

File# FO 83 O (2) — Vilas County - 38.1 acres

The Department acquired this property in 1911 from the G F Sanborn Company. This parcel is part of the Northern Highlands exclusion zones. The NHAL Master Plan, approved in 2005, included acquisition exclusion areas in and around the Towns of Manitowish Waters, Boulder Junction, Sayner, St. Germain and Lake Tomahawk. These exclusion areas were originally removed from the Northern Highland and American Legion State Forest Administrative boundaries in 1975 by NRB action. The 1982 and 2005 NHAL Master Plans recognized this action and the continued interests of the local Towns for these areas to remain as exclusion areas and not be included in the NHAL project boundary. The intent of the 1975 action, and the two subsequent master plan actions, was to adjust the project boundary and remove lands from the NHAL project boundary, as well as the State Forest designation. The rationale for all three actions was to allow the Department the ability to divest the lands by trade or sale, for more appropriate forested lands within the NHAL and allowing the Towns to direct local growth and development in and around their communities.

This parcel is developed with a gravel parking lot and the Fern Ridge Trail. This property currently has a land use agreement with the Town. The agreement allows for the maintenance of this silent sport trail. There is a snowmobile route that runs east-west along the southern part of the property. The Northern Hardwood stand on this property provides habitat for forest interior bird and animal species. A thinning harvest on the property was completed in December 2005, after working with the public to address concerns raised about possible impacts to the trail. Forest health has improved with this timber sale.

The property is accessible from HWY 155 and is adjacent to town owned lands. Due to the high public recreational use, proximity of other town land and the existing land use agreement, it is recommended that the property only be offered to the Town or County.

The Department recommends that the Natural Resources Board offer this land for sale under the authority granted by s. 23.145 Wis. Stats., and the land be only offered to the Town or County subject to a deed restriction requiring the land be open to the general public for all five NBOA's in perpetuity and requiring that a snowmobile trail be permitted to cross the property.

