



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name: Lake Helene State Natural Area

County: Sawyer

Property Acreage: 383 Acres

Forestry Property Code: 5896, Compartment 100

Master Plan Date: None

Part 1: Property Assessment

The Lake Helene State Natural Area lies within the Ceded Territory of the state and is located most closely to the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe.

Native American tribes are independent, sovereign nations, as they were prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America. The Ojibwe Tribes ceded lands in the northern one-third of Wisconsin to the United States government in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842. In those Treaties, they reserved their rights to hunt, trap, fish and gather within various publicly-owned lands. Treaty rights are currently being exercised and implemented by the Ojibwe Tribes within the Ceded Territory.

General Property Description

Landscape and Regional Context

Lake Helene State Natural Area is located within the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape. The property is located in a region that contains a mix of both private and public ownerships, the largest being Sawyer County Forest and further to the North, US Forest Service. This is a predominately forested landscape, with northern hardwoods and aspen as common covertypes in the uplands. Forested and unforested wetlands are fairly common in the region as well. Aquatic resources in the area include several large, developed lakes, including Clear and Spider Lakes. This area is within the greater Chippewa River watershed. The property encompasses the entirety of the shoreline of Lake Helene.



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Site Specifics

- **History of Land Use:**

The Lake Helene property was acquired by the Department from a private landowner in 2009. A significant portion of the uplands were harvested while in private ownership, within the past 30 years. No timber management has taken place since the property was acquired by the Department.

- **Current forest types, size classes and successional stages**

Aspen – 192 acres (50%)
Northern Hardwoods - 95 acres (25%)
White Pine – 17 acres (4%)
Unforested types – 79 acres (21%)

- **Biotic Inventory Status** – Biotic Inventory has not been completed on this property.
- **Deferral/Consultation Sites** – None have been designated.
- **High Conservation Value Forest** – Lake Helene was evaluated using the Departments' "Wild Lakes" criteria and given a score of 20, which is the highest possible point total using this scoring system.
- **Rare Species** – The property contains Element Occurrences for uncommon species. The NHI database will be screened prior to any management activities taking place.
- **Invasive Species** – Significant populations of invasive plant species are not known to occur on the property, but a comprehensive survey has not taken place.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- **Cultural and archeological sites:** There are no archeological or cultural sites identified on the property within the Wisconsin Historical Society database.
- **Recreational Uses:** Fishing, hunting, trapping and sightseeing are the primary recreational uses on this property.

Part 2: IFMP Components

Site Objectives

Throughout the property, manage towards stand conditions that exhibit old-forest characteristics. Lake Helene is a designated Wild Lake; all management planning on the property, including



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timber harvest, should consider both ecological and aesthetics issues as they relate to the lake itself. Water quality BMP's for forestry will be utilized for all timber sales.

Management approach

Stands of aspen and northern hardwoods will be managed to promote natural cover type diversity for this area. Specifically, use timber harvests to increase growth and vigor of the northern hardwoods stands and long-term conversion of the aspen stands to longer-lived species, particularly white and red pine, oak and northern hardwoods. The long-term goal of these stands is to create old-growth forest characteristics.

The initial harvests are needed to prepare the stands for more options in the future and to reach the property goals sooner. Presently they are in less than ideal status for growth and vigor. Apply appropriate silvicultural systems when conducting timber management activities.

The lakeshore areas, lowland brush and the lake itself do not require any active management at present, although if invasive species are found action may be taken.

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):

The Northern District Ecologist/Property Manager should be contacted prior to establishment of timber sales on Lake Helene State Natural Area.

Aspen – Aspen stands will primarily be harvested through even-aged coppice regeneration cuts. Over time, convert aspen stands to longer-lived species wherever opportunities exist. Green tree retention will be practiced in these stands while also focusing on snag and den/cavity tree retention. Retention will be concentrated near and between ephemeral ponds, where possible. In most cases, pine and oak will be retained, and areas of advanced regeneration of these species will be protected and released.

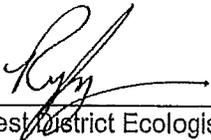
Northern Hardwoods – In actively managed stands, use uneven-aged selection (single tree or group selection) harvests to encourage long term multi-aged diversity. Gaps will be created to encourage age class diversity and edge cover. Promote oak, yellow birch and pine where opportunities exist. Snags, cavity trees, and other trees that have value as wildlife habitat will be retained. The long-term goal of these stands is to create old-growth forest characteristics.

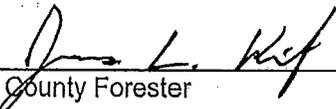
White Pine – Conduct periodic thinnings to improve the growth and vigor of both white and red pine. The long-term goal is to create old-growth forest characteristics, including a multi-aged stand, numerous snags and abundant coarse woody debris.



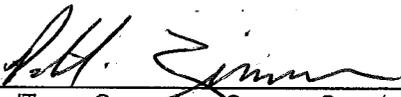
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Approvals:


Northwest District Ecologist 6-9-16
Date


Sawyer County Forester 6/9/16
Date


Property Manager for Lake Helene State Natural Area 6-9-16
Date


Area/Team Supervisor Sawyer County 6/10/16
Date