



Morgan Marsh Interim Forest Management Plan

Final Signed

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: MORGAN MARSH WILDLIFE AREA

Property manager: Scott Roepke

County: JACKSON

Property Acreage: 192 acres

Forestry Property Code(s): 2709

Master Plan Date: Estimated start date for NR 44 compliant Master Plan: 2014

Property Assessment

Morgan Marsh Wildlife Area (MMWA) is a state owned property located 11 miles west of Black River Falls in the township of Franklin, western Jackson County. The property consists of oak uplands and high quality wetlands with a couple of open water potholes. The North Branch Beaver Creek, which is a class II trout stream, flows through the property.

LANDSCAPE AND REGIONAL CONTENT

Hydrology: The MMWA lies in the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape. Dendritic drainage patterns are well-developed in this mostly unglaciated Ecological Landscape. Natural lakes are restricted to the floodplains of large rivers. Large warm water rivers are especially important here, and include the Wisconsin, Chippewa, and Black. The Mississippi River forms the Ecological Landscapes' western boundary. Numerous spring-fed (coldwater) headwater streams occur here. Cool water streams are also common.

Current Land Cover: The Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape is a mosaic of forest, cropland and grassland with wetlands mostly in the river valleys. Primary forest cover is oak and hickory. Maple and basswood forests, dominated by sugar maple, basswood and red maple, are common in areas that were not burned frequently. Bottomland hardwoods dominated by silver maple, swamp white oak, river birch, ashes, elms and cottonwood are common within the floodplains of the larger rivers. Relict "northern" mesic conifer forests composed of hemlock, white pine and associated hardwoods such as yellow birch are rare but do occur in areas with cool, moist microclimates. Dry rocky bluffs may support xeric stands of native white pine, sometimes mixed with red or even jack pine. Prairies are now restricted to steep south or west facing bluffs, unplowed outwash terraces along the large rivers, and a few other sites. They occupy far less than 1% of the current landscape. Mesic tall grass prairies are now virtually nonexistent except as very small remnants along rights-of-way or in cemeteries.

HISTORY OF LAND USE AND PAST MANAGEMENT

This property was once farmed and pastured by Mr. Robert Morgan before being purchased by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Recently through the use of Duck Stamp monies, two scrapes were created within the property to provide open water for waterfowl. The primary objective is to provide hunting and trapping opportunities; common game species include: deer,



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turkey, ruffed grouse, rabbits, waterfowl, pheasants and squirrels. Maintaining wildlife diversity and healthy game species populations are achieved through habitat management.

Most stands were likely grazed and commercially logged since European settlement.

PROPERTY CONTEXT/LANDSCAPE

Contextually, MMWA is located in an area that is approximately 50% forested and 50% non-forested while the property itself is dominated by a non-forested habitat mix consisting of brush, grassland, and wetlands. Subsequently, opportunities for large block old forest management for area sensitive forest interior species are limited. However, this more fragmented setting offers great opportunities for "edge" game species and early successional "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" as identified within the state's Wildlife Action Plan. See below for species/opportunities.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

Two priority natural community types are listed in the Wildlife Action Plan's Implementation document for the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape (WCREL) that the property contains; Shrub-carr (in part typed "lowland brush" in forest recon), and Southern Dry-mesic Forest (typed "Oak" in forest recon). Species of Greatest Conservation Need associated with Shrub-carr, early successional Southern Dry-mesic forest, as well as the Alder thicket/wetlands/open water, grassland, and fields of the property include; Northern Bobwhite Quail, American Woodcock, Blue-winged Teal, four-toed salamander, Bell's Vireo (shrubs in open grassland/wetlands), Blue-winged Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Whip-poor-will, Willow Flycatcher and Pickereel Frog (all but American Woodcock are High Priority SCGN's for WCREL). Management for early successional forest, sedge meadow, shrub wetlands and open water, and warm and cool season grass fields will not only benefit these SCGN's but will also greatly benefit game species such as white-tailed deer, pheasants, turkey, ruffed grouse, blue-winged teal, quail, woodcock, and rabbits.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREA

This property does not fall within a Conservation Opportunity Area as identified within the Wildlife Action Plan's implementation document for the Western Coulees and ridges Ecological Landscape

NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY (NHI)/RARE SPECIES

No rare species are listed in the Natural Heritage Inventory database at the time of this writing.

HIGH VALUE CONSERVATION FORESTS (HVCF) OR OTHER RESOURCES/NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES LIMITED IN THE LANDSCAPE

No High Value Conservation Forests have been identified on the Morgan Marsh Wildlife Area.

BIOTIC INVENTORY STATUS

Master Plan Biotic Inventory not complete.



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CULTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (INCLUDING TRIBAL SITES)

There are no known historical or archaeological sites on this property.

RECREATIONAL USES

The property receives heavy visitation during the annual gun deer season, other uses include trapping, birding, hiking and fishing. It is especially noted for waterfowl, deer, Turkey, Pheasant and bear.

INVASIVE SPECIES

There are a few non-native and native invasive plant species that have been identified growing on the property. Honeysuckle is the only non-native invasive that has been identified. Box elder is the only native invasive that has been identified. No other invasive plants have been identified on the property at this time. Control of these invasive species needs to be considered for future forest management activities and for retaining the grass wetland cover types in their current condition or when improving the current conditions.

SOILS

Moderately eroded Council and Seaton soils are found on a majority of the upland portion of the property while the soils surrounding North Fork Beaver Creek are comprised of both Ettrick silt loam and Houghton and Palms mucks. Ettrick consists of silty alluvium and is found on the flood plain area. Houghton and Palms muck soil types have deep, nearly level, very poorly drained subsoil overlain by organic sediment and are found to the south and east of the creek bed. Other soil types found to a lesser extent on the steeper sloped upland portion property include Boone-Elevasil and Council-Elavasil-Norden complexes.

CURRENT FOREST TYPES

Morgan Marsh Wildlife Area is 192 acres of wetlands, oak, central hardwoods, aspen, and a grassy mosaic. Recon was completed in 2006 and 2013. The three largest cover types (also called timber types) are; keg/lowland areas, oak, and grasses/upland brush area.

The largest cover type is the keg and lowland brush area that comprises 76 acres or 40% of the property. This area falls along the stream that runs through the property.

The second largest cover type on the property is the oak cover type which is 63 acres or 33% of the property. 49 acres of the oak is in the large saw log size class (15 inches in diameter and larger). 5 acres of the oak stand is in the small saw log size class (11 to 15 inches in diameter). 9 acres of the oak stand is in the pole sized timber class (5-11 inches in diameter).

The third largest cover type is grass and upland brush which is 42 acres or 22% of the property.

The remaining cover types are 8 acres or 4% aspen and 2 acres or 1% red pine.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

Forest Management Objectives:



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The primary forest management objective is to provide younger forest for both game species and early successional species of greatest conservation need. A second objective of the property is to provide small blocks of old forest and scattered old trees for mast production, cavity trees and snag trees for wildlife benefit.

1. Maintain oak cover types where feasible.
 - a. Diversify age classes with emphasis on developing younger stands.
 - b. Crop tree release oak in young stands where possible.
 - c. Regenerate oak stands where feasible and promote oak in young mixed hardwood stands.
 - d. Maintain large diameter oak to benefit wildlife and as a seed source.
 - e. Increase coarse wood debris.
2. Promote other early successional forest types.
 - a. Promote aspen and birch where it exists and within other stand types.
3. All stands.
 - a. Control invasive species.
4. Wetlands.
 - a. Protect hydrology of the current wetland cover types.

Property Prescription (Identify specific and pertinent prescriptions by area or forest type, including passive management areas, extended rotation, and other information that will help achieve the objectives)

OAK- Oak is the main forest cover type within MMWA; it comprises 33% of the property. Utilize even-aged rotation constraints to 80 years for management. Maintain and promote oak through planting, scarification, thinning, coppice, over story removal, shelterwood, and other techniques described in the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook. Reserve/legacy trees should be retained as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands to maintain a component of large mast trees and promote both snag trees and coarse woody debris for wildlife.

GRASS/UPLAND BRUSH- Upland fields will be examined when recon updates occur for the potential of maintaining openings. If appropriate, fields will be maintained via prescribed fire and/or chemical/mechanical control of undesirable woody vegetation. Natural succession may be allowed to occur where desirable seed sources are present.

KEG/LOWLAND BRUSH/SEDGE MEADOW-Protect hydrology through appropriate BMP's for water quality. Assess the wetlands to determine if quality sedge meadow exists and if so, manage to maintain via methods listed under "Grass/Lowland Brush".

ALL STANDS- Control invasive plant species with a variety of methods such as mechanical and chemical treatment as well as prescribed fire.

Approvals:

Amund Barz 2/24/14
Regional Ecologist

Date



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John Z. Selmer 2-25-14
Forester Date

Scott Rappke 2-25-14
Property Manager Date

[Signature] 2-25-14
Area Team Supervisor Date

