



# Interim Forest Management Plan

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## Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area (TFSWA)

County(ies): Iron

Property Acreage: 35,602.81

Forestry Property Code(s): 2615

Master Plan Date: March 23, 1995

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## Part 1: Property Assessment (1-2 pages maximum)

### General Property Description

- Landscape and regional context  
Located in Southern Iron County, the TFSWA lies mostly within the Northern Highland Ecological Landscape with a small portion in the northwest corner in the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape. Soils are mostly sands and gravel with some sandy loam in the North Central Forest portion. The many wetlands consist of organic peat or muck. The TFSWA consists of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage (~14,500 acres of water) and surrounding upland/wetland. The Flowage includes approximately 327 miles of shoreline and 314 islands. In surface area, the Flowage ranks as Wisconsin's seventh largest body of water. Three major inlet streams feed the Flowage: Turtle River from the north, and the Manitowish and Bear Rivers from the east. The outlet becomes the Flambeau River.
- History of land use and past management  
The Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company (CFIC) created the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage in 1926 to serve as a water retention reservoir providing flood control and a dependable supply of water for down-stream hydroelectric generating stations. The Flowage flooded 16 named lakes and many acres of upland. Limited management of forest, fish and wildlife resources existed until the 1970's. In 1974, CFIC completed a forest inventory and found that the majority of upland timber was mature aspen and white birch. In the early 1980's, the department became more actively involved in managing the Flowage and surrounding lands. A "Turtle-Flambeau Flowage Management Plan", developed jointly by the DNR and CFIC, was completed in 1989. The plan addressed forestry, fish, wildlife, endangered resources management and recreational concerns. A recommended management and development program was outlined and was the basis for management until the time the DNR acquired the Flowage from CFIC in 1990 and 1991. The initial acquisition of 22,343 acres consisted of Flowage bottom and surrounding shoreline.

### Site Specifics

- Current forest types, size classes and successional stages  
Currently, 17,092 acres are forested with 8,655 acres of that scheduled for management. Of the total forested acres, 35% consists of aspen in varying age classes with the majority in the 25-45 year range. Northern Hardwood comprises 23%, swamp conifer 17%, and white birch comprises 5%. The northern hardwood is primarily second growth pole-timber. The white birch is mostly mature, older than 60 years and located mostly on islands. The majority of the swamp conifer exceeds 100 years old. Other forest types include balsam fir, hemlock, oak, swamp hardwood, and red and white pine.



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- State Natural Area designations

Two state natural areas exist within the boundaries of the Turtle Flambeau SWA: the Turtle Flambeau Flowage Patterned Bog and the Flambeau Wetlands. As their name implies, these are mostly wetland areas. The Patterned Bog does include some aspen and white birch upland. Salvage harvests have occurred in the aspen/white birch in consult with the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape

The Turtle Flambeau SWA current master plan identifies those areas that qualify as HCVF. At the time the master plan was written, HCVF was not a term used so the master plan identifies these areas as Natural in its Land Classification section. There are seven different areas identified as Natural in the current master plan. Two of these are natural, large pine stands although one of them was essentially ruined in the tornado of 2010 with many of the pine snapped off or uprooted. Four of the areas are hemlock stands that are large diameter and older than 100 years. Unfortunately, three of these areas were also ruined in the tornado of 2010 with virtually every hemlock snapped off or uprooted. The other area is the state designated Turtle Flambeau Flowage Patterned Bog area. These areas currently do not allow timber harvesting.

- Biotic Inventory status

No Report available.

- Deferral/consultation area designations (refer to the following website):

Not Completed.

- Rare species

Many species of greatest conservation need call the Turtle Flambeau SWA home. Some are directly tied to the water (black duck, blue-winged teal, black tern, trumpeter swan) while others are migrants and pass through (wood thrush, Connecticut warbler, Kentucky warbler, Canada warbler, and moose). Northern goshawk, osprey, and bald eagle all nest on the TFSWA. When nests are identified, the necessary steps are taken to protect the nests from timber harvests. Other bird species on the list associate with mature northern hardwoods. The current master plan states that 4-5 den trees per acre are left standing and that valuable food trees such as oak, cherry, and ironwood be left uncut. Woodcock will benefit from aspen regeneration cuts which are allowed in the Backlands and on the Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Area. The Eastern red bat and northern flying squirrel will benefit from the northern hardwood management indicated in the current master plan (retaining den trees and retaining some large diameter over-mature hardwood). The gray wolf moves about the TFSWA and benefits from timber sales where its prey species become congregated during the winter. Any known den or rendezvous sites will be protected.

- Invasive species

Currently, spotted knapweed in the established prairie on the Little Turtle Wildlife Management Area is the only known terrestrial invasive. On the prairie this is being treated with Milestone by pesticide certified DNR employees. Spotted knapweed is present on some old logging roads but as the tree cover grows over, this should be reduced. Requiring clean machines before logging would help prevent invasives from taking hold. Purple loosestrife locations on the Flowage have been increasing but some larger patches have decreased in size in response to aggressive treatment with Habitat herbicide in recent years.

## Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- Cultural and archeological sites (including tribal sites)

There are no known cultural or archaeological sites. Several intense surveys on different parts of the TFSWA have been conducted for various projects resulting in no findings. The potential does exist, particularly in areas close to the original lake and stream beds.



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## Part 2: IFMP Components (1-2 pages maximum)

### **Management Objectives** (Outline primary forest management objectives):

The primary goal of the TFSWA is to preserve the “wild” scenic character of the flowage. The TFSWA will be managed to achieve wildlife and aesthetic objectives. The role of forest management on the property will not be timber production, but to facilitate these aesthetic and wildlife management objectives. Vegetative management prescriptions will be based on information derived from available tools such as the Habitat Type Classification System. In general, the western portion of the TFSWA is well suited for northern hardwood management and the eastern portion for pine, aspen, and white birch.

Project lands have been divided into three distinct vegetative management zones: shoreline, viewshed, and backland. The shoreline and viewshed zones are classified as Scenic Areas. Vegetative management is restricted in the Natural and Wild areas and contributes aesthetic value.

The viewshed zone consists of any areas outside the shoreline zone which are visible from the Flowage as well as a strip of land extending 150 feet on either side of all public roads. This zone is managed with primary consideration given to aesthetics. Only selection or salvage harvests are allowed.

The backland zone consists of those areas not visible from the water and more than 150 feet from public roads. These will be managed to promote a diversity of wildlife habitat. Only winter logging will be allowed in eagle and osprey nest territories and erosion-sensitive areas. Timber types will be maintained and/or encouraged on those sites where, according to the Habitat Type Classification System, the type can effectively be maintained or encouraged and is consistent with the objectives in the zone. Management prescriptions will be based on the ecological capabilities of each site, not on the existing vegetation types.

The Deadhorse Lake Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Area implements management practices that complement forest wildlife habitat, especially ruffed grouse. Aspen rotations will not be extended and will be such that a diversity of age classes is maintained. Red oak will be planted on suitable sites to enhance acorn production.

### **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):

**Aspen/White Birch** – Aspen will be retained for its wildlife benefits through regeneration cuts. Clear cuts are limited to 40 acres at any one location. In areas other than the Deadhorse Lake Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Area, the aspen will be managed for maximum rotation while maintaining vigor for sprouting (minimum 60 years of age). Ironwood, cherry, oak, and scattered pine and hemlock will be kept for additional wildlife benefits. Birch will be retained as long as possible for its scenic values and managed using sound silvicultural practices.

**Northern Hardwood** – This type will be managed through an uneven-aged system using selection harvests. To maximize benefits for wildlife, 4-5 den trees per acre will be left standing. Valuable food trees such as cherry, oak, and ironwood should be left uncut. Non-commercial thinnings may include girdling to promote standing, dead and snag-trees for woodpecker, small mammal, and songbird habitat.

**Red Oak** – On appropriate sites, red oak will be maintained through seed tree or shelterwood harvests. Controlled burning or other appropriate techniques may be used where feasible to promote and maintain these stands.

**White and Red Pine** – These stands should utilize big tree management. Where natural stands of white pine exist, utilize appropriate management to maintain these stands. The red pine stands on TFSWA are planted stands and should utilize big tree management as well. Carry these stands to maximum rotation.



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Hemlock-Hardwoods – These few sites will be maintained wherever site conditions allow. Summer logging, thinning or controlled burning may be required to provide the necessary conditions for regeneration.

Fir/Spruce – If a component of aspen is present, the site may be more suited for aspen management and managed as such. If pure fir/spruce, consult with wildlife management prior to management to determine suitability of harvesting. This type is valuable for snowshoe hare, American marten, fisher, and ruffed grouse.

Swamp Conifer – Where feasible these sites may be harvested but only after consult with wildlife management and their consent.

Swamp Hardwood – Primarily black ash, this type may be managed using appropriate Silviculture methods.

Approvals:

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Regional Ecologist Date

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Forester Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area/Team Supervisor Date