



Douglas La Follette, *Secretary of State*
Dawn Marie Sass, *State Treasurer*
J.B. Van Hollen, *Attorney General*
Tia Nelson, *Executive Secretary*

125 S. Webster Street
Room 200
PO Box 8943
Madison, WI 53708-8943

608 266-1370 INFORMATION
608 266-0034 LOANS
608 267-2787 FAX
bcpl.state.wi.us

Managing Wisconsin's trust assets for public education.

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CONTACT: Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary (608) 266-8369

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC LANDS APPROVES LAND SALES TO DNR
AND LOANS TO SCHOOLS AND MUNICIPALITIES**

MADISON – The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands approved the sale of 361 acres of Trust Lands to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and also approved \$4.5 million in loans to five municipalities and school districts today at its board meeting.

The agency's land bank authority, granted unanimously during the 2006 legislative session, enhances BCPL's ability to support sustainable forestry, reduce forest fragmentation, permanently protect unique natural areas and improve public access. The sale of these lands to the DNR will ensure the preservation of unique natural area qualities located within the Trust Land parcels. Using the proceeds from these sales, BCPL will purchase additional productive timberland to add to its portfolio.

Since BCPL's inception of the Land Bank Program in 2006, the agency has sold nearly 6,000 acres of land poorly suited for timber production or otherwise located within the boundaries of another government agency. In addition, just over 3,725 acres have been purchased to help consolidate Trust Lands, reduce forest fragmentation and increase productive timberlands.

"The Board's ability to sell our Trust Lands with unique natural area qualities to the DNR is vital in preserving them for future generations to enjoy," said Board Chair Secretary of State Douglas La Follette. "Improving efficiencies in our timber management program is also a benefit to the trust assets that the BCPL manages."

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands also administers the State Trust Fund Loan Program, which provides financing to school districts and municipalities for public purpose projects. In the last 12 months, including actions approved today, the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands has approved 205 loans totaling \$199.4 million. That's a significant increase over the number of loans authorized in fiscal year 2007 (113 loans totaling just over \$72 million).

"The Boards' commitment to support Wisconsin's school districts and municipalities by providing a funding source for much needed public projects is important during these challenging financial times," said State Treasurer Dawn Marie Sass.

Over the past five years, Wisconsin citizens have benefited from over \$600 million in Trust Fund loans to support Wisconsin's public infrastructure. The loans can be made to municipalities and school districts for any public purpose.

"The Board of Commissioner's of Public Lands is proud to support public safety, community and school projects that are the backbone of our communities," said Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen.

Created in 1848 by the Wisconsin Constitution, the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands was established to accept federal land grants and to manage trust funds for the benefit of public education in Wisconsin. The majority of Trust Fund assets are held in the Common School Fund, from which most State Trust Fund loans are issued. "Our cost of operations is very low so more than 95% of the interest collected on Trust Fund Loans is distributed as aid to the Common School Fund's beneficiaries, K-12 public school libraries. This aid is critical to many students and schools. For many schools, this is their only source of library aid. That's why we like to think of ourselves as the state-wide lender that pays local dividends," said Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary of the Board.

A complete list of Wisconsin municipal and school projects funded by today's Board action can be found here:

<http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/docview.asp?docid=15948&locid=145>.

The agency's biennial report can be found here: <http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/docview.asp?docid=15317&locid=145>.

A list of loans approved in the last twelve months can be found here: <http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/docview.asp?docid=15949&locid=145>.

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