



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation : Rice Beds Creek Wildlife Area

County: Polk

Property Acreage: 3134 acres (recon acres)

Forestry Property Code(s): 4986

Master Plan Date: 1985 (last update)

Part 1: Property Assessment

Rice Beds Creek Wildlife Area is a 3,134 acre (73% wooded) property located in Polk County. It consists of rolling oak, aspen, and maple upland forest, lowland forest, stream, and ponds.

General Property Description

- **Landscape and regional context**

The Rice Beds Creek 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:

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.

The landtype association is called: 212jd01 Lake 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 well drained sandy loam over dense, acid sandy loam till. Common habitat types include ACaCi and AA.

It is within the Straight Lake Conservation Opportunity Area.



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

Rice Beds Creek Wildlife Area was established in 1951 to acquire and protect deer wintering habitat. Later, the project was expanded for multiple use benefits such as upland game, waterfowl, and furbearers. The area is popular with deer and grouse hunters because of favorable habitat created by forest management.

There is an active multiple use forest management program designed to benefit all wildlife but especially deer and ruffed grouse. A logging road that goes south from the main parking lot on Hwy G provides access to the property by foot traffic only.

Site Specifics

- Current forest types, size classes and successional stages
 - Aspen (33%), 79% <30 years old
 - Oak (34%), 99% >75 years old
 - Swamp Hardwood (31%),
- State Natural Area designations
 - None
- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape
 - Rice Beds Creek WA has a wide array of unique community associations that serve as habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. HCVF locations have not been designated at this time.
- Biotic Inventory status
 - A Rapid Ecological Assessment focusing on rare plants, selected rare animals, and high-quality natural communities has not been completed.
- Deferral/consultation area designations:
 - There are no Deferral or Consultation sites present.
- Rare species
 - Numerous special concern plants and communities are identified in the Rice Beds Creek Area, none considered rare.
- Invasive species
 - No major problems are identified. Reed canary grass and scattered buckthorn exist. Additional invasive species surveys are needed.
 - NHI screening will be conducted prior to all future management activities.
- 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. Old home/farm sites (early 20th century) are present. Any forest management projects will follow manual code procedures to avoid impacts to cultural and archeological sites.
- This property offers excellent recreational opportunities for hunting, trapping, hiking, sightseeing, and birding.



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Part 2: IFMP

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 a largely unmanaged area of swamp hardwood as mature old forest.

- 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

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 60 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 in the current rotation.

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 125-130 square feet per acre, thinning to a variable residual basal area to between 80 and 100 square feet per acre. Management prescriptions for each site will be specific depending upon exact silvicultural, ecological, and wildlife objectives for the stand.

Swamp Hardwood – Passive management will prevail in this type unless specific wildlife objectives need to be met or insect/disease issues warrant more active management. In the future there may be areas where regeneration harvests should be considered to maintain those types.

Attachments:





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Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date