



# Interim Forest Management Plan

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## Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: McKenzie Creek Wildlife Area

County: Polk

Property Acreage: 5642 recon acres

Forestry Property Code(s): 4984

Master Plan Date: 1981

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## Part 1: Property Assessment (1-2 pages maximum)

McKenzie Creek Wildlife Area is a 5,497 acre (85% wooded) property located in Polk County. It consists of rolling upland aspen, oak, and maple forest, lowland forest, trout stream, lakes, tamarack/black spruce bog, and red pine/spruce plantation.

### General Property Description

- **Landscape and regional context**

The McKenzie Creek Wildlife Area is located entirely within the Forest Transition Landscape. It also lies in a landscape ecosystem subsection called the "Upper Wisconsin/Michigan Moraines: drumlinized ground moraine, ice-stagnation moraines, localized outwash; northern hardwood forest, bog." Within this subsection, the property is within the sub-subsection called "Chippewa-Green Bay Lobes; stagnation moraine with sandy soils, kettle lakes; northern forest and bogs." This sub-subsection is characterized by the following:

**Landform** There is a narrow band of stagnation moraine formed at the front of the glacier during the Wisconsin Glaciation.

**Lakes and Streams** Small kettle lakes are common on the moraines, but there are a few large lakes. The moraines are also headwater to several streams.

**Soils** Soil texture is typically sandy loam to loam, developed from either brown or red glacial drift. Wetland soils are not extensive, but peat bogs are common throughout in ice-block kettles.

The landtype association is called: 212jd01 Lake St. Croix Moraines

The characteristic landform pattern is rolling collapsed moraine interlaced with outwash terraces and intermixed with ice-walled lake plains. Soils are predominantly moderately well drained sandy loam over dense, acid sandy loam till. Common habitat types include ACaCi and AA.

It is within the Straight Lake Conservation Opportunity Area.

- **History of land use and past management**

McKenzie Creek Wildlife Area (MCWA) was established in 1945 because it was a major wintering area for deer, for watershed protection, and for access to four trout streams.



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After 2,320 acres was acquired north of Hwy W, the project boundary was expanded in 1958 to its current size. The area is popular with hunters, especially ruffed grouse and deer hunters. There are 4 lakes on the property; McKenzie, Margaret, Tula and Dinger. McKenzie Lake has the only developed boat landing, which is at the end of 280th Avenue. The other lakes are walk in only. Margaret Lake is a Wild Lake and can be reached by walking one-half mile south of Hwy W on a narrow trail.

McKenzie Creek, the namesake for the property and one of the reasons the project was established, is a class 1 trout stream that can be accessed at several locations throughout the property. Trout stream management has been done on McKenzie Creek, as well as the Clam River. An active forest management program is implemented to maintain quality habitat for ruffed grouse and deer, as well as forest interior songbirds, woodland raptors, snag and cavity using wildlife, reptiles and amphibians, and endangered, threatened, and special concern species.

## Site Specifics

- Current forest types, size classes and successional stages
  - Aspen (45%) - 72% less than 30 years old, 21% over 50 years old
  - Oak (32%) - 95% over 75 years old
  - Swamp Hardwood (11%)
  - Pine/Spruce (4%)
- State Natural Area designations
  - Tula Lake Natural Area (120 ac)
- High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape
  - Margaret and Dinger Lake are designated as Wild Lakes.
  - McKenzie Creek WA has a wide array of unique community associations that serve as habitat for a variety of plant and animal species, but HCVF locations have not been designated at this time.
- Biotic Inventory status
  - A Rapid Ecological Assessment focusing on rare plants, selected rare animals, and high-quality natural communities has not been completed.
- Deferral/consultation area designations:
  - Active forest management has not been done in the northern part of sections 1, 2, and 3 of T36N R16W due to contradicting deed interpretations.
- Rare species
  - Numerous special concern plants and communities are identified in the Rice Beds Creek Area. One threatened bird has been observed on the property.
- Invasive species
  - Buckthorn at old homestead sites is spreading. Control measures are continuing.
- Soils
  - Soils are predominantly moderately well drained sandy loam over dense, acid sandy loam till.

## Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- Cultural and archeological sites
  - No archeological or historic sites have been identified on the state database. Old home/farm sites (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are present. Any forest management projects will follow manual code procedures to avoid impacts to cultural and archeological sites.



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- This property offers excellent recreational opportunities for hunting, trapping, hiking, sightseeing, fishing, and birding. The Ice Age Trail goes through the property and is maintained by volunteers from the local chapter of the Ice Age Trail.

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

### Management Objectives :

The primary forest management objective is to provide young forest for both game species and early successional species of greatest conservation need in the aspen areas or where opportunities exist. A second objective is to provide large blocks of managed semi mature hardwood (mostly oak). A third objective would be to promote and enhance the natural regeneration of white pine while managing existing pine (red or white) plantations.

- 1) Aspen
  - a. Promote aspen where it exists and/or appropriate
  - b. Maintain or improve age-class diversity
  - c. Enhance diversity within selected aspen areas by green tree retention of long lived hardwood species.
- 2) Oak/hardwood
  - a. Promote large blocks of hardwood in areas not dominated by aspen.
  - b. Thin to promote larger diameter classes.

### Property Prescriptions

**Aspen** – Maintain and enhance aspen cover by using the coppice or coppice with standards. Favor winter harvesting for reduced soil impacts. Rotation age is generally 60 years. Stands on wet sites may be harvested as early as 45 years or stands on high quality sites may push the rotation age back to beyond 60 to achieve a better age class diversity across the property. As appropriate, snags, high quality cavity, some mast and conifer trees along with green tree retention areas will not be harvested in the current rotation.

**Oak** - Maintain blocks of oak or northern hardwoods where they exist. Thin stands periodically to improve stand health, species composition, and density. Generally thin stands when stand basal area reaches 125-130 square feet per acre, thinning to a variable residual basal area to between 80 and 100 square feet per acre. Management prescriptions for each site will be specific depending upon exact silvicultural, ecological, and wildlife objectives for the stand.

**Swamp Hardwood** – Passive management will prevail in this type unless specific wildlife objectives need to be met or insect/disease issues warrant more active management. In the future there may be areas where regeneration harvests should be considered to maintain those types.

**Pine** - Natural pine stands will be managed on extended rotations. Increasing the number of acres of red and white pine where natural regeneration is occurring will be encouraged. Even aged management with periodic thinning and an extended rotation age will be used in plantations to slowly convert them to a mix of tree species where pine will continue to be a component of the stand.



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Attachments: Map of Property



Approvals:

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Regional Ecologist Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Forester Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area/Team Supervisor Date