

Dike 17 Wildlife Area

Within the State Forest boundary lies the Dike 17 Wildlife Area. This 3,700 acre area is primarily managed for waterfowl, sharp-tailed grouse, and grassland song birds. Take a short hike to the observation tower off of North Settlement Road and keep your eyes and ears open for sandhill cranes, eagles, grasshopper sparrows and wolves. The twenty flowages of the Dike 17 area were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) crews in the 1930s. These are still maintained today and can hold such rare birds as the whooping crane or the more common Canada goose. Some endangered and threatened wildlife species which can be found are the osprey, Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, Cooper's hawk, Blanding's turtle and the Karner Blue butterfly.



The Forest

The Black River State Forest was established in 1957 after the Federal Government transferred 59,000 acres of forest land to the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Through further land purchases, the Forest has grown to its present size of approximately 68,000 acres.

The Black River State Forest has unique geological features. This area lies on the edge of the glaciated central plain of the rough coulee region or driftless area of Wisconsin. Looking east from the top of Castle Mound, one can observe what was once the bed of glacial Lake Wisconsin. Unglaciated buttes, sandstone hills, and castellated bluffs such as Castle Mound dot the forest landscape.

Through integrated resource management techniques, the Forest is managed for multiple uses such as: recreation, wildlife, woodproducts, aesthetics, biodiversity, watershed protection and fisheries.

Forest Management

Managing the Forest for wood products has been a major use for the property since the 1950's. The wood products from this Forest help support the second largest industry in Wisconsin and provide hundreds of people with jobs. The harvests of today are managed by foresters who practice sustainable forestry, unlike logging during the 1800's.

Several harvest systems are used depending on tree species involved. Jack pine, aspen and oak are all clear-cut because the young seedlings require full sunlight to get established. White pine, which is moderately shade tolerant, is selectively harvested so enough sunlight is permitted to stimulate young seedlings and to allow larger trees to grow.

Whenever possible, natural regeneration of a desirable tree species is encouraged. Where natural regeneration is inadequate or where forest areas have been devastated by fire or other disturbances, trees are planted.

