



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: Pierce County Islands Wildlife Area

County: Pierce

Property Acreage: 1,309

Forestry Property Code(s): 4824

Master Plan Date: Management Plan Concept Element – approved 11-15-82

Part 1: Property Assessment

General Property Description

- Landscape and regional context

The Pierce County Islands WMA lies in the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape and has the following Land type association – 212Lc08 Mississippi River Valley Train-North. The property consists of floodplain, floodplain islands and peninsulas bordering the Mississippi River and its associated backwaters adjacent to and upstream of Lake Pepin from Bay City, Wisconsin, to Redwing, Minnesota.

Ecological management opportunities on the property include management of large floodplain forests, native grassland and oak savanna maintenance/restoration, big river protection, and management/protection of wildlife, fish, herptiles, and invertebrates associated with these habitats.

- History of land use and past management - This property lies nearly entirely within the floodplain of the Mississippi River. The floodplain is impacted by frequent natural and human caused disturbances. The lock and dam system and maintenance of the 9 foot shipping channel have changed river hydrology. Commercial and recreational boat traffic accelerate erosion of floodplain islands. Portions of the property contain dikes and pools used as fish holding ponds for the once thriving commercial fishery of Lake Pepin. The introduction of reed canary grass has made it more challenging to regenerate trees and maintain flood plain plant communities. Timber harvesting has occurred on the property during and prior to state ownership. Portions of this property were transferred to the state by Pierce County. The county retains timber rights on these parcels – when appropriate timber harvests are initiated by the property manager, Pierce County (parks) receives the revenue. Wildlife staff manage a native prairie the upland portion of this property, and conduct invasive plant control as needed throughout the property.

Site Specifics

- Current forest types, size classes and successional stages:



Interim Forest Management Plan

Bottomland Hardwoods 884 Acres (80%)

- 109 Acres (12%) of sapling/small poletimber 1-20 year age class
- 37 Acres (4%) of poletimber/small sawtimber 21-40 year age class
- 138 Acres (16%) of small sawtimber 41-60 year age class
- 133 Acres (15%) of large sawtimber 61-80 year age class
- 196 Acres (22%) of large sawtimber 81-100 year age class
- 271 Acres (31%) of large sawtimber 101-120 year age class

Emergent grasses/sedges (18%)

- Oak (1%) 4 acres small sawtimber 61-80 year age class
- 7 acres of small sawtimber/poletimber 41-60 year age class

GG – native grasses (1%) 10 acres

CH (<1%) 6 acres 0-5 year age class

- State Natural Area designations – Non applicable
- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape-
- Biotic Inventory status: not conducted
- Deferral/consultation area designations (refer to the following website): Non applicable
- Rare species – The NHI data base has a number of hits for this property. Most of the NHI hits are aquatic species. Numerous bald eagle pairs nest on the wildlife area and seem well acclimated to human activity on and near the property.
- Invasive species – Reed canary grass, black locust, buckthorn, honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and purple loosestrife are known to occur on this property.
- Soils - The Pierce County Islands Wildlife Area lies in the Sparta-Plainfield Association. The soils are predominantly Algansee-Kalmarville Complex (loamy and silty) and Scotah Loamy Fine Sand, occurring on the flood plain of the Mississippi. The soils on the river terrace are Finchford Loamy Sand and Rasset Sandy Loam.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- Cultural and archeological sites (including tribal sites)

One known (circa turn of century – 1900 – recon work) archeological site exists (or existed) on this property. Past agricultural activity severely disturbed this site.

Remnants of the Lake Pepin commercial fishery occur on this property – dikes, former fish holding ponds, an artesian well, etc.

- Recreational

This property receives significant fishing, boating, and hunting use.



Interim Forest Management Plan

Part 2: IFMP Components

Management Objectives:

1) Sustain healthy forests with high scenic quality.

- Habitat: Retain floodplain forest. Provide habitat for a variety of wildlife and plants, including maintaining habitat for species of older forests and creating habitat for early successional species. This will benefit both common and rare species.
- Aesthetics: Encourage the growth of large diameter trees.
- Forest Health:
 - 1) Regenerate the forest and seek opportunities that enhance or maintain the overall health and vigor of the riparian forest ecosystem.
 - 2) Apply Forestry Best Management Practices for Invasive Species to manage invasive plant and animal species.
- Water quality: Apply Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality to sustain the water resources.
- Recreation: Maintain quality floodplain forest habitat that sustains and enhances hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, hiking, etc.
- Education and research: Provide opportunities for interpretation, education, and scientific research.

Property Prescriptions (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):

- 1) Floodplain Forest – Maintain floodplain forest. Complete intermediate thinning in younger stands to develop large diameters, and maintain tree health to extend biological rotation ages. Rotation ages will be extended to the extent possible to grow large diameter trees. Strive to achieve successful regeneration through harvests that maintain sufficient canopy to prevent infestation of sites by reed canary grass. Look for opportunities to release and manage established regeneration where it occurs. Manage to reduce the proportion of green ash in stands in anticipation of emerald ash borer infestation. Maintain some super canopy cottonwood for potential nest trees for bald eagle. Islands that are inaccessible for active management will develop old growth characteristics. Sapling bottomland hardwood stands dominated by willow will provide early successional habit.
- 2) Oak- A small upland (non-flood plain) oak stand adjacent to native grassland was recently thinned to create a savanna like distribution of trees. An intermediate aged oak/central hardwood stand will be managed to favor oak, especially bur oak (long-lived).



Interim Forest Management Plan

Approvals:

Armond D. Barty 2/19/2013
Regional Ecologist Date

Dave Giff 2-19-2013
Forester Date

[Signature] 02/19/2013
Property Manager Date

Harvey Hakosa 2-19-2013
Area/Team Supervisor Date