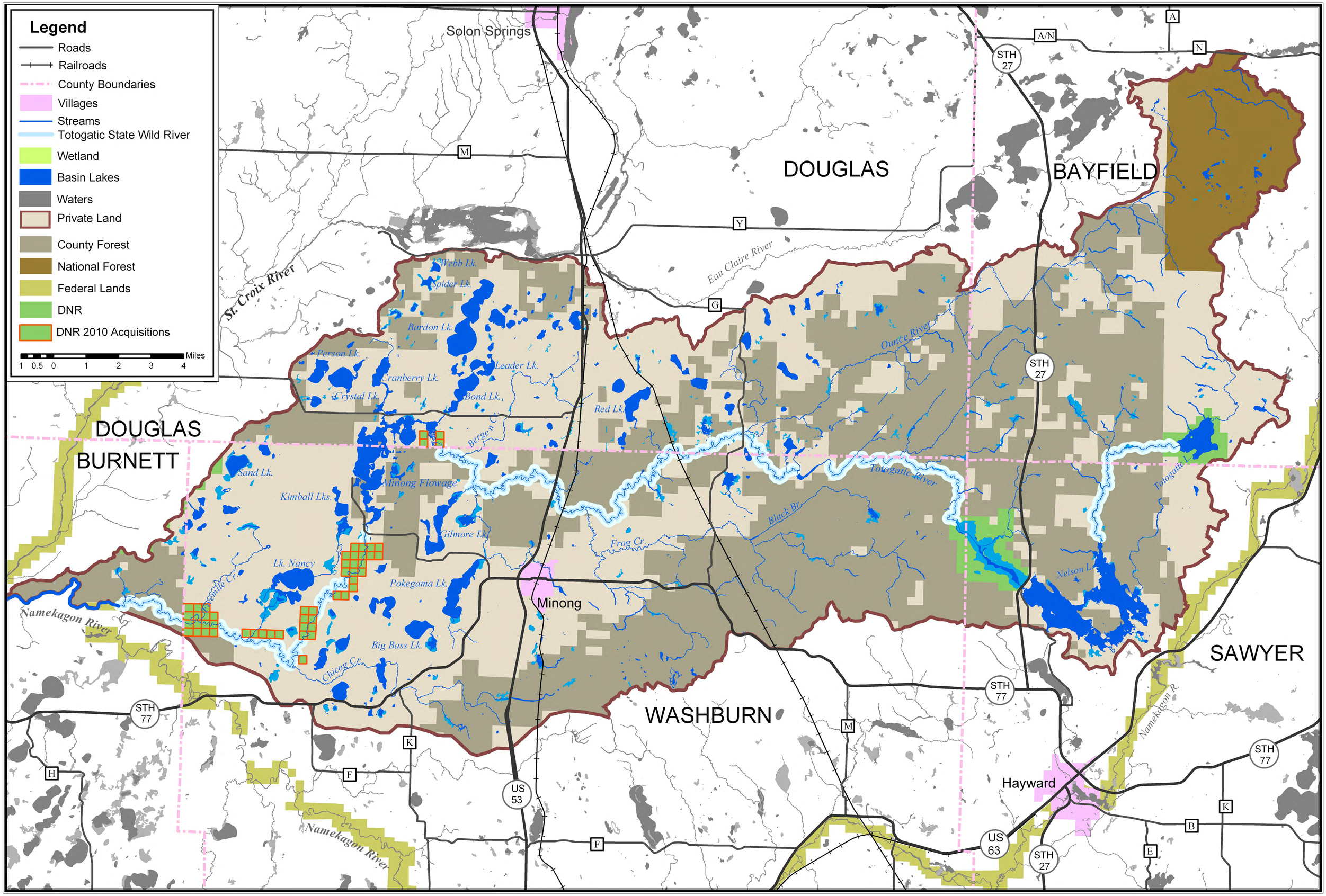
List of Appendix items:

- *Environmental Analysis Certification (is forthcoming pending staff review)*
- Maps
    - Regional View Map
    - Aerial Map of Entire Project Area
    - Washburn County Parcel Detail
    - Douglas County Parcel Detail
    - PROJECT BOUNDARY ALTERNATIVES
    - Ecological Landscape of Area
    - Landtype Associations of Area
    - Erodable Soils
    - Land Cover
    - Forested Land Cover
    - Wetlands
- Deeds/easements
- Memos
    - Land Purchase Memo
    - Summary of memo with request for feasibility study
- Public Involvement Comment Summary Log

Regional View Map of project location

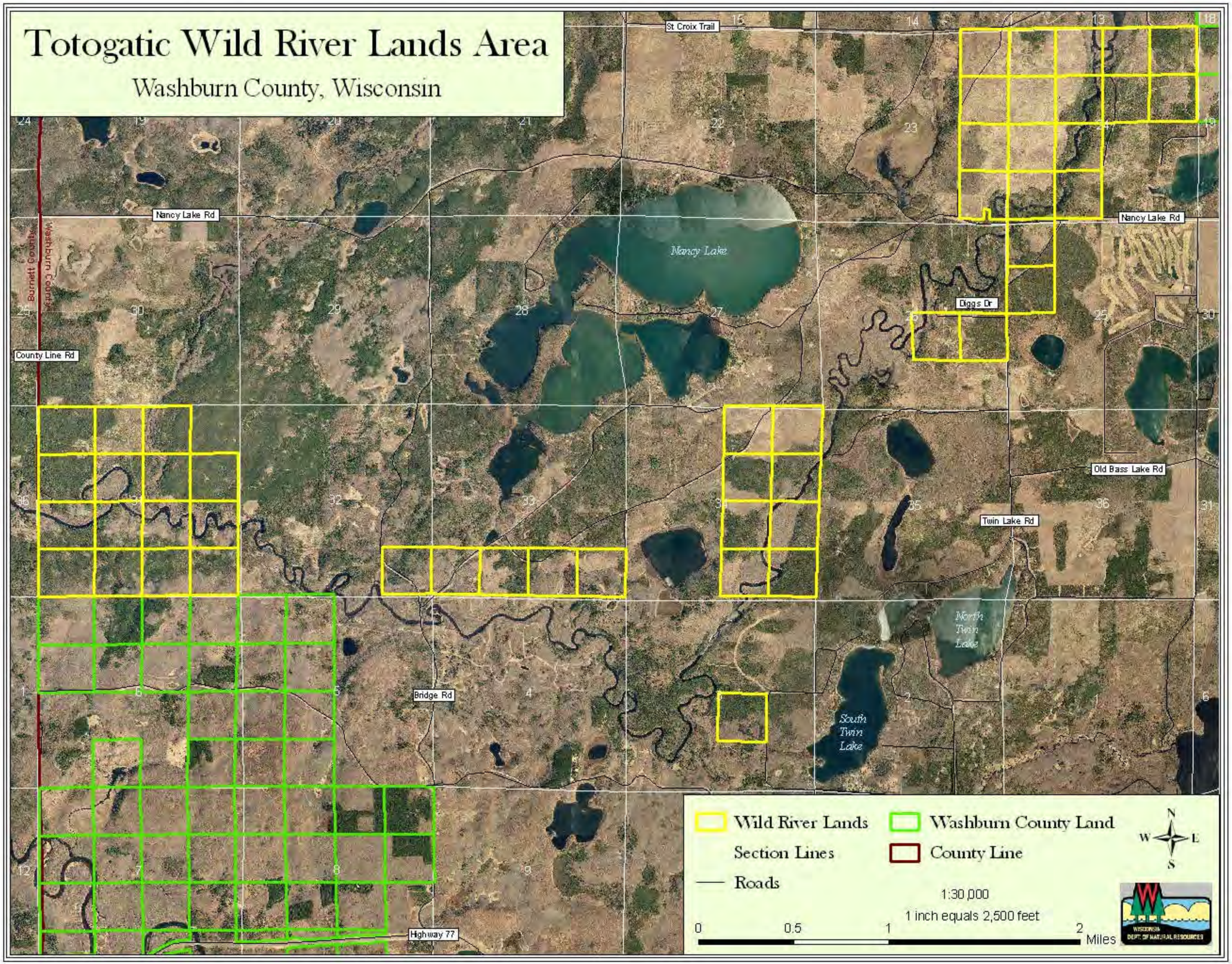


Totogatic State Wild River - 2010 Land Acquisitions



Totogatic Wild River Lands Area

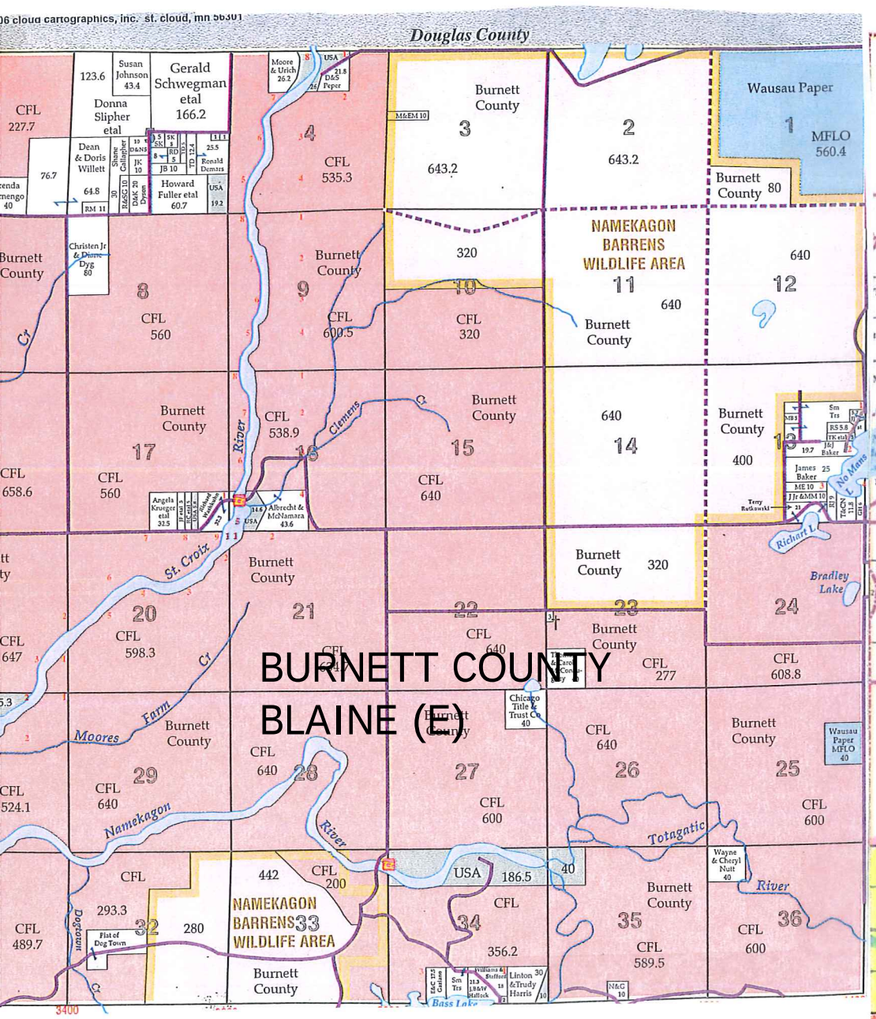
Washburn County, Wisconsin

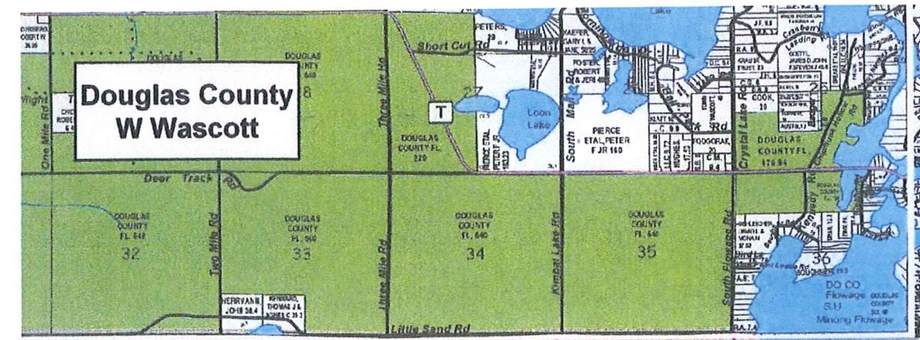


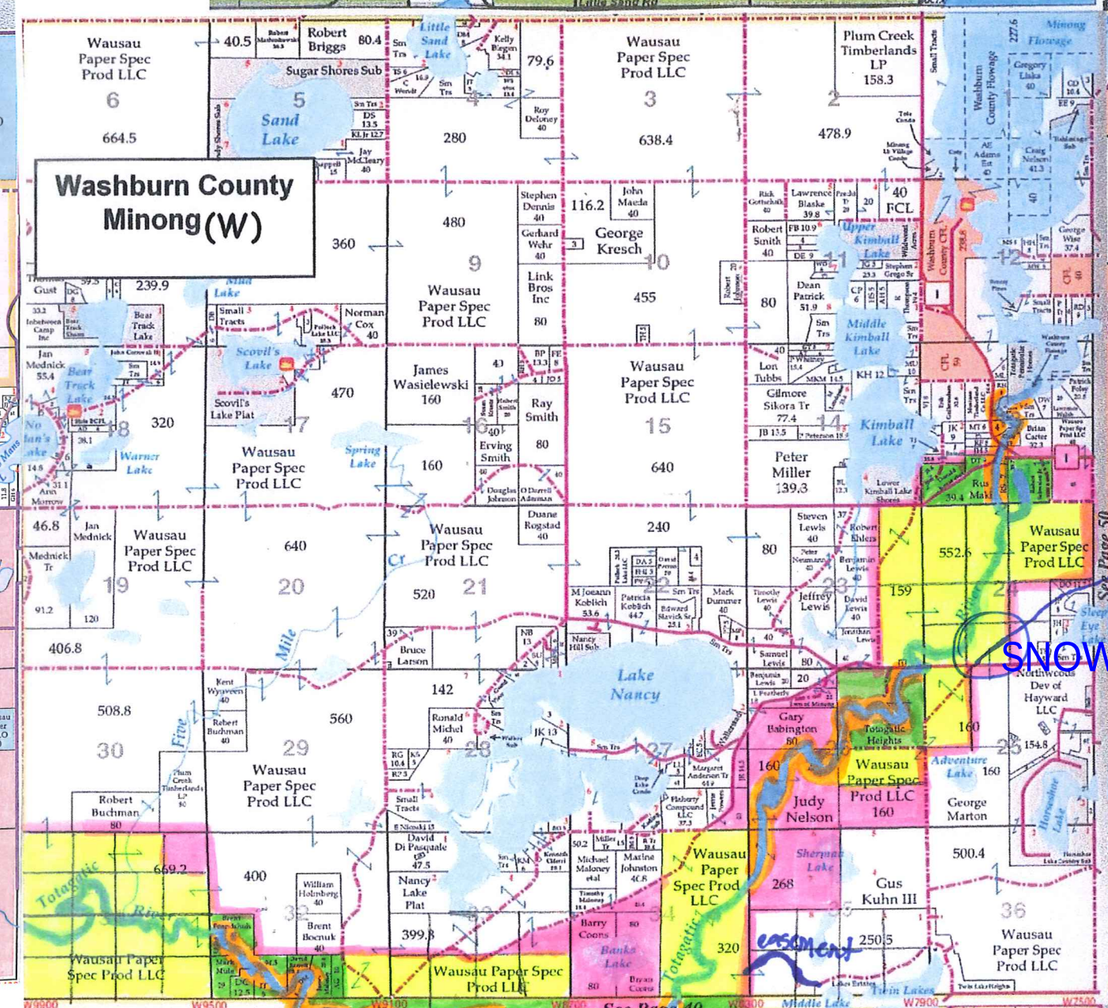
Totogatic Wild River Lands Area

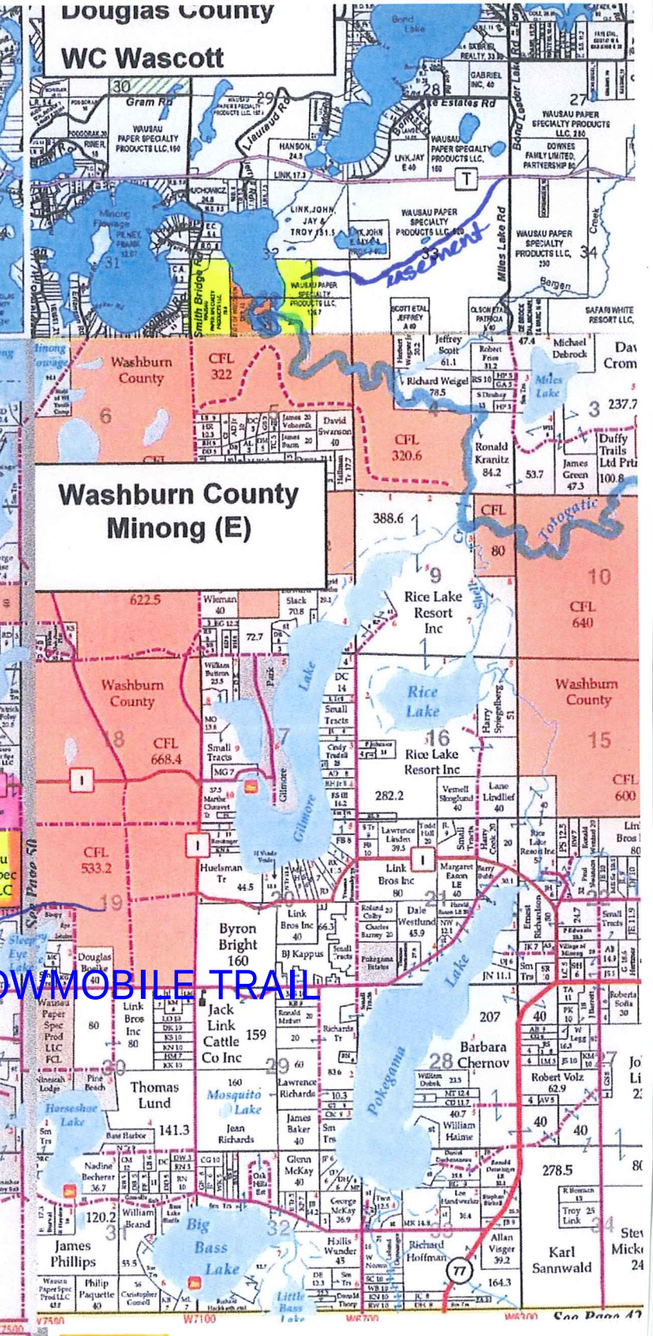
Douglas County, Wisconsin

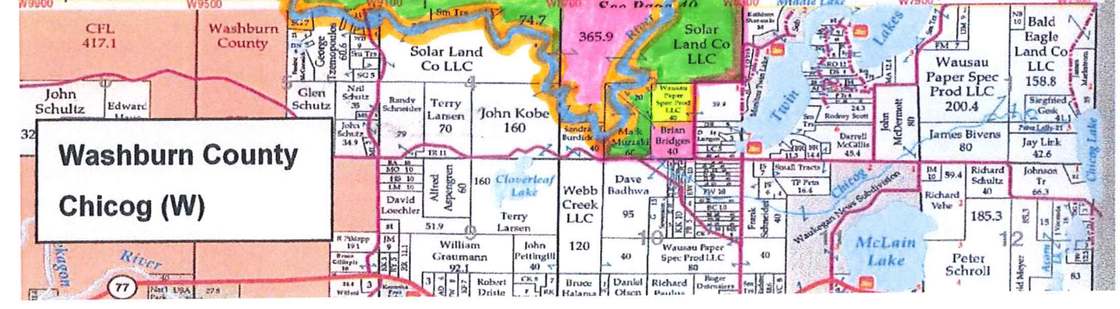
Added easements
T43N R12W, Sec 32 & 33
T42N R13W, Sec 35
(See appendix for legal descrip. & detailed map.)











SNOWMOBILE TRAIL

Alt. A — 400' along river only

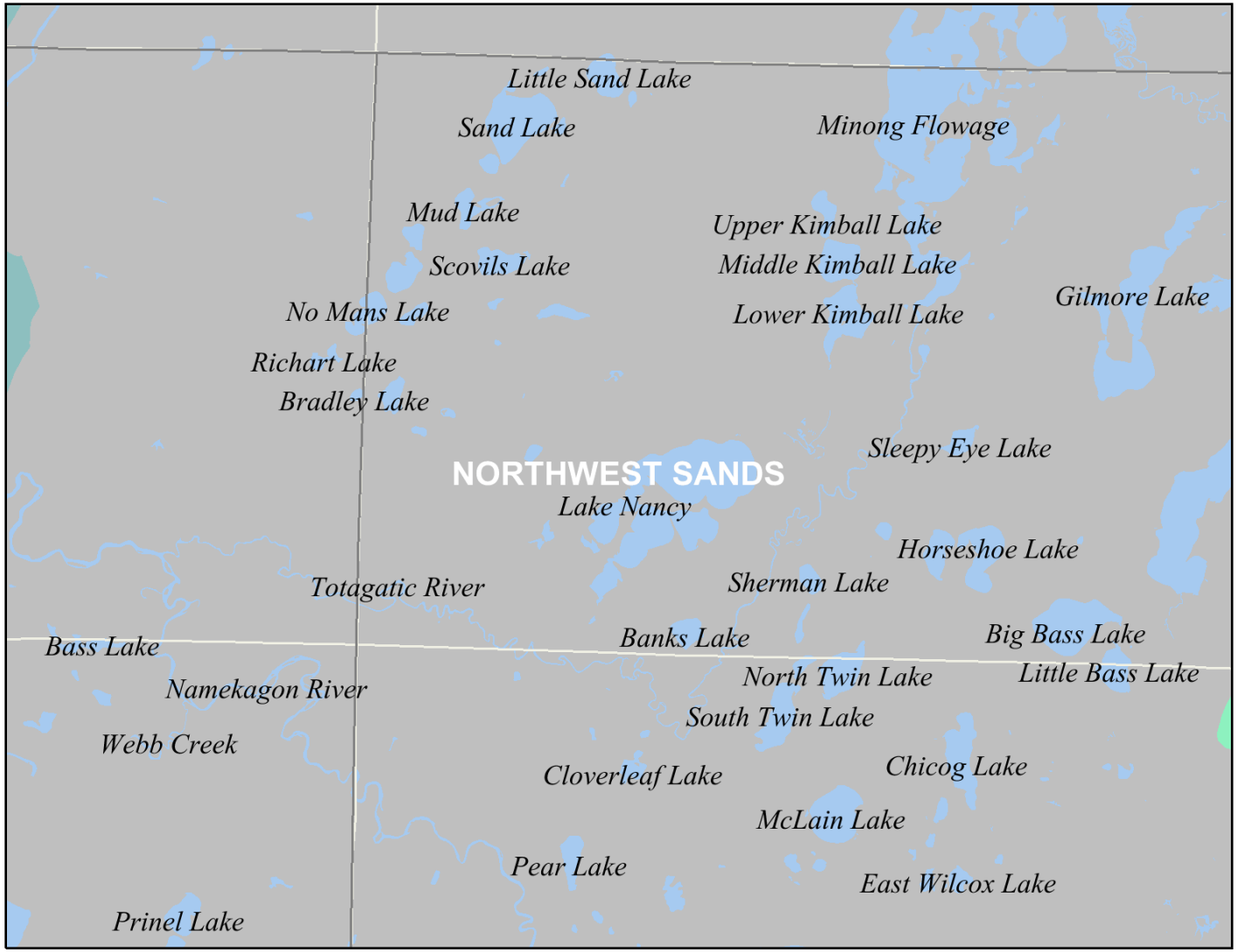
Alt. B — adding contiguous parcels

Alt. C — adding to form large block parcels for management

Alt. D — no additional action

TOTOGATIC WILD RIVER LANDS AREA
FEASIBILITY STUDY PROJECT BOUNDARY
MAP

Ecological Landscapes of Project Area



0 2 4 6 mi.

Legend

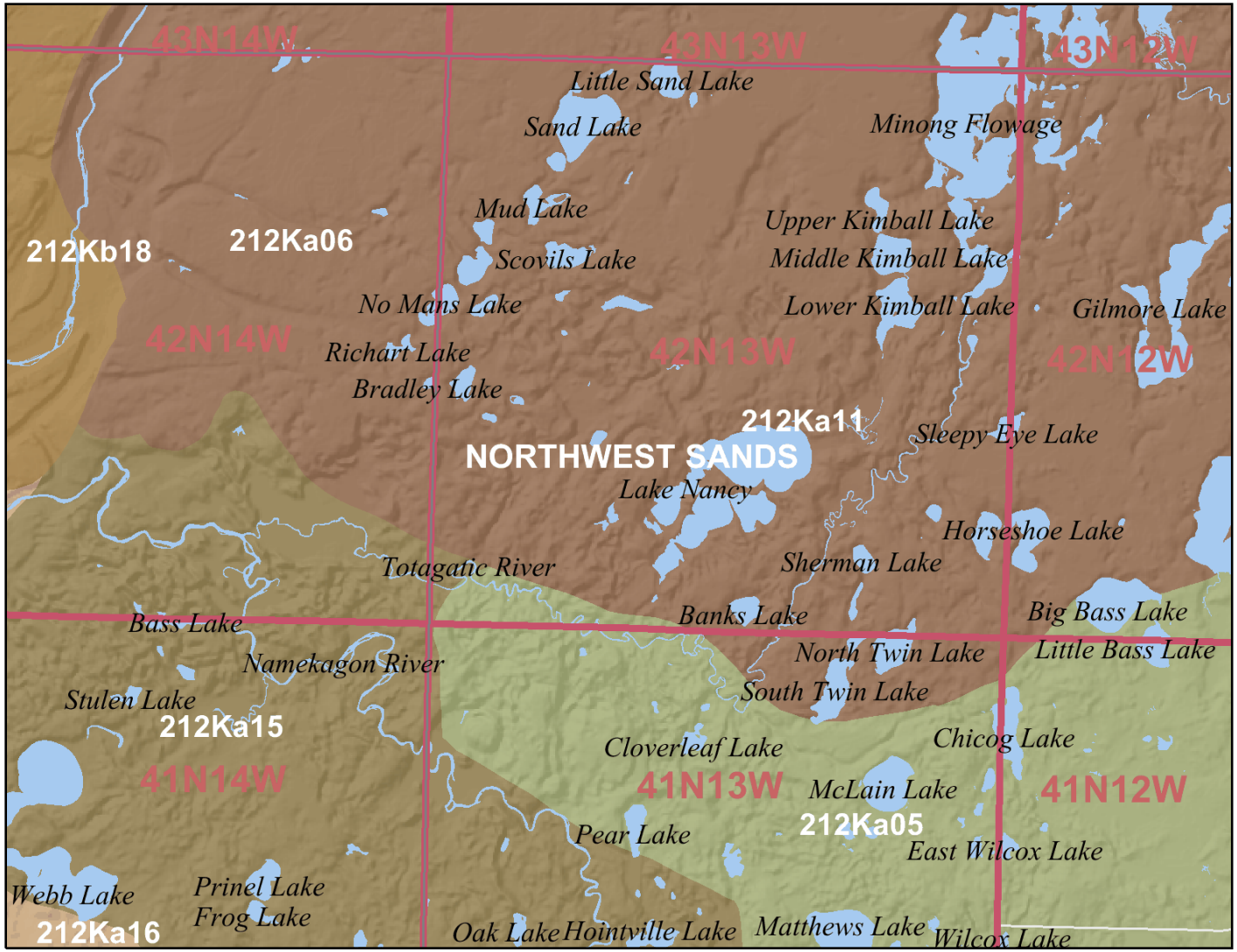
- 24K County Boundaries
- Civil Towns
  - Civil Town
- 24K Open Water
- Cities and Villages
  - Village
  - City
- Ecological Landscapes
  - Central Lake Michigan Coastal
  - Central Sand Hills
  - Central Sand Plains
  - Forest Transition
  - North Central Forest
  - Northeast Sands
  - Northern Highland
  - Northern Lake Michigan Coastal
  - Northwest Lowlands
  - Northwest Sands
  - Southeast Glacial Plains
  - Southern Lake Michigan Coastal
  - Southwest Savanna
  - Superior Coastal Plain
  - Western Coulees and Ridges
  - Western Prairie

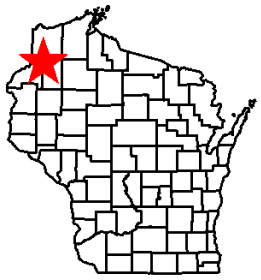
N

Scale: 1:107,381

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

Landtype Associations within Project Area





Legend

- 24K County Boundaries
- PLSS Townships
- Civil Towns
- Civil Town
- 24K Open Water
- Cities and Villages
- Village
- City
- Ecological Landscapes
- Central Lake Michigan Coastal
- Central Sand Hills
- Central Sand Plains
- Forest Transition
- North Central Forest
- Northeast Sands
- Northern Highland
- Northern Lake Michigan Coastal
- Northwest Lowlands
- Northwest Sands
- Southeast Glacial Plains
- Southern Lake Michigan Coastal
- Southwest Savanna
- Superior Coastal Plain
- Western Coulees and Ridges
- Western Prairie

0 2 4 6 mi.

N

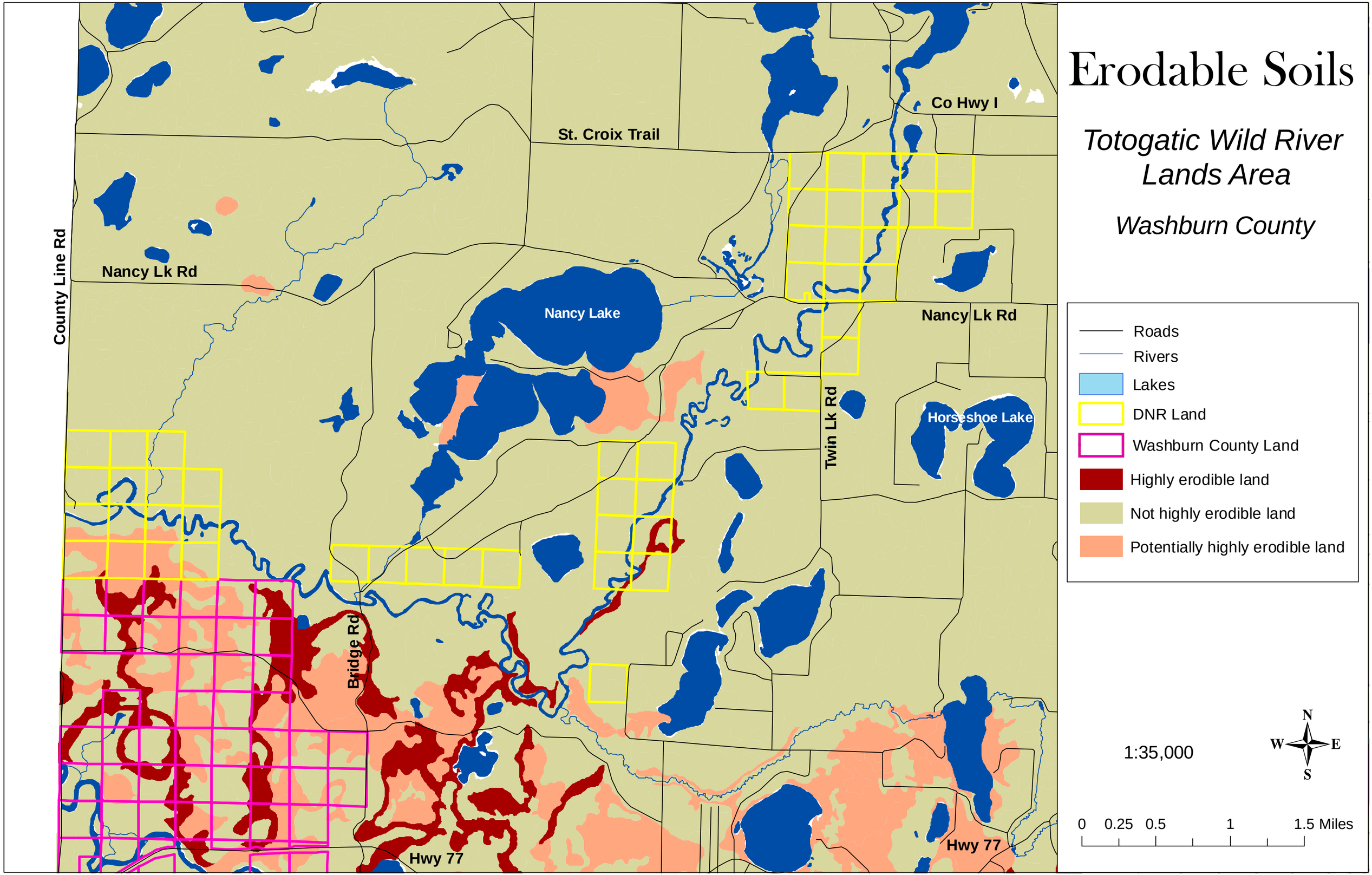
Scale: 1:112,240

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

Erodable Soils

Totogatic Wild River Lands Area

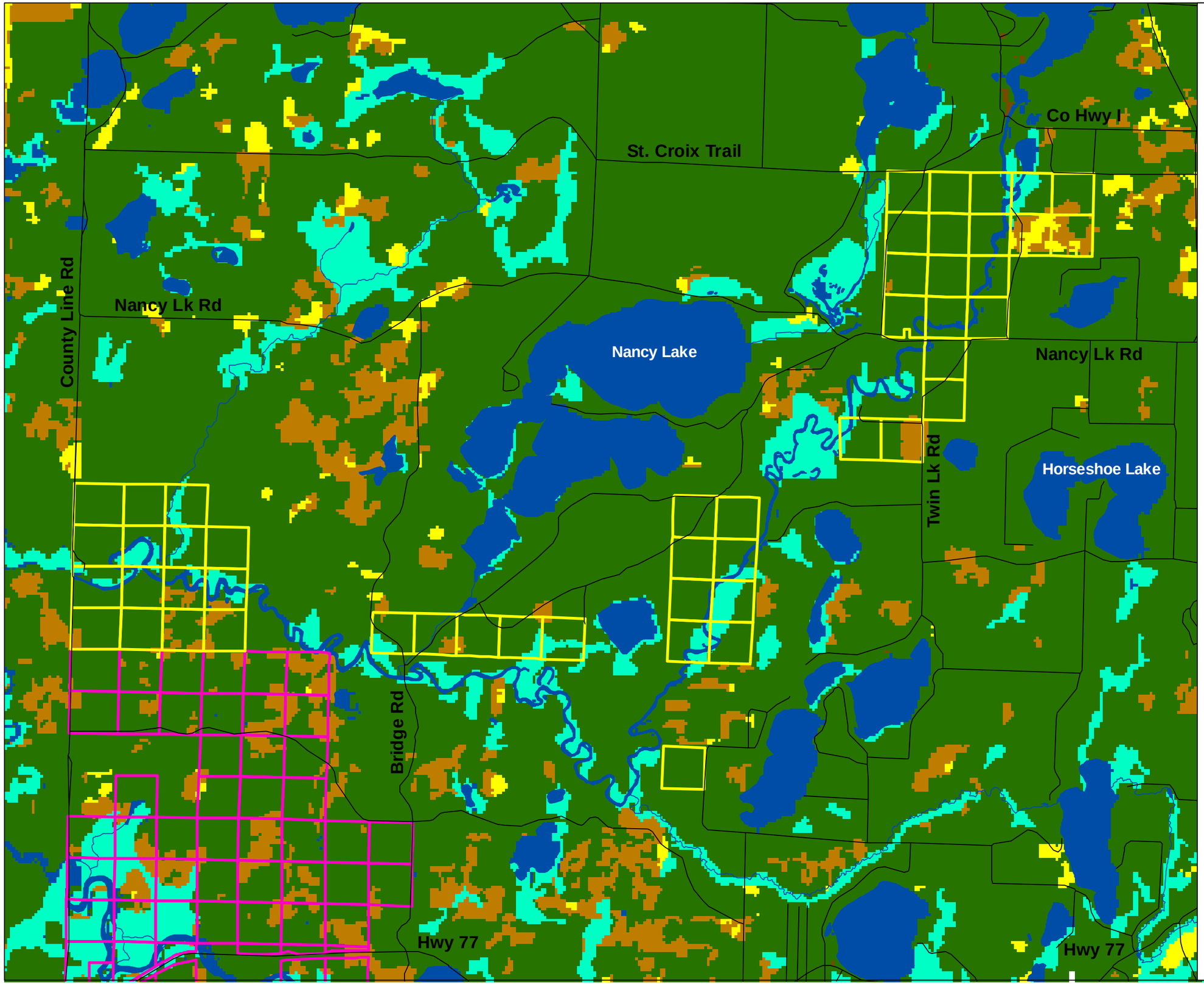
Washburn County



Land Cover

Totogatic Wild River Lands Area

Washburn County

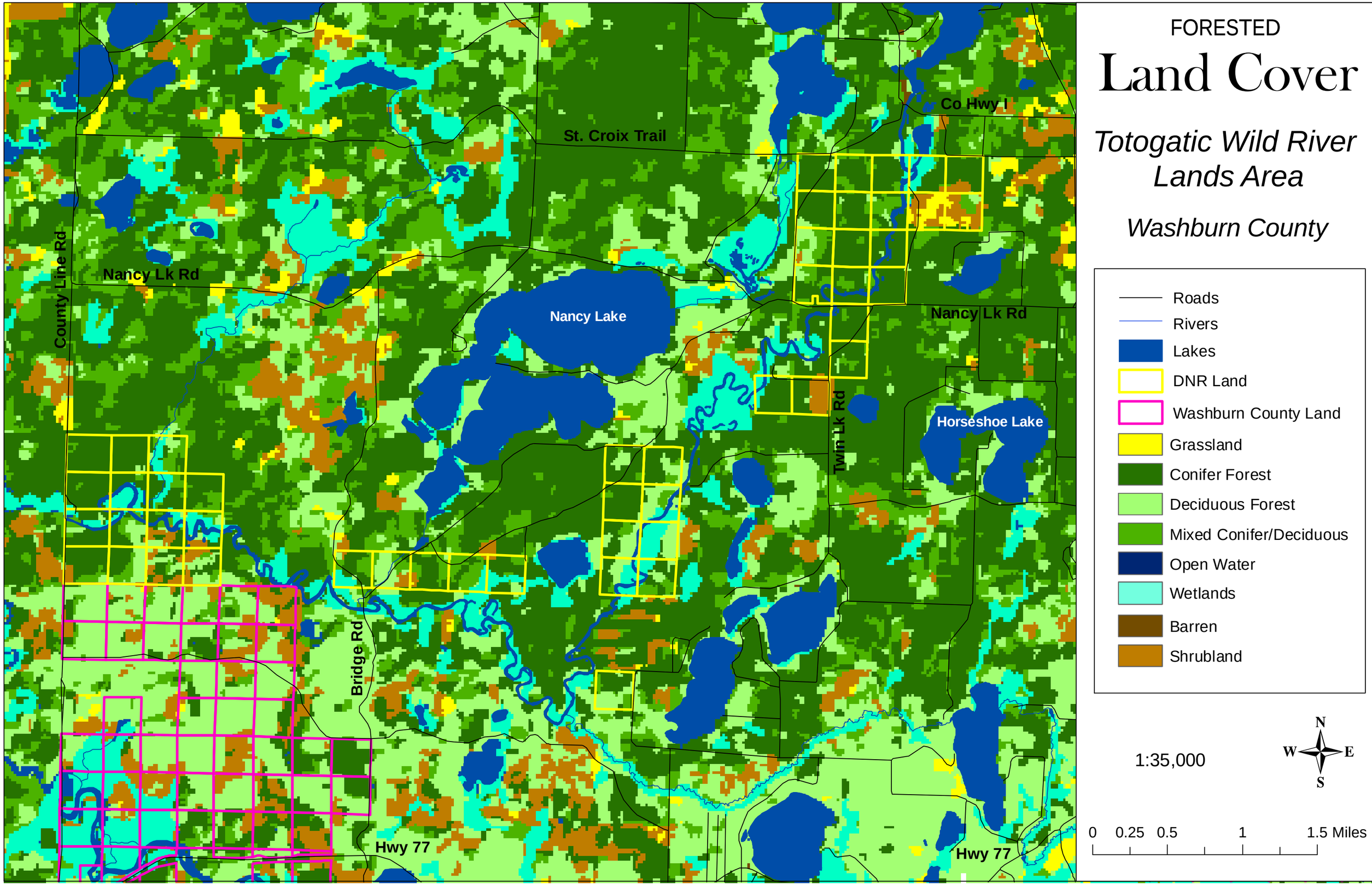


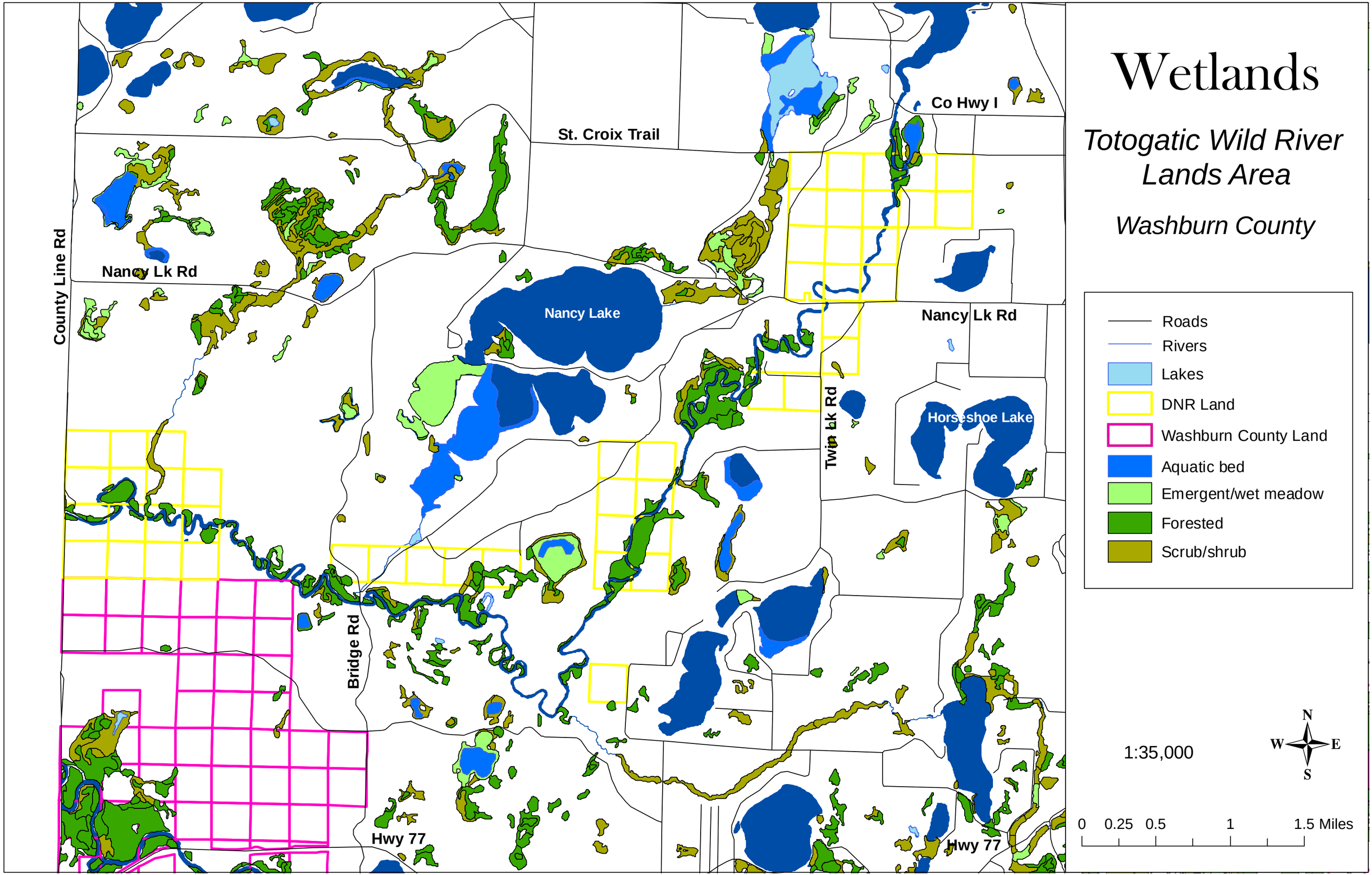
Roads
Rivers
Lakes
DNR Land
Washburn County Land
Grassland
Forest
Open Water
Wetland
Barren
Shrubland

1:35,000

N
W E
S

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles


FORESTED
Land Cover
Totogatic Wild River Lands Area
Washburn County
Roads
Rivers
Lakes
DNR Land
Washburn County Land
Grassland
Conifer Forest
Deciduous Forest
Mixed Conifer/Deciduous
Open Water
Wetlands
Barren
Shrubland
1:35,000
N
W
E
S
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles
St. Croix Trail
Co Hwy I
Nancy Lk Rd
County Line Rd
Nancy Lake
Nancy Lk Rd
Twin Lk Rd
Horseshoe Lake
Bridge Rd
Hwy 77
Hwy 77


Wetlands
Totogatic Wild River Lands Area
Washburn County
Roads
Rivers
Lakes
DNR Land
Washburn County Land
Aquatic bed
Emergent/wet meadow
Forested
Scrub/shrub
1:35,000
N
W
E
S
0
0.25
0.5
1
1.5 Miles
St. Croix Trail
Co Hwy I
Nancy Lk Rd
County Line Rd
Nancy Lake
Nancy Lk Rd
Twin Lk Rd
Horseshoe Lake
Bridge Rd
Hwy 77
Hwy 77

DOC# 343693

Certified, Filed and or Recorded on
Aug. 09,2010 AT 02:35PM
DIANE POACH
WASHBURN CO REGISTER OF DEEDS
SHELL LAKE WI 54871
Fee Amount: $30.00
Transfer Fee: $10,737.00
Total Pages 4

Document Number

State Bar of Wisconsin Form 1-2003
WARRANTY DEED

Document Name

Recording Area

Name and Return Address
Runkel Abstract
PO Box 1303
Wausau WI 54402

#30 7#10,737.00 ck

THIS DEED, made between THE CONSERVATION FUND, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION ("Grantor," whether one or more),

and STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ("Grantee," whether one or more).

Grantor, for a valuable consideration, conveys to Grantee the following described real estate, together with the rents, profits, fixtures and other appurtenant interests, in Washburn County, State of Wisconsin ("Property") (if more space is needed, please attach addendum):

See attached Exhibit "A"

Together with an easement for ingress and egress as granted in the Easement recorded on May 3, 2010 in the office of the Register of Deeds for Washburn County as Document No. 342359.

See attached Exhibit "A"
Parcel Identification Number (PIN)

This is not homestead property.
(is) (is not)

Grantor warrants that the title to the Property is good, indefeasible in fee simple and free and clear of encumbrances except: any municipal and zoning ordinances and agreements entered under them, recorded easements for the distribution of utility and municipal services, recorded building and use restrictions and covenants, and general taxes levied in the year of closing.

Dated July 29, 2010.

THE CONSERVATION FUND, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

(SEAL) (SEAL)
* Richard L. Erdmann
Executive Vice President

(SEAL) (SEAL)
* *

AUTHENTICATION

Signature(s)

authenticated on

*

TITLE: MEMBER STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN
(If not, authorized by Wis. Stat. § 706.06)

THIS INSTRUMENT DRAFTED BY:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Commonwealth
~~STATE~~ OF VIRGINIA
Arlington COUNTY)

CAROLYN NIEDZINSKI
) Notary Public
Commonwealth of Virginia
289629
My Commission Expires Mar 31, 2012

Personally came before me on July 27, 2010, I was commissioned a Notary Public as Carolyn Niedzinski
the above-named Richard L. Erdmann
to me known to be the person who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

* Carolyn McCoy
Notary Public, State of Virginia
My Commission (is permanent) (expires: 3/31/12)

(Signatures may be authenticated or acknowledged. Both are not necessary.)
NOTE: THIS IS A STANDARD FORM. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO THIS FORM SHOULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED.

© 2003 STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN

* Type name below signatures.

Exhibit "A"
Legal Description

Parcel II:
The Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NE ¼ NE ¼); the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SE ¼ NE ¼) and the East half of the Southeast Quarter (E ½ SE ¼) of Section 23, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin, Except the following described parcel: Commencing at a point 30 rods West of the Southeast corner of said Section 23; thence West on the Section line 10 rods; thence North 16 rods; thence East 10 rods; thence South 16 rods to the place of beginning.

65-030-2-42-13-23-1 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-23-1 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-23-4 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-23-4 04-000-001000

Parcel III:
The Northeast Quarter (NE ¼), the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) and the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼) all in Section 24, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-24-1 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-1 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-1 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-1 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-2 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-2 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-2 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-2 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-3 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-3 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-3 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-24-3 04-000-001000

Parcel IV:
The West half of the Northwest quarter (W ½ NW ¼) of Section 25, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-25-2 02-000-00100
65-030-2-42-13-25-2 03-000-00100

Parcel V:
The North half of the Southeast Quarter (N ½ SE ¼) of Section 26, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-26-4 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-26-4 02-000-001000

Parcel VI:
The West half of the Northeast Quarter (W ½ NE ¼), the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SE ¼ NE ¼); the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼); the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼); and the

Southeast Quarter (SE ¼) all in Section 31, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-31-1 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-1 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-1 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-2 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-2 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-2 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-2 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-3 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-3 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-3 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-3 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-4 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-4 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-4 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-31-4 04-000-001000

Parcel VII:
The Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SE ¼ SE ¼) of Section 32, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-32-4 04-000-001000

Parcel VIII:
The South half of the Southwest Quarter (S ½ SW ¼) and the South half of the Southeast Quarter (S ½ SE ¼) of Section 33, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-33-3 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-33-3 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-33-4 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-33-4 04-000-001000

Parcel IX:
The East half (E ½) of Section 34, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-030-2-42-13-34-1 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-1 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-1 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-1 04-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-4 01-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-4 02-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-4 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-34-4 04-000-001000

Parcel X:
An easement for the benefit of Parcel X over and across the South 33 feet of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼ SW ¼) and that part of Government Lot 9 (GL 9) lying

Westerly of Middle Road, all in Section 35, Township 42 North, Range 13 West, Town of Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin, as created by Easement by and between Wausau Paper Mills, LLC, Grantor and The Conservation Fund, a Non-Profit Corporation, Grantee.

65-030-2-42-13-35-3 03-000-001000
65-030-2-42-13-35-5 05-009-001000

Parcel XI:
The Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NW ¼ SE ¼) all in Section 3, Township 41 North, Range 13 West, Town of Chicog, Washburn County, Wisconsin.

65-016-2-41-13-03-4 02-000-001000

836370	State Bar of Wisconsin Form 1-2003 **WARRANTY DEED**	DOCUMENT # 836370
Document Number	Document Name	Certified, Filed and or Recorded on Aug. 09, 2010 AT 10:00AM GAYLE I. WAHNER DOUGLAS COUNTY RECORDER SUPERIOR, WI 54880-2769 Fee Amount: $30.00 Transfer Fee: $678.00 Total Pages 2 Recording Area

THIS DEED, made between THE CONSERVATION FUND, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION ("Grantor," whether one or more),

and STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ("Grantee," whether one or more).

Grantor, for a valuable consideration, conveys to Grantee the following described real estate, together with the rents, profits, fixtures and other appurtenant interests, in Douglas County, State of Wisconsin ("Property") (if more space is needed, please attach addendum):

See attached Exhibit "A"

Together with an easement for ingress and egress as granted in the Easement recorded on May 11, 2010 in the office of the Register of Deeds for Douglas County as Document No. 834338.

Name and Return Address
Runkel Abstract
PO Box 1303
Wausau WI 54402
$30 714 678 pd CK 30ck

See attached Exhibit "A"
Parcel Identification Number (PIN)

This is not homestead property.
(is) (is not)

Grantor warrants that the title to the Property is good, indefeasible in fee simple and free and clear of encumbrances except: any municipal and zoning ordinances and agreements entered under them, recorded easements for the distribution of utility and municipal services, recorded building and use restrictions and covenants, and general taxes levied in the year of closing.

Dated 7/29/2010.

THE CONSERVATION FUND, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

(SEAL) * (SEAL) * Richard L. Bodmann, Executive Vice President

(SEAL) * (SEAL) *

AUTHENTICATION

Signature(s) _____

authenticated on _____.

*

TITLE: MEMBER STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN
(If not, _____
authorized by Wis. Stat. § 706.06)

THIS INSTRUMENT DRAFTED BY:
Attorney Patrick C. Rowe

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Commonwealth
~~STATE~~ OF VIRGINIA)
) SS.
Arlington COUNTY)

CAROLYN NIEDZINSKI
Notary Public
Commonwealth of Virginia
289629
My Commission Expires Mar 31, 2012

I was commissioned a Notary Public as Carolyn Niedzinski

Personally came before me on July 29, 2010, the above-named Richard L. Bodmann to me known to be the person who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

* Carolyn McCoy
Notary Public, State of Virginia
My Commission (is permanent) (expires: 3/31/12)

(Signatures may be authenticated or acknowledged. Both are not necessary.)
NOTE: THIS IS A STANDARD FORM. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO THIS FORM SHOULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED.

© 2003 STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN

* Type name below signatures.

2

836370

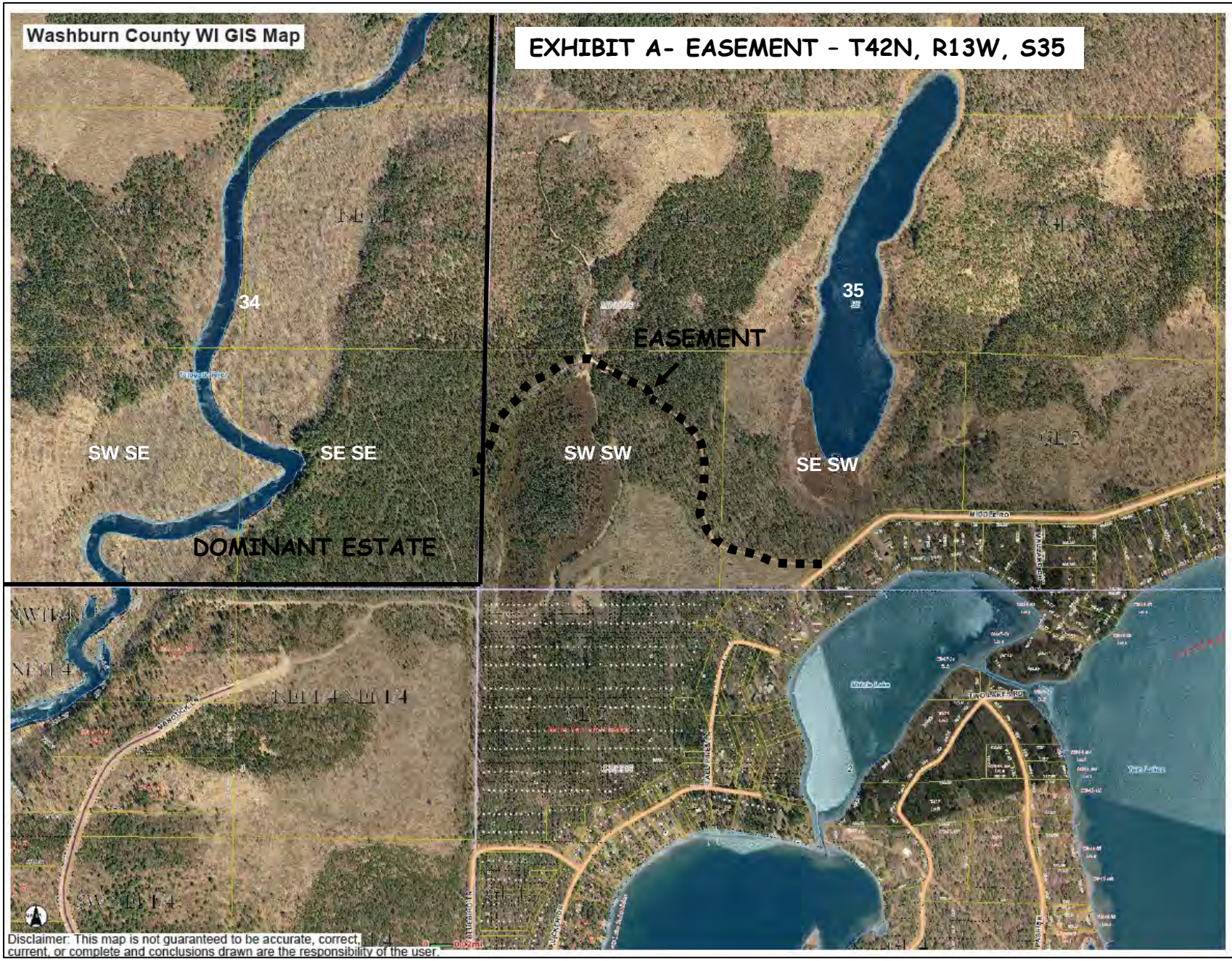
Exhibit "A"
Legal Description

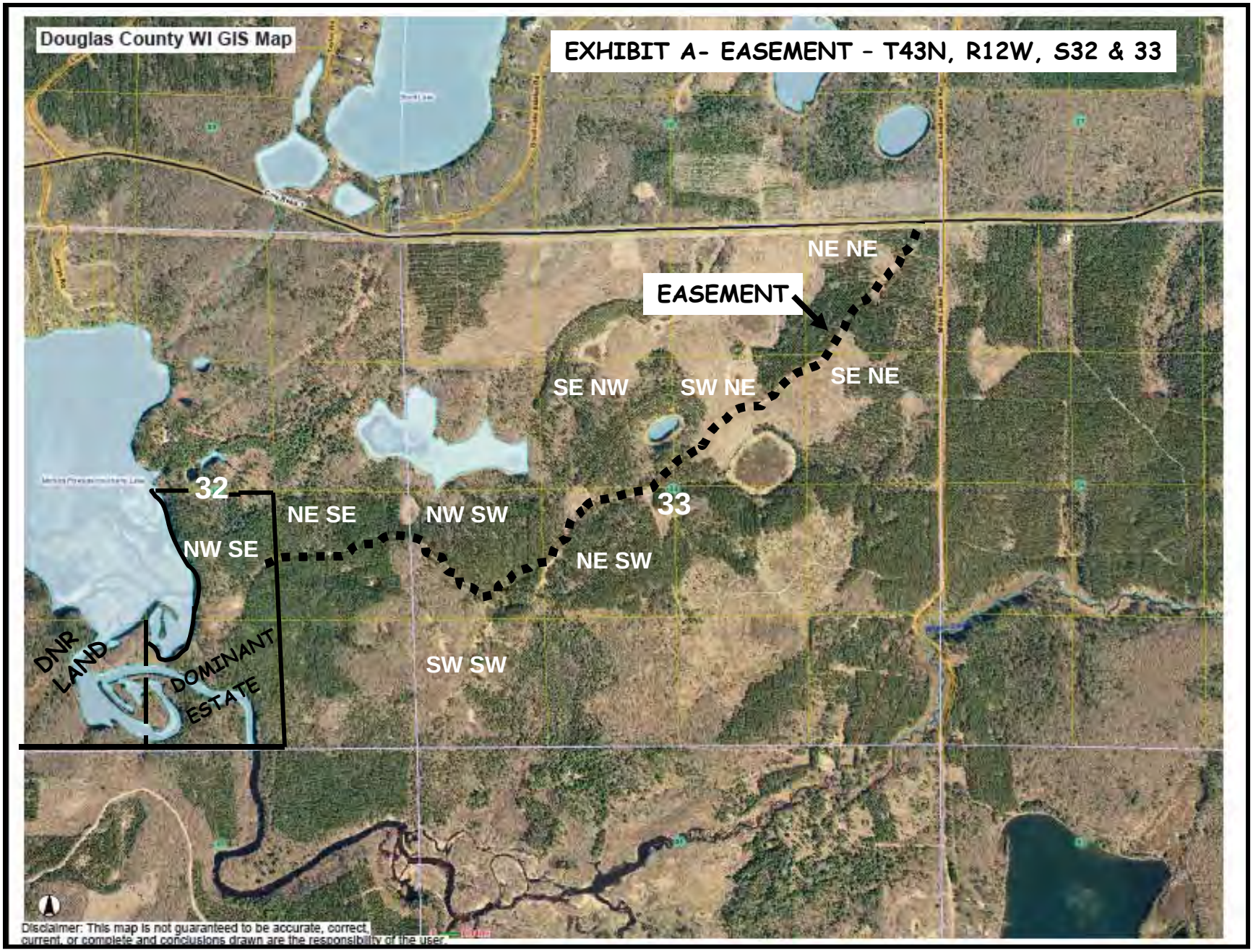
Parcel I:
The West half of the Southwest Quarter (W ½ SW ¼) and the West half of the Southeast Quarter (W ½ SE ¼) of Section 32, Township 43 North, Range 12 West, Town of Wascott, Douglas County, Wisconsin.

WA-032-01572-00
WA-032-01573-00
WA-032-01576-00
WA-032-01577-00

Parcel I-A:
A 33' easement for the benefit of Parcel I over and across the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4) of the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4); the Southeast quarter (SE 1/4) of the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4); the Southwest quarter (SW 1/4) of the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4); the Southeast quarter (SE 1/4) of the Northwest quarter (NW 1/4); the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4) of the Southwest quarter (SW 1/4) and the Northwest quarter (NW 1/4) of the Southwest quarter (SW 1/4); all in Section 33, Township 43 North, Range 12 West and the Northeast quarter (NE 1/4) of the Southeast quarter (SE 1/4) of Section 32, Township 43 North, Range 12 West, as created by Easement by and between Wausau Paper Mills, LLC, Grantor and The Conservation Fund, a Non-Profit Corporation, Grantee.

WA-032-01579-00
WA-032-01581-00
WA-032-01587-00
WA-032-01582-00
WA-032-01586-00
WA-032-01588-00
WA-032-01575-00


Washburn County WI GIS Map
EXHIBIT A- EASEMENT – T42N, R13W, S35
34
35
EASEMENT
SW SE
SE SE
SW SW
SE SW
DOMINANT ESTATE
Disclaimer: This map is not guaranteed to be accurate, correct, current, or complete and conclusions drawn are the responsibility of the user.


Douglas County WI GIS Map
EXHIBIT A- EASEMENT – T43N, R12W, S32 & 33
NE NE
EASEMENT
SE NE
SW NE
SE NW
32
33
NE SE
NW SW
NW SE
NE SW
SW SW
DNR LAND
DOMINANT ESTATE
Disclaimer: This map is not guaranteed to be accurate, correct, current, or complete and conclusions drawn are the responsibility of the user.

Form 1100-1
Rev. 5-01

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. 3.B.4

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION, DONATION AND PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT– TOTOGATIC WILD RIVER – WASHBURN AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES

FOR: JUNE 2010 BOARD MEETING

A copy of the agenda item summary addressing the purchase of the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area.

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an agreement to purchase 2,113.72 acres of land from The Conservation Fund (TCF) for $3,971,600.00 for the Totogatic Wild River, in Washburn and Douglas Counties. TCF recently purchased this tract from Wausau Paper Company. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds $150,000, to establish a new project and to accept a donation of $400,000 toward the purchase price from the Doris Duke Foundation.

Wisconsin Act 32, of 2009 created State Statute 30.26(2)3m and designated nearly 70 miles of the Totogatic River, from its outlet of Totogatic Lake in Bayfield, though Sawyer, Washburn, and Douglas Counties to its mouth at the Namekagon River in Burnett County for preservation and protection under the Wild Rivers legislative designation. The intent of the legislation is to provide guidelines for the Department to create Wild Rivers projects on specific rivers in the state, which allow the *public to enjoy rivers in a free flowing condition, preserve them from development and protect and enhance the river's natural beauty and its unique recreational and inherent values.* Four impoundments along the Totogatic River's path were exempted from the designation since three have already been developed with buildings and all areas have a dam, which requires maintenance and repair with heavy equipment. The impoundments create Nelson Lake in Sawyer County, the Totogatic Flowage in Sawyer County, the Colton and the Minong Flowages in Washburn County. The primary goal of the designation is protecting the water quality, habitat, and scenic beauty of the river by protecting its sensitive bank areas, floodplain forests, high sand banks, and its watershed. With that come the terrestrial benefits of contiguous undeveloped land for wildlife, forestry, and recreation. This property will be open to the public for all non-motorized, nature-based outdoor recreational activities to include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

This large 2,113.72-acre property is seven different blocks, spread over three townships and two counties. The Totogatic River flows through many of the land blocks and the tract provides about six miles of the two-bank frontage on the Totogatic. In addition, the tract provides ½-mile of two-bank frontage on Five Mile Creek and ¼-mile frontage on Minong Flowage. The property is approximately 90% upland woods and 10% lowland and swamp. The woodland has varying amounts of timber harvest, from clear-cut to select cuts and topography varies from rolling to steeply sloping along the river. Several town roads intersect the blocks creating points of access. In addition, the Department will obtain two easements for access where there are no town roads abutting the subject. The tracts are surrounded largely by other timber company property. However, the subject tract spans much of a gap between two county forests as well as abuts existing department ownership near the inlet of Minong Flowage in Douglas County.

The Conservation Fund parcel includes a critical segment of the newly designated Wild River, the Lower Totogatic River. Having been in an industrial forest ownership for many decades, the river frontage and associated backland is undeveloped. The property will also provide important habitat for diverse populations of wildlife including forest interior bird species and natural plant communities. While future land management will be better defined after a planning effort, the land will be maintained for public outdoor recreation. There is potential for some pine barrens restoration. Pine barrens found in Wisconsin are globally significant due to their distinctive ecological characteristics, restricted range and range-wide rarity.

The Doris Duke Foundation is donating $400,000 toward this purchase. That organization values the environmental qualities of wild and scenic rivers and wishes to support preservation in a very tangible way. The Department requests, along with acceptance of the donation and approval of the purchase, the establishment of a new project, the Totogatic Wild River. The project boundary will be set as the perimeter of the land currently proposed for purchase. If this acquisition is approved, the Totogatic Wild River will be scheduled for a master planning process in the next few years with citizen and local government involvement.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the establishment of the Totogatic Wild Rivers Project with an acreage goal of 2114 acres and approve the purchase of 2,113.72 acres for $3,971,600.00 and accept a donation of $400,000 from the Doris Duke Foundation.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No ☒	Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No ☒	Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required	Yes ☐	Attached
No ☐	Background Memo	Yes ☒	Attached

APPROVED:

Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6 — Date: 5-7-10

Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8 — Date: 5/11/10

Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8 — Date: 6-11-10

cc: S. Miller – LF/6
R. Steffes – LF/6
L. Ross – AD/8
J. Gozdialski – NOR/Spooner

State of Wisconsin

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2010 FILE REF: WR 70031

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. Frank

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, The Conservation Fund Tract, File # WR 70031, Requested Approval by August 2, 2010

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Totogatic Wild River
Washburn County

Grantor:

The Conservation Fund
c/o Tom Duffus, Upper Midwest Director
394 Lake Avenue South, Suite 404
Duluth, MN 55802

Acres: 2,113.72
Price: $3,971,600.00 (net cost of $3,571,600 after accounting for $400,000 donation)
Appraised Value: $2,959,278, $3,488,000, $3,805,000 and $4,544,606
Interest: Fee Title Purchase
Improvements: None

Location: The property is located in Washburn County 25 miles northwest of the City of Spooner.

Land Description: The subject land is level to gently rolling.

Covertype Breakdown:	Type:	Acreage:
	Upland Woodland	1,902.40
	Lowland Woodland	170.00
	Water	41.37
	TOTAL:	2,113.72

Zoning: Forestry and Recreational Conservancy
Present Use: Timber Production
Proposed Use: Forest Management, Scenic Protection and Public Recreation
Tenure: Long-term industrial forest ownership; acquired by The Conservation Fund in late April of 2010 for $3,805,000.
Property Taxes: $301.84 (FCL and MFL)
Agreement Date: April 12, 2010

Stewardship Land Access: This property will be open to the public for all non-motorized, nature-based outdoor recreational activities to include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross-country skiing.

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The Department has obtained an agreement to purchase 2,113.72 acres of land from The Conservation Fund (TCF) for $3,971,600.00 for the Totogatic Wild River, in Washburn and Douglas Counties. TCF has contracted to purchase this tract from Wausau Paper Company. The lands will be held by TCF and then purchased by the Department using FY11 funding. The Department will also reimburse TCF for interest, property taxes, closing fees, and administrative fees. These additional fees have been lumped into the cost above.

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Wisconsin Act 32, of 2009 created State Statute 30.26(2)3m and designated nearly 70 miles of the Totogatic River, from its outlet of Totogatic Lake in Bayfield, though Sawyer, Washburn, and Douglas Counties to its mouth at the Namekagon River in Burnett County for preservation and protection under the Wild Rivers legislative designation. The intent of the legislation is to provide guidelines for the Department to create Wild Rivers projects on specific rivers in the state, which allows the *public to enjoy rivers in a free flowing condition, preserve them from development* and to *protect and enhance the river's natural beauty and its unique recreational and inherent values.* Four impoundments along the Totogatic River's path were exempted from the designation since three have already been developed with buildings and all areas have a dam, which requires maintenance and repair with heavy equipment. The impoundments create Nelson Lake in Sawyer County, the Totogatic Flowage in Sawyer County, the Colton and Minong Flowages in Washburn County.

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3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship (FY11) bond funds are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
$50,000,000	$26,845,046

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE TOTOGATIC WILD RIVER:

Established: 2010
Acres Purchased to Date: 0.00
Acquisition Goal: 2,114 Acres
Percent Complete: 0.00%
Cost to Date: $0.00

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Peter Wolter (Department Review Appraiser)
Valuation Date: October 23, 2009
Appraised Value: $3,805,000.00*
Highest and Best Use: timber production

Allocation of Values:

a. land: 2,113.72 acres @ $1,800.10 per acre: $3,805,000.00
b. market data approach used, nine comparable sales cited
c. adjusted value range: $1,655.00 to $1,881.00 per acre

Appraisal Review – Richard Steffes - February 15, 2010

*Comment: Four private appraisers, Michael Augustyn, Wendy Walker, William Steigerwalt (Compass Land Consulting), and Lee Steigerwaldt (Steigerwaldt Land Services) prepared appraisals on the subject 2113.72-acre property. Valuations recommended in each appraisal ranged from $1,400/acre to $2,150/acre. Peter Wolter prepared a reconciliation of reports in an Opinion of Value using the better comparable sales compiled by the private appraisers. The reviewer's conclusion in the opinion of value recommended a price of $1,800 per acre.

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes — Date: 5-7-10

Bureau of Legal Services — Date: 5-10-10

Laurie Osterndorf — Date: 5/11/10

RES:ch

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: December 3, 2010 FILE REF: Totogatic Wild River Lands Area

TO: John Gozdzialski, NOR
Laurie Osterndorf, AD/8

FROM: Bill Smith, Spooner
Kathy Bartilson, Spooner

SUBJECT: Report to the Natural Resources Board Regarding Totogatic River Public Involvement and Authorization to Begin a Feasibility Study

We forward to you the following report to the Natural Resources Board and our staff recommendations to begin a Feasibility Study on the Totogatic Wild River Property. This document and attachments represents the work of many Department staff, partners and individuals, and we recommend your support.

1. Background Info: At the June 23, 2010 Natural Resources Board meeting, the Board approved acquisition of lands along the Totogatic Wild River in Washburn and Douglas Counties. As part of the approval, the NRB directed staff to seek local government and citizen involvement to guide our property management efforts. This report summarizes public input and requests "Authorization to Conduct a Planning Process" per NR 44.04 (2), which requires NRB notification and approval before beginning a Feasibility Study. We request your approval of this report, and then forward it through channels to the Natural Resources Board for their consideration and direction.

2. Public Involvement Summary: Staff conducted public involvement activities and received a very strong and positive response from the public and our governmental partners. Staff sent an Oct 18 news release to local media, contacted all adjoining property owners by letter, held a meeting with governmental representatives/partners and held a community open house for the public. We encouraged written comments for several weeks, closing on November 19. We provided information to the public, answered their questions and encouraged their input to guide our property management of the Totogatic Wild River lands….. and the public response was gratifying:

- Oct 18 - Government Representatives and Partner Meeting, attended by Washburn County, Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association, Burnett County, UW Extension.
- November 4 – Community Open House at the Minong Town Hall attended by approximately 25 citizens.
- Written Comment Period (Oct 18 thru Nov 19). We received an additional 21 written or called-in comments.
- November 19 – Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association presented a unanimous Board resolution calling for the Department to "expand its project boundaries" and enable further acquisition or donation of lands to protect the Totogatic Wild River. The WCLARA Board represents 28 member lake associations with a total membership of 2000.

We have attached a more detailed compilation of the public input for your review, but let us briefly highlight key themes from the public input process:

- Forestry management remains an important aspect of land management on this site with 18

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comments received supporting continued management for timber with consideration given to erosion control measures, seasonal timing of any harvesting, emphasis on natural appearance and providing for wildlife habitat.

- Limit or prohibit motorized usage of the area (19 comments), and emphasize non-motorized use.
- DNR acquire (via willing seller/willing buyer or donor) additional lands in this area for increased river protection and to support continued public recreation (16 supporting comments, including partner organization endorsements).
- Improve existing river access sites to control erosion and evaluate the need for additional river access sites (12 comments).
- Hunting, fishing, and other non-motorized recreation opportunities continue to be a valued activity on the property (10 comments).
- Primitive camping along the river at few specified sites was debated, with comments received both pro/con on the topic (9 comments).

3. Request NRB Approval for Feasibility Study (NR 44.04 (2)): In response to public input regarding land management priorities and strong support for expanded Department land protection along the Totogatic Wild River, we request Natural Resources Board "notification and approval" per NR 44.04(2) to begin staff work on a Feasibility Study for the Totogatic Wild River property. Based upon public input, we recommend discussion of acquisition boundary expansion and property management alternatives with the public.

We propose to complete the Totogatic Wild River Feasibility Study largely with staff resources from the Northern Region and with partner assistance. Jessie Schalkowski, NOR, will coordinate staff input and draft the Feasibility Study as a masters thesis (equivalent) project in her graduate study in Parks and Recreation Management - Environmental Education. Jessie's work is planned outside of her normal duties.

WHS

cc: Steve Miller, LF/6
Dick Steffes, RE/6
Kate Fitzgerald, LF/6
NOR Regional Leaders
Nancy Christel, Spooner
Rhonda Kenyon, Cumberland
Jessie Schalkowski, Spooner

Full summary of comments including names, comments made, and dates they were received.

Public Involvement Comment Summary – Totogatic Wild River Lands Area management:

The following meetings/events took place during October and November 2010 with additional written comment period open until November 19, 2010. Comments received after this timeframe also included.

1. **DNR staff input meeting – October 12, 2010, Spooner** (Attended by: Bill Smith, Mike Zeckmeister, Brad Johnson, Nancy Christel, Ryan Magana, Rick Rosen, Dave Swanson, Dave Daniels, Jim Pearson, Terry Margenau, Paul Bruggink, Kate Fitzgerald, Kathy Bartilson, Larry Damman, Jim Bishop, John Haack, Rhonda Kenyon). These staff members represent the following programs: Lands and Facilities, Wildlife, Endangered Resources, Law Enforcement, Forestry, Fisheries, I&E, Watershed, and UW-Extension Basin Education.

2. **Government Representatives and Partner input meeting – October 18, 2020, Ag Research Station, Spooner** (Attended by: Kathy Bartilson, Cathie Erickson, Wayne Sabatke, Chip Wood, Earl Cook, Dave Ferris, Mike Peterson, Dave Daniels, Jake Nichols, Bill Smith, John Haack – representing DNR, Washburn County Forestry, Burnett County Forestry and Land Conservation, Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association, and UW Extension)

3. **Public Open House – November 4, 2010, Minong Town Hall**
   - Invitations sent by e-mail to a list of Wild River partners
   - Invitations sent by e-mail to a list of interested citizens
   - Invitation sent by e-mail to the St. Croix Basin Partner Team
   - Direct mailing to all landowners bordering the Washburn County parcels and all riparian owners on the river between the Minong Flowage dam and the Burnett County Line
   - Contact by e-mail or phone to County Board members and northern legislators (Jauch and Milroy).
   - News release in the local media.

4. **Additional comment period – October 18, 2010 through November 19, 2010:** Comments were received by phone, mail, email, and in person during this time (21 comments total – several before and after this time period included). Comments/issues/concerns are included in the summary below and detailed in the table.

<u>Summary of comments, issues and concerns that emerged (in no order of priority) during the public comment period regarding this project were:</u>

- Attendees at the public meeting November 4th inquired that if the department was interested in purchasing more land, would adjoining private land be condemned, and what activities are allowed along this and other state wild rivers.
- Information was provided by the department that explained that while the department is interested in lands it does not condemn or "take" land. DNR would only work with willing sellers as funding is available and with authorization from the Natural Resources Board.
- Department staff reaffirmed continued goal of working together with landowners to help protect the Totogatic River and its wild nature.
- Questions were asked on how the Wild River designation and shoreland zoning ordinances affect what owners can do on their property.
- Majority of responses showed support for further protection of the Totogatic River with mention of further land acquisitions.

- Many responses in favor of non-motorized or "quiet sport" day-use of the lands – paddling, hiking, birdwatching, hunting/fishing, etc.
- Support for sharp-tailed grouse management.
- Potential ATV use limited and/or under supervision of ATV clubs within travel prohibited within at least 400' of the river, additional comments recommended prohibiting ATV use.
- Concern of spending/effort to manage a resource that potentially not many folks use.
- Concern on local zoning restrictions (river setbacks and other ordinances) that affect private landowner's use of their property.
- Forestry management remains important, with concern for soils, aesthetics, use of prescribed burns, wildlife habitat enhancement, and promotion of natural forest systems emphasized.
- Hunting/fishing activity remains important to users.
- River access for canoe/kayakers and land-based users was mentioned often with emphasis on control of erosion issues and primitive/rustic development preferred.
- Camping, not a generally allowed use on state lands, was debated with several comments received in regards to prohibiting camping on the property and/or limiting it to only one/two canoe accessible sites.
- Some general recommendations on improvements DNR can make in public meetings.

Public Involvement Log Management of the Totogatic Wild River Lands Area		
Contact	**Date**	**Comment**
DNR Staff –Jim Pearson, Forester	October 12, 2010	Area is in NW sands landscape; paper company is heavy into the pines resource with typical industry intensive management (planting and harvest). Much of it has been cut and regenerated. It is unlikely that paper company has a detailed forest inventory for the property.
DNR Staff – Dave Swanson, Warden	October 12, 2010	These areas are heavily hunted. On north end there is significant illegal ATV use near the golf course as well as along the farthest west edge of the properties. Most town roads are ATV routes. Paper company has done posting against ATV use and requested DNR enforce ATV trespass on private lands. They've constructed berms and placed barriers in key area. Currently lots of access trails for trucks that allow non-ATV vehicle traffic. Canoe traffic is light, some fishing, trapping. Minong Snowmobile club has access on the SE boundary and the core of the SE section has a long established snowmobile corridor through it.
DNR Staff – Bill Smith, Lands Leader	October 12, 2010	Hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, gathering, canoeing are standard permitted uses. Department is not interested in allowing motorized use in general. Depends on public input and likely discourage roads unless they serve a defined purpose.
DNR Staff – Paul Bruggink, Lands	October 12,	Existing roads or trails would have to follow

Program Supervisor	2010	NR302 protection near the river. Sites further back we'd need to consider options.
DNR Staff – Ryan Magana, Ecologist	October 12, 2010	NE corner cut but not planted, scatter red pine. Not a whole lot of weeds, fairly intact systems. Bank road parcel mostly planted. Noted a lot of ATV use by the river. Bigger blocks offer the best habitat protection. Some diversity and lots of good habitat for non-game species. Western parcel flood plain forest may have red shouldered hawk habitat. Kathy Bartilson commented- previous mussel survey found Paper Shells (rare for the upper river), purple wartyback near the mouth of Chicog Creek. Very abundant and diverse shell fish. Larry Damman commented – It is likely endangered dragonflies are present.
DNR Staff – Brad Johnson, Forestry Team Leader	October 12, 2010	There is real opportunity to continue with forest management. This large of block should have periodic disturbance. Managed or un-managed fire will likely be present within these parcels in the future. The county forest would be a good partner for future management discussion. Barrens management has potential opportunities within this property in the future. Succession on this habitat type will tend to go to pines, historically frequent disturbance across this habitat type.
DNR Staff – Nancy Christel, Wildlife Biologist	October 12, 2010	Any push to keep it un-motorized will be good for wildlife. Bring these lands towards more diverse rather than monotype pine would be positive for wildlife.
DNR Staff – Mike Zeckmeister, Regional Wildlife Supervisor	October 12, 2010	Existing river accesses have significant erosion - Bridge road, Nancy lake road. Expectations may be that now that it is DNR land something will be fixed soon. [Note, these accesses are not on DNR property-will need to work with the Township on improvements]
DNR Staff – Larry Damman, Fisheries Biologist	October 12, 2010	Fisheries surveys were conducted in recent years near Bridge Rd. Small mouth bass and fair numbers of walleye (12-14 inch) likely exports from the Minong flowage are common. River has abundant red horse; some species likely on the state watch list. There is a possibility that gilt darters are present, however the river maybe too low gradient. Adult sturgeon numbers appear to be dwindling. Population of younger fish in Namekagon and St. Croix are coming back.
DNR Staff – Kathy Bartilson, St Croix Basin Supervisor	October 12, 2010	River classified as an Outstanding Resource Water. Steep sand banks are sensitive to erosion.

		About 20 piers are present along this stretch of river. Pier owners can keep existing compliant docks (mostly small docks). There is no significant agriculture within the watershed. Washburn County adopted conservancy zoning in the 1970s along this stretch of river which includes 300 ft. structural setbacks.
DNR Staff – Rhonda Kenyon, Real Estate Specialist	October 12, 2010	Negotiated several easements to land locked parcels. Douglas county easement is 1.5 miles long off of Smith Bridge Rd and give access to the 80 acre parcel on the east side of the flowage. Section 35 by N. Twin Lake has a .75 mile long access. Remaining parcels have access with the exception of no road access to section 35 on the east side of Five Mile Creek (currently Wausau Papers has access roads throughout the area).
DNR Staff – Ed Slaminski, Financial Assistance Specialist	October 12, 2010	Recreation trails - try and maintain those already present on the property. It is very expensive to relocate and rebuild trails. Through the public input process- the public is concerned that it will turn into the very protective standards similar to those along the National Scenic Riverway. There is a fear that DNR will mirror the Park Service and take lands. Some folks are concerned that this designation may encourage too much use. Additional concerns were heard from forest industry that the wood would no longer be available for harvest and industry use.
DNR Staff – Kate Fitzgerald, Section Chief (Land Mngt)	October 12, 2010	Biggest challenge will likely be the existing use patterns. Legal opinion calls “permanent roads” development and they are prohibited near the river.
Washburn County Forestry – Mike Peterson	October 18, 2010	Investment will be lost if we don’t continue to manage the timber. Will the DNR have the resources to manage this properly/sustainably (especially young pine plantations)? Some plantings date back to the 1940s. Recommending department work “outside the box” – abuts Washburn County and Burnett County in parts, can DNR contract with county for management? Washburn County Forestry committee supports continued forest management. Bond debt service is paid by the forestry program and it should see some benefits, general funds provide the balance. County allows motorized use on some of its designated trails (has established/enforceable trail system), no plans to connect ATV trails through

		this area, should be NO ATV use right by the river. County allows other trail uses specified by county ordinance. On county land camping is allowed with written permission or in designated camping areas only.
Burnett County Forestry – Jake Nichols	October 18, 2010	Look for continued recreation and timber management. Burnett County does not have recreational trails that connect to these parcels. County ordinances specify recreational trail restrictions (ATV/Snow – winter/fall/summer usage changes). Camping is allowed on Burnett County Forest with a permit. Ordinances specify distances, specific location limitations, and other restrictions.
Burnett County Land and Water Conservation – Dave Ferris	October 18, 2010	Continue forest management with less emphasis on industrial production. Mixed feelings about providing campgrounds near the river, don't feel this river lends itself to camping. Look long term – future potential may be to acquire a larger block along the corridor of the river. Managing ATV issues will be a challenge.
Washburn County Lake and Rivers Association – Chip Wood	October 18, 2010	Public may get confused over DNR's authority over the wild river vs. authority over the recently purchase wild lands. WCLRA discourages motorized uses of lands along the river. Would like to see foot paths. Potentially establish canoe camping or lunch stop areas. Improved access points – do need to promote the wild river designation for people to use it. Pine plantations are not good for hunters or wildlife – foresters addressed this by responding that diverse red pine plantations with 6-7 trees per acre with a mix of jack pine and oak- good wildlife cover.
Paul Nelson	October 22, 2010	Nice work! Putting together some pretty well connected parcels to protect the river. Looks like a well thought-out plan. As an adjoining land owner with MFL land may want to discuss an easement/access in the future. Have sent letters to adjoining landowners in regards to what public is allowed to do on MFL land.
Bob Wanek	November 2 & 5, 2010	Appreciation for the quiet and outdoors! Some parking places and short walks for elderly folks or young families to walk/sit by the river would be nice. Longer trails for walking/skiing that hook back to parking areas. Keep open for deer hunting, but restrictions on deer stands. Let the motorized vehicles stay on the public roads, non-

		motorized trails on this property. Many people that have cabins in the area (lake/river front) have no close access to walk in the woods or get to the river. This would be a nice change from just walking down the road. Recommend canoe landing similar in style to Namekagon Cty K landing with picnic table/parking lot. It's great what you're doing and I want to see it protected otherwise I'm scared what it would look like in 10 years.
Tim & Jennifer Harkin	November 4, 2010	Unable to attend public meeting, but would like to stay informed on the area. Enjoyed the public lands of WI our entire lives. Looking forward to seeing/participating in the protection of this area. Welcome the WI DNR to the neighborhood and look forward to years of mutual enjoyment of a truly magnificent area.
Public meeting – flip chart comments	November 4, 2010	<u>Recreation</u>: • More hiking trails where vegetation is thick • Day Camp – week or two • Would like campsites small but designated and posted • Stay wild and do <u>not</u> allow camping along river; allow day trips only. • Provide access for day trips • ATV trails under supervision of clubs +/- • No ATVs • Post boundaries along river • Remove downed trees for safety only • Paddle only – worried about tubes • Provide trail along river w/overlook <u>Wildlife</u>: • Barrens management for sharp-tailed grouse and towhee • Sharp-tailed grouse management vote – great opportunity to work on the minimum habitat needs with the Namekagon Barrens Wildlife Area. <u>DNR Lands</u> • More acquisition – in support of protecting land • Another vote for acquisition and protection • Expand property boundary lines to allow willing property owners to sell or donate land for DNR ownership

		• "Protect the whole thing!" <u>General</u> • The state is expending a lot of effort to protect the river for only a few canoeists (two in 15 years observed by a landowner) • Landowner expressed concern that the county zoning building setback of 300 feet precludes him from using his land along the riverbank.
Fred Blake	November 4, 2010	More undeveloped land along Totogatic that could potentially be acquired. First priority should be considering expanding project boundary.
Public comment	November 4, 2010	Inquiring on land boundary for information for family with land in Totogatic Heights. Not interested in selling, just wanted to provide information to daughter as FYI.
Mark Mule	November 4, 2010	Owns acreage in sec. 32, SW corner. Doesn't want to sell now, but wanted information on how the process would work if he wants to sell in the future may potentially consider DNR along with any other buyer.
Cathie Erickson	November 4, 2010	As resident of Washburn Co., requests DNR expand project boundary for acquisition of lands to complete a Totogatic River corridor.
Herbert Wagner	November 4, 2010	Suggests inventory of purchased lands for red pine forest remnants that historically grew along Totogatic River. Manage red pine remnants for aesthetics/pine savanna characteristics. Use "big tree" silviculture techniques – biological rotation age, not economic rotation age. Dense pine stands could be thinned, but aesthetics should be foremost. Extend management back to ¼ mile zone.
Public comment	November 4, 2010	As a resident board member of Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association, would like to request DNR take steps to expand property boundary so any future private land transfers can be done smoothly/easily. Keep pristine, limit access, no motorized land units.
Russ Robinson	November 4, 2010	Parts of river get clogged with downfalls, is it possible to have program where this is cleared for minimal navigation by canoes/kayaks? Possible to have launch retrieval site at Thompson Bridge (town land?) or County Line Rd (DNR land)? The stretch of river from Minong Flowage to Namekagon River before suitable launch/take out

		area (approx. 10 hrs travel).
Robin Maercklien	November 4, 2010	Do not add canoe access points, enough exist already. No glass bottles or cans should be allowed. No boat ramps. Suggest barrens management where feasible; add additional lands at every opportunity. Suggest jack pine or red pine savannah management. Look favorably on prescribed fires/burns.
Tim Maloney	November 9, 2010	Comments rec'd via phone – long time recreational user, great job acquiring acreage as public land; very excited about it. Allow day use only, no camping. Would like another meeting once all feedback is received. Permanent deer stands left on the property should be removed. No ATV use, allow non-motorized use – hunting, fishing, hiking, etc. Absolutely buy more land if possible.
Russ Schaffenberg	November 10, 2010	Couldn't make it to the meeting, but would like to remain on the list for future correspondence. Cabin on Deer Lake few miles south of the confluence of Namekagon/Totogatic Rivers and have been studying flora of this area, particularly aquatic and wetland plants. Working with Freckmann Herbarium on rare plant reports. Received DNR training on aquatic plant monitoring and will be doing some survey work next summer for an AIS grant. Will be speaking with John Haack about studying Totogatic next year and assisting on any botanical work.
David Barrett	November 10, 2010	Owns 20.7 acres off Misty Bog Lake Rd and would like to be kept up to date and added to distribution list.
Bill Paron	November 11, 2010	Comments rec'd via phone – been on this river all his life (friend has property on the river), wouldn't want to see this turn into a Namekagon River situation with too many people, too many tubes, and too much noise. Like solitude and quiet that can be experienced on the Totogatic. Would like "no camping" and to see the river remain wild and quiet.
St Croix River Association	November 12, 2010	(Complete letter attached.) • Additional land acquisition should be supported. • Broad property boundary is important for maximum protection. • Land should remain open for non-motorized use.

		• Encourage a study to determine if any additional river access sites are needed. • Assess land for unauthorized access sites, erosion issues, and reduce runoff/erosion at existing or future access sites. • Forestry should continue as an option, but practice silvicutural BMPs for water quality. • Consider doing forestry work during the winter (protection of soils and less users of the river during this time). • Consider holistic riparian corridor conservation plan. • Consider the soils during land/wildlife management planning.
Bruce Moss	November 13, 2010	Review restrictions placed on the other three state wild rivers and follow them. Insure no intrusions within the view shed of the river including commercial timber harvesting and primitive campsites. Leave property open to hunting, trapping, fishing.
St Croix Basin Water Resources Planning Team	November 16, 2010	(Complete letter attached.) The basin planning team includes state, federal, and local resource agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota. • Endorses managing the Totogatic land in a manner that best protects soil/water resources. • Recommends only low-impact human-powered activities. • Any hiking trails developed should be located back from the river and maintained to prevent erosion. • Stabilize existing canoe/kayak access sites to prevent runoff. • ATV use should be banned. • Forestry practices should be used to enhance wildlife habitat where practical. • Timber harvesting should only be allowed on frozen soils to reduce erosion. • Allow natural forest conditions to eventually dominate. • Encourage agency to continue to examine potential acquisition of additional lands along the river/watershed.
Mike Johnson, President – Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum	November 18, 2010	• By all means add to the acreage and river frontage along the Totogatic River. Draw a generous line around the whole river and buy from willing sellers. • Forestry can be compatible/desirable as long

		as there are no new plantations. Barrens acreage is rarer than managed forest and wildlife depend on open spaces, wildlife needs should trump timber production. • No motorized vehicles – gate or bunker every trail and enforce! • Hunting/trapping should be permitted with tree stands removed daily. • A canoe campsite or two would be nice – more Boundary Waters than NPS, don't go overboard. • Ban piers/docks on the river. Unnecessary and impractical and inevitably wash away to become downstream litter. • Would like to see native vegetation buffers to screen cabins/houses. 100' of OWHM?
Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association (WCLRA)	November 19, 2010	WCLRA resolution received which urges the DNR to expand project boundaries along the wild segments of the Totogatic River corridor to allow acquisition, by purchase or donation, of additional shoreland properties along the Totogatic River from willing sellers or donors. Adopted by a vote of 11-0 in favor.
Gary Peterson	November 19, 2010	Writing as a canoeist, fisherman, hunter, and camper – federal National Wild and Scenic Rivers requirement that had riverfront cabins within 400' of riverbank be removed was a heartbreak for affected families. Suggest only habitable structures closer than 100' of regional flood elevation on Totogatic be required to abandon those structures. **Other cabin conditions outlined for any cabins that would exist on public lands the department would obtain. Existing rustic public access roads down to the Totogatic not marked for drive-in canoe landing sites should be blocked from vehicle access, but remain as rusting walking trails. Prohibit all ATVs. Prohibit clearcut logging within a set distance from the river. Floodplain disputes and property owners with cabins – owners should have the option to have a new floodplain study of their site done by a professional engineer at the owner's expense if they dispute the FEMA-generated floodplain maps. Every attempt should be made to add the section of the river from the Colton Flowage upstream to the Duck Dam to the wild river as it is some of the finest whitewater in the Midwest. Deer hunted by canoe a portion of the

		Totogatic through this property. No deer but memorable float spotting grey fox, bufflehead ducks, kingfishers, eagles, otter, and turkey along the way. [Note: the reach mentioned above is in the Wild River Designation; no private property is affected and no cabin removal required.].
Tony Tubbs	November 19, 2010?	Wish list for this property would include wooden, rustic-looking stairs to more easily access the river at Nancy Lake Rd and Smith Bridge Rd crossings.
Dave Evenson – President, Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society	November 19, 2010	Society would like to go on record as strongly supporting the current acquisition and would support more acquisition in this corridor. Pleased to see hunting, trapping, fishing as featured activities on these lands. Understand protection is a key factor and riparian area will have special rules. Ask that the DNR consider "Big Block" management of land away from the river, managing Jack Pine in even age rotations with blocks a square mile or larger. With the current ownership pattern this would require coordinated management with adjacent county lands, industrial forests, and private land owners. Namekagon Barrens stable sharp-tailed grouse population is within 5 miles of present ownership – large clear cuts could provide stepping stone for other temporary habitat on sand barrens.
Kevin Hagen	November 19, 2010	Congratulations on purchasing these key parcels which will provide upland habitat and watershed/shoreline protection for the river. Family of four have paddled the Totogatic several times – supports/encourages securing additional acreage. Recommend only non-motorized recreation, also no mountain bikes. Existing snowmobile trail could remain unless it needs to be moved farther from the river. No camping. Advise against adding more access points in lieu of improving the existing ones. Address erosion issues at access points. Directing access points downstream hides them from view while paddling (less visual disruption). Active logging could still be done in the winter, a quarter mile plus from river, encourage converting plantations into more natural looking stands. Keep acreage open to hunting/fishing/birdwatching/hiking/snowshoeing, etc. Manage acreage where appropriate for sharp-tailed grouse. Strongly encourage DNR to pursue approval to acquire more lands to create a

		contiguous corridor for the riverine wildlife and native plants.
Dave Zeug	November 20, 2010	Floated a portion of the Totogatic River this summer and found it a wonderful resource. Encourage DNR to purchase additional lands along the corridor as they become available to protect the watershed. Hope access remains relatively primitive without manicured/developed access points at too many locations.
Herbert Wagner	November 23, 2010	Natural Red Pine forest was a premier feature of the lower Totogatic River in pre-settlement times and would seem to be a top management opportunity wherever that still exists. Organize a "friends" advocacy/advisory group for this area. Maintain historical/scientific database of this area for reference in land management/education, etc. Use original General Land Office survey notes/maps as pre-settlement vegetation/forest management reference. Inventory forest types on the landscape for remnant, natural-origin red & white pine stands. Manage remnant, natural-origin red pine stands by Big Tree Silviculture and forest aesthetic principals. Abide by NR 302.02.4 mandating protection zone within 400' of the waters of the wild river. If harvesting mature jack pine or aspen stands which contain isolated natural-origin red and white pines those trees should be left as "sentinels" or in groups. Use fire as a management tool when applicable/practical for barrens/savannah communities. Manage existing pine plantations so that over time they replicate natural forest conditions. Document rare/unusual/special species of concern both aquatic and terrestrial. Identify/map/protect any archaeological sites. Exclude ATVs from 400' "protection zone".
Craig Walkey	November 24, 2010	Would like to see the Totogatic Wild Lands remain motorless. Am not opposed to primitive camping at designated locations or any other daytime recreations.
Cathie Erickson	November 29, 2010	Totogatic Wild River is a rare, irreplaceable gem. Top DNR priority should be managing acquired land along/near river to protect river/maintain its wild nature. Natural condition of land should be maintained or restored. Human activities near river should be limited to non-motorized uses. Too great a risk that motorized vehicles will result in erosion along river banks. Public should have

		access to the river's scenic beauty through trails back away from the river with occasional "fingers" reaching toward viewing points. Paddlers on the river should have access for rest stops/picnics not by development of land, but by notifying users where public lands exist by maps or signage. Camping should not be allowed. Land should be managed to prevent/control invasive species (terrestrial and aquatic).
David Murphy	December 20, 2010	Would like to see the continuation of Mosinee Paper's dead/down tree removal permit. This was a 3 month permit for $25.00. This helped to supplement firewood supply. Feels the state should adopt a similar program.