



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation
Totagatic River Wildlife Area

Counties:
Sawyer, Washburn

Property Acreage: **2719**

Forestry Property Code: **5833**

Master Plan Date: **1981**

Part 1: Property Assessment

General Property Description

- Landscape and regional context
Totagatic Wildlife Area (Washburn and Sawyer Counties) is located within the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape, and is associated with both the Frog Creek Moraines (212Xf05) and the Hayward Moraines (212Xf04) Land type Associations. The local landscape is dominated by forested uplands with a significant component of both forested and unforested wetlands. The property is located in an area with large tracts of County Forest in 4 different counties, although nearby Nelson Lake has a developed shoreline in private ownership. The Totagatic River flows through the property, which eventually drains into the Namekagon River system.

This property is not part of a Conservation Opportunity Area or Wisconsin Important Bird Area.

- History of land use and past management
Acquisition of Totagatic Wildlife Area began in 1941 and was completed in 1951. This project was funded originally through the Pittman-Robertson Act as a waterfowl restoration area. A 600 ft. dike and 70 foot dam were completed in 1953 which flooded approximately 1000 acres with about 400 acres of open water. Fifteen miles of roads were constructed on the property to improve access and provide fire breaks. A 35 acre impoundment was created on the south edge of the property in 1956 to improve muskrat habitat and nesting islands were created here for waterfowl. Boat landing were built at both ends of the flowage to provide public access. The dam was modified in 1960 to add one tier of stop logs. Minor repairs were made to the dam in 1973 and a proposal is currently in the works to replace the deteriorating water control structure. The flowage is now used more heavily for fishing than waterfowl hunting and is a popular place in spring and fall for viewing migrating waterfowl. Osprey nesting platforms have been placed on the property. Currently hunting, trapping, fishing, snowshoeing, bird watching, and canoeing are the main recreational activities taking place on the property. Cross country skiing takes place on the property although there are no groomed trails. Snowmobiles and ATV's are allowed only on designated county routes.



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Site Specifics

- **Current forest types, size classes and successional stages**
 - ***Aspen** (30%) – 341 acres – 7% in the 1-5 year age class, 9% in the 6-10 year age class, 15% in the 11-15 year age class, 17% in the 16-20 year age class, 25% in the 26-30 year age class, 5% in the 31-35 year age class, 23% in the 36-40 year age class.
 - ***White Birch** (1%) -15 acres in the 26-30 year age class.
 - ***Northern Hardwoods** (50%) - 567 acres all uneven aged stands.
 - ***Swamp Conifer** (3%) 29 acres in the 91-95 year age class.
 - ***Swamp Hardwoods** (17%) – 49% in the 61-65 year age class, 51% in the 81-85 year age class.

- State Natural Area designations
There are no SNA designations within this property.
- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape
Hardwood stands in older age classes are currently underrepresented in the local landscape.
- Biotic Inventory status
- Biotic Inventory has not taken place on the property
- Deferral/consultation area designations
- There are no Deferral or Consultation Sites present on the property
- Rare species
Two species of Special Concern birds are known to nest on the property.

An NHI screening will be conducted prior to all future management activities.

- Invasive species
Spotted knapweed, lesser amounts of honey suckle present.
- Soils From the LTA descriptions:

Well drained and moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained loamy soils with a silt loam surface over non-calcareous loamy sand till, along with very poorly drained nonacid organic soils.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- Cultural and archeological sites (including tribal sites)
There are no historical or archeological sites listed for this property on the Archeological Sites Inventory.



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Part 2: IFMP Components

Management Objectives:

Aspen

The primary objective is to regenerate this type using even-age management methods to the extent possible to benefit game and non-game wildlife. Age class diversity will be maintained and green tree retention practices will be observed as appropriate. Special focus will be given to retaining conifer species and oak wherever possible to improve stand diversity, cover, and mast production for wildlife. Efforts will be made to allow succession to northern hardwoods or conifer cover within a 150' riparian zone of the Totagatic Wild River downstream of the Duck Pond Road dam.

White Birch

The birch stand will be managed using even aged techniques. This stand may be considered a seed source to promote white birch regeneration. Aesthetic value will be taken into account at time of harvest, and green tree retention practices will be observed as appropriate.

Northern Hardwoods

Regenerate stands utilizing uneven-aged or even-aged management techniques to increase wildlife values, nesting and cavity trees, and species diversity. Timber production will be a secondary value.

Swamp Conifer

Provide bedding and nesting cover, as well as cavity trees for wildlife. Even and uneven aged techniques will be used.

Swamp Hardwoods

Regenerate stand using uneven-aged or management techniques to increase wildlife values, nesting and cavity trees, and species diversity. Timber production will be a secondary value.

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): **The DNR Silvicultural Handbook and this IFMP will be the primary guiding documents resource managers will utilize to determine objectives and prescriptions for individual stands within the property. A wide host of additional resources including, but not limited to, the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan, Wisconsin Best Management Practices for Water Quality, and the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory, Historical and Archeological Inventory will be utilized on a regular basis to plan for the management of individual stands, as well as the property as a whole. The prescriptions listed below are guidance for future management, but will not preclude utilization of other appropriate commonly accepted forestry management prescriptions that will enhance the goals and objectives for this property.**



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Aspen/White Birch

Aspen stands will primarily be harvested through even-aged coppice regeneration cuts. Larger stands will be divided to increase age class diversity and edge cover. Green tree retention will be practiced in this stands while also focusing on snag and den/cavity tree retention. Concentrate retention near and between ephemeral ponds. Retain all large pine and oak, and protect areas of advanced regeneration of these species. Routinely, all non-merchantable trees greater than 1" will be felled to encourage aspen regeneration. A 150' riparian management zone will be created along the Totagatic River to succeed to conifer or northern hardwoods to discourage beaver activity and protect the watershed. Aesthetic value of white birch and potential seed source will be considered for future white birch regeneration in adjacent stands at time of harvest.

Northern Hardwoods

Northern hardwood stands will generally be managed by uneven-aged selection (single tree or group selection) harvests to encourage long term multi-aged diversity. Gaps will be created to encourage age class diversity and edge cover. Promote oak, yellow birch and hemlock where opportunities exist. Snags, cavity trees, and other trees that have special value to wildlife will be retained.

Swamp Conifer

Even-aged management techniques will be used to manage these stands under frozen ground conditions only. These stands are extremely valuable to the property due to increased diversity and cover for wildlife, and the wide range of understory shrubs and plants found here.

Swamp Hardwoods Management of swamp hardwood stands will be implemented according to a variety of methods as described in the DNR Silvicultural Handbook, with the primary goal being to enhance wildlife habitat. Focus will be given to retaining den/cavity trees and other individual trees of high value to wildlife. Harvest will take place under frozen ground conditions only.

Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date