

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
FY 2011 Recommendation  
Accomplishment Plan**

**Date: December 22, 2009**

**Project or Program Title: Protect (Acquire) Key Industrial Forest Land – Cass County**

**Manager’s Name: Joshua Stevenson**  
**Title: Cass County Land Commissioner**  
**Agency/organization: Cass County**  
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Funds Recommended (\$000s)	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	<b>\$594,000.00</b>	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00

**Appropriation Language**

**Abstract**

Project will protect and restore 400+- acres of forest and wetland wildlife habitats in central Minnesota (Cass County) through fee title acquisition of key industrial forest tracts. Title of lands acquired will be held by Cass County in Fee.

**Narrative**

Problem: Central Minnesota, especially the area in Cass County from Brainerd/Baxter to Walker, has and will continue to see some of the fastest human population growth in Minnesota. This growth will lead to increased recreational demands/use of this area, its natural resources and related public land base that needs to support this growth.

Opportunity: Key industrial forest tracts (i.e. in-holdings in large public land tracts, public access issues, etc.) are being considered or currently being offered for sale by a large industrial forest owner (Potlatch Corporation) in this area. Market conditions and a willingness by this industrial forest owner to sell at this time is an opportunity that should be addressed now since it is narrow and may close (properties sold) at any time. The strategy is to acquire land that currently provides access to County and State property. The land acquired has existing forest access roads that have been open to the public for years providing access to public lands. Although some of the public land has legal access, it would be inaccessible to the public and for management purposes without frozen ground conditions. This will result in 1,235 acres of lost public hunting and recreational opportunities. It will also increase the County and State resource management cost on the adjacent public land

significantly with bridge construction and frozen ground only management. The Cass County Forest Resource Management Plan directs the County to acquire lands of this nature whenever possible. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no net loss of acres of public land and local unit of government input on all purchases and land sales. This project meets the requirements of both plans and will require stakeholder input as part of the project. The local units of government with the private industrial lands to be purchased will be contacted for input before any acquisitions are made. Recent purchases of this nature have been supported by both the County and local units of government. The Cass County Board of Commissioners has a strong history of supporting land sales and acquisitions that have local unit of government support.

**Relationship to *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and other published resource management plans.**

The Cass County Forest Resource Management Plan directs the County to acquire lands of this nature whenever possible. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no net loss of acres of public land and local unit of government input on all purchases and sales of land. Priorities supported in these plans that are accomplished in this project include: access to inaccessible public land, consolidation of ownership, management for wildlife habitat, and landscape level management between multiple land management agencies.

**Project Design and Evaluation**

*Describe the scope of the project in appropriate measures (i.e. ,acreage numbers of lakes, miles of shoreline)*

<b>Project Scope</b>	<b>Wetlands and Wetland Systems</b>	<b>Prairies and Prairie Systems</b>	<b>Forests and Forest Systems</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife (Include Description in Footnote)</b>
<b>Restore</b>				
<b>Protect</b>			400+/- Acres Primarily Forested with some lake and stream frontage	
<b>Enhance</b>				

<b>Counties in which activities will take place</b>	<b>Wetlands and Wetland Systems</b>	<b>Prairies and Prairie Systems</b>	<b>Forests and Forest Systems</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>				
<b>Protect</b>			Cass County	
<b>Enhance</b>				

<b>Acres Within Each Ecological Section</b>	<b>Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area</b>	<b>Forest-Prairie Transition</b>	<b>Southeast Forest</b>	<b>Prairie Region</b>	<b>Northern Forest</b>
<b>Restore</b>					
<b>Protect</b>					400+/-
<b>Enhance</b>					

<b>Funding Per Ecological Section</b>	<b>Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area</b>	<b>Forest-Prairie Transition</b>	<b>Southeast Forest</b>	<b>Prairie Region</b>	<b>Northern Forest</b>
Restore					
Protect					100%
Enhance					

<b>Funding Resource Type</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
Restore				
Protect			100%	
Enhance				

<b>Acquisition and Tax Data</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability				
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability			400+/- Acres	
Permanent Easement				

### Budget

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 11</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 12</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 13</b>
Personnel			
Contracts			
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	\$594,000	No other money from the 2011 Recommendation	No other money from the 2011 Recommendation
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$594,000		

**Relationship to Current Budget**

The total value of this project is 30% of our annual budget. The entire amount received will be used for acquisition. The amount of money available to the Cass County Land Department for acquisition in the past is directly related to land sale revenue. Land Sales revenue has been down recently and funds to LCCMR are still outstanding pending the sale of land currently available over the counter. Our current staff will use this money to acquire lands in fee following existing procedures. Because our activity in land purchases and sales is currently low due to the slow economy, there will be little or no effect on current duties.

**Personnel**

*List the positions, name (if known) and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation*

Position	Name	Amount

***No positions will be funded with this money. The funds will be used for acquisition only.***

**Leverage**

*List the sources and amounts of leverage you have in hand or anticipate by fiscal year.*

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Non state						
In-kind/Volunteer	\$37,000	NA	\$37,000	NA	\$37,000	NA
TOTAL	\$37,000		\$37,000		\$37,000	

Leverage funds are in-kind used to support existing staff.

Leverage	State				Non-State			
	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore								
Protect								
Enhance								

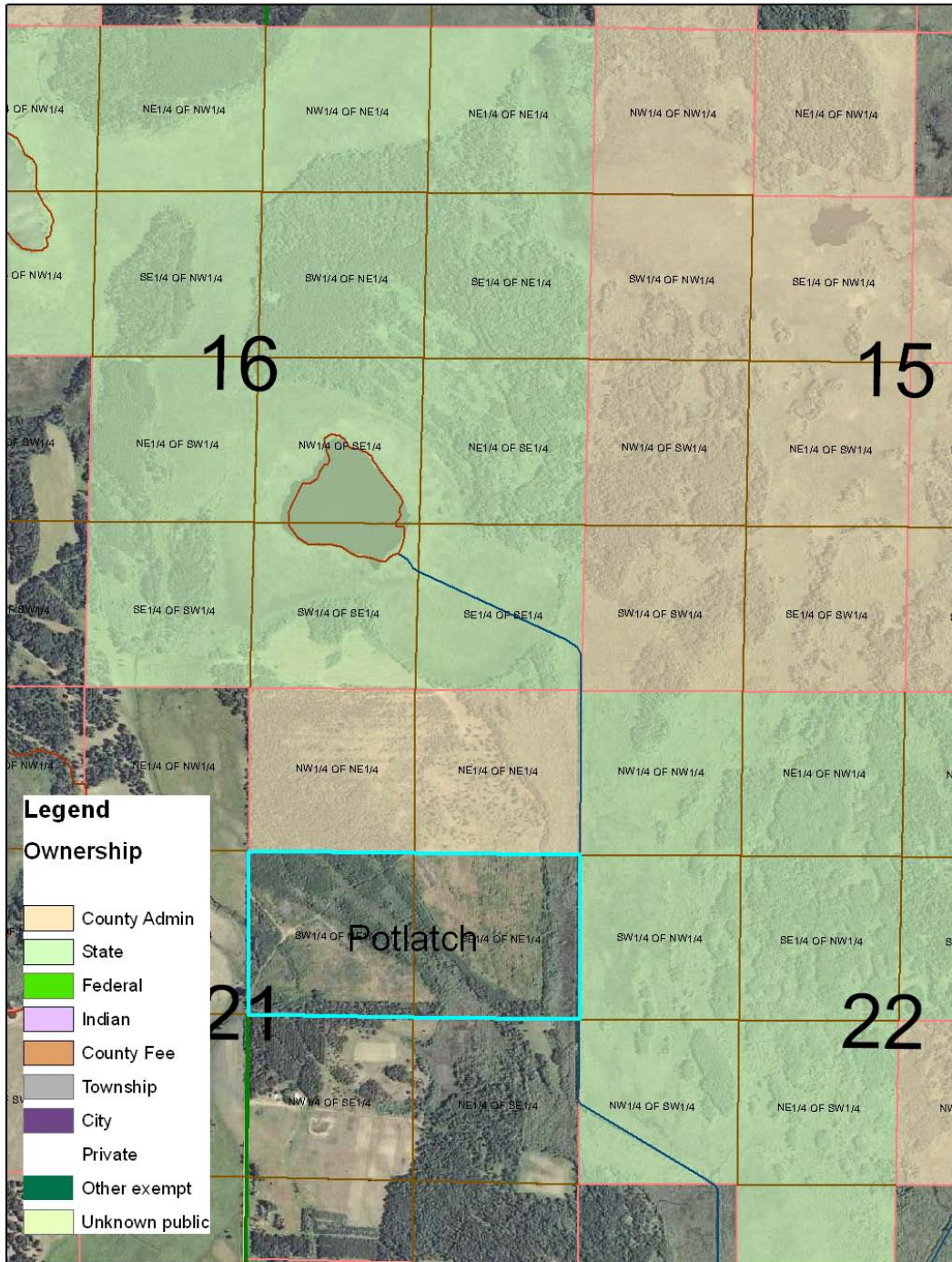
### Accomplishment Timeline

Milestones	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
<i>Meet with LUG's and prepare purchase agreements</i>	<i>Jan -Feb</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>\$37,000</i>
<i>Acquire Lands in Fee</i>	<i>March - June</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>\$594,000</i>
<i>Record Deeds</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>

### Maintenance and Sustainability

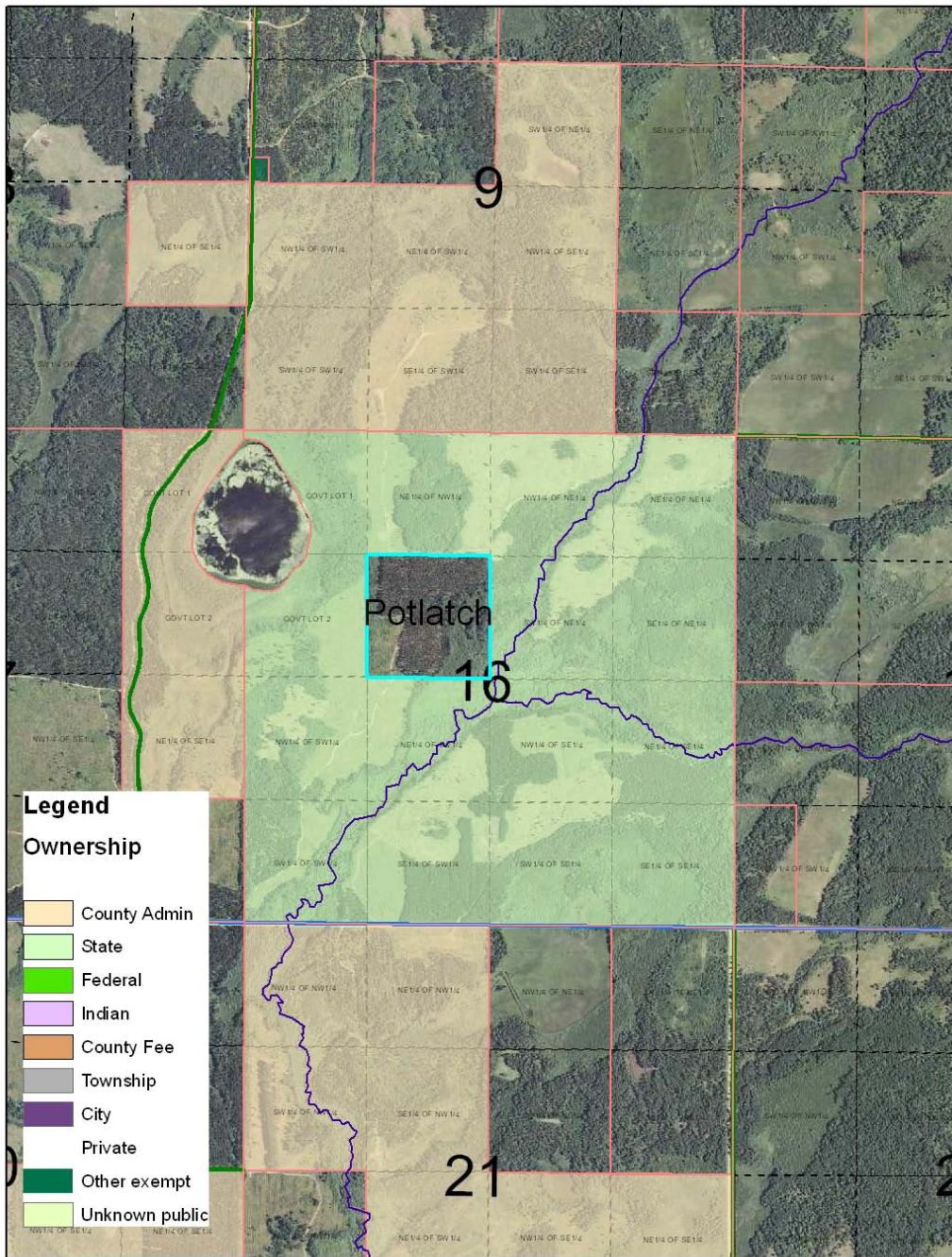
The Cass County Land Department manages all County Administered lands under our Forest Resource Management Plan. This management plan requires that operations are maintained from revenue generated from timber sales. Cass County has a long history of covering our operation costs with timber revenue. The lands acquired will be managed under this same plan. These lands are not eligible for PILT payments.

# Lands Acquired



**T. 134 N., R. 32 W., S. 21 (S1/2 of the NE quarter)      80 Acres Purchased**

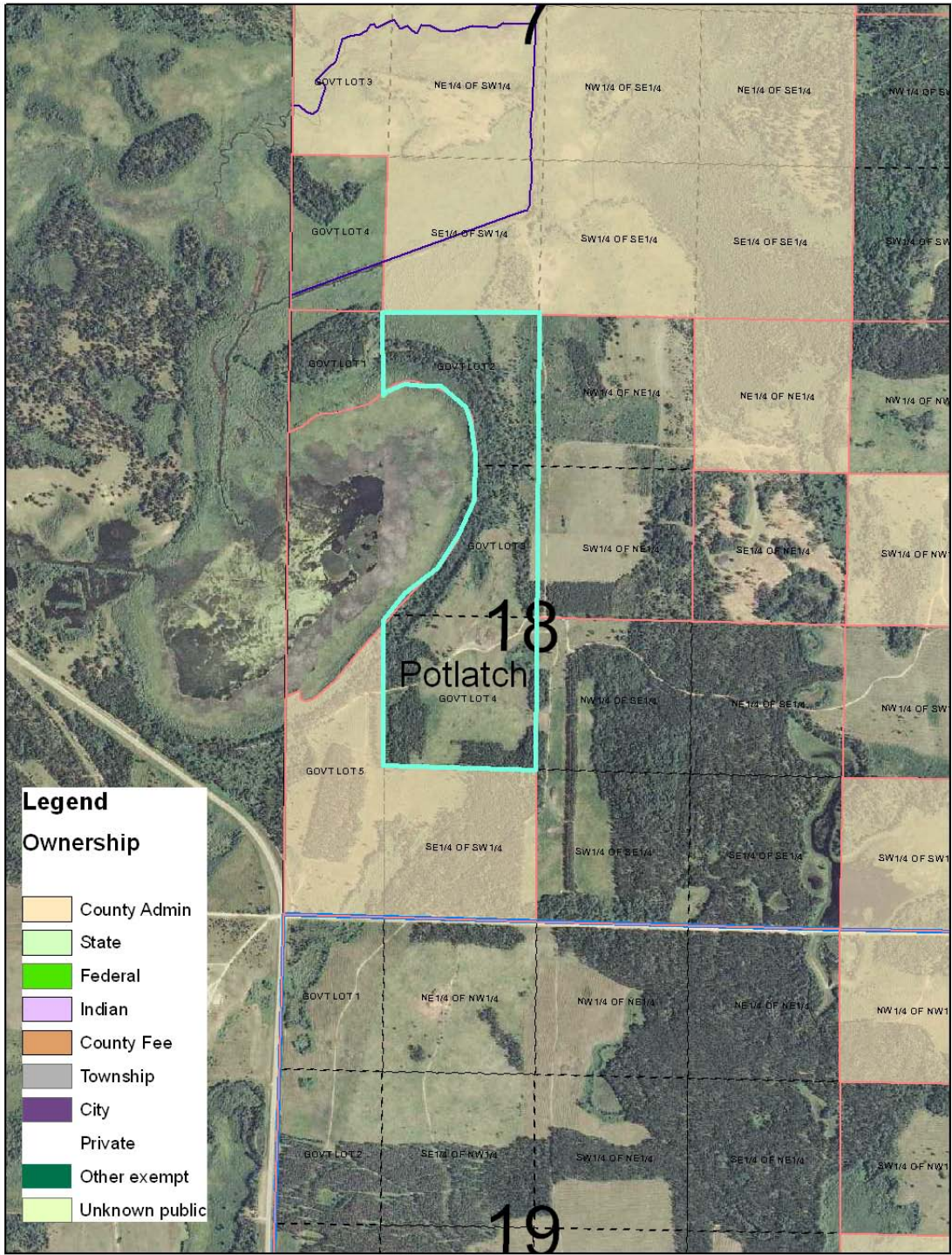
.5 mile of common boundary with Cass County land, .25 common boundary with State Forestry land.  
 This purchase will protect public and management access to 380 acres of other Cass County and State lands.



**T. 135 N., R. 32 W., S. 16 (SE of the NW quarter)**

**40 Acres Purchased**

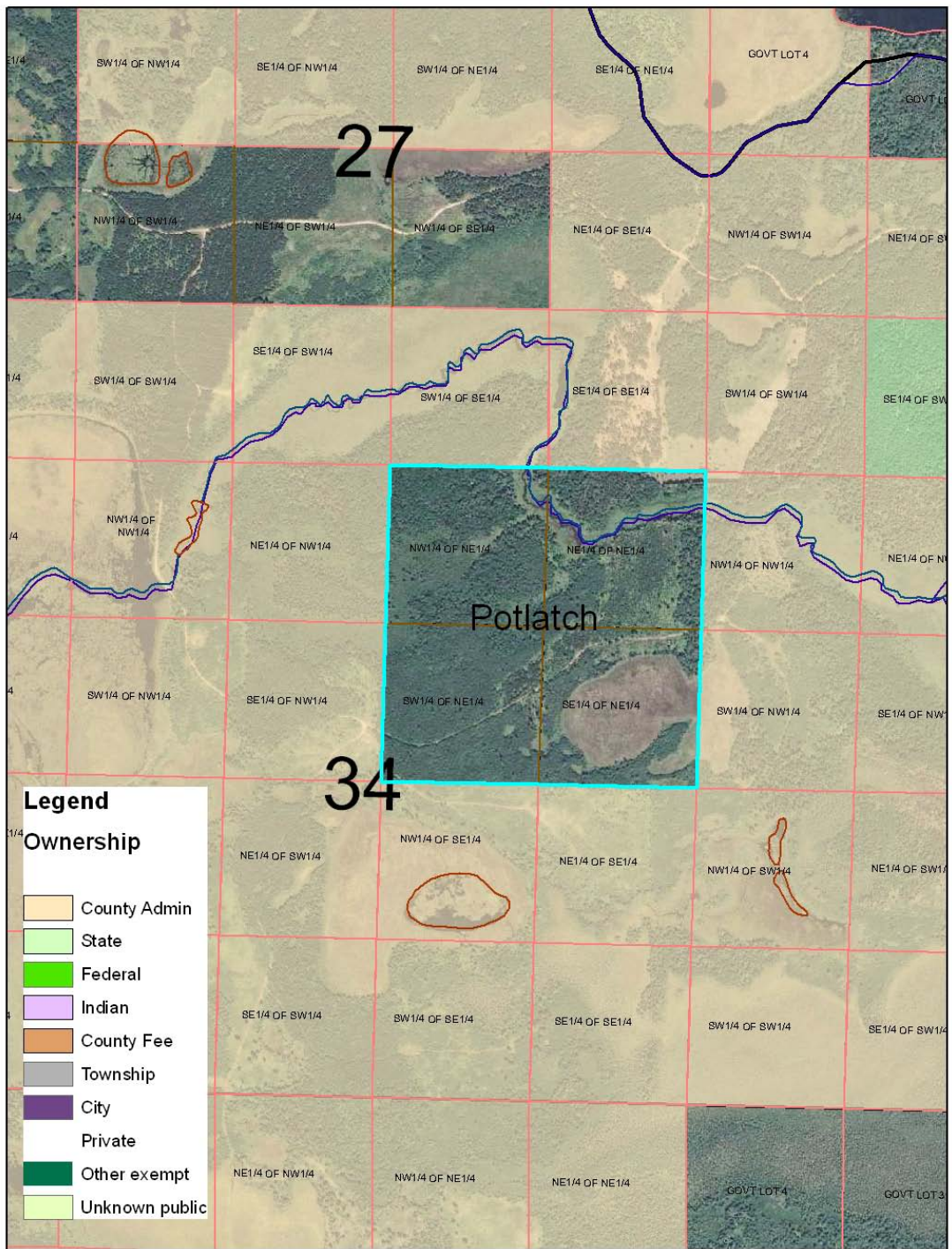
Totally surrounded by State Forestry lands (i.e. tract is situated in the middle of 600 acres of State Trust Fund land). Over .5 miles of road access easement will have to be granted if this tract goes private. Land exchange will be pursued with DNR Forestry to consolidate this State ownership and assist County land asset management needs somewhere else. Purchase will protect public and management access to 295 acres of State and County Land.



**T. 135 N., R. 32 W., S. 18 (E1/2 of the NW, NE of the SW) 120 Acres Purchased**

.75 miles of common boundary with Cass County land. Tract protects 3,000 feet of shoreline on Farnham Lake within the newly created Farnham Lake State Wildlife Management Area. Cooperative lease will be pursued with the Minnesota DNR for management of this tract as part of the Farnham Lake WMA. Purchase protects public and management access to 260 acres of exiting County Land.



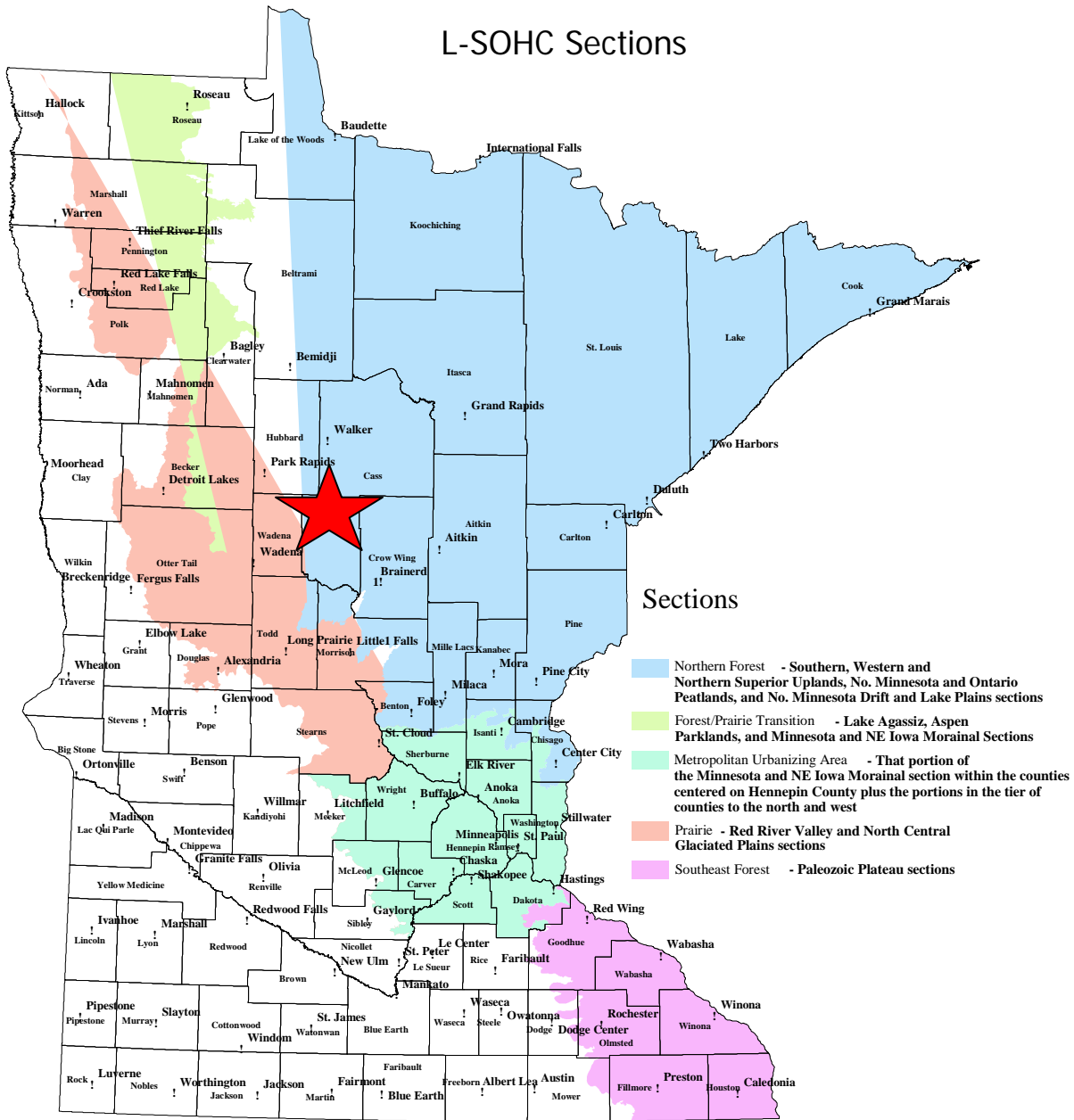


**T. 140 N., R. 27 W., S. 34 (NE quarter)**

**160 Acres Purchased**

Totally surrounded by Cass County land, 2.0 miles of common boundary, 1,500 feet of stream frontage on Daggett Brook, ¼ mile downstream of the Daggett Brook State WMA. Purchase protects public and management access to 300 acres of existing County Land.

# L-SOHC Sections



## Sections

- Northern Forest - Southern, Western and Northern Superior Uplands, No. Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands, and No. Minnesota Drift and Lake Plains sections
- Forest/Prairie Transition - Lake Agassiz, Aspen Parklands, and Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal Sections
- Metropolitan Urbanizing Area - That portion of the Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal section within the counties centered on Hennepin County plus the portions in the tier of counties to the north and west
- Prairie - Red River Valley and North Central Glaciated Plains sections
- Southeast Forest - Paleozoic Plateau sections