


CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: December 18, 1981

File Ref: 2300

To: Charles Higgs - Green Bay

From: James R. Huntoon 

RECEIVED DNR
JAN 7 1982
Lake Mich. Dist.

Subject: Peshtigo Brook Wildlife Area

At the December meeting, the Natural Resources Board approved the Conceptual Element of the subject Plan. No change was made to the Plan.

I am enclosing extra copies of the final draft for your future use. I would suggest that the original be retained on file by the District Master Plan Coordinator. The original will serve as a district reference copy and provide the base for accommodating any future photocopying needs.

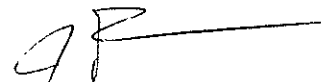
Please complete the Implementation Element of the Master Plan as outlined in the Master Plan Handbook and submit to this office by March 20, 1982.

Enc.

cc: R. Nicotera - ADM/5
J. Keener - WM/4

1037L

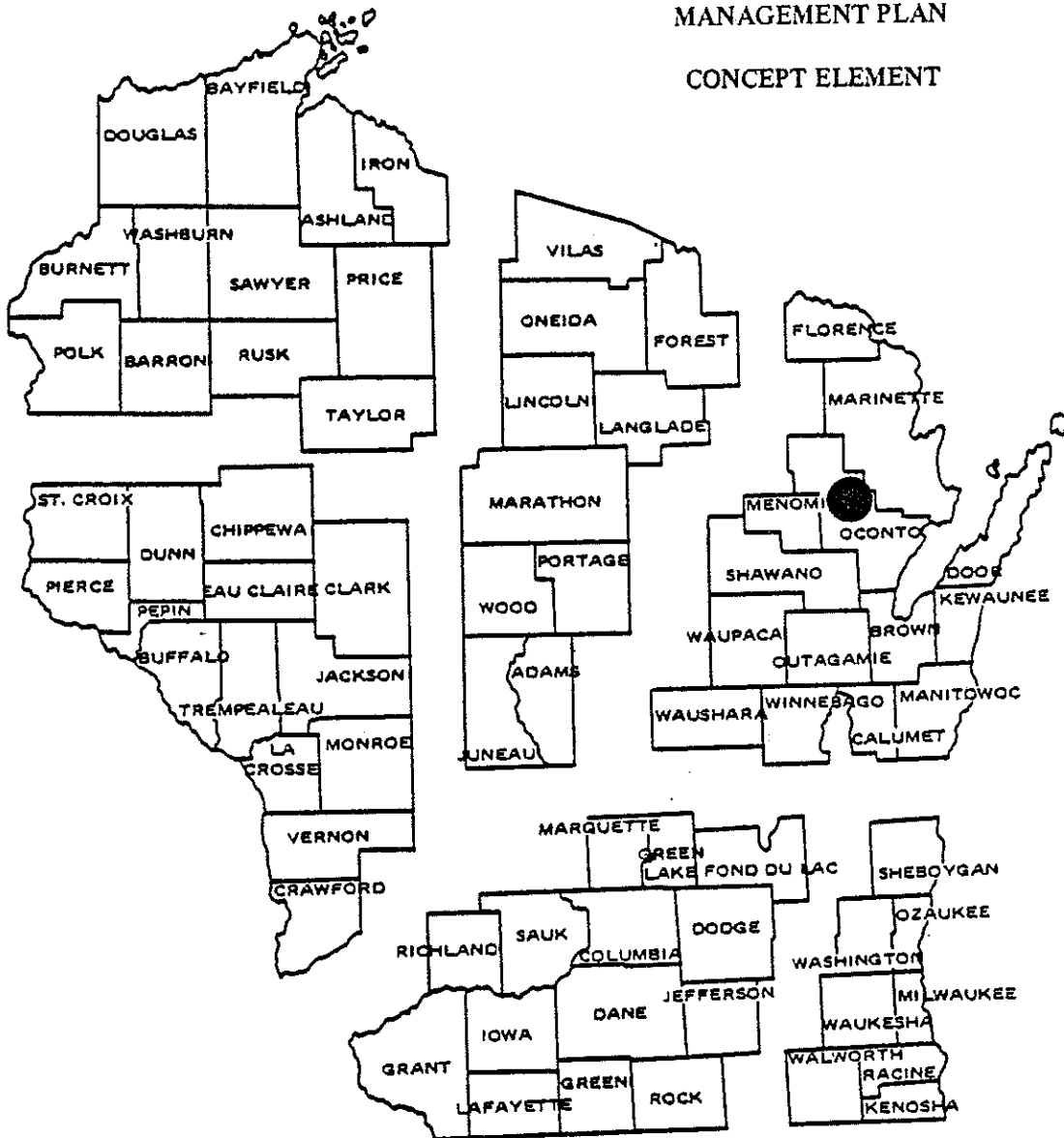
Roger Anderson
Please follow through



PESHTIGO BROOK WILDLIFE AREA

MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

Leader: TOM BAHTI, WILDLIFE MANAGER
MILT BURDICK, FISH MANAGER
BOB COOK, FOREST MANAGER/PARK MANAGER

Approved By: Nat. Res. Board

Date: DEC 16 1981

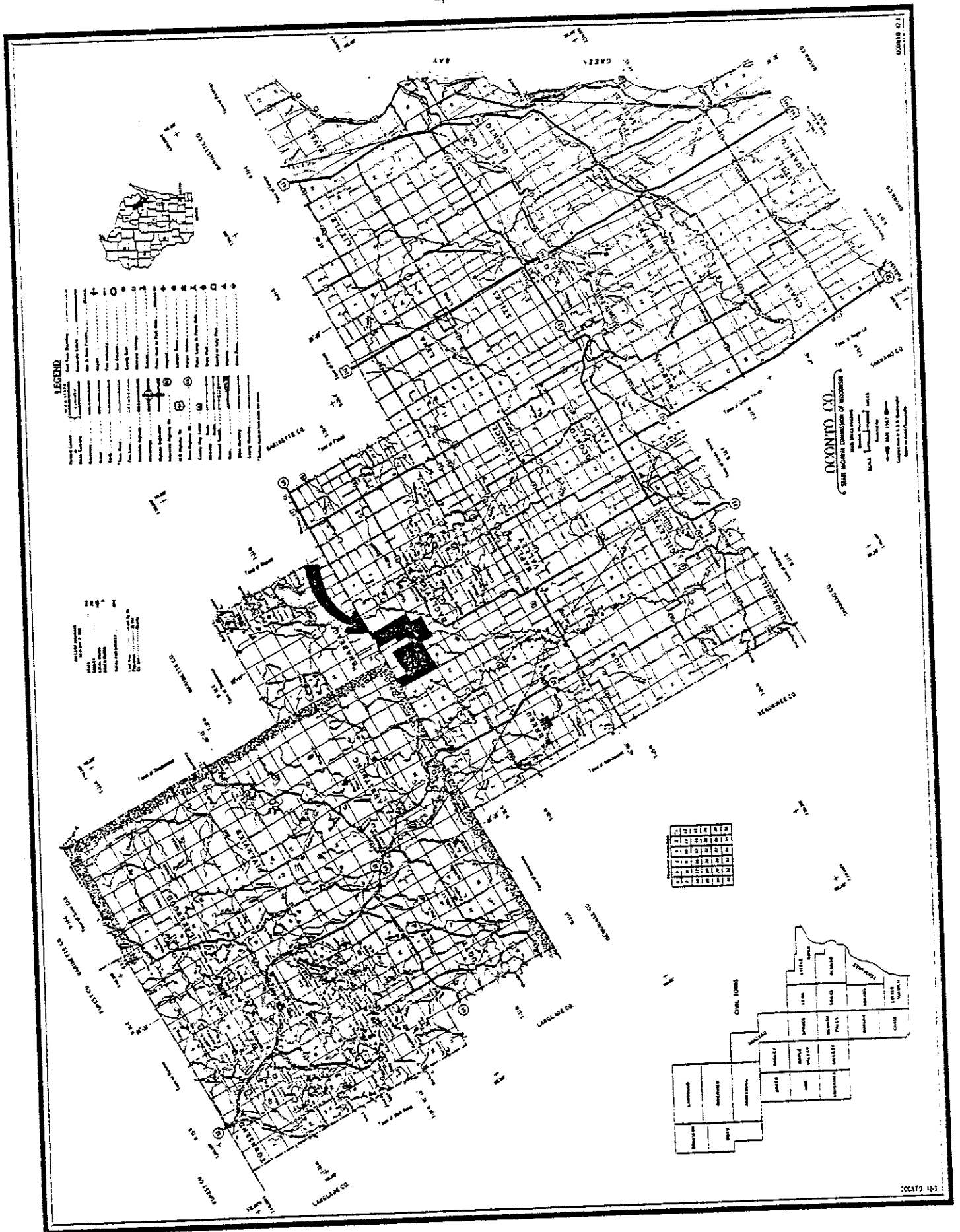


FIGURE 1 LOCATOR

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Peshtigo Brook Wildlife Area is located in north central Oconto County in the Town of Bagley. Currently, 2,160 acres are in state ownership with a total property acquisition goal of 3,200 acres. The area lies 33 miles west of the city of Marinette and 54 miles northwest of Green Bay (Figure 1).

The wildlife area is surrounded by county forest lands on the east, south and west, and is bordered by a large private muck farm on the north. The Peshtigo Brook runs through the eastern third of the area in a northeast to southwest direction. The area is the terminal of a glacial lake and is basically a series of old shore dunes and peats underlain by coarser lacustrine deposits.

The flora present exhibits some unique characteristics, due to a combination of high water table and the presence of sands, especially where old dunes exist. Because of the persistent presence of wet sands, distinctive flora develops including various gentians, club moss, and other moss varieties.

On April 20, 1953, 2,040 acres of land were purchased from Oconto County and another 80 acres was acquired from the Commissioners of Public Lands on April 25, 1960. A 40 acre tract was purchased by the Department on April 22, 1953, and is now the site of the Bagley fire tower.

Originally proposed as a waterfowl area, the property was classified as a sharp-tailed grouse area and initial management was aimed at this species. A series of dikes were constructed in 1955-56 for fire suppression and, as impoundments formed, public sentiment for management of the area turned almost entirely toward waterfowl.

Sharp-tailed grouse dwindled and disappeared from the area by 1960. It also became increasingly evident that waterfowl management on the area was severely limited for both biological and financial reasons. Soils, water quality and quantity, and the limited possibility of acquisition of the muck farms all lessened the potential of the area for waterfowl production and management.

Upland soils on the area are all loose, light and porous and conventional management proved very difficult in the past. Trail seeding along road cuts was a total failure, dikes required constant care and attention, and impounded waters virtually disappeared unless replenished.

More recent management of the area has been in conjunction with wildlife management activities on the surrounding county forest lands and has been aimed at forest wildlife species (white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock, etc.). Sandhill cranes are known to frequent the area throughout the year and they undoubtedly nest on some of the marshes.

No detailed fisheries investigation has been conducted on Peshtigo Brook. Warm water fishes may frequent that portion of the stream within the wildlife area, but fishermen have never been seen fishing the stream and sportsmen have never requested that fish management activities be conducted.

A snowmobile trail maintained by the county traverses the wildlife area in an east-west direction. Its presence and use is widely approved and accepted by the public.

Cross-country skiing, a growing activity in this region, is allowed on the wildlife area and has been compatible with other use activities occurring throughout the property. However, because of state liability concerns and because budgetary constraints have precluded supervision, no trail designation is given to cross-country skiing.

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OTHER BENEFITS

GOAL:

To manage a state-owned wildlife area for forest and wetland wildlife, provide public hunting and trapping opportunities as well as accommodate other compatible recreation and education.

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide 1,500 participant days of hunting and trapping recreation as follows:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Participant Days</u>
a. Ducks	50
b. Deer (bow and gun)	500
c. Ruffed Grouse/Woodcock	800
d. Furbearers	100
e. Other game	50

2. Harvest 120 cords of merchantable timber off 10 acres compatible with wildlife objectives.
3. Provide opportunities for 240 participant days of snowmobiling recreation associated with a county trail system.

ANNUAL ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:

1. Accommodate 100 participant days of compatible recreation including cross-country skiing, hiking, berry picking, snowshoeing, and nature observation.
2. Produce .5 ducks per acre on 20 acres of permanent water (10 ducks).
3. Contribute to the habitat of other wildlife including migratory, endangered, and threatened species.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The current property boundary delineating 3,200 acres in the Peshtigo Brook Wildlife Area should be changed to conform to the current state ownership boundary and acquisition should be considered complete (Figure 2).

Various development has been carried out on the wildlife area and, as it exists today, it is a productive wildlife property. The entire property should be designated as a Fish and Wildlife Management Area - RD₂. No further development will be needed in the foreseeable future. Existing facilities are illustrated in Figure 3. Management will be focused on maintaining the participant day use stated in the goal and objectives. Maintenance of use facilities (property signs, trailmowing, etc.) will be ongoing activities.

Hunting recreation remains the primary management goal with forest wildlife receiving primary emphasis. Wildlife centered non-hunting use will be encouraged. Silviculture techniques will be used as the major tool with which to achieve forest wildlife management objectives and commercial sales will be designed to maximize wildlife benefits.

The 464 acres of aspen on the property will be maintained and clear cuts should be designed not to exceed 20 acres so as to maximize the diversity of forest age classes. One-half of the available aspen will be harvested within the next ten years and the remaining half cut in the following 20 years. Management of the remaining 492 acres of forest lands will be in accordance with the guidelines in the Silvicultural and Aesthetics Management Handbook and based on the Forest Reconnaissance completed in 1975.

<u>Cover Type</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Pine	28
Aspen	464
Oak	287
Lowland Brush	778
Bog/Marsh	406
Openings	20
Swamp Hardwood	177
	<u>2,160</u>

As money and time become available, sedge meadows will be maintained for wildlife openings and habitat diversity by preventing brush invasion by mowing, burning, or herbicide application. Management will primarily consist of maintenance type activities and will be continued as long as user activities remain significant.

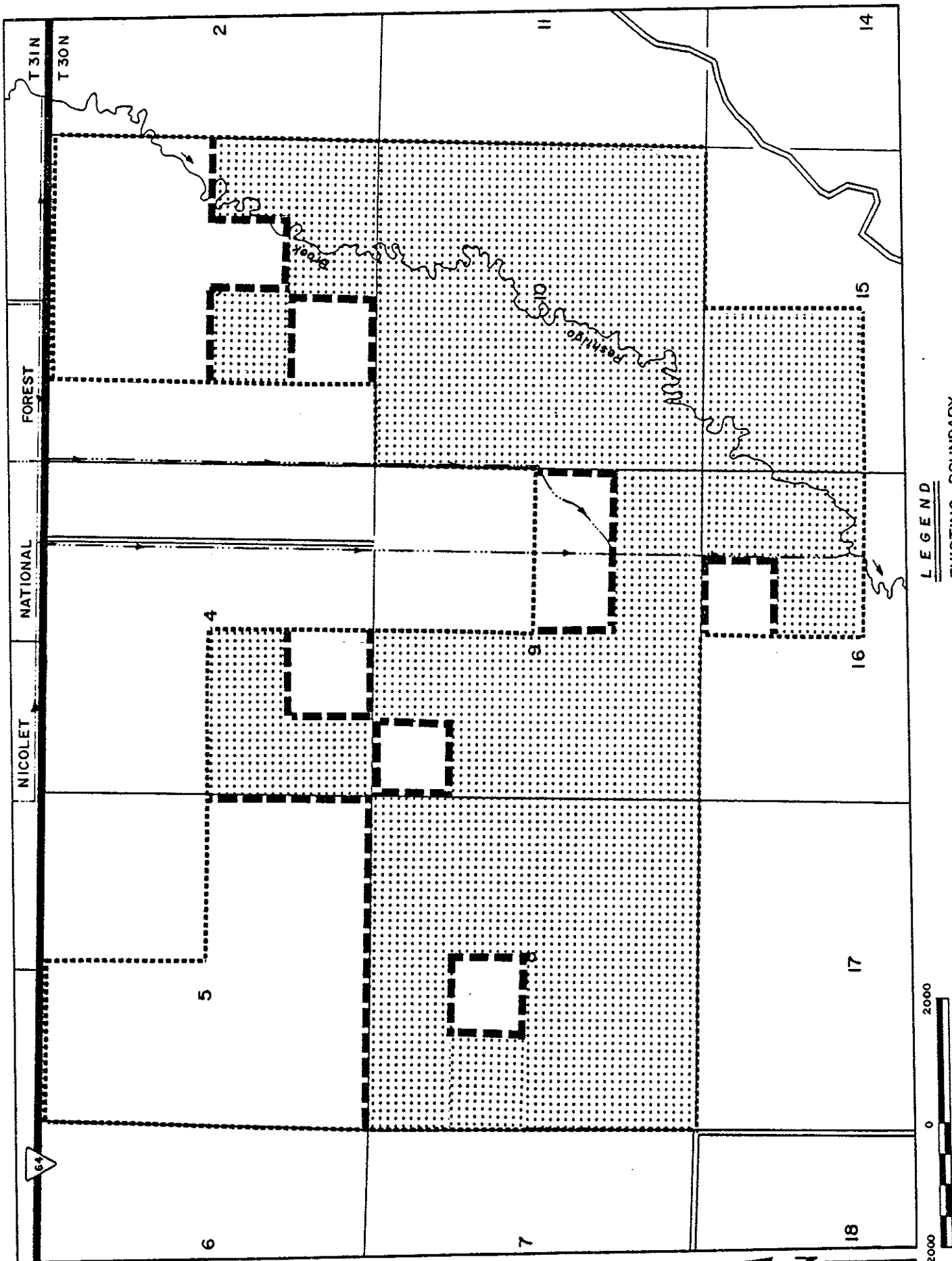


FIGURE 2 BOUNDARY AND OWNERSHIP

LEGEND

- EXISTING BOUNDARY
- STATE OWNED
- PROPOSED BOUNDARY

PESHTIGO BROOK WILDLIFE AREA

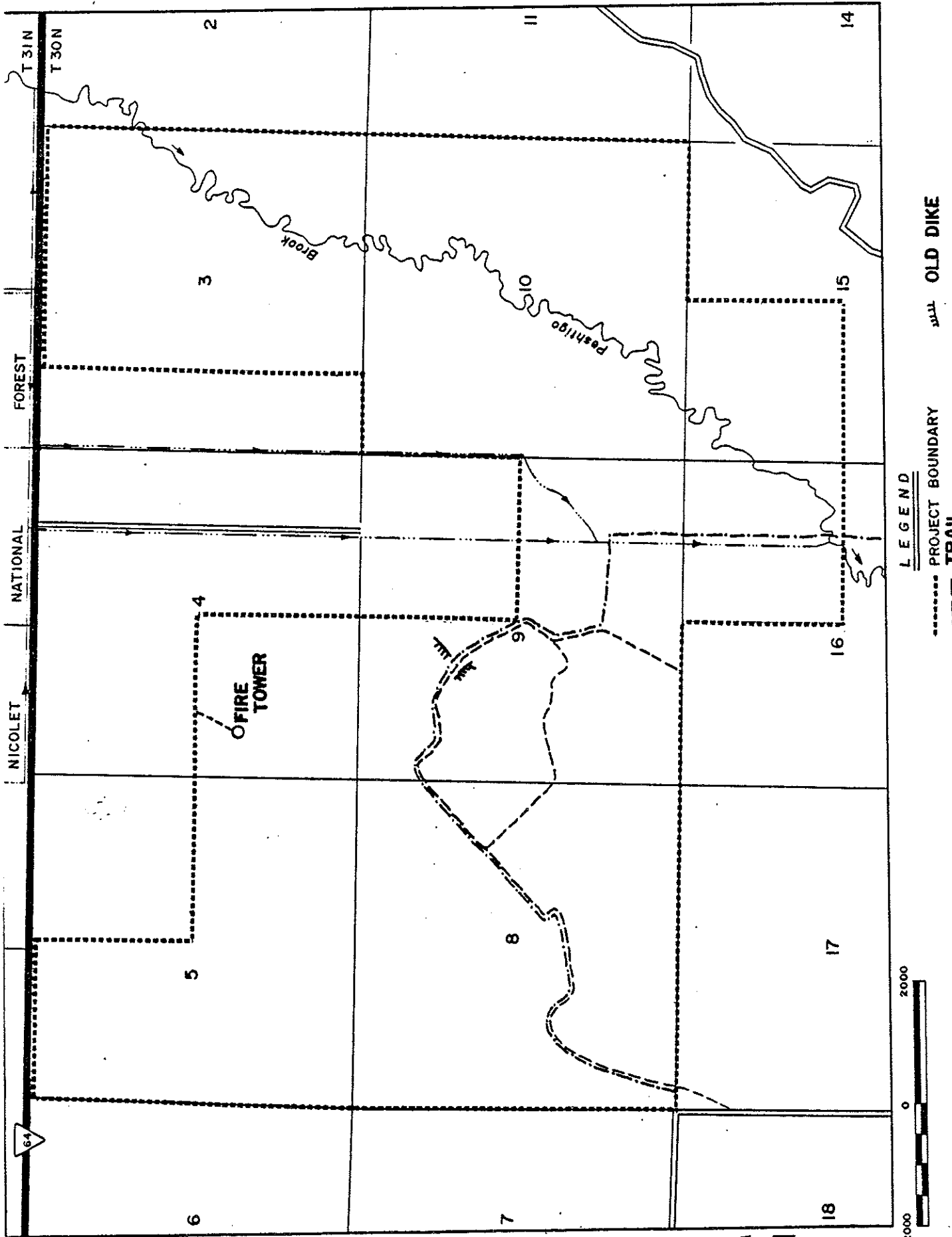


FIGURE 3 EXISTING AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

PESHTIGO BROOK WILDLIFE AREA

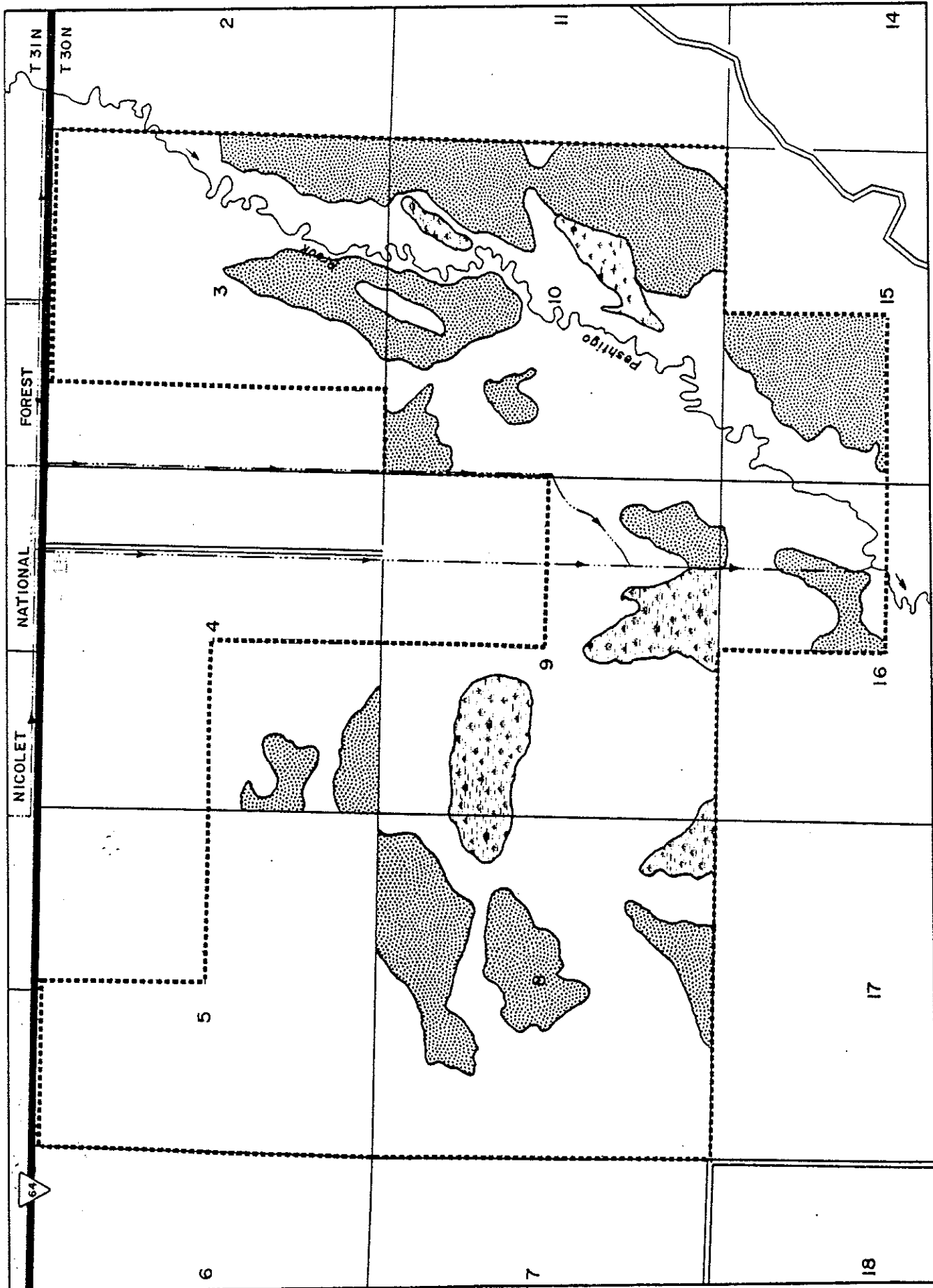


FIGURE 4 VEGETATION

PESHTIGO BROOK WILDLIFE AREA

APPENDIX

Master Plan Comments

By: Henry W. Kolka
Representing: Wild Resources Advisory Council
Date: August 26, 1981

The Wild Resources Advisory Council finds the Peshtigo Brook Wildlife Area Management Plan Concept Element woefully weak in analysis of basics for a wild area of 2,160 acres in state ownership and very limited in its proposed management. According to the text, the area is a productive wildlife property. Yet nowhere in the discussion are there any substantiating facts to support this general statement. Likewise, no concern is expressed for wildlife outside of the game target species of whitetail, ruffed grouse, and woodcock. Oh yes, there is a guess that some sandhill cranes might nest in some of the marshes. Since basic analysis of the property is so inadequate the council questions the task force's assumption that there are no other wild resource categories on the property beside the general designation of RD₂.

DNR RESPONSE: Do not agree with this assessment. Because of the budget constraints and program priorities, the Department has determined that a more elaborate planning effort is not justified. A simple, cost-effective effort is warranted for game species consistent with the priorities identified by the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Management System.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Background Information

- a. In general, this segment is the best presentation of the Concept Element that is of the last two paragraphs are discounted.
- b. Second paragraph - correction. The Peshtigo Brook runs from northeast to southwest direction. Not southeast.
- c. Second paragraph - Last sentence. The WRAC questions the statement of coarse lacustrine deposits. If the comparison is intended in relation to peats, then the word should be coarser not coarse.
- d. Third paragraph - The statement says, quote "The flora present exhibits some unique characteristics." The Council feels that adequate explanation is necessary.
- e. Next to the last paragraph - Page one. WRAC considers this presentation very inadequate. Beside the target game species listed, the Council recommends that adequate inventories of nongame animal and plant species be a part of this report. If the Concept Element is prepared for a wildlife area, then all forms of wildlife in the area should get some exposure.
- f. Last paragraph - Page one. Again, the WRAC charges the task force of neglect of their responsibility. Since no detailed fisheries investigation has been conducted on Peshtigo Brook, the task force is obligated to propose such activity in the Concept Element.

DNR RESPONSE: Corrections incorporated. However, before stating in a definitive sense, that a species if found in an area, there must be: 1) a faunal list relating to the description, 2) a voucher in some museum or recognized collection, 3) personal experiences of the writer. Anything else must be listed as hypothetical. Since a comprehensive list has not been completed and funding prohibits obtaining such a list at this time, the Department recommends proceeding with the planning process with the information available.

2. Page 2 - First Paragraph. The WRAC questions the advisability of operating a long snowmobile trail disrupting wildlife in nearly one-third of the project area. With the popularity of this sport declining, possibility of a better compromise is recommended.

DNR RESPONSE: Trail activities have been monitored and no adverse impact has been observed.

3. Page 2 - Goals, Objectives and Other Benefits. WRAC recommends that and education be added to the Goal after the word recreation.

DNR RESPONSE: Concur, text modified.

4. Page 3 - Recommended Management and Development Program.

- a. First paragraph. WRAC considers the proposal of no planned expansion of property beyond the present holdings of 2,160 acres a negative approach. According to Figure 2, there are a number of private blocks (3 small ones) that are disruptive for area management and should be left on a "willing seller" list for future consideration. Acquiring the 3,200 total may not be realistic in today's climate.

DNR RESPONSE: In evaluating public needs on a statewide basis in light of current dollar restrictions, the Department does not feel the cost/benefit ratio warrants additional purchasing in this area.

5. Page 3 - Paragraph 2. Considering the presentation of the Concept Element, the WRAC questions the management designation of RD₂. There is no indication that fish management is part of the program.

DNR RESPONSE: The Master Plan Handbook does not provide jargon which describes this site accurately. For all practical purposes, it is indeed a "Wildlife Management Area".

6. Page 3 - Last paragraph. To maintain a sedge meadow; mowing, burning or herbicide application is considered. In first place, how will the sedge meadow enhance the project area and where will it be? If herbicides are considered, what type, and how will it be applied? Herbicides are a touchy issue with the public and the WRAC.

DNR RESPONSE: Text modified regarding need. Herbicides would only be used if determined to be environmentally safe.

7. The charts of Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 are well coordinated. Figures 4 and 5 are based on the assumption that the original 3,200 acre project area is still in the acquisition boundary.

DNR RESPONSE: The acreage goal is reduced by 1,040 acres to coincide with the current ownership pattern.

By: C. E. Germain
Representing: Scientific Areas Preservation Council
Date: September 3, 1981

I have reviewed on behalf of SAPC and find no cause for concerns of SAPC.

988L