

Chippewa Flowage



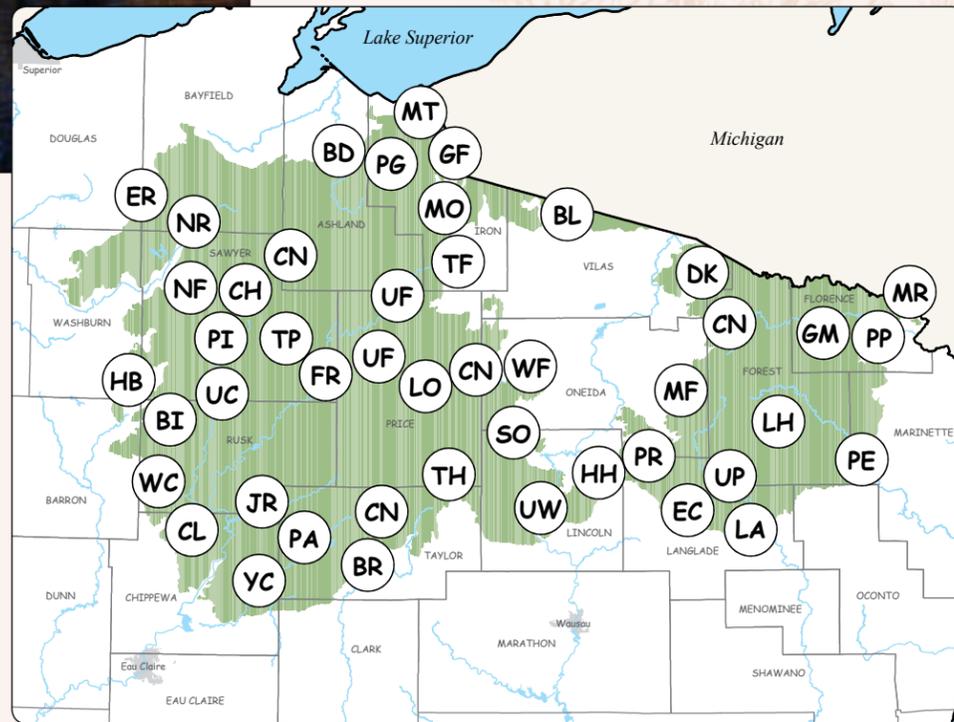
North Central Forest

ecological landscape

Attributes and Characteristics

Running across much of northern Wisconsin, this ecological landscape encompasses what many residents refer to as the “north woods.” Lying on top of the end and ground moraine left by the glaciers about 12,000 years ago, these vast northern hardwood forests support a variety of wildlife, including many that need large blocks of habitat to survive. Although there are very few large lakes on this ground moraine, many large wetlands, small creeks, rivers, and small kettle lakes occur throughout. Soils are primarily acid silt loams, often rocky, and poorly drained. Areas of loam and loamy sand are also present.

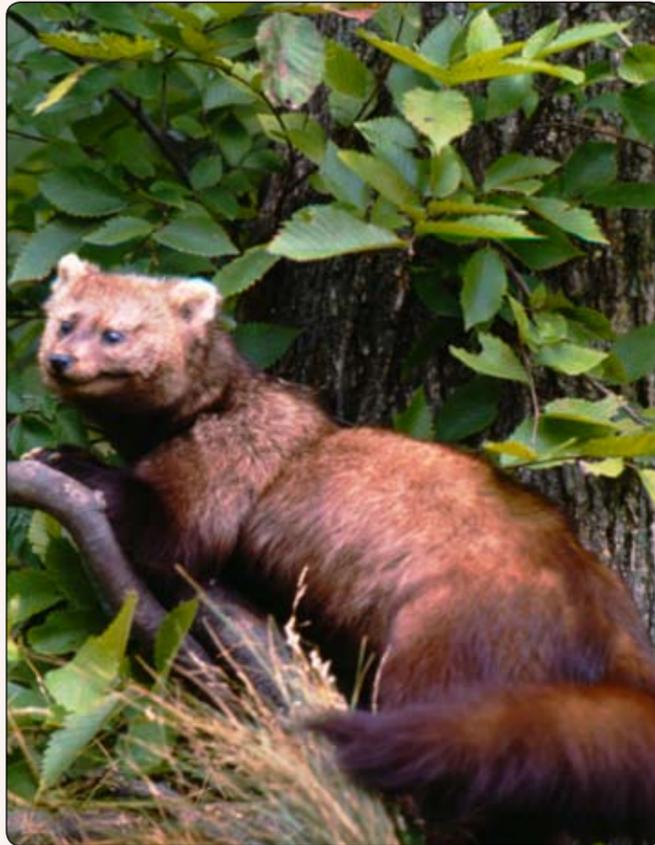
Many of the state’s major rivers, such as the Flambeau, Chippewa, Wolf, Peshtigo, and Brule-Menominee rivers, originate in the North Central Forest. The exceptional water quality and aquatic



Legacy Places

- BD Bad River
- BR Black River
- BI Blue Hills
- BL Border Lakes Region
- CN Chequamegon - Nicolet National Forests
- CH Chippewa Flowage
- CL Chippewa Glacial Lakes
- DK Deerskin River
- EC East and West Branches of the Eau Claire River
- ER Eau Claire River
- FR Flambeau River State Forest
- GF Gile Flowage
- GM Goodman Forest
- HH Harrison Hills
- HB Haugen - Birchwood Lakeland
- JR Jump River
- LA Langlade Moraine
- LH Laona Hemlock Hardwoods
- LO Lost Lake Bog
- MR Menominee River
- MF Monico Forest
- MT Montreal River
- MO Moose Creek Hemlock Woods
- NR Namekagon River
- NF North Fork of the Chief River
- PG Penokee-Gogebic Range
- PA Pershing Area
- PE Peshtigo River
- PP Pine - Popple River
- PI Pipestone Hills
- PR Prairie River
- SO Somo River
- TP Thornapple - Brunet River Woods
- TH Timm’s Hill
- TF Turtle - Flambeau Flowage
- UC Upper Chippewa River
- UF Upper Forks of the Flambeau River
- UW Upper Wisconsin River
- UP Upper Wolf River
- WC Weyerhauser Cedar Swamp
- WF Willow Flowage
- YC Yellow (Chippewa) River

North Central Forest ecological landscape



Fisher (*Martes pennanti*)

diversity of these rivers is a result of the heavily forested landscape. The major land use is pulp and sawlog production with only a limited amount of agriculture, mostly small dairy farms.

Over the last several decades, this area has experienced tremendous growth in second-home development and a trend to significantly smaller parcel sizes. Although most of this new housing is centered on lakes, flowages, and rivers, even areas without water frontage are increasingly being subdivided and developed.

Conservation Needs and Opportunities

The existing vegetation is primarily hardwood forest. Aspen and birch dominate younger forests; older forests are typically comprised of a mix of sugar maple, basswood, red maple, and other hardwoods. Hemlock, white pine and red pine are present in varying densities throughout the landscape. Tamarack, white-cedar, black ash, and black spruce are present in the conifer swamps. Many large wetlands are associated with the kettle lakes and streams.

This landscape offers opportunities to manage large blocks of forest land, ranging from northern mesic to hardwood swamps, for species adapted to predominantly unfragmented landscapes. These include several mammals, such

as elk, wolves, bear, bobcats, and pine martens, as well as many birds like northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk, and spruce grouse.

This ecological landscape and the Northwest Lowlands are probably the only places in Wisconsin with enough public land to manage a broad scale “shifting mosaic” of forests—that is, forests at a variety of successional stages, with different age structures and species compositions, in different patch sizes. At present, older forests and conifers are under-represented in this landscape.

Recreation Uses and Opportunities

With the large amount of public land in this area, the North Central Forest is a very popular vacation and outdoor recreation destination. The uplands draw hunters, wildlife watchers, snowmobile and ATV riders, off road bikers, skiers, and horseback riders, among others. The rivers, streams, lakes, and flowages attract anglers, boaters, kayakers, and canoeists from throughout the Midwest.

Given the extensive public ownership here and the adjacent Northern Highlands ecological landscape, this is one of the best areas in the state to provide a diverse set of long distance and loop trails for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation. Some key gaps occur between existing public lands.

Key characteristics:

- » Wild lakes and rivers
- » Large working forests
- » Large acreage of public land
- » Headwaters of Chippewa, Flambeau, Jump, Wolf, and Menominee Rivers

Size:

- » 9,540 square miles
- » 6,107,100 acres (17.0% of Wisconsin)

Population:

- » 139,000 (2.6% of Wisconsin's population)

Notable species:

- » Elk
- » Timber wolf
- » Bobcat
- » Pine marten
- » Fisher
- » Black bear
- » Muskellunge
- » Brook trout
- » Northern redbelly dace
- » Bald eagle, osprey, common loon
- » Neotropical migrant songbirds
- » Spruce and Ruffed Grouse
- » Goshawk
- » Sugar maple
- » Eastern hemlock
- » Goblin fern
- » Braun's holly-fern
- » Fairy slipper

Natural communities:

(See Appendix B for descriptions)

- » Alder thicket
- » Bedrock glade
- » Dry and moist cliffs
- » Emergent aquatic
- » Ephemeral pond
- » Hardwood swamp (Northern)
- » Northern mesic forest
- » Northern sedge meadow
- » Northern wet-mesic forest
- » Northern wet forest
- » Open bog
- » Submergent aquatic

Figure 56: Land cover of the North Central Forest

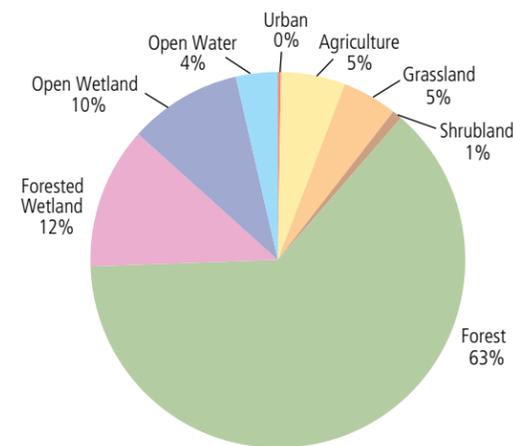


Figure 57: Public conservation and other land ownership in the North Central Forest

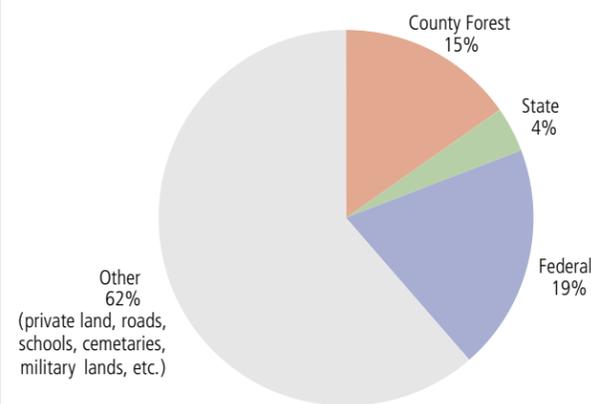


Figure 58: Land cover of public conservation lands in the North Central Forest

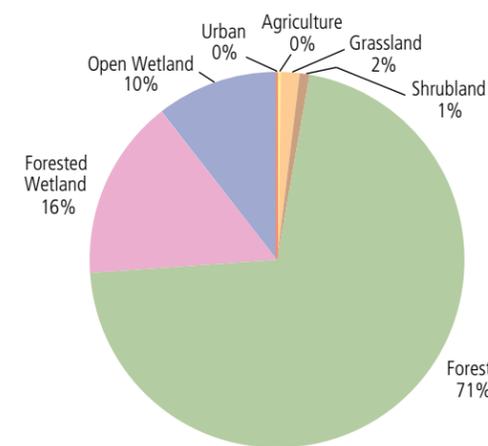


Figure 60a: Legacy Places and land cover of the North Central Forest

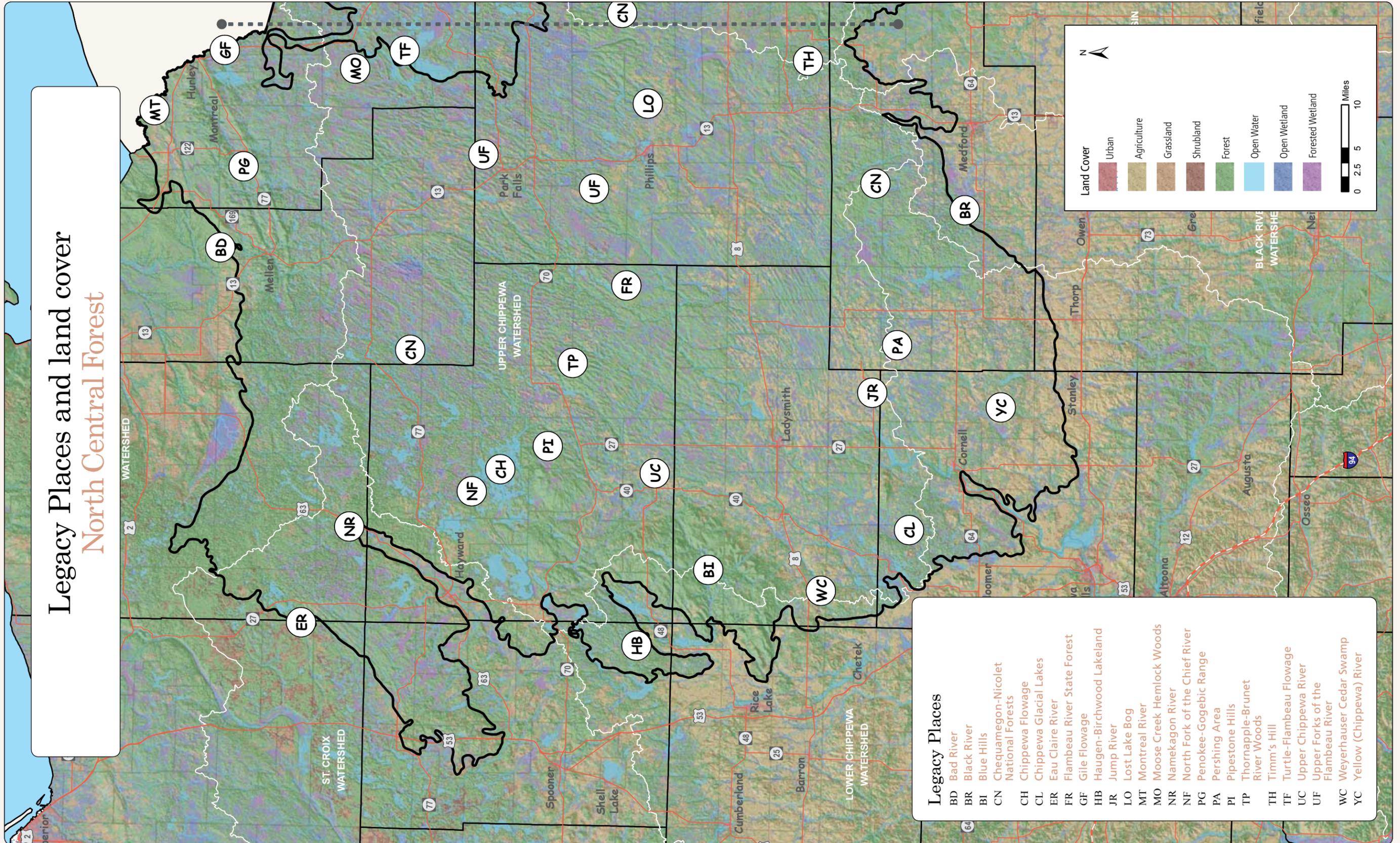


Figure 59b: Legacy Places and public conservation lands of the North Central Forest

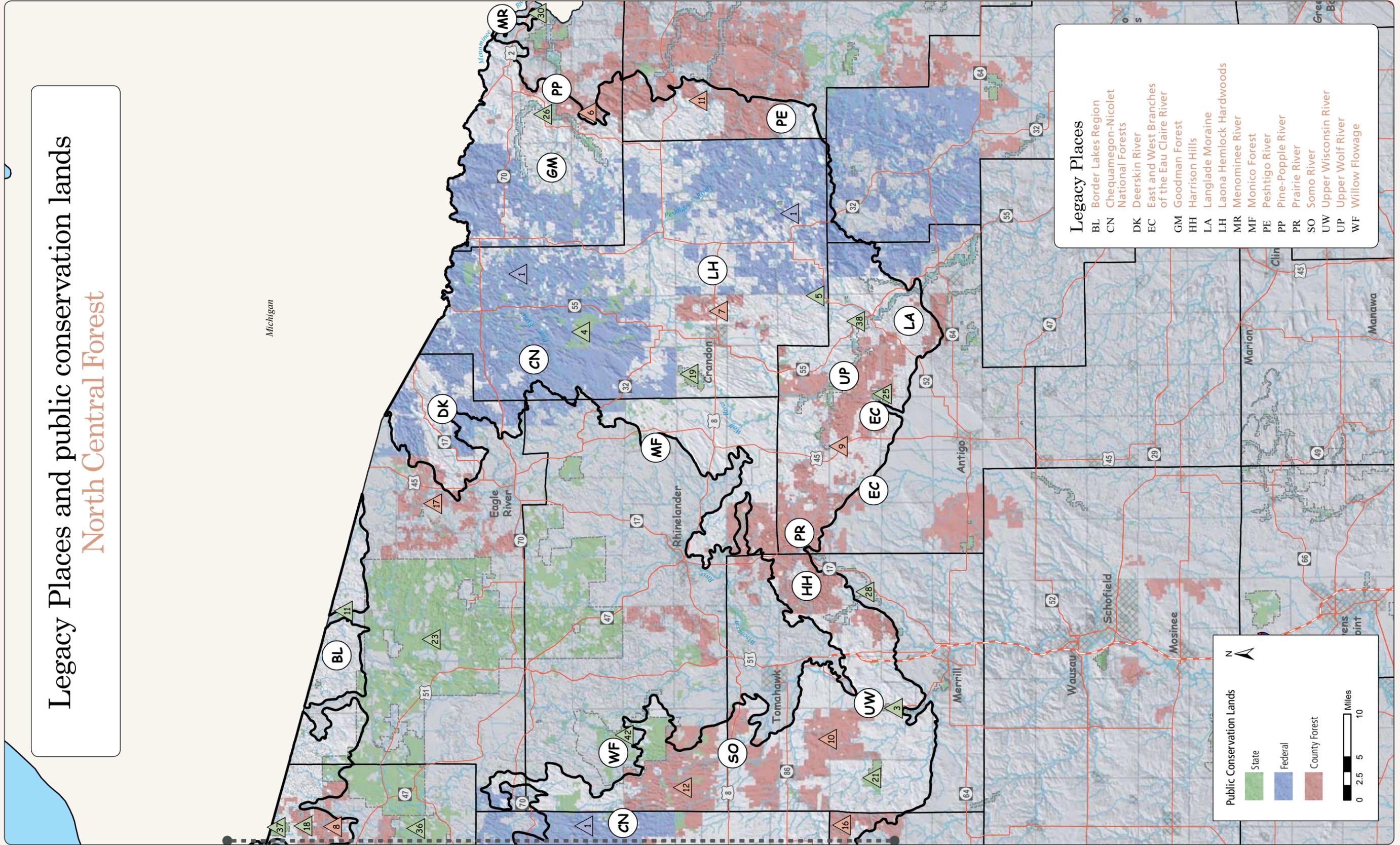
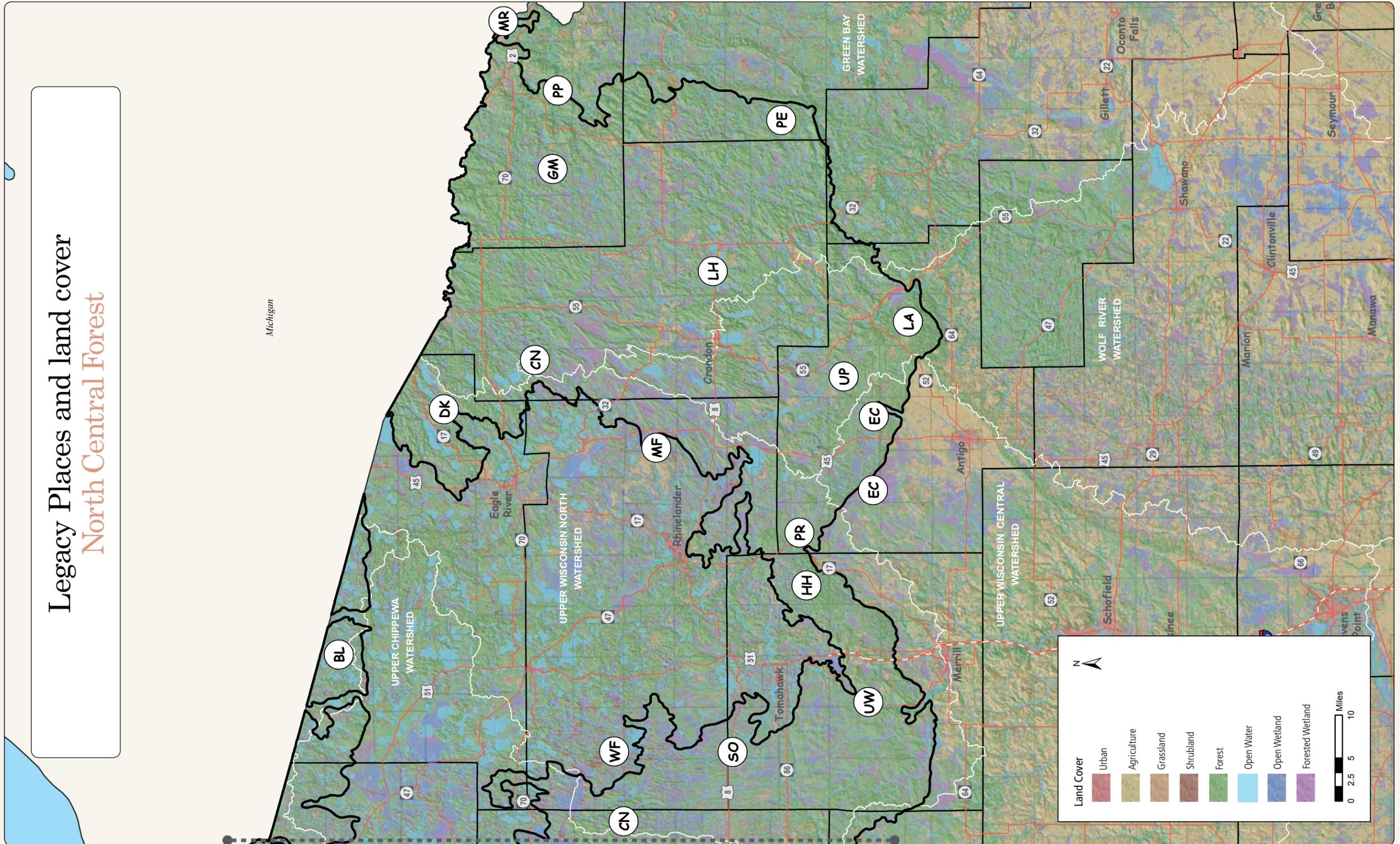


Figure 60b: Legacy Places and land cover of the North Central Forest



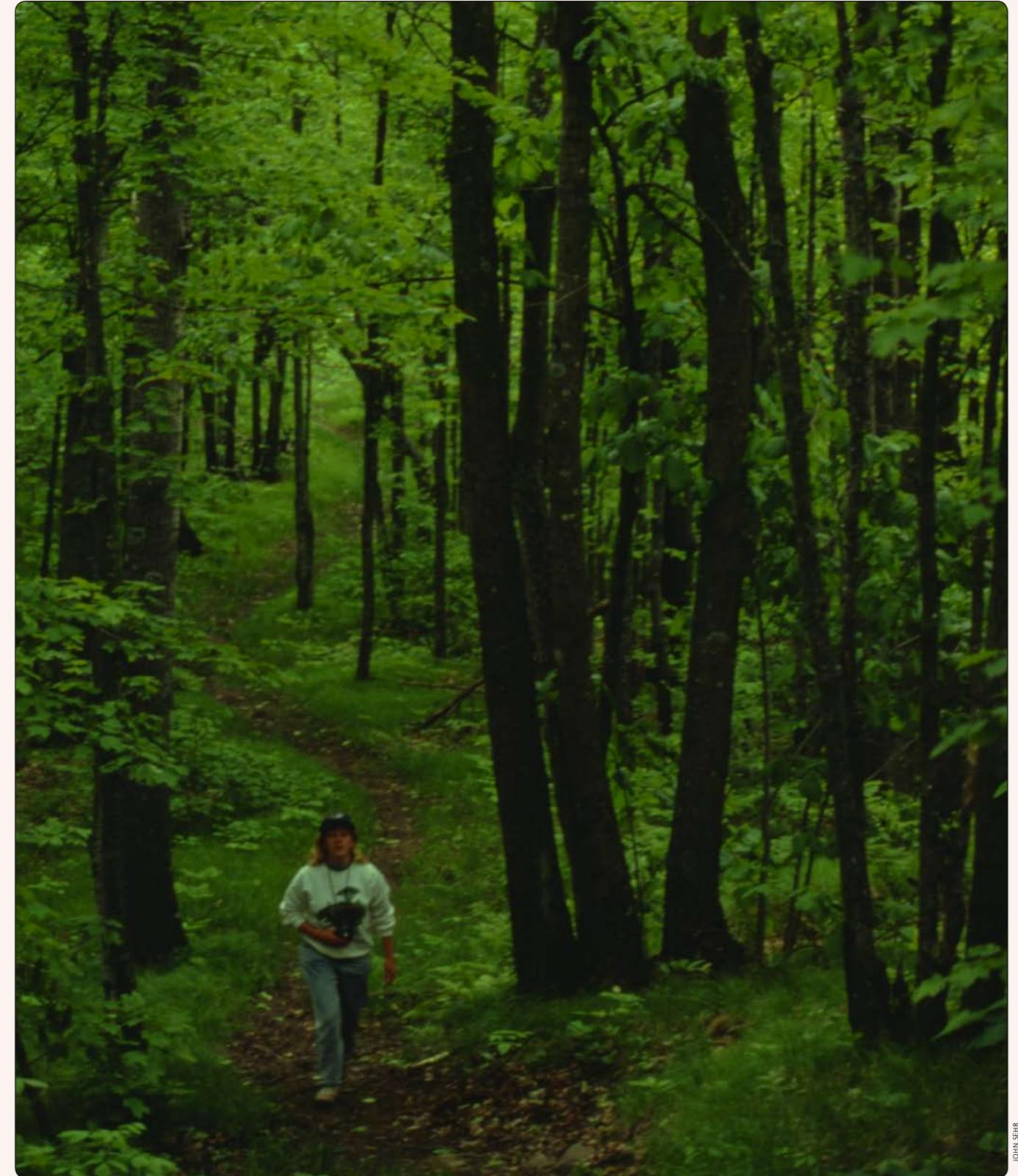
North Central Forest
ecological landscape

Public Conservation Lands

Map#	Property Name	Size (acres) ¹
State		
1	Benson Creek State Fishery Area	300
2	Beverly Lake State Fishery Area	275
3	Bill Cross State Wildlife Area ²	1,170
4	Board of Commissioners of Public Land	-
5	Bog Brook State Wildlife Area	265
6	Brunet Island State Park	1,070
7	Chief River State Wildlife Area	1,190
8	Chippewa Flowage	13,920
9	Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area ²	2,760
10	Copper Falls State Park ²	2,015
11	Dunn Lake State Natural Area	560
12	Eddy Creek State Fishery Area	280
13	Flambeau River State Forest	90,135
14	Grindstone Creek State Fishery Area	410
15	Hay Creek-Hoffman Lake State Wildlife Area ²	12,605
16	Kimberly Clark State Wildlife Area	8,570
17	Kissick Swamp State Wildlife Area	930
18	Lake Evelyn State Natural Area	220
19	Little Rice State Wildlife Area	2,860
20	Moose Lake State Natural Area	2,060
21	New Wood State Wildlife Area	1,640
22	Niebauer Springs Fishery Area	200
23	Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest ²	5,890
24	Pershing State Wildlife Area	7,440
25	Peters Marsh State Wildlife Area	1,740
26	Pine-Popple Wild Rivers ²	4,100
27	Potato Creek State Wildlife Area	940
28	Prairie River State Fishery Area ²	450
29	Silvernail State Wildlife Area	1,050
30	Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area ²	315
31	Spring Creek State Wildlife Area	920
32	Tom Lawin State Wildlife Area ²	515
33	Totagatic Highlands Hemlock State Natural Area	160
34	Totagatic Lake State Wildlife Area	980
35	Totagatic State Wildlife Area	2,660
36	Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area ²	9,380
37	Underwood State Wildlife Area	1,630
38	Upper Wolf River State Fishery Area ²	5,930
39	Washington Creek State Wildlife Area	525
40	Weirgor Springs State Wildlife Area	1,960
41	White River State Fishery Area ²	340
42	Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area ²	8,790
	Miscellaneous Lands ³	15,965

Map#	Property Name	Size (acres) ¹
Federal		
1	Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests ²	1,186,860
2	St. Croix National Scenic Riverway	3,390
County Forest⁴		
1	Ashland County Forest	32,830
2	Barron County Forest ²	5,210
3	Bayfield County Forest ²	28,230
4	Chippewa County Forest ²	31,410
5	Douglas County Forest ²	6,610
6	Florence County Forest ²	15,260
7	Forest County Forest ²	10,690
8	Iron County Forest ²	150,370
9	Langlade County Forest ²	86,500
10	Lincoln County Forest ²	90,160
11	Marinette County Forest ²	36,450
12	Oneida County Forest ²	56,850
13	Price County Forest	88,010
14	Rusk County Forest ²	86,920
15	Sawyer County Forest ²	110,630
16	Taylor County Forest ²	13,330
17	Vilas County Forest ²	4,240
18	Washburn County Forest ²	74,940
TOTAL		2,335,195

¹ Actual acres owned in this Ecological Landscape.
² This property also falls within adjacent Ecological Landscape(s).
³ Includes public access sites, fish hatcheries, fire towers, streambank and non-point easements, lands acquired under statewide wildlife, fishery, forestry, and natural area programs, small properties under 100 acres, and properties with fewer than 100 acres within this Ecological Landscape.
⁴ Locations and sizes of county owned parcels enrolled in the Forest Crop Law are presented here. Information on locations and sizes of other county and local parks in this Ecological Landscape is not readily available and is not included here, except for some very large properties.



Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

JOHN SEHR

Legacy Places



Learning the wonders of nature firsthand

HUGH WABERS

BD Bad River

See the Superior Coastal Plains ecological landscape.

BR Black River

See the Forest Transition ecological landscape.

BI Blue Hills

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

A large, very old quartzite outcropping forms the Blue Hills. The Hills support an extensive forested tract intermingled with lakes, wetlands and a number of high quality streams. The Hills are a potential link between the Chippewa Moraine to the south and the large forest blocks to the north. Although little farmland exists within the area, agriculture is a dominant land use to the south and west.

The Blue Hills support a high quality, second growth forest. Dominant tree species include sugar maple, red oak, aspen, and basswood, although the topography of the area provides a diversity of microclimates that support a wide variety of trees and other plants. The Hills harbor many birds dependent on forest interior conditions. In addition, numerous coldwater, high-gradient streams originate in the Hills and support productive brook trout fisheries. Within the hilly landscape there are a number of small, mostly undeveloped lakes and impoundments that provide fishing for species such as bass, northern pike, and panfish. Several large felsenmeers (talus slopes that generate a consistent upwelling of cold air from their base and support a number of rare plants and invertebrates), along with other important geological and archaeological features, are also found here.

Maintaining the large forested landscape will be critical to meet the area’s conservation potential, particularly the full range of forest age classes and patch size. Reducing habitat fragmentation could enhance populations of forest dwelling birds. Although a considerable portion of the Blue Hills is within county forest programs, many key areas remain unprotected.

The Hills are popular destinations for hunters, anglers, snowmobilers, hikers, and skiers. Given the size of the area, maintaining the large forested landscape here might allow multiple recreation uses, including both motorized and quiet activities, to successfully coexist.

BL Border Lakes Region

Size Large
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties harbor one of the highest concentrations of lakes in the world. Although most of the privately owned lake shoreline in these counties is developed, a pocket of mostly undeveloped or lightly developed lakes exists along the border with Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. These lakes support an unusually diverse and high quality assemblage of aquatic natural communities. The surrounding uplands harbor a high quality forest complex with several patches of old-growth. Numerous rare species are known to occur here, particularly birds and plants.

The Border Lakes Region is flanked by the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, several large County Forest properties, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and Michigan’s Ottawa National Forest (home of the Sylvania Wilderness Area). The Nature Conservancy is actively working with landowners in the area on a variety of conservation projects.

The Border Lakes Region represents one of the last opportunities in Wisconsin to protect a reasonably large cluster of wild lakes. Lying at the heart of several large blocks of public property, the area could provide low-impact recreation activities in a very remote setting. Several portions of this area are held in large ownership blocks, which have been integral to maintaining the character of the area. Some of the lakes currently receive minimal fishing pressure and, as such, offer an opportunity for a variety of research projects.

Protecting this unique mosaic of lakes, wetlands and upland forests—with its significant water quality, fisheries, wildlife, and forest resources—will be important to maintaining the biological diversity and recreational opportunities of northern Wisconsin.

CN Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

Over 80% of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests occurs within the North Central Forest ecological landscape, covering an area close to 1.2 million acres. The National Forest occurs primarily on glacial moraines and till plains with loamy soils that provide mesic and wet-mesic conditions. Forests are predominantly aspen and northern hardwoods, with some red pine plantations and wetlands. Northern hardwood forests provide habitat for a number of mesic herbaceous plant species, and for forest interior birds during the breeding season. Aspen forests provide habitat for early-successional wildlife species, and offer opportunities for ruffed grouse and woodcock hunting. Hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, biking, snowmobiling, and off road vehicle riding are among the many popular recreation activities. Off road vehicle use has been permitted on most of the Chequamegon National Forest, but restricted to roads posted for such use on the Nicolet National Forest. Current guidelines for off road vehicles are being revised as part of the National Forest planning process.

While the Chequamegon and Nicolet portions of the National Forest are similar in geologic origin and forest cover, there are some notable features unique to each. The Chequamegon contains a portion of the Penokee-Gogebic Range, noted for its steep topography and relatively contiguous northern hardwood forest cover, which provides interior forest habitat for species that require large extensive forests. Much of the area around Clam Lake is a drumlinized ground moraine, with wetland forests in the low-lying areas between the drumlins. Wilderness areas on the Chequamegon include the Rainbow Lake Wilderness of 6,583 acres, and the Porcupine Lake Wilderness of 4,446 acres, both located near Drummond. The North Country Trail passes between the towns of Drummond and Mellen, and a number of other recreational trails are available for Forest visitors. The Medford Ranger District is disjunct from the rest of the Forest, and its more southern location leads to the

Legacy Places



Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) strikes with a vengeance

presence of species less common on the rest of the Chequamegon-Nicolet. It also provides a significant forested patch in an area more fragmented by development and agriculture.

On the Nicolet, a large contiguous forested area made up of aspen and northern hardwoods occurs near Laona, and has been identified as an area where management for forest interior species is feasible. A very large area of continuous National Forest ownership is found in the Eagle River Ranger District on a drumlinized ground moraine where upland forests are interspersed with lowland conifers. There are also opportunities to coordinate management of large landscapes across the state boundary into the Ottawa National Forest in Upper Michigan. Several wilderness areas are found on the Nicolet, including the Blackjack Springs and Headwaters Wildernesses near Eagle River that together occupy 23,800 acres, and the Whisker Lake Wilderness of 7,500 acres near Florence.

CH Chippewa Flowage

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This 15,000-acre impoundment hosts a seemingly endless maze of islands, points, bays and channels. With over 230 miles of mostly undeveloped shoreline and 200 islands, the Chippewa Flowage is one of the state's most spectacular waterbodies. Forests of aspen, birch, pine and oak line much of the shore and the surrounding rolling landscape. Herons, eagles, loons and waterfowl are commonly seen.

Since it was initially dammed in 1923, the flowage has drawn visitors from throughout the Midwest. Fishing, in particular for muskellunge, is a prized activity. Walleye, pike, perch and crappie are also popular among visitors. The flowage has 18 island camping sites that create a unique wild and uncrowded experience.

CL Chippewa Glacial Lakes

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This rugged, wooded terrain contains numerous ephemeral wetlands, bogs, kettle lakes, and large seepage lakes that have little or no development. This area also contains an excellent representation of a variety of glacial features including moraines, eskers, ice block depression lakes, ice-walled lake plains, and a glacial meltwater channel. Forests in portions of the area are very high quality and contain a high diversity of forest interior bird species.

Existing land protection and management efforts occurring within the Ice Age Reserve and Chippewa County Forest could be substantially enhanced to create a landscape linkage between these properties and existing public ownership in the Blue Hills of Sawyer, Barron, and Rusk Counties. Protection efforts in the Chippewa Glacial Lakes area could provide quality hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, paddling, and fishing opportunities for the numerous residents in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls areas. Given its close proximity to US 53, it is also easily accessible to many others.

DK Deerskin River

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★

The Deerskin River is a cold water stream containing Class I and Class II trout waters in different reaches. Much of the upper part of the river goes through the Nicolet National Forest; the middle and lower reaches flow through private parcels. The river corridor includes impoundments at Long Lake and Scattering Rice Lake. A dam that held the former Deerskin Flowage has recently been removed, restoring wetlands and the natural streambed.



Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)

EC East and West Branches of the Eau Claire River

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

Originating in the large wetlands and small lakes near Kempster, these streams are productive trout waters. The large wetland in the headwater area, known as Bogus Swamp, is a high quality open bog that supports rare butterflies and a diverse assemblage of plants. The water quality in the East Branch in particular has improved recently and is supporting higher numbers of trout. There are several public properties located in these corridors, including Langlade County Forest, the old Crystal Springs Hatchery, Peters Marsh Wildlife Area and some scattered fishery properties.

ER Eau Claire River

See the Northwest Sands ecological landscape.

North Central Forest
ecological landscape



Hiking the Ice Age Trail in the Harrison Hills



Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

FR Flambeau River State Forest

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

The Flambeau River State Forest is dominated by northern hardwood species such as sugar and red maple, yellow birch, aspen, and white ash. The North and South Forks of the Flambeau River combine within the forest to provide over 75 miles of nearly uninterrupted natural beauty and whitewater excitement. Canoeing and fishing are popular river-based activities, while hunting and snowmobiling are the most popular land-based recreation activities on the State Forest. Muskellunge, sturgeon, trout, walleye, bass, and panfish occur in the river.

Several large blocks of land, much in County Forest or industrial forest ownership, surround the Flambeau River State Forest. Maintaining these large blocks of working forest would help to buffer the state forest, offer excellent outdoor recreation opportunities, and provide an important source of wood fiber for paper and lumber. Downstream from the State Forest critical habitat exists for several threatened and endangered species of fish, mussels, and dragonflies. Two flowages and the surrounding uplands provide opportunities for fishing, boating, picnicking and camping. Many stretches of the lower river are undeveloped or lightly developed, with extensively forested shorelines.

GF Gile Flowage

Size Small
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

The Gile Flowage is a large reservoir with a relatively undeveloped shoreline that provides fishing, hunting, trapping, boating, camping and swimming opportunities. The surrounding land is a mix of northern conifer and northern hardwood forest. The Gile Flowage has been designated an Outstanding Resource Water.

GM Goodman Forest

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This area is part of the headwaters of the Pike and Peshtigo Rivers and contains large blocks of managed forest. The general topography of the area is gently rolling. The soils have textures of fine sandy loam to silt loam and support nutrient-rich habitat types.

Numerous streams originate in this area, many lined with swamp conifer stands or open boggy meadows. Forest management practices that perpetuate the “big woods” feel of the area would help maintain the area’s character as well as the water quality in the Pike and Peshtigo River systems. This area provides a link between the Nicolet National Forest and Marinette County Forest.

HH Harrison Hills

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

Located at the eastern end of the Perkinston recessional moraine, this area contains a mix of numerous, small kettle lakes interspersed with northern hardwood forest. The hilly topography provides a variety of habitat conditions. Most of the area is forested with early successional hardwoods and aspen. A large percentage of the area is within Lincoln County Forest. Several high quality coldwater streams that support healthy trout populations originate in the area, including the Prairie River, and Big Pine, Little Pine, and Green Meadow Creeks. Only about 10 miles from STH 51, the area is relatively easily accessible to residents of Merrill, Wausau, and other cities to the south.

HB Haugen - Birchwood Lakeland

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

Lying between Lake Chetak and Long Lake is an area of kettle lake topography containing an exceptionally high density of small, mostly undeveloped lakes. It was formed primarily while the Chippewa lobe of the most-recent continental glaciation was melting back from its maximum extent. The lakes formed when large, buried blocks of glacial ice melted and left deep depressions. The surrounding wooded uplands support many rare birds. Some of the area is owned and managed as County Forest. Many of the small lakes in the County Forest are accessible only by foot and provide a remote, wilderness experience for visitors. Fishing in these lakes, many of which are less than 30 acres in size but more than 25 feet deep, is excellent.

Extending a protected corridor south to near Birchwood and west to Haugen could alleviate user conflicts currently occurring on the Tussock State Trail, which passes south of this area. Such a corridor could provide a scenic alternative route for the Ice Age Trail and protect similar kettle topography formed by the Lake Superior lobe.

JR Jump River

Size Large
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★★★

The Jump River system drains a predominantly forested landscape, although some farmland is present. Many of the headwater creeks drain from and flow through large wetland complexes. As the North and South Forks of the river gain volume, they also pick up speed as they pass through higher gradients. The entire river corridor has remained largely intact and supports a diverse aquatic community structure with several rare elements and few problems with exotic species.

North Central Forest ecological landscape



Lungwort (*Lobaria pulmonaria*)



Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

The Jump River and its two forks support a diverse assemblage of species including several rare insects, fish, and reptiles. In-stream habitat throughout the system is excellent. Lake Sturgeon, moving up from the Chippewa River, are present.

This medium-large river system provides excellent canoeing and kayaking opportunities with whitewater occurring in some segments, particularly near the confluence of the North and South Forks. The river also provides a connection between the Chippewa River corridor and the Chequamegon National Forest. The river and the two forks flow through extensive industrial forest lands. Maintaining these large blocks of habitat will be critical to meeting multiple economic, ecological, and recreation goals.

LA Langlade Moraine

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★★

Like the Kettle and Chippewa Moraines, this area contains excellent examples of the glacial landforms associated with recessional moraines, although very few kettle lakes are found here. The undulating terrain harbors mostly early successional forest dominated by aspen. The Evergreen River and Evergreen Creek drain the south side of the area, both of which support good trout populations.

The Langlade Moraine lies between several large forested tracts owned by the county and the Nicolet National Forest. The Wolf River borders the area on the north. Protecting some key places between existing public lands could create a very large area providing hunting, fishing, trail use, and other recreational opportunities within about two hours of the large population in the Fox Valley. Much of the area is currently in industrial forest ownership.

LH Laona Hemlock Hardwoods

Size Small
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

Lying west of Laona are several lakes surrounded by mature hemlock-hardwood forest. These woods, which continue north to the Peshtigo River, offer one of the best opportunities in the state to manage for old-growth characteristics. Species that do best in large blocks of mature forest, such as black-throated green warbler, northern goshawk, and bobcat are common here.

LO Lost Lake Bog

Size Small
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★
Recreation Potential ★

This large, mostly undisturbed tamarack and spruce swamp provides habitat for many rare species. The bog provides nesting habitat for many Neotropical migrant birds, in addition to harboring some boreal bird species, such as boreal chickadee and gray jay. The full range of species that typically utilize spruce and tamarack bogs is found here. Recreational opportunities may be limited in summer, due to the wet nature of the area. More extensive recreation may be possible when the ground is frozen.

Immediately to the north of the bog is a high quality reach of the Elk River between Musser and Duroy lakes. The river is bordered by second-growth red and white pine. The Elk River harbors numerous rare aquatic invertebrates.

MR Menominee River

See the Northeast Sands ecological landscape.

MF Monico Forest

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★
Recreation Potential ★★

This large block of woods sits between the Nicolet National Forest, Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, and a large block of county forest. These and adjoining woods support a diverse set of forest interior birds, many uncommon. Although many large wetlands are present, the area could support a range of recreation activities.

MT Montreal River

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★★

Two main forks draining out of the northern highlands feed the Montreal River. After cutting through the Penokee-Gogebic Range, the river's considerable drop provides a spectacular valley studded with whitewater, waterfalls, and steep cliffs. Of particular note is a two mile stretch, the Montreal Canyon, where the river has cut through conglomerate, shale and sandstone, forming steep cliffs over 200 feet high. The Saxon and Superior Flowages lie upstream and downstream, respectively, from the canyon and directly influence water levels. Primary hardwood species in the valley include red oak, aspen, sugar and red maple, paper and yellow birch, and basswood. The most common conifers include red and white pine, white cedar, hemlock, fir, and spruce. The canyon harbors several rare species, with some cedar and spruce clinging to the sides of the canyon walls.

From the Penokee-Gogebic Range downstream to Lake Superior there is little access to the river and as a result it has considerable wilderness character. The river's fast moving water supports an excellent coldwater fishery of brook, brown and rainbow trout. During the spring, steelhead and salmon move into the stretch from Lake Superior to Superior Falls. Warmwater species, particularly northern pike, muskellunge, and walleye, may be found in the vicinity of the two flowages. The river is a popular whitewater kayaking and canoeing destination.

MO Moose Creek Hemlock Woods

Size Small
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This is one of the largest blocks of mature to old-growth hemlock-hardwood forest known to occur in Wisconsin with two State Natural Areas currently protected within the area. The woods are adjacent to Iron County Forest and the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage and an opportunity exists

North Central Forest ecological landscape

to have several thousand acres of old-growth forest in one unbroken block. Many rare plants are found in the area and the forest is also an important warbler breeding area.

The Moose Creek Hemlocks are part of a much larger, high quality forested landscape running from the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage north to the Penokee-Gogebic Range. Much of this larger area is very wild (it is perhaps the best moose habitat in the state) and, although development pressure is increasing, it is currently owned primarily by industrial forest companies and Iron County Forest.

NR Namekagon River

See the Northwest Sands ecological landscape.

NF North Fork of the Chief River

Size Small
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★
Recreation Potential ★★

The North Fork of the Chief River flows from the Tiger Cat Flowage south to the Chippewa Flowage and provides an important muskellunge spawning area for the Chippewa Flowage. The surrounding area is characterized by generally rolling till plains with moderate slopes and ridges. Upland forest types include aspen, white birch, northern hardwoods, and balsam fir with scattered pockets of hemlock and white pine. Lowland forests include black ash, balsam fir, tamarack, black spruce, white cedar, and alder.

The existing Chief River State Wildlife Area protects some of the riparian zone and provides habitat for many northern wildlife species. Current management focuses on providing hunting, wildlife watching, fishing, snowmobiling, and day walking opportunities.

PG Penokee-Gogebic Range

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★

Extending approximately 25 miles through Ashland and Iron Counties, the Penokee-Gogebic Range consists of two narrow, relatively steep and parallel ridges that dominate the local landscape. The ridges, rising several hundred feet above the surrounding plains, are composed of quartzite and metamorphic rocks containing significant iron concentrations. Popular recreation activities in the area include whitewater canoeing and kayaking, hunting, fishing and hiking.

The Penokee-Gogebic Range supports a high quality forest matrix with several patches of old growth hemlock-hardwood forest. Several high quality rivers, including the Bad, Tyler Forks, Potato and Montreal, cut through the range.

Waterfalls occur as these rivers pass over resistant rock ledges and attract many visitors. The large forest block supports a number of uncommon and rare birds, particularly warblers. The topography of the area and the variety of soil conditions result in a wide range of habitat that supports a diverse assemblage of species and natural communities.

The Range acts as an ecological corridor between the Chequamegon National Forest and the national forests in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This corridor is an important travel route for moose and wolves to and from the Upper Peninsula. The area's highly varied topography offers many opportunities to maintain a mosaic of forest habitats. Although a significant portion of the Penokee-Gogebic Range is in county forest, mining companies also own large acreage. Much of the area has been mined for iron ore in the past.

PA Pershing Area

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

The Pershing Wildlife Area consists of two large and separate tracts, encompassing approximately 7,400 acres, which are intensively managed for the production of sharp-tailed grouse and waterfowl. The surrounding area is a mix of active and

fallow farmland, open wetlands, and scattered small parcels of northern and swamp hardwood forest. Much of the land between the two existing tracts contains a significant amount of former farmland that is now reverting to a more natural state. The Fisher River, and associated tributaries, which support several rare, threatened and endangered species, runs through the area.

Maintaining the open space between the existing sections of the Wildlife Area and the Chequamegon National Forest just to the east would facilitate species movement, simplify management operations, and maintain (and potentially increase) recreation opportunities.

PE Peshtigo River

See the Northeast Sands ecological landscape.

PP Pine-Popple River

See the Northeast Sands ecological landscape.

PI Pipestone Hills

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★★

This area contains a large block of forest representative of northern hardwoods and harbors all the glacial landforms of the area. The forest is mostly roadless and provides habitat for a wide variety of "big woods" species, including a large portion of the hardwood forest birds known to occur in northern Wisconsin. Given its size, the full range of forest recreation activities could be considered for this site.

PR Prairie River

See the Forest Transition ecological landscape.

SO Somo River

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★
Recreation Potential ★★



Calypso Orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*)

This river complex comprises the Big Somo and Little Somo Rivers, along with Hay Creek. All eventually flow into Lake Mohawksin at Tomahawk. These good quality streams harbor trout in their headwaters. The watersheds are wooded and quite wild. Numerous riffles and rapids exist in the rivers and help support a variety of aquatic life. Protection of the river corridor could connect several County Forest properties.

TP Thornapple-Brunet River Woods

Size Large
Protection Initiated Moderate
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This large forest block southeast of Winter contains mature northern mesic forest and northern hardwood swamps. The area has no paved roads and very few gravel ones, making it one of the state's most remote areas. American marten

North Central Forest ecological landscape

appear to be colonizing here and occasionally moose are reported. The Thornapple and Brunet Rivers flow through the area and form ecological connections between the Chequamegon National Forest and Sawyer County Forest. The Flambeau River State Forest lies to the east. The area presents a unique opportunity to maintain a large wild tract that could support primitive camping, hunting, canoeing, and other low-impact activities.

TH Timm's Hill

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

The highest point in the state, Timm's Hill is within a county park. Protection could be expanded to the surrounding area, which harbors many small lakes and extensive forest including old-growth hemlock. The steep-sided hills harbor different plants and animals depending on their slope and aspect. These steep slopes continue down below many of the lakes in the area and form very severe underwater shelves. As a result, these "meromictic" lakes are exceptionally deep for their small surface area and can become permanently stratified (i.e., they do not fully "turn over" in the spring and fall) resulting in unusual chemical properties. The area contains many recreation opportunities for public enjoyment including lake access, trails, observation platforms, and hunting.

TF Turtle-Flambeau Flowage

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Limited
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

Created by a dam at the confluence of the Turtle and Flambeau Rivers, this 14,000-acre flowage is one of northern Wisconsin's most popular backcountry destinations. Surrounding the flowage are over 18,000 acres of state-owned land that

support forests of aspen, birch, maple and other northern hardwoods. Scattered through the area are some pockets of old-growth hemlock and pine that provide excellent nesting habitat for eagles and osprey. Many grass openings have been created and maintained to increase the variety of wildlife in the area, particularly game species. In addition to deer, bear, fisher, beaver, and otters, wolves and moose are occasionally seen on the property. The Flowage has the highest density of breeding pairs of eagles, osprey, and common loons in Wisconsin.

State ownership includes 114 miles of shoreline and 195 islands. With 60 campsites accessible only by boat, the flowage offers a unique, remote setting for boaters and paddlers. Fishing for black crappie, smallmouth bass, muskellunge, and in particular walleye, is excellent throughout the flowage.

UC Upper Chippewa River

Size Large
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

From the Chippewa Flowage downstream to Eau Claire, the Chippewa River corridor provides extraordinary ecological and recreation values. As with several of the other large river systems in the state that run north-south, the Chippewa has a storied history and played a major role in native cultures as well as the logging and fur trade eras. The river, the riparian forest, and adjacent wetlands act as a natural travel corridor for animals as they move about locally and as they pass between the northern forest and the Mississippi River valley.

Numerous clean, clear rivers and streams feed the Chippewa, resulting in a river with very sizable flow and uncommon quality. Not surprisingly, a diverse array of rare aquatic species are found in the river including the purple warty-back mussel, pygmy snaketail dragonfly, wood turtle, greater redhorse, and long-ear sunfish. It is this quality and flow that draw so many recreationalists, primarily canoers, kayakers and anglers. Fishing is superb with small and large mouth bass, walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, channel catfish, and a variety of panfish present. A sizable lake sturgeon population exists.

Although nearly all of the shoreline is privately owned, the Chippewa River provides an excellent large, quiet river experience. The area around the confluence of the Chippewa and Flambeau Rivers is particularly scenic and could provide multiple recreation opportunities including camping, wildlife watching, and many trail uses. Between Lake Holcombe and Eau Claire, the river shoreline is more heavily developed, but is still scenic and very popular. The short stretch between Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire harbors numerous sandstone outcroppings. White cedar, hemlock and white pine are prevalent throughout this stretch.

UF Upper Forks of the Flambeau River

Size Large
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Substantial
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

This area consists of the stretches of the North and South Forks upstream from the Flambeau River State Forest. These parallel river corridors provide an opportunity to link the state forest with the Chequamegon National Forest, the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage, some county forest lands, and several large State Wildlife Areas.

The North Fork provides one of the longest river wilderness experiences in the state. Currently, river users can paddle from the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, through the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage, and down to the Flambeau River State Forest. Significant portions of this 65-mile stretch are in public ownership and managed to provide a wild setting along the water. Most of the land between the public properties is in industrial forest production, which contributes to the river's remote nature.

The South Fork of the Flambeau is much more dependent on surface water drainage with the flow varying dramatically based on precipitation. The South Fork originates in the Chequamegon National Forest and joins the North Fork in the Flambeau River State Forest. Unlike the North Fork, the private lands between the public properties are in relatively small ownership parcels with little industrial forest production.

Several very large blocks of working forest lie adjacent to and between the Upper Forks. These blocks include typical northern hardwood forests, aspen stands, bogs and the "Million Acre



Indian-pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*)

Swamp." These large blocks of forest help to maintain the ecological corridor along the North and South Forks, offer excellent outdoor recreation opportunities and provide an important source of wood fiber for paper and lumber.

UW Upper Wisconsin River

See the Northern Highlands ecological landscape.

UP Upper Wolf River

Size Large
Protection Initiated Substantial
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★★

The Wolf River is Wisconsin's largest trout water. Its beauty and significant whitewater attract anglers and paddlers from throughout the Midwest. From its headwaters in Forest County down to the Menominee Reservation, the river corridor contains excellent examples of old growth forest. The Upper Wolf offers the opportunity to link the Menominee Reservation and its tremendous natural resource base with the Nicolet National Forest.

North Central Forest *ecological landscape*

Starting in Pine Lake, the upper stretch of the Wolf River winds through several large, high quality wetlands, some of which contain wild rice. After passing through several lakes, the river gains considerable volume and speed. Although much of the immediate river corridor is in public ownership, some important stretches are not formally protected. Some of the highest quality portions are within industrial forest ownership. Enlarging the width of the protected corridor would significantly increase its ecological value.

Important tributaries include Swamp and Nine-mile Creeks, and the Hunting, Evergreen, and Lily Rivers. All contribute to the Wolf River's excellent water quality. Of particular interest to many residents is Swamp Creek, known as the Little River of Medicines by the Chippewa. The creek, the surrounding hills, and the wild rice beds—particularly the extensive beds in Rice Lake—have played central roles in the cultural, spiritual, and economic lives of the native Chippewa community. This area has been the focus of considerable interest and controversy since the announcement in 1976 of the discovery of a highly concentrated metallic mineral deposit south of Crandon.

White water rafting and kayaking are popular activities on the Upper Wolf. Between Pearson and the Menominee Reservation are dozens of rapids. The river corridor is also extensively used for trout fishing, hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching. The potential abandonment of the rail line that borders the river for several miles in Langlade County offers the opportunity to connect this corridor with the larger regional and statewide trail systems.

Although distant from this area, these waters eventually flow into Lake Winnebago, the source of water for the Oshkosh, Neenah, Menasha, and Appleton municipal water systems. As a result, water from this area may affect the raw water quality of those municipal systems, which provide drinking water for approximately 162,000 customers.

WC Weyerhaeuser Cedar Swamp

Size Small
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★
Recreation Potential ★

This is the largest remaining cedar swamp in western Wisconsin south of the Bois Brule River. The cedars grow along seepage areas a few miles south of the Blue Hills and are most likely integrally connected via groundwater. Many rare plants and Neotropical migrant birds are found here during the summer. Seepage areas and springs provide water to small streams emanating from the slopes. Recreational opportunities may be limited to low-impact activities because the land is very wet.

WF Willow Flowage

See the Northern Highlands ecological landscape.

YC Yellow (Chippewa) River

Size Medium
Protection Initiated Limited
Protection Remaining Moderate
Conservation Significance ★★★
Recreation Potential ★★

The Yellow River is a large tributary of the Chippewa River located in Chippewa and Taylor Counties. The main river harbors over 40 miles of free-flowing, medium to high gradient, riverine habitat with numerous small coldwater, coolwater and warmwater tributaries. Upland vegetation consists of deciduous and coniferous forest; lowland vegetation consists of floodplain forest, alder thicket and various other wetland communities. The surrounding area is a mixture of private recreational and agricultural land. The Yellow provides an opportunity to connect the Taylor County section of the Chequamegon National Forest with the Chippewa River corridor.

Other Areas of Interest

Big Island-Nelson Lake (Sawyer County)

Nelson Lake, a 2,500-acre flowage located in northwest Sawyer County, is famous for its walleye and panfish. A large portion of the remaining undeveloped privately-owned shoreline is found on Big Island, the largest island in this lake. This island is approximately 550 acres, about half of which is owned by Sawyer County. The shoreline, however, is primarily in private ownership that is receiving increased development pressure. The riparian edge contains typical upland to lowland plant communities except for the west side of the island where a stand of wild rice is present.

Bootjack Bog (Oneida County)

Adjacent to Chequamegon National Forest, this very large, undisturbed wetland complex contains two high quality lakes and numerous headwater streams. The area is very remote.

Couderay River (Sawyer County)

Most of the river flows through forested land, with predominantly wild shorelines. This river supports several endangered species and is a major tributary to the Chippewa River. The river drains several high quality lakes including Grindstone, Whitefish, Lac Courte Oreilles and Sand Lake in Sawyer County.

Elvoy and Brule Creeks (Forest County)

These Class I trout streams contain a native brook trout fishery with Elvoy Creek harboring the only known naturally reproducing brown trout fishery in Forest County. These creeks are very important tributaries to the Brule-Menominee River and add significantly to the system's trout fishery.

Montagne Creek Headwater Woods (Florence County)

This area contains a mosaic of mature hemlock-hardwood forest (hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch), wild lakes, old-growth cedar swamp, high quality brook trout streams, and wild rivers. The area is adjacent to the Whisker Lakes Wilderness area and is an important bird nesting area.

Mosquito Brook (Sawyer County)

This area, to the north and east of Hayward, provides excellent fishing and hunting opportunities. Mosquito Brook, a 3-mile long Class I trout stream, originates from an unnamed lake and is fed by springs along its banks. Brook trout are abundant throughout its length. The banks are forested with second growth conifers and hardwoods.

North Otter Creek (Forest County)

This is a Class I trout stream and is a very important tributary to the Peshtigo River. This stream is one of the best brook trout fisheries in Forest County. Much of this area is within industrial forest ownership.

South Fork of Main Creek (Rusk County)

This spring fed stream supports a healthy brook trout population as well as a diverse non-game fish community. The stream flows through northern hardwood and softwood forests and moderately developed agricultural lands. Parts of the existing creek have been restored through intensive in-stream habitat improvement.

Springstead Area Woods (Iron County)

This block of high quality woods, lakes, and wetlands lies between the Hay Creek-Hoffman Lakes Wildlife Area, Turtle Flambeau Flowage, and the Chequamegon National Forest. The area is heavily used by wildlife moving between these large public properties.

Weirgor Springs (Sawyer County)

Weirgor Springs form the headwaters of Little Weirgor and Beaver Creeks, two excellent trout streams. Aspen and northern hardwoods dominate the surrounding upland forests. Several spring ponds are present. The Weirgor Springs State Wildlife Area protects some of this area and could be the foundation of a protected corridor between the Blue Hills and the Couderay and Chippewa Rivers.