NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL
FINAL TRAILWAY PLAN

Analysis of Alternatives
and
Environmental Assessment
Northwest Wisconsin and Adjoining Minnesota Region

Prepared by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Executive Summary

This document analyzes six alternatives, including the no action alternative, regarding the question of routing and developing the North Country National Scenic Trail across Bayfield, Burnett, and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin, and Carlton County, Minnesota.

In March 1980, Federal legislation authorized the establishment of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) as a component of the National Trails System (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.). To date, Congress has authorized the establishment of eight National Scenic Trails--long distance, non motorized trails that follow major geographic features or pass through scenic areas. National Scenic Trails are patterned after the renowned Appalachian NST.

The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982 used a very broad approach for identifying a potential corridor of opportunity in Northwest Wisconsin. Meetings in Wisconsin and Minnesota over the last few years have identified some concerns about the 1982 route. These concerns led to the need to rethink the route from the western edge of the Chequamegon National Forest (Wisconsin) to the Jay Cooke State Park/ Duluth area in Minnesota. A planning team was formed to investigate alternatives and conduct a public involvement process. Five alternatives plus the no action alternative resulted from the scoping and evaluation process. The preferred alternative, Alternative 2, totals 109 miles across Bayfield and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin and Carlton County, Minnesota. Of this total, approximately 88 miles traverse public lands, and 22 miles cross private property.

Since there are private holdings that the North Country NST must cross in Douglas County, Wisconsin and Carlton County, Minnesota and because of the general philosophy and purpose of a NST, the planning team is recommending a trail for foot travel only. This would include such winter uses as snowshoeing, and limited, ungroomed cross-country skiing. Development of a low impact, foot travel only trail using the careful design and construction techniques discussed herein will result in only minimal impacts.

Locating and constructing a new trail across the planning area may produce both positive benefits and negative consequences. Negative impacts on the human environment are generally limited to a perceived, slight increase in what are collectively called nuisance impacts. Adjoining landowners typically have fears about loss of privacy, vandalism, and littering when a new trail is being planned. Past experience and formal studies have shown these fears to be groundless as the perceived impacts do not develop after the trail is constructed. What trail users and neighboring landowners normally experience as the most important benefits of a trail are health, fitness, and recreation opportunities. Other advantages include aesthetic beauty, open space, natural resource protection, and in some instances, higher property resale values. Also, local communities may even experience bolstered economies and increased local pride. The new trail is predicted to have a minimum impact on the natural and cultural environments. These slight impacts are further discussed in Section VIII--Affected Environment and Impacts.

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I. Introduction and Background Information

In March 1980, Federal legislation authorized the establishment of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) as a component of the National Trails System (16 U.S.C. 1241et seq.). It is one of only eight trails authorized by Congress to be National Scenic Trails. Patterned after the renowned Appalachian Trail, NSTs are long distance, non-motorized trails that follow major geographic features or pass through scenic areas.

In many ways, the North Country NST is similar in concept to the Appalachian NST. Yet in other ways, it is uniquely different as it takes the visitor through a diverse series of landscapes rather than following a mountain range or other distinct geographic feature. When completed, the North Country NST will extend from the vicinity of Crown Point, New York, to Lake Sakakawea State Park, on the Missouri River, in North Dakota (Attachment 1), where it joins the route of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. While it was originally thought that the distance required to span these two extremities was about 3,200 miles, as work progresses to complete the trail, a total length of about 4,175 miles is now anticipated. Currently, more than 1,344 miles of the trail are in place and certified as meeting the standards of a NST. Another 800-1,000 miles, some of which are on roads, are walkable but not yet certified.

The National Park Service is responsible for overall administration of the North Country NST. However it is a partnership project where the actual development and management of the trail is intended to be accomplished through many cooperating Federal, State, and local agencies, and private trail organizations. When viewed in this manner, the North Country NST is truly a cooperative endeavor.

When Congress established the trail, a very general route was delineated. A slightly more refined, but still general route was shown in *The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982* which envisioned approximately 143 miles of the trail route passing through Bayfield, Burnett, and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin, and into Pine and Carlton Counties, Minnesota--from the western edge of the Chequamegon National Forest to Jay Cooke State Park (Attachment 3).

From the west boundary of the Chequamegon National Forest, a long established and certified portion of the trail extends easterly for 60 miles. Within the planning area itself, 4.2 miles of trail within Brule River State Forest was certified as North Country Trail NST in February of 1997. This includes the entire 2.1 miles of the Historic Portage Trail. The balance of the route across all of the counties is located primarily on county and state owned properties with scattered private properties dispersed among the public lands. The purpose of this plan is to identify a specific corridor of opportunity within which a permanent trail can be established, and thereby guide agencies and private volunteer organizations to secure a route for the trail.

II. Purpose of the Environmental Assessment

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires consideration of the environmental effects of proposed Federal actions, in this case the National Park Service's proposal to select a specific alignment for a North Country NST route across northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region.

This assessment serves to:

A. Comply with all provisions regarding environmental considerations and public involvement required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by carrying out an open, public planning process to determine the ideal location for the trail and to identify and address public issues and concerns.

B. Comply with 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties, the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation governing the section 106 review process and the Programmatic Agreement as implemented by the National Park Service, the National Conference on State Historic Preservation Officers and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

C. Comply with consultation requirements established in the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

D. Comply with Executive Order 11988--Floodplain Management and Executive Order 11990--Protection of Wetlands.

E. Provide information on the physical and social environment through which the trail passes for the local trail clubs and the counties to use as they plan the physical location, construction, and subsequent maintenance of the trail.

F. Foster public involvement in developing and managing the trail, including recognition and possibly adoption of the trail by public and private land use planning groups.

III. Description of Northwest Wisconsin and Adjoining Minnesota Region

Bayfield, Burnett, and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin, and Pine and Carlton Counties, Minnesota are located in the northwest portion of Wisconsin and the adjoining northeastern portion of Minnesota within a short drive of the "Twin Ports" of Superior, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota (Attachment 2).

The terrain and soil change from gently rolling and sandy in the east to steep, rocky and broken in the west. In the middle of the planning area are vast expanses of remote wetlands. The landscape

offers scenic overlooks and rugged near-wilderness areas. Ice Age glaciers left their mark on the land, along with ancient volcanoes and earthquakes. Reminders of the area's logging past are found in abandoned logging roads and railroad grades. Forest management and the associated manufacturing of forest products remain a major industry in the area. Tourism/recreation is another major industry fueling the local economy throughout the planning area.

Northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region is rich in natural beauty as well as recreational opportunities. Except for the high degree of development adjoining Lake Superior, principally in the Duluth/Superior greater metropolitan area, the planning area is still largely rural in character with small towns dotting the countryside. The planning area is home to permanent populations of Eastern Timber Wolf (Canus lupis)--an indication of its wild character.

Water is an abundant resource within the planning area. There are literally hundreds of small, inland lakes, ponds, and streams. As an example, there are 966 inland lakes in Bayfield County and 431 in Douglas County . Most are inhabited by a variety of fish including: several species of trout, bass, perch, walleye, northern pike, muskellunge, various sunfish and others. Lake Superior is the largest, deepest fresh water lake in the world, encompassing 3,200 square miles. It is over 160 miles wide at the widest point with a maximum depth of 1,290 feet.

There are three State Parks (S.P.) and two National Parks in the area; Amnicon Falls S. P. (825 acres), Pattison S. P. (1,374 acres) , Jay Cooke S. P. (9,000 acres), Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway (NSR) (39,041 acres), and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (16,321 land acres). Vast State and County forests cover much of the planning area and account for the bulk of the public land. They are perhaps the biggest reason for the still undeveloped, natural appearing landscape. Public areas include Bayfield County Forest (177,000 acres), Brule River State Forest (40,467 acres), Douglas County Forest (267,000 acres), Douglas County Wildlife area (3,990 acres), St. Croix S.F. (26,000 acres), and Nemadji State Forest (93,300 acres).

IV. Planning Background in Northwest Wisconsin and Adjoining Minnesota Region

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FES 75-85 dated October 3, 1975) was prepared by the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. This FES titled *The North Country Trail--A Potential Addition to the National Trails System* shows the trail passing through northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota Region and describes a very general route on pages 61- 69 of the FES.

As mentioned in Section I, *The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982* also indicates the trail route as passing through northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota Region (Attachment 3). This plan used a very broad approach for identifying a potential corridor of opportunity. Within the last several years, discussions and meetings with St. Croix NSR staff, Burnett County Forestry staff, Minnesota DNR, and others (in both Wisconsin and Minnesota) identified a number of concerns about the 1982 route. Some of these concerns are: 1) When the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway worked on an Environmental Assessment to locate a route for the trail within the park it became obvious that the park is

essentially a narrow, water-based band along the river. Adjoining the river are many wetlands that are not conducive to trail building. In addition, eagle nests are located in several locations within the ownership. These nests and their necessary zones of protection serve as trail barriers. The result of these various factors was a route that was partially on roads. A road route as a permanent solution was unsatisfactory to the Superintendent and Manager of the North Country NST who asked St. Croix's Superintendent to defer any further work until a detailed county-wide planning process could be accomplished . 2) Because of the limited NPS ownership, there were many places where the route had to leave NPS property and enter Burnett County Forestry land. County officials strongly felt that the North Country Trail should follow existing snowmobile and ATV routes. While following a motorized route may temporarily serve as the trail, such a location could never become an officially certified segment of the trail. 3) The 1982 route entered Minnesota west of Danbury, WI. It then turned north following the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail to Jay Cooke S.P. After the 1982 plan was written, Minnesota officials pointed out that the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail was a snowmobile route and further, it was passable only during the winter months when the extensive wetlands were frozen.

These concerns pointed out the need to rethink the route's Wisconsin/Minnesota connection--essentially from the western edge of the Chequamegon National Forest (WI) to Jay Cooke State Park (MN). A planning team was formed to investigate alternatives and conduct a public involvement process. Five alternatives plus the no action alternative resulted from the scoping and evaluation process.

V. Implementation of the Planning Process

In December 1995, a planning team comprised of representatives of the NPS-Madison Trails Office, North Country Trail Association, Douglas County Forestry Department, Bayfield County Forestry Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources initiated a comprehensive planning process for the North Country NST in northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region. The purpose of this process was to determine the ideal location for the trail, and to comply with Federal and State environmental laws.

Each planning team member was asked to provide a list of their organizations goals and objectives for the North Country Trail. The following list was the National Park Service's Goals and Objectives. The selected route and planning should:

- Pass through the most scenic, feasible terrain.
- Connect scenic highlights such as long vistas, waterfalls, points of interest, historically interesting areas, and other attractions.
- Incorporate existing recreation features such as parks, other trails, etc. whenever compatible with the above statements.

- Be non-motorized and include design features to discourage unwanted uses.

- Be designed to be primarily a hiking/walking trail. It should not be designed to allow bikes or horses. Other "foot" type uses such as XC skiing, snowshoeing, etc. are appropriate. Any exceptions would occur only if the route incorporates portion of trails that are constructed to withstand multi-use impacts--such as railtrail segments.

- Take a long term approach for the trail vs. an immediate approach. i.e. Select the highest quality route vs. going for a fast but less significant route. Identify alternate "temporary" routes to bypass blockages on the preferred route.

- For the most part, pass through generally natural and rural areas. Passage through small communities is acceptible but the trail route should not deviate from the best location merely to do so.

- Provide periodic hiker amenities such as areas where camping is permissible, drinking water, and intermittent re-supply opportunities.

- Avoid wet areas and/or design standards should incorporate means to keep boots generally dry.

- Provide for minimum maintenance needs. i.e. Sidehill trail is easier to maintain than trails in other locations.

- Identify local managing authorities.

- Be certifiable - not on road.

- Utilize public land and larger tracts of private land to minimize the number of potential conflicts and contacts.

- Identify a legally defensible location for the trail meeting National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, of 1966, requirements.

- Include provisions to develop a broader base of community awareness and local support for the trail.

The planning team then met to combine the above list with the goals and objectives of the other planning team members. After finding commonality, clarifying, adding, and subtracting, they arrived at a total of 16 combined goals/objectives. The following list was the planning team's goals and objectives for the North Country NST in northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region.

The selected route should:

A. Be volunteer driven.

B. Provide local economic benefits.

C. Utilize the most scenic route.

D. Provide some level of accessibility.

E. Utilize public land and large tracts of private lands.

F. Connect with other trails.

G. Be certifiable.

H. Avoid wet areas.

I. Have a preference for hiking.

J. Be non-motorized.

K. Offer both short and long distance hiking opportunities.

L. Achieve long-term permanency.

M. Provide hiker amenities.

N. Connect communities.

O. Link recreation and points of interest sites.

P. Have the least impact on wetlands and endangered species.

These compiled goals and objectives were then used by the team as they created a criteria prioritization matrix (Attachment 4A). When using this matrix process a team compares each objective with every other objective and makes a decision regarding its comparative value. Is it much more important, more important, equally important, less important, or much less important? This process allows the team to become cohesive and develop a shared vision of what is important in selecting alternatives for further analysis, and eventually, a preferred alternative. The finalized criteria, listed in descending order of importance along with their relative weights (with 5 being the highest weight and 1 being the lowest weight) are given below.

1.) Have the least impact on wetlands and endangered species. (5)

2.) Achieve long-term permanency. (5)

3.) Utilize public lands and large tracts of private lands. (5)

4.) Be non-motorized. (4)

5.) Be certifiable. (4)

6.) Have a preference for hiking. (4)

7.) Utilize the most scenic route. (4)

8.) Avoid wet areas. (3)

9.) Link recreation and points of interest sites. (3)

10.) Connect communities. (2)

11.) Provide local economic benefits. (2)

12.) Provide hiker amenities. (2)

13.) Provide some level of disability accessibility. (1)

14.) Be volunteer driven. (Dropped--is a must, not a selection factor.)

15.) Connect with other trails. (Dropped--is a must, not a selection factor.)

16.) Offer short-term and long-term hiking. (Dropped--is a must, not a selection factor.)

Six alternatives for a possible trail route were identified by the planning team. Using the weighted selection criteria, the team then studied each of the trail route alternatives to determine how well each alternative met each of the 13 selection criteria and to choose the team's preferred alternative. After much discussion and utilization of the ranking matrix as a planning tool, the team chose Alternative 2 (Moose River) as the team's preferred route. Refer to Attachment 4B for the specific numerical results. The entire planning process sequence of events is shown as Attachment 5.

VI. Description of Alternatives

Generally, five new alternatives plus the No Action Alternative (the 1982 route) resulted from the scoping and evaluation process described in Section V (Attachments 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, and 6F). A description of the five alternatives and a no action alternative is presented in this section.

Alternative 2 is presented first. Due to the fact that it is the preferred alternative, more detailed information is known and presented. Secondly, because several other alternatives are constructed as variations of Alternative 2, presenting it first assists reader understanding.

Alternative 2 -Moose River

Alternative 2 (Attachments 6B, 7, and 8) is the route described in most detail as it is preferred.

Alternative 2 leaves the Chequamegon National Forest at Bayfield County Highway A (south of Iron River) where it heads west through pitted topography on Bayfield County Forest Land. The dominant timber species in this area are Quaking Aspen, Jack Pine, and various oaks. The proposed trail swings northwest and crosses Banana Belt Road. At this point, the route uses a portion of the existing Bayfield County Forest Ahmeek Lake Walking Trail that passes through stands of mature Red Pine and Northern Red Oak with scattered White Pine and mixed hardwoods. The surrounding seepage lakes are without inflow or outlets, and have no surface linkages to other water bodies. After passing south of Erick Lake, the route bends southwest passing an abandoned farmstead where only a root cellar remains. The farmstead's old fields were replanted to Red Pine 40-50 years ago. After crossing a small wet area that may require puncheon or another trail hardening structure, the route heads northwest again where it follows an abandoned town road. The abandoned road carries the trail through a brushy, wet area which has been heavily logged in the past 15-20 years and is dominated with aspen and wetland scrubs. After passing through or near a few Red Pine and White Spruce plantations, the route crosses South Shore Grade Road, entering Douglas County and the Brule River State Forest.

About one mile west of the county line, a spur trail will head west across State Highway 27. The spur trail will travel past a state operated fish hatchery and then climb a hill where it will merge with the existing Stoney Hill Nature Loop Trail until it ultimately ends in the Bois Brule Campground. This campground has 23 sites, and is dominated by a nice grove of 80 year old pine. Returning to the junction of the spur trail and the main trail, the main route heads south remaining east of the Bois Brule River and west of Samples Road. It is on pitted topography but hugs the crest of the hills to take advantage of as many scenic overlooks of the Brule River and its valley as possible. Glacial Lake Duluth once poured through a rift in the Copper Range, and the glacial meltwater formed the present valley of the Brule River. Stony deposits and old dry washes, along the proposed route, provide visible evidence of these ancient streambeds. About a mile past Rush Lake Road, the route briefly crosses a corner of Mosinee Paper Mills Company land and then it is immediately back in Brule River State Forest among the scenic bluff tops and pine flats. At Motts Road, the route continues southwest crossing County Highway S and then

Jerseth Creek.

Between ¼ and ½ mile south of Jerseth Creek, the route joins an existing, certified segment of trail for the next 4.2 miles. The first 2.1 miles of certified trail is on a woods road that is gated at both ends. The southerly 2.1 miles follows the Historic Portage which is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks.

Upon reaching Douglas County Highway A, the route turns north, first parallel to and then following the highway shoulder, for a short distance, to cross a wetland. It then leaves Highway A in a northeasterly direction, along a small ridge within the wetland, where after ¾ mile it turns west to cross County Highway P within the upper Bois-Brule River Bog and it's associated swamp wetlands. Boardwalk will need to be constructed in this area which remains in a near pre-settlement condition. This structure will provide opportunities to bring trail users into the wetland to observe native plants such as rare orchids and 160-200 year old Northern White Cedars, and to birdwatch. Once across the main bog, the route follows its edge in a southwesterly direction, crossing Porcupine Creek and Catlin Creek before reaching Heyer Road. Beyond Heyer Road, the route continues southwest crossing Sjoberg Road and Highway AA as it heads towards Solon Springs.[1]

Upon crossing County Highway A, at the north edge of Solon Springs, the route follows East Third Street to Main Street (shown on some maps as Lake Avenue). Crossing Main Street, a short, dead end street leads to the gated entrance to the trail system within Lucius Woods County Park. (See Attachment 10).

If the final decision is to use this alternative, Solon Springs will become one of only two "trail towns" in Wisconsin--the other being Mellen which is some 100 miles to the east. For long distance hikers, the town will offer opportunities to resupply and to take a break from the routine of trail life. Within a couple of blocks of the trail route, hikers can find a grocery store, post office, bakery, motels, and restaurants.

Entering Lucius Woods County Park, the route follows an existing trail downhill (southeast) to near the mouth of Park Creek and joins an existing nature trail. The route turns right (west) following the nature trail upstream along Park Creek. At the west end of the nature trail, a snowmobile trail is crossed but the hiking trail continues around the western perimeter of the park--eventually reaching the service road near the entrance/contact station. This makes obtaining information and payment of fees convenient for those hikers wishing to spend the night in the park. A trail to exit the south side of the park will be designated.

Marion Avenue serves as the south boundary of the park. Upon crossing Marion Avenue, the route continues south along Lakeside Street, jogs west, south, and east to gain the north end of Hillside Street which is followed south to Valley Park Avenue. At this point, the street system

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[1]Refer to Attachment 7, Maps 6 & 7 of 15, for a temporary trail route.

begins to break up. Continuing to the south, a route passing through generally undeveloped portions of the village will be identified. It will cross Prevost Drive and gain access to the narrow strip of land between the active railroad and Upper St. Croix Lake.

At the south edge of Solon Springs, the route stays within the narrow strip of land between the railroad and Upper St. Croix Lake crossing Leo Creek and skirting a very wet area. Puncheon or boardwalk will most likely be required in this area.[2] The route then climbs a steep hill and enters the Wisconsin Department of Transportation wayside park that offers a spectacular view of the Upper St. Croix Lake. An informational plaque and statue is also present. After crossing U.S. Highway 53, the route turns west and enters the Douglas County Wildlife Area, locally known as the "Bird Sanctuary." The route continues in a southwesterly direction through the wildlife area, and crosses Bird Road, County Road M, and Stuckey Road.

Upon departing the wildlife area, the route stays on Douglas County Forest land north of the St. Croix Flowage. It crosses Spring Creek, which is a very wet area, and continues to north of Gordon Dam County Park. The wetlands just north of the dam are identified in the Wisconsin Watchable Wildlife Guide. A campground is situated across the dam, on the south side of the flowage. Remaining north of the river, the route enters Federal lands administered by the National Park Service's St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (NSR). The St. Croix NSR was established in 1968 as one of the original eight rivers under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. For about a mile and a half, the route passes through the NSR--mostly along an abandoned road. Before crossing the Moose River and South Mail Road the route passes two NPS designated campsites along the St. Croix River.

Near South Mail Road, the route turns north and leaves Federal lands to follow hills on the west side of the Moose River. The Moose River region is locally known for its interesting historical remnants. These include old ruts, created by logging or settler wagons, and logging sawdust piles from long ago. In addition to opportunities for scenic views of the river, a trail route in this area is able to pass near, and perhaps interpret, these historic features. The topography in this area is hilly and wooded providing opportunities to create a dry, sustainable trail using sidehill construction techniques.

Continuing parallel to Moose River, the route crosses County Highway M and 4-5 miles later a narrow neck of the Moose Branch Flowage. About one mile later, the route crosses an east-west portion of County Highway A and continues north for another mile. It then begins to pull away from the Moose River, in a generally westerly direction, eventually crossing Ericson Creek. The trail then turns to the southwest towards Bear Lake Road. At Bear Lake Road the trail turns south towards Summit Tower Road. The route heads west on Summit Tower Road to cross a wetland.

After crossing the wetland the trail heads north, west of Bear Lake towards Pioneer Road--

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[2]Refer to Attachment 7, Map 7 of 15, for a temporary trail route.

crossing it on high ground west of the Empire Swamp. About 2 ½ miles north of Pioneer Road, the route utilizes the Empire Grade (See Alternative 1) for about 1/8 mile. Reaching the eastern embankment of the Black River, the route turns northeast.

The route then follows the eastern embankment of the Black River taking advantage of as many scenic overlooks as possible. Heading north to Pattison State Park, the route crosses Milchesky Road and soon leaves Douglas County Forest land. Continuing along the Black River, the route turns northwest and enters Pattison State Park. Shortly after entering Pattison State Park, the route gains access to a series of existing hiking trails. In the southern portion of the park, a short spur trail leads to a designated backpack camp area and Little Manitou Falls. Farther north, the route follows portions of the Old Logging Camp Trail and then the Beaver Slide Nature Trail which borders Interfalls Lake. Near the park's swimming beach and nature center, side trails lead to the 59-site campground. State Highway 35 is crossed using an existing pedestrian underpass. Just west of the highway, existing trails provide spectacular overlooks of Big Manitou Falls--a 165-foot-high waterfall named by the Ojibwa Indians. Shortly beyond the falls, new trail will be created along the north rim of the gorge of the Black River.[3]

From Highway 35 to Jay Cooke S.P. the terrain becomes much more rugged and steep. It is dissected by many sizeable creeks and rivers whose valleys must be crossed by the trail.

Exiting the park's north boundary, the route continues along the rim of the river gorge until it crosses Manitou Valley Road. Shortly thereafter, a steep descent (utilizing switchbacks) is made into the gorge and the river is crossed using an existing bridge. Once on the south side of the river, the route generally stays at the base of the hills for close to a mile before climbing steeply and crossing an active railroad track. Continuing through broken terrain, the route crosses Rock Creek and Miller Creek. Before crossing Balsam Creek, the route crosses the Gandy Dancer Trail--a multi-use rail trail that begins near Minneapolis/St. Paul and ends near Superior, Wisconsin. About miles east of Dedham Road, the route descends a steep hill to Balsam Creek. It is anticipated that a bridge will be constructed to cross Balsam Creek at this point. After crossing the creek, the route crosses one small landowner and enters Wausau Paper Mills Company land where it is then parallel to and south of the Nemadji River. The route crosses the Nemadji River on County Highway W and turns back to the west following the north bluff of Mud Creek. Just before reaching the Wisconsin/Minnesota boundary, the route turns north and follows the Saunders Grade--a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources multi-use railtrail. About ½ mile of the Saunders Grade is used to cross Clear Creek.

Upon crossing Clear Creek, the route turns west, following the north bluff of the creek, and enters Minnesota. About a mile past the state line, the route turns back to the northeast and follows a long-abandoned railgrade for about one-half mile. Upon leaving the grade the route begins to travel north about three-quarter of a mile before crossing railroad tracks. The route begins to meander northwest and soon enters Jay Cooke State Park where very rugged terrain is

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[3]Refer to Attachment 7, Maps 12 & 13 of 15, for a temporary trail route.

encountered. The route crosses State Highway 23 and within two miles begins following existing hiking trails within the park--south of the St. Louis River. The route passes two trail shelters and a backpack campsite on it's way to the swinging bridge where the planning process terminates.

Alternative 2 totals approximately 110 miles. (Note: For comparison purposes, if like other alternatives measurement was from the proximity maps, this alternative would be 75 miles in length. The larger 110 mile figure includes all of the designed twists and turns to insure proper trail grade, dry passage, etc.)

Summary and Selected Highlights of The Preferred Alternative

The specific location of the North Country NST preferred corridor of opportunity is:

Counties: Bayfield and Douglas in Wisconsin and Carlton in Minnesota.

Communities: Solon Springs, WI

Townships:

Wisconsin:

Hughes	-T46N, R9W, Sections 1, 2, and 3.
	-T47N, R9W, Sections 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, and 19.
Brule	-T47N, R10W, Sections 24, 25, 23, 26, and 35.
Highland	-T46N, R10W, Sections 2, 11, 14, 23, 22, 27, 34, 33, 32, and 31.
	-T46N, R11W, Sections 36 and 35.
Solon Springs	-T45N, R11W, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 9, 17, 8, 7, and 18.
	-T45N, R12W, Sections 12, 13, 24, 25, 36, and 35.
	-T44N, R12W, Sections 1, 2, and 11.
	-T45N, R13W, Sections 35 and 26.
Gordon	-T44N, R12W, Sections 14, 23, 22, 27, 21, 28, 20, 29, 19, and 30.
	-T44N, R12W, Sections 25, 36, 26, 35, 34, 27, 22, 23, 14, 11, and 2.
	-T45N, R13W, Sections 34, 27, 22, 15, 16, 17, 9, 8, 5, 6, and 7.
Summit	-T45N, R14W, Sections 12, 11, 14, 15, 10, and 3.
	-T46N, R14W, Sections 35, 34, 27, 22, 21, 20, 16, 17, 9, 8, 4, and 3.
Superior	-T47N, R14W, Sections 33, 34, 27, 28, 22, 21, 20, 16, 17, 8, 19, 18, and 7.
	-T47N, R15W, Sections 13, 12, 24, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 7, 8, and 6.

Minnesota:

Wrenshall	-T47N, R15W, Sections 6 and 7.
	-T47N, R16W, Section 1.
Silver Brook	-T48N, R15W, Sections 31 and 30.
	-T48N, R16W, Sections 36, 25, 24, 23, and 22.
Twin Lakes	-T48N, R16W, Sections 15, 10, and 9.

Selected Areas of Interest Along the Corridor

Bayfield County Forest: This county forest bridges the gap between the Chequamegon National Forest and the Brule River State Forest. It consists of 177,000 acres of public land that is managed to provide for a variety of recreational opportunities as well as to provide for sustained timber production providing income to the county. The county has established special management guidelines for the Wild Lakes Area to protect it from unacceptable impacts. This is an area of small, high quality kettle lakes located in some of the more hilly terrain found in the southern part of the county..

Douglas County Forest: At 267,000 acres, this is the largest County Forest in Wisconsin. The lands are managed for multiple use to provide a variety of recreational opportunities as well as to provide for timber production. Douglas County, as Bayfield County, strives to balance the development of the Forest to provide for a variety of recreational uses while also manipulating the vegetation in order to provide for the production of timber products. All of this is done with the ultimate long-term goal of protecting the soils, water, wetlands, wildlife and other natural features.

Brule River State Forest: This long, rather linear forest buffering the Bois Brule River contains approximately 50,000 acres, of which 40,467 acres are owned by the State of Wisconsin. It is a working forest as well as a recreation area. Multiple use management provides for the melding of timber production, aesthetics, wildlife, fisheries and watershed protection. The Forest offers hunting, camping, fishing, canoeing, hiking, swimming, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling. The Bois Brule River is one of the best known rivers east of the Mississippi. Five Presidents of the United States have fished this exceptional trout stream. The Brule River contains resident brook and brown trout. Anadramous brown and rainbow trout and coho and chinook salmon migrate up the Brule River from Lake Superior. The southern portion of the river flows through miles of coniferous bog and is fed by numerous springs. Wildlife observed in the Forest includes deer, ruffed grouse, geese, fisher, snowy owls, bald eagles, osprey, black bear, bobcat, and even an occasional timber wolf.

The Brule-St. Croix Portage Trail: Within Brule River State Forest, this centuries-old portage, between the upper reaches of the Brule River and the north end of St. Croix Lake has been used by Native Americans, explorers, traders, trappers, and missionaries. It was a vital connection allowing travel and trade between the Lake Superior watershed, with access all the way to the east coast, and the Mississippi River watershed and the Gulf of Mexico or the interior of Minnesota . Along the Historic Portage portion of the trail route are seven sizeable stones, with small brass plates that have a name and a date--Dulhut-1680, Lesueur-1693, Carver-1768, Curot-1803, Cadotte-1819, Schoolcraft-1820, and Lucius-1886. These stones were placed some years ago by a local civic group to serve as "memory stones" commemorating the various historical users of the portage.

Solon Springs: This village once was the site where French voyagers bartered and traded with the Chippewa and Sioux Indians at Fort Saint Croix. The log fort and adjacent area was inhabited by hundreds of people. In 1896, the town's name was changed from Nebagamon, meaning "overnight stop" to Solon Springs. Today, Solon Springs, has a year-round population of approximately 600 with a considerably higher population during the summer months.

When the railroad eventually hardened roads and provided access to the community, it became known as a summer destination for people living farther south. In the early days, passenger trains deposited vacationers who owned cabins where they stayed for a week or the entire summer. The area was (and still is) popular because of its cooler climate and the abundant nearby recreation opportunities. The community is located on the shore of beautiful Upper St. Croix Lake. A city ordnance prohibits the cutting of the large red and white pines. The result is a community heavily populated with large, old growth conifers that surround cabins and line the narrow streets.

Lucius Woods County Park: This park is located in the middle of Solon Springs. The park's 40 acres offer a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities including swimming, camping, canoeing, picnicking, and hiking. A self-guided nature trail runs along Park Creek, and an amphitheater showcases a variety of musical and artistic groups. Included within the park is a nice stand of virgin White and Red (Norway) Pine.

Native Americans once traveled through this area and then onto the portage trail on their annual trek to and from Washburn, located on the shore of Lake Superior, where they received their annual stipend from the government. They buried their dead in Washburn, and this trek became a part of Wisconsin's own "Trail of Tears". In 1891, Nick Lucius bought the current park land from the Omaha Railroad and proceeded to operate the park for day-use and camping. In 1950, Mr. Lucius sold the property to the State of Wisconsin for a state park. In 1990, the State deeded the property to Douglas County.

Upper St. Croix Lake: This 855 acre lake is very popular for fishing, boating, and waterskiing. This beautiful lake is the result of glacier action some 10,000 years ago. This glacial action also created the unusual flows of the Brule and St. Croix Rivers. A short distance upstream from Upper St. Croix Lake, a divide in the watershed causes the Brule to run north to Lake Superior while the St. Croix River runs south to the Mississippi. The exact boundary of the two watersheds sometimes varies due to beaver activity changing the direction that the water flows.

The Bird Sanctuary-Douglas Co. Wildlife Area: Located southwest of Solon Springs, this area is an extensive "barrens" sparsely vegetated with scrub jack pine and hardwoods. It is managed so as to restore and maintain a pine barrens--a once common ecological community in northwest Wisconsin. It is situated on a flat, sandy plain that lies in the drainage basin of the St. Croix River.

The Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1948 officially created the Wildlife Area as a sharp-tail grouse management area when 2,480 acres were leased for 50 years from Douglas County. The State currently owns 994 acres in fee title while another 2,997 acres are leased from Douglas

County. The entire property is designated a fish and wildlife management area except for a 240 acre Scientific Area. Vegetative management efforts strive to obtain a mixture and dispersion of grass/brush savannah with thickets of young aspen and jack pine--ideal sharp-tail grouse habitat. Repeated, periodic, prescribed fires are used to perpetuate the barrens. In addition to sharp-tail grouse, birds preferring the pine barrens habitat include upland sandpipers, rough-legged hawks, clay-colored sparrows and a host of other songbirds. At least one or two beaver colonies are usually active. Mallards, teal, ring-necked ducks, wood ducks, geese and pied-billed grebes have been observed on the several shallow ponds. Leo Creek, a popular trout stream, flows though the Wildlife Area's northwest corner.

Essentially, a pine barren is a brush prairie or a savannah. The Douglas County Wildlife Area will be the most extensive prairie that east to west hikers will encounter before reaching western Minnesota.

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: The upper part of the St. Croix River and the entire Namekagon River were designated as initial components of the National Wild and Scenic River System by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of October 2, 1968 (Public Law 90-542). Administered by the National Park Service, the Riverway is made up of the two rivers plus the riparian settings through which they flow. Today, approximately 252 miles of these rivers are preserved. Along the Riverway, the topography varies from high rock or sand bluffs to low marshy areas with occasional sandy hummocks. The vegetation is varied and includes a variety of conifers and hardwoods, comprised of various pines, spruces, maples, and several other broadleaf species, including an assortment of swamp species. Like all of the northern lake country, the upper St. Croix has a history of Native American presence, logging, farming, and forest fires.

Pattison State Park: Water and history merge in this 1,374 acre park. The centerpiece of the park is the 165-foot high Big Manitou Falls--the highest falls in Wisconsin.. Two other waterfalls rush through the park as the Black River carves its gorge through volcanic basalt. Little Manitou Falls has a vertical drop of 31 feet. Traces of earlier civilizations remain at Pattison S.P. Nomadic hunters passed through the area following the retreat of the last glacier. Other native populations followed. Between 1840 and 1910, copper was mined in the park. Test holes, pits, trenches, tunnels, and shafts scattered throughout the park serve as reminders. Today, some of Pattison's attractions include a 59-site campground, 10.5 miles of hiking trails, and a beautiful sand beach swimming site.

Jay Cooke State Park: Located on the St. Louis River, Jay Cooke S.P. is the third largest State park in Minnesota with an area of over 9,000 acres. The park's terrain has been shaped and reshaped by glaciation in the past million years. The rugged land formations of Jay Cooke State Park include the water-eroded gorge, steep valleys, and massive rock formations comprised of slate, graywacke, and red clay. Although most of the land surrounding the park was cleared over the years, the rough terrain in the park was never successfully cleared for farming.

The park was established in 1915 when the St. Louis River Power Company donated 2,350 acres of land. In 1945, the state purchased additional land. Deer, black bear, timber wolf, and coyote

are among the largest of 46 animal species in the park. The pileated woodpecker, marsh hawk, and great blue heron are just a few of 173 species of birds that nest or feed in the park. Jay Cooke State Park has fifty miles of hiking trails, ranging from easy to difficult.

Description of Alternatives (continued)
Alternative 1 - Empire Grade

Alternative 1 (Attachment 6A) is identical to Alternative 2 except between South Mail Road at the northwest ¼ of section 35, Gordon Township (Attachment 8-page 9 of 17), and the Bear Lake area near the east ½ of section 11, Summit Township (Attachment 8- page 11 of 17).

At South Mail Road, Alternative 1 continues west, parallel to the north side of the St. Croix River (within the St. Croix NSR) whereas Alternative 2 turns north, parallel to the Moose River. After crossing Sheosh Creek, Alternative 1 reaches the long abandoned Empire Grade-- a logging railroad established about the turn of the century. This alternative is named after this old grade.

Since the Empire Grade was not intended to be of long duration and because much of its use occurred under frozen conditions, a large built-up subgrade was not established. The grade was barely elevated above the extensive wetlands known as the Empire Swamp--even during the period of its use. Today, due to the lack of substantial substructure, much of the grade has subsided and is wet in many areas. The route follows the old grade northwest all the way to the Bear Lake vicinity. Initially it was thought that Alternative 1 would follow the Empire Grade all the way to the Black River. However, due to the extreme subsidence and wet conditions of the grade farther north, the thought of following it beyond approximately Bear Lake was dropped early in the planning process. Therefore, about east of Bear Lake, the route abandons the grade, angles east to higher ground, and joins Alternative 2. From this point to Jay Cooke S.P., Alternative 1 follows the same route as Alternative 2.

Alternative 1 is approximately 75 miles in length (measured from a small scale proximity map).

Alternative 3 - Belden Swamp

From the Chequamegon National Forest to South Mail Road Alternative 3 (Attachment 6C) is identical to Alternative 2. At South Mail Road it becomes identical to Alternative 1. However, about two miles north of County Highway M, shortly after crossing Crotte Creek, the Empire Grade intersects with the Empire Wilderness Road. At this location, Alternative 3 turns southwest off the Empire Grade (whereas Alternative 1 continues north on the grade) and follows the Empire Wilderness Road for about 2½ miles in a southwesterly direction. The route then leaves the road, crosses Chases Brook, and enters the vast Belden Swamp. For many miles it picks its way across the swamp in a northwesterly direction, crossing State Highway 35 and the Spruce River along the way. After crossing Spruce River, the route turns north until it intersects the Black River 1½ miles north of Summit Trail. The route then turns northeast on the bluffs parallel to and east of the river, crosses State Highway 35 once again, and joins Alternative 2 near the north ½ of section 20, Summit Township (Attachment 8-page 12 of 17). From this point to

Jay Cooke S.P., Alternative 3 follows the same route as Alternative 2.

Alternative 3 is approximately 80 miles in length (measured from a small scale proximity map).

Alternative 4 - 18th Street/Amnicon Falls

From the Chequamegon National Forest to County Highway P near the south ½ of section 8, Solon Springs Township (Attachment 8, page 6 of 17) Alternative 4 (Attachment 6D) is identical to Alternative 2. After crossing County Highway P, Alternative 4 turns north terminating on the Bong Bridge, in the City of Superior. In contrast, Alternative 2 continues west from County Highway P and terminates in Jay Cooke State Park.

After turning north, the route crosses Stone Chimney Road, Wilson Creek, County Highway L, and North Bennett Road. Turning northwest, the route crosses County Highway B and 3½ miles later reaches an abandoned railgrade/multiple use "trail" known as the South Shore Grade. Portions of this grade are developed as multi-use snowmobile trail while other portions are utilized as public roads. Other portions are fenced and are being pastured or cultivated for agricultural purposes. Prior to reaching Lackson Road/Kent Road, the route leaves the grade and turns north. The original alternative was to follow the South Shore Grade all the way to near Superior. This alternative was developed as an attempt to devise a route that would include Amnicon Falls S.P.

After leaving the grade and turning north, the route passes through scattered woodlots. It eventually crosses to the west side of Lackson Road but after another 1½ miles returns to the road in order to cross Middle River. It then turns west until crossing County Highway U where it turns north running parallel to and east of Amnicon River to enter Amnicon State Park.

Within Amnicon State Park, the Amnicon River produces a series of waterfalls and cascades. The route follows an existing hiking trail that offers outstanding views of these falls. The trail also crosses two covered bridges. Hikers using this route alternative could partake of the park's 36 unit campground.

Upon departing Amnicon S.P., the route continues north along the east side of the Amnicon River until crossing the river on the State Highways 13 bridge. Heading west and then northwest, the route stays north of State Highway 13 and 13/53 in a mixture of wooded areas and shrub wetlands-- skirting ravines along the way. The route connects with the City of Superior's partially completed waterfront trail system at the southeast corner of Allouez Bay. When completed the Waterfront Trail is intended to be a paved, multi-use trail. In winter months, it already serves as a snowmobile trail providing access to the city. Interspersed by scenic stretches of natural beauty along Lake Superior, the route would pass grain elevators, a shipyard, and industrial properties. One of the city's main attractions is Lake Superior, the largest fresh water lake in the world. The City of Superior also offers museums explaining the shipping and lumbering history, a tourist information center, parks, restaurants, and lodging. At Belknap Street, the route leaves the waterfront trail system and heads west on sidewalks through the city

to cross the St. Louis River on the Bong Bridge. This alternative ends at Bong Bridge.

Alternative 4 is approximately 56 miles in length (measured from a small scale proximity map).

Alternative 5 - 18th Street/South Shore

Except for the section between Lackson Road/Kent Road and the southeast corner of Allouez Bay, Alternative 5 (Attachment 6E) is identical to Alternative 4. Near Lackson Road/Kent Road, Alternative 5 continues to follow the South Shore Grade in a northwesterly direction whereas Alternative 4 departs the grade and turns to the north. Following the South Shore Grade the route crosses State Highway 53, the Amnicon River, several county roads, and once again State Highway 53 to reach the southwest corner of Allouez Bay, where the route connects with the Waterfront Trail and rejoins Alternative 4. From this point to the trail's western terminus at Bong Bridge, Alternative 5 is identical to Alternative 4.

Alternative 5 is approximately 57 miles in length (measured from a small scale proximity map).

Alternative 6 - 1982 Route (No Action)

Under this alternative, except for minor refinements, the trail would be located along the route shown in *North Country National Scenic Trail-Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use - 1982*. Since this route has already been studied it is the route of the trail until some other study supersedes it. It is therefore the obvious No Action Alternative.

From the Chequamegon National Forest to Gordon Dam the 1982 route is very similar to Alternative 2 except that Alternative 2 is much more refined. Just north of Gordon Dam, the 1982 route departs from Alternative 2, crossing to the south side of the St. Croix River on the dam structure. From this point, it follows the course of the river in a southwesterly direction all the way to Danbury, Wisconsin. Throughout this stretch, the route is primarily within the National Park Service lands of the St. Croix NSR. However, due to the ownership patterns, there are many locations where portions of the route are on Burnett County Forestry lands. Regardless of ownership, the route offers many scenic views of the river.

West of Danbury, the route crosses into Minnesota using the Wisconsin SR 77/Minnesota SR 48 bridge. It then turns north and follows the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail most of the way to Jay Cooke S.P. Along the course of the route in Minnesota, the trail would pass through portions of the St. Croix and Nemadji State Forests.

Alternative 6 is approximately 143 miles (measured from a small scale proximity map).

VII. Analysis of Alternatives

The five alternative alignments and the no action alternative were reviewed in terms of their relative feasibility and desirability. Public response to the proposed trail routes was received at open house meetings in Solon Springs, Superior, and Ashland on August 6-8, 1996. Review of the public response contributed to the following analysis. The conclusion was that Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative. Public input from the open houses resulted in a several improvements to the initial proposal. These suggestions have been incorporated into the description just covered in Section VI. The preferred trail alignment is graphically depicted on Attachments 7 and 8.

Alternative 1 -Empire Grade

Alternative 1 became a discussed option mainly because the planning team initially believed that the Empire Grade, which had grown back to a natural state, would offer a dry route through a largely swampy area of Douglas County. This route also remained within the St. Croix NSR longer than the other alternatives and this too was thought to be a factor worth exploring. Unfortunately, upon site investigation of the grade, it was discovered that it was not as dry as the planning team had originally thought. In fact, there were varying degrees of wetness all along the grade. Alternative 1 was wetter than all of the other alternatives except for Alternative 3. In addition to the wetness factor, the grade does not provide for scenic variety or elevation changes and there would not be dry places to camp along the way.

Alternative 2 - Moose River (PREFERRED)

The primary reason for studying and favoring this alternative is because it consistently scored the highest in the ranking process (Attachment 4B). Factors such as having the least impact on wetlands and endangered species, utilizing public lands and large tracts of private lands, and others were among its strengths. Alternative 2 is also very appealing from a feasibility standpoint as approximately 80-percent is on public ownership.

Alternative 2 is located in the most scenic areas of the planning region and offers exposure to a wide variety of experiences including forests, lakes, bogs, rivers, creeks, pine barrens, waterfalls, rolling hills, rugged terrain, and steep rock formations. Significant stretches are within several river corridors such as the Bois Brule, the St. Croix, the Moose, the Black , the Nemadji, and the St. Louis. Forested hills adjoin the rivers to create outstanding views, sidehill trail construction opportunities, and interesting hiking experiences. The rivers offer a relaxing atmosphere, opportunities to observe wildlife, and possible sources of treatable water.

Alternative 2 links recreation and points of interest sites such as: A Special Conservation Bayfield County Forestry Area and the Wild Lakes Area, Brule River State Forest, Upper St. Croix Lake, Village of Solon Springs, Lucius Woods County Park, The Bird Sanctuary - Douglas County Wildlife Area, Douglas County Forestry lands, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Moose River historical remnants, Pattison State Park, Nemadji State Forest, and Jay Cooke State Park.

It traverses the areas of the planning region with the most public and largest land ownership patterns. Alternative 2 totals 109 miles. Of this total, approximately 88 miles traverse public lands, and 22 miles cross private property.

The main concern with Alternative 2 is that it has to cross short stretches of private land--primarily near the Village of Solon Springs, near Douglas County Highway M, near Pattison S. P., along the Nemadji river (most of this is industrial forest land), and approaching Jay Cooke S.P. Since the National Park Service has no authority to purchase either fee simple lands or easements for the North Country NST, the completion of the trail is heavily dependent on the voluntary cooperation of landowners. The North Country Trail Association could purchase lands or easements if funds were available, but only on a willing seller basis. Because of these restrictions, the support of the general public and especially of the landowners is crucial. In all likelihood, a trail following this corridor of opportunity will be many years in the making.

See section VIII for a more complete description of the environment affected by Alternative 2. It should be noted that except for a few limited circumstances where the corridor of opportunity is hampered by physical constraints, the corridor of opportunity is at least one mile in width to provide for flexibility in routing the trail.

Alternative 3 - Belden Swamp

Alternative 3 was discussed as an option because the planning team believed it to be a good representation of Northwest Wisconsin and it was very remote and undeveloped. Unlike the Empire Grade, which is a straight shot, it offered a few topographical changes. However upon field checking Alternative 3, it was discovered that the route passed through extensive wetlands and was dependent on somehow avoiding these wet areas or constructing many miles of boardwalk and puncheon--a very expensive and impractical solution. Rather than offering scenic variety, the route lacks diverse experiences since it exists in mainly swampy vegetation. This alternative is the wettest of all of the alternatives. Due to all of these insurmountable obstacles, Alternative 3 is not favored. The site investigation determined that it is simply not feasible to pass through this swampy region.

Alternative 4 - 18th Street/Amnicon

Alternative 4 could actually be called a sub-alternative to Alternative 5. Alternative 5 was the alternative originally proposed by the planning team because it was thought that there was potential to use a couple of abandoned railgrades. Alternative 4 was developed as an attempt to devise a route that would include Amnicon Falls S.P. (a jewel of waterfalls) as well as the advantages of passing through the City of Superior. It was considered advantageous to include the City of Superior's numerous qualities and Lake Superior. Additionally, a route through the City of Superior provided an opportunity to promote interest within a large population center, and the route is tied into the city's planned waterfront trail system.

Upon further field checking, several drawbacks appeared. Overall, Alternative 4 is not as wooded

or undeveloped as the other alternatives. It is more pastoral and would have to pass through many private properties with their associated fences, pastures, and buildings. The hiking experience was more rural to suburban in nature with not as many wild areas or rivers. While field checking the route, extensive areas of shrub swamp wetland and heavy soils, with no easy way around them, were discovered between Amnicon Falls S.P. and Allouez Bay. The quality of the hiking experience along State Highway 2 and the Bong Bridge in the City of Superior was also questionable. Due to these drawbacks, Alternative 4 would not be the best representation of a national scenic trail in comparison to Alternative 2.

Alternative 5 - 18th Street/South Shore

Since Alternative 5 is similar to Alternative 4 except for the variation of following an abandoned railgrade and not passing through Amnicon Falls State Park, refer to the above analysis for explanation of why Alternative 5 is not preferred. In addition to the above reasons for dismissal, this portion of the grade was continuously broken up into segmented pieces--gated and fenced off by the numerous private landowners along the route. Plus, there is established motorized activity occurring on the route in the form of snowmobile use.

Alternative 6 - 1982 Route (No Action)

Selecting this alternative would have done nothing to solve the concerns about the 1982 route that led to initiating this study. These concerns are discussed in Section IV. However, due to the fact that the 1982 Route was THE currently approved route of trail, it had to be compared to the new alternatives to see if it was still the best route, despite the identified concerns.

Fortunately, better alternatives were identified by the planning team. As can be seen in Attachment 4B, this alternative actually scored the lowest of any alternative. Due to these reasons, Alternative 6 was dismissed.

VIII. Affected Environment and Impacts

This section discusses the potential impacts to natural, cultural, and socio-economic resources associated with selecting the proposed corridor and developing the trail.

A. Impacts to Physical Resources

Soils

Soil type, slope, and drainage all influence the suitability of an area to withstand the potential impacts of trail construction and use. The trail route chosen will attempt to minimize the possibility of compaction or erosion of the soil surface. In addition, soils that are rocky or frequently wet create difficult hiking conditions and will be avoided if possible. Most of the soils along the proposed alignment are well suited for trails. The primary limiting factor is the poorly drained soils in low areas, creating a potential for compaction. However, since these low areas

are generally flat, little erosion is expected.

With proper layout of the trail on the landscape, erosion control techniques, construction of appropriate trail structures such as puncheon, boardwalks, or bridges, all potential impacts from constructing and using the trail can be mitigated to a non-significant level. Even in steep or unstable soil conditions, careful design and construction techniques, such as those shown in the *National Parks Service's Trail Management Handbook,* the *North Country National Scenic Trail - A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*, the *Appalachian Mountain Club's Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance* by Proudman and Rajala, or the Student Conservation Association's *Lightly on The Land* will minimize erosion problems and soil impacts.

Wetlands, Water, and Water Quality

Small kettle lakes, streams and rivers, marshes and other wetlands are some of the features included within the proposed trail corridor. The trail crosses or closely follows some of these features.

Under Alternative 2 (preferred), depending on the trail's exact location and site specific investigations, a few small bridges may be necessary. Most moderate to major streams are crossed utilizing existing road bridges. The majority of the wetlands are located in Douglas County and for this planning project, structures such as boardwalk and puncheon are more likely to be needed than are bridges.

Actions involving water crossings and wetlands will be conducted with the use of appropriate erosion control techniques. Placement of any type of fill in wetlands is subject to regulation. The rules in place that govern activities in wetlands include Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources NR 1.95 and NR 103, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Any work on the bed or banks of navigable waters, including bridges, is governed under Chapter 30, Wisconsin Statutes. The State of Minnesota has similar jurisdiction and permitting requirements. Permits from both DNRs will be needed for bridges and work in wetlands.

Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over wetlands and waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Permits will be needed from the COE for bridges and boardwalks in wetlands.

Minimum impact on aquatic resources is anticipated when construction, use, and maintenance of the proposed route occurs. Where necessary, bridges will be constructed over streams and other wet-area structures will be utilized in wetland areas. Experience on other parts of the North Country NST has shown that with careful trail design and construction, water quality will not suffer.

Floodplains

Executive Order 11988--Floodplain Management-- governs potential impacts of Federal projects on flood plains. NPS regulations for implementing this order provide under Section 5, Scope, Part B Excepted Actions, 2a: ". . . foot trails are excepted from compliance with this order."

Prime Agricultural Lands

Prime farmland as defined by the Soil Conservation Service is "farmland which meets a set of technical criteria based upon soil water capacity or availability of irrigation, temperature regime, pH, depth of water table, conductivity, sodium exchange, flood potential, erosion potential, permeability and percentage of fragment rocks." In general, wherever the corridor of opportunity passes through soil types classified as prime farmland soils it avoids open fields and follows wooded areas, fringes of wetlands, and wooded fencerows--areas that the landowners have not developed for agriculture. However, in the case of the current planning location, the area is largely forested and no prime farm lands are involved.

St. Croix National Scenic River

Alternative 2 (preferred) closely parallels the St. Croix NSR from Gordon Dam to the Moose River--approximately two miles. Under the definitions found in the act creating the Riverway, this portion of the river is designated as "Scenic."

The Act does not prohibit a hiking trail within the river corridor. However, location and construction of the trail does have the potential to be in conflict with the river's management regulations. Since new bridges crossing a designated river are usually not allowed, the trail location is to take advantage of existing bridges. In this instance, this is a moot point as no crossings of the St. Croix are proposed. The management regulations pertaining to a National Scenic River also affect other aspects of trail location and construction techniques. Under the preferred alternative, the trail route would not be visible from the river itself except in a couple of locations where it approaches existing campsites. Even in those locations, river users will probably not realize that the trail is present unless they explore from the campsite and observe the trail's blazes or small signs. Mitigating measures are outlined in Section IX--Trail Use, Development, and Management Standards.

Air Quality

Under all alternatives, air emissions may increase slightly due to increased automobile traffic by visitors to the trail and due to the use of construction and maintenance equipment such as chainsaws, brush mowers, etc. or it may be reduced by people walking the trail instead of driving.

In any case, since the ambient air quality of the study area is good and current and anticipated use of the trail is low to moderate, the effect of the North Country NST on air quality is probably negligible.

B. Impacts to Biologic Resources

Wildlife

In general, under the preferred alternative, securing a trailway and constructing the trail will have no significant effects on wildlife. The area that the proposed corridor is located in is rural to roaded natural area with the dominant use being forestry with pockets of agriculture. This type of land use creates good wildlife habitat for both "edge" and "interior" species.

The primary effects on wildlife would be the occasional sightings of wildlife by users of the trail. It is possible that some wildlife will be disturbed by these sightings but this disturbance would be very short-term and most wildlife become accustomed to the occasional presence of a trail user. It has been the experience of the North Country NST that users are concerned and aware of the surrounding environment and take great precautions to preserve the habitats that surround the trail.

Fisheries

No adverse effects to the fishery resource surrounding the trail should occur with proper trail design and erosion control during construction.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Under the consultation requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the planning team requested the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's opinion regarding the presence of any rare, threatened or endangered species within the preferred corridor (Attachment 14). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that the gray wolf (Canis lupis), a Federally listed endangered species, and the bald eagle, (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), a Federally listed threatened species, have a range that lies within Bayfield and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin. They also listed the Fassett's locoweed (Oxytropis campestris var. Chartacea) in Bayfield County as a Federally threatened species; and Kirtland's warbler (Dendroica kirtlandii) and the piping plover (Charadrius melodus) in Douglas County as Federally endangered species.

While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the Fassett's locoweed, Kirtland's warbler, and piping plover would not be affected by the proposed trail segment; they did state that, "a number of occurrences of the bald eagle and gray wolf are known from the vicinity of the project corridors being studied. The bald eagle and gray wolf tend to change the locations of nests or dens from year to year, and "both species are sensitive to disturbance near their breeding territories. Since the proposed trail construction is not likely to take place for several years, it is difficult for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to currently predict the specific areas which may be sensitive to disturbance." They have recommended contacting their office again at least 12 months prior to actual construction of these trail segments. They will then evaluate the specific plans at that time. They did state, "As a guide for planning purposes, we suggest that you plan your trails routes such that they are wide enough to accommodate the avoidance of sensitive

locations by at least one fourth (1/4) of a mile. This distance should be sufficient to avoid disturbance to either of these species, in the event that they are found to occur near your proposed trail route."

As stated in Section VI--Description of the Proposed Corridor of Opportunity and Alternatives, the corridor of opportunity is at least one mile in width to provide for flexibility in routing the trail, except for a few limited circumstances where the corridor of opportunity is hampered by physical constraints. This office will also obtain more specific information on exact locations of eagle nests, and wolf den and rendezvous areas from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as the planning and implementation proceed on this project.

Footpath construction and use have the potential to cause some local disturbance to vegetation and wildlife, but usually this will be slight. In most instances, the trail alignment can be adjusted or relocated within the proposed corridor to reduce impacts, should anything of concern be identified. In Wisconsin, both the Timber Wolf and the Bald Eagle are being declassified form Endangered to Threatened, which allows more leeway in management options.

C. Impacts to Cultural Resources

Historic Properties and Archeological Sites

Section 106 of The National Historic Preservation Act requires that the Advisory Council be given an opportunity to comment during the planning process. The regulations that the Advisory Council prepared to carry out Section 106 include the involvement of State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs). Responsibility for involving the above parties has been delegated to NPS Superintendents. Accordingly, the NPS Madison Trails Office has involved the Advisory Council as well as both the Wisconsin and Minnesota SHPOs.

During the preliminary review of the route by the Wisconsin SHPO, information was provided only on the history of Pattison S.P. The transmittal letter stated: "This should be incorporated into your plan in choosing an alternative route...." The information supplied concerned the Pattison S.P. Ranger Station which dates back to the depression era and was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in September 1937. The associated service building and storage building were constructed in 1935 and 1936 respectively. They were relocated to the ranger station site in the early 1950's. One of the two (probably the storage building) served as the National Park Service field office at Camp Pattison for the supervision of state program projects at the park. Also during 1936, CCC enrollees constructed a sand beach and a bath house at the park. Since the entire trail route within Pattison S.P. follows the park's existing trail system, the designation of the North Country NST will have no effect on historic resources.

During the preliminary review of the route by the Minnesota SHPO, three recorded inventory sites, none of which have been evaluated in order to determine National Register eligibility, were identified. These were: Silver Creek Historic, Sliver Creek Overlook, and Pt. Douglas-Superior

Military Road. We do not believe that the proposed trail alignment affects any of these sites. However if after seeing the detailed plan maps during the review of this Environment Assessment, the Minnesota SHPO (or the Wisconsin SHPO) provides more detailed information, adjustments will be made to the plan. The Minnesota SHPO letter also mentioned: "Inventory sites in the general vicinity of the project also include those at Fond du Lac, and the Grand Portage of the St. Louis River." Since the planning area does not encompass Fond du Lac, no further discussion is offered herein. Where the proposed trail approaches the St. Louis River (possible location of the Grand Portage), it is on existing park trails in Jay Cooke S.P. Since it is on existing trails, the designation of the North Country NST will have no effect on historic resources. The Minnesota SHPO goes on to say: "Finally, we believe that any project areas that are within 1,000 feet of water, on hilltops, or on glacial lake beaches have high potential of containing archaeological sites. Survey of these project areas is recommended."

Further discussion on archeologic protection can be found in Section IX--Trail Use, Development, and Management Standards.

D. Socio-economic Impacts

Land Use/Land Ownership

Construction and use of a new trail across northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region may produce both positive benefits and negative consequences from a landowner's point of view. Negative impacts are generally limited to a perceived, slight increase in "nuisance" type activities. Adjoining landowners typically have fears about loss of privacy, vandalism, and littering when a new trail is being planned.

Past experience and formal studies have shown these fears to be groundless as the perceived impacts do not develop after the trail is constructed. In 1992, the National Park Service in cooperation with Pennsylvania State University conducted an extensive study, *The Impact of Rails Trails*. This study showed that problems along trails had not developed, as feared, and that the vast majority of landowners were more satisfied with the trail after it was in place than they were before it was in place. Additionally, adjoining landowners found that they personally made use of the trail.

Trail users and landowners alike normally find recreation and health and fitness opportunities to be the most important benefits of a trail. However, other benefits normally include aesthetic beauty, open space, and in some instances higher property values.

Many of the issues raised by adjoining landowners are legitimate concerns, but they can be addressed through trail design solutions. These design solutions are spelled out in Section IX--Trail Use, Development, and Management Standards. Additional information to resolve landowner concerns about ownership are found in Attachment 16--Questions and Answers.

Visitor Use and Protection

As a result of the establishment of the trail, increased human access to many areas is expected. Along with this increased activity some secondary impacts may occur such as litter and interruption of wildlife use patterns. These impacts will be minimal because, by its nature, the North Country NST is designed and managed to be a low-impact experience.

The trailway passes through existing county and State recreation areas. These areas may receive a few additional visitors as a result of the trail. However, it is more likely that the impact to these areas will be that the trail will provide additional recreation opportunities to park visitors. The projected use of the trail is difficult to estimate. Based on patterns of use on other national scenic trails and on other already completed portions of the North Country NST, it is likely that use will be highest near populated areas or existing recreation areas. If uses increase considerably, conflicts between users may develop. This is also difficult to predict. However, because the trail is being designed as a foot travel only trail, use conflicts should be very minimal. The trail will be monitored by trail volunteers, local law enforcement agencies, NPS officers, and WDNR enforcement officers if necessary.

In the case of an injury to a trail user or a fire along the trail, there may be a need for an emergency response. The closest community or emergency unit would respond to such an emergency. However, the risk of such an event is minimal. The risk of environmental damage from a response to such an event is also minimal.

Developed Areas and Communities

Generally, the planning area is undeveloped. The preferred corridor of opportunity includes one community, the Village of Solon Springs. Trail development provides increased opportunities for local recreationists. Providing the public with additional recreational opportunities may increase the numbers of people who flow into the region and this increased public use of the area may benefit local businesses.. Additional trailheads with parking areas may be developed.

Although the trail may attract some new commercial establishments, catering to trail users, to the local communities, a significant increase in that type of development is not expected. As awareness and use of the North Country NST increases, some economic benefits to area businesses will result from spending by day hikers and overnight backpackers.

Public Health and Well Being

Northern Wisconsin and adjoining Minnesota already abound with opportunities for motorized recreation experiences. Development and completion of the North Country NST will help create a new social environment by providing the public with access to the surrounding resources, via non-motorized means, for purposes of outdoor recreation. The trail will provide links to many area parks, forests, and recreation lands. The trail will be used primarily as a hiking trail. Other uses will include ungroomed cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, birdwatching, interpretive walks, and education.

The trail will enhance awareness of northern Wisconsin's and Minnesota's glacial carved landscape and vast forest resources. Through interpretation, visitors will better understand sound forest management practices, glacial actions, the value of solitude, and other unique features along the route. The trail serves as a backbone trail for the two states--connecting them not only to each other but also to the other five trail states.

Quality of Trail User Experience

One of the reasons for the selection of the preferred alternative is because it provides the highest quality user experiences. It is located in the most scenic areas of the planning region and is steeped with scenic attributes and local cultural significance.

IX. Trail Use, Development, and Management Standards

The National Park Service, in conjunction with the North Country Trail Association (NCTA), and the Wisconsin DNR has developed a handbook on trail design, construction, and maintenance--*North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*. This handbook provides detailed guidance on a variety of trail issues for planners and developers of the trail in both States. This section provides introductory material on these issues. For each individual trail segment, the local managing authority will influence the final development and management decisions.

The way in which the North Country NST is designed, developed, and maintained should make it easily recognizable as a National Scenic Trail. The 1966 Department of Interior report, "*Trails for America,*" which helped set the stage for eventual passage of the National Trails System Act two years later described NSTs as very special trails: "A standard of excellence in the routing, construction, maintenance, and marking consistent with each trail's character and purpose should distinguish all national scenic trails. Each should stand out in its own right as a recreation resource of superlative quality and of physical challenge." It is important that the collective effort of the many partners involved in this project maintain the North Country Trail's national significance and superlative qualities. The most basic way to accomplish this is to ensure that the trail is planned, established, and managed with a level of consistency over its entire length that conveys a sense of "connectedness" and continuity to users. Quality design and construction of the trail, parking lots, and other facilities; clear and consistent signage, and timely response to problems created by storms or routine recreational use all help to maintain this consistency and foster pride in the trail. Regular maintenance and cleanup of litter along with timely response to other public concerns about trail-related problems ensure that the trail will be a welcome addition to a community or area.

Type of Use

The National Trails System Act specifies that National Scenic Trails are not open to motorized use by the general public. The 1982 comprehensive plan for the North Country NST explains that the trail is primarily intended to be a foot trail--meaning that traveling on foot is the one use that must be provided for on all segments of the trail. Other non-motorized uses such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, jogging, bicycling, and horseback riding may be permitted on a given segment according to the desires and policies of the managing authority responsible for the segment -- only if the trail segment has been developed to safely accommodate the additional activity, the activity will not cause significant deterioration of the trail, and the activity will not conflict with the principal user (the hiker).

The current National Park Service position regarding bicycling and horses is based on the policies found in *The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982*, is:

> Bicycling is best accommodated as a use on the North Country NST on rail-trail segments and on other short sections of hardened surface (1) specifically designed for wheeled vehicles, where the bikes would not damage natural or trail resources, (2) that are parts of previously established multiple use trails that become part of the North Country Trail route, (3) where bicycles could be physically restricted to the designated section, and (4) where bicycle use would not adversely affect the recreational experience of hikers. These conditions generally are not found on the typical, single-track, forested and rural segments of the North Country Trail and the trail in these areas should not be developed to the necessary higher standards solely to accommodate bicycles.
>
> We believe that horse use is best accommodated on the North Country NST on those segments of trail which have been specifically designed and hardened to withstand such use. These conditions generally are not found on the typical, single-track, forested and rural segments of the North Country Trail. Additionally, horse use is perhaps an acceptable use on most trail segments within the prairies and grasslands of North Dakota and western Minnesota, where the character of the North Country NST changes from primarily a wooded experience to primarily a prairie (big sky) experience, passing through many miles of farms, ranches, and grasslands. Here, the flavor of the trails is more "western" than "eastern" and the dryer soils are more forgiving of horse traffic than in wetter, forested areas. In these areas, there may also be opportunities to establish parallel hiking and horse trails, such as along the McCluskey and New Rockford Canals--horses on the old access road and hikers on a foot trail within the boundary of the canal right-of-way.

Because of the above statement of philosophy and the several private holdings that the trail must cross in the affected Counties, the planning team is recommending the lowest impact trail possible--a foot travel only trail. A foot trail can be accommodated with very little impact on the land or the surroundings. Any fences can be easily crossed or gone through using stiles. To

provide for other uses requires the trail, associated bridges, and fence crossings to be constructed to higher standards. Also, other uses on the trail may lead to erosion problems, muddy conditions, widening of the trail, greater maintenance, and even relocation. These unacceptable resource impacts eventually result in the degradation of the hiker experience.

Trail Design and Maintenance

In all areas, the trail will be created by clearing a path through brush and woods. When on private property, it will usually be located along the back sides of the property. Vegetation will be trimmed to keep it from touching hikers or their backpacks with extra allowance for seasonal growth. Typically, the trail is cleared four feet wide and eight feet high. Only brush and very small trees will be cut. Larger trees will be left in place and the trail will wind between them. On flat ground, the path remains natural and ungraded. When the trail traverses sidehill, "benching" will normally be done in order to provide a flat walking surface and create a sustainable trail. Simple, native material erosion control devices will be used for erosion control.

The trail will be cleared and erosion control devices will be maintained two to three times per year using hand tools such as weed whips, lopping shears, pruning saws, shovels, and appropriate power tools such as weed trimmers, and mowers. Chain saws may also be used for the removal of large fallen trees and limbs.

Impacts to soil and water have been discussed in Section VIII-B. Detailed discussions on trail design characteristics are shown in *North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*. See Figure 1 (page 35) and Chapter 4 of the handbook.

During the construction of the trail a minute amount of noise and air pollution can be expected due to equipment operation and disruption of surface conditions. Trail plans will be designed to minimize any soil erosion. Maintenance of the trail will also result in some very limited noise and air pollution due to equipment operation such as mowers and brush cutters.

Wetland Crossings

Crossing broad expanses of wetland will be avoided by careful trail planning and lay out. Where it is necessary to cross; creeks, wetlands, and other seasonally wet areas, it will be done at the narrowest points and puncheon, boardwalks or simple bridges will be used. The objective when crossing saturated soils and wet areas can be summarized by saying "a dry boot experience is desired." This symbolism is used because a hikers dry boots equate to a wetland area that is not being damaged by hiker impact--the area has been hardened and protected.

Many proven designs for trail structures, using native or treated materials, are available. Detailed discussion on trail structures and their desired design characteristics are included in Chapter 5 of *North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance.* Other designs are shown in the NPS's *Trail Management Handbook,* the *AMC Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance* by Proudman and Rajala, SCA's *Lightly on The*

Land, and other trail books. Local innovation and design is encouraged but it should meet the basic design requirements shown in Figure 2--page 36.

Whenever necessary, permits will be obtained from the Wisconsin DNR, the Minnesota DNR, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. See Section VIII-A to determine when permits are necessary.

Support Facilities

Support facilities provide for hiker convenience, comfort, and sanitation. These structures should be designed to harmonize with the surrounding environment. Support facilities are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of *North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance.* Additional discussion and plans can be found in one of the several good trail handbooks mentioned in previous sections. See Figure 3--page 37.

Signing

A complete signing system has been developed for the trail. This signing system is discussed in Chapter 7 of *North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance*. This handbook is meant to guide managing authorities by defining workable trail standards including signing. The ultimate objective is to achieve signing consistency and clarity on a trailwide basis. Signing throughout the counties will be standardized. The sign system includes signs informing the public about what types of uses are appropriate (i.e. foot travel only); reminders to the hiker to observe good manners and protect private property (i.e. entering private property, leave no rubbish, start no fires, stay on the trail, and camping status); destination signs at roads and trailheads informing the hiker how far something is down the trail; and interpretive signs where key features are located. Various types of signs will be posted periodically as needed. See the above handbook for complete details and Figure 4 (page 38) for a summary. Maintenance of signs will be performed two to three times per year as part of routine maintenance.

Litter

Prevention and education will be accomplished through signing, brochures, other literature, and talks. If littering does occur, it will be cleaned up every time the trail is maintained. Experience has shown that hikers leave very little litter because they usually carry out what they carry in. Any litter that does occur is normally near roads and other access points, and is easier to monitor and clean up.

Hunting

Granting permission for trail passage does not convey any hunting access or privileges. Land that is posted "closed" to hunting or fishing remains closed. This will be emphasized in signing and in literature.

Hunters and hikers will be educated by members of the North Country Trail Association, the National Park Service, and local managing authorities regarding potential conflicts and dangers during hunting season through a variety of informational techniques. Hikers will be asked to avoid the trail during the time of heaviest hunting and to wear bright colors in the fall. Hunters will be reminded of standard firearm safety practices such as not shooting at a sound and not shooting toward or down a known travelway.

While fall is the season for hunting, it is also considered as the best hiking season by hikers. Although closing a section of the trail at this time is not desirable, some landowner agreements may include hiker restrictions for short periods during hunting season--particularly the firearms deer season.

Archeologic Protection

Following the preferred route as closely as possible, trail developers will work with landowners to obtain a permanent trailway, whether by fee title purchase, easement, use agreement, etc. Once a route is secured, trail developers, will make plans to clear and/or construct the treadway and supporting facilities. Trail location and construction impacts a very narrow area about 18-48 inches in width. During construction, a carefully flagged area may be slightly shifted to avoid a tree, boulder, or other obstruction. Trails are normally constructed using a variety of hand tools rather than heavy mechanical equipment. Disturbance to the soil is minimal and the opportunity for spotting a resource prior to damage occurring is much greater.

As an extra precaution, trail construction crews will be oriented, to the extent possible, to spot both prehistoric and historic resources, and instructed to immediately stop any disturbance activities until an archeologist can be consulted.

If archaeologic resources or historic properties are discovered during trail/facility development activities (marking, construction, maintenance, etc.), operations will be suspended at the site, the appropriate SHPO will be notified, a professional archeologist will be scheduled to inspect the site, and the procedures of 36 CFR Part 800.11 (b) (2) will be implemented.

The National Park Service will enter into the *Supplemental Programmatic Agreement between the National Park Service and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin concerning the Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails.* The National Park Service will work with the Minnesota SHPO to reach a similar agreement.

Protection and Enforcement

Responsibility for the administration of the trail rests with a variety of public and private entities since the proposed trail passes through a patchwork of ownership and managing authorities. There is no single entity that will own, develop, manage, or operate the entire trail. Some segments will be on Federal, State, County, or municipal lands and will be under the direct

protection and enforcement of those local authorities. Other portions will be on private lands under an easement or agreement with the North Country Trail Association (NCTA).

NPS, NCTA, and other principle partners in the trail project stress low impact trail use through signage, literature, and public contact along the trail. Experience and research has shown that few enforcement problems are experienced along linear trails. Once established, they become valued neighbors (Impacts of Rail Trails, NPS, Moore et al, 1992). Volunteers will monitor the trail, educate trail users, and record names or license numbers of violators to report them to the appropriate authorities.

True enforcement actions will be undertaken only by those who have the authority to do so, including the agencies who administer the land such as the National Park Service in St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the Wisconsin DNR in Brule River State Forest and Pattison State Park, the Minnesota DNR in Nemadji State Forest and Jay Cooke State Park, city police, and the county sheriff. Local law enforcement officials will have jurisdiction for illegal acts that may occur on the trail just as they do for any other lands where they have jurisdiction. The county sheriff has jurisdiction over all lands in a county, and local units of government may also enact ordinances governing the trail.

Accessibility

The North Country NST will be designed and constructed to ensure that people with a wide range of ability levels will have the opportunity to experience the significant resources that make it unique. At the same time, planners and developers will strive to maintain the generally rustic character of a National Scenic Trail. To accomplish these goals, the trail will provide a range of opportunities to accommodate individuals who enjoy a challenge, as well as those who prefer easier, non-strenuous hiking.

Some segments of the trail will be **fully accessible**. These segments are designed to improve access for persons with mobility and vision impairments. Fully accessible segments meet a number of specifications addressing width, passing space, surface, running slope, cross slope, edging, rest areas, signage, and information points. Generally these segments are useable without assistance by all but the most severely disabled persons. Opportunities for fully accessible segments are most likely to occur near urban areas or near trailheads--especially when a scenic overview or attraction is nearby. Within the planning area, such opportunities already occur in several locations--Lucius Woods County Park Nature Trail, the trail to view Big Manitou Falls in Pattison S.P., and the trail to the swinging bridge in Jay Cooke S.P. As actual trail development occurs, developers should be observant for other feasible opportunities to develop this type of trail segment.

Many trail segments can be developed as **barrier free**. These segments of the trail are designed to provide a more challenging experience while still accommodating use by individuals with disabilities. Facilities remain fully accessible but the trail grades and surfaces may be more challenging to persons with limited mobility. Impediments such as steps, waterbars, fords,

stepping stones, and unusually narrow bridges all tend to create barriers. These types of barriers can often be avoided by choosing another trail location or construction design. Trail segments should be made barrier free if all it takes is a little extra work or a slightly different location. Standards discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of *North Country National Scenic Trail-A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance* and also shown in Figures 1 and 2 are specifically designed with the barrier free objective in mind.

Within the planning area, opportunities for barrier free trail can be found in most of the dryer soil areas occurring between the Chequamegon National Forest and County Highway P, north of Solon Springs. Additional opportunities occur within the Douglas County Wildlife Area and perhaps from near the Black River, south of Pattison S.P., to Jay Cooke S.P.

And last, are those segments of the trail that will be **not accessible**. Existing natural elements, the remote character of the trail, the use of native materials for structures, and respect for the contours of the land are all reasons why much of the trail will fall into this classification. Steepness, rocks, roots, and extensive wet areas that cannot be altered or eliminated without drastic measures that are insensitive to the environment or destructive to the desired character of the trail are just a few of the natural impediments. Not accessible segments will probably occur from County Highway P to the Highway 53 wayside rest area and from near the west boundary of the Douglas County Wildlife Area to the Black River. In these areas the trail will be wending between wet areas and many sections of puncheon will be needed. Within this area, isolated opportunities for barrier free may occur--such as going east from the Moose River to the established campsites along the St. Croix River.

FIGURE 1

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION DESIGN STANDARDS

Standards (desired)	ROS Class			
	Urban	Rural and Roaded Natural	Semiprimitive	Primitive
Tread Width Hiking Segments Accessible Segments	 48" 60"	 24" 36"	 18" 28"	 *
Clearing Width (each side of tread))	24"	12" (WIDNR-24")	12"	*
Clearing Height (min.)	10'	8' (WIDNR-10')	8'	*
Slope(max.sustained) Hiking Segments Accessible Segments	 10% 5%	 10% 8%	 15% 12%	 *
Slope (max.) Hiking Segments Accessible Segments	 15% for 100' 8% for 30'	 20% for 100' 10% for 50'	 30% for 100' 10% for 50'	 *
Cross Slope (max)	3%	5%	8%	*
Other Accessible Segment Standards Passing Spot Int.-max Rest Area Interval-max	 N/A 1200'	 600' 1200'	 1200' 1/2 mile	 N/A N/A
Surfaces Accessible Surfaces	Asphalt. Concrete. Stabilized-aggregate. Screening(1) .Wood Chip. Sod. Asphalt. Concrete. Stabilized-aggregate.	Native. Wood Chip(2). Stabilized-aggregate. Screening(1). Asphalt. Stabilized-aggregate.	Native Native. Stabilized-aggregate.	Native Native

* In Primitive ROS (Wilderness), human impacts and changes to the scenery are meant to be less obtrusive--when entering a Wilderness area, one accepts greater personal risk. Trails in primitive areas lay "light on the land." Because of this, no hard/fast standards have been established. Generally, the tread is more faint, the grade varies depending on the terrain, etc. However, it is still very important to consider trail design standards which protect the resources of the area. Because trails in Wilderness areas may receive less frequent maintenance, designing a trail that requires little maintenance is of utmost importance.

(1) Limestone screenings include the fines.
(2) Not in wet areas--adds to the problem.

Figure 2

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR TRAIL STRUCTURES

Standards (desired)	ROS Class			
	Urban	Rural and Roaded Natural	Semiprimitive	Primitive
Bridges (width) Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 60" 72"	 36" 48"	 28" 36"	 *
Bridge Railings Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 Y Y	 Formula (1) "	 Formula(1) "	 Formula(1) N/A
Bridge Rail Height	42"	42"	42"	42"
Bridge Engineering Design	Y	If length > 25 ft. or height > 5 ft.	Same as at left.	Same as at left.
Clearance above Navigable Waters(2)	5'	5'	5'	5'
Bridge Kickplate Required (3) Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 Y Y	 N Y	 N Y	 *
Other Structures Puncheon (4) Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 N/A N/A	 16-18" width N/A	 16-18" width N/A	 *
Boardwalk(5) Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 60" 72"	 36" 48"	 28" 36"	 *
Corduroy Hiking Segment Accessible Segment	 N/A N/A	 (6) N/A	 (6) N/A	 *
Culverts(7)	OK	OK	OK	*

(1)Railings are required if: (½length X height²)/width □ 40
(2)Navigability as defined by the individual state. Clearance requirement may vary.
(3)Kickplates are often included for safety when handrails are not required.
(4)Puncheon rests on sills and is generally less than 1' high.
(5)Boardwalk is generally less than 2' above water level and should have kickplates.
(6)Generally not acceptable–but can be used as a temporary measure in areas not defined as wetlands.
(7)Calculate length to provide for 2:1 fill slope beyond the normal trail clearing. Size (engineering consultation) to accommodate peak flows. Water crossing permits often required.

* In Primitive ROS (Wilderness), structures are provided only for visitor safety or resource protection–not for visitor convenience or comfort.

Figure 3.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

STANDARDS FOR TRAIL SUPPORT FACILITIES

Standards (minimum)	ROS Class			
	Urban	Rural and Roaded Natural	Semiprimitive	Primitive
Primary Trailhead (1)	As needed.	Spacing 5 miles or less when actual or desired use is high. Spacing 10 miles or more when actual or desired use is low.	Spacing 10 miles or more.	*
Campsite/Shelter	N/A	Spacing 8-15 miles. Especially needed when dispersed camping along the route is not permissible.		*
Developed Water	Obtain from public facility or home.	Spacing 10-15 miles when potable or treatable water is not available.	Spacing 20-30 miles when potable or treatable water is not available.	*
Toilet Facility	As needed.	At high use areas, campsites, trailheads, and other public areas as necessary.	As needed for resource protection.	*
Bench	May be provided at selected view spots or rest areas.		Not applicable.	*

(1)Primary trailheads will provide parking for a number of vehicles and contain a bulletin board or kiosk for trail information. They may be part of an existing recreation facility or can be located where the trail crosses a highway or major road.

Secondary trailheads may also be established. These are places where only 1-2 small vehicle spaces are provided or, because of safety considerations parking is not provided and may be discouraged. They may include a small bulletin board or kiosk with trail information. Generally, these will be used when it is necessary to gain access to the NST via some other named trail or an access trail. The secondary trailhead would be located where the named trail intersects the NST or at the beginning of the access trail. Secondary trailheads may be found in remote areas where major roads are far apart.

* In Primitive ROS (Wilderness), structures are provided only for visitor safety or resource protection--not for visitor convenience or comfort.

Figure 4

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

SIGN SUMMARY

Sign Type	Material	Background Color	Letters	
			Color	Size
Highway Information Signs	Aluminum or HDP	Brown	White	MUTCD-varies
Warning Signs	Aluminum or metal	Yellow	Black	MUTCD-varies
Entrance Signs	Aluminum or HDP	Brown	White	MUTCD-varies
Trailhead Kiosk	Wood	Brown	NA	NA
Regulatory (Usage) Signs	Decal, Alum., Plastic	Brown	White	varies
Blazes	Paint, Alum., Plastic	Medium Blue	NA	NA
Trail Emblems	Aluminum, Plastic	NA	NA	NA
Interpretation #1	Wood	Natural Wood	Med. Blue	1¼ inch
Interpretation #2 and #3	Fiberglass Embedded	Buff	Multi-color	varies
Crossing Private Land	Plastic, Aluminum	Yellow	Brown	NA
Destination Signs	Wood	Natural Wood	Med. Blue	Trail Name-2 inches Destinations-1 inch
Boundary Markers	White Carsonite® Post	Medium Blue	White	NA
Adopter Signs	Decal, Plastic, Aluminum	White	Med. Blue	NA

HDP = High Density Plywood
MUTCD = Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NA = Not Applicable

X. Consultation and Public Involvement

There has been considerable emphasis on public involvement during this trail planning effort. The following agencies and individuals were actively involved with preparing this plan or were contacted for their input regarding trail alignment, location, trail uses, environmental impacts, etc., for the trail across Northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region.

Bayfield County Forestry

Paul Stone, Forest Administrator (Planning Team Member)

Burnett County Forestry

Jim Wetterau, Forest Administrator/Trail Coordinator (Provided periodic input.)

City of Superior

Mary Morgan, Recreation Director (Provided periodic input and participated in the open houses.)

Chequamegon National Forest

Judy Henry, Washburn Ranger District (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Jack Troyer (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Douglas County Forestry

Mark Schroeder, Administrator/Trail Coordinator (Planning Team Member)

Minnesota DNR

Dennis Asmussen, Trails and Waterways Unit (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Eunice Luedtke, Manager, Jay Cooke S.P. (Planning Team Member)

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer

(See Attachment 13)

National Park Service

Tony Anderson, Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Carla Britton, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Planning Team Member)

Tom Gilbert, Superintendent, Ice Age, North Country, and Lewis and Clark National Trails (Participated in an initial scoping meeting and provided periodic input.)

Dennis Kaleta, Yakutat Ranger Station (Planning Team Member representing the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway for the initial planning meetings.)

Bill Menke, Manager, North Country NST (Planning Team Co-Leader)

Paul Roelandt, Voyageurs National Park (Planning Team Member)

Darryn Witt, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Participated in final open houses and team meetings)

North Country Trail Association

Kim Bair, NCTA Recreation Planner (Planning Team Co-Leader, through 5/22/97)

Dirk Mason, NCTA Recreation Planner (Planning Team Co-Leader, beginning 9/15/97)

Bob Dreis (Planning Team Member)

Rod MacRae, NCTA State Coordinator for Minnesota (Provided periodic input.)

Bob Papp, NCTA Executive Director (Provided periodic input.)

Gaylord Yost, NCTA State Coordinator for Wisconsin (Provided periodic input and participated in the open houses.)

Superior Hiking Trail Association

Kevin Peterson, former Executive Director (Provided periodic input.)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(See Attachment 14)

Wisconsin DNR

Jay Gallagher, Assistant Forest Manager, Brule River S.F. (Provided periodic input and participated in the open houses.)

Ruth Goetz, Department of Development (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Kerry Isensee, Manager, Pattison S.P. (Planning Team Member)

Terry Jordan, Northern Regional Trails Coordinator (Planning Team Member)

Bill Moorman, Bureau of Parks and Recreation (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Phil Wallace, Northwest District (Kept informed about the planning process.)

Chuck Zosel, Forest Manager, Brule River S.F. (Planning Team Member)

Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer

(See Attachment 13)

Townships

Every township along the preferred and alternative routes was contacted to inform them of the planning process and seek their input. Township officials were also invited to the open houses.

Cities

The cities through which the preferred alternative passes were contacted to inform them of the planning process and seek their input. The mayors were invited to attend the open houses.

General Public

August 1996, Open Houses:

Seven individuals visited with the planning team in Solon Springs, twelve stopped by in Superior, and nine came to the Ashland open house. Some people came to ask questions of a general nature and to just learn more about the North Country Trail. However, most people had specific comments regarding trail routing across the planning region. These specific comments were considered as we refined the route.

Written comments were received from twenty-three individuals either during the open houses or by mail. Virtually all of the respondents fully supported the general concept of a National Scenic Trail and all of the opportunities it offers as a primarily hiking trail across the planning region. The majority of visitors supported Alternative 2, the planning team's preferred alternative. The comments received reiterated that Alternative 2 seems to be the most scenic, dry, and feasible opportunity to hike across Northwest Wisconsin and the adjoining Minnesota region.

January 1998, Open Houses:

The January Open Houses were considered a success by all involved. Forty two individuals

visited the planning team in Solon Springs and forty one people stopped by in Superior. In general people came to ask specific questions about property owner's liability, the trail, and implementation of the plan. The planning team recorded individual comments as best as possible during the Open Houses. Written comments were received from 19 via comment sheets during the Open Houses and/or by mail. In general the comments received were split 50/50 in favor and opposition of the proposed trail. Many of the comments in opposition were landowners denying access to their property.

XI. List of Attachments

Attachment 1 --	General Route Map of the North Country NST
Attachment 2 --	Planning Location Map
Attachment 3 --	Bayfield, Burnett, and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin, and Pine and Carlton Counties, Minnesota General Trail Route Maps from *The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982*
Attachment 4A--	Criteria Prioritization Matrix
Attachment 4B--	Trail Alternative Ranking Matrix
Attachment 5 --	Planning Process Sequence of Events
Attachment 6A--	Alternative 1 Map
Attachment 6B--	Alternative 2 Map
Attachment 6C--	Alternative 3 Map
Attachment 6D--	Alternative 4 Map
Attachment 6E--	Alternative 5 Map
Attachment 6F--	Alternative 6 Map
Attachment 7 --	USGS Trail Alignment and Corridor Maps
Attachment 8 --	Township Plat Trail Alignment and Corridor Maps
Attachment 9 --	US Highway 53 Relocation Map
Attachment 10 --	Route map through Solon Springs
Attachment 11 --	Sample Open House Invitation to the Public Press Release
Attachment 12 --	Sample Open House Summary Letter Sent to Officials
Attachment 13 --	Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office Correspondence
Attachment 14 --	Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office Correspondence
Attachment 15 --	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Correspondence
Attachment 16 --	General Questions and Answers
Attachment 17 --	Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

ATTACHMENTS

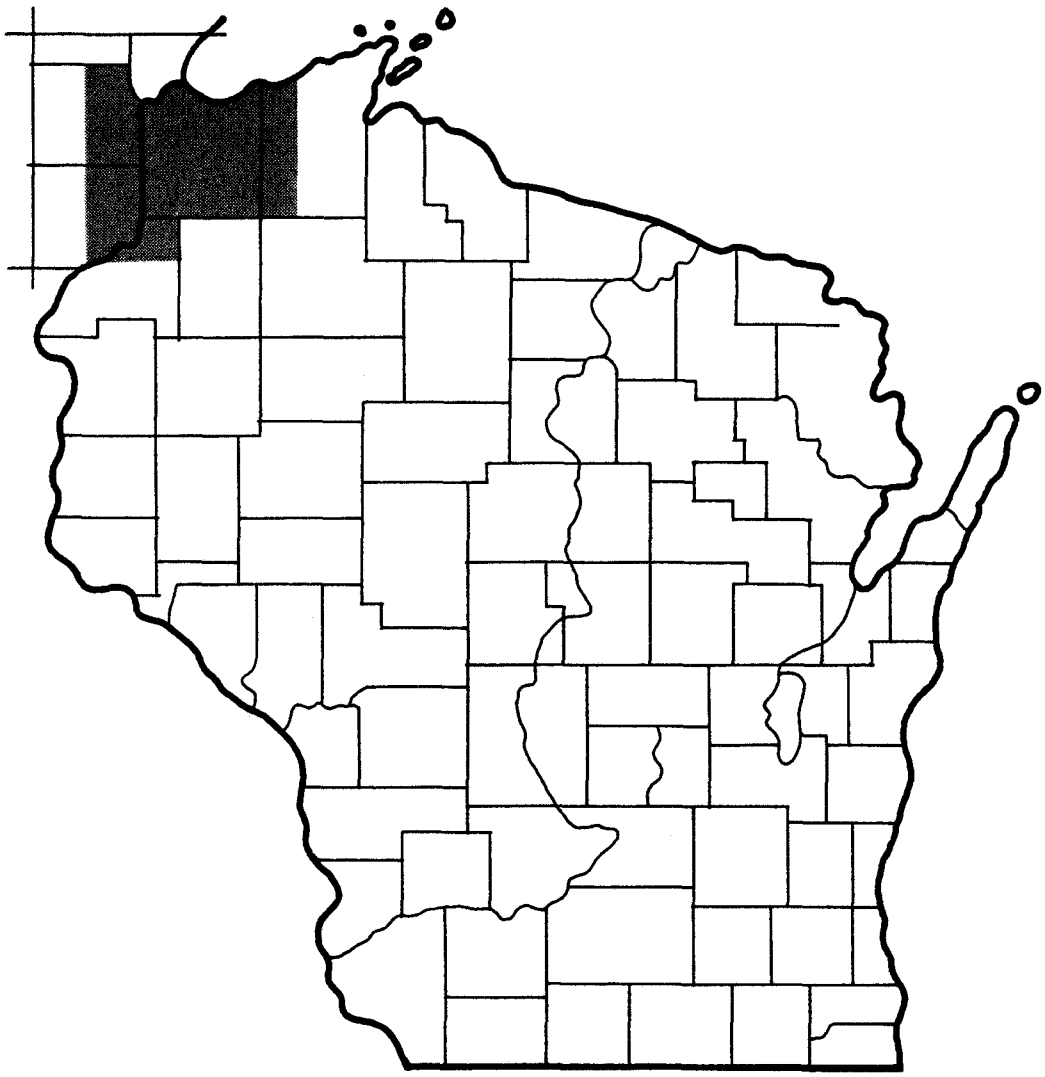
Attachment 1

General Route Map
The North Country National Scenic Trail

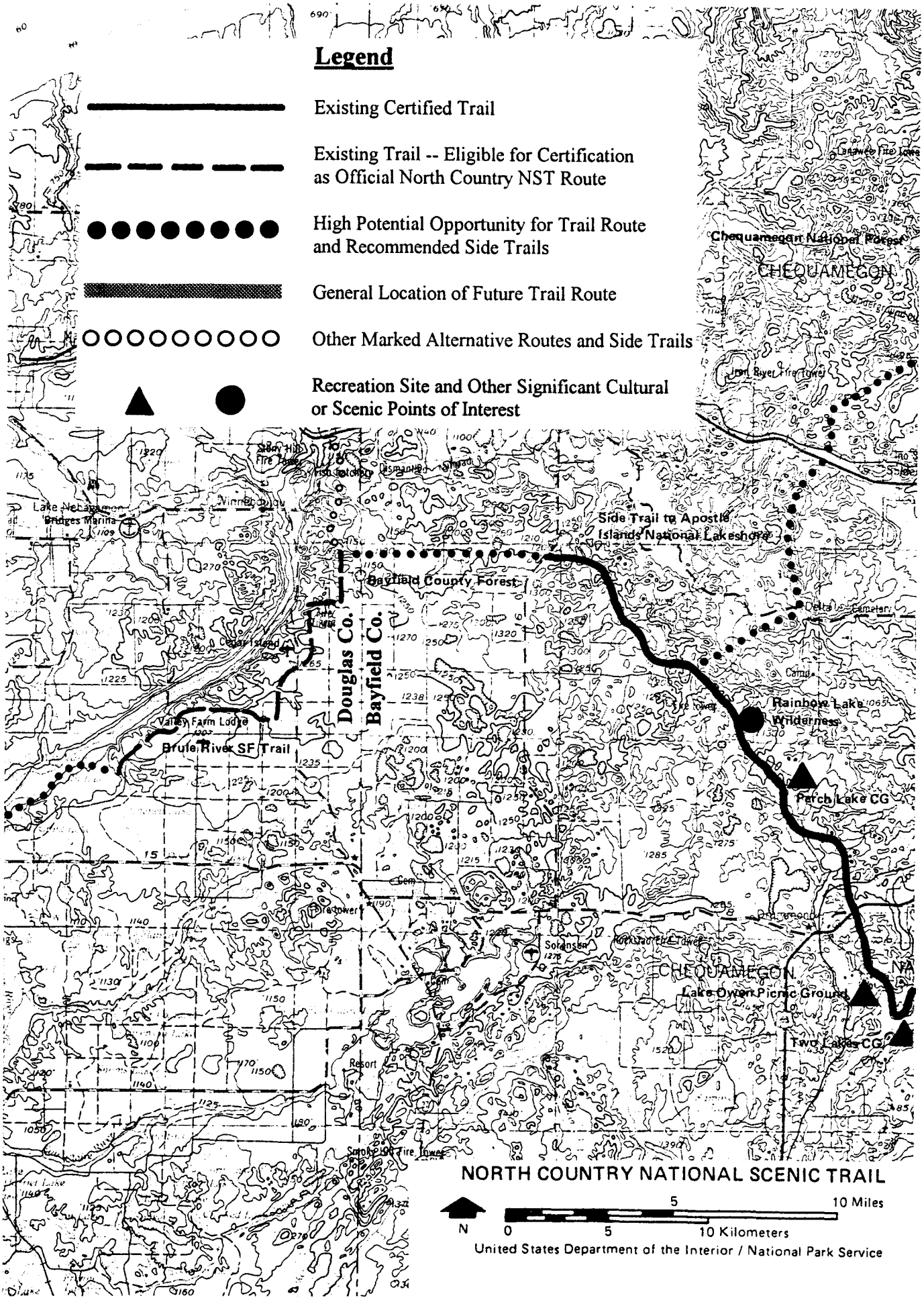
Attachment 2

Planning Location Map

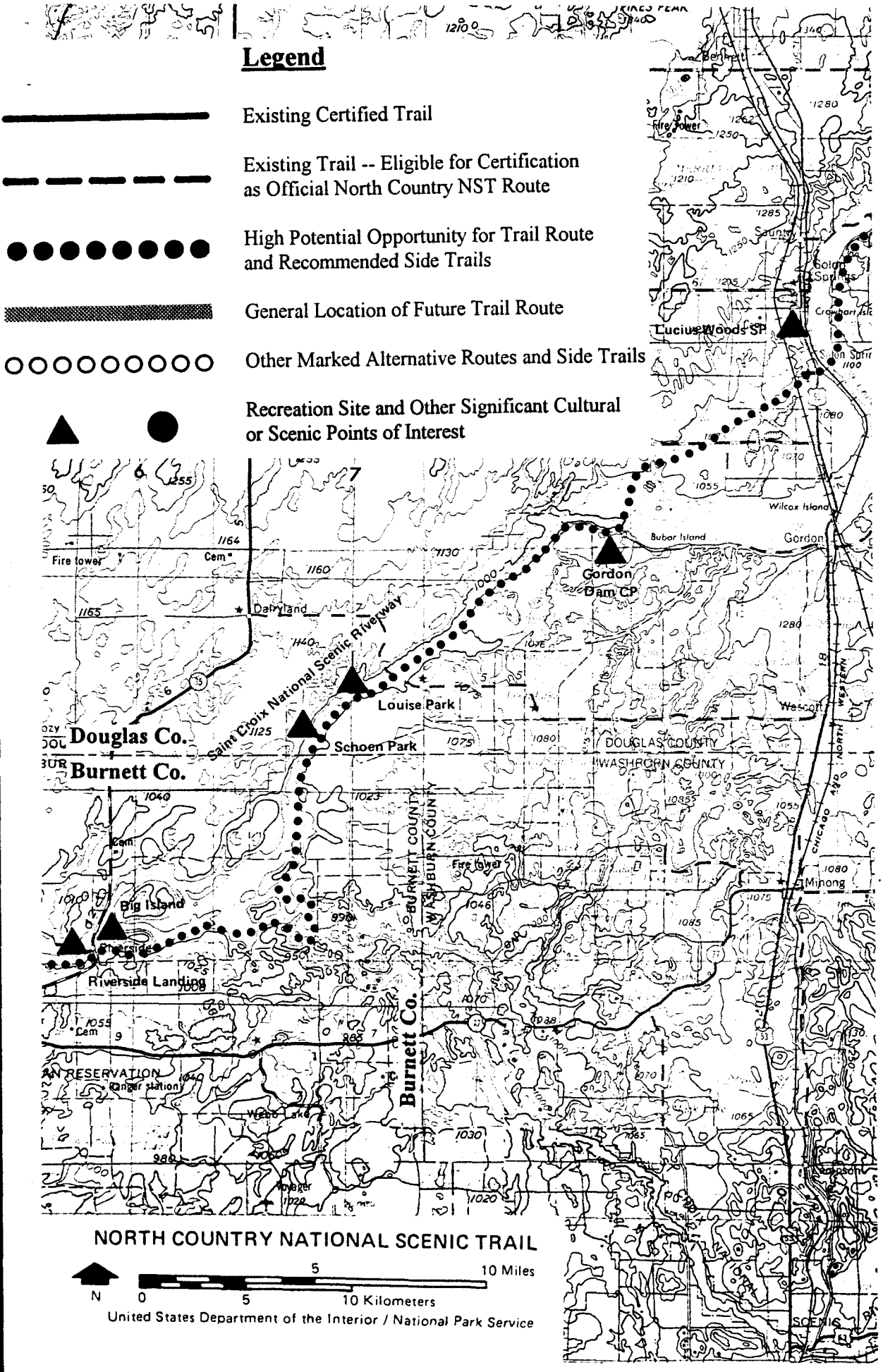
Bayfield, Burnett, & Douglas Counties, Wisconsin
and Pine & Carlton Counties, Minnesota



Attachment 3



Attachment 3



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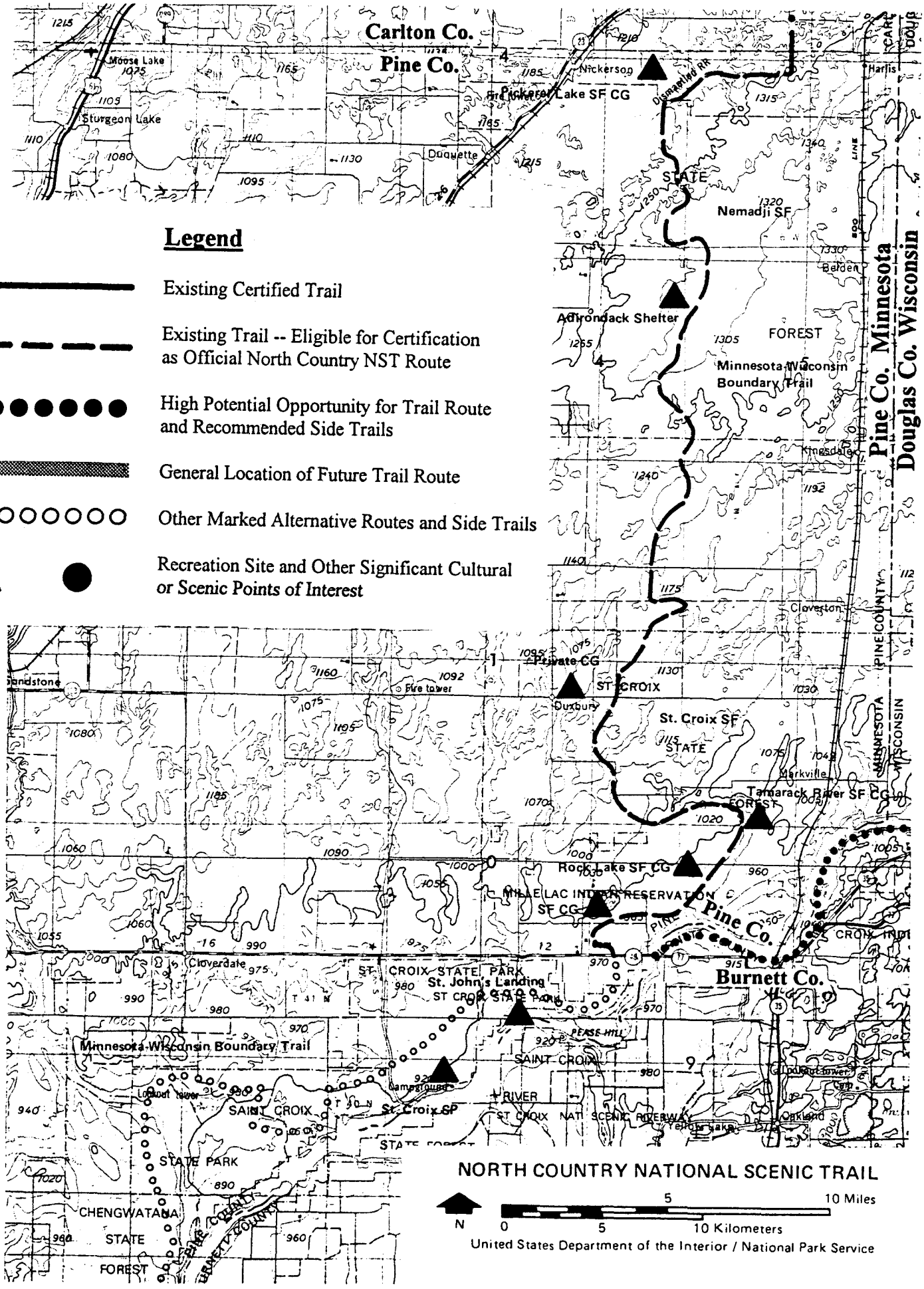


Legend

- Existing Certified Trail
- Existing Trail -- Eligible for Certification as Official North Country NST Route
- High Potential Opportunity for Trail Route and Recommended Side Trails
- General Location of Future Trail Route
- Other Marked Alternative Routes and Side Trails
- Recreation Site and Other Significant Cultural or Scenic Points of Interest

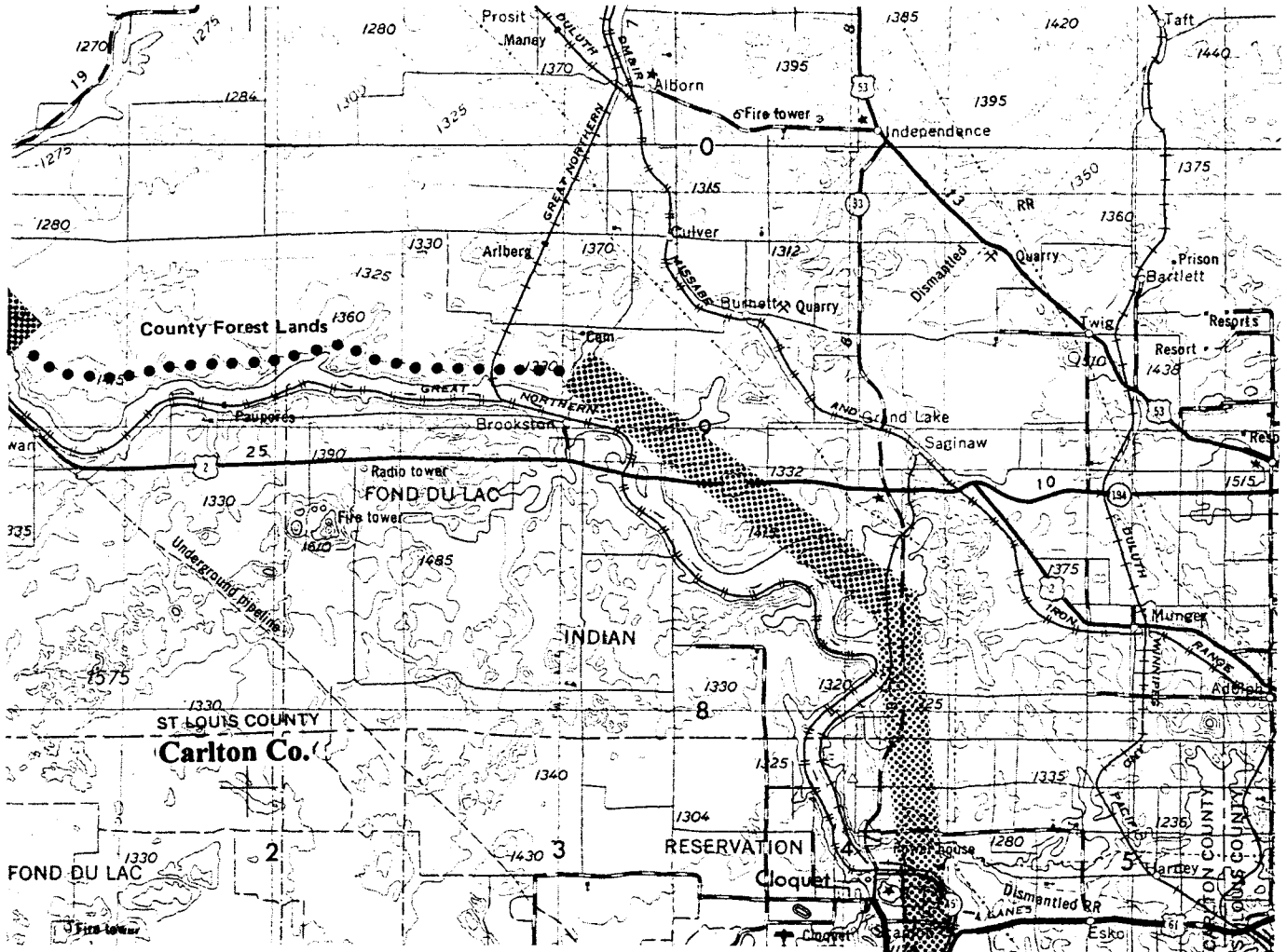
NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

N 0 5 10 Kilometers

5 10 Miles

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

Attachment 3



Legend

- Existing Certified Trail
- Existing Trail -- Eligible for Certification as Official North Country NST Route
- High Potential Opportunity for Trail Route and Recommended Side Trails
- General Location of Future Trail Route
- Other Marked Alternative Routes and Side Trails
- Recreation Site and Other Significant Cultural or Scenic Points of Interest

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

N

0 5 10 Miles

0 5 10 Kilometers

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

Attachment 4A

WISCONSIN CRITERIA PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

CRITERIA	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.	H.	I.	J.	K.	L.	M.	N.	O.	P.	TOTAL
A. Volunteer Driven		10	.2	5	.1	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	1	.1	10	5	.2	.1	32.7
B. Local Economic Benefits	.1		.2	1	.2	1	.2	.2	.1	.2	1	.1	1	1	.2	.1	6.6
C. Utilize Most Scenic Route	5	5		5	5	5	1	5	1	1	5	1	10	5	1	.2	55.2
D. Some Level of Disability Accessibility	.2	1	.2		.1	.2	.1	.2	.2	.1	1	.1	1	1	.2	.1	5.7
E. Public Lands & Large Tracts of Private Land	10	5	.2	10		10	1	.2	.2	.2	5	.2	10	5	1	.2	58.3
F. Connect With Other Trails	.1	1	.2	5	.1		.1	.1	.2	.1	1	.1	5	1	.2	.1	14.3
G. Certifiable	5	5	1	10	1	10		1	5	1	5	1	10	5	5	.2	65.2
H. Avoid Wet Areas	5	5	.2	5	5	10	1		1	1	5	1	10	10	5	.2	64.4
I. Preference for Hiking	5	10	1	5	5	5	.2	1		.2	5	.2	10	5	5	.2	58.8
J. Is Non-motorized	5	5	1	10	5	10	1	1	5		5	1	10	5	5	.2	69.2
K. Offer Short-term and Long -term Hiking	1	1	.2	1	.2	1	.2	.2	.2	.2		.1	1	1	.2	.1	7.6
L. Long Term Permanency	10	10	1	10	5	10	1	1	5	1	10		10	5	5	.2	84.2
M. Hiker Amenities	.1	1	.1	1	.1	.2	.1	.1	.1	.1	1	.1		1	.2	.1	5.3
N. Connect Communities	.2	1	.2	1	.2	1	.2	.1	.2	.2	1	.2	1		.2	.1	6.8
O. Link Recreation and Points of Interest Sites	5	5	1	5	1	5	.2	.2	.2	.2	5	.2	5	5		.2	38.2
P. Least Impact on Wetlands and Endangered Species	10	10	5	10	5	10	5	5	5	5	10	5	10	10	5		110

Attachment 4B

WISCONSIN TRAIL ALTERNATIVE RANKING MATRIX

ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA	Weight	Empire		Beldon Swamp		Moose River		18th\ Amnicon		18th\ S. Shore		1982 Route	
1.) Least Impact on Wetlands and Endangered Species	5	(1)	**5**	(0)	**0**	(2)	**10**	(2)	**10**	(3)	**15**	(0)	**0**
2.) Long Term Permanency	5	(2)	**10**	(2)	**10**	(2)	**10**	(1)	**5**	(1)	**5**	(3)	**15**
3.) Public Lands & Large Tracts of Private Land	5	(3)	**15**	(3)	**15**	(3)	**15**	(1)	**5**	(1)	**5**	(3)	**15**
4.) Is Non-motorized	4	(2)	**8**	(3)	**12**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(0)	**0**
5.) Certifiable	4	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(0)	**0**
6.) Preference for Hiking	4	(3)	**12**	(3)	**12**	(3)	**12**	(2)	**8**	(2)	**8**	(1)	**4**
7.) Utilize Most Scenic Route	4	(1)	**4**	(2)	**8**	(3)	**12**	(1)	**4**	(0)	**0**	(2)	**8**
8.) Avoid Wet Areas	3	(1)	**3**	(0)	**0**	(2)	**6**	(1)	**3**	(2)	**6**	(0)	**0**
9.) Link Recreation and Points of Interest	3	(2)	**6**	(2)	**6**	(3)	**9**	(1)	**3**	(0)	**0**	(3)	**9**
10.) Connect Communities	2	(1)	**2**	(1)	**2**	(1)	**2**	(2)	**4**	(2)	**4**	(1)	**2**
11.) Local Economic Benefits	2	(1)	**2**	(1)	**2**	(1)	**2**	(2)	**4**	(2)	**4**	(1)	**2**
12.) Hiker Amenities	2	(1)	**2**	(1)	**2**	(2)	**4**	(1)	**2**	(0)	**0**	(2)	**4**
13.) Some Level of Disability Accessibility	1	(1)	**1**	(1)	**1**	(1)	**1**	(2)	**2**	(2)	**2**	(0)	**0**
TOTAL			**78**		**78**		**99**		**66**		**65**		**59**

The rating is done by assigning the degree of value the alternative has toward meeting the selection criteria:

(0) = Least Value
(1) = Fair
(2) = Good
(3) = Excellent

(The numbers in **bold** are values multiplied by the weight. The totals are added vertically.)

Attachment 5

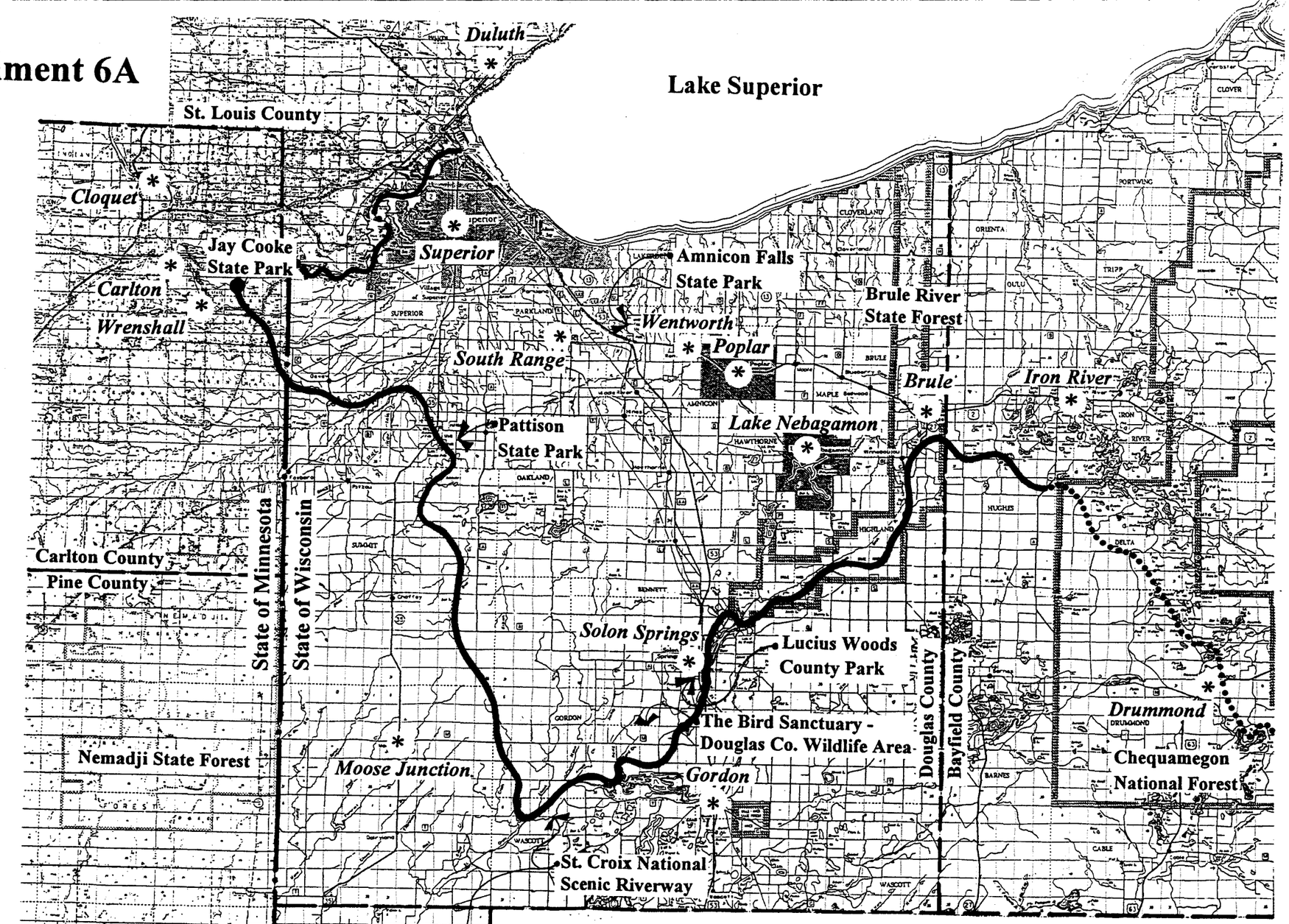
PLANNING PROCESS SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

YEAR	EVENT
11/95	Letters were sent to agencies/organizations requesting a delegate to express their objectives and concerns, and to be integral to the planning process at the Initial Team/Scoping Meeting.
11&12/95	General background information was gathered about the potential corridor area and past routing discussions to prepare for the Initial Team/Scoping Meeting. Also, a map of the 1982 route, and a map with informational layers for planning was created for discussion.
12/95	The Initial Team/Scoping Meeting was held. The history and status of the NCT, the need for and status of planning, and where the planning process would ultimately lead were all reviewed. Everyone participated by brainstorming concerns, objectives, and abilities. The core team for the planning process was then identified, and the commitment necessary from the team members to reaffirm each organization's resolve was secured.
12/95	A VIP was assigned to issue a general press release prepared by NPS to the media explaining the NCT, local planning process, and eventual public involvement.
1/96	A couple NCTA volunteers offered to be available for civic groups, schools, and libraries. They were sent bulletins and a list of drop-off points to increase public awareness about the trail.
1/96	The team members submitted their agency/groups goals/objectives for the NCT.
2/96	The goals and objectives were prioritized and assigned importance weights.
4/96	Six trail route alternatives were identified.
5/96	Utilized a ranking matrix combined with local realities to identify the planning team's preferred alternative.
6/96	Set dates for the first set of open houses.
7/96	Issued a press release to the media listing the times, dates, and locations of the open houses.
7/96	Wrote a letter outlining the planning process to date and briefly describing the alternatives to the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) , Minnesota SHPO, and Advisory Council (ACHP). Also, requested the NPS Midwest Field Office to obtain U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) input. Their responses are included as Attachments 9 and 10.

Attachment 5

YEAR	EVENT
7/96	Letters were sent out to all affected Township Chairpersons and County Officials informing them about the general NCNST background, local planning efforts, and informing them that the currently favored route passed through their township. A map showing all of the alternatives was included.
8/96	The first set of open houses were held. They were broad based informational meetings. The objectives were to generally inform the public, explain the planning process and conceptual routes, record public feedback by involving them in the decision making process and obtaining their reaction to the preliminary concept, notify the public of the planning timetable.
9/96	Sent letters to the open house attendees and township officials to inform them of the reactions at the open houses, and updated them on the planning timetable.
2, 3 & 4/97	A 3 landowner wide or minimum ½ mile wide corridor was drawn on a composite plat map, and then the actual trail was placed within the corridor. The proposed corridor and trail route was digitized and was also drawn on a set of topographical maps. The trail route and corridor were also transferred on mylar maps, photo-mechanic transfers, plat maps, and aerial photographs.
5 & 6/97	Prepared the draft EA and developed the attachments for the EA.
7/97	Requested that the planning team review the draft EA, and incorporate their suggestions.
8/97	Sent the NPS Midwest Field Office the draft EA and maps for a three week review. Also, sent both SHPO's, ACHP, and the Wisconsin Bureau of Endangered Resources (BER) copies for review.
12/97	Letters were sent to agencies/organizations, property owners, politicians, and many interested individuals announcing that the Environmental Assessment was available for public review.
1/98	The final set of open houses was held. The objective was to gather public comments pertaining to the Environmental Assessment.
3/98	The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed by the Regional Director of the Midwest Region.

Attachment 6A



Alternative 1 Map

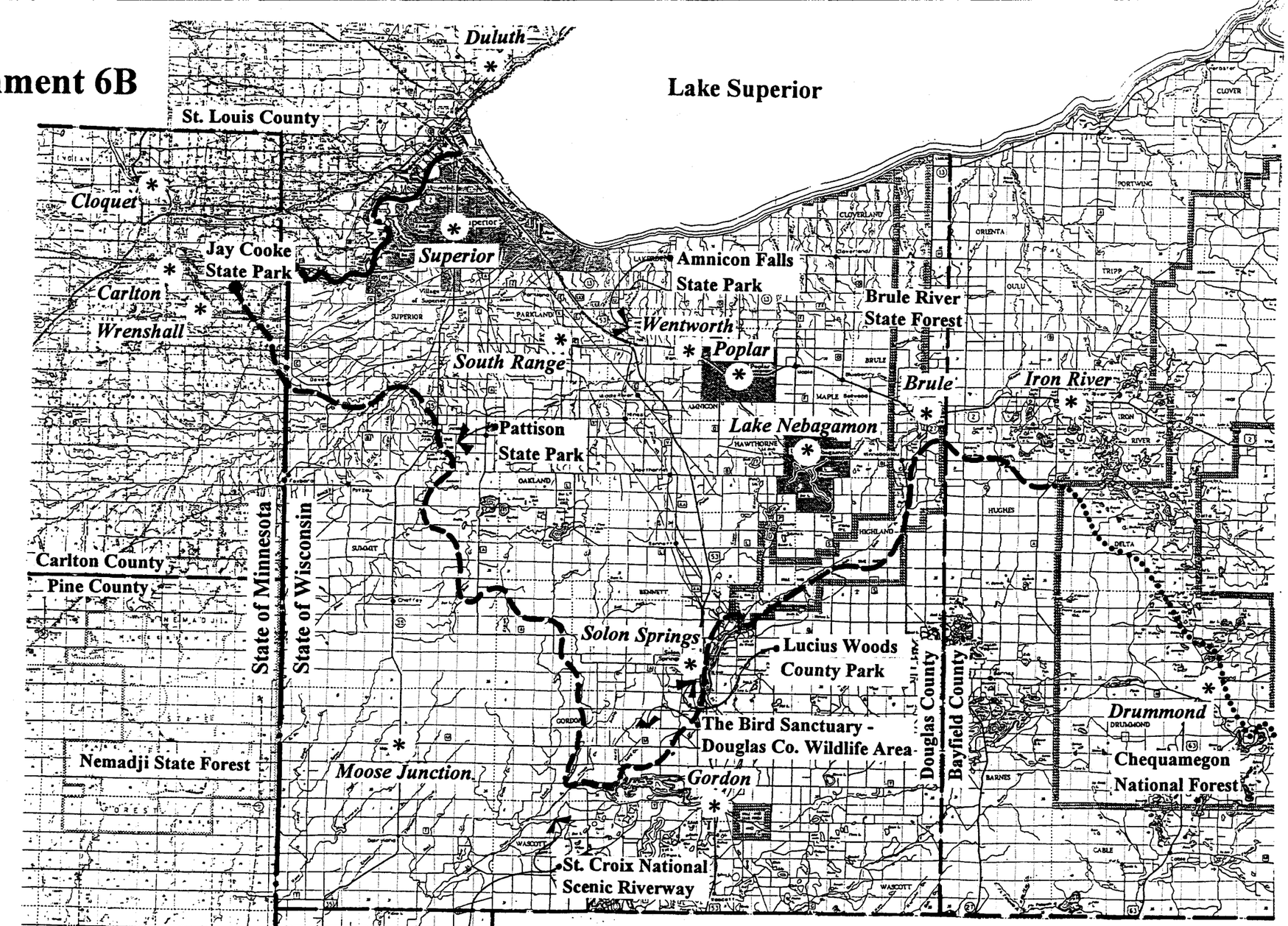
North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... Existing Certified Trail

~~~ Alternative 1 Route
~~~

Attachment 6B



Alternative 2 Map

(Preferred Alternative)

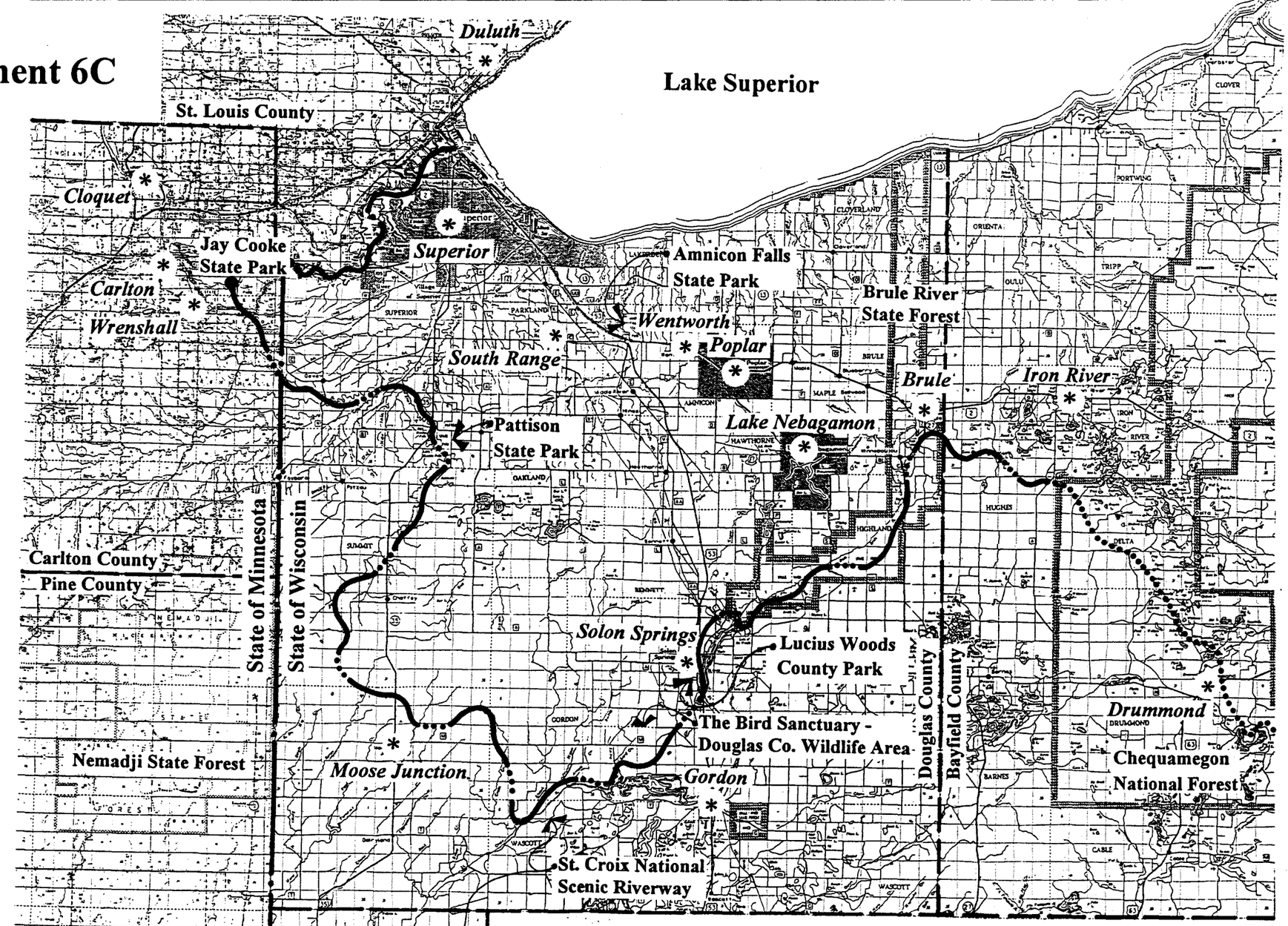
North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... Existing Certified Trail

Alternative 2 Route

Attachment 6C



Alternative 3 Map

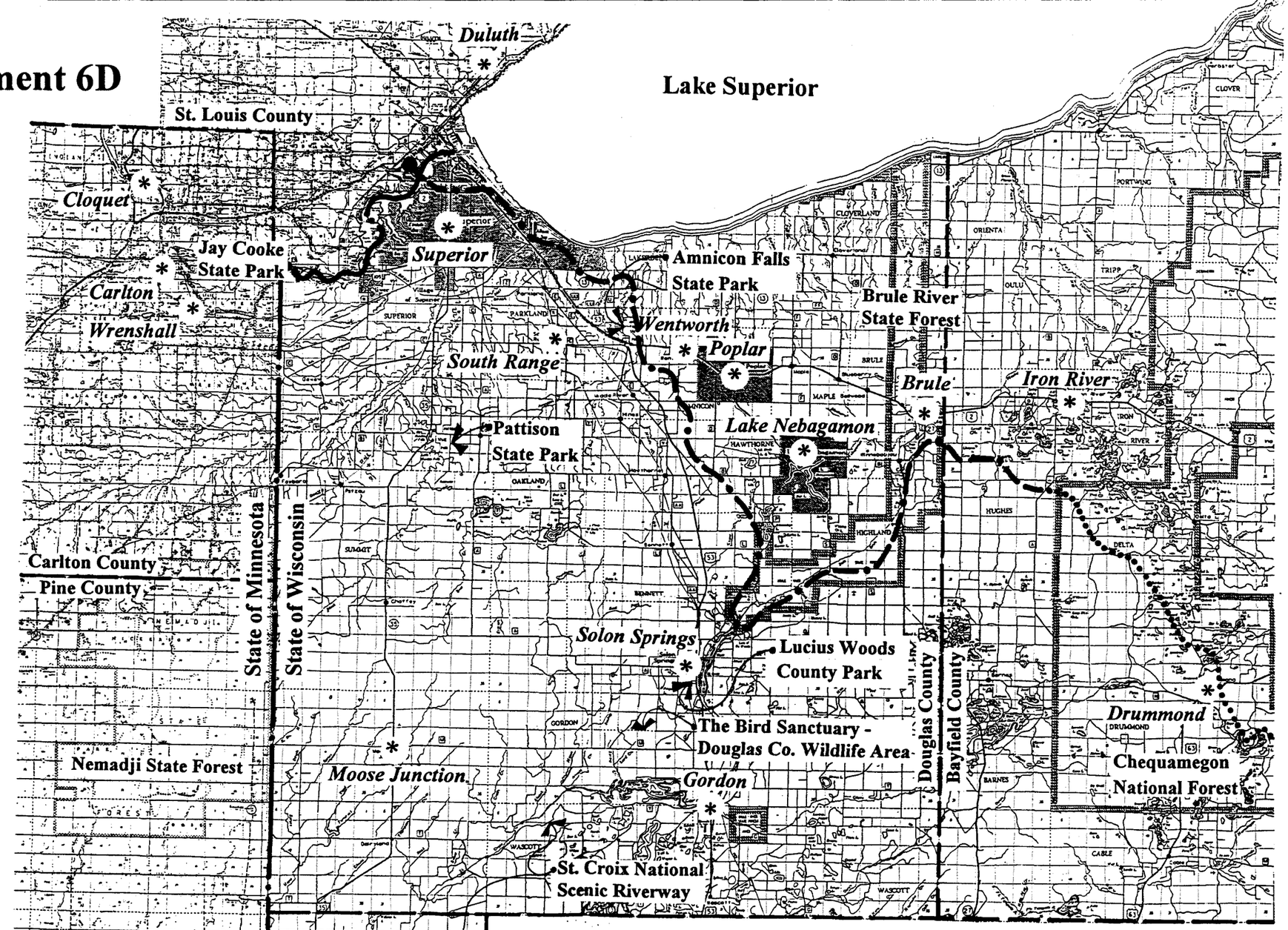
North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... Existing Certified Trail

~...~ Alternative 3 Route

Attachment 6D



Alternative 4 Map

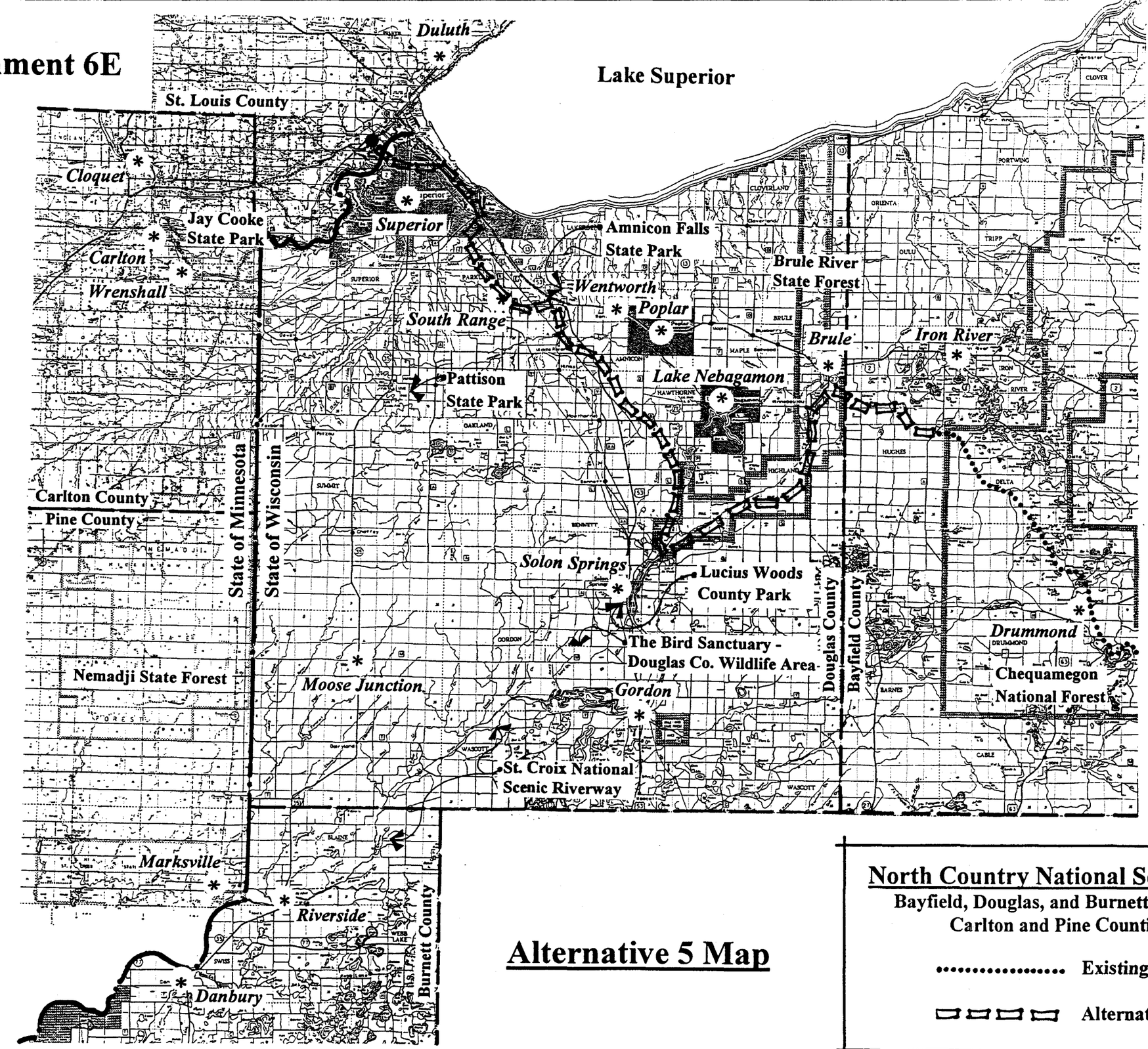
North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... **Existing Certified Trail**

Alternative 4 Route

Attachment 6E



Alternative 5 Map

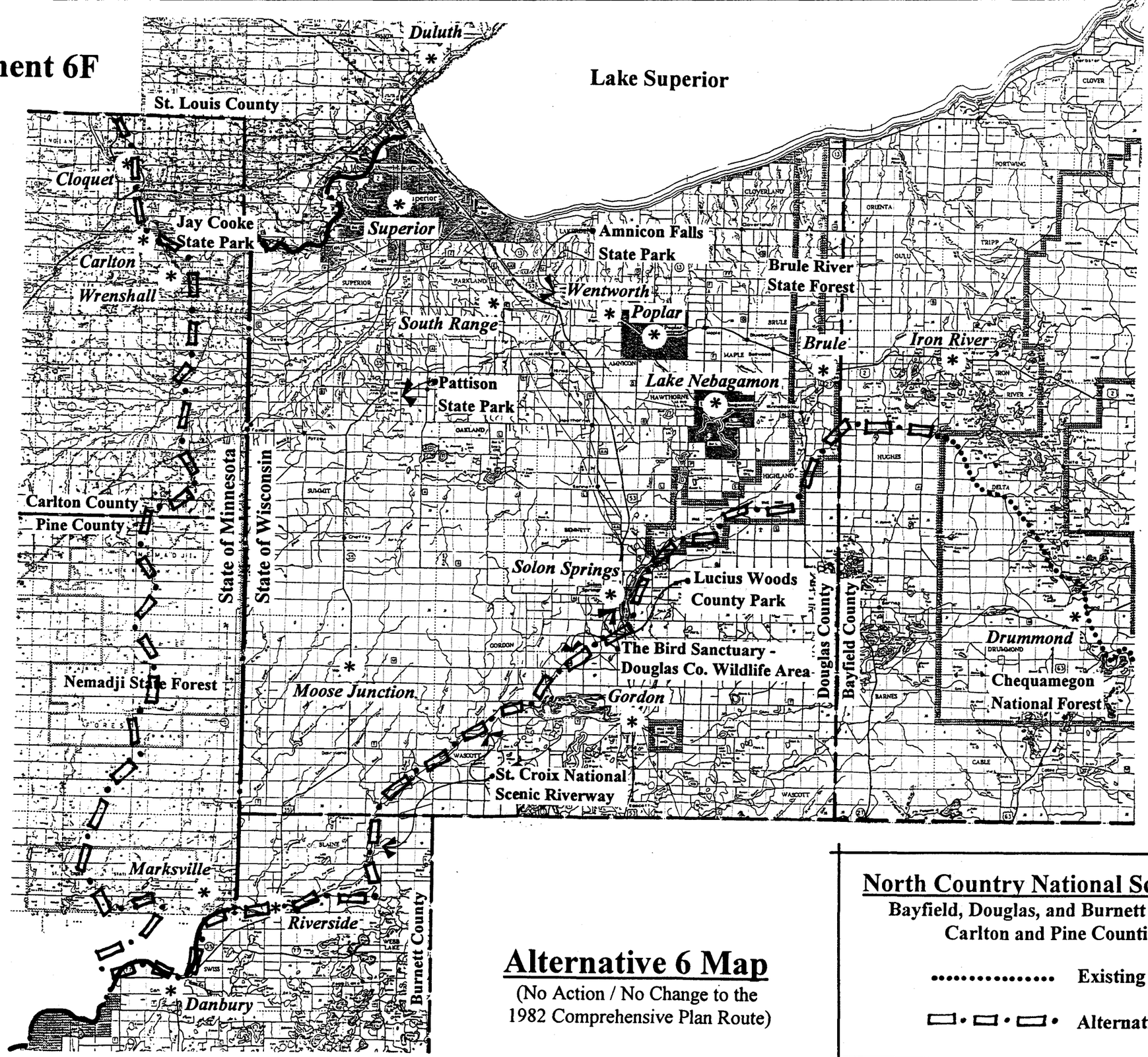
North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... Existing Certified Trail

Alternative 5 Route

Attachment 6F



Alternative 6 Map

(No Action / No Change to the 1982 Comprehensive Plan Route)

North Country National Scenic Trail Legend

Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties, Wisconsin
Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota

..... **Existing Certified Trail**

Alternative 6 Route

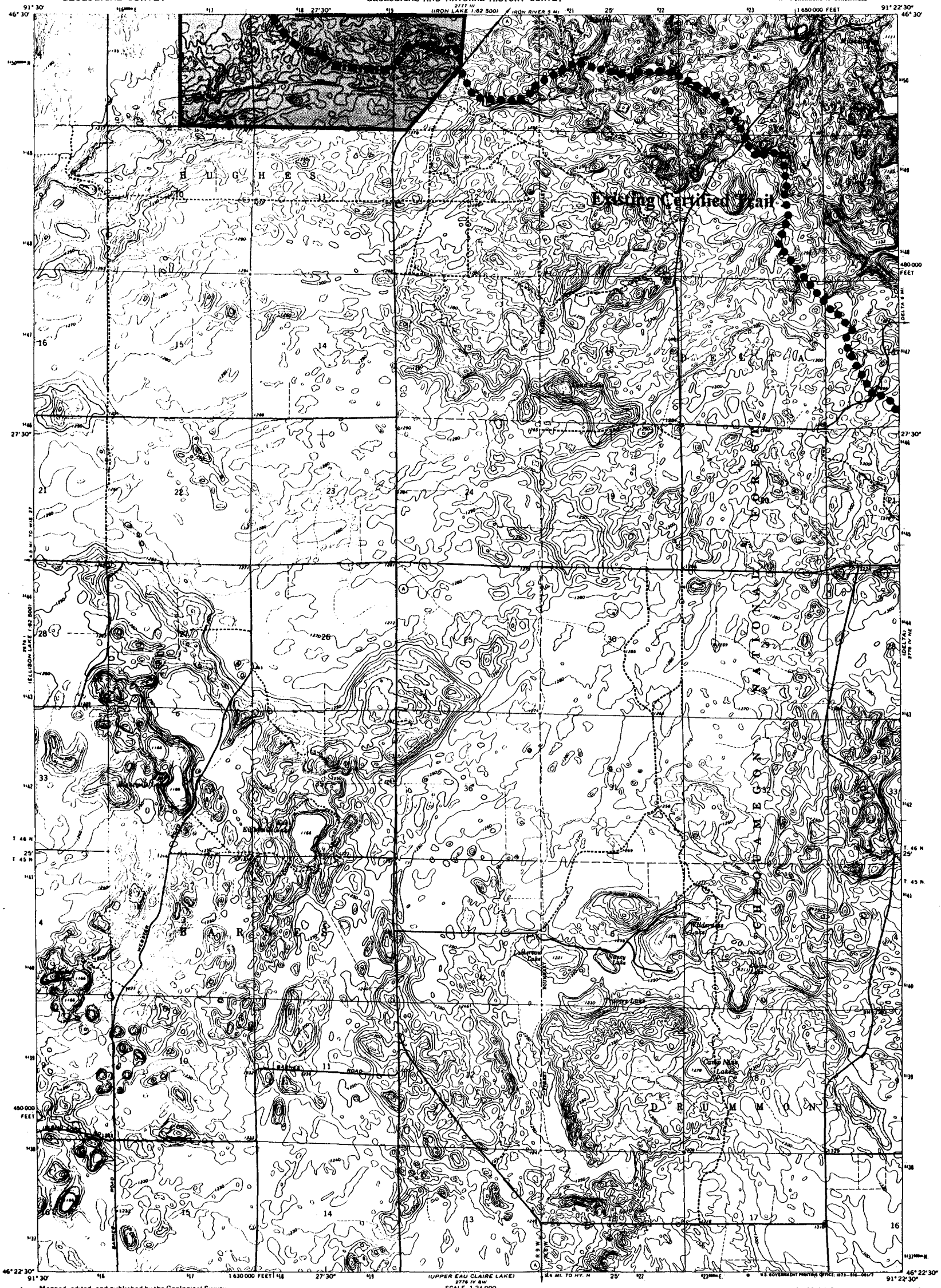
Attachment 7

Attachment 7 includes 15 USGS maps showing the preferred trail alignment and corridor (organized east to west) within the context of the topography and other natural features.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

DRUMMOND NW QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN—BAYFIELD CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 DRUMMOND 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Highway Commission and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1970. Field checked 1971

Depth curves compiled from charts furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface — Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface — Unimproved road
Interstate Route — U. S. Route — State Route

UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

DRUMMOND NW, WIS.
NW/4 DRUMMOND 15' QUADRANGLE
N4622.5—W9122.5/7.5

1971

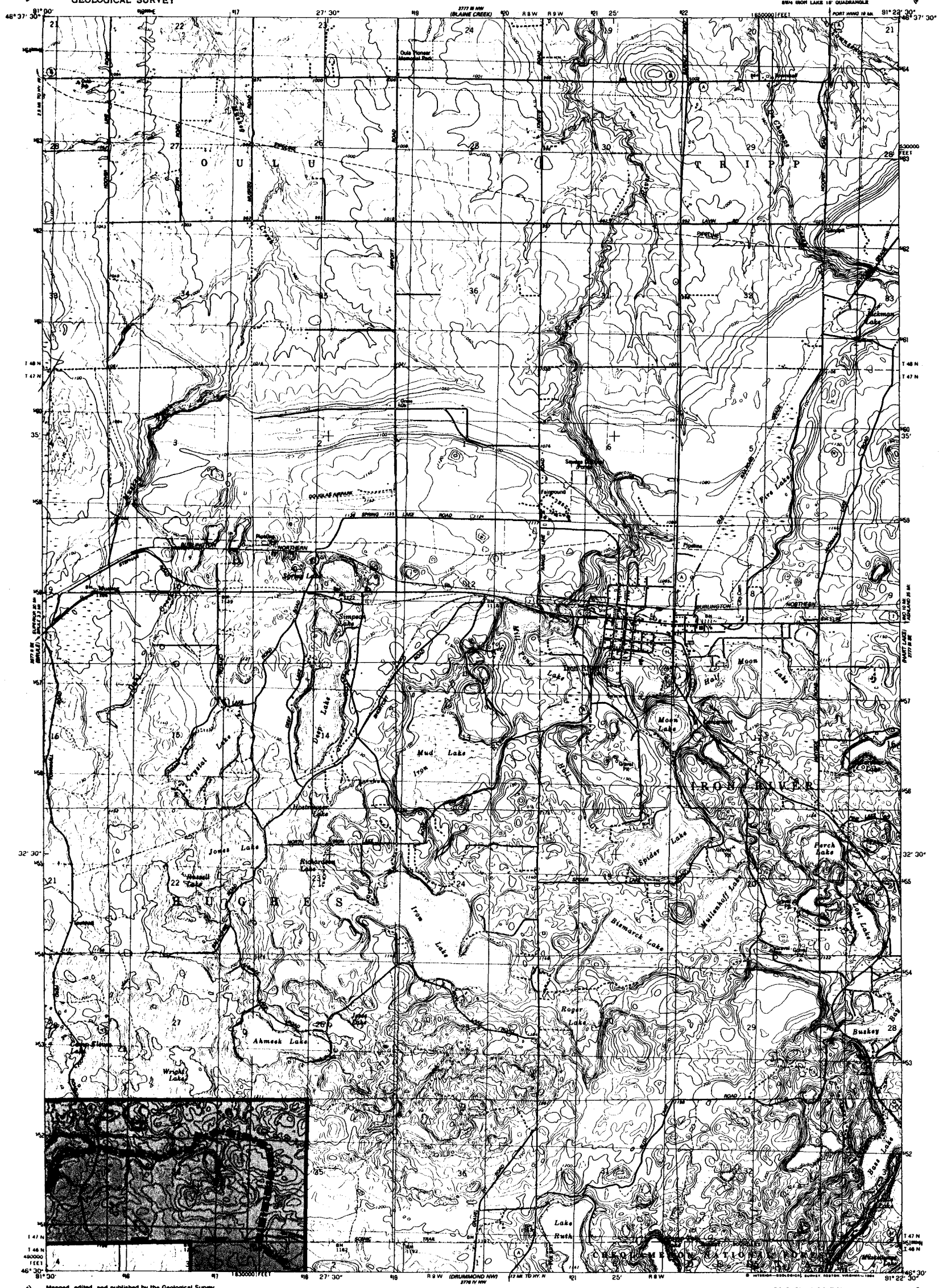
AMS 2776 IV NW—SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

IRON LAKE QUADRANGLE

WISCONSIN–BAYFIELD CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 IRON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1983. Field checked 1984. Map edited 1984

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface — Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface — Unimproved road
Interstate Route · U.S. Route · State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

IRON LAKE, WIS.
SW/4 IRON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE
46091-E4-TF-024
1984
DMA 377, III SW–SERIES V861

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

BRULE QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SE/4 BRULE 15' QUADRANGLE

Fish Hatchery

Campground

Brule River

A Special Conservation Bayfield County Forestry Area and the Wild Lakes Area

Brule River State Forest

Douglas County Bayfield County

BRULE

Planning Legend

Trail Corridor	Private
Trail Corridor	Public
Preferred Trail Alignment	
Alternate Trail Alignment	
Existing Certified Trail	
Selected Nearby Trail	
Preferred Spur Trail	

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1983
Field checked 1984. Map edited 1984
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked

SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BRULE, WIS.
SE/4 BRULE 15' QUADRANGLE
46091-E5-TF-024
1984
DMA 2677 II SE-SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

ISLAND LAKE QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 ELLISON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE

Bois Brule River

Brule River State Forest

Douglas County Wisconsin

Bay Lake

Island Lake

Sand Lake

Loon Lake

Hay Lake

Ole Lake

Mud Lake

Little Two Rivers

Sucker Lake

Cedar Island Airport

Public Hunting

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1983
Field checked 1984. Map edited 1984
Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
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SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ISLAND LAKE, WIS.
NE/4 ELLISON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE
46091-D6-TF-024
1984
DMA 2678 I NE-SERIES V861

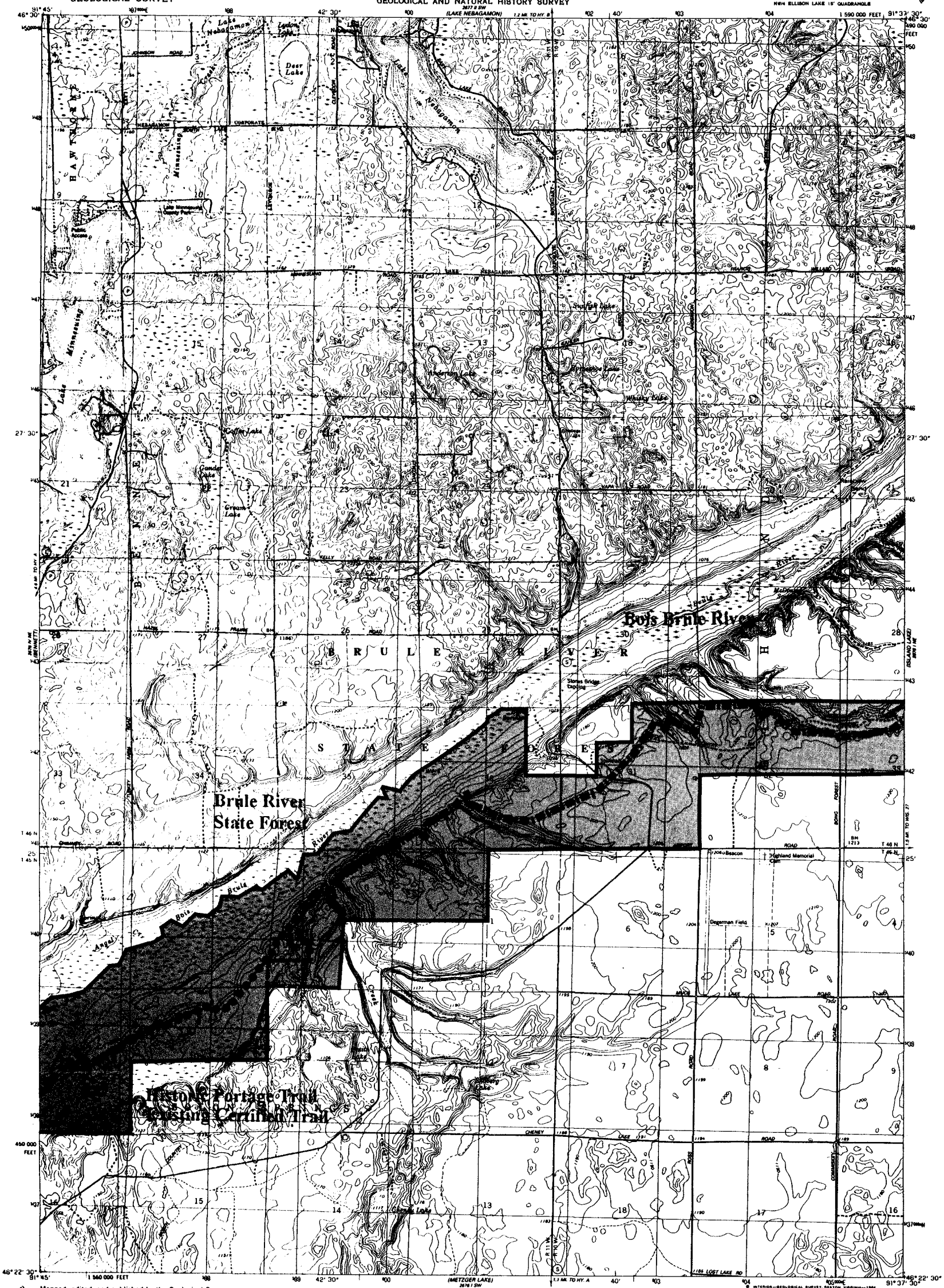
Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor
- Trail Corridor
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

LAKE MINNESUING QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN–DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 ELLISON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1983. Field checked 1984. Map edited 1984

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the bounderies of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

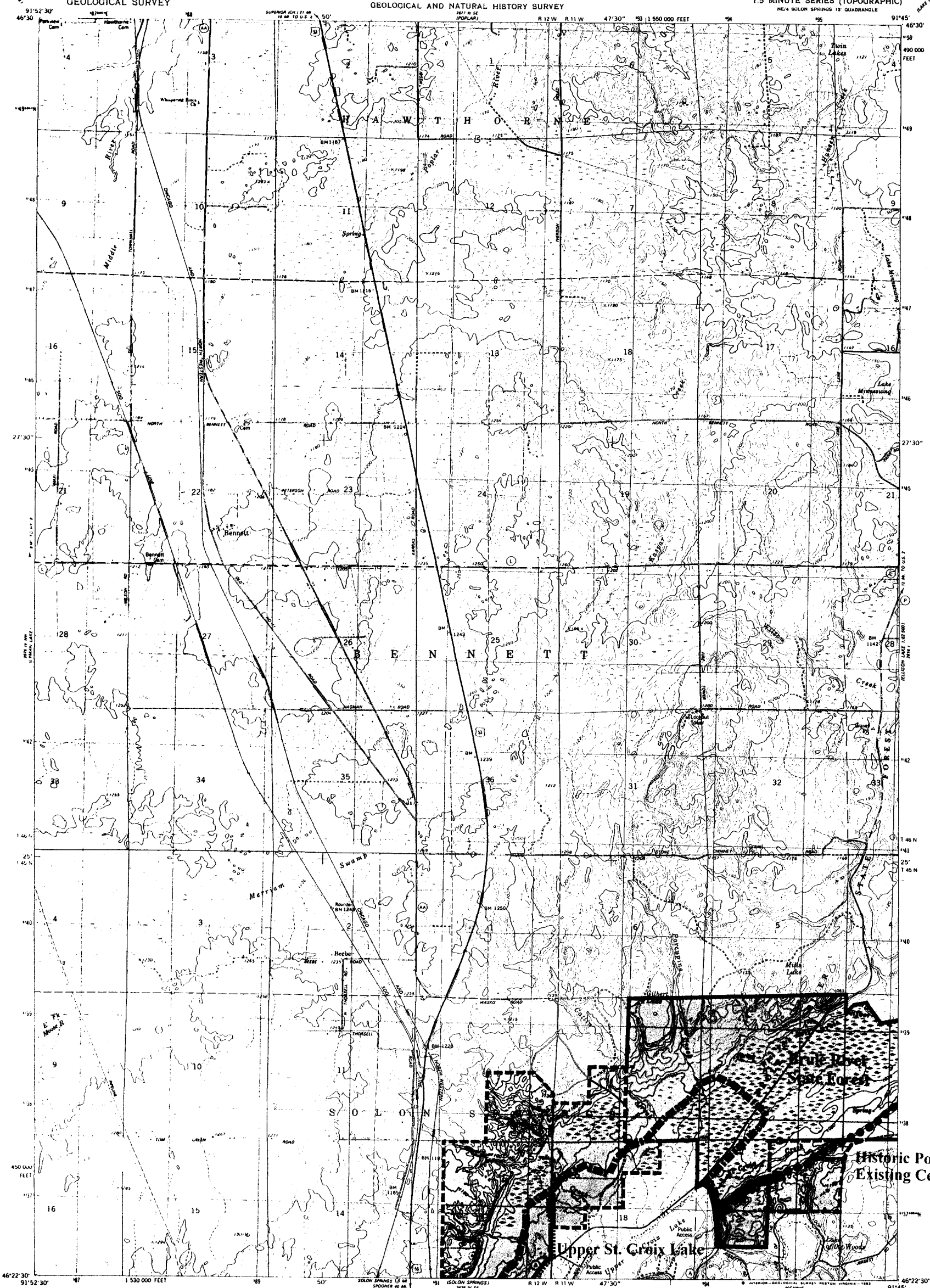
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

LAKE MINNESUING, WIS.
NW/4 ELLISON LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE
46091-D6-TF-024
1984
DMA 2678 I NW–SERIES V861

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

BENNETT QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN–DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1978
Field checked 1980. Map edited 1981

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route · U. S. Route · State Route

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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QUADRANGLE LOCATION

BENNETT, WIS.
NE/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE
N4622.5–W9145/7.5

1981

DMA 2876 IV NE–SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

SOLON SPRINGS QUADRANGLE

WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SE/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE

Upper St. Croix Lake

Lucius Woods County Park

Wayside Park

St. Croix River

The Bird Sanctuary
Douglas Co. Wildlife Area
STATE WILDLIFE

St. Croix Flowage

Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1978. Field checked 1980. Map edited 1982

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 7 meters north and 13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route · U S Route · State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
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QUADRANGLE LOCATION

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

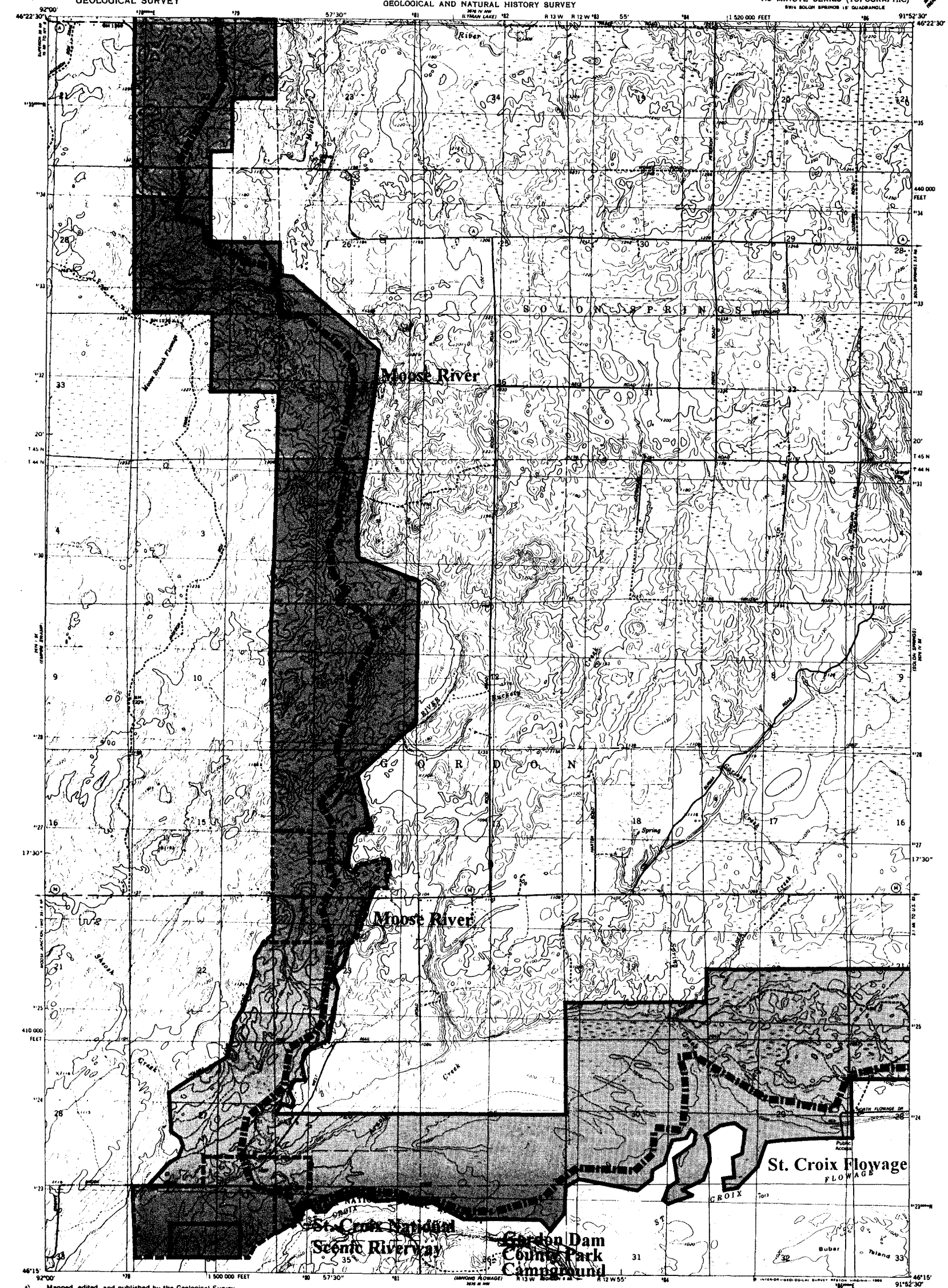
SOLON SPRINGS, WIS.
SE/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE
N4615-W9145/7.5
1982
DMA 2876 IV SE-SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

BUCKETY CREEK QUADRANGLE

WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1978. Field checked 1980. Map edited 1982

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 7 meters north and 14 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

BUCKETY CREEK, WIS.
SW/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE
N4615-W9152.5/7.5

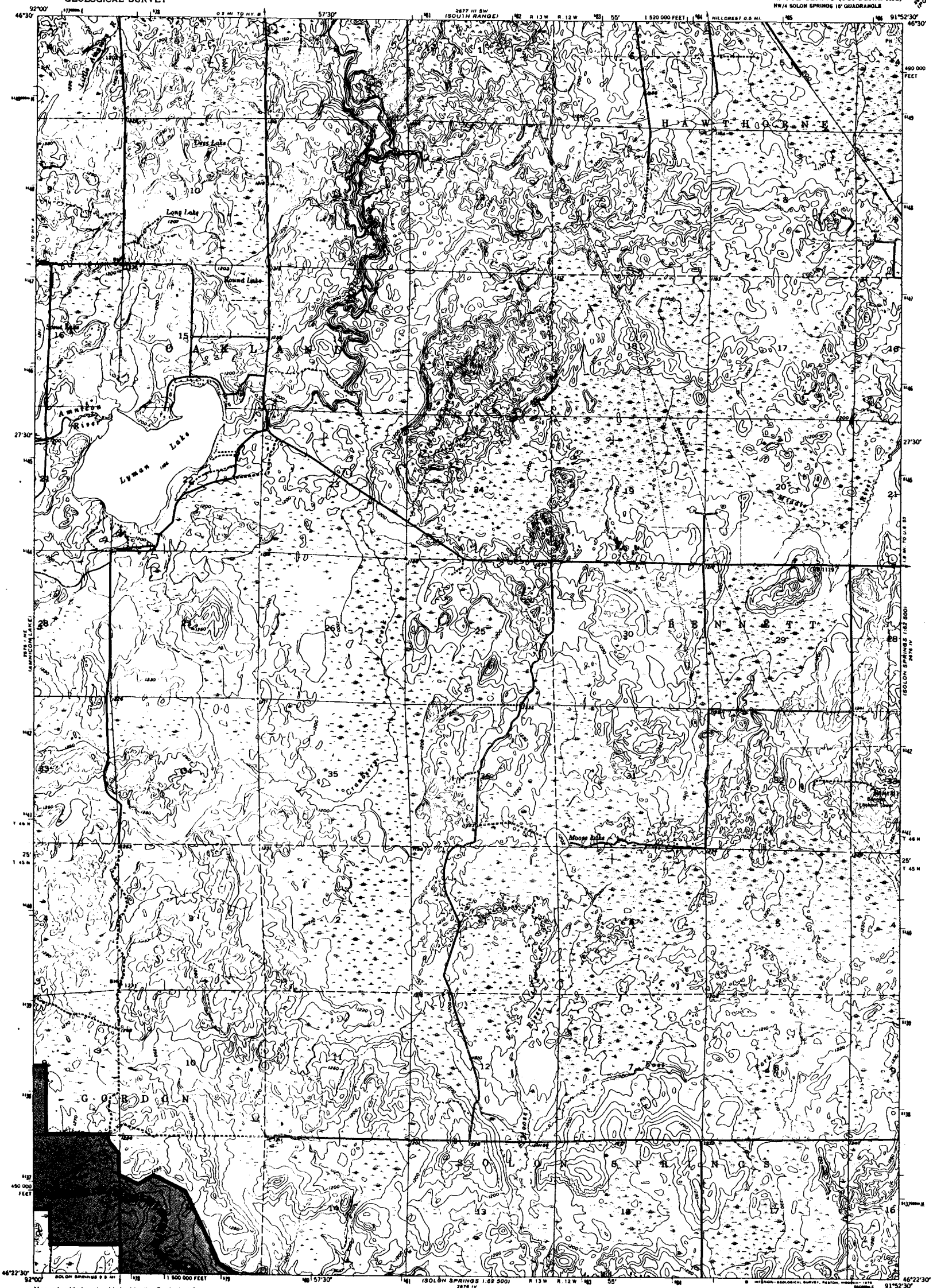
1982

DMA 3678 IV SW-SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LYMAN LAKE QUADRANGLE

WISCONSIN - DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor
- Trail Corridor
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1952-53. Field checked 1954. Revised 1961

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1975. This information not field checked

UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty — Light-duty —
Unimproved dirt .....
State Route

WISCONSIN
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

LYMAN LAKE, WIS.
NW/4 SOLON SPRINGS 15' QUADRANGLE
N4622.5—W9152.5/7.5

1961
PHOTOREVISED 1975
AMS 2676 IV NW—SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

AMNICON LAKE QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 PATZAU 15' QUADRANGLE

Black River

Reichwaldt Lake

AMNICON LAKE

Lake Newman

One Buck Lake

Dowling Lake

Scout Lake

O A K L A N D

Mud Lake

Bear Creek

Amnicon River

Ericson Creek

Use Abandoned Grade

M M I T

Planning Legend

Trail Corridor — Private

Trail Corridor — Public

Preferred Trail Alignment

Alternate Trail Alignment

Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952 1953 Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks zone 15, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1975. This information not field checked

UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy duty — 4 LANE | 6 LANE — Light duty
Medium duty — 4 LANE | 6 LANE — Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route — State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

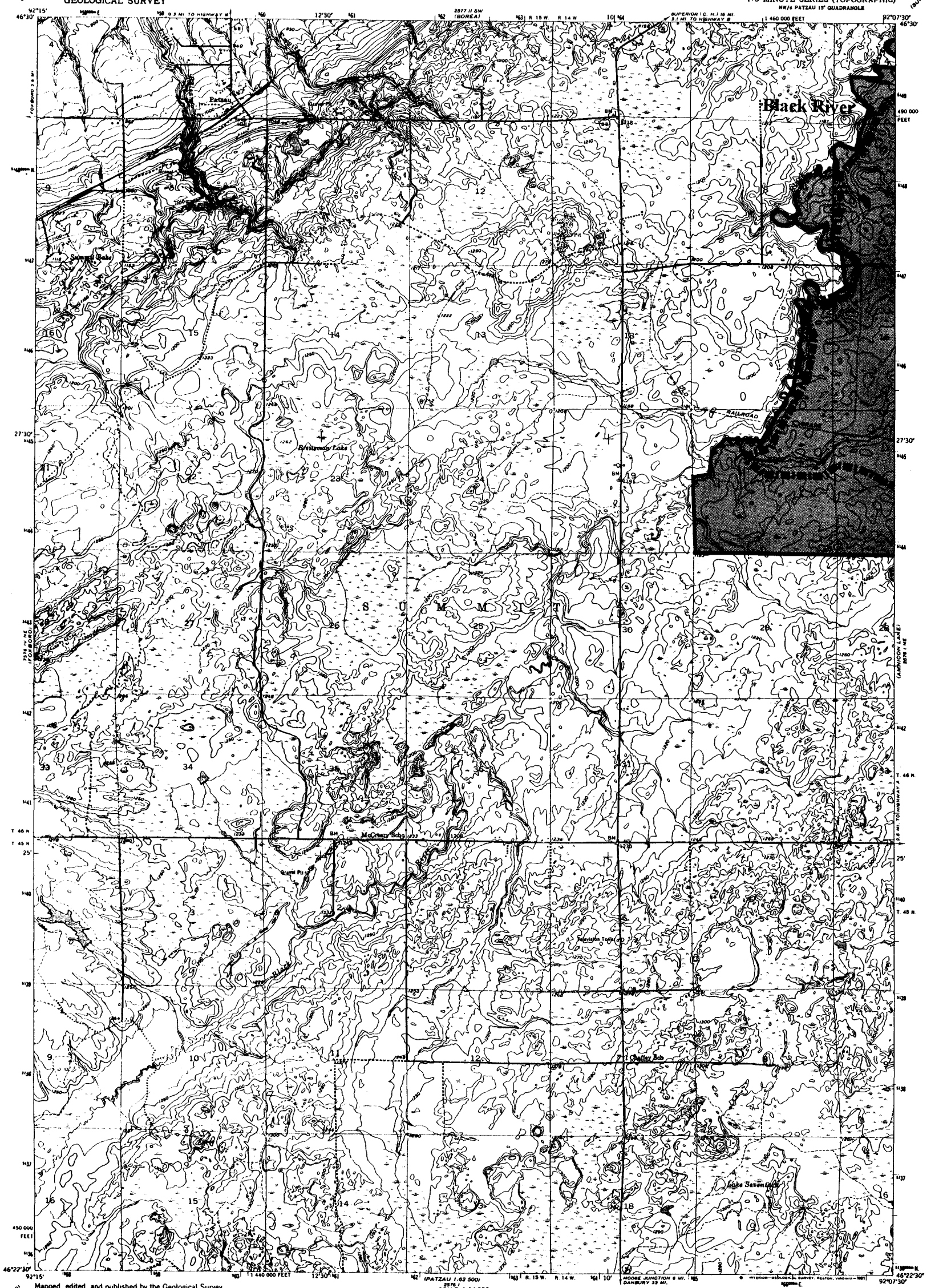
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

AMNICON LAKE, WIS.
NE/4 PATZAU 15' QUADRANGLE
N4622.5-W9200/7.5

1954
PHOTOREVISED 1975
AMS 2576 I NE-SERIES V861

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PATZAU QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 PATZAU 15' QUADRANGLE



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952-1953. Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks zone 15, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1975. This information not field checked

Map photoinspected 1981
No major culture or drainage changes observed

UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — 4 LANE | 2 LANE — Light-duty
Medium-duty — 4 LANE | 2 LANE — Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route — State Route

Planning Legend

Trail Corridor — Private
Public Land — Public
Preferred Trail Alignment
Alternate Trail Alignment
Existing Certified Trail

North Country National Scenic Trail

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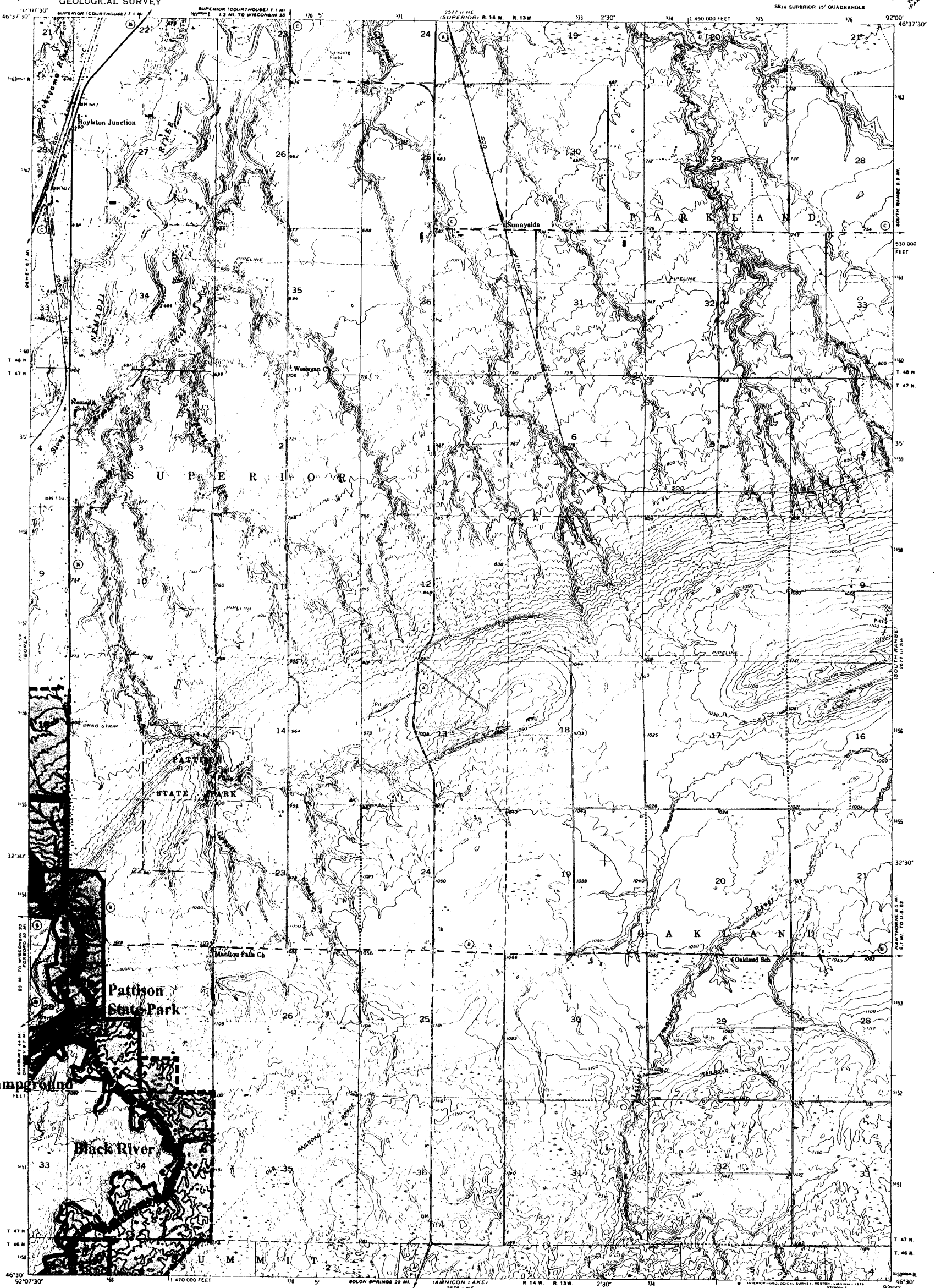
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

PATZAU, WIS.
NW/4 PATZAU 15' QUADRANGLE
N4622.5-W9207.5/7.5
PHOTOINSPECTED 1981
1954
PHOTOREVISED 1975
AMS 2576 I NW—SERIES V661

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SUNNYSIDE QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SE/4 SUPERIOR 15' QUADRANGLE



Planning Legend

- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail
- Selected Nearby Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952 Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks zone 15, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1975. This information not field checked

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy duty — 4 LANE | 0 LANE — Light duty
Medium duty — 4 LANE | 0 LANE — Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route — State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WISCONSIN
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

SUNNYSIDE, WIS.
SE/4 SUPERIOR 15' QUADRANGLE
N4630—W9200/7.5

1954
PHOTOREVISED 1975
AMS 2577 II SE—SERIES V861

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BOREA QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN-DOUGLAS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 SUPERIOR 15' QUADRANGLE

Nemadji River

Black River

Boylston

Dewey

Dedham

Borea

Anton

Little Pokegama River

Pokegama River

Little Muntoon Falls

St. Aloysius Ch.

Gravel Pits

Planning Legend

Trail Corridor — Private

Trail Corridor — Public

Preferred Trail Alignment

Alternate Trail Alignment

Existing Certified Trail

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952 1953 Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters north and 14 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Map photoinspected 1981
No major culture or drainage changes observed

UTM GRID AND 1954 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy duty — 4 LANE DIVIDED — Light duty
Medium duty — 4 LANE UNDIVIDED — Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route — State Route

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

BOREA, WIS.
SW/4 SUPERIOR 15' QUADRANGLE
N4630—W9207.5/7.5

1954
PHOTOINSPECTED 1981
DMA 2577 II SW-SERIES V881

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

FROGNER QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Ley Cooke State Park

Douglas County

Saunders Abandoned R.R. Grade

State of Minnesota
State of Wisconsin

S I L V E R B R O O K

S U P E R I O R

W R E N S H A L L

N E M A D J I S T A T E F O R E S T

S U M M I T

H O L Y O K E

Frogner

Clear Creek

Rock Creek

South Fork Nemadji River

Nemadji River

Bacon Creek

Foxboro Sch

Balsam Cr

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952–1953. Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Minnesota coordinate system, central zone, and Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000 metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1975. This information not field checked

SCALE 1:24 000

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 5 0 1 KILOMETRE

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy duty	Light duty
Medium duty	Unimproved dirt

State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Planning Legend

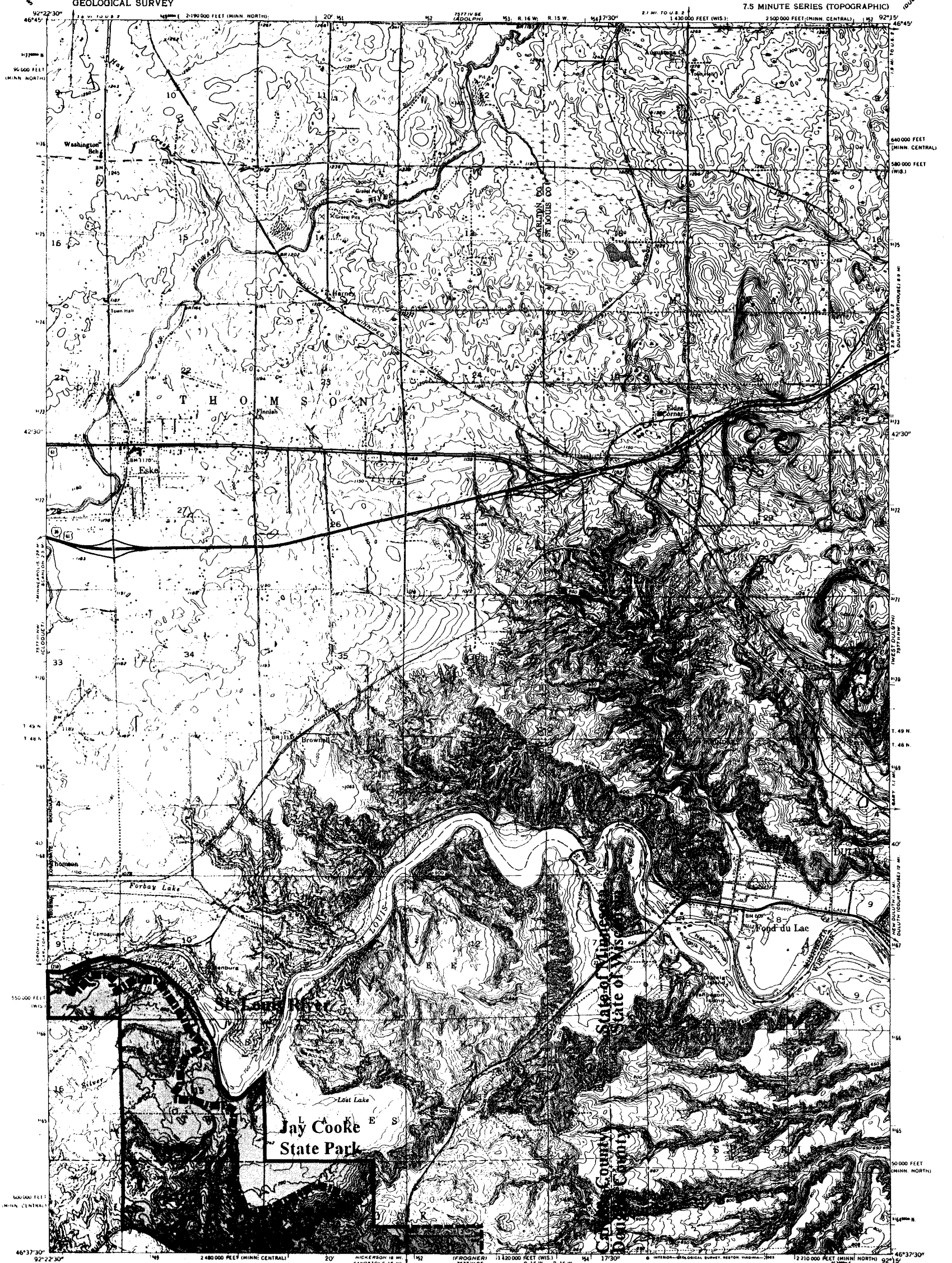
- Trail Corridor — Private
- Trail Corridor — Public
- Preferred Trail Alignment
- Alternate Trail Alignment
- Existing Certified Trail

FROGNER, MINN.–WIS.
N4630–W9215/7.5

1954
PHOTOREVISED 1975
AMS 7577 III SE–SERIES V872

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

ESKO QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA- WISCONSIN
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsh plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1952 Field check 1954
Hydrography from U.S. Lake Survey Chart 966 (1:15,000)

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Minnesota coordinate system, central and north zones, and Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters north and 14 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER

North Country National Scenic Trail

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light-duty —
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt - - - -
U.S. Route State Route
Interstate Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources
This information not field checked. Map edited 1983

ESKO, MINN.–WIS.
N4637.5—W9215/7.5
1954
PHOTOREVISED 1983
DMA 7577 III NE—SERIES V872

Planning Legend

Trail Corridor — Private
Trail Corridor — Public
Preferred Trail Alignment
Alternate Trail Alignment
Existing Certified Trail

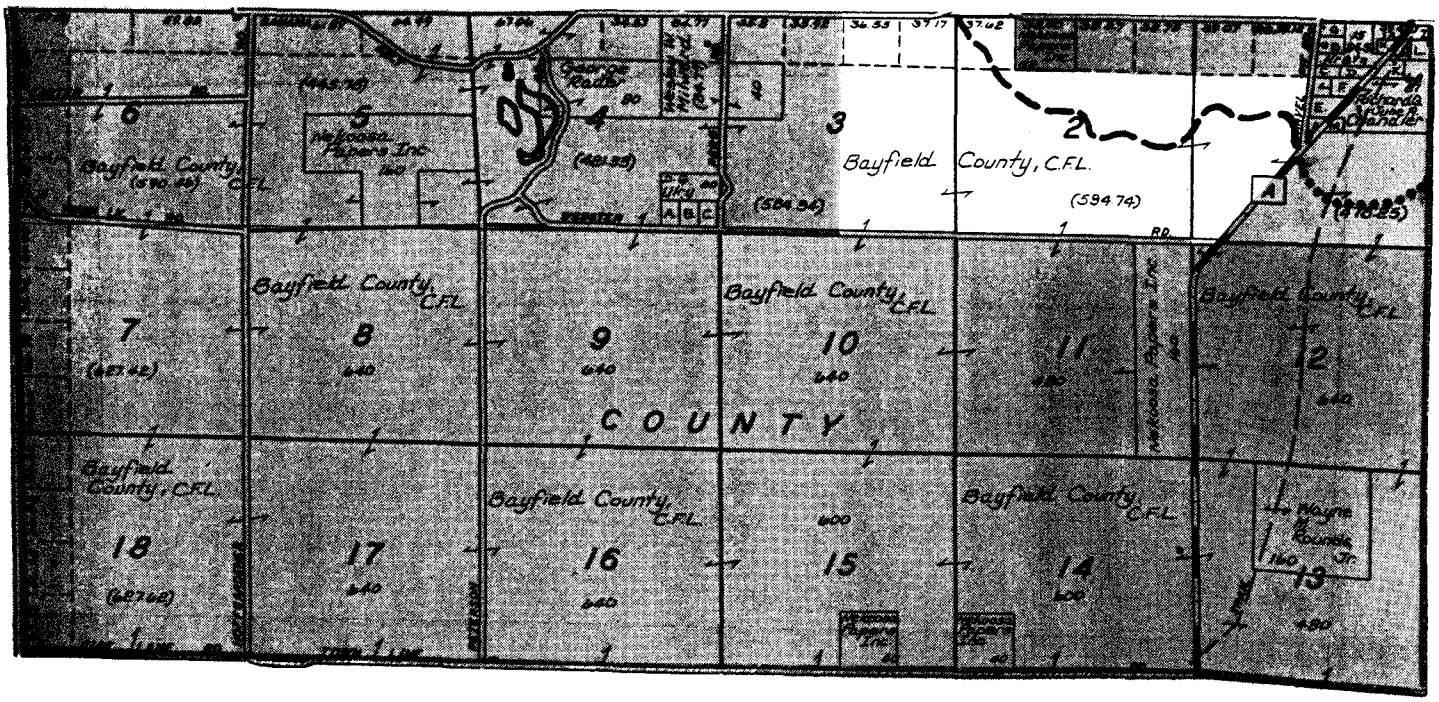
Attachment 8

Attachment 8 includes 17 township plat maps showing the preferred trail alignment and corridor for Alternative 2. These are organized east to west within the context of land ownership patterns.

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

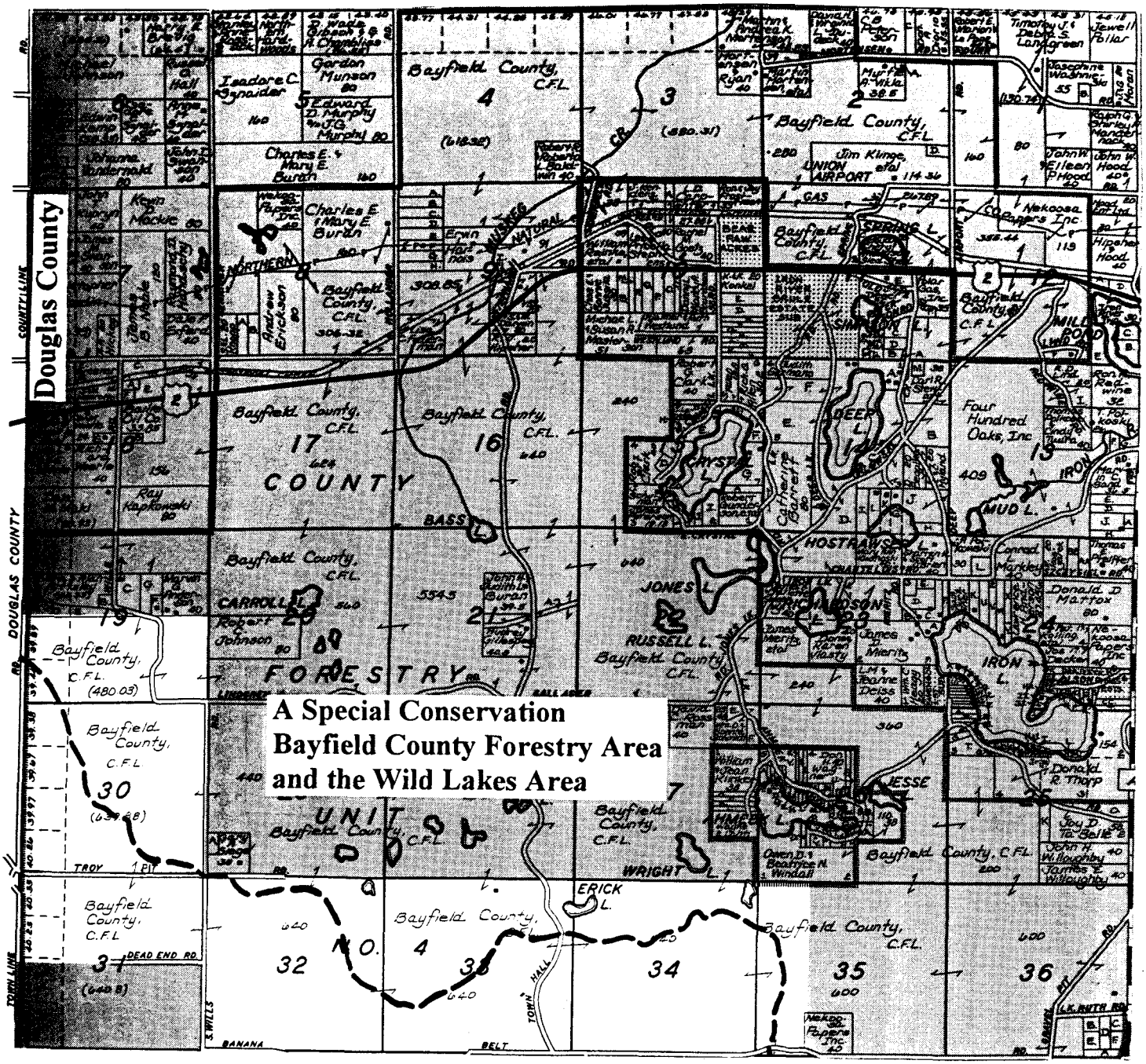
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #1
USGS Maps #1 and #2

HUGHES TOWNSHIP -- SOUTH

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

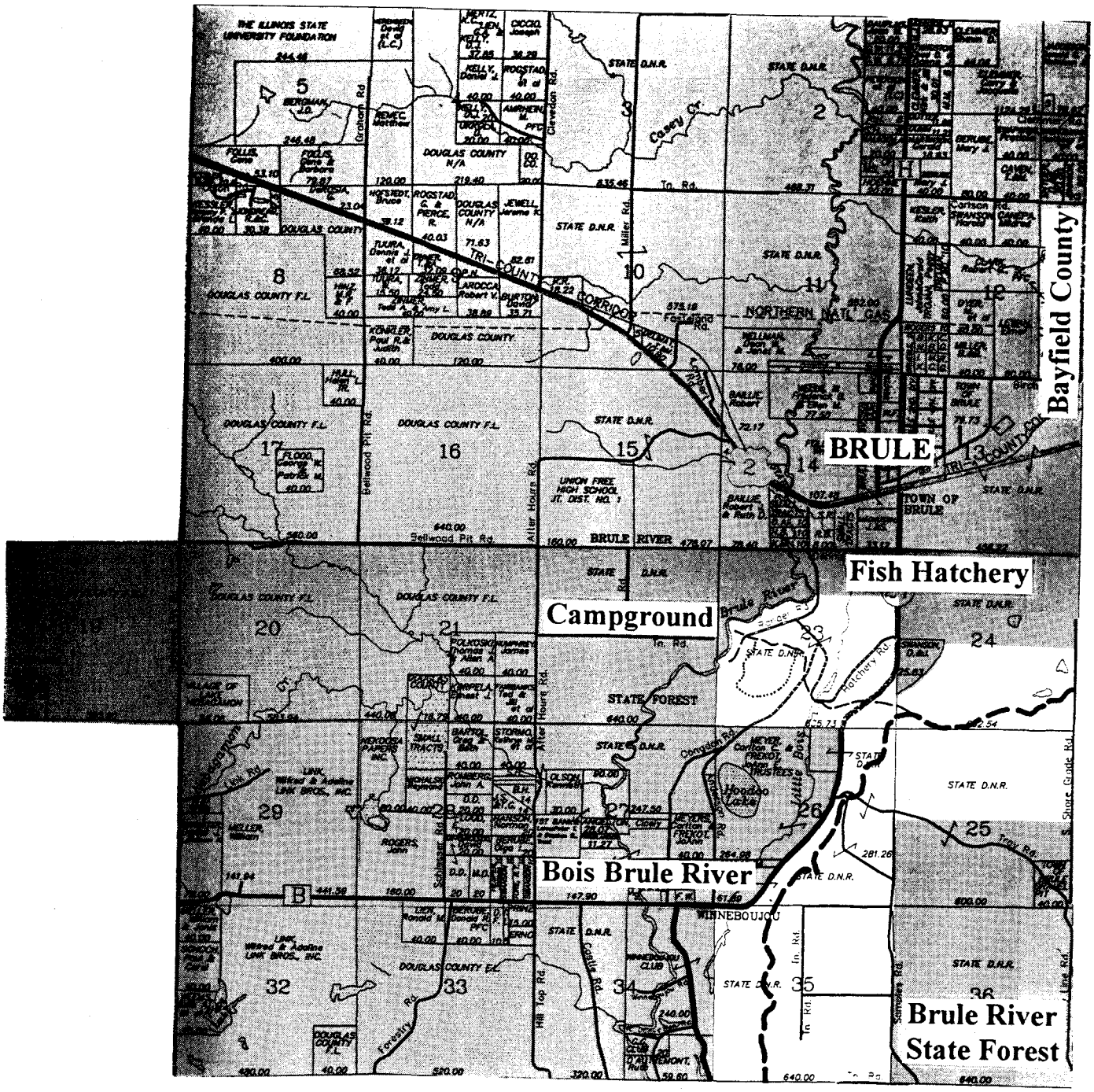
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #1
USGS Maps #2 and #3

HUGHES TOWNSHIP -- NORTH

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor
- Preferred Spur Trail
- Selected Nearby Trail

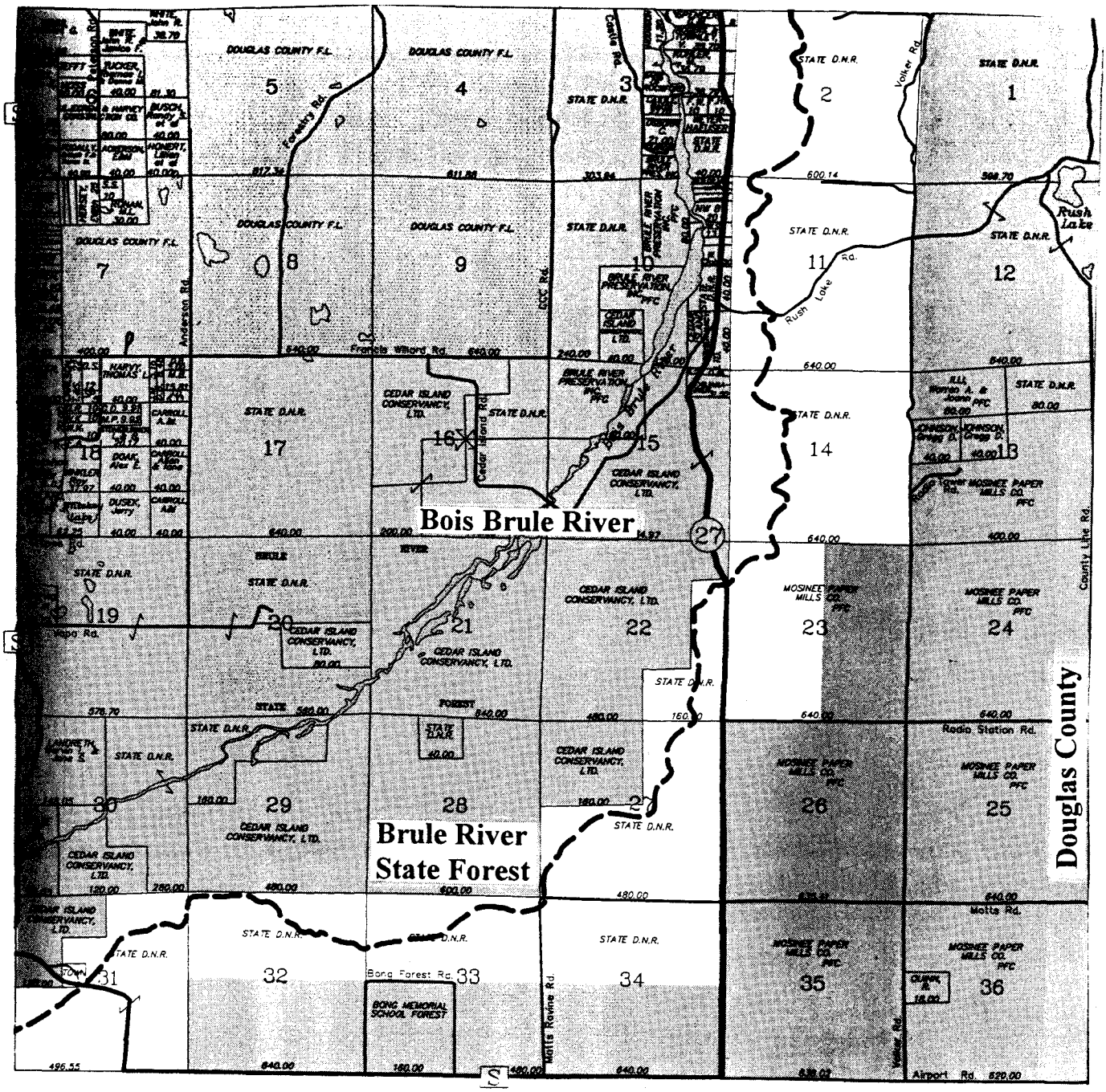
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #1
USGS Map #3

BRULE TOWNSHIP -- SOUTH

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

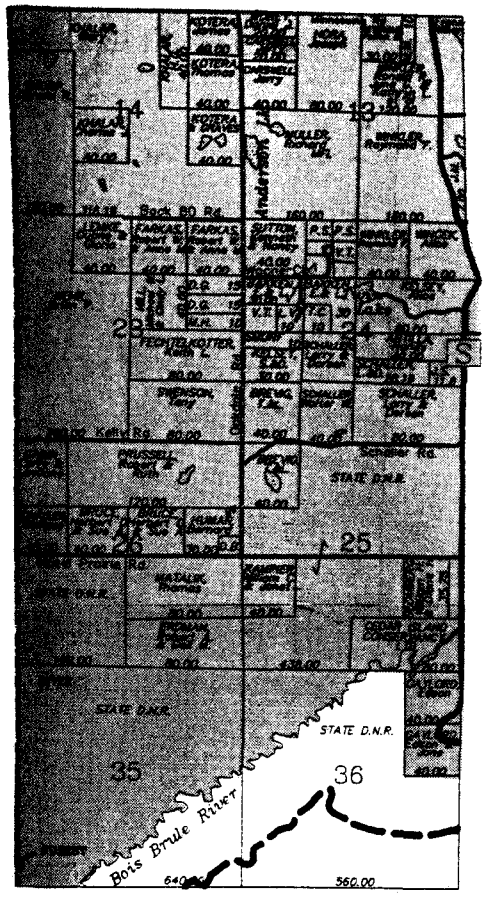
This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #1 and #2
USGS Maps #3, #4, and #5

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP -- NORTH

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

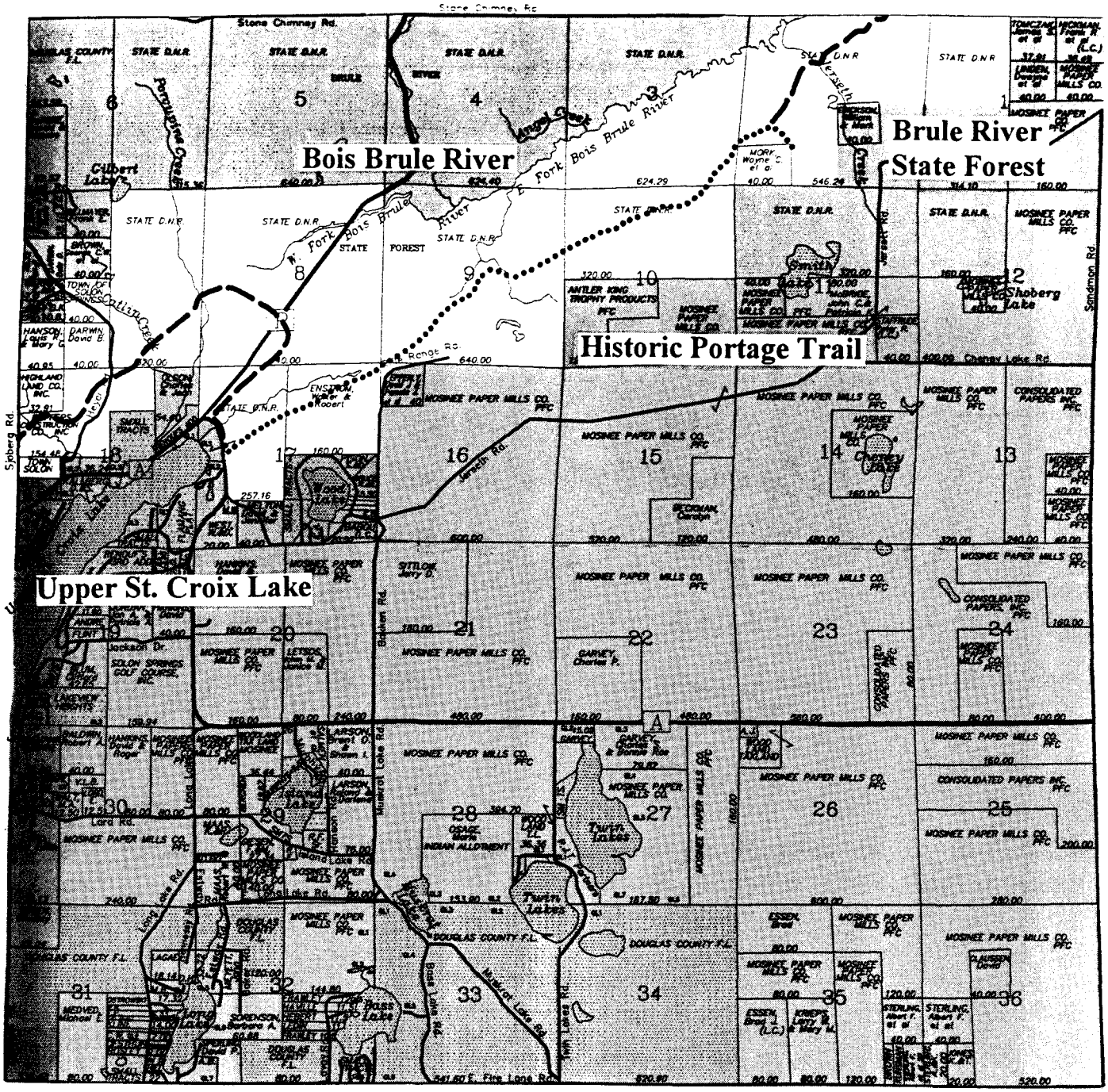
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #2
USGS Map #5

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP -- WEST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

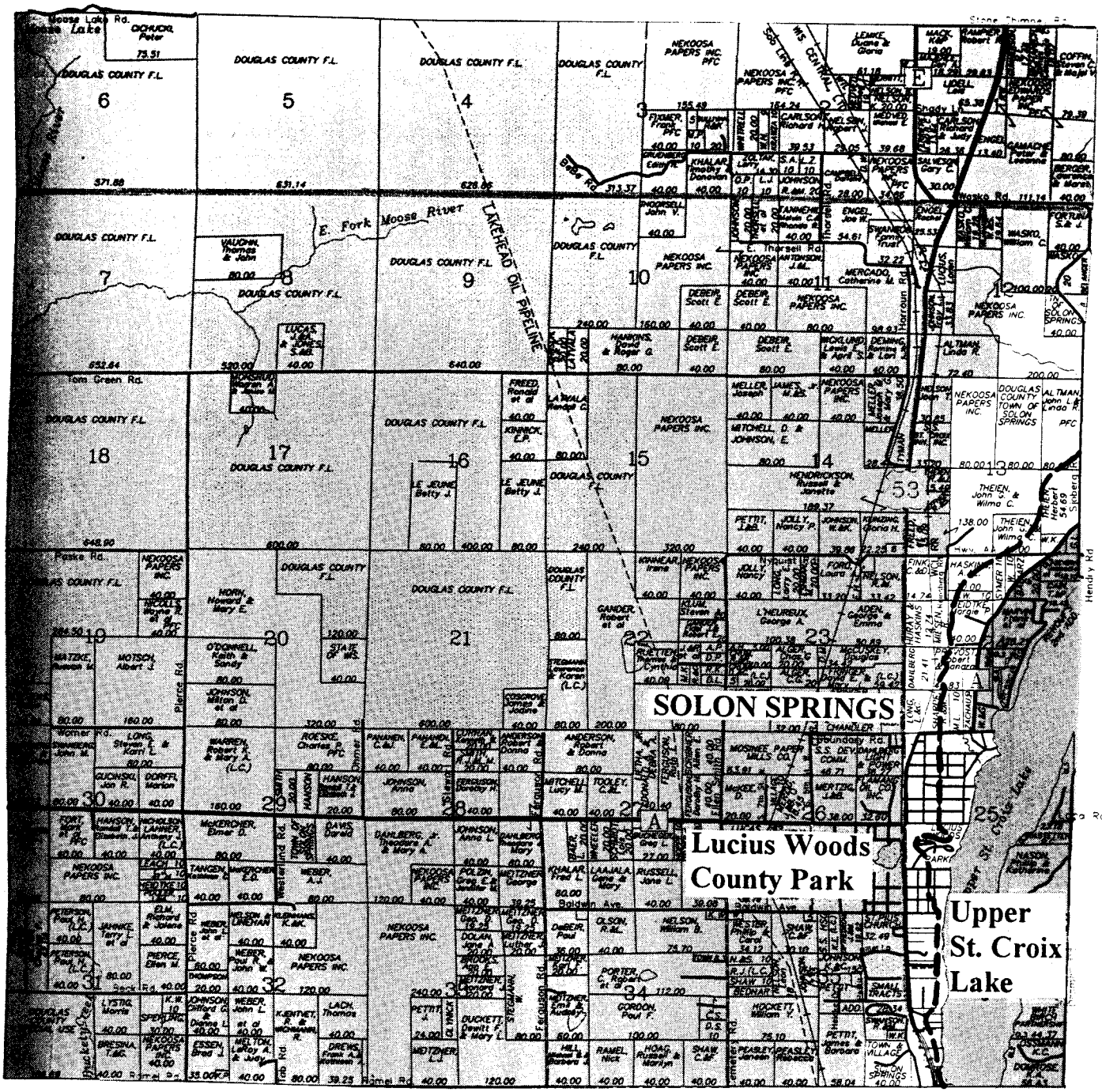
This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #2 and #3
USGS Maps #5 and #6

SOLON SPRINGS TOWNSHIP -- EAST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

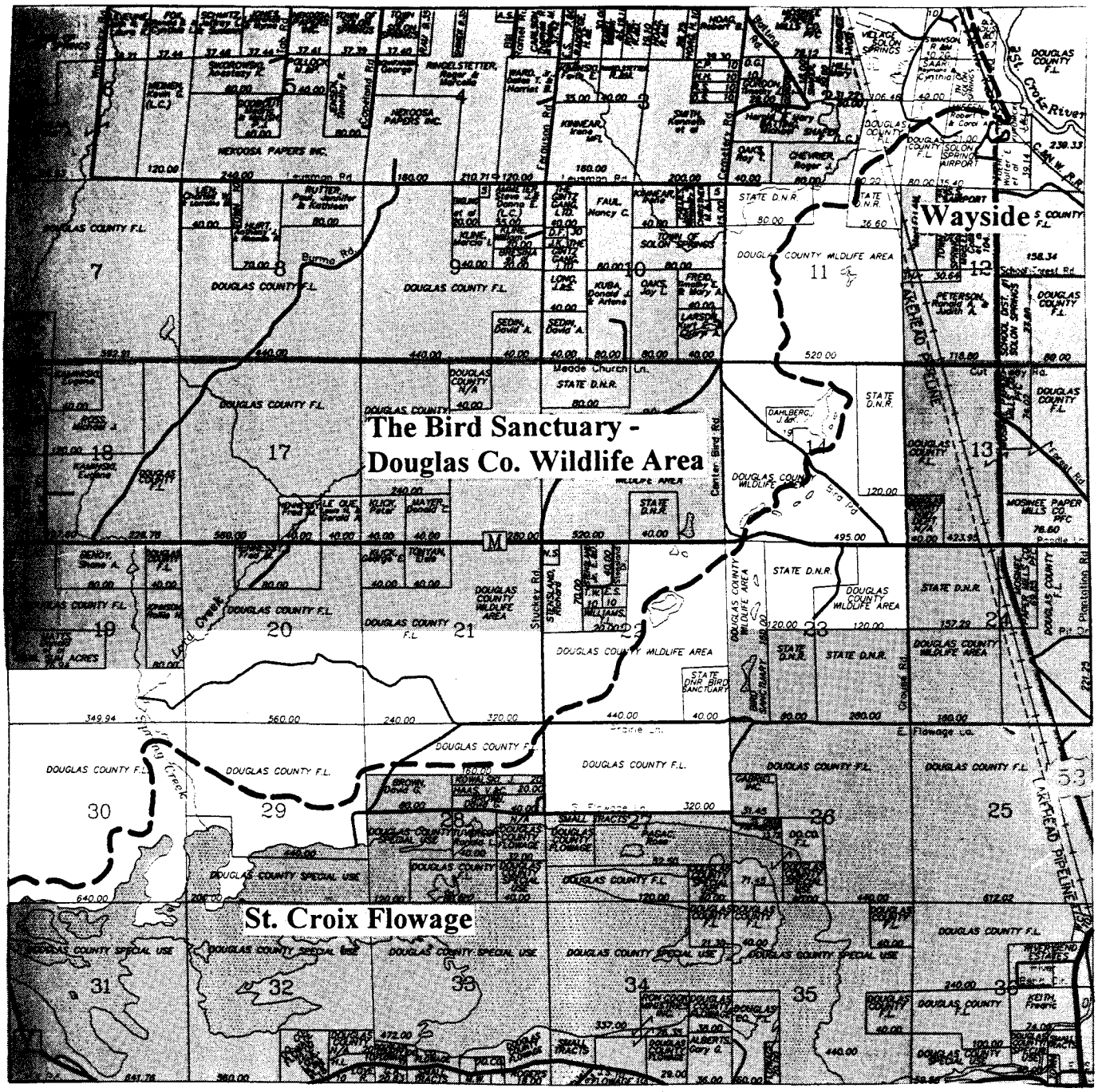
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #3
USGS Maps #6 and #7

SOLON SPRINGS TOWNSHIP -- CENTRAL

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #3
USGS Maps #7 and #8

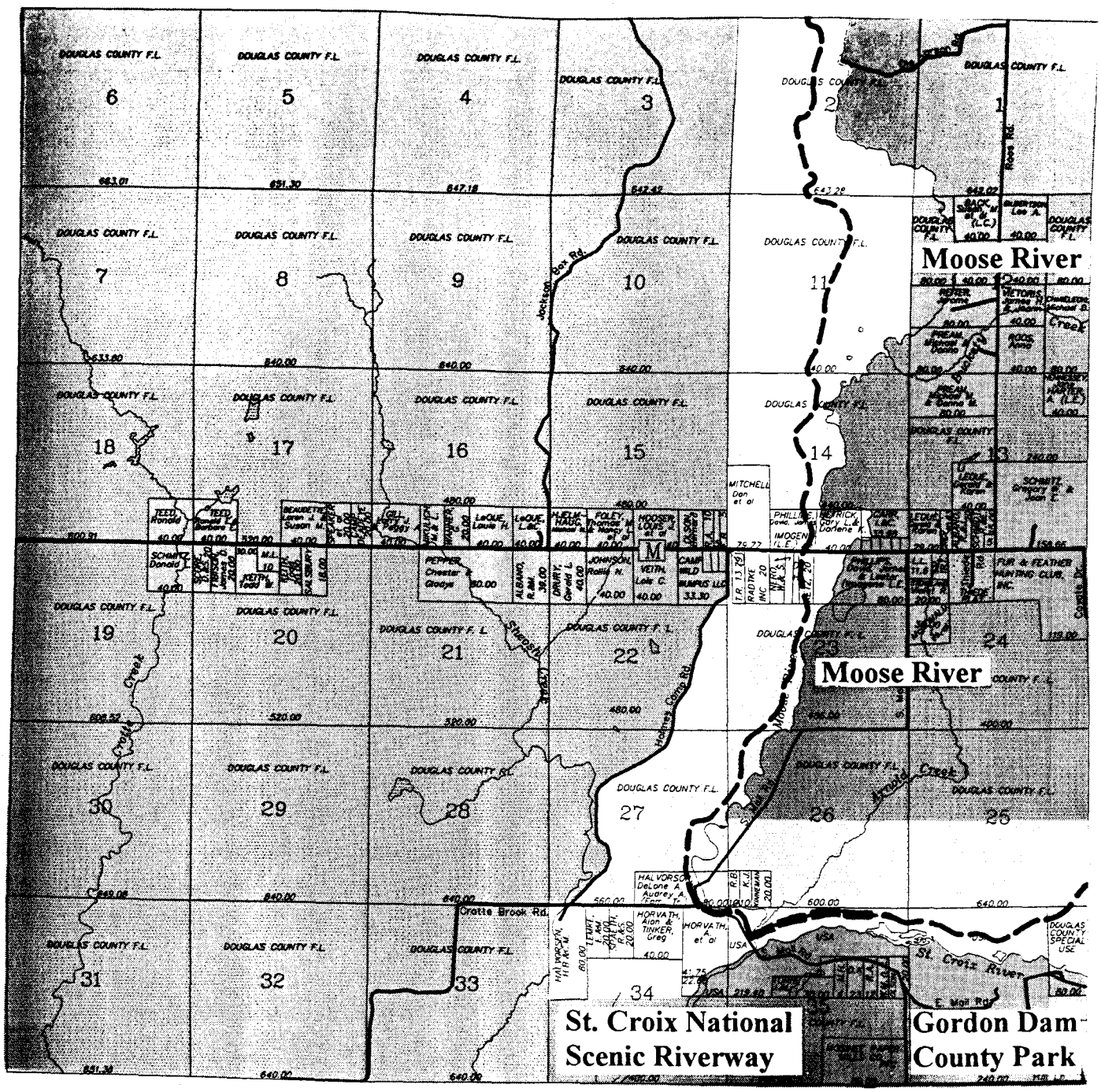
SOLON SPRINGS TOWNSHIP -- SOUTH

GORDON TOWNSHIP -- WESTCENTRAL

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

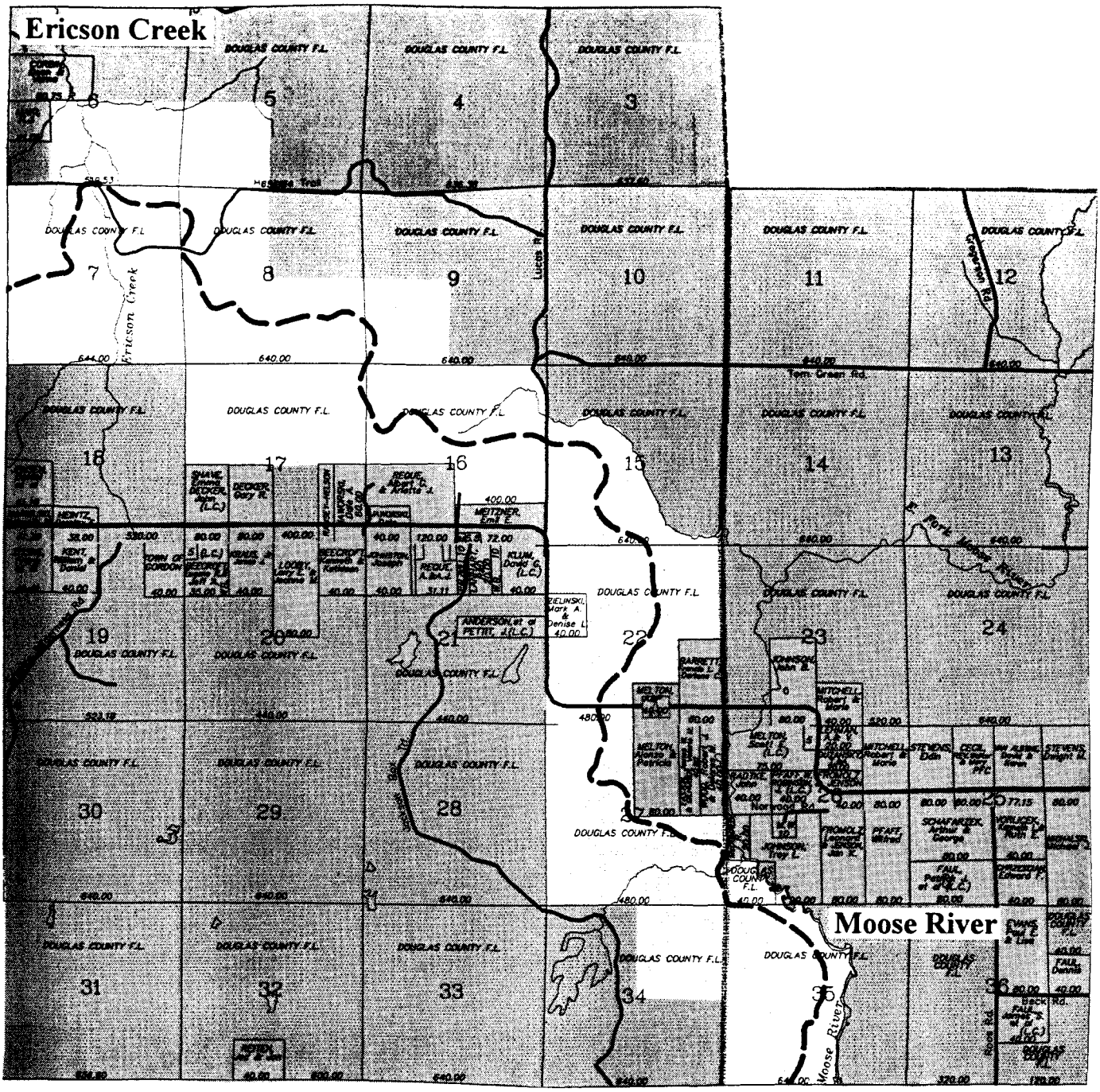
This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #3 and #4
USGS Map #8

GORDON
TOWNSHIP --
WEST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #4 and #5
USGS Maps #8, #9, and #10

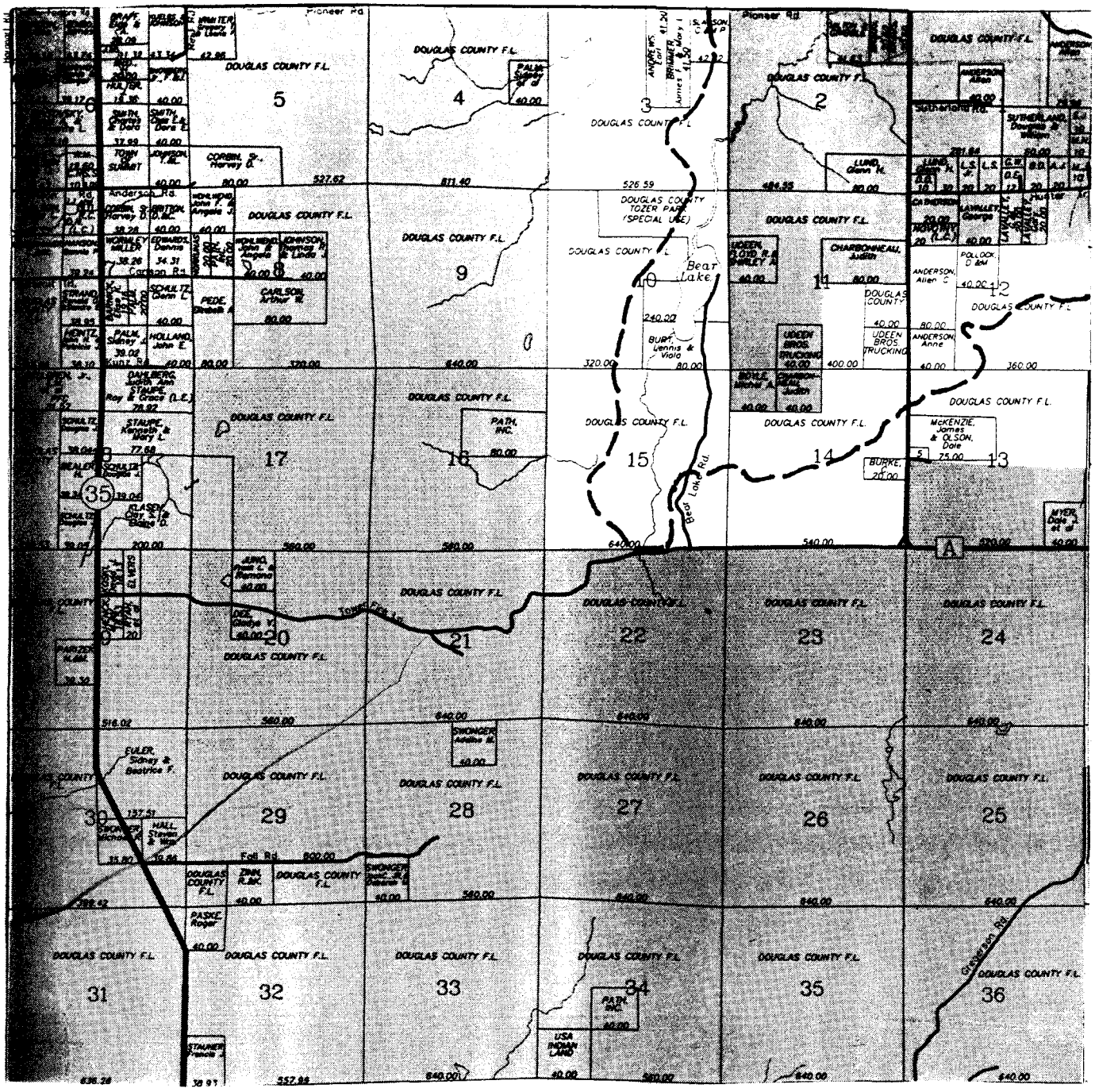
SOLON SPRINGS TOWNSHIP -- WEST

GORDON TOWNSHIP -- NORTH

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

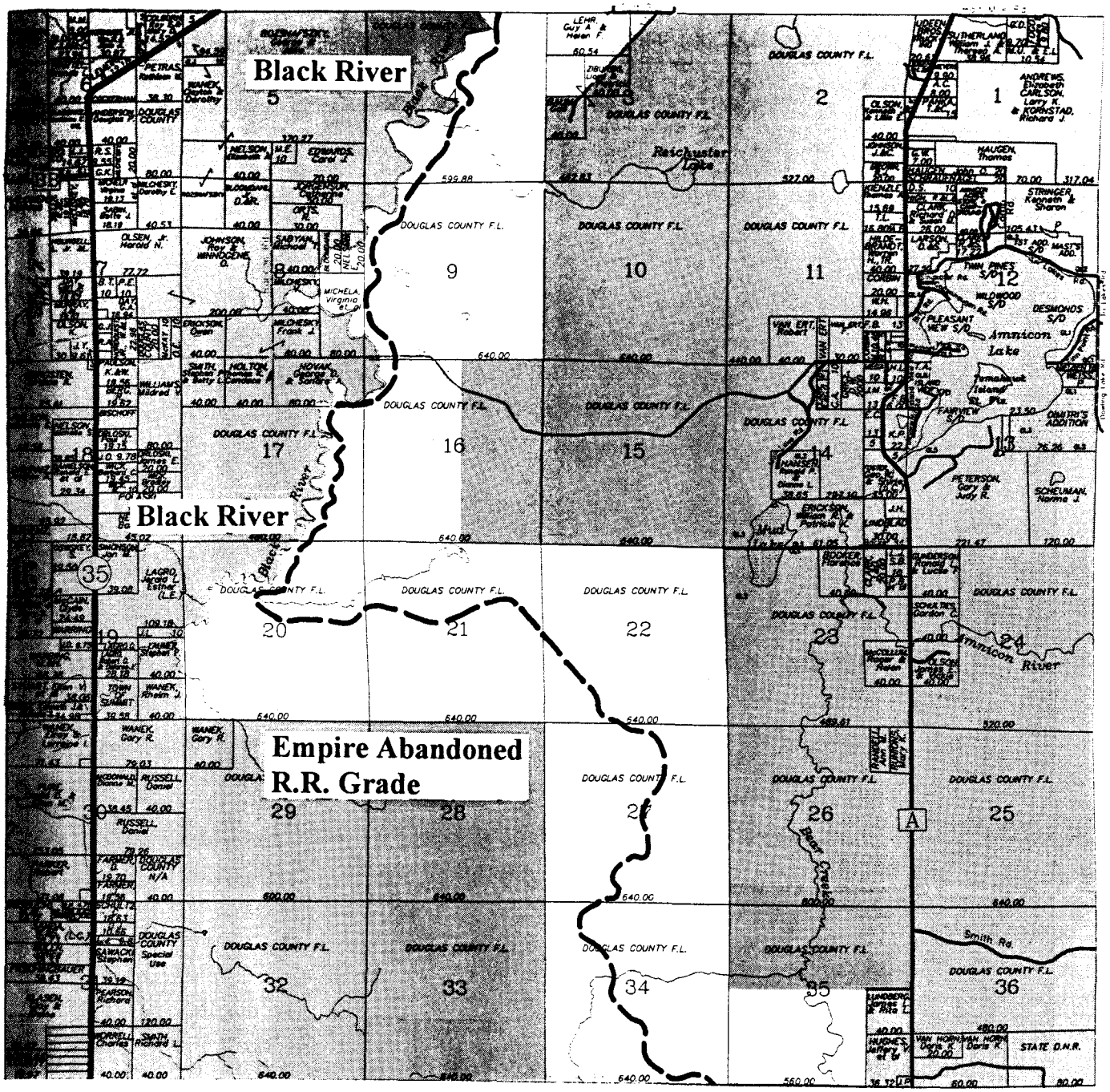
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #5
USGS Map #10

SUMMIT TOWNSHIP -- SOUTHEAST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

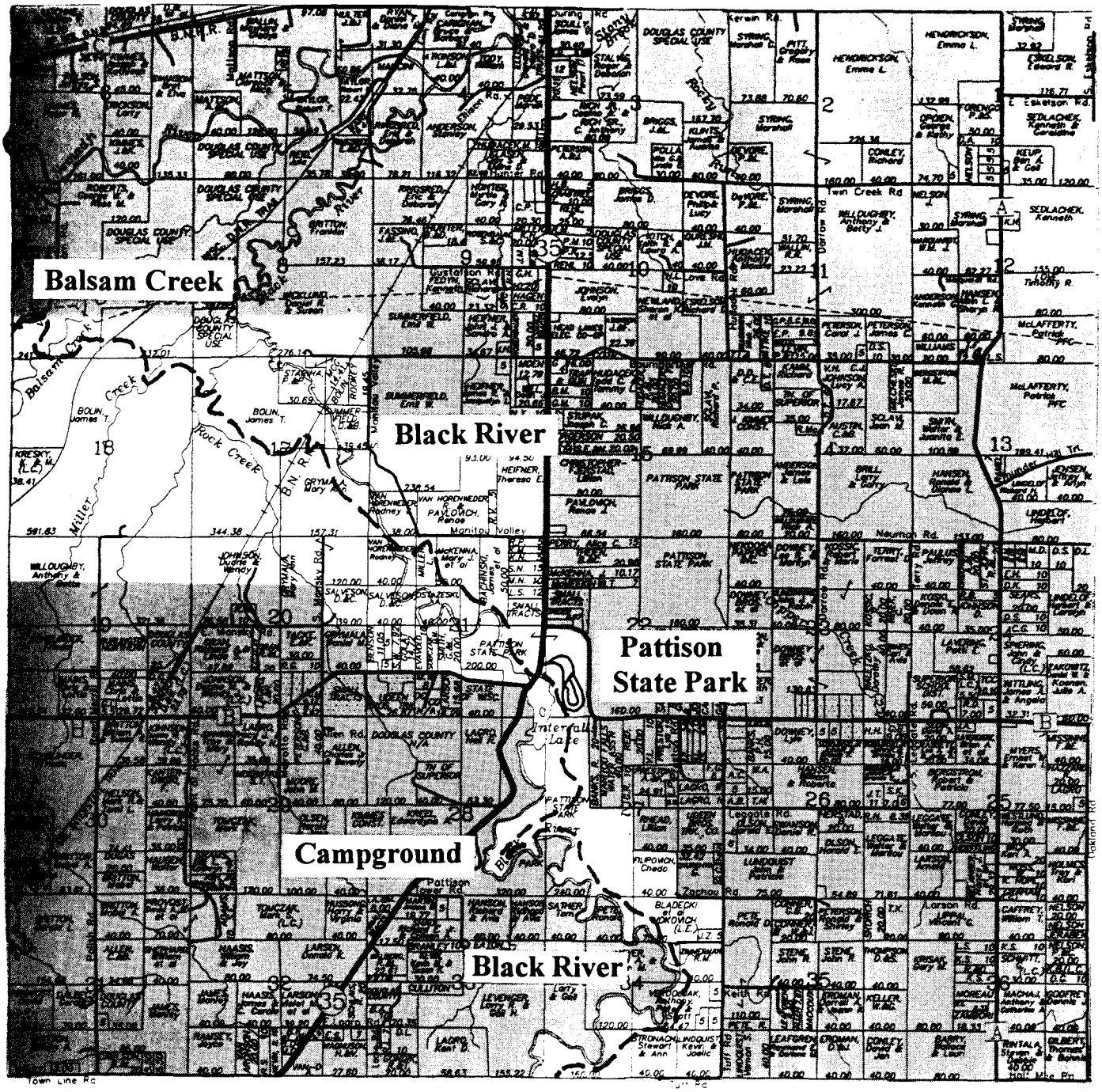
This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #5 and #6
USGS Maps #10, #11 and #12

SUMMIT TOWNSHIP -- NORTHEAST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #6
USGS Maps #12 and #13

LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Selected Nearby Trail

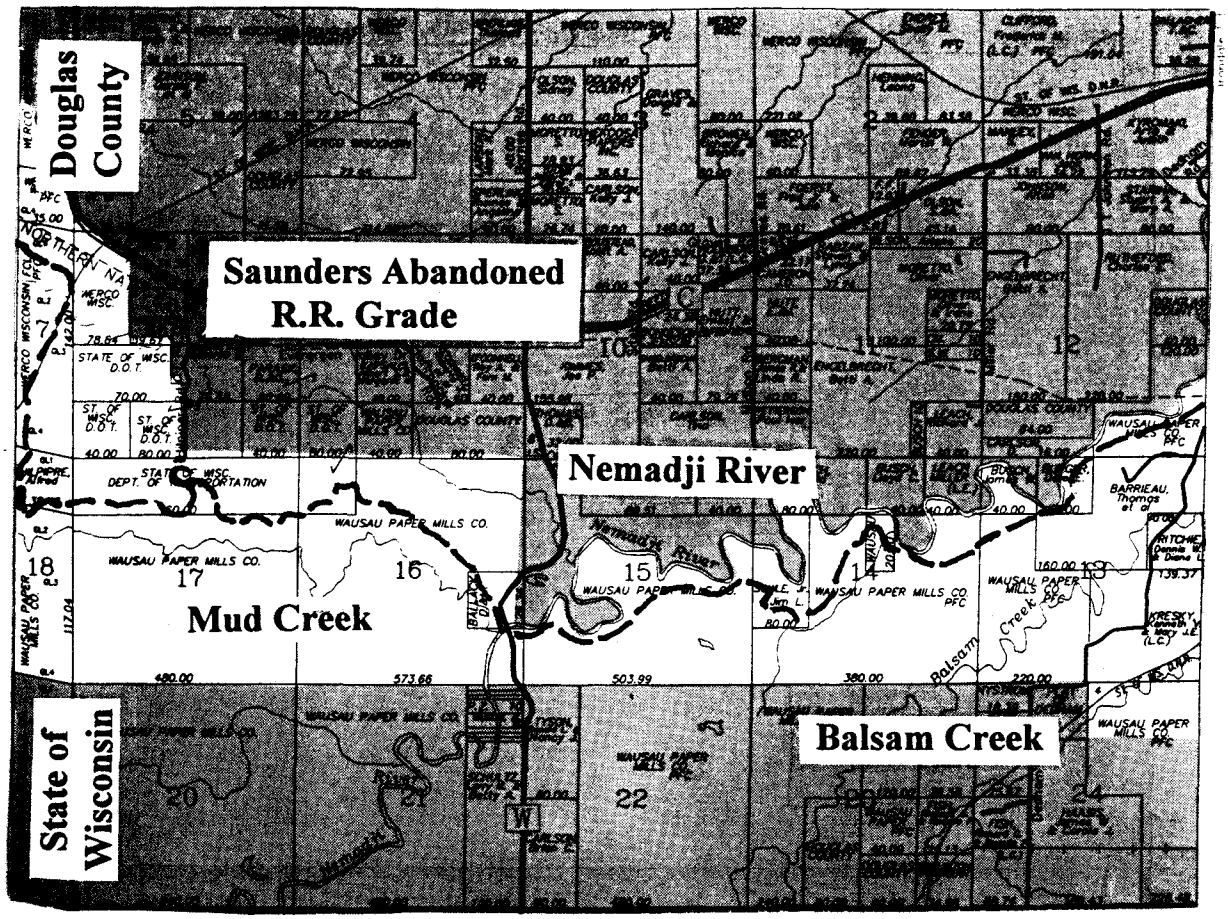
Trail Corridor

SUPERIOR
TOWNSHIP --
SOUTHEAST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

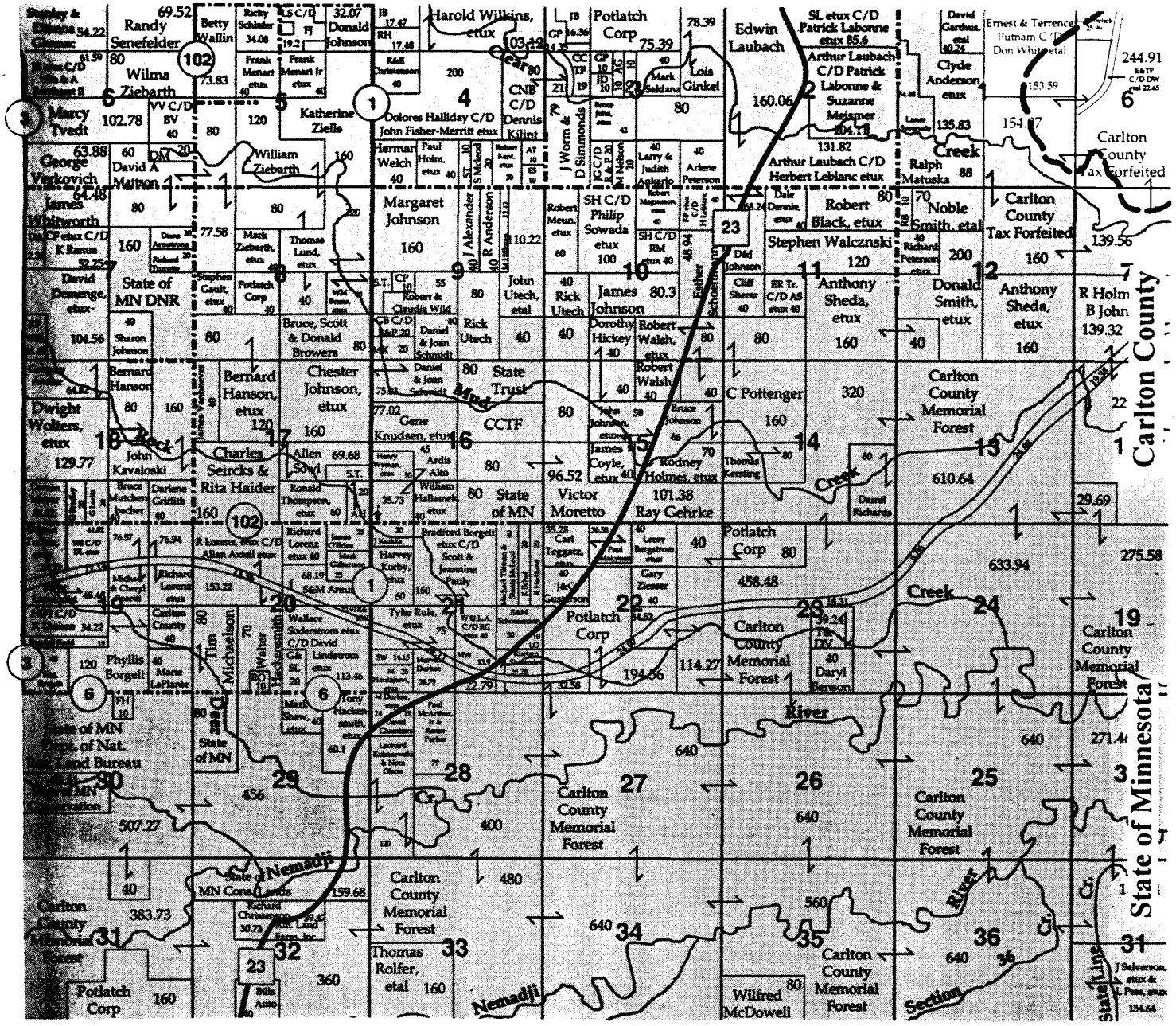
This map corresponds with:
Photo Boards #6 and #7
USGS Maps #13 and #14

SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP -- SOUTHWEST

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

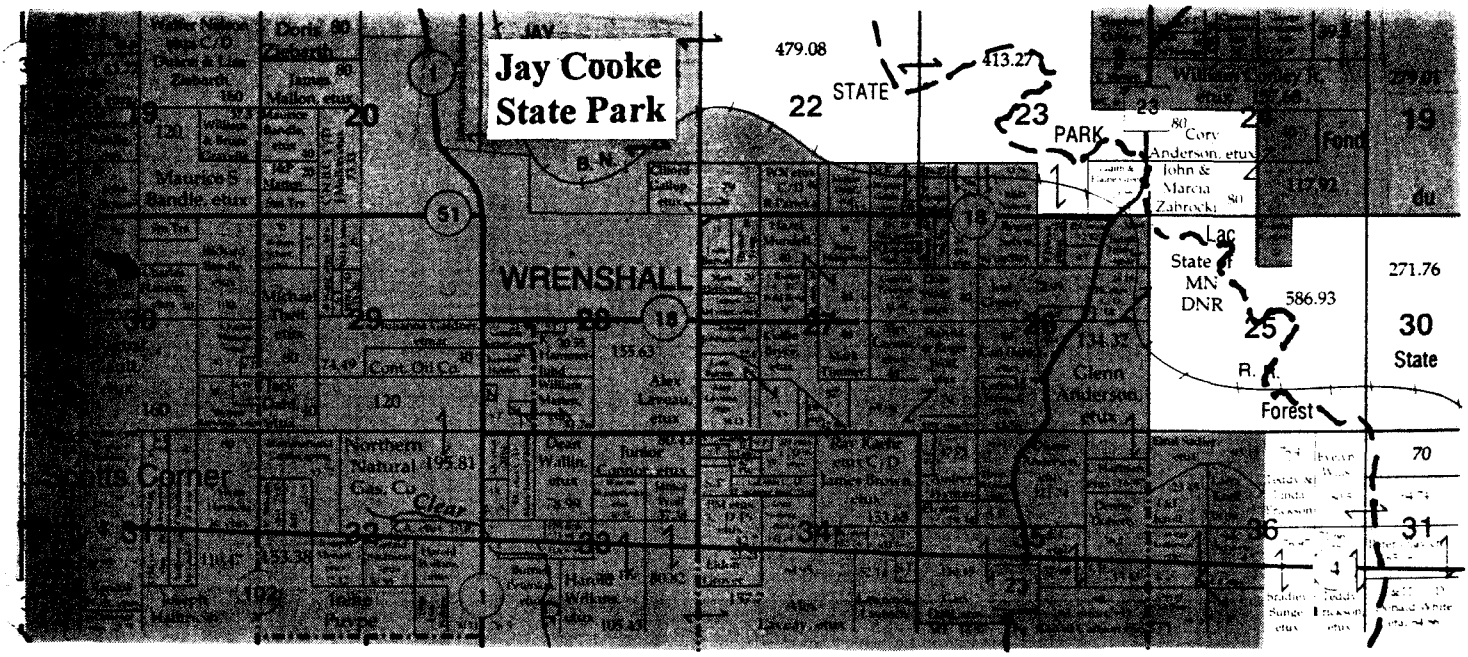
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #7
USGS Map #14

WRENSHALL TOWNSHIP

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



LEGEND

Preferred Trail Route

Certified Trail

Alternate Route

Trail Corridor

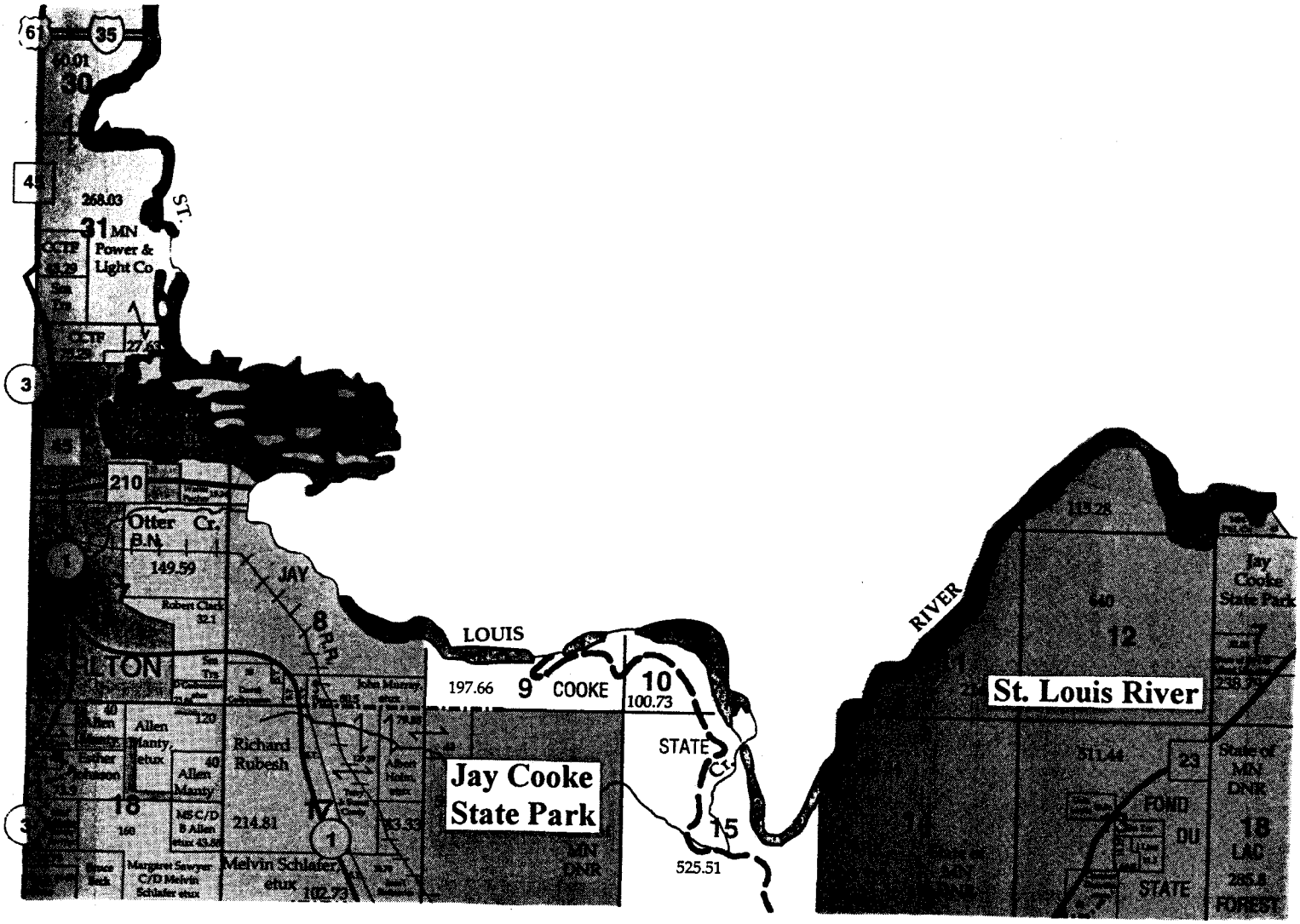
This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #7
USGS Maps #14 and #15

SILVER BROOK TOWNSHIP

North Country
National Scenic Trail

PROPOSED CORRIDOR

Northwest Wisconsin and
Adjoining Minnesota Region



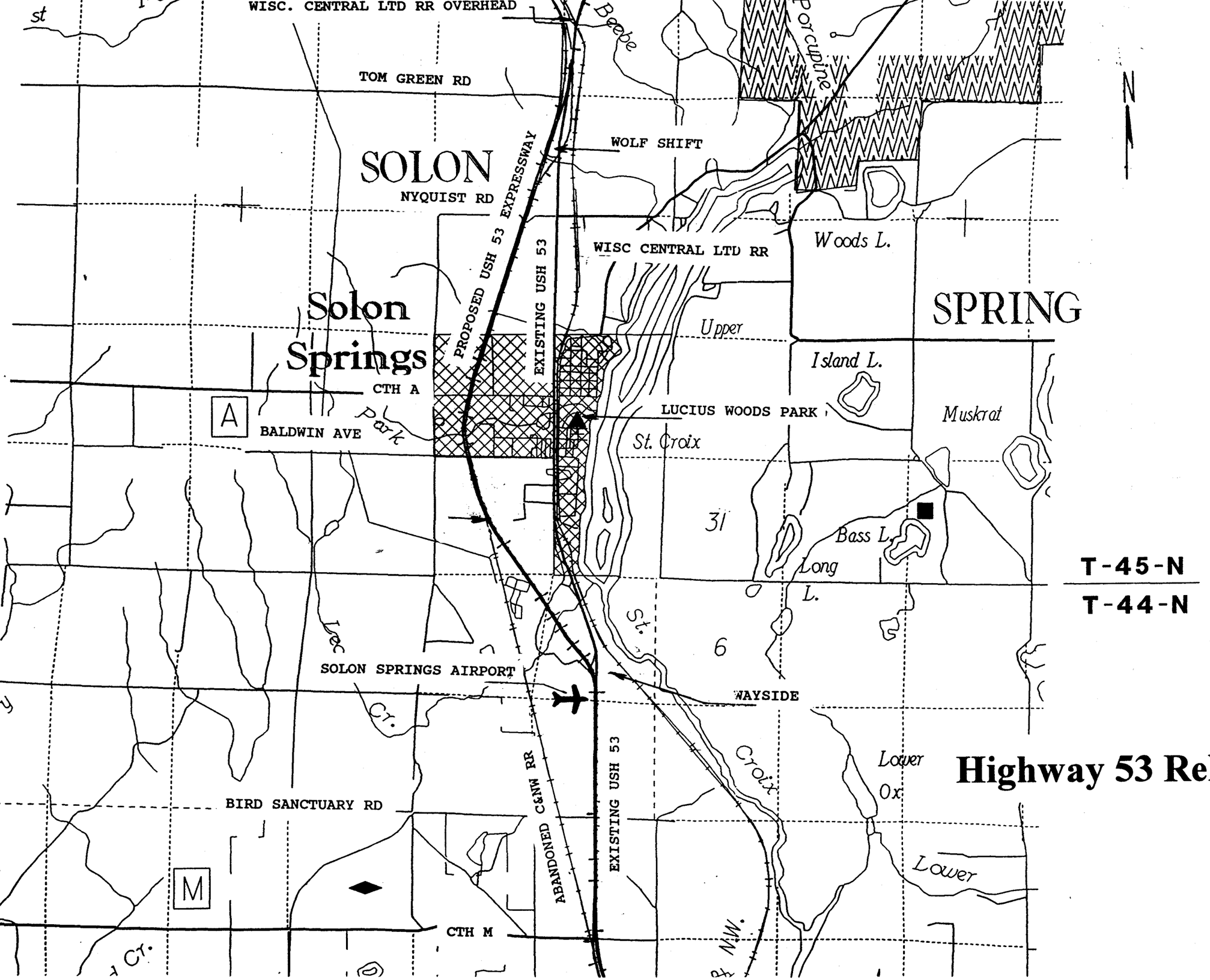
LEGEND

- Preferred Trail Route
- Certified Trail
- Alternate Route
- Trail Corridor

This map corresponds with:
Photo Board #7
USGS Map #15

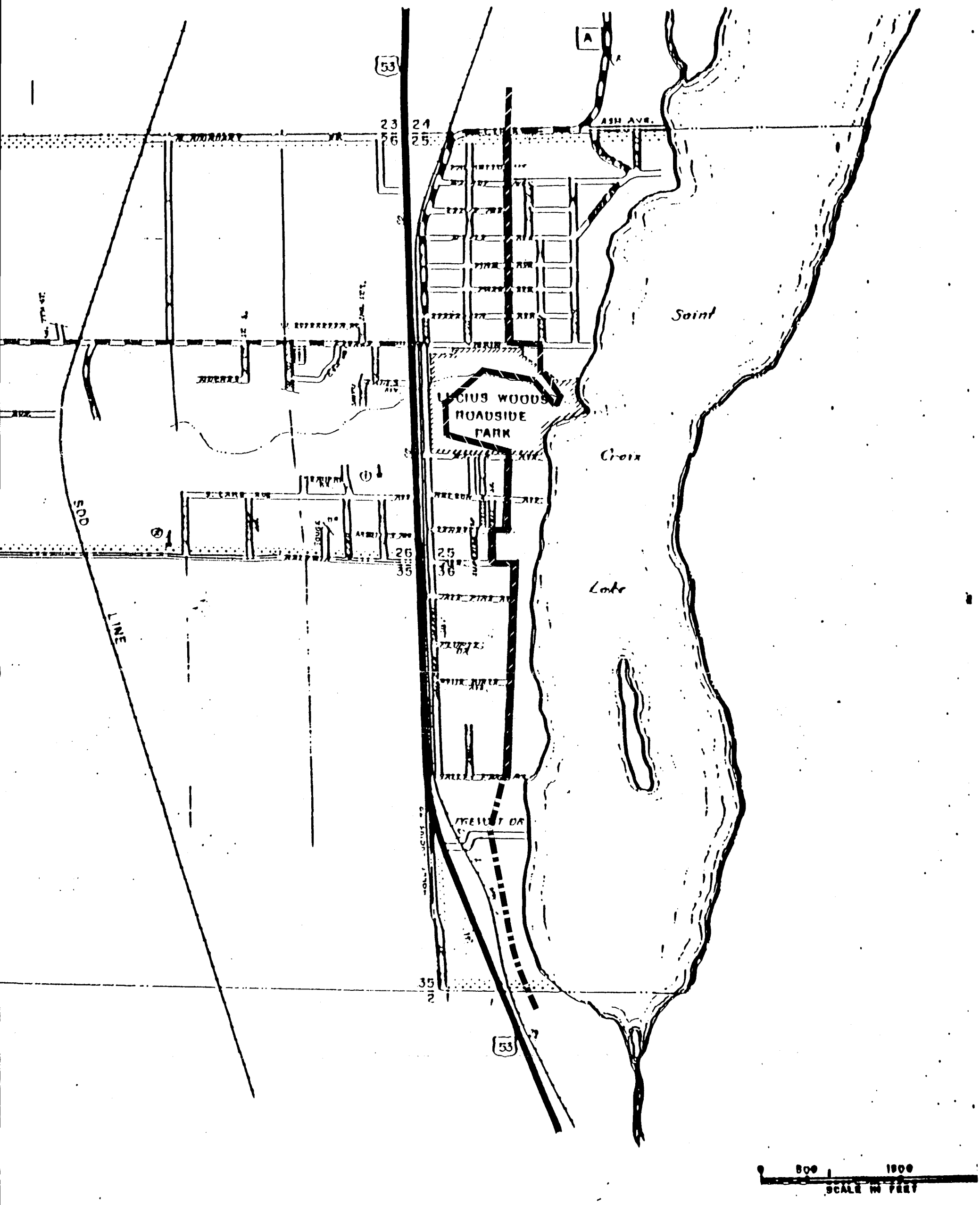
TWIN LAKES TOWNSHIP -- EAST

Attachment 9



Highway 53 Relocation Map

Attachment 10



Route Map Through Solon Springs

Attachment 11

NEWS RELEASE

u.s. department of the interior

national park service

For Immediate Release

Bill Menke
Or Kim Bair 608-264-5610

PLANNING TEAM IDENTIFIES TRAIL ROUTE ALTERNATIVES THROUGH BAYFIELD, DOUGLAS, AND BURNETT COUNTIES, WISCONSIN; OPEN HOUSES SCHEDULED

Madison, WI -- Three "open house" meetings to share information and seek public input about trail route alternatives for the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) across Bayfield, Douglas, and Burnett Counties will be held on August 6, 7, and 8, 1996, from 4:00 to 8:00 PM each day. The August 6th open house in Solon Springs will be held at the Douglas County Forestry Building, located at the intersection of Hughes Avenue and Highway 53. The open house on August 7th will be held at the Douglas County Courthouse in Superior, located at the corner of Belknap Street and Hammond Street. The third open house on August 8th will be in Ashland at the Sentry Conference Room within the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, located at Northland College on Admiral Leahy Drive. The public is invited to these open houses to learn more about the North Country NST, and offer input about the alternatives.

A planning team, consisting of members of the North Country Trail Association, Douglas County Forestry Department, Bayfield County Forestry Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and National Park Service (NPS), was established last February to identify a specific route for the North Country NST through NW Wisconsin through an open planning process. So far, the team has collected basic information and data needed to plan the route. Team members representing each of these organizations will be at the open house meetings to share information and to record public comments. Bill Menke, a member of the planning team and National Park Service Manager of the North Country NST, said, "Public involvement is essential to the success of these planning efforts. All of us on the team encourage interested people to participate in these informational meetings."

There are two main reasons for the planning process. One reason is to identify the ideal location for the North Country NST. Trail route alternatives across the counties have been identified that incorporate natural, scenic, cultural and historic sites; and existing recreation facilities. They generally meet the objectives established for a National Scenic Trail as well as the objectives of the local units of government who may eventually manage the trail on a day-to-day basis.

The second reason for the planning process is to involve local officials, the public, and landowners along the route alternatives in the decision making process, in order to benefit from their extensive knowledge of the local area, and to seek their support for the project. After obtaining public comments and suggestions, a final route plan will be developed. The planning team expects to complete this plan by the spring of 1997.

Once the trail plan is finalized, groups and individuals working to complete trail sections will have a framework to implement the trail, and construction design standards to guide their efforts. When the trail is eventually completed across NW Wisconsin, residents will have a new opportunity to hike in the scenic, Wisconsin northwoods.

When Congress established the trail in 1980 as a component of the National Trails System, a very general route was delineated. A slightly more refined, but still general route was shown in *The Comprehensive Plan For Management and Use of The North Country Trail - 1982.* Seventy-one miles of the trail already exist in Chequamegon National Forest, Copper Falls State Park, and the City of Mellen. The rest of the route in NW Wisconsin is only conceptual at this time. Since 1982, many changes in land use patterns have pointed to the need to refine the exact location for the route. To accomplish this, the NPS has developed this comprehensive planning process.

In many ways, the North Country Trail is similar in concept to the famous Appalachian Trail. When completed, it will extend approximately 3,200 miles from the vicinity of Crown Point, New York, to Lake Sakakawea State Park, on the Missouri River, in North Dakota, where it will join with the route of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Along the way, this non-motorized, hiking trail passes through seven states. Wisconsin's segment will be approximately 150 miles long.

The National Park Service is responsible for the overall administration of the North Country Trail from an office in Madison, Wisconsin. Actual development and management of the trail, however, is accomplished through many cooperating Federal, State, and local agencies, and private trail organizations. The North Country NST is truly a cooperative venture.

The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) is a not-for-profit organization formed in 1981 to support the development and maintenance of the trail. The association's headquarters is located at 49 Monroe Center, N.W., Suite 200B, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. Contact Gaylord Yost at 414 354-8987 for more information about membership and volunteer activities.

JUL 15 1996

Attachment 12

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Ice Age, North Country, and
Lewis and Clark National Trails
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100
Madison, Wisconsin 53711

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L6017(NOCO-WI)

SEP 0 3 1996

Dear Local Official:

In late July, we contacted you about a planning team formed to identify a specific route for the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) in northwest Wisconsin and Minnesota, and invited you during the first week of August to three "open house" meetings set up to share information and seek public input. We presently want to provide you with a summary of the public's reaction to the trail route alternatives and brief you on the status of the planning process.

Seven individuals visited with us in Solon Springs, twelve stopped by in Superior, and nine came to the Ashland open house. Some people came to ask questions of a general nature and to just learn more about the North Country Trail. However, most people had specific comments regarding trail routing across the planning region. These specific comments will be extremely helpful in the next step of the planning process.

The following summarizes the public feedback from the first set of open houses:

* Written comments were received from 23 individuals either during the open houses or by mail. Virtually all of the respondents fully supported the general concept of a National Scenic Trail and all of the opportunities it offers as a primarily hiking trail across the planning region.

* The majority of visitors supported Alternative 2 - Moose River, the planning team's preferred alternative. The comments received reiterated that Alternative 2 seems to be the most scenic, dry, and feasible opportunity to hike across Douglas County.

* Four people supported Alternative 4 - 18th Street/Amnicon Falls because this alternative would be near their homes giving them direct access to the trail, and the alternative comes directly into the city of Superior along the Lake Superior shoreline. Another person supported Alternative 6 - 1982 Comprehensive Plan Route since he was enthused about promoting "quiet" sports near Danbury, his town of residence.

We now plan to identify the favored route within a corridor of opportunity specifically recording and considering landownership patterns. A draft environmental assessment will then be written, and another set of open houses will be held in the winter of 1996-97 to record the responses of the affected landowners and public.

If you have any thoughts concerning any of the alternatives or questions on the planning process, feel free to call either one of us. We are seeking your partnership in building an important recreational resource.

Sincerely,

William R. Menke
North Country NST Manager

Kimberly K. Bair
North Country Trail Association
Recreation Planner

MS.CAROL AHLBERG
CITY OF SUPERIOR CLERK
1407 HAMMOND AVENUE
SUPERIOR WI 54880

MS PATTI BARSNESS
TOWN OF AMNICON CLERK
8985 E US HWY 2
SOUTH RANGE WI 54874

MS ELAINE BENDER
TOWN OF PARKLAND CLERK
PO BOX 98
SOUTH RANGE WI 54874

MS MARCIA CAVEN
TOWN OF BRULE CLERK
14257 E CARLSON ROAD
BRULE WI 54820

MS MARY CONLEY
TOWN OF OAKLAND CLERK
5026 E COUNTY RD B
SOUTH RANGE WI 54874

MS SWAN DAWSON
VILLAGE OF LAKE NEBAGAMON
CLERK
BOX 517
LAKE NEBAGAMON, WI 54849

MR ALAN GUSTAFSON
TOWN OF DAIRYLAND CLERK
792 E KINGSDALE RD
DAIRYLAND WI 54830

MS JAN JENSEN
TOWN OF WASCOTT CLERK
BOX 158
WASCOTT WI 54890

MS JANICE JOHNSON
TOWN OF HIGHLAND
9604 S SANDMON RD
LAKE NEBAGAMON WI 54849

MS MARY KUTZLER
VILLAGE OF OLIVER CLERK
2931 S WINONA AVENUE
SUPERIOR, WI 54880

MS PHYLLIS MASSIER
TOWN OF CLOVERLAND CLERK
2763 S STATE RD 13
MAPLE WI 54854

KAREN RASK
VILLAGE OF POPLAR CLERK
BOX 137
POPLAR WI 54864

MR EDMOND SAFFORD
VILLAGE OF SUPERIOR CLERK
PO BOX 3065
SUPERIOR WI 54880

MS PEGGY STONE
TOWN OF SOLON SPRINGS CLERK
9902 E COUNTY RD A
SOLON SPRINGS WI 54873

MS PEARL SWANSTROM
TOWN OF LAKESIDE CLERK
9909 E HALKETT RD
POPLAR WI 54864

MS JOANNE THOMPSON
TOWN OF SUPERIOR CLERK
4917 S STATE RD 35
SUPERIOR WI 54880

MS DOLORES UKKOLA
TOWN OF MAPLE CLERK
3875 SOUTH COUNTY RD O
MAPLE WI 54854

MS SHELLY WAISANEN
TOWN OF GORDON CLERK
PO BOX 164
GORDON WI 54838

DEBRA WERMTER
TOWN OF HAWTHORNE CLERK
PO BOX 116
HAWTHORNE WI 54842

MS DORIS WESTER
TOWN OF BENNETT CLERK
8451 S COUNTY RD E
SOLON SPRINGS WI 54873

MS JANICE E WOODHULL
VILLAGE OF SOLON SPRINGS
CLERK
PO BOX 273
SOLON SPRINGS WI 54873

MR DANIEL E ZUCHOWSKI
TOWN OF SUMMIT CLERK
1703 E ZUCHOWSKI RD
FOXBORO WI 54836

Attachment 13

State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Division of Historic Preservation
816 State Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1488
☎ (608) 264-6500 • FAX (608) 264-6404

RECEIVED
AUG 27 1996
MADISON TRAILS OFFICE

August 23, 1996

Mr. Thomas Gilbert
Superintendent
Ice Age, North Country, and
Lewis and Clark National Trails
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53711

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO SHSW: #96-0943/BA/BT/DG
RE: North Country National Scenic Trail

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

The Division has reviewed your submittal for the above-referenced project as required for compliance with 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties, the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation governing the section 106 review process and the Programmatic Agreement as implemented by the National Park Service, the National Conference on State Historic Preservation Officers and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

In searching our records we have come up with some preliminary information on the history of Pattison State Park. This should be incorporated into your plan in choosing an alternative route for the North Country Trail.

This search should not be considered comprehensive. A more complete search will take more staff time that we can presently afford.

We look forward towards working with you on this project as it develops. If you have any questions regarding this matter please call me at (608) 264-6506.

Sincerely,
Richard A. Bernstein
Richard A. Bernstein
Historian, Compliance Section

Attachment 14

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RECEIVED
SEP 11 1996
MADISON TRAILS OFFICE

September 6, 1996

Mr. Thomas L. Gilbert
National Park Service
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53711

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

Re: North Country National Scenic Trail through northwest Wisconsin and adjoining Minnesota, Alternative 2, Carlton County, Minnesota
SHPO Number: 96-3500

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

There are three recorded inventory sites in the project area. None of these sites has been evaluated in order to determine National Register eligibility. These sites are:

21CL0005 Silver Creek Historic
21CL0007 Sliver Creek Overlook
CL-SVB-002 Pt. Douglas-Superior Military Road

Inventory sites in the general vicinity of the project also include those at Fond du Lac, and the Grand Portage of the St. Louis River. The latter is listed on the National Register.

Finally, we believe that any project areas that are within 1000 feet of water, on hilltops, or on glacial lake beaches have high potential of containing archaeological sites. Survey of these project areas is recommended.

For additional information on the inventory sites, contact our Inventory Coordinator, Homer Hruby, at 612-296-5434.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

DAG:dmb

cc: Homer Hruby

Attachment 15

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Green Bay ES Field Office
1015 Challenger Court
Green Bay, Wisconsin 54311-8331

October 2, 1996

RECEIVED
OCT 4 1996
MADISON TRAILS OFFICE

Memorandum

To: Field Director, Midwest Field Area, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska

From: Field Supervisor, ES Field Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, Green Bay, WI

Subject: Trail Route Planning - North Country National Scenic Trail

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has received your letter dated September 3, 1996, requesting information on potential project impacts to federally-listed species. Your letter also requested initiation of informal section 7 consultation, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. This project entails the planning for final trail routing of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST), in Bayfield, Burnett, and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin. Our comments follow.

Federal Threatened and Endangered Species

A review of the information in our files indicates the following federally-listed threatened or endangered species occur in the following counties:

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Classification	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat
threatened	bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	breeding
endangered	gray wolf	Canis lupus	northern forested areas
threatened	Fassett's locoweed	Oxytropis campestris var. chartacea	open sandy lakeshores

BURNETT COUNTY

Classification	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat
threatened	bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	breeding
endangered	gray wolf	Canis lupus	northern forested areas
endangered	Karner blue butterfly	Lycaeides melissa samuelis	prairie, oak savanna and jack pine areas w/wild lupine

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Classification	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat
threatened	bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	breeding
endangered	gray wolf	Canis lupus	northern forested areas
endangered	Kirtland's warbler	Dendroica kirtlandii	potential breeding in jack pine
endangered	piping plover	Charadrius melodus	sandy beaches; bare alluvial and dredge spoil islands

Based upon the information which you provided, and conversations with Ms. Jill Medland of your staff, we conclude that the piping plover, Kirtland's warbler, and Fassett's locoweed, will not be affected. However, a number of occurrences of the bald eagle and gray wolf are known from the vicinity of the project corridors being studied.

Both the bald eagle and the wolf are sensitive to disturbance near their breeding territories, and both species also tend to change the locations of nests or dens from year to year. It is difficult to predict the specific areas which may be sensitive to disturbance at this time, since the proposed trail construction is not likely to take place for several years. Therefore, we ask that you contact this office again, at least 12 months prior to actual construction of these trail segments. We will evaluate your specific plans at that time. As a guide for planning purposes, we suggest that you plan your trail routes such that they are wide enough to accommodate the avoidance of sensitive locations by at least one fourth (1/4) of a mile. This distance should be sufficient to avoid disturbance to either of these species, in the event that they are found to occur near your proposed trail route.

As planning proceeds on this project, and you require more specific information on exact locations of eagle nests, and wolf den and rendezvous areas, we suggest that you also contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources, in Madison, Wisconsin.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond. Questions pertaining to these comments can be directed to Mr. Joel Trick of my staff by calling 414-465-7440.

Janet M. Smith

cc: NPS, National Trails Office, Madison, WI Att: Bill Menke

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT IS THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL?

In March 1980 Federal legislation authorized the establishment of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) as a component of the National Trails System. It is one of only eight trails authorized by Congress to be National Scenic Trails. National Scenic Trails are long distance, non-motorized trails.

In many ways, the trail is similar in concept to the more widely known Appalachian Trail--both are NST's. In other ways, it is uniquely different as it crosses a more diverse geographic area. The North Country NST will extend from the vicinity of Crown Point, New York, to Lake Sakakawea State Park, on the Missouri River, in North Dakota, where it joins the route of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. As work on the trail has progressed, it appears that the final length will approach 4,200 miles, instead of the originally estimated 3,200 miles.

Currently, about 1,344 miles of the trail are in place and certified as meeting the standards of a NST. Another 600-800 miles are walkable but not yet certified. These additional miles include pending certifications, motorized snowmobile or ATV trails which cannot be certified, and other off-road opportunities.

EXACTLY WHAT IS THE CORRIDOR AND WHAT ARE ITS LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS?

The corridor was selected because it connected other recreation resources and provided for scenic trail passage. It is an opportunity area within which the North Country Trail Association and others will attempt to obtain trail passage. Passage may be obtained by various agreements, easements, deed restrictions, or outright purchase. These can be donated or purchased from willing sellers only. The corridor itself has no legal standing; it is not a recorded instrument. It simply defines the limits of the National Park Service's, Wisconsin's and Minnesota's Departments of Natural Resources, North Country Trail Association's, and the affected counties involvement with the project. The National Park Service has no authority to purchase lands or easements for the North Country Trail. The corridor was deliberately designed wide enough so that if one landowner is not interested in the project, perhaps his or her neighbor will be. There is no intention of acquiring the entire corridor--just a trailway that is approximately 50 - 1000 feet in width depending on circumstances and natural resource features. As stated previously, lands for the trail will be acquired only from willing sellers. Designation of a corridor carries no threat which would cause a landowner to change their lifestyle.

Designation of a corridor carries no threat which would cause a landowner to change their lifestyle.

WHY OR HOW WAS THE EXACT TRAILWAY SELECTED AND HOW WILL IT BE APPLIED?

As stated earlier, the corridor was selected to connect a number of parks, forests, recreation facilities, and public lands. The trailway itself was placed within the corridor to avoid wetlands, take advantage of outstanding scenery, and achieve specified design standards. When within private property it avoids farming practices and undue invasion of privacy. Instead, the trailway is normally located at the back

Landowners will be fully involved in determining exactly where the trail crosses

sides of farms (away from occupancy sites), along or through wooded areas, skirting the edges of wetlands, and along wooded fencerows. When determining the exact location of the trail route, every effort will be made to minimize this concern through taking advantage of natural screening. If a landowner agrees/desires to be part of the project, they will be fully involved in determining exactly where the trail crosses their land.

WHAT USES ARE ALLOWED ON THE TRAIL? HOW ARE UNDESIRABLE USES CONTROLLED?

The North Country Trail is built primarily for pleasure walking and hiking. However, in places other uses such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, and bicycling are appropriate and are allowed.

On all public lands, local managers determine the uses that will be allowed in accordance with their management objectives and the capability of the land to accommodate the various uses without damaging the natural resources. Both the National Park Service (NPS) and the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) have adopted policies encouraging local managers to prohibit bicycling except when the trail is: (1) specifically designed for wheeled vehicles, where the bikes would not damage part of the North Country Trail route, (3) where bicycles could be physically restricted to the designated section, and (4) where bicycle use would not adversely affect the recreational experience of hikers. These conditions generally are not found on the typical, single-track, forested and rural segments of the North Country Trail. In recent years, the National Park Service has refused to certify any portions of the trail that allowed bicycle or horseback riding except in those rare circumstances where specifications 1-4 (above) have been met.

Horseback riding is allowed on some segments of the trail. However, it its discouraged because of the extreme damage caused by horse use.

Where the trail crosses private lands, the types of uses are in accordance with the wishes of the land owners granting the trail easements. Understandably, the uses can not change from property to property, Therefore, the trail crossing private lands is segmented into units of 5-10 miles, or more, in length (from one major road to another or from one trailhead to another) and the allowable uses are based on the wishes of the more restrictive landowners. In northwest Wisconsin and adjoining Minnesota, because of the numbers of private properties and fences that the trail will have to cross, it is anticipated that the Environmental Assessment process will recommend that the trail be restricted to foot travel only.

Dirt bikes, snowmobiles, ATV's, and other motorized vehicles are not allowed on any National Scenic Trail.

WHAT LEVEL OF TRAIL USE CAN BE EXPECTED?

It is difficult to project the level of use for the North Country Trail through each County. Since the trail is still being developed, no statistics for levels of use, especially on private lands, are available at this time. Based on patterns of use on other long distance trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, the North Country Trail segments located within or near populated areas will receive more use than those in more remote areas. As additional trail is developed and the trail becomes better known, increased use can be expected. In the near term, it is doubtful that a landowner would even notice hikers on the trail unless they specifically watched the trail throughout the daylight hours.

HOW IS THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL MANAGED?

The North Country NST is a cooperative project of many public agencies and private organizations.

- National Park Service (Madison Trails Office):
  The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for overall administration of the North Country NST and has primary responsibility for planning the trail and interpreting the landscape through which it passes. NPS provides color brochures describing the trail and the signs to mark its location. Actual development and management of the trail, however, will be accomplished through many cooperating Federal, State, and local agencies and private trail organizations. When viewed in this manner, it can be seen that the North Country NST will become a collection of Federal, State, County, Township, and private trails.

- National Park Service (St. Croix National Scenic Riverway):
  This unit of the National Park System is responsible for 252 miles of the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers including their riparian areas. While primarily a water-based park, NPS also has responsibility for a variety of existing trails. The proposed North Country Trail route would be integrated into the park's trail system and they would assist in its development, interpretation, and management.

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:
  The two state agencies have responsibility for an integrated system of trails within their States and directly manage segments of the North Country Trail occurring on state owned lands. Currently, these include one State Park segment in each state and one State Forest segment in Wisconsin. Within the planning area, the only currently certified segment of Trail is the 4.2 miles managed by WiDNR-Forests in Brule River State forest. It is anticipated that the trail will also pass through Douglas County Wildlife Area, Pattison State Park, Nemadji State Forest, and Jay Cooke State Park.

- Bayfield and Douglas County Forestry Departments:

  County forestry lands are managed for a variety of uses including timber production, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities. Being the largest of landowners, it is anticipated that the bulk of the trail mileage, within the planning area, will be on County lands. Other than providing lands for the trail route and perhaps becoming the Local Managing Authority for segments of the trail located on County lands, it is anticipated that they will have little involvement.

- North Country Trail Association:
  The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) is the primary citizens organization formed to support efforts to develop and promote the North Country NST. The NCTA is a private, nonprofit corporation composed of individual members and affiliated organizations. It was formed in 1981 and incorporated in the State of Michigan on April 8, 1985. National headquarters are in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its purpose is to help acquire, build, maintain, promote, and protect the Trail. It does this primarily by organizing and coordinating private sector involvement in such efforts as fund raising and the recruiting, organizing, and training of volunteers to build and maintain the Trail. A local chapter (the Brule-St.Croix Chapter) has been organized to cover the area between the Chequamegon National Forest and the Minnesota State line.

- Local Municipalities:
  It is possible that governmental entities such as Townships or Cities could be the Local Managing Authority for portions of the trail should they desire. If the route of the North Country NST fulfills a trail network need for a municipality, they could work to complete that section of trail. At the very least, it is hoped that municipalities, civic groups, and individuals will volunteer to perform routine maintenance of a section of the trail through the "Adopt-A-Trail" program.

HOW IS THE TRAIL BUILT, WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE, AND HOW WILL IT BE MAINTAINED?

Trail construction generally consists of clearing a path through brush and woods, usually along the back sides of private properties. Vegetation is trimmed enough to keep it from touching the hiker or their pack (usually about four feet wide and eight feet high) with extra allowance for seasonal growth. Only brush and very small trees are cut. The trail winds between existing trees which are left in place. On flat ground, the path remains natural and ungraded but when traversing steeper slopes, some "benching" may be done, in order to provide a flat walking surface. Simple, native material, erosion control devices are used when the trail is going up or down hills. Puncheon board walks and simple bridges are used to cross seeps and water courses. Where necessary, devices, called stiles, for crossing fences are installed to avoid any damage to the fence or the possibility of leaving a gate open.

The Trail is marked with short vertical painted or plastic blazes placed on trees facing the hiker coming from either direction. Small blue and gold, 3 ½ inch North Country Trail emblems are placed where the trail crosses roads and at about ½ mile intervals along the trail. Other signs informing the public of what types of uses are appropriate and to remind the hiker to: observe good manners and protect private property....leave no rubbish....start no fires....stay on the trail...etc are provided.

Development and maintenance of the Trail is a cooperative effort of many public and private agencies. The trail will occasionally be visited by public land managers (in this case, NPS, WIDNR, MNDNR, and Douglas and Bayfield Counties). Volunteer members of the North Country Trail Association will perform the bulk of patrol and routine maintenance. They will clear obstructions, maintain signs, and make any necessary repairs to bridges, stiles, or erosion control devices. NCTA welcomes volunteers to "Adopt" a certain trail segment.

Law enforcement along the trail is provided by the County Sheriffs Department and others that have legal jurisdiction over the areas through which the trail passes.

WHAT FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR TRAIL USERS?

- Camping and Drinking Water:

  These are typically provided at intervals of about 10 miles along the Trail. In the planning area, the need for drinking water can be met by treating natural water sources such as lakes, streams, seeps, and springs and from developed recreation areas in Brule River State Forest, Lucius Woods County Park, Pattison State Park, and Jay Cooke State Park. Water is also available in the community of Solon Springs. Camping opportunities are plentiful. Dispersed camping is generally permitted within Brule River State Forest (permit needed), Nemadji State Forest, and on the two county forests. Developed camping opportunities are in place in Brule River State Forest, Lucius Woods County Park, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Pattison State Park, and Jay Cooke State Park.

- Parking Areas:

  Trail access parking areas have been provided along the Trail on many of the segments located on public land. Similar trailheads are included in the planning for new trail segments and may include toilets, drinking water and informational sign boards.

- Food and Supplies:

  Hikers who are out for more than a few days need to resupply their food and sometimes replace equipment. They also enjoy a break in the routine of eating trail food and sleeping on the ground. These long distance hiker needs can be met in the stores, restaurants, B and B's, etc. located in the communities along or near the trail. Within the planning area, these opportunities are limited--Solon Springs is the only community along the route.

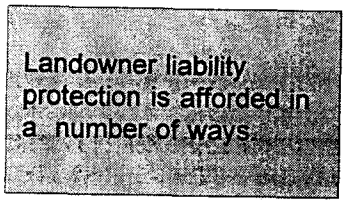
IS A PERMANENT RIGHT-OF-WAY BEING PRESERVED?

Yes and no. Yes because within the planning area, much of the proposed route is already on public property where it is permanently protected. No because while this is the ideal arrangement, the principal parties do not currently have the where-with-all to purchase the needed private property. The National Park Service has **no** authority to acquire lands for the North Country NST. Once the route is approved, it is possible that other entities may endeavor to purchase either fee simple or scenic easements to protect the trail permanently. Any purchases will be on a **WILLING SELLER/WILLING BUYER** basis only. Tax deductible easements can be donated to either the National Park Service or to other qualified entities but again would be on a **WILLING DONOR** basis only.

When permanent easements are not possible, "handshake" agreements are sometimes used on an interim basis.

ARE LANDOWNERS LEGALLY LIABLE FOR INJURIES TO TRAIL USERS?

If you sell or donate your land or an easement to the North Country Trail Association, the National Park Service, or one of the States or Counties, then the liability rests with them. If you do not do either of the above, but merely grant permission for the trail to cross your land, you will be protected by either Wisconsin's or Minnesota's very strong recreation liability laws--Wisconsin Act 418 and Minnesota Chapter 87.



Additional protection can be afforded to landowners who sign up with the National Park Service as a Volunteer In the Park (VIP). These individuals are then considered to be federal employees and would have the backing of the Federal Government regarding any potential tort action against them. In order to receive this protection, a landowner would have to execute a letter or other simple, written agreement allowing the trail for a certain period of time--probably 5 years or more.

IS HUNTING ALLOWED ALONG THE TRAIL?

In areas of public land such as National, State, and County Forests, State Game Areas, etc. hunters often use the trail for access to hunting areas. However, any hunting must be done in accordance with all applicable seasons and regulations of the State through which the trail is passing. Normally trail use is restricted to non-consumptive activities such as bird watching, nature photography, etc.

Granting permission for trail passage does not convey any hunting access or privileges. Land which is posted "closed" to hunting or fishing remains closed. This will be emphasized in signing and in literature.

The North Country Trail Association and the National Park Service will strive to educate hunters and hikers regarding trespass and other potential conflicts and dangers during hunting season through a variety of informational techniques. Hikers will be asked to avoid the trail during the time of heaviest hunting and to wear bright colors in the fall. Hunters will be reminded of standard firearm safety practices such as not shooting at a sound and not shooting toward or down a known travelway. Closure of the trail during the two weeks of gun deer season may be appropriate.

The likelihood of a hiker accidentally spoiling a landowners hunting chance is not great. The chance that a hiker would pass through the exact area, at the exact time a landowner was hunting is very remote.

WHAT ABOUT LITTERING, NOISE, TRESPASS, FIRES, AND VANDALISM?

These concerns can be grouped together under the general topic of "nuisance" impacts. Landowner concerns of this nature are consistent with concerns of landowners nationwide when a new trail is being developed. Adjoining landowners typically have fears about vandalism, littering, and access to their

property for more serious crimes.

Past experience and formal studies have shown the level of these fears bears little relation to the reality as the perceived impacts do not develop after the trail is constructed. In 1992 an extensive study, *The Impact of Rail Trails*, was conducted by the National Park Service in cooperation with Pennsylvania State University. This study showed that problems had not developed as feared and that the vast majority of landowners were more satisfied with the trail after it was in place than they were before it was in place. Additionally, adjoining landowners found that they personally made use of the trail.

Hikers and walkers fall within the segment of our population that tends to be very sensitive to environmental issues. They tend to have a strong land ethic and respect the rights of others. Prevention and education will be accomplished through signing, brochures and other literature, talks, etc. If littering does occur, it will be cleaned up every time the trail is maintained. Experience has shown that hikers leave very little litter and normally pack out what they pack in. Any concentrations of litter normally occur near roads and other access points and are, thus, easier to monitor and clean up as necessary.

While there can be no guarantee that hikers will not stray from the trail, it is unlikely that this will happen. Signs informing the public about what types of uses are appropriate and to remind the hiker to observe good manners and protect private property, leave no rubbish, start no fires, stay on the trail, camping status, etc., will be posted periodically--perhaps at every change in ownership if need be. Maintaining signs will be done as part of routine maintenance two to three times per year. Anyone deliberately leaving the trail would fall under the trespass laws of the States and would be subject to prosecution.

HOW LONG BEFORE I AM CONTACTED AND HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE THE TRAIL IS COMPLETED?

Practically speaking, it could be months or even years before you are contacted. This depends on a complex set of circumstances including: volunteer availability and interest, funding availability, and the priorities set by the various partners in this project as to which part of the three counties to first concentrate efforts. It is the intent to complete a several mile long, useable segment of trail in one location before moving on to another segment--rather than jumping all over the planning area from individual landowner to individual landowner.

If you are anxious to have your property become part of the trail, or there is a personal advantage (such as a conservation easement donation/tax reduction), please initiate the contact by calling or writing to one of the partners--preferably the North Country Trail Association.

All of the partners to this project recognize that the development of a trail of this magnitude will take a very long time. It will not be completed in the next year or the next several years. It will happen slowly as landowner agreements are reached and may take 10, 20, or even 50 years before the trail might reach 100 % completion. This is not unusual for a project of this size. Some of our National Parks, for example, have been established since the early 1900's but some parcels still remain to be acquired. In the meantime, where lands cannot be acquired, the trail will be established on a temporary basis--following along road right-of-ways and on other areas of less than permanent rights.

July 7, 1997

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NW WISCONSIN and Adjoining MINNESOTA REGION TRAIL CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES STUDY

North Country National Scenic Trail
Wisconsin/Minnesota

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared an Analysis of Alternatives and Environmental Assessment (EA) for development of the North Country National Scenic Trail in Bayfield and Douglas Counties, Wisconsin, and Carlton County, Minnesota. The proposed action is described as Alternative 2 (Preferred) in the environmental assessment.

The public review process has been completed. As a result of the public review, including comments by affected individual private property owners, modifications to Alternative 2 are outlined below:

1. A modification to the trail corridor and trail alignment occurred on map 10 of 15, the Amnicon Lake, WIS 7.5' Quadrangle. The modified route reduces the number of private property owners affected by the trail from four to one. The balance of the trail is on public land owned by Douglas County. The aforementioned private property owner was previously included in the corridor. The modification is a result of public comment, which brought to the attention of the National Park Service that beaver activity has modified the wetlands.

2. Two additional modifications in the preferred trail alignment within the corridor were made to accommodate landowner concerns.

3. Two temporary route alternatives were identified within the corridor because of landowner concerns. In these cases, the original alignment shown in the environmental assessment remains the preferred route.

Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470, as amended), as relevant to this level of trail planning, has been completed. Further compliance procedures will be necessary when segments of the trail have been laid out on the ground, marked and opened for public use. These additional compliance procedures will assess the effects of foot traffic and trail use on any archeological sites which may be present and, if necessary, could include field surveys for possible archeological resources.

Compliance with the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 USC 1531-1543) was completed in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on October 2, 1996. It was reported that several endangered and/or threatened species are present in the proposed counties. These include the piping plover, Kirtland's warbler, bald eagle, gray wolf, and

Fassett's locoweed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated "... we concluded that the piping plover, Kirtland's warbler, and Fassett's locoweed, will not be affected." The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also stated "Both the bald eagle and the wolf are sensitive to disturbance near their breeding territories, and both species also tend to change the locations of nests and dens from year to year." The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service suggested planning our route to be flexible and the corridor of opportunity to be ¼ mile wide. This has been accommodated. Footpath construction and use have the potential to cause some local disturbance to vegetation and wildlife, but usually this will be slight. In most instances, the trail alignment can be adjusted or relocated within the proposed corridor to reduce impacts.

The environmental assessment has been reviewed, resulting in the following conclusions:

1. The proposals, individually or cumulatively, do not constitute actions which normally require preparation of an environmental impact statement (40 CFR 1502.3; 516 DM 6, Appendix 7.3). The action is not a categorical exclusion under the contemplation of 40 CFR 1501.4 and 1508.4.

2. The proposed actions will not have a significant (40 CFR 1508.27b) effect on the human environment. Scheduled and routine monitoring and trail maintenance will serve to identify and mitigate any possible negative environmental impacts. There are no adverse impacts on public health, public safety, rare or endangered species, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. There are no irreversible commitments of lands or other natural resources. Implementation of the actions will not violate any Federal, State, or local law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that implementation of the proposal will not constitute a major Federal action which will significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and that an environmental impact statement is not required and will not be prepared.

William C. Schenk

Regional Director, Midwest Region

3/11/98

Date