NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION – TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA AND LOWER CHIPPEWA RIVER NATURAL AREA – PEPIN COUNTY

FOR: AUGUST 2010 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Richard Steffes

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 87.45 acres of land from Johan Brekhus and Michelene Sullivan for $212,000 for the Tiffany Wildlife Area and Lower Chippewa River Natural Area in Pepin County. The item is being submitted because the purchase price exceeds $150,000.

The tract is located about two miles south of the Village of Arkansaw. This property has 40 acres that lie within the Tiffany Wildlife Area with the remaining area lying within the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area project boundary. The property adjoins department-managed lands to the south and touches on a portion of department lands to the east and west. The property is a mix of upland woods and wetlands. It has an escarpment that overlooks the Chippewa River Bottoms.

The Tiffany Wildlife Area is located in west-central Wisconsin along the Chippewa River about 70 miles north of La Crosse and 50 miles south of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. It contains the lower 12 miles of the Chippewa River, above the Mississippi River in Buffalo and Pepin Counties. The wildlife area is part of the largest contiguous lowland hardwood forest in the Midwest and is adjacent to the northern end of the 200,000-acre Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The property is used by the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, cross-country skiing, hiking and other outdoor recreation. In 2000, the Department of Natural Resources recognized the importance the entire area surrounding the Tiffany Wildlife Area with the establishment of the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area. The area contains the highest number of rare species than any other location of comparable size in the state.

The Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area was established to protect natural areas and rare species habitat. The project focuses on remnant prairie, oak savanna, woodlands, wetlands and geologic features, and contains the largest intact floodplain forest in the upper Midwest. Other recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting are also popular.

Purchase of the Brekhus-Sullivan property will provide opportunities for wildlife management and public recreation and consolidate state ownership as well as protect and preserve endangered and threatened species.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the purchase of 87.45 acres of land for $212,000 for the Tiffany Wildlife Area and the Lower Chippewa River Natural Area.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

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<tr>
<th>Fiscal Estimate Required</th>
<th>Environmental Assessment of Impact Statement Required</th>
<th>Background Memo</th>
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<td>No ☒</td>
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APPROVED:

Real Estate Director, Richard E. Steffes - LF/6
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8
Secretary, Matthew J. Frank - AD/8

cc: S. Miller - LF/6 R. Steffes - LF/6 L. Ross - AD/8
T. Hauge – WM/6 S. Humrickhouse – WCR/ Eau Claire

6-3-10
7-15-10
DATE: June 29, 2010

TO: Governor Doyle

FROM: Matthew J. [Signature]

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Brekhus/Sullivan Tract, File # WM 60097, Option Expires September 12, 2010

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

   Tiffany Wildlife Area and Lower Chippewa River Natural Area
   Pepin County

   Grantor:
   Johan Brekhus and Micheline Sullivan
   4709 27th Avenue South
   Minneapolis, MN 55406

   Acres: 87.45
   Price: $212,000.00
   Appraised Value: $212,000
   Interest: Fee Title Purchase
   Improvements: House, well and septic, shed and two silos

   Location: The property is located in Pepin County about 10 miles southwest of the City of Durand.

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

   Covertype Breakdown: Type: Acreage:
   Wetland 36.00
   Home Site 2.00
   Woodland 48.00
   Brush 1.45
   TOTAL: 87.45

   Zoning: No general zoning
   Present Use: Cabin/Recreation
   Proposed Use: Wildlife Management and Public Recreation
   Tenure: 14 years
   Property Taxes: $1,763
   Option Date: June 14, 2010

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

2. JUSTIFICATION:

   The 87.45-acre Brekhus-Sullivan property is proposed for purchase for the Tiffany Wildlife Area and the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area in Pepin County. The tract is located in the Town of Waterville about two miles south of the Village of Arkansaw. This property has 40 acres that lie within the Tiffany Wildlife Area with the remaining area lying within the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area project boundary. The property adjoins department-managed lands to the south and touches on a portion of
department lands to the east and west. The property is unique in that it has an escarpment that overlooks the Chippewa River Bottoms.

The Tiffany Wildlife Area is located in west-central Wisconsin along the Chippewa River about 70 miles north of La Crosse and 50 miles south of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. It contains the lower 12 miles of the Chippewa River, above the Mississippi River in Buffalo and Pepin Counties. The wildlife area is part of the largest contiguous lowland hardwood forest in the Midwest and is adjacent to the northern end of the 200,000-acre Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Land in the project area was first purchased in 1960. The purpose of the project is to manage the 15,650-acre wetland habitat area primarily for waterfowl and wetland wildlife and for public recreation. The property is used by the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, cross-country skiing, hiking and other outdoor recreation. In 2000, the Department of Natural Resources recognized the importance of the entire area surrounding the Tiffany Wildlife Area with the establishment of the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area. The area contains the highest number of rare species than any other location of comparable size in the state.

The Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area was established in 2000 to protect 15,000 acres of natural areas and rare species habitat. The project focuses on remnant prairie, oak savanna, woodlands, wetlands and geologic features, and contains the largest intact floodplain forest in the upper Midwest. The Natural Heritage Inventory indicates the occurrence or probable presence rare plants and animals in or near the project area. These species depend on the unique nature of their respective ecosystems to survive, coinciding with the goal of the project to protect biological diversity and providing research benchmarks for these rare resources. The purpose of the Natural Area program is to protect the best remaining examples of Wisconsin's native plant and animal communities, their component species, and habitat for rare plant and animal species. Natural areas protect the natural diversity of the landscape for future generations. Natural areas are used for study by school groups of all ages and researchers as well as by the general public. Other recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting are also popular.

The Department recommends the purchase of the Brekus-Sullivan property to provide opportunities for wildlife management and public recreation and to consolidate state ownership within the project boundary as well as to protect and preserve known endangered and threatened species.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship Wildlife (FY 11) bond funds are anticipated:

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<th>Funds allotted to program:</th>
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<th>Balance after proposed transaction:</th>
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4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA:

Established: 1946
Acres Purchased to Date: 13,041.39
Acquisition Goal: 15,955.0 Acres
Percent Complete: 81.74%
Cost to Date: $1,359,793.48

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Ronald Rasmussen
Valuation Date: June 4, 2009
Appraised Value: $212,000.00
Highest and Best Use: Recreation/Seasonal Residential
Allocation of Values:

a. land: 87.45 acres @ $2,264.15 per acre: $198,000.00
b. improvements: $14,315.00
c. total: $212,000.00
d. market data approach used, ten comparable sales cited
e. adjusted value range: $2,200.00 to $3,300.00 per acre

Appraisal Review: Peter Wolter – August 19, 2009

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Steffes

Joseph Wm. Renshaw
Bureau of Legal Services

Laurie Osterndorf

RES:ch

Date

Date

Date