



Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties Fish Lands Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: Scattered Fish Lands in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties.

- Elk Creek Fish Area (Chippewa County, Property Code 0901) = 257 acres.
- Hay Creek Fish Area (Chippewa County, Property Code 0902) = 93 acres.
- McCann Creek Fish Area (Chippewa County, Property Code 0903) = 301 acres.
- Sand Creek Fish Area (Chippewa County, Property Code 0904) = 197 acres.
- Duncan Creek Fish Area (Chippewa County, Property Code 0910) = 237 acres.
- Remnant Property – Elk Creek (Chippewa County, Property Code 0905) = 10 acres.
- Remnant Property – Bob Lake (Chippewa County, Property Code 0908) = 40 acres.
- Remnant Property – Sand Creek (Chippewa County, Property Code 0909) = 40 acres.
- Remnant Property – Clear Creek (Eau Claire County, Property Code 1802) = 18 acres.
- Lowes Creek Streambank Protection Area (Eau Claire County, Property Code 1801) = 364 acres.

Total Property Acreage: 1557

Master Plan Date: Concept Element Documents on file for Elk Creek (1983), Hay Creek (1981), McCann Creek (1984), Sand Creek (1985) and Duncan Creek (1985).

Property Assessment

The above listed Fish Lands located in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties are state owned properties with the primary objectives of providing public access for fishing opportunities as well as protection and restoring in-stream and riparian habitat conditions. Secondary purposes of the properties include public lands for hunting and wildlife management, trapping, hiking, timber production and other non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities. The properties are primarily located in the western portions of the two counties.

LANDSCAPE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The properties lie in the Forest Transition and Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscapes and are associated with the Chippewa River basin. The area is influenced by agriculture and heavy development pressure. State owned Fish Lands provide scattered parcels of public land that provide hunting and fishing opportunities. They also help ecologically connect the two landscapes which, in this area, are quite fragmented and offer few opportunities for area sensitive, forest interior species. Opportunities for management include regenerating and maintaining oak ecosystems (forests, woodlands, and savannas), protecting floodplains, watersheds, and headwater areas, and increasing ecological connectivity. Invasive species are a large concern in the area. Early detection and control is a challenge on these lands because of adjacent development pressure.

Hydrology: This part of the state has a number of generally low-gradient streams that range from small coldwater streams to large warm water rivers. The Chippewa River basin is the dominant water feature in the area. All of the streams listed above drain into the Chippewa River with the exception being Sand Creek which flows to the Red Cedar River and eventually to the Chippewa. Natural lakes are common in the Forest Transition Landscape but rare in the Western Coulee and Ridges.

Current Land Cover: Once largely forested, this area is now dominated by agricultural use on level ground and is heavily influenced by development near the communities of New Auburn, Bloomer, Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire. Forested acreage is primarily limited to stream corridors and areas of steep topography.



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HISTORY OF LAND USE AND PAST MANAGEMENT

Many stream corridors were historically grazed or used for agricultural purposes. When properties were purchased by the state these parcels were converted to recreational land uses.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN's) associated with these stream corridors are many, and in particular include aquatic species, reptiles, amphibians, migrant birds and insects. Small scale forestry practices that promote diversity of forested types will benefit a variety of the upland species, while riparian buffers, reserve areas and BMPs will protect the stream corridors. Riparian buffers and reserve areas will also provide ecological "legacies" such as large diameter trees, snags, and coarse woody debris within these small properties.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREA

Elk Creek Fish Area is listed in the Wildlife Action Plan's Implementation document for the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape as potentially within the Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) known as Bur Oak Openings. Barrens attributes and management opportunities may be found on upland fringe areas of these stream corridors. It is important when assessing oak stands to consider possible barrens management, especially as it relates to regeneration techniques. All of these Fish properties are tributaries to another COA known as Large River Corridors which includes the lower Chippewa and Red Cedar Rivers.

NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY - RARE SPECIES

At the time of this plan (2012) 8 threatened and special concern species were identified as being in the vicinity of these properties. Many of these species are associated with the aquatic habitat provided by the stream corridors. Forest management activities will maintain riparian buffers to avoid impacts to these aquatic associates. In addition, forest management activities are usually limited to frozen ground or dry conditions and impacts to other species can be minimized by this. Of primary concern on these properties are raptors and turtle species. At the time of establishing a practice it will be important to observe any raptor nesting activity in the area and avoid impact by following rare species guideline documents. To help protect turtles, management activities should avoid growing season time periods when possible. NHI screening will be conducted prior to all future management activities.

HIGH VALUE CONSERVATION FOREST (HCVF) or other resources/ natural community types limited in the landscape

There are no identified HVCF on these properties.

BIOTIC INVENTORY STATUS:

There are no known biotic inventories for these properties.

CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES: (including tribal sites)

Potential archaeological sites are associated with Elk Creek and Sand Creek Fish Areas. At the time of planning a management activity it will be required to contact the DNR Archeologist prior to implementing any activity. No historical sites have been identified by the Wisconsin Historical Society on any of these properties.



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RECREATIONAL USES

These properties are open to foot use only (disabled access is provided by permit). Fishing is the primary recreation use of these properties. Secondary uses such as hunting and trapping are also common. Occasional use for hiking, geo-caching, wildlife viewing and other non-consumptive recreation is present.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species inventory has not been taken, but buckthorn is known to be common in some of the area. Purple Loosestrife is noted in reconnaissance of Sand Creek FA. There is high potential for invasive establishment due to development in the area and access by recreationists.

SOILS

Glacial till is the major type of material deposited throughout the area and the prevalent landforms are till plains or moraines. Post-glacial erosion, stream cutting, and deposition formed floodplains, terraces, and swamps along streams and the Chippewa River. Wind-deposited silt material (loess) formed a layer 6 to 24 inches thick. Most soils are non-calcareous, moderately well-drained sandy loams derived from glacial till. The stream and river corridors include sandy soils formed in outwash. Drainage classes range from poorly drained to excessively drained.

CURRENT FOREST TYPES, SIZE CLASSES AND SUCCESSIONAL STAGES

The Chippewa/Eau Claire Fish Lands consist of 1,557 acres of a wetlands, pines, oak, aspen, mixed hardwoods and grass vegetative cover types. Low, wet areas adjacent to stream corridors occupy (40%) of the acreage (keg, lowland brush, marsh, other wetland types or surface water). Upland grass cover occupies 156 acres (10%). Forested acreage covers the other 50% of these properties, including mixed hardwoods (15%), oak (10%), aspen (10%), pine (7%), and lowland hardwoods (7%).

Mixed Hardwoods:

Timber types included in the mixed hardwood category include northern hardwoods (82 acres), red maple (72 acres), central hardwoods (52 acres) and white birch (18 acres). Primary tree species that make up these types include ash, basswood, cherry, elm, red, sugar maple, and white birch. They are often mixed with oak, box elder and aspen. Mixtures of hardwood tree species make for good riparian buffers because they can be managed using an all-age silvicultural system. Single tree or group selection harvesting can help develop a diverse, healthy stand that will protect stream corridors. Most of these stands however have very light stocking levels and harvests are scheduled many years out. Insect and disease concerns in these stands include Emerald Ash Borer, Dutch Elm Disease, Oak Wilt and Gypsy Moth. Elm continues to die out on a regular basis and soon ash will be affected. There is only one hardwood thinning harvest scheduled in the next 15-year period. This is a 43 acre stand located on Sand Creek Fish Area.

Oak:

There are currently 148 acres of oak timber type consisting of mostly pin and black oak with site indexes that range from 50 to 60 feet at 50 years of age. The oak are predominantly 70 to 100 years of age. These stands typically reach forest product maturity between 60 and 80 years old and then slowly decline in vigor. As mortality occurs, red maple and other hardwoods become established in the understory. This invasion of red maple is a wildlife habitat concern if it replaces oak regeneration in the future. Intensive oak management on these small scattered properties will be difficult to implement. Because cavity trees and snags are an important habitat component, some oak mortality is desired. Patch regeneration harvesting provides the best chance at maintaining a diverse hardwood stand that includes some oak.



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Aspen:

There are currently 152 acres of aspen timber type. Aspen is a short lived, intolerant species that is an important component of upland habitat. Regeneration is primarily achieved through coppice harvesting (clearcut). Management will be geared toward maintaining the aspen timber type acreage on these properties using a rotation age of 50 years. The objective will be to provide dense wildlife cover in relatively small patches. Much of the aspen is currently young to middle-aged. Over the next 15 years there is one aspen harvest scheduled on Elk Creek FA and one harvest on McCann Creek FA.

White, Red and Jack Pine:

There are 111 acres of white, red and jack pine timber types. The white pine (53 acres) have developed as natural succession takes place in lowland areas. Scattered large seed trees have survived in these stream corridors and provide structural diversity. Stand density tends to be low with the exception of one stand on the Sand Creek FA where there are 13 acres of dense, large diameter white pine. The management objective in white pine will be to periodically thin the stands to promote growth of large diameter, managed old growth. Red pine occupies 49 acres on four different properties. These are plantations that were established between 20 and 40 years ago. Some past management has occurred except in the very smallest patches. The management objective in red pine is to develop large diameter, natural looking stands by periodically thinning out the inferior trees. Access is normally good for these plantations. There are only a couple small patches (9 acres) of jack pine on Sand and Elk Creek FAs. These trees typically develop on fallow agriculture fields along the upland fringe. The stands are relatively young and management will be incidental to managing adjacent stands.

Lowland Hardwoods:

There are 113 acres of swamp and bottomland hardwood timber types. Tree species in these areas include ash, elm, aspen, red maple, silver maple and oak. These trees typically grow on poorly drained soils. Mortality from insects and disease has naturally thinned these stands over the past decades. Elm have died and it is anticipated that ash will in the future. Most areas have slow growth and light stocking density. Access is difficult on this low ground. Most of these stands will be passively managed to avoid disturbance to the stream corridor, provide ecological legacies and structural diversity that may be limited in actively managed stands. There are no scheduled harvests in these lowland types over the next 15 years.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

These properties are managed primarily to protect and restore habitat conditions within the stream corridor and provide quality wildlife habitat. Future forest management will include small scale timber sales that will avoid disturbance to the streams and increase diverse wildlife habitat. Because these are small scattered properties the annual allowable figure is only a guide and actual forest management practices will be based on logical grouping of stands to harvest. Long term allowable harvest level averages around 15 acres per year. Sale size of at least 20 acres is desirable to attract buyers to these isolated parcels.

Scheduled harvests are as follows:

Elk Creek Fish Area (Property 0901)

- 2015: Red pine thinning on 17 acres (Stand #1).
- 2022: Aspen harvest on 20 acres (Stand #2).
- 2025: Red pine thinning on 17 acres (Stand #1) and 6 acres PJ (Stand #14).

Sand Creek Fish Area (Property 0904)

- 2007: White pine thinning on 13 acres (Stand #5).
- 2015: Red pine thinning on 21 acres (Stands #1 and #2).
- 2022: Northern hardwood thinning on 43 acres (Stand #9).
- 2025: Red pine thinning on 21 acres (Stands #1 and #2).



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McCann Creek

- 2025: Red pine thinning on 7 acres (Stand #5).
- 2027: White pine thinning on 31 acres (Stand #1).
- 2028: Oak and aspen harvest on 22 acres (Stands #6 and #7).

Duncan Creek

- 2027: Multiple timber types on 58 acres scheduled. Look at harvesting 20 – 30 acres.

Lowes Creek Streambank Protection Area (Property 1801)

- 2011: Oak harvest on 13 acres (Stand #1).

Forest Management Objectives:

1. Protect the stream corridor by maintaining proper BMP buffers.
2. Maintain variety of timber types through forest management practices with primary focus on oak, aspen, upland hardwoods, and pine.
3. Conduct small scale timber sales to provide a variety of succession stages to benefit wildlife habitat.
4. Identify invasive species and implement practices to eliminate/minimize impact to property.
5. Identify rare/endangered species and protect/provide habitat.

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.)

Actual sale establishment will vary slightly to spread out the work load and is outlined here:

- 2014:** Sand Creek white/red pine thinning on 34 acres (Stands #1, #2 and #5).
- 2015:** Elk Creek red pine thinning on 17 acres (Stand #1).
- 2016:** Lowes Creek oak harvest on 13 acres (Stand #1).
- 2022:** Elk Creek aspen harvest on 20 acres (Stand #2).
- 2023:** Sand Creek northern hardwood thinning on 43 acres (Stand #9).
- 2024:** Sand Creek white/red pine thinning on 34 acres (Stands #1, #2 and #5).
- 2025:** Elk Creek red pine thinning on 17 acres (Stand #1).
- 2026:** McCann Creek red pine thinning on 7 acres (Stand #5).
- 2027:** Duncan Creek harvest on 20 to 30 acres.
- 2028:** McCann Creek oak and aspen harvest on 22 acres (Stands #6 and #7).

Passive management is planned for most forested wetland acreage and harvest schedules have been removed from WisFirs. Small isolated patches that are landlocked by private ownership or extensive wetlands have also been removed from management schedules and will serve as reserve areas. Approximately 20% of the forested acreage will be managed passively.



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Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

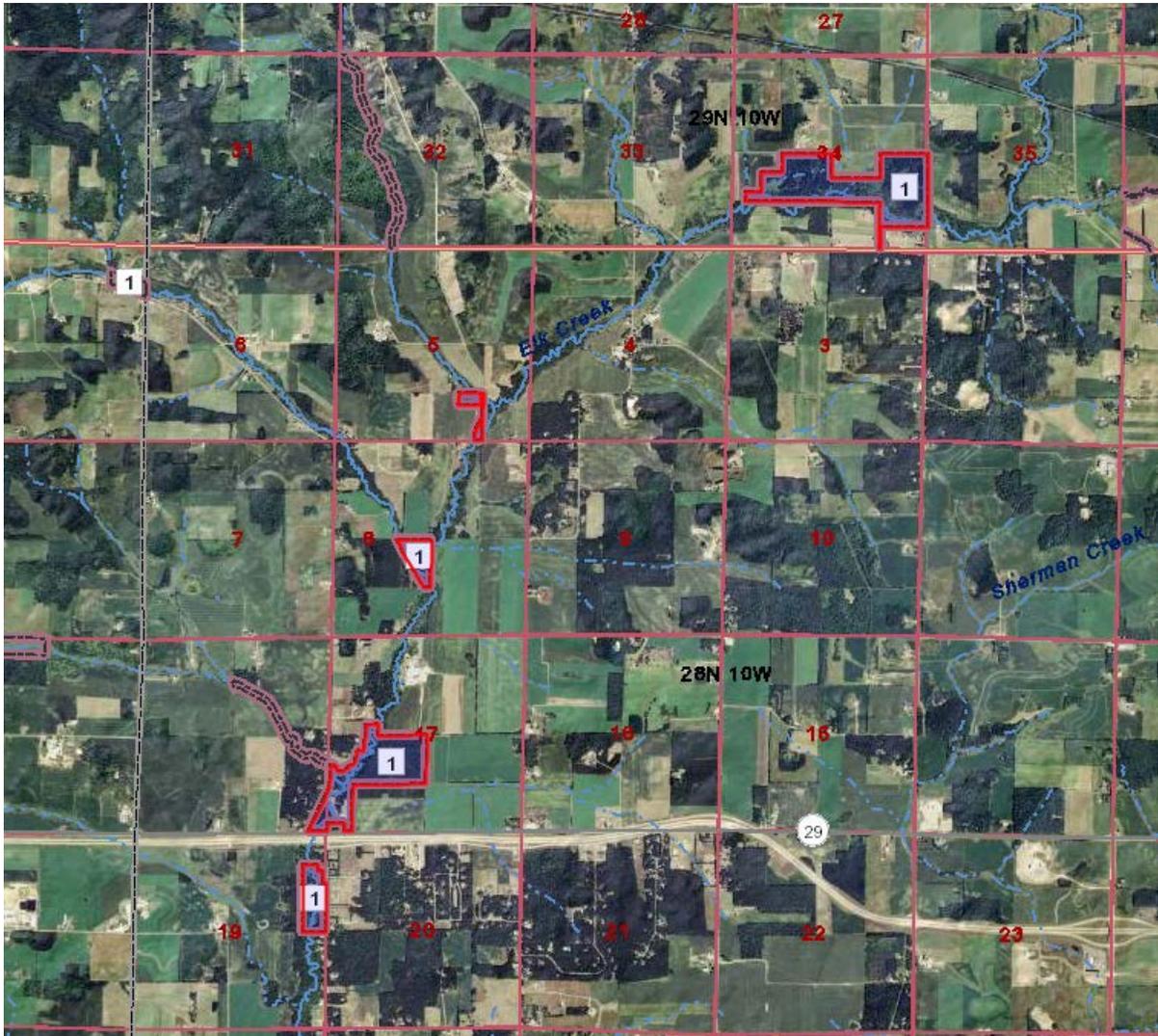
Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date



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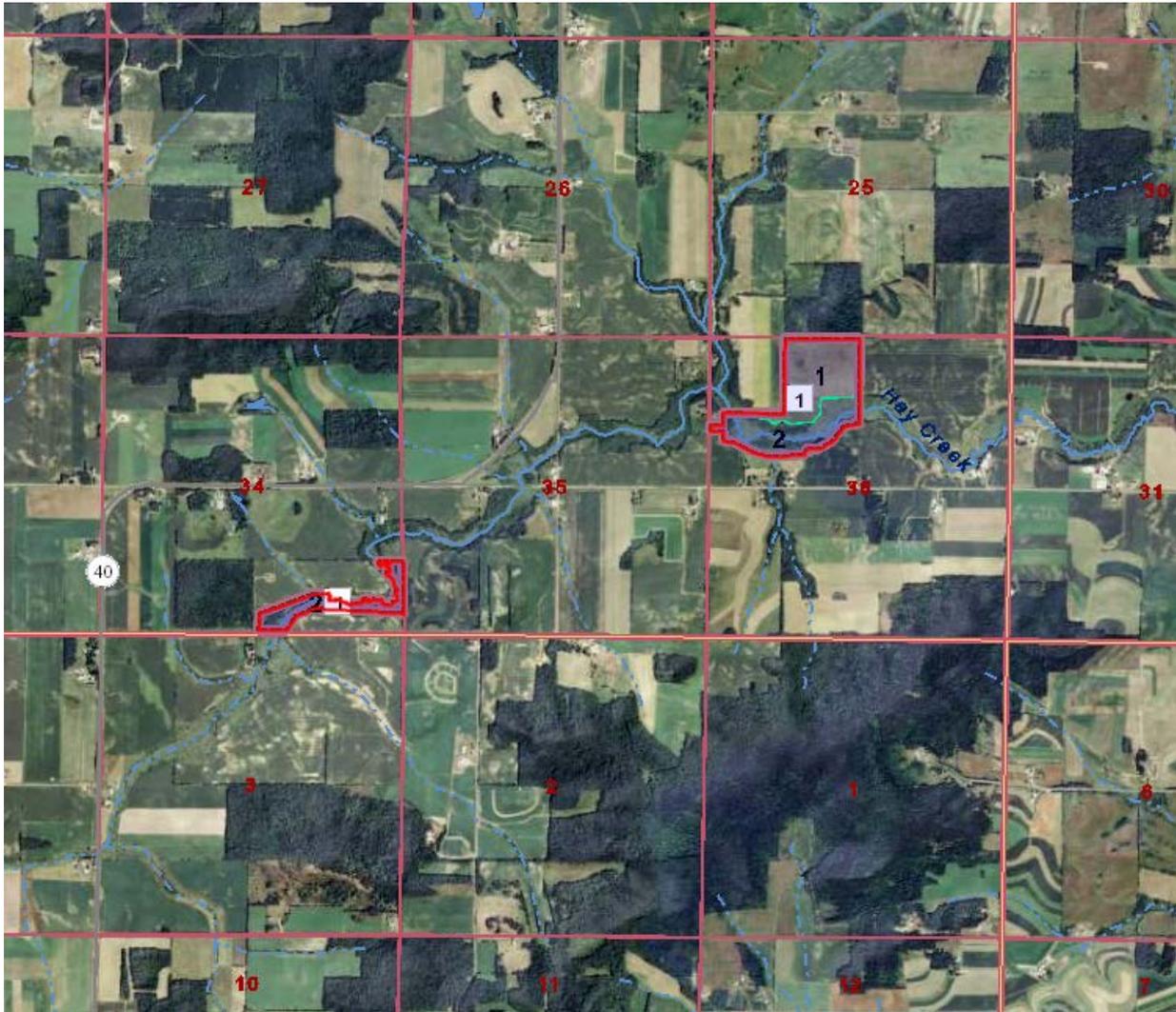
AIR PHOTO OF ELK CREEK FISH AREA





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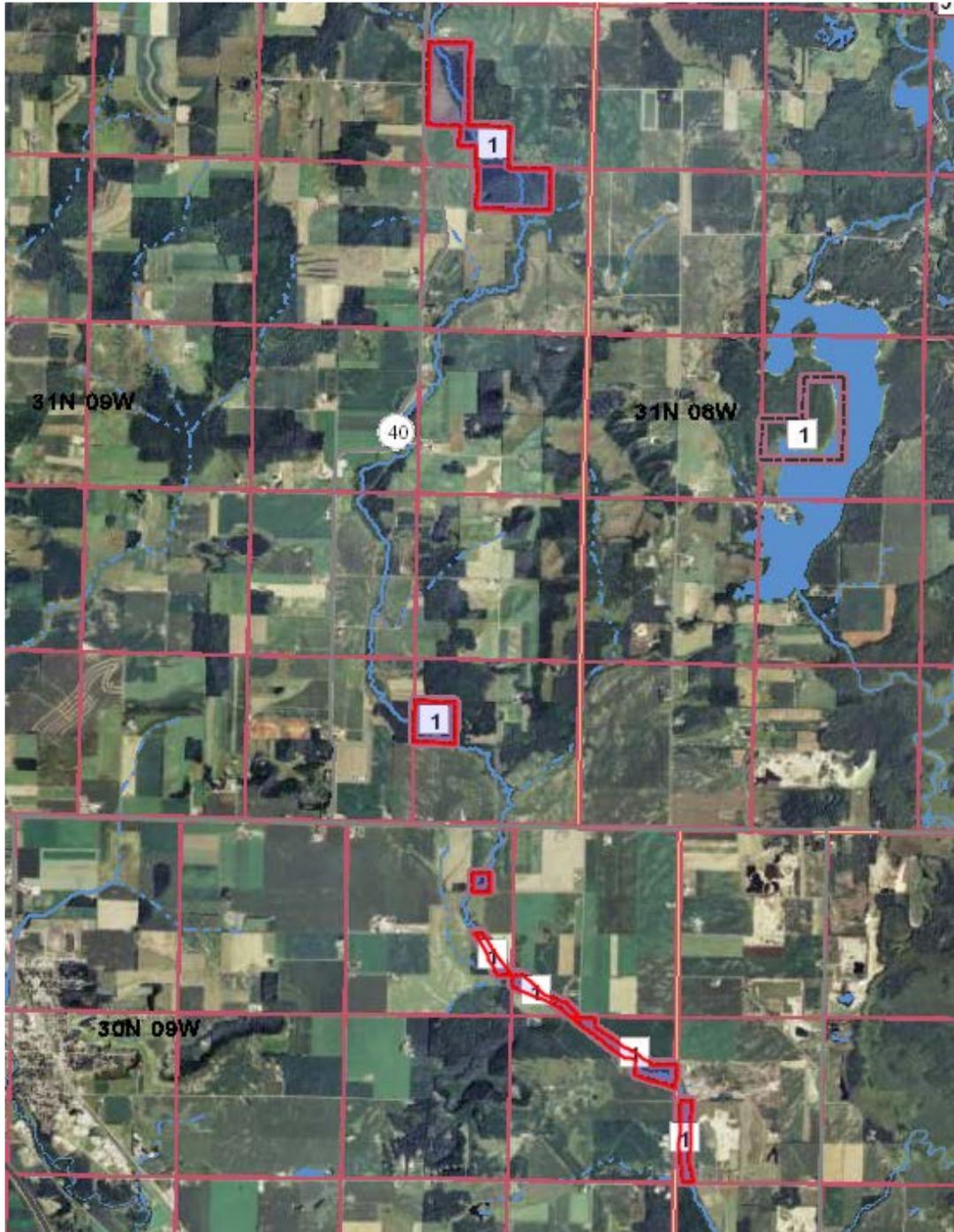
AIR PHOTO OF HAY CREEK FISH AREA





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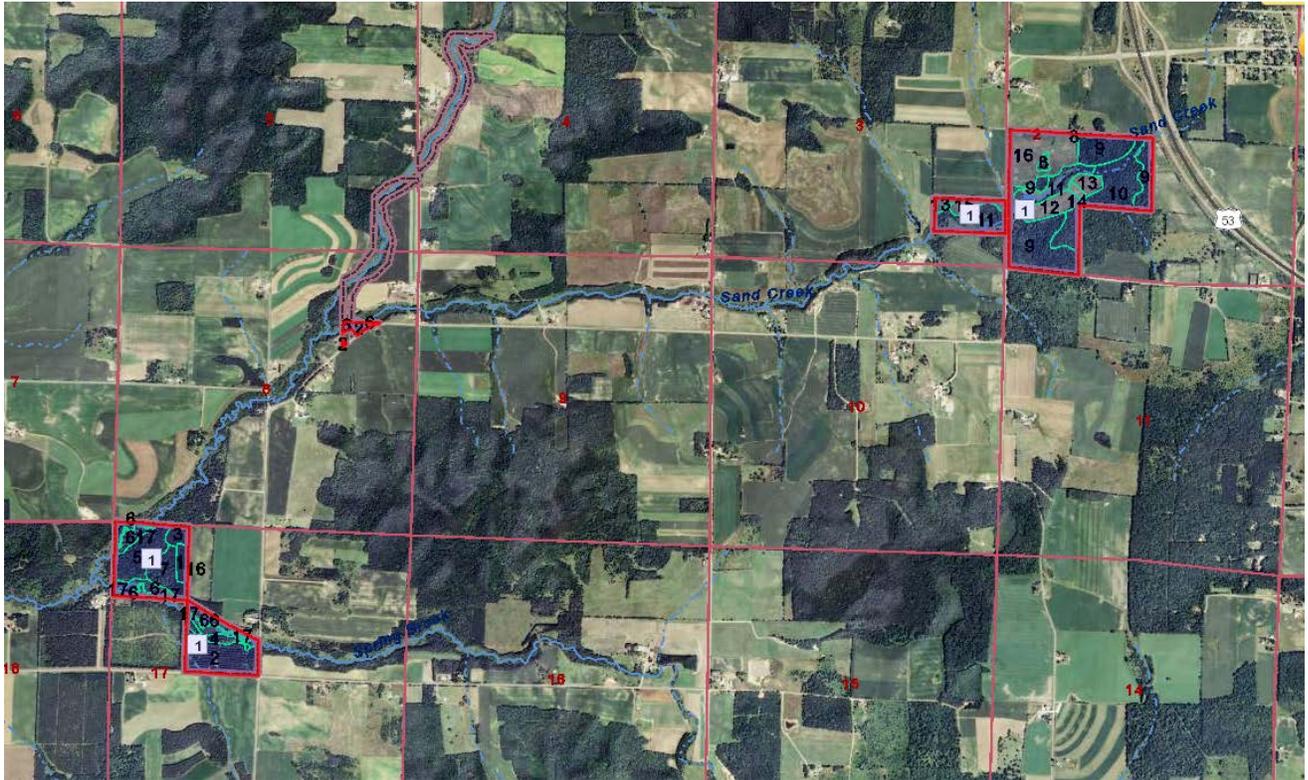
AIR PHOTO OF MCCANN CREEK FISH AREA





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AIR PHOTO OF SAND CREEK FISH AREA





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AIR PHOTO OF REMNANT BOB LAKE



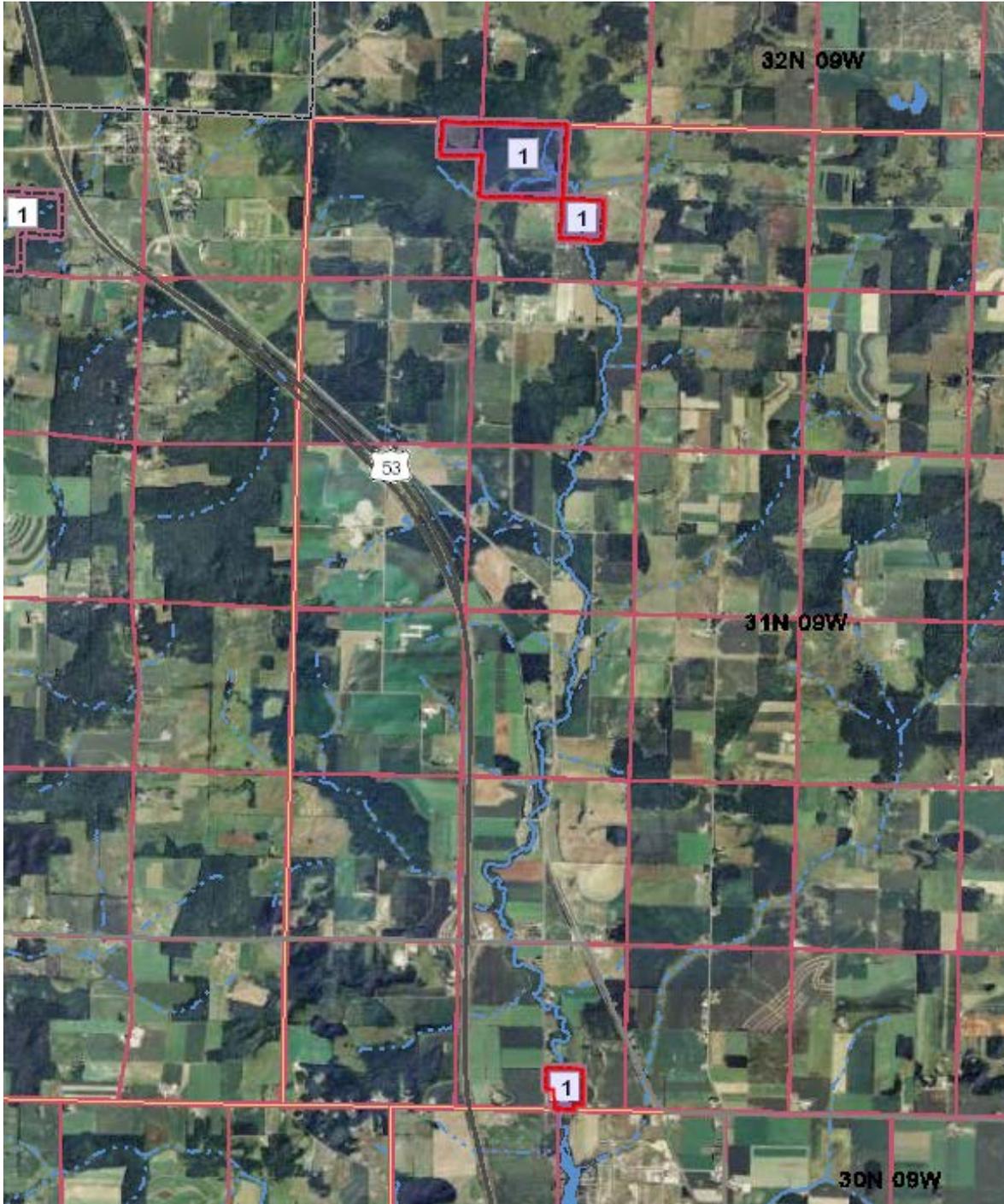
AIR PHOTO OF REMNANT CLEAR CREEK





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AIR PHOTO OF DUNCAN CREEK FISH AREA





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AIR PHOTO OF LOWES CREEK STREAMBANK PROTECTION AREA

