



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



RODNEY A. STOKES
DIRECTOR

May 21, 2012

TO: Rodney A. Stokes, Director

INFORMATION: Natural Resources Commission

Transaction: State Trail Acquisition
Ironwood to Bessemer Railroad Corridor and State Line Trail – Gogebic
County
Land Transaction Case #19970202

Purchase: 96.75 acres (7.4 linear miles) - \$625,522.00

Description: Gogebic County, Ironwood Township, T47N, R47W, Sections 13, 14, 21,
22, and 23, Gogebic County, Bessemer Township, T47N, R46W,
Sections 16, 17, and 18; Gogebic County, Bessemer Township, T47N,
R45N, Section 25: as more completely described in Exhibits A, B, and C
in the project file.

Seller(s): Wisconsin Central Ltd. (WC), Homewood, Illinois.
Keweenaw Land Association Ltd. (KLA), Ironwood, Michigan.
White Spruce Rentals, Inc. (WSR), Ironwood, Michigan

Authority: Act 451, Public Acts of 1994, as amended

Notice: This item will appear on the Department of Natural Resources
(Department) June 4, 2012, calendar, and is eligible for approval on
June 11, 2012.

Comments: Working collaboratively with the Gogebic Range Next Generation
Initiative (GRNGI), the segments of inactive railroad corridor now being
offered the Department have been stitched together from three separate
sellers, and serve as the core of the Initiative's "Strengthening Our Niche
Regional Trail Concept." The intent is to provide multi-use trails for
motorized and non-motorized users. GRNGI serves the communities of
Western Gogebic County, Michigan, and Eastern Iron County,
Wisconsin with the mission to retain and attract young people on the
Gogebic Range.

Beginning near the Wisconsin border on the Montreal River at Ironwood and extending eastward to Bessemer, the offered 7.44 linear miles of inactive Soo Line and C&NW railroad corridors include the following features:

- the Soo Line railroad bridge over the Montreal River and a 70-foot long easement over the bridge approach on the Wisconsin side will provide motorized and non-motorized trail connectivity between the states trail systems.
- a 1,251-foot long extension of the State Line Trail east of the City of Wakefield;
- three steel bridges, one of which is on the National Register of Historic Places;
- a 3.34 acre parcel of adjacent land that the corridor purchase will render inaccessible to the owner (KLA) for timber management. The owner has agreed to remove the parcel from the Commercial Forest Program prior to conveying the land to the State.

Also offered is a 0.7 acre parcel with a garage the seller has agreed to remove prior to conveying the land to the State. This parcel is next to the old railroad depot property acquired by the City of Ironwood. The City is the recipient of a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to develop the property as a downtown park and trailhead. The offered parcel will allow the trail to connect to the future city park. Coupled with other downtown enhancement projects and streetscape improvements, the proposed City of Ironwood Depot Recreation Park and Trailhead is being locally touted as the future Western Upper Peninsula Recreation Gateway, connecting Ironwood to Wisconsin and neighboring Michigan communities through a growing multi-state regional trail system.

When completed, the trail between Ironwood and Bessemer, and the State Line Trail, will provide additional recreational opportunities in the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, as well as support to the local economy.

- Recommendation:
- 1) That the acquisition be approved, with payment to be made from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, State Trailways Acquisition Initiative, as contained in Act 59, Public Acts of 2007, and in Act 278, Public Acts of 2008.
 - 2) That the property be dedicated for public use and administered by the Parks and Recreation Division as part of the rail trail system.
 - 3) That the lands described above be acquired for use as a Michigan Trailway and designated as such when the legislated requirements are met.

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

William O'Neill, Acting Chief
Forest Resources Division

James L. Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

Mark H. Hoffman
Chief Administrative Officer

I approve the staff recommendations

Rodney A. Stokes
Director

Date Approved

-  Land Offered to DNR from Wisconsin Central
(46.08 acres, 3.60 miles -- \$282,280.00)
-  Land Offered to DNR from KLA
(49.97 acres, 3.97 miles -- \$324,855.00)
-  Land Offered to DNR from White Spruce Rentals, Inc.
(0.70 acres, 524.59 feet -- \$18,387.00)
-  City of Ironwood Depot Recreation Park & Trailhead
-  City of Ironwood Trail Connector
-  Proposed City of Bessemer Ethnic Commons Park
-  State Line Trail Route

STATE TRAIL ACQUISITION

Ironwood to Bessemer Railroad Corridor and State Line Trail -- Gogebic County

Land Transaction Case #19970202 (Bessemer and Ironwood Townships)

