

State of Wisconsin

SENATE CHAIR
Alberta Darling

317 East, State Capitol
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ASSEMBLY CHAIR
John Nygren

309 East, State Capitol
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Joint Committee on Finance

MEMORANDUM

To: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

From: Senator Alberta Darling
Representative John Nygren

Date: May 11, 2015

Re: 14-Day Passive Review Approval – DNR

Pursuant to s. 23.0917(6m), Stats., attached is a 14-day passive review request from the Department of Natural Resources, received on May 11, 2015.

Please review the material and notify **Senator Darling** or **Representative Nygren** no later than **Friday, May 29, 2015**, if you have any concerns about the request or if you would like the Committee to meet formally to consider it.

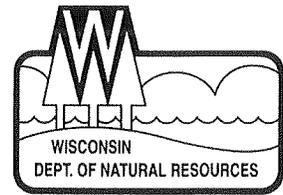
Also, please contact us if you need further information.

Attachments

AD:JN;jm

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
101 S. Webster Street
Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921

Scott Walker, Governor
Cathy Stepp, Secretary
Telephone 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TTY Access via relay - 711



May 8, 2015

The Honorable Alberta Darling, Co-Chair
Committee on Joint Finance
Room 317 East
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison WI 53707-7882

The Honorable John Nygren, Co-Chair
Committee on Joint Finance
Room 309 East
State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53707-53708

Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

Pursuant to s. 23.0917(6m), Wis. Stats., the Department is notifying you as co-chairs of the Committee on Joint Finance of a proposed Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant to the Glacial Lakes Conservancy in the amount of \$2,443,430.00 for the acquisition of 184 acres along Lake Michigan in the Town of Holland, Sheboygan County. The proposed grant award represents 50% of the total eligible project costs.

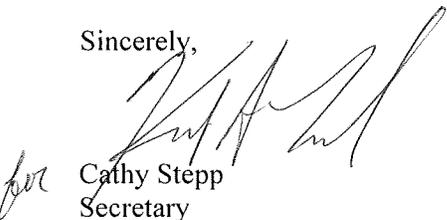
The proposed project is a portion of a larger, 328 acre property acquired by the Conservancy in partnership with Sheboygan County to be owned and managed as a County Park. The acres for which they are seeking Stewardship grant assistance include a significant stretch of undeveloped Lake Michigan beach. The entire property will be open to the public for nature-based recreational activities including hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, cross-country skiing and beach access.

The Conservancy and County propose no prohibitions of nature based outdoor activities as defined in s. 23.0916(1)(b), Wisc. Stats.

As provided in s. 23.0917(6m)(a), Wis. Stats., if the Department does not receive notification of the scheduling of a hearing from either of the Joint Committee on Finance co-chairpersons within 14 working days from today, the Department will award this grant.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Cathy Stepp
Secretary

C: Sanjay Olson, Lands Div. Administrator
Steve Miller, Director, Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Pam Foster Felt, Stewardship Nonprofit Grant Manager

DATE: May 8, 2015

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Stepp, Secretary

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF STEWARDSHIP GRANT GREATER THAN \$250,000

Pursuant to s. 23.0917(6m)(a) and (c), Wis. Stats., the Department of Natural Resources is notifying you of a proposed Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant to the Glacial Lakes Conservancy in the amount of \$2,443,430.00 for the acquisition of 184 acres of the Amsterdam Dunes property. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program is funded under s. 20.866(2)(ta), Wis. Stats.

I. PROJECT DETAILS:

Project Sponsor: Glacial Lakes Conservancy
Grant sub-program: Habitat Areas

Location:

The Amsterdam Dunes property is located in Sheboygan County, Town of Holland along the shore of Lake Michigan. The property is immediately south of DNR's Cedar Grove Hawk Research Station and adjacent on two sides to a small beach front town park. The public can access the property from parking at Amsterdam Park, from Sauk Trail Road and from the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Project maps are attached as Appendix A.

Project Description:

Glacial Lakes Conservancy, working in partnership with Sheboygan County, is seeking Stewardship funds to cost share on a 184 acre portion of a larger, 328 acre parcel, all of which will ultimately transfer to County ownership to be managed by Sheboygan County Parks as the Amsterdam Dunes Preservation Area. The entire acreage will be managed as public park: the areas excluded from the application for Stewardship funding will be utilized as a wetland mitigation bank. This site is one of the last remaining undeveloped and significant Lake Michigan shoreline habitat assemblages in Wisconsin. This is property that the DNR and other conservation buyers have sought opportunities to purchase for at least the last decade.

The two most notable benefits of this project are permanent conservation of a public recreational asset along Lake Michigan and preservation and enhancement of migratory bird stopover habitat.

This acquisition will ensure public access to one of the last undeveloped sections of Lake Michigan beach between Sheboygan and Chicago and provide over 300 acres of land for public, nature-based recreation. The County's plans include development of a trail system and interpretive material about the ecological communities on the property.

The larger project is bisected north to south by a ~40 foot bluff, the ancient shoreline of Glacial Lake Nipissing. Most of the Stewardship acres lie below the bluff and host a notably diverse array of ecological community types: wet meadow, forested wetland and some upland woods including a stand of

100+ year-old white pine, ridge-swale wetland complex, several streams draining off the bluff and approximately 1,540 feet of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline beach and vegetated dune. The dunes host a population of state endangered and special concern species. The Stewardship acres above the bluff include ~60 acres of tilled farmland and warm water stream corridors.

Sheboygan County plans significant wetland restoration on portions of the property and preservation and enhancement of the dune, ridge/swale and wooded wetland communities. Their primary management goals are: 1) to improve the ecological health and wildlife habitat on the entire property through the re-establishment and preservation of native ecological communities; and 2) provide quality wildlife-based recreation.

Project Goals:

This acquisition will advance goals of several regional conservation and comprehensive land use plans:

- This property has been identified as an extremely important migratory bird stopover site in a designated Important Bird Area. Research conducted by DNR and partners, including USFWS and The Nature Conservancy identifies immediate shoreline habitat, wooded wetland, riparian areas and old growth stands as the highest priorities for conservation along the Great Lakes flyway. Preservation of this stopover habitat is a priority echoed in several regional conservation efforts: *Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative*, *The Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Region Joint Venture All Bird Implementation Plan*, *DNR's Sheboygan River Basin Plan*, and *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Strategy*.
- As identified in the *State Wildlife Action Plan*, the property is within a "Globally Significant Conservation Opportunity Area" and includes natural communities further identified as "major" conservation opportunities within that, where preservation and restoration are likely to maintain long term, high quality composition and ecological function – Great Lakes beach, Great Lakes dune, Great Lakes ridge/swale and warm water streams.
- This acquisition advances objectives in both the *Sheboygan County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan* and the *County Natural Areas and Critical Resources Plan* to permanently secure environmental corridors and ecologically significant sites and to provide public recreational land in southeastern Sheboygan county.
- This purchase advances needs identified by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to enhance public access to recreational lands and waters, in particular to conserve natural landscapes through partnerships.

Also of note, the Town of Holland passed a resolution in support of this project and the proposed Stewardship award.

Public Uses:

The property will be open to the public for low-impact recreational activities including hunting, trapping, hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing and wildlife viewing. The Department's analysis of the permitted nature-based outdoor activities is attached in Appendix B.

Property Management:

Amsterdam Dunes Preservation Area will be owned, operated and maintained by Sheboygan County and managed according to a Land Management Plan approved by the Department.

Project Partners:

The partners in this project have convened the Amsterdam Dunes Advisory Committee to serve as advisors to oversee transfer of the property to Sheboygan County and assist in long term planning for restoration and management plans.

- The Advisory committee includes representatives from the Town of Holland, two adjacent neighborhood associations, the Sheboygan County Conservation Association (a coalition of 27 sport fishing, hunting, and trapping clubs) and the DNR’s Cedar Grove Raptor Research Station.
- Other potential funders for acquisition and management of the property include the NRDA Trustees Council and the Fund for Lake Michigan.
- Volunteer management assistance is expected from the Sheboygan County Ground Army (local invasive species removal volunteer group).

II. PROJECT FINANCES:

A. Appraisals

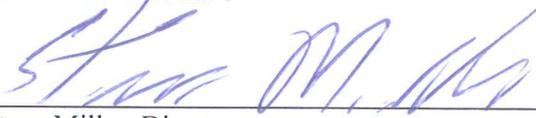
As required by s. 23.0917(7)(e)1., Wis. Stats., two appraisals were ordered to determine the fair market value of the land. DNR’s review appraiser determined a fair market value in between; this opinion of value has also been reviewed by DNR’s Real Estate Director. Note that all the values listed below are for the Stewardship portion of this project not the larger parcel.

Appraisal 1	\$5,447,600.00
Appraisal 2	\$3,590,000.00
Value approved by DNR	\$4,885,000.00

B. Grant calculation:

DNR approved land value	\$4,885,000.00
Related eligible acquisition costs	\$1,860.00
Total eligible project costs	\$4,886,860.00
Sponsor match (from Sheboygan County and a partial donation from seller)	\$2,443,430.00
Stewardship grant amount (50% of total eligible costs)	\$2,443,430.00

III. RECOMMENDED:



 Steve Miller, Director
 Bureau of Facilities and Lands

5.5-15

 Date



 Sanjay Olson, Administrator
 Land Division

5/5/15

 Date

Attachments: Appendix A – Property maps
 Appendix B – Staff analysis of public use



Glacial Lakes Conservancy - Amsterdam Dunes



- ### Map Features
- Ice Age Trail
 - State Trail
 - DNR Voluntary Public Access Land
 - County Forest
 - Stewardship Grant Acquisition: Natural Area Parcel Ownership
 - WI DNR
 - Federal
 - County/City/Town
 - Non-Gov't Conservation Org
 - Education Institution
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service
 - US Forest Service
 - National Park Service
 - Fee Simple
 - Easement**
 - Open
 - Hike & Fish
 - Hike & Hunt
 - Hike Only
 - Closed
 - Leased



1: 172,067

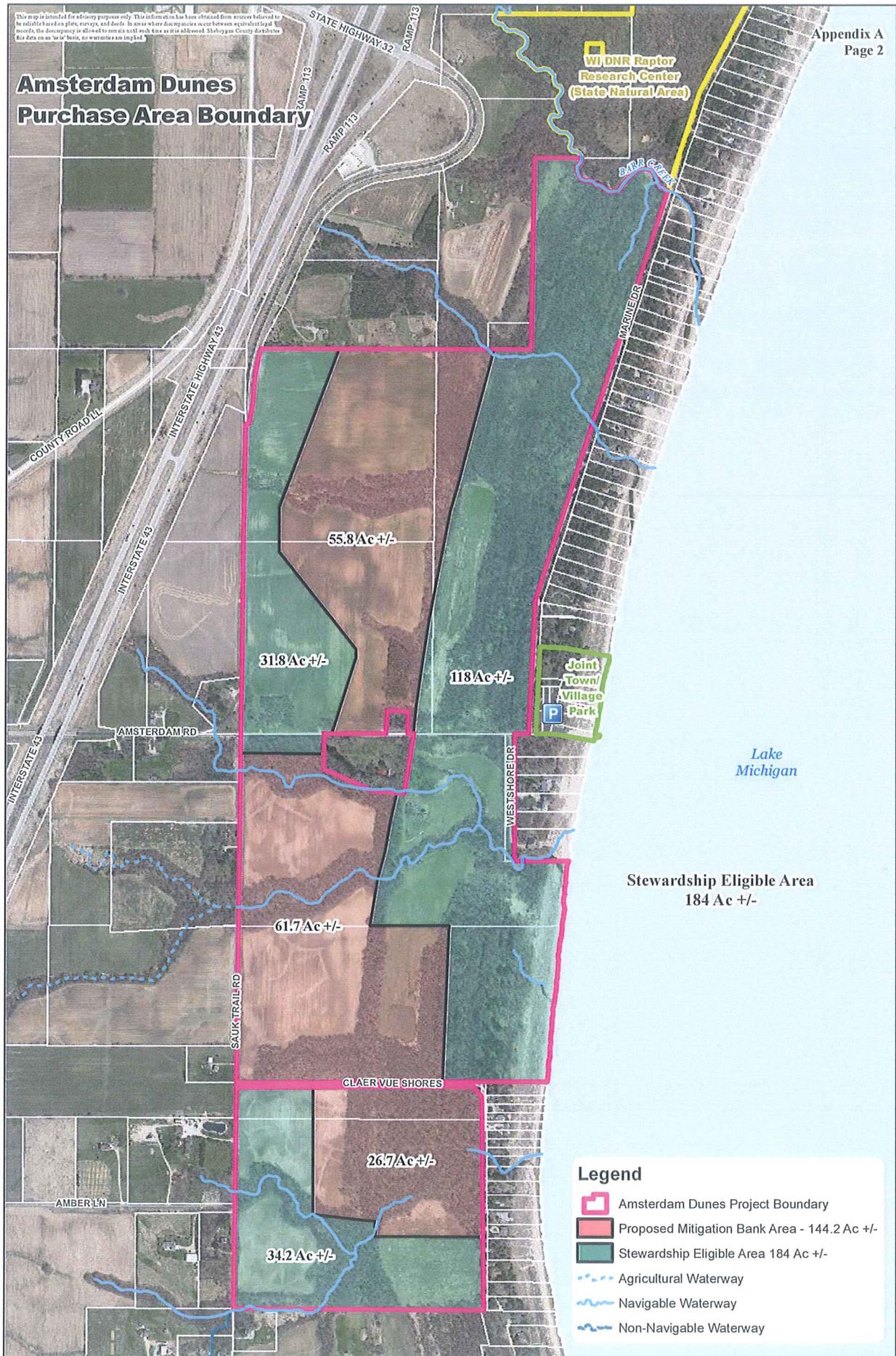
NAD_1983_HARN_Wisconsin_TM

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Notes

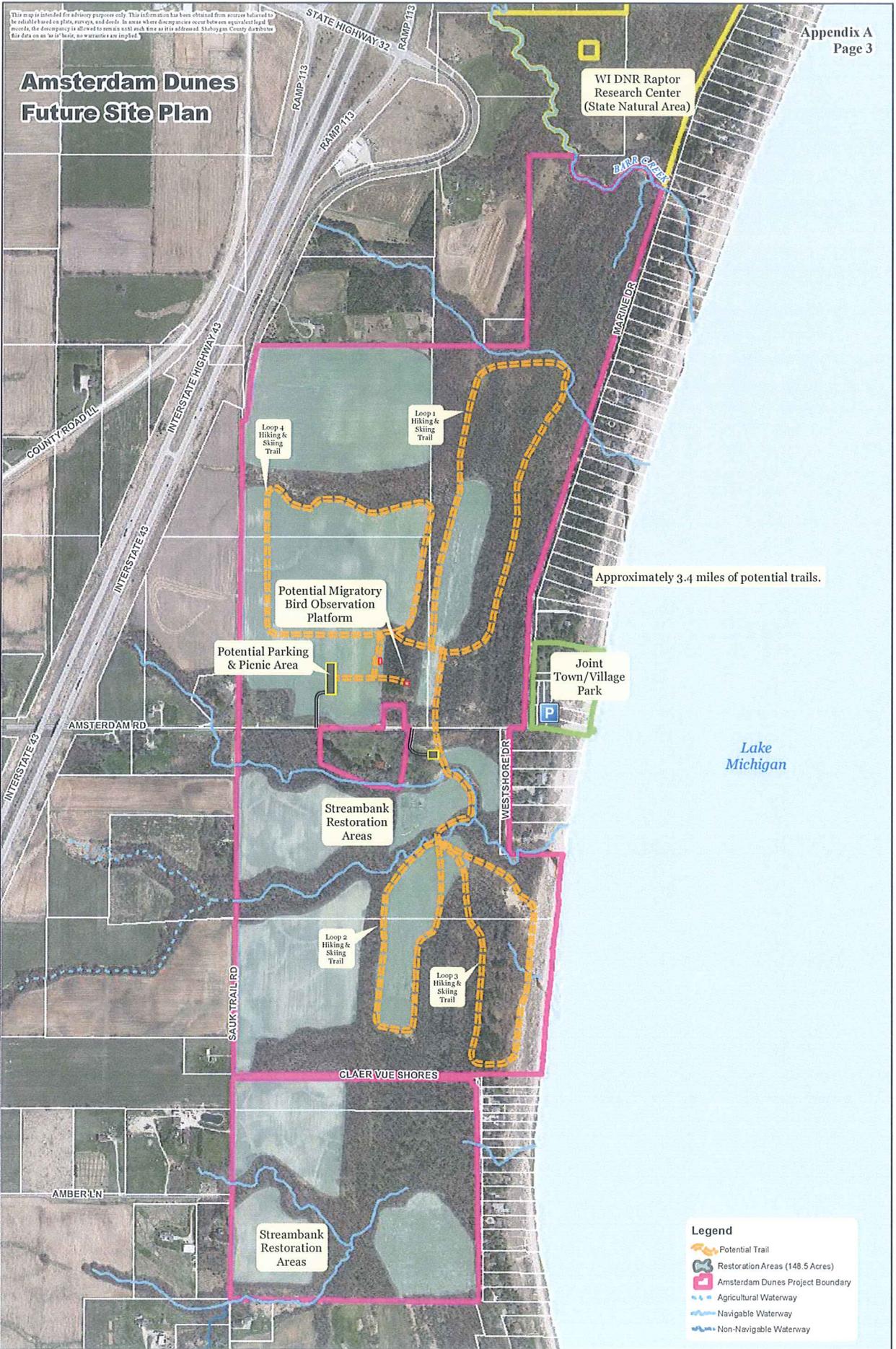
This map is intended for advisory purposes only. This information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable based on plans, surveys, and data. In areas where discrepancies occur between equivalent legal records, the discrepancy is allowed to remain until such time as it is addressed. Sheboygan County does not warrant this data on an "as is" basis, no warranties are implied.

Amsterdam Dunes Purchase Area Boundary



Legend

- Amsterdam Dunes Project Boundary
- Proposed Mitigation Bank Area - 144.2 Ac +/-
- Stewardship Eligible Area 184 Ac +/-
- Agricultural Waterway
- Navigable Waterway
- Non-Navigable Waterway



This map is intended for advisory purposes only. This information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable based on plans, surveys, and deeds. In areas where discrepancies occur between equivalent legal records, the discrepancy is allowed to remain until such time as the official Sheboygan County distributor has data on an "as built" basis, as variations are implied.

Amsterdam Dunes Future Site Plan

WI DNR Raptor
Research Center
(State Natural Area)

Approximately 3.4 miles of potential trails.

Lake
Michigan

Legend

- Potential Trail
- Restoration Areas (148.5 Acres)
- Amsterdam Dunes Project Boundary
- Agricultural Waterway
- Navigable Waterway
- Non-Navigable Waterway



4/29/2015
Source: Sheboygan County
G:\Departments\Planning\Mapdocs\American Heritage Project\2014 Update\Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Conceptual Future Site Plan.mxd

