



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Cylon Wildlife Area

County: St. Croix

Property Acreage: **2,351**

Forestry Property Code(s): # **5603**

Property manager: **Ryan Haffele**

Master Plan Date: Approved in November 30, 1983

Part 1: Property Assessment

General Property Description

- Landscape and regional context

The Cylon Wildlife Area <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/WildlifeAreas/cylon.html> is a 2,351 acre property that is situated in the northeastern corner of St. Croix County in the town of Cylon. It lies about a mile east of the Village of Deer Park, 15 miles north of Interstate 94, one-half miles west of U.S. Highway 63, one mile east of state highway 46 and one and one-half miles north of the intersection of state highways 46 and 64 and U.S highway 63. The Cylon Wildlife Area lies within the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape and has the following Land Type Associations: 222Md 08. The North Fork of the Willow River meanders its way eight miles through the Cylon Wildlife Area on its way to the St. Croix River.

The Landscape was entirely glaciated. The property consists of wetland and upland hardwoods, sedge meadow, grassland, wetland and open water. The soils of Cylon Wildlife Area are mostly silt loam, sandy loam, loamy sand, loam and muck. Ecological management opportunities include management of swamp hardwood, aspen, oak, maple, wetland protection, wildlife, fish, herptiles, grassland and invertebrates associated with these habitats.

- History of land use and past management

Santee Sioux and Ojibwa lived in the region before the Europeans settlers moved in. Otto Neitge, the “The Dutch Hunter”, was one of the first settlers to settle near Deer Park in 1853, a village that received its name from the deer trap he constructed on 160 acres near the town. Otto Neitge eventually settled within what is now known as Cylon Wildlife Area.

Other early settlers in the area included J. Smith, H. Fouks, E. Johnson, George Goodrich, S. W. Beel, and J. Tomlinson. The first settlement was created in 1855 and the township of Cylon was organized in 1859. By 1935 physical development in the Cylon Wildlife Area included 13 houses, 1.25 miles of phone and power lines, 4.5 miles of gravel road and 1.75 miles of unimproved dirt road. About 66 percent of the Cylon Wildlife Area was devoted to agriculture by 1939.

Acquisition of major tracts from willing sellers began in 1975 and has continued. An acreage goal of 2,980 was set but the DNR has so far bought about 2,351 acres (the goal was to purchase all lands



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within the current boundary). Situated at the Confluence of the North Fork of the Willow River and the Black Brook Stream, the property's uniqueness presented an opportunity to preserve the last remaining large block of wildlife habitat in St. Croix County.

The history of the word Cylon with particular reference to this area is uncertain but Cylon (Kylon) is a historical figure in Greece.

Nearly 60 percent of the land area is forested. The rest is made up of grasslands, open water, and open wetlands. The major forest cover types are Oak, Swamp Hardwood, Bottomland Hardwood, Aspen, Northern Hardwood and Red and White Pines. Cylon Wildlife Area is surrounded by private lands and homeowners. There is a well-connected trail system that crisscrosses the property.

Site Specifics

- Current cover types, size classes and successional stages: The main current forest cover types are Aspen, Oak, Central Hardwood, Bottomland Hardwood, Swamp Hardwood, Northern Hardwood, and conifer.

Oak (7%): 158 acres in 6 stands; date of origin of the oldest stand is 1906; mostly large sawlogs; poles and saplings present; oak dominated although other hardwoods present.

Conifer: (8%): 187 acres of conifers in 13 stands, consisting of red pine, white pine, tamarack and spruce; mostly pole and small sawlogs although large sawlogs (old growth candidates) of white pine are present in stand 13; oldest stand originated in 1907.

Northern Hardwood: (2%) 56 acres in 2 stands; dominated by sugar maple; other hardwoods present.

Bottomland Hardwood: (3%) 71 acres in 4 stands; dominated by large sawlog silver maple; red maple and other hardwoods present; originated in 1920.

Swamp Hardwood: (6%) 138 acres in 6 stands; dominated by pole-sized and small sawlog black ash; date of origin is 1930.

Aspen: (30 %) 705 acres in 17 stands; dominated by pole timber and small sawlog; other hardwoods including oak, maple, cherry, white pine among others present; some stands may convert to northern hardwood if no action taken; year of origin for the oldest stand is 1937.

Central Hardwood: (3%) 73 acres in 2 stand; a mix of upland species including black cherry, oak, red maple, aspen, elm, ash, etc.; year of origin is 1930.

None forested: (41%) 963 acres; emergent vegetation, grassland, low land brush, low growing shrub, water body and herbaceous vegetation.

NHI: Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern species:

At the time of this writing, 1 state threatened species and 2 special concern species are known from the general vicinity of the property. Negative impacts to these species will be avoided by following DNR's Species Guidance Documents: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/guidance.asp>. In cases where species guidance documents haven't yet been developed, avoidance to rare species will occur via practices such as time of year restrictions, modified harvest boundaries, and/or consultation with rare species experts. For Species of Greatest Conservation Need, see below under "Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Areas".



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Wildlife Action Plan's Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA), Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and Priority Conservation Actions:

The property is specifically listed in the Wildlife Action Plan's Implementation document for the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape (WPEL) as being located within the Prairie Potholes COA (6.02) which is of statewide significance for pothole lakes, surrogate grasslands, and oak openings:

http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/PriorityRpt_EL6.pdf Specifically, surrogate grasslands are noted as a High Priority for this ecological Landscape. Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN's) listed within this COA are: Blanding's Turtle, Pickerel Frog, American Golden Plover, Black Tern, Blue-winged Teal, Bobolink, Brown Thrasher, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Dickcissel, Dunlin, Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Red-necked Grebe, Short-billed Dowitcher, Short-eared Owl, Trumpeter Swan, Western Meadowlark, Willow Flycatcher, Franklin's Ground Squirrel, and Prairie Vole. Priority Conservation Actions that fit well with this property that are listed for the WPEL are:

- Promote agricultural practices that are compatible with grassland management, such as rotational grazing, greater use of small grains and hay crops and later harvesting of grass hay.
- Restore temporary and seasonal wetlands.
- Develop incentives for private landowners to maintain native prairies and shortgrass habitats.
- Partner with prairie and savanna restoration groups to more efficiently accomplish habitat management.
- Actively manage appropriate patches for oak savanna and woodland restoration using prescribed fire.
- Develop educational tools and demonstration/training areas that promote prescribed fire and other prairie/savanna management practices.
- Protect the ecological gradients from lowlands to uplands, along with protection of the floodplain corridor. This will enlarge the amount of habitat available, allow for the movement of species upslope and downslope as environmental conditions change over time, provide suitable habitat for species that require large areas or are dependent upon a mosaic of interconnected habitats for their long-term survival, and provide migratory bird stopover habitat.

Existing State Natural Areas (SNA) designations/natural community types limited in the landscape:

The 207 acre Cylon State Natural Area (#623) is comprised of 4 separate parcels within the Cylon Wildlife Area. This Natural Area features woods and sedge meadows with an interesting mix of both northern and southern plant species. This mix of species occurs due to the site's location near Wisconsin's vegetation "tension zone", a band running from northwest Wisconsin to the southeast. The closed canopy forest is composed of large Hill's oak, white oak, and bur oak with basswood, red maple, and white pine. The sedge meadow is comprised of both wire-leaved and broad-leaved sedges, white meadowsweet and steeplebush. Birds using the area include wood duck, ruffed grouse, broad-winged hawk, ovenbird, and red-eyed vireo.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index.asp?SNA=623>

Biotic Inventory Status: None at the time of this writing.



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Deferral Consultation area designations: None at the time of this writing.

Invasive species: Common buckthorn is by far the most threatening invasive species in the property. It is found in many areas in Cylon Wildlife Area. Common buckthorn was introduced from Europe to North America in the early 1800s as hedging materials. Shortly after its introduction, it was found to be invasive and the nursery industry stopped selling them in the 1930s. By then it was too late to control its spread.

Buckthorn is a threat to the area and neighboring properties because:

- It spreads aggressively and out competes native plants for nutrients, light, space and moisture
- Degrades wildlife habitat
- Threatens the future of forests, wetlands, prairies and other natural habits
- Serves as host to other pests such as crown rust fungus and soybean aphid
- Forms an impenetrable layer of vegetation
- Lack natural control
- It is difficult to control
- Causes long-term decline of forests by shading out and displacing other woody and herbaceous plants

Buckthorn is spread primarily by seeds. Birds and mammals eat the seeds and spread them through their excrements. A serious attention should be given to buckthorn control to minimize damaging effect on forest trees and herbaceous plants.

Cultural and Recreational Consideration: There are historical and archeological sites within and around Cylon Wildlife Area.

- **Cultural:** Otto Neitge, “The Dutch Hunter” settled within the Cylon Area. The foundation of his home is reportedly still discernible. It was recommended to the State Historical Society for preservation.

Archeological: Otto Neitge, “The Dutch Hunter”, who was one of the first European settlers in Cylon Wildlife Area, was buried in an unmarked grave near the area where his home foundation stands. Prior to any ground disturbing management activity, the WI State Historical Society database is checked for any known archaeological or historical sites.

Recreational- The Cylon Wildlife Area provides excellent opportunities for nature lovers and hunters, and thousands avail themselves every year. This property is heavily used for hiking, sightseeing, trapping, hunting and fishing. To facilitate these activities, at least five parking lots have been constructed to accommodate the property users’ vehicles.

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

Management Objectives:

The property is managed for the purpose of enhancing wildlife habitat to create opportunities for hunting, trapping, wildlife observation and other recreational activities. Forest management objectives include maintaining existing forest types and developing a diversity of age classes with emphasis on young but including old forest areas for both game and non-game species dependent on these types. This will largely



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be accomplished through sustainable silvicultural systems that will increase the diversity and structural complexity of wildlife habitat.

OAK – Maintain, expand, and/or perpetuate oak cover types where feasible.

- a. Diversify age classes with emphasis on developing older stands and retaining large diameter trees.
- b. Promote oak in young mixed hardwood stands.
- c. Develop large snags and large course woody debris

ASPEN – Maintain/expand aspen where feasible.

- a. Diversify age classes with emphasis on young stands.
- b. Prevent/minimize the conversion of aspen stands to other species by applying appropriate silvicultural measures.

CONIFERS – Maintain conifer cover types.

- a. Promote older, large diameter trees
- b. Develop large snags and large course woody debris

OTHER TYPES – Maintain where feasible

- a. Central hardwoods-promote young stands and oak/aspen component within.
- b. Northern hardwoods, Bottomland hardwoods, Swamp hardwoods-promote older, large diameter trees, large snags and large course woody debris

ALL TYPES - Increase coarse woody debris and snags where it is not a hazard. Reduce proportion of ash species to lessen impacts of future EAB infestation.

STATE NATURAL AREA – Promote older, large diameter trees, large snags and large course woody debris in the forested portions of the SNA.

UPLAND FIELDS – Some of the agricultural fields in the property have been converted to native grass and forbs. Grassland restoration and maintenance will be enhanced by aggressively controlling invading hardwood species like boxelder, elm, ash, and cottonwood, along forest edges.

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)

OAK - Extend rotation age from normally recommended 80-90 years to 120 years to diversify age classes and to spread oak harvest schedule when stand health permits. Maintain and promote oak through planting, timber stand improvement methods, prescribed fire, seed tree, shelterwood, clearcut, and other techniques described in the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook. Promote the growth and retention of large oak through techniques such as thinning, extended rotation, and passive management (State Natural Area only). Prioritize regeneration harvests where the possibility of oak regeneration success is greater, or where terrain is suitable for pre/post-harvest treatments or other site preparation that may be necessary to maximize oak regeneration.

ASPEN – Clearcut to regenerate. Stagger regeneration harvests to diversify age classes.



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CONIFERS – Thin pine plantations every 8-10 years or when stocking warrants maintaining healthy, vigorous stands. Consider big tree silviculture, extended rotation, managed old forest/old growth or passive management for natural white and red pine and tamarack. Passively manage the white pine within the State Natural Area.

CENTRAL HARDWOODS – Primarily utilize even aged silvicultural methods such as clearcut, seed tree, and shelterwood, as well as timber stand improvement methods, thinning, and other techniques described in the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook to regenerate these stands. Emphasize mast tree retention (especially oak) as groups or individuals to meet legacy tree and green tree retention requirements and to develop large snag/cavity trees.

NORTHERN HARDWOODS- Primarily utilize uneven-aged harvest methods such as thinning, extended rotation, and managed old forest/old growth to develop large diameter trees and maintain forest canopy. Passively manage this type within the State Natural Area. Consider following the DNR Old Growth and Old Forest Handbook Management Guidelines for management of these stands.

BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS/SWAMP HARDWOODS – Where appropriate and feasible, use forestry practices to regenerate floodplain forest and swamp hardwood tree species. Thinning as well as single tree and group selection are common tools used in these forest types. Based on site conditions and the presence of invasive species (especially reed canary grass), these cutting practices may be used individually or in combination to achieve the management objectives. Consider extended rotations, managed old forest/old growth, and passive management. Retain snags and coarse woody debris.

STATE NATURAL AREA – Passively manage the forested portions of the SNA

All stands –

- Utilize BMP's for Water Quality to protect streams and wetlands when conducting timber sales.
- Utilize BMP's for Invasive Species to help limit the introduction and spread of invasive species when conducting timber sales. Utilize mechanical, chemical, hand pulling, prescribed fire and other treatments of invasive species where appropriate.
- Retain reserve/legacy/green tree retention trees as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands. Leave dead/dying trees for wildlife habitat.
- Follow DNR's Species Guidance Documents: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/guidance.asp>. to protect rare species. In cases where species guidance documents haven't yet been developed, avoidance to rare species will occur via practices such as time of year restrictions, modified harvest boundaries, and/or consultation with rare species experts.

Summary of Public Involvement and Comments Received

No comments received.

Maps (optional)

- a. Property boundary and ownership maps
- b. Forest Cover Types
- c. State Natural Area (included)



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Approvals:

Armund D Bartz 2/24/14
Regional Ecologist Date

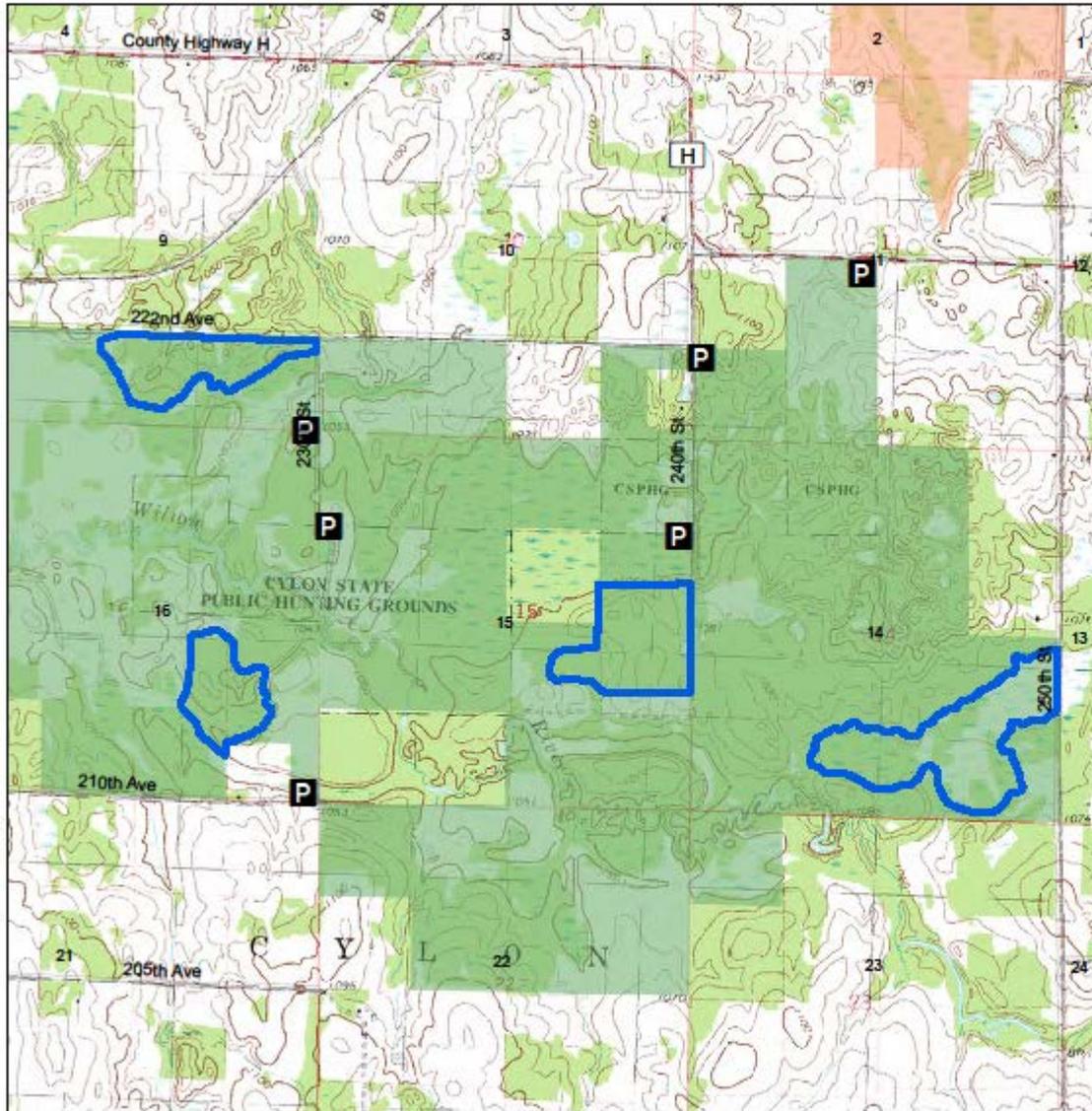
Dahn V Borh 2/24/14
Forester Date

Ryan D Haffele 2/24/14
Property Manager Date

Harvey H Halvorsen 2/24/14
Area/Team Supervisor Date



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Cylon
State Natural
St. Croix Co
#623



- State Nat
- DNR Fee
- DNR Eas
- Parking A

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USGS Quad: Forest



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