

S-61 Washburn Co RR Grade Acq

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
dnr.wi.gov

Motorized Recreation Grant Application

For: (choose all that apply)

Form 8700-159 (R 02/2024)

Page 1 of 5

☐ ATV/UTV Trail Aid

☒ Snowmobile Trail Aid

Due Date: April 15

Notice: Completion of this form is required under Wisconsin Statutes 23.09(26) and 23.33. Failure to complete this form will result in denial of financial assistance. Personally identifiable information found on this form is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may provide this information to requesters as required by Wisconsin's Public Records law {ss. 19.31 – 19.39, Wis. Stats.}.

Instructions: Applications may combine more than one source of funds. They may be submitted for consideration of traditional ATV, UTV, Snowmobile and Motorized Stewardship funding. Submit one copy of all forms and attachments. See Page 2 for necessary attachments. Send applications to your [Community Services Specialist](#).

DNR Use Only	
Category	Number

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant / Organization Name			Check Recipient: Individual other than authorized individual to act on behalf of the applicant. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Select if the same as applicant.		
Washburn County Forestry					
Individual Authorized to Act on Behalf of Applicant per Resolution			Check Recipient Name (Name to Appear on Check)		
Brandon Shutt			Brandon Shutt		
Title			Title		
Assistant Recreation Administrator			Assistant Recreation Administrator		
Address			Address		
1760 Roundhouse Road			1760 Roundhouse Road		
City	State	ZIP Code	City	State	ZIP Code
Spooner	WI	54801	Spooner	WI	54801
Telephone Number		Email Address			
(715) 635-4490		bshutt@co.washburn.wi.us			

Section 2: Project Information Required for all Projects

Project Title					Current Funded Miles	New Miles (if applicable)
Shell Lake Railroad Grade Acquisition					116.4	
County	Township	Range	Section	1/4 1/4	GPS Coordinates:	
Washburn	N	<input type="radio"/> E <input type="radio"/> W		1/4	Lat. _____ Long. _____	

Project Description Summary

The Union Pacific Railroad has offered Washburn County the opportunity to acquire an abandoned railroad grade running from Spooner, south to the Washburn/Barron County line. On the Barron County side, an ATV/Snowmobile has been developed. On the Washburn side, an ATV trail is developed on the north half of the grade (funded trail without legal ownership. This was based on federal code prior to a supreme court ruling). This project consists of an approximate 5-mile corridor running south of Shell Lake to the Barron County line. The corridor is 100 feet wide and includes approximately 60.3 acres. We have secured a certified appraisal for the property and will be negotiating from that basis.

In order to split up the appraisal and acquisition costs, Washburn County will apply for acquisition of the northern portion in 2026. We will also be applying for development funds in 2026 as well.

The full project estimate is ~~\$377,777~~, which we are splitting 50% with ATV.

\$311,777

☒ I certify that all maintenance land use agreements are on file.

Estimated Cost

Maintenance	Acquisition	Insurance	Development	Bridge Rehab.	Trail Rehab.	Total Estimated Cost
	\$155,689.00					\$155,689.00
Leave Blank – DNR Use Only						
	\$159,888					\$155,888

Applicant Certification

Printed Name of Authorized Official	Official's Title
Brandon Shutt	Assistant Recreation Administrator

As the applicant's authorized official, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true and correct.

Brandon Shutt

Signature of Authorized Official

4/1/2025

Date Prepared

- For development projects, contingency and indirect costs are **not** eligible expenses.
- For acquisition projects, complete the Acquisition Project Cost Estimate Section of this form.



WASHBURN COUNTY

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

1760 Roundhouse Road • Spooner, WI 54870
(715) 635-4490 • Fax (715) 388-7947

SHELL LAKE RAILROAD GRADE ACQUISITION - UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources ATV & Snowmobile Grant Programs

BACKGROUND

The Chicago & Northwestern abandoned the rail line from Spooner to Hudson in 1982. A majority of the railroad parcel(s), in Washburn County, remained dormant since then and most of the area is listed under Washburn County tax records as "right-of-way". Prior to 2014, there were legal assumptions that abandoned railroad grades were federally designated as public transportation highways and as such, Washburn County took a risk and developed the area from Spooner to Shell Lake as an ATV trail. This section of abandoned railroad had served as snowmobile trail for decades prior.

In 2014, court rulings called the issue into question, putting ownership of the northern section into question. No issues of rights to use the grade have arisen. Currently, the ATV trail designation ends in the City of Shell Lake and Snowmobile designation continues south for an additional mile.

Washburn County has identified the benefit of developing recreational trails on the remainder of the grade as well as the need to acquire the parcels if they were to come up for sale.

CURRENT STATUS

A private landowner adjacent to the abandoned grade made a request to purchase several small parcels. This triggered a first right of refusal process that we were not aware existed. Once an offer was made, WisDOT was contacted for a right of refusal, then WDNR and finally Washburn County. We made a claim on the right of refusal and began working with Union Pacific to purchase all of the remaining grade parcels that would be available.

We have split this project into 2 phases. Phase one includes grade parcels running south from Shell Lake to the Barron County line at Barronett. Phase 2 will be Shell Lake north to Spooner. Phase one is approximately 5 linear miles, 100 feet wide and comprises roughly 60.3 acres. The City of Shell Lake owns all of the grade within the city limits and has committed to us a right to use that corridor. The Town of Barronett owns approximately ¼ mile south of the city limits and has also agreed to allow us to use their portion for recreational trail purposes.

There are 2 small private ownerships that were acquired in the mid 1980's. We plan on re-routing the trail to an adjacent town road for approximately ¼ mile to bypass those owners.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Union Pacific handles land sales through a process of an offer to purchase, followed by their review of comparable values to determine pricing. We contracted with Solum Appraisals, who has conducted numerous rail grade evaluations, and he established a value of \$295,000. We are applying for acquisition costs only at this time and will pursue development grants at a later date. The appraisal cost is \$13,277. Union Pacific is requiring title insurance and we are estimating \$2500. We also included miscellaneous closing costs of \$1000, which includes deed work, legal fees and recording. The total grant application is **\$311,777**

Phase 1 of this project will allow us to permanently connect a new ATV trail from Shell Lake to trails in Barron County as well as extend the snowmobile trail along the grade rather than across private parcels to the east. The land use agreements to the east have been uncertain recently and routing the trail on this grade gives us a permanent connection.

This project also provides for a permanent connection to the Shell Lake ATV campground that has been funded with ATV monies in the past. Phase 2 of this project will be a similar cost and connect north to the south limits of the City of Spooner and the Wild River Trail.

Due to the extensive length of this project, the legal description and GPS coordinate boxes on the application are left blank. Maps of the project segments are instead attached for reference.

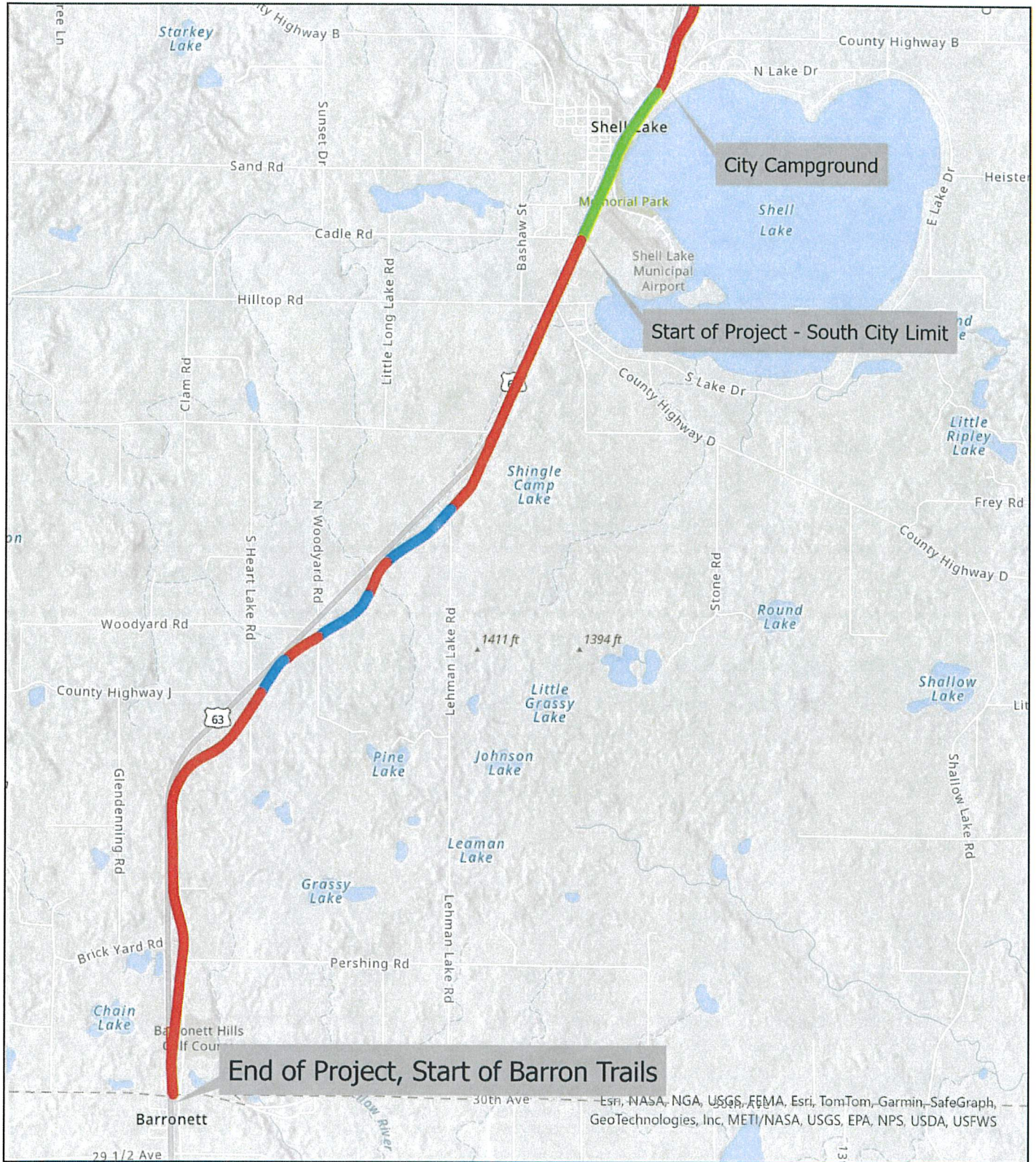
We appreciate your consideration of this project.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Peterson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

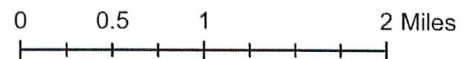
Mike Peterson
Washburn County Forest Administrator

Shell Lake Railgrade - Phase I of Acquisition Project



Shell Lake Grade

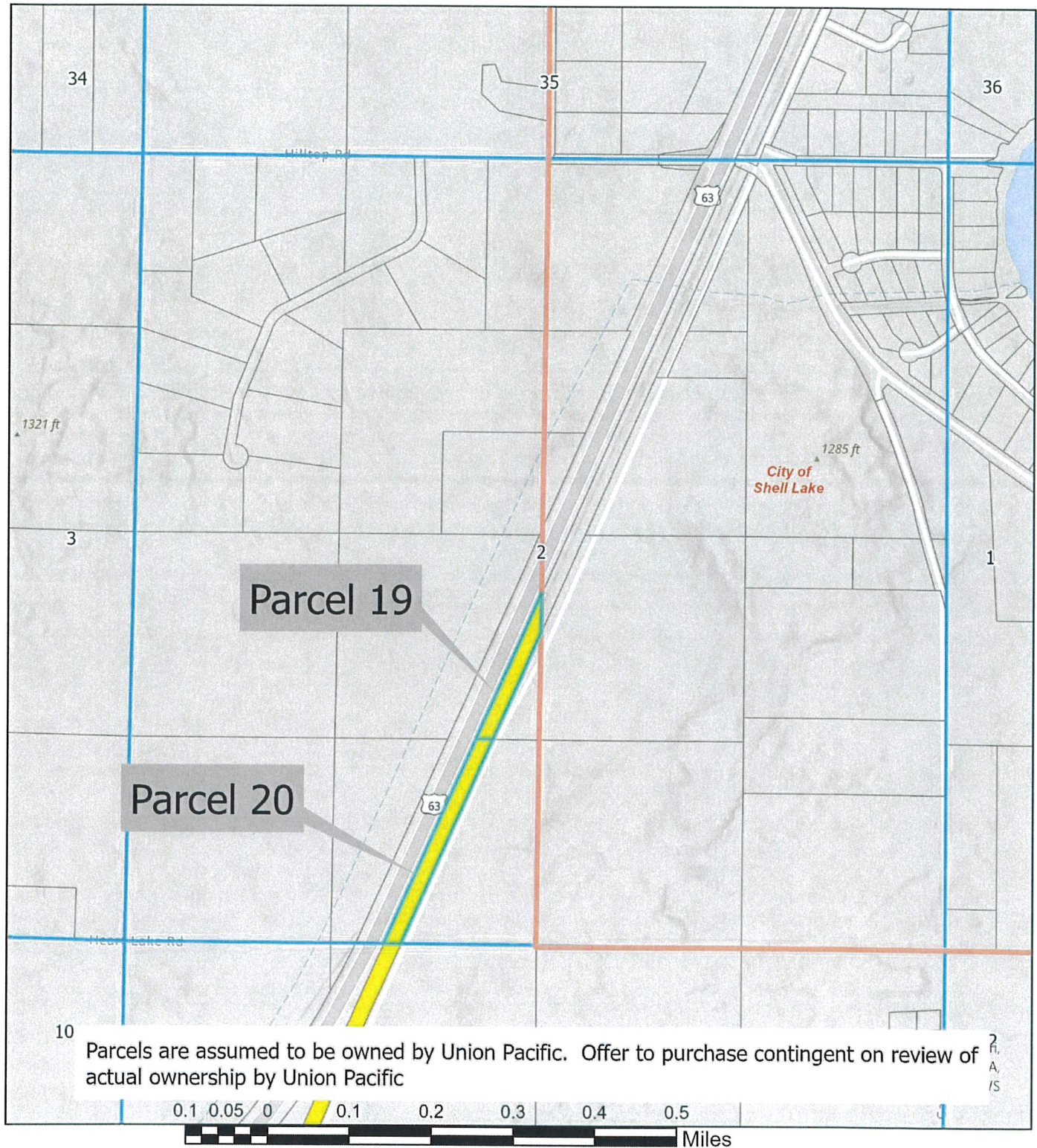
- Owned by City of Shell Lake
- Sold in 1980's
- Union Pacific



Parcel 19 - Approximately 2.03 Acres lying in the NESW

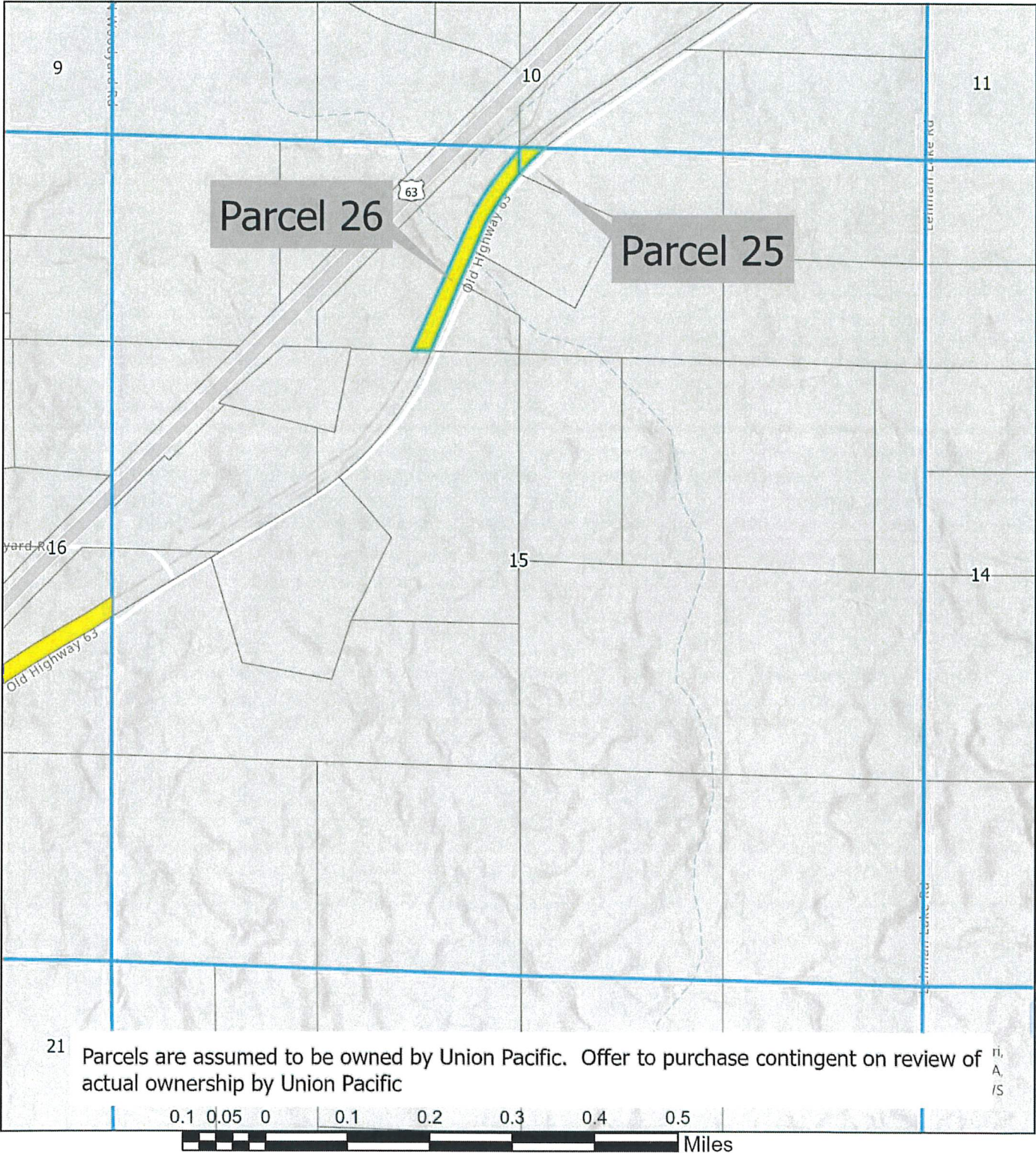
Parcel 20 - Approximately 3.30 Acres lying in the SESW

Section 2 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



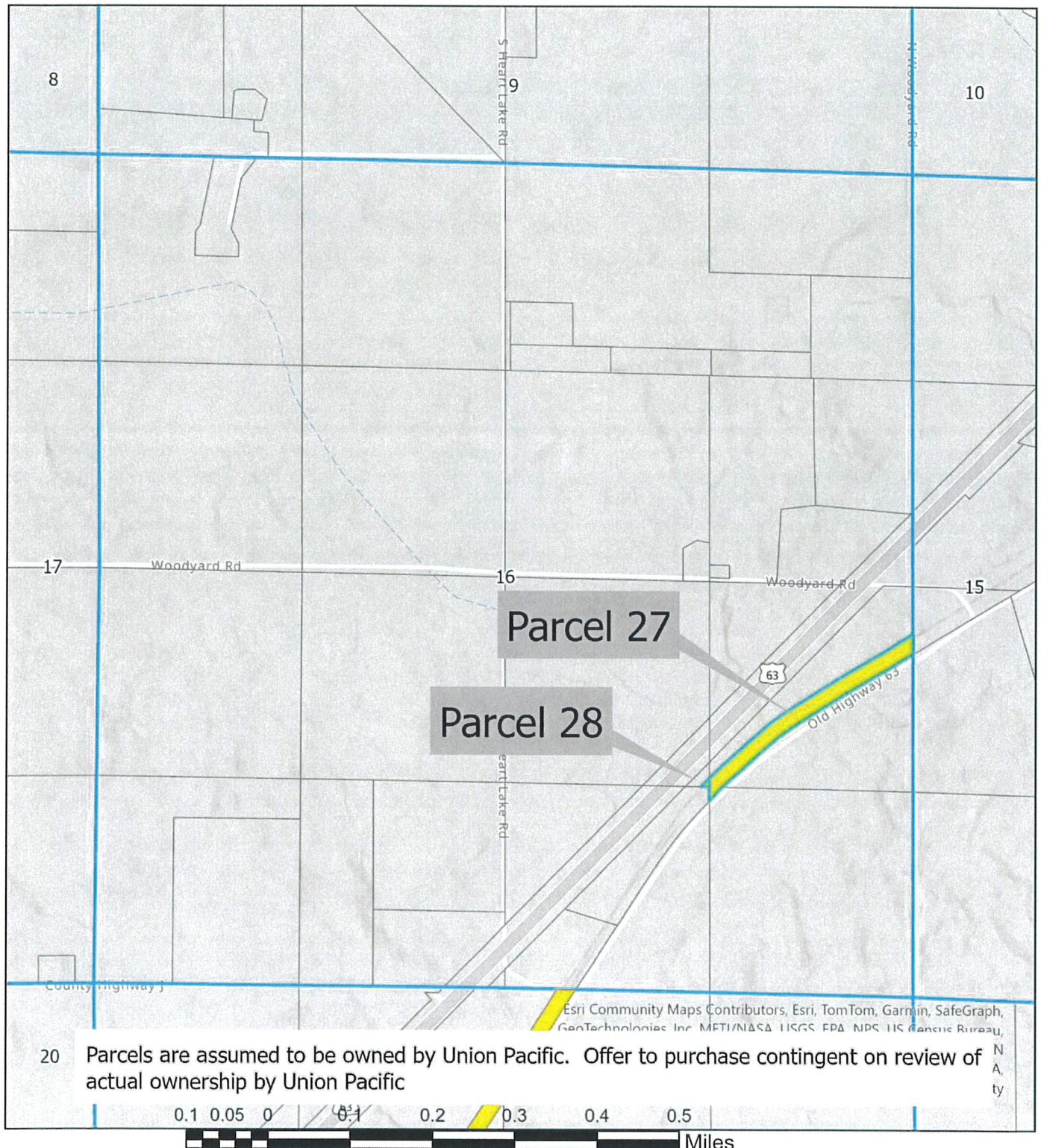
Parcel 25 - Approximately 0.29 Acres lying in the NWNE
Parcel 26 - Approximately 3.19 Acres lying in the NENW

Section 15 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



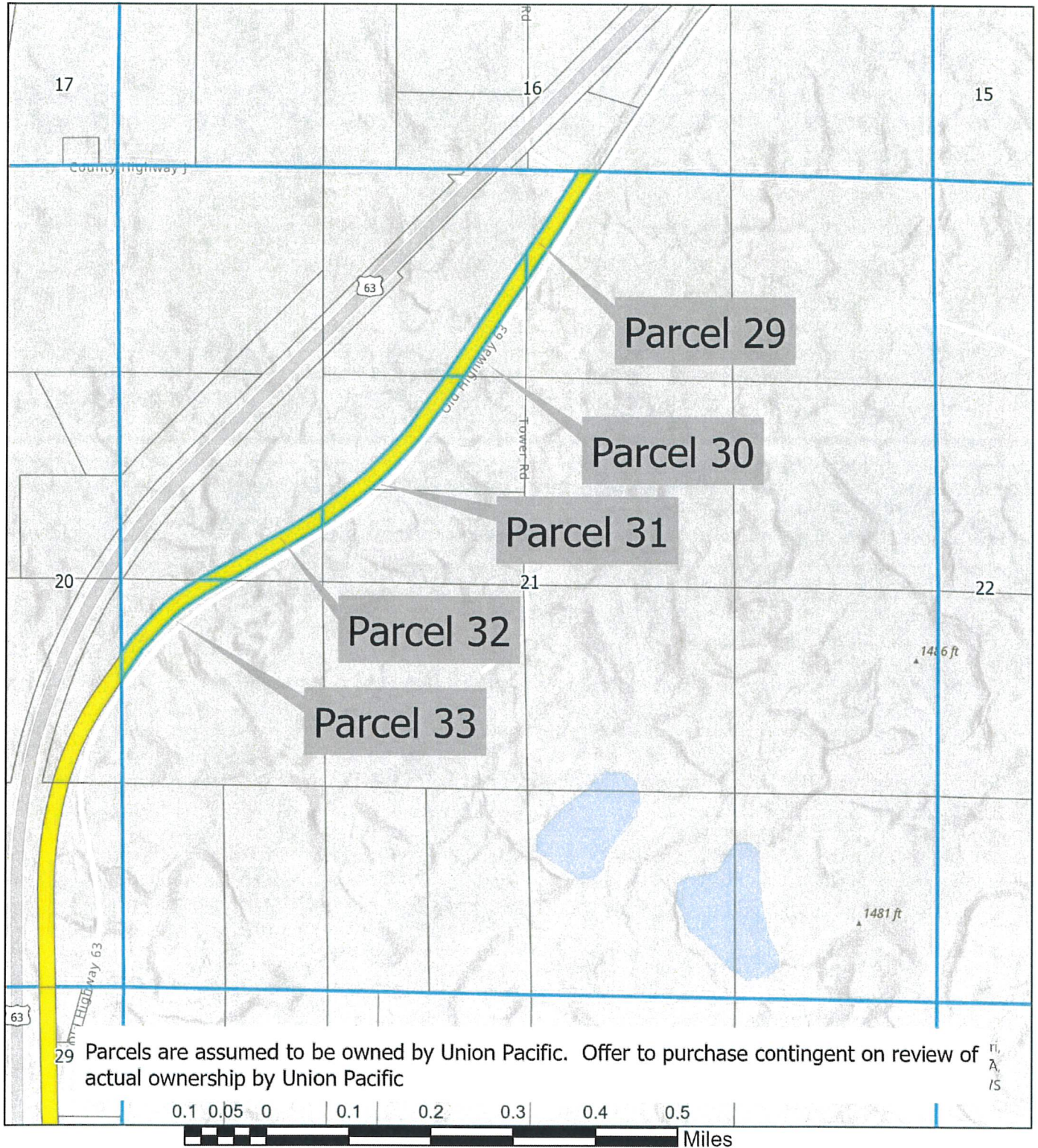
Parcel 27 - Approximately 3.84 Acres lying in the NESE
Parcel 28 - Approximately 0.03 Acres lying in the NWSE

Section 16 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



Parcel 29 - Approximately 1.67 Acres lying in the NWNE
Parcel 30 - Approximately 1.93 Acres lying in the NENW
Parcel 31 - Approximately 2.87 Acres lying in the SENW
Parcel 32 - Approximately 1.85 Acres lying in the SWNW
Parcel 33 - Approximately 1.89 Acres lying in the NWSW

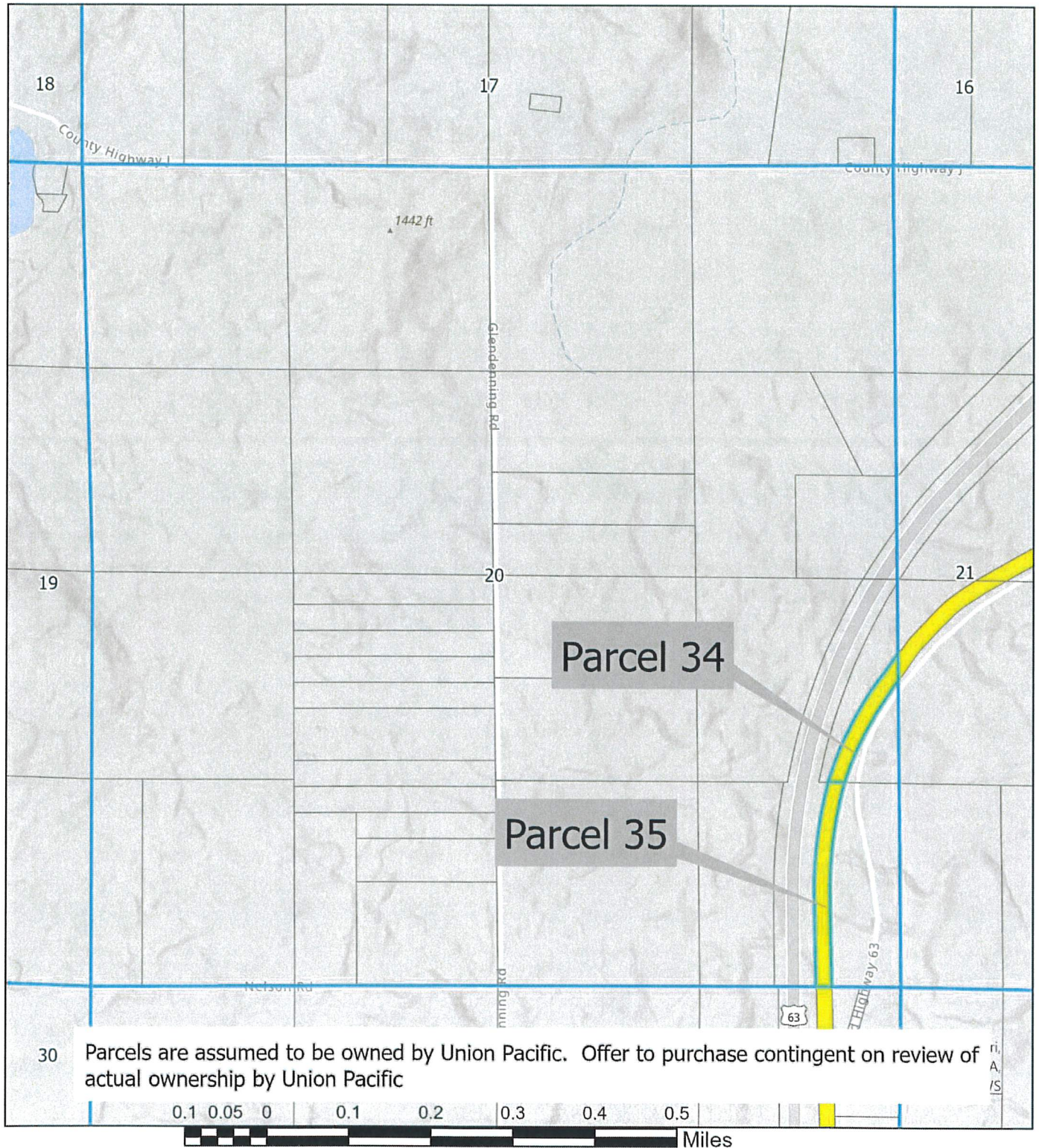
Section 21 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



Parcel 34 - Approximately 1.99 Acres lying in the NESE

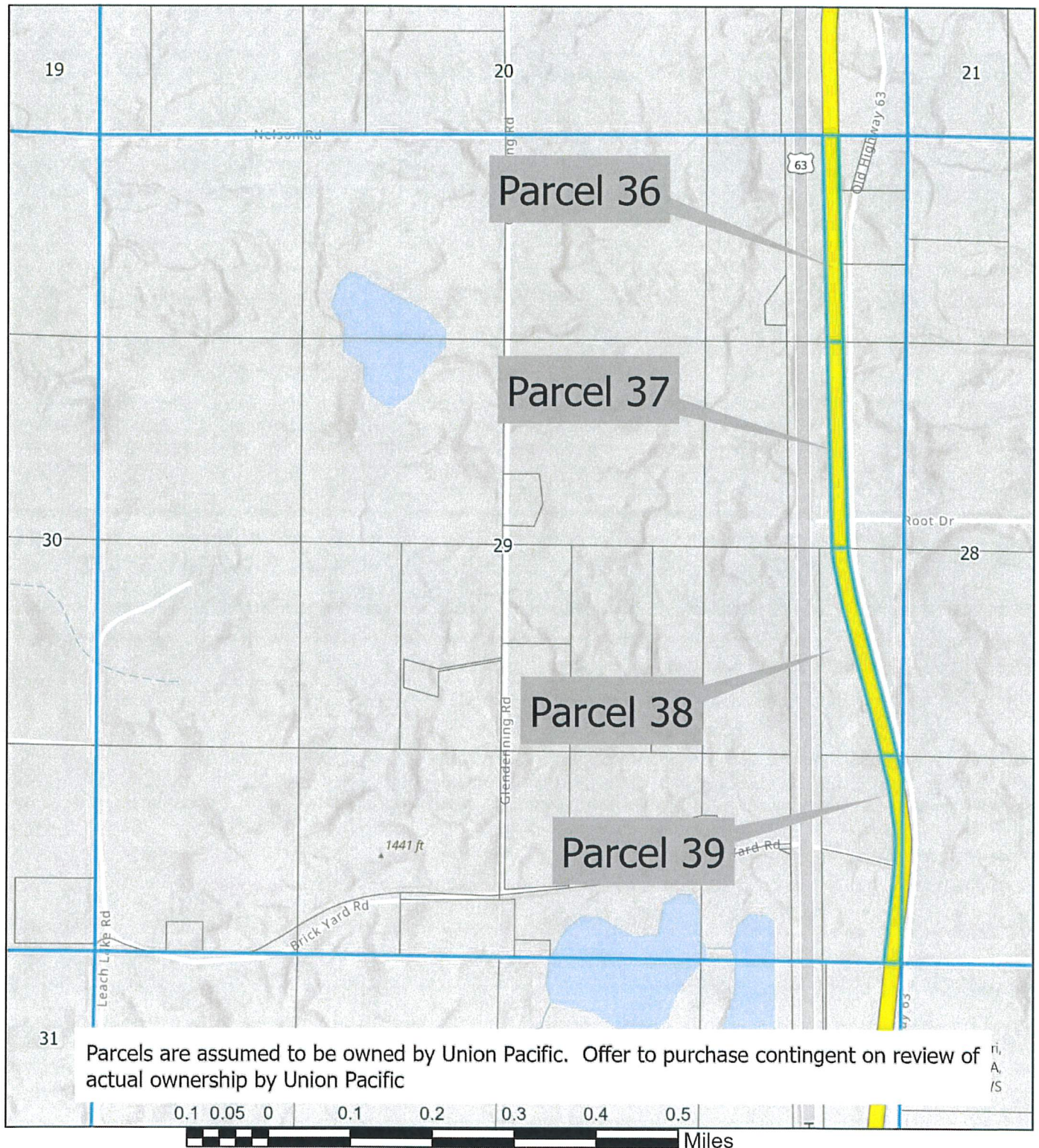
Parcel 35 - Approximately 3.02 Acres lying in the SESE

Section 20 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



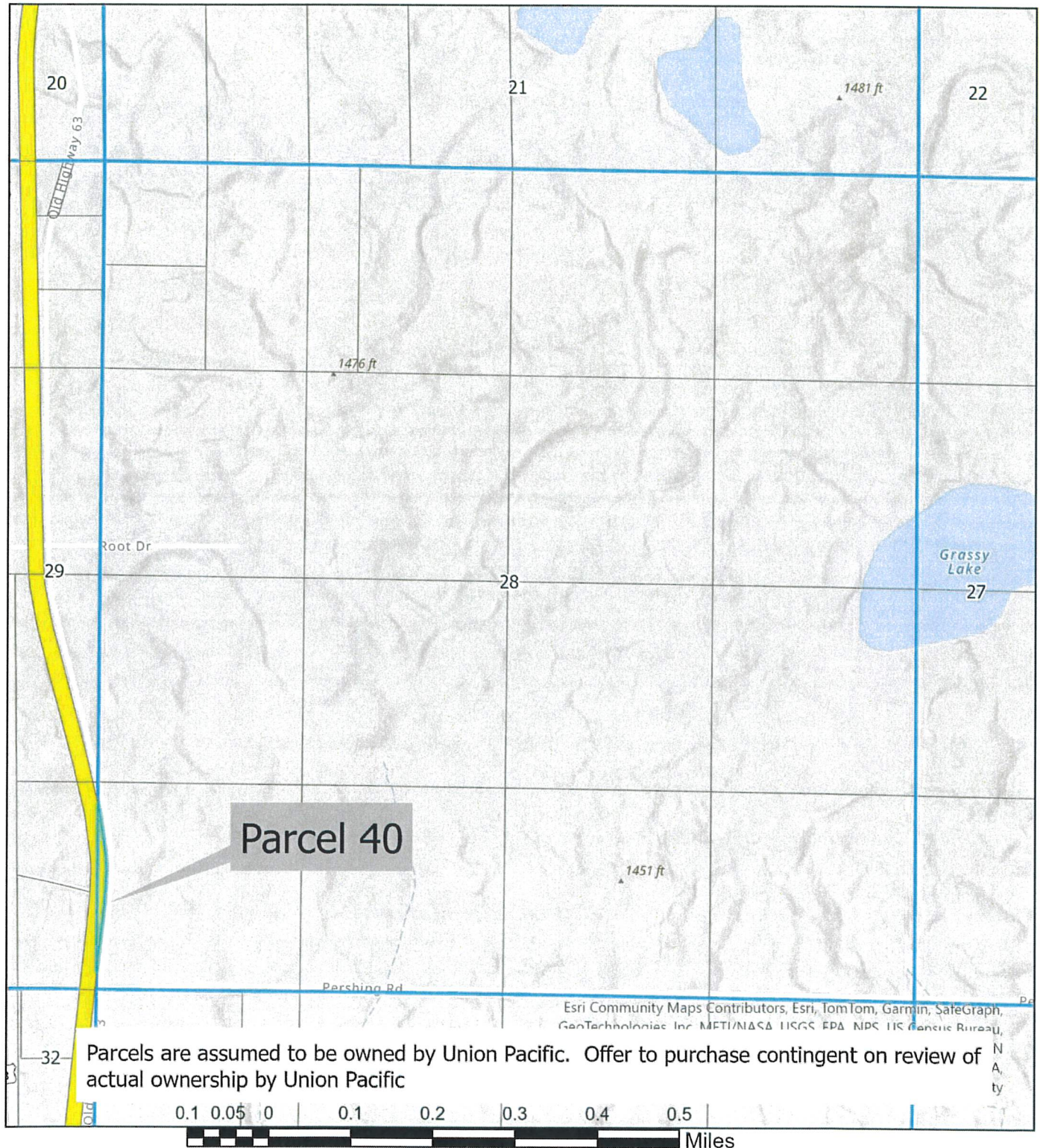
- Parcel 36 - Approximately 3.04 Acres lying in the NENE
- Parcel 37 - Approximately 3.02 Acres lying in the SENE
- Parcel 38 - Approximately 3.13 Acres lying in the NESE
- Parcel 39 - Approximately 2.25 Acres lying in the SESE

Section 29 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



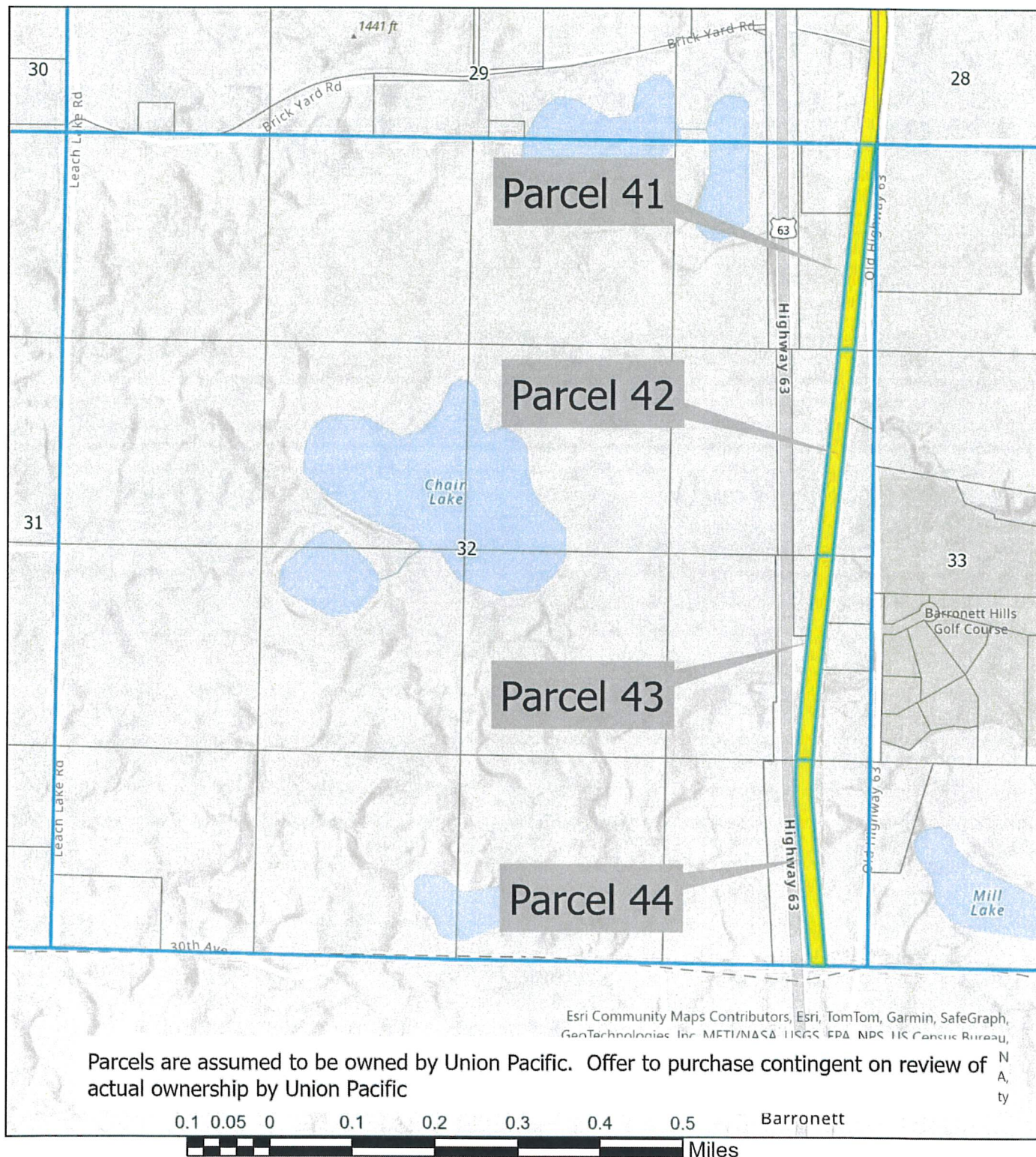
Parcel 40 - Approximately 0.81 Acres lying in the SWSW

Section 28 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin

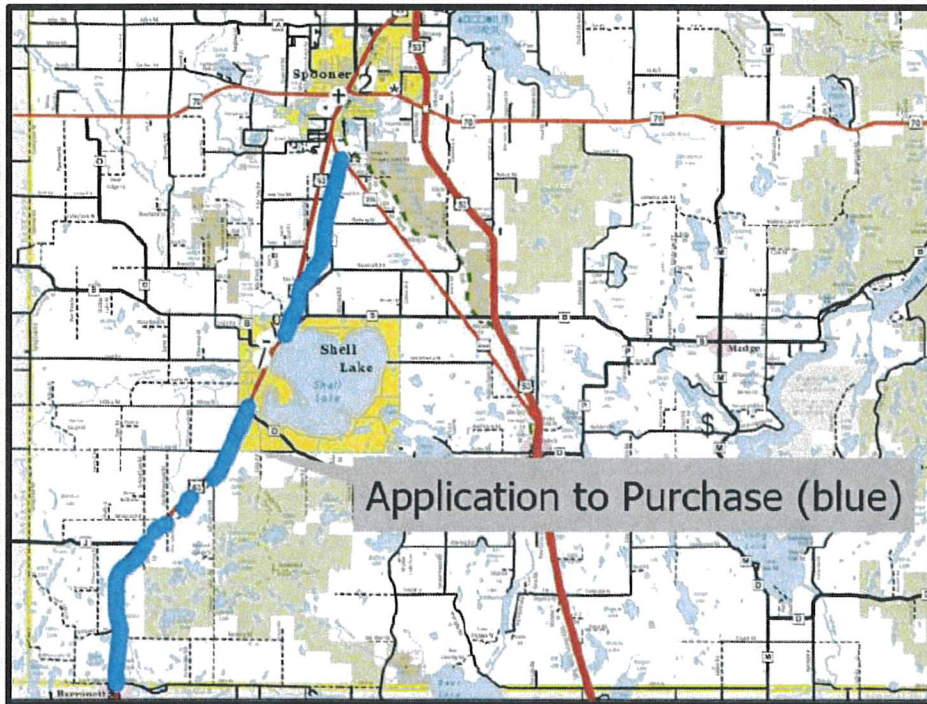


Parcel 41 - Approximately 3.02 Acres lying in the NENE
Parcel 42 - Approximately 3.02 Acres lying in the SENE
Parcel 43 - Approximately 3.00 Acres lying in the NESE
Parcel 44 - Approximately 3.00 Acres lying in the SESE

Section 32 T37N-R13W Town of Barronett; Washburn County, Wisconsin



**NARRATIVE APPRAISAL REPORT
FOR THE MARKET VALUE OF THE
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY
LOCATED FROM SHELL LAKE TO BARRONETT,
WASHBURN COUNTY, WISCONSIN**



**PREPARED FOR:
MICHAEL PETERSON, ADMINISTRATOR
WASHBURN COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT
1760 ROUNDHOUSE ROAD
SPOONER, WISCONSIN 54801**

**PREPARED BY:
CRAIG L. SOLUM, MAI
W7261 CABLE LAKE ROAD
SPOONER, WISCONSIN 54801**

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE APPRAISAL: JANUARY 29th, 2025
DATE OF THE REPORT: MARCH 27th, 2025**

CRAIG L. SOLUM, MAI

Craig L. Solum, MAI
Real Estate Valuation & Consultation
W7261 Cable Lake Road, Spooner, WI 54801
(715) 520-3093 email craig@solumappraisal.com

March 27th, 2025

Michael Peterson, Administrator
WASHBURN COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT
1760 Roundhouse Road
Spooner, WI 54801

**Subject: Narrative Market Value Appraisal Report
For The Union Pacific Railroad Corridor
Located Between the City of Shell Lake and the Village of Barronett,
Washburn County, Wisconsin**

Mr. Peterson:

In accordance with your request, I have conducted the required investigation, gathered the necessary data, and made certain analyses that have enabled me to form an opinion of the market value of the **UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CORRIDOR** property located between the City of Shell Lake and the Village of Barronett, Washburn County, Wisconsin. The property consists of a 100 feet wide corridor containing 60.34 acres. It is approximately five miles in length and extends from south of County Highway D at the south limits of the City of Shell Lake to the south Washburn County line at 30th Avenue near Barronett.

The property is legally described on page six of the appraisal report.

Based on the inspection of the property and the investigation and analyses undertaken, I have formed the opinion that, as of January 29th, 2025, and subject to the assumptions and limiting conditions set forth in the addendum of this report, the market value of the subject property is:

TWO HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS
(\$295,000)

The narrative appraisal that follows sets forth the identification of the property, the assumptions and limiting conditions, pertinent facts about the area and the subject property, comparable data, the results of the investigation and analyses, and the reasoning leading to the conclusions set forth.

Respectfully submitted,
CRAIG L. SOLUM, MAI



Craig L. Solum, MAI
Wisconsin Certified General Appraiser #26

CRAIG L. SOLUM, MAI