



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Names and Designation:

New Wood State Wildlife Area/ Ice Age Trail-Lincoln/ Bill Cross State Wildlife Area

County: Lincoln

Combined Acreage: 6488

Forestry Property Code(s): 3522/3521/3506

Master Plan Date: 2020-2024

Part 1: Property Assessment

General Property Description

New Wood Wildlife Area, Ice Age Trail property, and Bill Cross Wildlife Area are located in the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape. These properties include the following Landtype Associations: 212Xd05 Jump River Ground Moraine, 212Xe09 New Wood Moraines, and 212Qc03 Merrill Outwash Plain. There are no designated Conservation Opportunity Areas associated with the property. The North Central Forest contains the best large-scale interior forest management opportunities in the state. This Landscape also offers excellent opportunities to manage areas for older forest within a context of outstanding aquatic features, intact and relatively undisturbed wetlands and vast public landholdings. Working forests could include areas with extended rotations, the development of old-growth forest characteristics and/or stands of "managed old-growth."

In the early 1900's, near the end of the pine era, the untapped potential of the vast stands of hardwoods and hemlock in Lincoln County was realized. While logging was the priority land use protection of wildlife habitat also became an important objective. New Wood Wildlife Area was established in 1945 to protect a significant deer yard, and for the management of general forest wildlife. Over time timber sales regenerated and expanded the aspen type and the New Wood State Wildlife Area became a destination for deer and grouse hunters. Other forms of compatible recreation, such as hiking and snowshoeing, are also accommodated.

A large block of the Ice Age Trail, acquired in 1999, adjoins New Wood to the west. Hunting and other compatible uses are allowed. Timber management generally follows established silvicultural guidelines with more restrictive harvest objectives in the immediate vicinity of the trail to protect aesthetic qualities. Similarly, the Bill Cross Wildlife Area, purchased in 1997, is managed to provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, fishing and other outdoor recreation while protecting the unique native communities and associated species found along the Wisconsin River.

Site Specifics

- Current forest types, age classes and successional stages
 - Aspen – A total of 1904 acres (29%) of recon is typed as aspen. Six hundred ninety-six acres are in the 0-20 age class. There is also a spike



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between 25 and 30 years that includes about 300 acres. Another 581 acres are over the recommended rotation age of 50 years.

- Northern Hardwoods - A total of 1963 acres (30%) of recon is typed as northern hardwoods. The dominant size class is 5-11" (1296 acres). The next most prevalent size class is 11-15" (635 acres).
- Oak – A 28 acre stand of oak can also be found within this property group.
- Pine – A 78-acre red pine plantation (1% of recon), and 16 acres of natural white pine (less than 1% of recon), can be found in the group.
- Most of the remaining timber is comprised of swamp conifers (804 acres) and swamp hardwoods (457 acres).
- State Natural Area designations
 - There are two stands within New Wood Wildlife Area that are candidates for State Natural Area designation: Compartment 1, Stand 41, White Cedar, 65 acres; and Compartment 1, Stand 42, Northern Hardwoods, 32 acres.
- High Value Conservation Forests (HVCF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape
 - The aforementioned cedar (Stand 41) and hardwood stands (Stand 42) also meet the criteria for High Value Conservation Forests
- Biotic Inventory – Not completed.
- Deferral/consultation area designations – No final or draft sites.
- Rare species – A rare reptile has been found within the property group.
- Invasive species – Hemp nettle and purple loosestrife have been found within the property group. They occur at low densities and are not widespread. Tartarian honeysuckle occurs sporadically as an understory component.
- Soils – Based on information included in the Land Type Association narratives, prevalent soils vary from moderately to well drained, and are classified as silt or sandy loams.

Cultural and Archeological Considerations

- The Lincoln County Archaeological and Historical Sites map (WDNR, 2012) indicates no hits on any of the properties.

Part 2: IFMP Components

Management Objectives:

1. Aspen
 - The primary objective is to regenerate this type to the extent possible for the benefit of game and nongame wildlife. Additional objectives include increasing age class diversity, expanding aspen acreage where opportunities exist, and leaving selected reserve trees as appropriate.
2. Northern Hardwoods
 - The primary objective for this type is to maintain and/or regenerate stands to enhance wildlife values, with timber production as a secondary objective.



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Depending on quality and species composition, objectives may include uneven-age and even-age management. The 32-acre stand in compartment 1 (stand 42) will continue to be managed for old growth forest characteristics.

3. Oak
 - The management objective for the oak stand is long-term maintenance with emphasis on regeneration.
4. Pine
 - Red pine stands will be managed using even-aged techniques with eventual conversion to other species/cover type. The white pine type will be maintained over the long-term.
5. Forested Wetland Species
 - Forested wetland species that comprise significant acreage in this property group include black spruce, tamarack, and black ash. The majority of these stands are not scheduled for management in the foreseeable future. At some point there may be select areas where regeneration cuts will be considered. The 65-acre stand of white cedar is being considered for Natural Area status and no management objectives are being considered.

Property Prescriptions

1. Aspen
 - Aspen will be harvested using the coppice method. To further enhance this type for wildlife large stands will be divided into smaller units and sales staggered over time to diversify age classes. As appropriate, snags, especially high value cavity and den trees, important mast trees, and selected conifers, especially supercanopy red and white pine suitable for eagle nests will be marked for retention. All non-merchantable trees 1" or greater in diameter will be felled. An exception to the regeneration objective is the narrow corridor along the Ice Age Trail. If feasible, a 100-foot buffer adjacent to the trail will be converted to longer-lived species.
2. Northern Hardwoods
 - Where uneven-age management is appropriate, selection harvests will be designed to improve stand quality by removing poor quality trees and releasing crop trees. Canopy gaps will be included to enhance regeneration of species such as yellow birch, basswood and white ash, and to enhance shrub and ground layer communities to benefit wildlife. The 32-acre stand in Compartment 1 will be managed using the Departments' old growth handbook with more emphasis on canopy gaps and preserving snags. In the case of very poor quality stands with less than 40 potential crop trees per acre, shelterwood harvesting may be utilized for regeneration. Snags, conifers, (e.g. white pine and hemlock), and other trees that have special value to wildlife will be retained..
3. Oak
 - Oak stands will be thinned to increase volume, improve quality, and maintain this important type. At rotation age a shelterwood harvest will be used to regenerate the stand.
4. Pine
 - Red pine plantations will be managed using intermediate selection thinnings until rotation age or extended rotation age. As stated, the stands will be allowed to convert to other species and/or cover type. A shelterwood harvest will be prescribed to maintain the white pine type.
5. Forested wetland species
 - As stated under Objectives no harvests are planned for the foreseeable future. However, there may be a limited number of stands with the appropriate site index



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to warrant regeneration. At some point strip cuts may be prescribed in the hope of regenerating at least part of the stand.

Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date