



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: Loon Lake Wildlife Area

County: Barron & Polk

Property Acreage: 3316 acres

Forestry Property Code: 0383

Master Plan Date: 1984

Part 1: Property Assessment

Loon Lake Wildlife Area is a 3,316 acre (52% wooded) property located mostly in Barron County (2908 acres) and Polk County (408 acres). It consists of rolling aspen, oak, white pine, and northern hardwood upland forest, lowland forest, stream, ponds, and several small kettle lakes. Roughly the northwest 1/3 of the property consists of open upland grassland and wet sedge meadows, with some sharecropped farmland.

General Property Description

- **Landscape and regional context**

The Loon Lake Wildlife Area is located entirely within the Forest Transition Landscape. It also lies in a landscape ecosystem subsection called the "Upper Wisconsin/Michigan Moraines: drumlinized ground moraine, ice-stagnation moraines, localized outwash; northern hardwood forest, bog." Within this subsection, the property is within the sub-subsection called "Chippewa-Green Bay Lobes; stagnation moraine with sandy soils, kettle lakes; northern forest and bogs." This sub-subsection is characterized by the following:

Bedrock Geology Precambrian bedrock within the subsection is quite diverse and includes granite, gabbro, basalt, gneiss, amphibolite, felsic, and mafic metavolcanic rock, quartzite, slate, and iron formations. Bedrock is generally overlain by glacial drift, but is locally exposed throughout the subsection. Glacial drift is up to 300 feet thick.

Landform Sub-subsection is a narrow band of stagnation moraine formed at the front of the glacier during the Wisconsin Glaciation.

Lakes and Streams Small kettle lakes are common on the moraines, but there are a few large lakes. The moraines are also headwater to several streams.

Soils Soil texture is typically sandy loam to loam, developed from either brown or red glacial drift. Wetland soils are not extensive, but peat bogs are common throughout in ice-block kettles.

Presettlement Vegetation Northern hardwoods, dominated by a mix of sugar maple, basswood, and white pine.

The landtype association is called: 212jd01 Late St. Croix Moraines

The characteristic landform pattern is rolling collapsed moraine interlaced with outwash terraces and intermixed with ice-walled lake plains. Soils are predominantly moderately



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well drained sandy loam over dense, acid sandy loam till. Common habitat types include ACaCi and AA.

- **History of land use and past management**

Loon Lake Wildlife Area was established in the 1950's or early 1960's to acquire and protect deer wintering habitat. Later, the project was expanded and open grasslands purchased for multiple use benefits such as upland game, grassland birds, waterfowl, and furbearers. The area is popular with deer, grouse, waterfowl, and pheasant hunters because of favorable habitat created by forest management and grassland/wetlands management.

Today, there is an active multiple use forest management program designed to benefit all wildlife but especially deer and ruffed grouse. Access is by foot traffic only.

Site Specifics

- Current major forest types, size classes and successional stages
 - Aspen (40%), 83% <30 years old
 - Oak (37%), 78% >75 years old
 - Swamp Hardwood (8%),
 - White Pine (8%)
 - Northern Hardwoods (4%)
- State Natural Area designations
 - Loon Lake Hardwoods SNA is located within the LLWA
- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape
 - Element occurrences of Southern Mesic Forest, Northern Dry Mesic Forest, and Northern Wet Forest are considered HCVF.
- Biotic Inventory status
 - A Rapid Ecological Assessment focusing on rare plants, selected rare animals, and high-quality natural communities has been completed.
- Deferral/consultation area designations:
 - There are no Deferral or Consultation sites present.
- Rare species
 - Several special concern plants and communities are identified in the Loon Lake Area, none considered rare.
 - NHI screening will be conducted prior to all future management activities.
- Invasive species
 - Reed canary grass and scattered buckthorn exist. The forest on east side of Crystal Lake has an expanding buckthorn infestation.

Soils

- Soils are predominantly moderately well drained sandy loam over dense, acid sandy loam till.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- No archeological or historic sites have been identified on the state database. Any forest management projects will follow manual code procedures to avoid impacts to cultural and archeological sites.



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- This property offers excellent recreational opportunities for hunting, trapping, hiking, sightseeing, and birding.

Part 2: IFMP Components (1-2 pages maximum)

Management Objectives

The primary forest management objective is to provide young forest for both game species and early successional species of greatest conservation need in the aspen areas or where opportunities exist. A second objective is to provide a fairly large block of managed semi mature hardwood (mostly oak). The third objective is to provide scattered stands of white pine for diversity, aesthetics, winter green cover.

- 1) Aspen
 - a. Promote aspen where it exists and/or appropriate
 - b. Maintain or improve age-class diversity
 - c. Enhance diversity within aspen areas by green tree retention of long lived hardwood species.
- 2) Oak/hardwood
 - a. Promote large blocks of hardwood in areas not dominated by aspen.
 - b. Thin to promote larger diameter classes.
 - c. Regenerate oak stands at maturity.

Property Prescriptions :

Aspen – Maintain and enhance aspen cover by using the coppice or coppice with standards. Favor winter harvesting for reduce soil impacts. Rotation age is generally 50 years. Stands on wet sites may be harvested as early as 45 years or stands on high quality sites may push the rotation age back to beyond 60 to achieve a better age class diversity across the property. As appropriate, snags, high quality cavity, some mast and conifer trees along with green tree retention areas will not be harvested. Concentrate retention near and between ephemeral ponds where opportunities exist.

Oak - Maintain blocks of oak or northern hardwoods where they exist. Thin stands periodically to improve stand health, species composition, and density. Generally thin stands when stand basal area reaches 120-130 square feet per acre, thinning to a variable residual basal area to between 80 and 100 square feet per acre. Force regeneration of oak stands as they reach maturity (rather than allowing conversion to northern hardwoods) utilizing two or three cut shelterwood systems combined with mechanical site preparation, prescribed burning, and possible planting or direct seeding. Management prescriptions for each site will be specific depending upon exact silvicultural, ecological, and wildlife objectives for the stand. Stands 11, 12, and 13 are the State Natural Area and will continue to be passively managed.

White Pine – Manage similar to and/or in conjunction with oak.

Swamp Hardwood – Semi – passive management, thin or regenerate as appropriate, only operable if in conjunction with timber sale activity in adjacent uplands. Monitor for insect/disease issues which may warrant more active management.

Attachments:



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Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date