



**Brule River State Forest
Douglas County, WI
Master Plan Variance
Proposed
December, 2011**



PROPERTY NAME

Brule River State Forest

DATE MASTER PLAN WAS APPROVED

May 2003

Proposed Change(s) to the Master Plan

Authorize the removal of 300-400 small diameter trees in Land Management Area 13, along Town roads surrounding state owned property including the west side of Lake Minnuesing, Minnuesing Acres Road, Bennett Road, and Park Road to enhance scenic qualities by promoting larger longer live tree species including oak, pine and hemlock and encourage release and regeneration of pine and hemlock, and to use the removed trees as woody material for a fish shoreline habitat project on Lake Minnuesing.

Approved: _____

Administrator, Division of Forestry

Date: _____

5/15/12

Purpose and Need for the Plan Change

The proposed management activity is consistent with the objectives of Area 13 but a specific prescription is not included in the master plan. The master plan prescriptions only include thinning pine plantations in area 13.

Long term management Objectives – Area 13 (Master Plan 2003)

- o Maintain an older forest of primarily shade tolerant species such as northern hardwoods and hemlock for the scenic values
- o Monitoring Hemlock and white pine regeneration to determine if small scale management actions are necessary to keep these species as a component of the forest.

The proposed prescription is consistent with the objectives of the area and will enhance scenic qualities by increasing the vigor of large longer lived tree species including oak and pine. In addition, the management activity will create growing space to allow for regenerating hemlock and pine and release existing small diameter suppressed pine, hemlock. Basal area measurements will not fall below 60 square feet for any area that trees will be removed

In addition to the scenic and ecological benefits above, the proposed management activity will provide woody material for an approved shore land fish habitat restoration project on Lake Minnuesing.

The following paragraph is a description of proposed fish habitat project which is to occur on Lake Minnuesing, for which the woody material is proposed to be provided from the Brule River State Forest lands adjacent to the habitat project site

The trees to be used for this project will range in diameter from 4 inches to 12 inches, including all species found within the area. Red maple, red oak, ash, and balsam fir are the most prevalent species that will be used on this project. Trees to be used will be cut adjacent to town roads and existing woods trails, within reach of cables to the roadways, from which vehicles will be used to pull trees to the lake. There will be limited off roadway vehicle operation for this project.

Wood habitat complexes will be placed in near shore areas of Lake Minnuesing. These complexes will be constructed from natural materials with the exception of cables to secure trees to bank. The trees will then be secured with a cable to a tree on the bank. The live tree on the bank will be protected from the cable by a section of rubber hose which the cable will run through. Wood habitat complexes will be placed on the ice with a skid loader that will also haul the trees from upland locations. The project is proposed to begin when ice conditions are adequate. A majority of the trees are to come from state property located along Minnesuing Acres Drive. Approximately 3,200 feet of shoreline are planned in three sections for woody habitat restoration. The project will remain at least 75 feet away from boat launches so as not to restrict navigation.

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How the supportive plan change is supported by or inconsistent with the property objectives or prescriptions.

The proposed action is consistent with meeting the future desired condition of area 13 but a specific prescription is not included in the master plan. The master plan prescriptions only include thinning pine plantations in area 13.

Removing small diameter short lived trees will create space for large long lived tree species to grow and thrive. Space will be created to allow for regenerating hemlock and pine and release existing small diameter suppressed pine, hemlock, and provide growing space around existing large oak trees to increase future diameter growth.

Anticipated benefits of the proposed plan change

Increase tree vigor of desirable long lived aesthetically pleasing tree species.
Create space for hemlock and pine release and regeneration.
Provide trials for management techniques to increase pine and hemlock regeneration.
Provide coarse woody material for fish habitat project.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts and

Stocking levels will be slightly lower, but no lower than 60 sq feet basal area, for a short time frame until additional trees fill in and grow.

Trees will be removed in full including all branches and tops to provide fish habitat. NHI was checked for the presence of rare species in the area of the project. Four-Toed Salamanders are listed as occurring within the project area. Of primary concern for this species is the presence of ephemeral ponds and the area surrounding them. Canopy cover will be retained in the vicinity of ephemeral ponds, and all snags and coarse woody debris will be left in all areas of the project, in order to eliminate any impacts to Four Toed Salamanders

Summary of Alternatives considered

Utilizing trees harvested from a different area. Using trees from development projects that required the removal of trees and hazard trees in developed recreation areas. These alternatives associated with hauling distances were not selected given the operational expense

COMPATIBILITY WITH STATUTES, CODES, AND DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The proposed master plan variance is compatible with NR 44.04(a) which reads as follows:

NR 44.04

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(d) "Master plan variance" or "plan variance" means a change in management activity or use described in the master plan that is consistent with the area's land management classification and does not constitute a change in an objective for management or public use of the area as specified in the plan.

The Public Review Process Used:

Information was posted on the Brule River State Forest master plan webpage and presented at the Brule River State Forest public open house meeting on December, 17, 2011. The property superintendent emailed interested and affected stakeholders to inform them of the variance and to solicit comments. Further direct outreach to adjacent landowners and friends group was initiated by the property manager.

Description of the Support and/or Opposition to the Proposed Variance (including reasons for the various positions taken) and Any Unresolved Issues or Concerns:

There were no formal comments submitted in support or opposition. Informal comments at the public meeting and with key stakeholders indicate support for the management direction.

