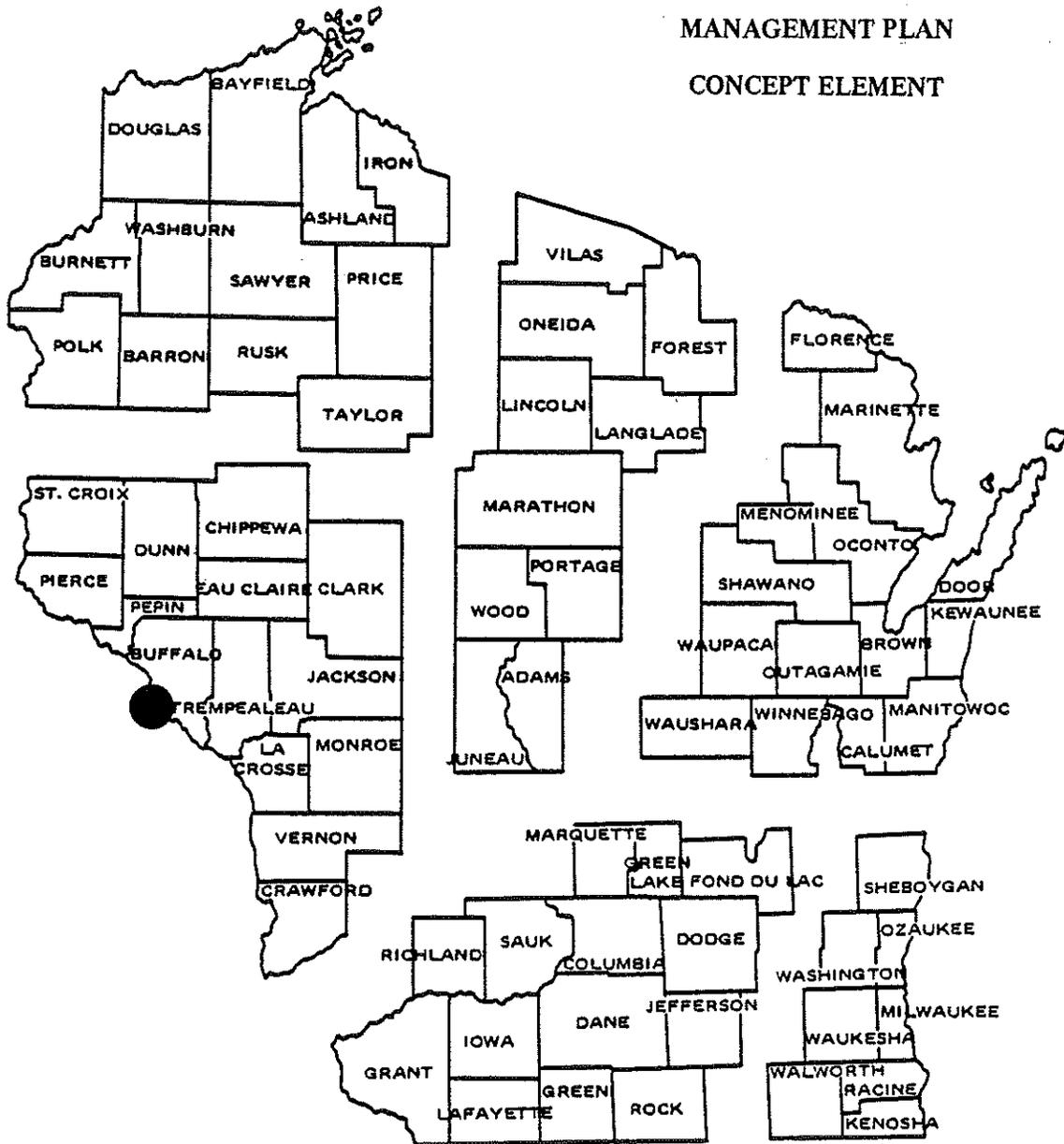


WHITMAN DAM WILDLIFE AREA

MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

- Leader: Dave Linderud - Wildlife Manager
- Mike Talbot - Fish Manager
- Kermit Traska - Park Manager
- Richard Mertig - Land Agent
- Edwin Godel - Forester
- Jim Everson - Conservation Warden

Approved By: *[Signature]*
Date: Oct. 26, 1981

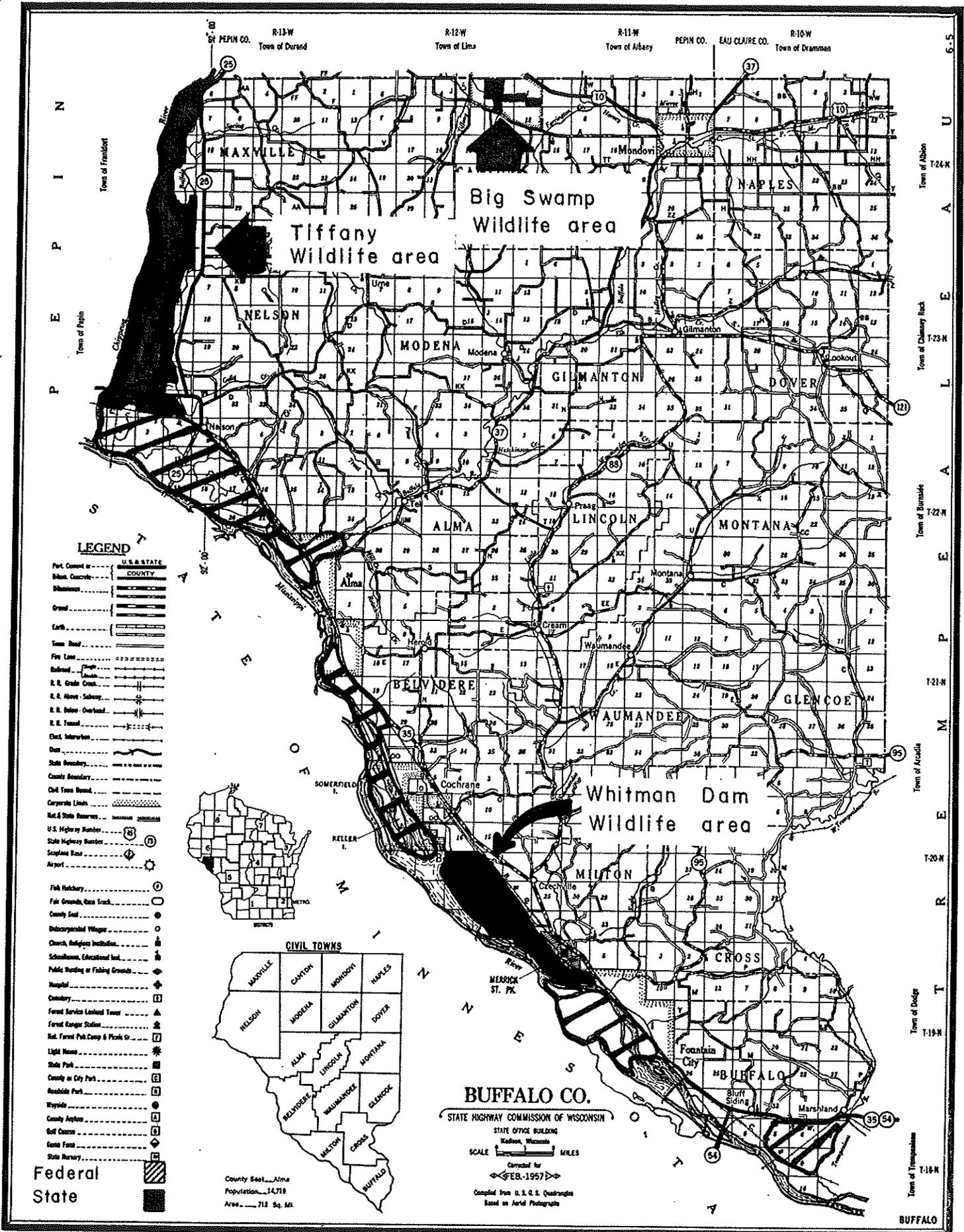


FIGURE 1 LOCATOR

BUFFALO
T-24-N
T-23-N
T-22-N
T-21-N
T-20-N
T-19-N
T-18-N

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Section I - Actions

GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Goal:

To manage a state-owned wildlife area for the benefit of fish and wildlife and for compatible recreation and education opportunities.

Annual Objectives:

1. Provide 5,100 participant days of hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities as follows:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Participant Days</u>
Waterfowl	1,000
Deer (gun and bow)	300
Small game	500
Trapping	300
Fishing	3,000

2. Maintain a minimum beaver population of 100 animals.
3. Produce two ducks per acre on 500 acres of permanent brood water.
4. Provide for 350 participant days of dog training.
5. Protect and maintain one great egret/great blue heron rookery.
6. Protect and maintain a 160 acre Scientific Area.

Annual Additional Benefits:

1. Provide 750 participant days of other recreation use such as canoeing, photography, nature study, sandbar picnicking, and other compatible activities.
2. Contribute to the habitat of all indigenous fish and wildlife as well as migratory species.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Activities: The majority of the land within the Whitman Dam Wildlife Area is floodplain forest and marsh along the backwaters of the Mississippi River (Figure 2). Upland fringes along the northern and eastern property boundary has the best potential for wildlife management activities that create habitat diversity for resident plant and animal species.

Open uplands in close proximity to wetlands will be maintained in permanent grass as waterfowl nesting cover (Figure 3). Dense nesting cover, such as switch grass or other native warm season grasses, will be established as funding permits. Controlled burning, mowing, and limited herbicide applications will be necessary for grassland management. Some existing agricultural land will be sharecropped to provide winter food for wildlife. Remaining open land will be planted to trees and shrubs.

Access development into the northern half of property will remain limited. The boat landing at the end of the state's access road on Indian Creek will remain unimproved. Eroding creek banks will be riprapped and a turnaround enlarged to help reduce congestion. Boat launching ramps do not need to be developed because adequate facilities exist within the immediate vicinity. Large boats can presently be launched at public sites in Merrick State Park and on adjacent reaches of the Mississippi River at Fountain City, Wisconsin, Spring Lake, Wisconsin, and at Bass Camp, Minnesota. These sites and private commercial ramps at Indian Creek village provide access for large boats to most of the navigable waters in the area. A parking lot in the northeast corner of the property will be developed when additional land is purchased.

An aerial beaver survey will be conducted each fall to estimate the beaver population. About 50 wood duck houses will be erected and maintained on the backwaters of the wildlife area. Boundary posting, fencing, parking lots, and other access points will be maintained as needed.

A Scientific Area consisting of 160 acres of southern wet mesic forest will be protected and maintained for scientific, educational, recreational, and aesthetic purposes.

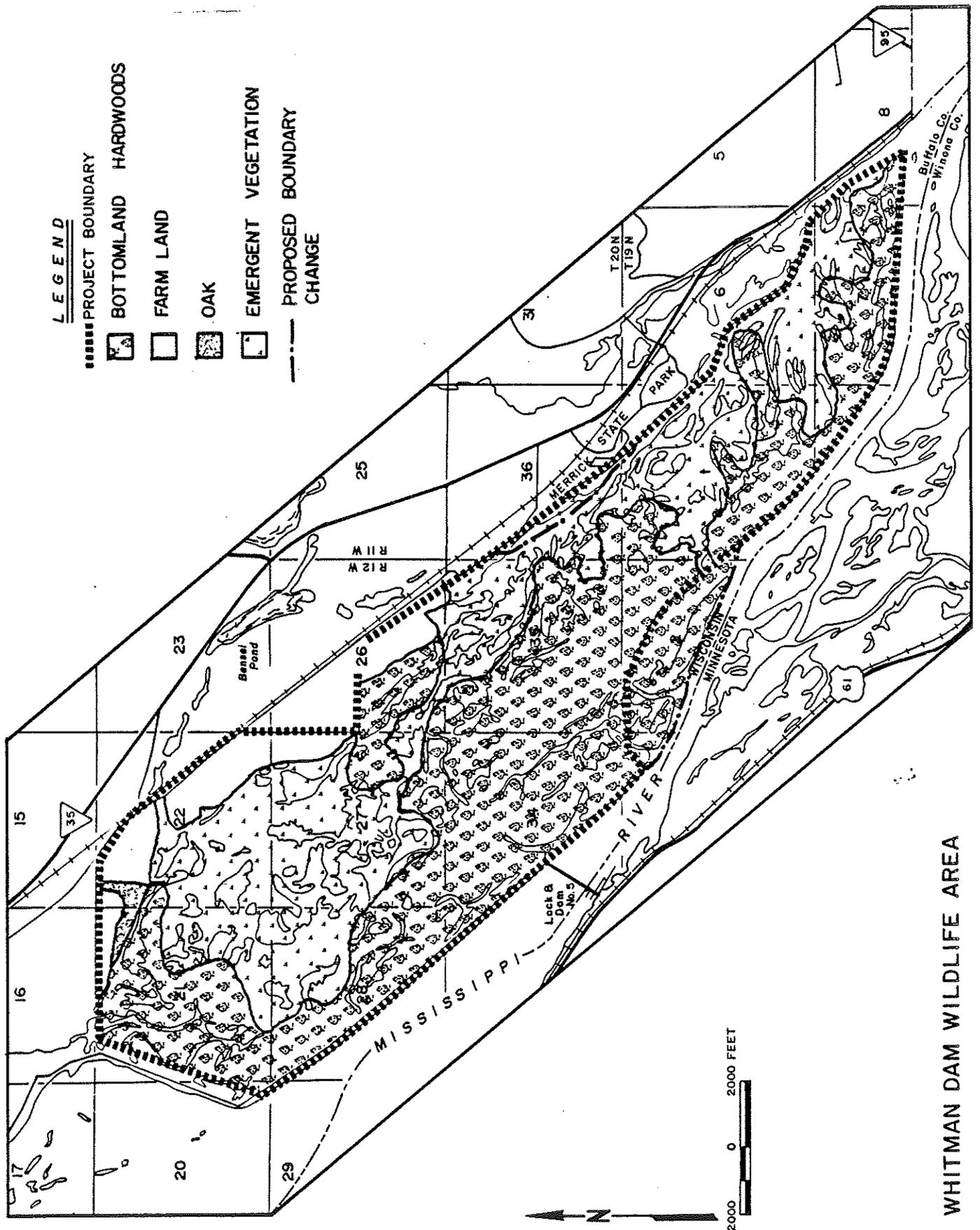


FIGURE 2 VEGETATION

WHITMAN DAM WILDLIFE AREA

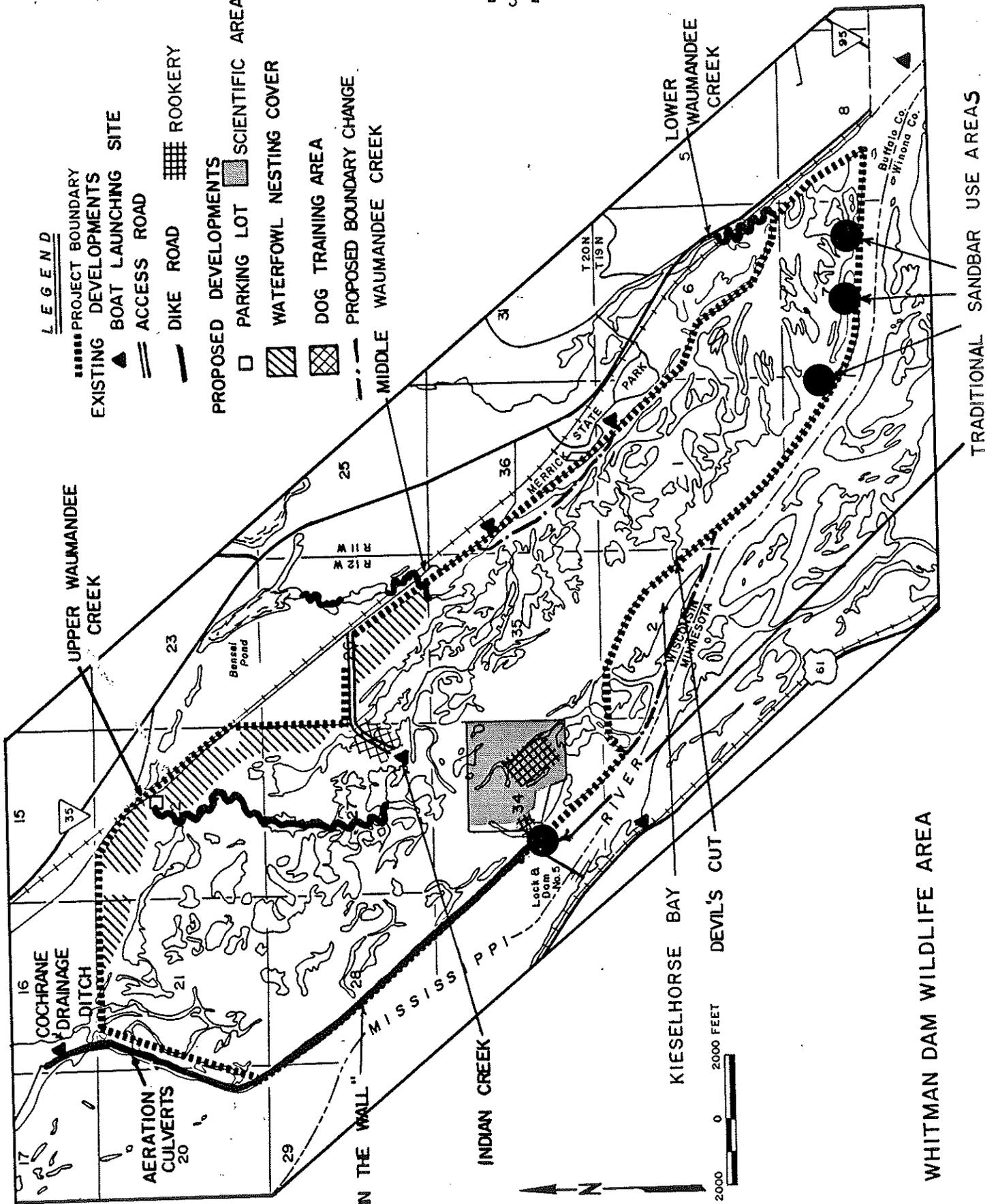


FIGURE 3 EXISTING AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

A large heron/egret rookery located near Lock and Dam #5 will be posted to prohibit human intrusion during the spring nesting season. The population has been declining over the last four years and disturbance during the breeding season may be one of the most significant problems. The potential for establishing a double-crested cormorant colony will also be explored.

Fish management personnel will periodically inventory fish population status and commercial and sport fishing harvest. Water quality parameters critical to supporting a healthy fishery resource will also be monitored. When conditions warrant, management activities including water flow manipulation, bank stabilization, and development of instream structures that improve or protect fish habitat will be implemented to maintain 3,000 participant days of fishing.

A dog training area for retrievers will be developed along the access road into Indian Creek. Some brush and tree clearing will have to be done to improve visibility and access to the water areas. The training area will be posted annually. At the present time, additional water areas and suitable upland areas for dog training do not exist on state land. Additional water and upland area for dog training will be developed when suitable land is acquired within the boundary.

Some logging is anticipated to remove overmature lowland hardwood species. Swamp white oak is found frequently in the northern section of the wildlife area and will be favored in management for its wildlife benefits. To effectively harvest the timber, an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers will be required to use the earthen dike along the west edge of the property as an access road. A buffer zone will be left along major streams and rivers to lessen the aesthetic impact. No harvest would be recommended within 500 feet of the egret/heron rookery. All logging activities would take place during winter months and no permanent roads are required.

Acquisition (Figure 4): The state presently owns 1,345.44 acres within the existing boundary. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Interior own an additional 457 acres within the boundary. The acreage goal is presently 2,773 acres and is adequate for achieving the proposed goal and objectives. The boundary actually contains 4,155 acres, therefore, 925 acres will remain in private ownership. Acquisition emphasis will be placed in the northern third of the wildlife area.

Two minor boundary alterations are recommended: 1. Move the boundary west and south of Kieselhorse Bay to include islands that are presently in state and federal ownership. 2. Move the boundary west into the middle of Fountain City Bay to avoid Merrick State Park and the development along the east shore of Indian Creek.

There are 16 private landowners within the boundary. The 1,427.56 acres of goal remaining will cost an estimated \$667,500 (1981 dollars).

Maintenance and Development Costs: Estimated annual property maintenance will average between \$500.00 to \$1,000.00 over the next six years. Development costs will depend on whether additional land is purchased. Presently, it will range between \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 per year.

Section II - Support Data

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History: In 1919, John Latsch donated 1,257 acres of land to the State of Wisconsin for outdoor recreational activities. This land formed the bulk of the Whitman Dam Wildlife Area when it was established in 1965.

Before Lock and Dam #5 (Whitman Dam) was closed in 1936, much of the lowland was cut for hay, firewood was cut for river steamboats, open land was farmed, and hunting and trapping were popular. The area was well known for its migratory waterfowl hunting and trapping. Flowing sloughs and backwater bays interlaced throughout the area provided good warmwater commercial and sport fishing.

With the construction of the Whitman Dam, a dike was built to connect the dam with high ground on the Wisconsin shore. The dike prevented the lowland sloughs and backwaters from being completely flooded, but it also blocked many of the flowing water channels that supported fish populations. Water stagnation and increased sedimentation reduced the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitat.

In 1957, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers placed an aeration culvert through the dike in a former natural inlet ("Hole-in-the-Wall") from the river into Fountain City Bay (Figure 3). Freshwater inflow improved fish habitat in the area, but was frequently blocked by debris in the culvert. In 1976, a partial closing dam was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers at the mouth of a side channel (Devil's Cut) opening into a large bay adjacent to Merrick State Park. The closing dam was built to prevent further deposition of main channel sand into slow water near the park.

In 1978, three aeration culverts were placed through the dike at the northwest corner of the wildlife property in order to allow fresh water to enter an existing slough originally blocked by the dike. Both projects were recommended by the Great River Environmental Action Team (GREAT) to alleviate water quality and sedimentation problems within the Whitman Dam Wildlife Area.

Current Management Activities: Current property management activities are limited to boundary posting and maintenance of an access road and parking lot. Fish management personnel periodically inventory fish population status and commercial and sport fishing harvest. Winter and summer dissolved oxygen levels are monitored to evaluate the quality of fish habitat in the area. Resource management personnel are cooperatively involved in developing strategies to address the need for further water flow regulation that will benefit fish and wildlife in the area.

Ownership: State presently owns 1,345.44 acres towards an acreage goal of 2,773 acres. Land acquisition costs to date total \$2,401.00.

RESOURCE CAPABILITY AND INVENTORY

Physical Setting: The Whitman Dam Wildlife Area consists mainly of a floodplain forest of lowland hardwoods on loamy alluvial soils. Shallow backwater marshes and sloughs form a mosaic pattern within the timbered areas. The "Big Marsh" in the northern third of the wildlife area is a 500 acre complex of various wetland types. Water levels in many of the ponds are maintained by beaver dams. The uplands consist of excessively drained sandy loam soils that are farmed to raise soybeans, corn, hay, and melons. Uplands too wet to plow are pastured.

The wildlife area is separated from the main channel of the Mississippi River by a dike and a levee formed by the deposition of dredged sand. River water enters the northern portion of the area by dike seepage, through the three aeration culverts opened in 1978 and through the "Hole-in-the-Wall" culvert placed in 1957. Additional water also enters the area by way of the Cochrane drainage ditch and three branches of the Waumandee Creek. A natural levee below the lock and dam was breached in 1951 (Devil's Cut) and allowed river water and sand to enter the bay adjacent to Merrick State Park.

Wildlife: A wildlife inventory of the Whitman Dam area for GREAT identified 120 bird species of which 54 were breeding species (Appendix A). Most birds were those common to floodplain forest and wetlands. Less common species sighted were migratory bald eagles, ospreys, and a lone peregrine falcon, all endangered species. The great egret and red-shouldered hawk, threatened species in Wisconsin, nest on the wildlife area. Nesting black terns and yellow-crowned night herons have also been observed. Common upland game species and fur-bearers include the squirrel, fox, raccoon, muskrat, mink, beaver, and white-tailed deer. Blue-winged teal, mallards, and wood ducks are the most common breeding waterfowl species present.

The egret/heron rookery located on the area near Lock and Dam #5 contained approximately 500 nests in 1978. This represents a 16% reduction in nesting activity since 1975. It appears that the colony may be slowly relocating along the river 11 miles to the south.

Fish: The wildlife area contains a diversity of fish habitats and a productive fishery where significant spawning, rearing, dwelling, and over-wintering occur. During a 1975-1979 GREAT sponsored fishery inventory, 62 fish species were collected in the area (Appendix B). These communities consist of a well-balanced mixture of commercial, sport, and forage fish species typical of other high quality Mississippi River backwaters. Bluegill, black crappie, white crappie, largemouth bass, walleye, yellow perch, northern pike, and white bass dominate game fish collections. Commercial fishes abundant in collections include channel catfish, carp, largemouth buffalo, and freshwater drum. Fish species listed as endangered or threatened in Wisconsin that were collected include the river herring, mud darter, and pugnose shiner.

Other: No historical or archaeological features are known within the boundaries of the wildlife area. The State Historical Society will be notified before any significant development is initiated.

A natural area inventory has identified a good quality lowland woods worthy of Scientific Area designation (Figure 3). This area contains river birch, silver maple, and swamp white oak, which is relatively undisturbed and its association with a diverse understory of poison ivy, grape, moon seed, wild yam and woodbine along with a variety of aquatic plant communities makes this environment ideal for wildlife.

Sandbar picnicing and camping occurs on open sandbars adjacent to the main channel of the Mississippi River. Most of these activities occur on federal lands but some occurs on the wildlife area. Litter and other waste products accumulate on the more popular sites but are flushed down river during periods of high water both spring and fall.

Most of the non-hunting use of the property is associated with the water (skiing, fishing, swimming) and has slight impact on the property. Mosquitos, stinging nettle, and poison ivy discourage most people from venturing beyond open sand. While the Department should continue to avoid direct regulation of sandbar camping, it should be noted that federal rules provide permit camping for 14 consecutive days per site but little enforcement is done.

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Sedimentation: The deposition of sand and fine sediments is filling in many wetlands and shallow backwaters within the wildlife area. The Cochrane drainage ditch and Upper Waumandee Creek are the major sources of fine sediments that have accelerated the natural rate of succession within the wildlife area. Coarse sand inputs from the Mississippi River main channel have filled sloughs connected to Devil's Cut and portions of Fountain City Bay. Aeration culverts installed on Indian Creek have relieved some of the water head differential and water currents that transport this sand, but the increased flow in Indian Creek caused by the aeration culverts has resulted in the deepening and widening of the upstream portion of the slough and the filling in of slow-water areas farther downstream.

The opening and closing of the culverts must be regulated to minimize the sediment load of the water, to minimize the head differential between the water in the main channel of the Mississippi River and the backwaters behind the dike and to maintain dissolved oxygen levels that will support a year-round fishery. Additional research should be conducted to develop a seasonal strategy for the regulation of flows through the culverts.

Water Control: Water levels in "Big Marsh" are maintained by a series of beaver dams. The dams create valuable open water waterfowl and fur-bearer habitat. Recently, one dam that maintained a head of water of one to two feet washed out and was not rebuilt. If other beaver dams in the area disappear, small dikes with water control structures would be constructed to maintain existing habitat. This type of development would require variances of shoreland and floodplain zoning restrictions.

Fur Farms: Eight private landowners owning 2,129 acres within the wildlife area boundary have their lands in fur farms. This results in heavy trapping pressure on the area's furbearers for an extended period of time. It also becomes difficult to justify habitat management practices that benefit beaver, mink, muskrat, or other furbearers on the small holdings of state land.

Land Control: Land acquisition within the property boundary is extremely difficult. Many private landowners lease their property to waterfowl hunters and also receive income from their fur farms. Therefore, they have no economic incentive to sell their property. As a result, only 88 acres has been purchased since the acquisition project was initiated in 1965. This has resulted in a checkerboard pattern of state ownership that is confusing to many users of the area. This problem is not likely to change and may be compounded by limited budgets.

APPENDIX A

Common Names of Birds Observed in the
Fountain City Bay Area, 1975-1978.

Pied-bellied grebe	Rock dove	Purple martin
Double-crested cormorant	Mourning Dove	Blue jay
Great blue heron	Yellow-billed cuckoo	Common crow
Green heron	Black-billed cuckoo	Black-capped chickadee
Great egret	Great horned owl	White-breasted nuthatch
Black-crowned night heron	Barred owl	Brown creeper
Yellow-crowned night heron	Whip-poor-will	House wren
Least bittern	Common nighthawk	Long-billed marsh wren
American bittern	Chimney swift	Grey catbird
Whistling swan	Ruby-throated hummingbird	Brown thrasher
Canada goose	Belted kingfisher	American robin
Mallard	Common flicker	Wood thrush
Black duck	Pileated woodpecker	Veery
Pintail	Red-bellied woodpecker	Eastern bluebird
Green-winged teal	Red-headed woodpecker	Blue-gray-gnatcatcher
Blue-winged teal	Yellow-bellied sapsucker	Cedar waxwing
American wigeon	Hairy woodpecker	Starling
Northern shoveler	Downy woodpecker	Red-eyed vireo
Wood duck	Eastern kingbird	Philadelphia vireo
Ring-necked duck	Western kingbird	Warbling vireo
Canvasback	Great crested flycatcher	Prothonotary warbler
Scaup	Eastern phoebe	Blue-winged warbler
Common goldeneye	Eastern wood pewee	Tennessee warbler
Bufflehead	Tree swallow	Yellow warbler
Hooded merganser	Bank swallow	Yellow-rumped warbler
Turkey vulture	Rough-winged swallow	Palm warbler
Sharp-shinned hawk	Barn swallow	Common yellowthroat
Cooper's hawk	Common snipe	American redstart
Red-tailed hawk	Spotted sandpiper	House sparrow
Red-shoulder hawk	Solitary sandpiper	Eastern meadowlark
Bald eagle	Herring gull	Western meadowlark
Marsh hawk	Ring-billed gull	Yellow-headed blackbird
Osprey	Forster's tern	Red-winged blackbird
Peregrine falcon	Common tern	Northern oriole
American kestrel	Black tern	Rusty blackbird
Ruffed grouse	Dark-eyed junco	Common grackle
Virginia rail	Tree sparrow	Brown-headed cowbird
Sora	Chipping sparrow	Cardinal
American coot	Swamp sparrow	Rose-breasted grosbeak
Killdeer	Song sparrow	Indigo bunting
American woodcock	Snow bunting	Evening growbeak
		American goldfinch

APPENDIX B

Fish Species Checklist for Fish Collected by Electro-shocking
and Trapnetting in the Fountain City Bay Area During the Summers of
1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978.

SPECIES	1975	1976	1977	1978
Bluegill sunfish	X	X	X	X
Black crappie	X	X	X	X
White crappie	X	X	X	X
Largemouth bass	X	X	X	X
Yellow perch	X		X	X
Walleye	X	X	X	X
Northern pike	X	X	X	X
Rock bass	X	X	X	X
Channel catfish	X		X	X
Pumpkinseed sunfish	X	X	X	X
Orange spotted sunfish	X			X
Black bullhead				X
White bass	X	X	X	X
Smallmouth bass	X			X
Muskellunge				X
Flathead catfish	X	X	X	X
Green sunfish				X
Warmouth				X
Brown bullhead	X		X	
Carp	X	X	X	X
Shorthead redhorse	X	X	X	X
Largemouth buffalo	X	X	X	X
Spotted sucker	X	X	X	X
Silver redhorse	X	X	X	X
Freshwater drum	X	X	X	X
Bowfin	X	X	X	X
Smallmouth buffalo	X			X
Shortnose gar	X	X	X	X
White sucker	X	X	X	X
Quillback carpsucker	X	X	X	X
Mooneye	X	X	X	X
Gizzard shad				X
Longnose gar				X
River redhorse	X			X
River carpsucker	X	X		
Mirror carp	X			
Chestnut lamprey	X			
Highfin carpsucker			X	
American eel			X	
Golden redhorse	X			

(APPENDIX B Cont.)

Additional Fish Species Collected by Seining
in the Fountain City Bay Area During the Summers of
1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978.

SPECIES	1975	1976	1977	1978
Smallmouth bass		X		
Largemouth bass		X	X	X
Sauger			X	
Western sand darter				X
Rainbow darter	X			
Iowa darter				X
Johnny darter	X	X		X
Mud darter				X
Spottail darter		X		
Log perch		X		
Tadpole madtom				X
Blacknose dace				X
Buntnose minnow				X
Fathead minnow				X
Bullhead minnow	X	X		
Pugnose minnow				X
Golden shiner	X		X	X
Spotfin shiner	X	X		
Common shiner	X			
Emerald shiner	X			
Weed shiner		X		
Spottail shiner		X		
Pugnose shiner		X		
Mimic shiner		X		
Brook silverside				X

APPENDIX C

Master Plan Comments

By: Henry W. Kolka
Representing: Wild Resources Advisory Council
Date: June 30, 1981

General Review

The Wild Resources Advisory Council finds the Whiteman Dam Wildlife Area Management Plan Concept Element very deceiving. It is exceptionally well done in many sections and decidedly limped and confusing in others. A page-by-page review follows.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Goal Page 1

WRAC recommends that and education be inserted between the words recreation and opportunities.

DNR response: Concur; text added.

2. Page 1. Annual Additional Benefits

WRAC has a question on one of the "non-hunting uses" in case of sandbar picnicking. The Council wishes to know the circumstances connected with this activity such as: where and what controls are needed, access, impact on the property, etc. The text does not cover this issue.

DNR response: Text added.

3. Page 2. First paragraph under topic Activities

In the opinion of the WRAC the second sentence of the paragraph is meaningless and misleading. The Council recommends its omission or restructure. This land, according to text, is predominantly private and farmed and included for waterfowl nesting cover if state acquired. How then could the management activities, quote "create habitat diversity for plant and animal species."

DNR response: Do not agree. Only a portion of these lands will be in nesting cover. A variety of other habitat components will be maintained.

4. Page 2. Second paragraph

WRAC is critical of Task Force's contemplated use of herbicides as a management tool. Since some of the most commonly used herbicides are in public disfavor, the Council recommends that the use of it be stricken from the list of vegetative controls.

DNR response: The chemical Atrazine is common within the agricultural community and certified not harmful to wildlife. It is considered a valuable aid in establishing cover crops.

5. Page 2 and top Page 5

Except for the confusion created by second sentence of paragraph one (see discussion of item 3) the rest of the material under heading Activities is handled exceptionally well by the Task Force.

WRAC has some reservations about proposed logging of low land and hardwood species mentioned in last paragraph under Activities. The Council questions the feasibility of this venture.

DNR response: The proposed logging is limited in scope because of the wet nature of the property and is designed strictly for enhancement of wildlife. Some recent logging on private lands demonstrated positive benefits for wildlife. Cull and den trees were left and an excellent stand of swamp white oak (preferred by wildlife) has been regenerated. In addition to increased ground cover for wildlife, future oak mast and cover will provide superior benefits when compared to those provided by soft maple and elm.

6. Page 4 Figure 3

For better interpretation and understanding of the Concept Element the Council recommends the following modifications for this chart:

- a. A clear cut conjunction of the Indian Creek access road with fringing public road system. As it is portrayed on the chart the access road makes a conjunction with either the Waumandee Creek or the railroad.
- b. Location of egret/heron rookery. According to text an area for these species is projected for protection during nesting period.
- c. Location of Kieselhorse Bay.

DNR response: Figures modified accordingly.

7. Page 5 Acquisition

WRAC finds it difficult to understand and to follow the sums listed and the logic involved.

- a. Using the figures listed under the heading - acreage goal 2,773 under state ownership 1,345.44 acres. If subtracting the state owned acres from the goal the remainder is 1,427.56 acres instead of 1,428.56 as stated in paragraph under acquisition.
- b. Again using the figures under the heading; state owns 1,345.44. The federal government owns 457 acres in the project area. By adding the two there would then be 1,802.44 acres in public ownership. The difference of this figure from goal acreage comes to 970.56 remaining in private ownership. WRAC does not understand why Task Force keeps the figure 1,427.56 (corrected sum) as the acreage to be acquired. Does the DNR expect to purchase the 457 acres in federal ownership as well as the 970.56 in private hands? Has the Task force considered management agreements between the two agencies for the 457 acres?

DNR response: 1428.56 was in error; 1427.56 is correct. The Department will not acquire the federal lands; 925 acres within the boundary will remain in private ownership. Text modified.

8. Page 6 Figure 4

The legend for this chart lists item no acquisition. This category has no meaning so far as WRAC is concerned. It is not discussed in the Concept Element, consequently it is a meaningless blob on the chart.

DNR response: Text modified.

9. Page 7 Background Information-History

WRAC considers this section as an outstanding presentation.

10. Page 8 Resource Capability and Inventory

This section is excellently presented. WRAC has one major suggestion -- a more complete inventory of non-game species, such as nesting birds, amphibians, mammals, and reptiles. Also a respectable list of plant species in the project area.

DNR response: Text modified; plant inventory too incomplete to be of value.

11. Page 9 Management Problems

WRAC considers this section well presented. The Council extends our sympathies for the Task Force for all of the delimiting problems that prevent it from realizing the goals and objectives to full attainment.

12. Comment

WRAC is accustomed to reviewing the recommended management option and the possible alternatives. Without a definite management proposal the outlined goal and objectives have very little meaning or chance for realistic attainment. The Council recommends that this supplement be included in the Concept Element.

DNR response: The Management Plan format does not require alternatives to be presented because of the simplistic nature of the management regime. This recommendation will be evaluated further by the Department when formalizing the format for statewide application.

By: Dr. Raymond A. Faber
Representing: St. Mary's College
Biology Dept.
Date: June 3, 1981

In general, the draft plan is, in my opinion, excellent. Its most important features are: 1) that it emphasizes water level management (via regulation of the new culverts), 2) that it emphasizes protection of the heron/egret colony, and 3) that it minimizes development of the area for public use.

I would like to see a few changes in the plan, however:

1. Under Goals, Objectives, and Additional Benefits:

Hunting, fishing, and trapping rate as an annual objective, but non-hunting use is considered only an "additional benefit."

This does not make sense to me. It seems to imply that hunting, etc. is more important than non-hunting uses. I certainly agree that consumptive use is an important objective, but non-consumptive uses are equally important in this area. It is an absolutely ideal place for canoeing, birdwatching, nature study, etc. (one of the best I have ever seen!). I believe that these two categories of use are compatible and that they deserve equal rank.

The same can be said for #2 under annual additional benefits -- "Contribute to the habitat of all indigenous fish and wildlife as well as migratory species." Isn't this what it's all about? Why isn't this an annual objective? It certainly supports the stated goal.

DNR response: Within master plan guidelines, objectives are legitimate only when specific management activities are to be funded to achieve some portion of the Strategic Plan within the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Planning System. Because specific non-hunting objectives have not been identified and funded by this process, they are only considered extra benefits of management.

2. Under Recommended Management and Development Program -- Activities:

Logging of "overmature" hardwoods is proposed. I do not understand the rationale for this. What is to be gained for the benefit of wildlife? It may be desirable to encourage understory growth for benefit of deer, etc., but this could be achieved by simple girdling of the trees rather than removal. This area is intensively used by cavity nesting species such as wood ducks, hooded mergansers, many wood peckers, tree swallows, etc., Girdling could provide more cavities while still allowing understory stimulation. It seems odd to put up wood duck houses on one hand and take out natural cavities on the other, especially when the economic benefit would be minimal. Also, cutting to within 500 feet of the heronry is much too close in my opinion -- at least 1000 feet of buffer would be desirable.

DNR response: Only limited logging will take place; text modified. Expanded protection for the heronry will be explored.

3. Also under Recommended Management and Development Program -- Activities:

I believe that it may be possible to establish a double-crested cormorant colony in the Big Marsh area. It has the isolation and large water area characteristic of such colonies. Nearby is the Weaver Bottoms --an even larger open water area, but with more human activity. Each spring nearly 100 comorants are seen in the Weaver Bottoms. They stay in the area for nearly a month. Why? Is this a former breeding area? It would be a simple experiment to put up a few nest poles in the Big Marsh during winter. I predict that they would be used within two years.

DNR response: While the Department program has not identified a need for cormorant management, its potential will be explored.

4. Under Management Problems--Sedimentation:

Water flow regulation is very important. I would only add here that the regulation needs to take into account the terrestrial environment as well as the aquatic. This is a floodplain, and changes in water levels can greatly affect the trees as well as the fish.

In summary, I am happy with the draft plan. It has many beneficial features that will help to preserve this beautiful area while continuing to permit its use by a concerned public. I hope that my suggestions will be helpful in completing the final plan.

By: Forest Stearns
Representing: Scientific Area Preservation Council
Date: August 4, 1981

We have reviewed the Whitman Dam property management and comments of the Bureau of Research regarding a proposed Scientific Area.

We support the Scientific Area recommendation and if possible an increase in the acreage goal to include the high quality bottomland forest within the boundary when funding permits.

DNR response: The Scientific Area has been designated. The lack of adequate statewide funding prevents the Department from expanding the acreage goal.

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