



# Interim Forest Management Plan

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## Property Identifiers

Property Name: [McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area](#)

County: **Marathon**

Property Acreage: **5,770 acres (GIS)**

Forestry Property Code: **3718**

Master Plan Date: **11-18-83**

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## Part 1: Property Assessment

### General Property Description

- **Landscape and regional context**  
The McMillan Wildlife Area is located entirely within the Forest Transition Ecological Landscape. It is also entirely contained within the Abbotsford Moraines (212Qc01) Land Type Association. McMillan contains extensive, high-quality wetlands, and is globally important habitat for both wetland and grassland birds. McMillan is considered a Conservation Opportunity Area, part of the Central Wisconsin Grassland Legacy Place, and a Grassland Bird Priority Landscape.
- **History of land use and past management**  
The McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area was first established by the Department as a 3,388 acre leased public hunting ground in 1954. Strong local support for the establishment of a state acquisition project developed in Marshfield and surrounding Marathon County in subsequent years. On February 21, 1958, a 5,634 acre acquisition project was approved by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission. The present acquisition boundary encompasses approx.. 6,588 acres. Wildlife habitat management has included construction of a system of dikes to enhance wetland quality, forest regeneration and enhancement and some upland grassland maintenance. Historically the area once included a private fur farm, logging operations and a sawmill on the Little Eau Pleine River.

### Site Specifics

- **Current Forest Types:**  
Aspen (64%) – 7% < 15 years old, 47% 15-40 yrs., 46% > 40 yrs.  
Swamp Hardwoods (23%) – Mainly (75%) in the 5-11" size class. 18% is in the larger size classes.  
Northern Hardwoods (10%) – 55% in the 11-15" size class, 44% in the larger, 15+" size class.
- **State Natural Area designations:**  
None
- **High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF):**  
McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area has a wide array of unique natural communities that can serve as habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. Therefore, virtually the



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entire property can fall into the category for “habitat for species classified endangered, threatened, or priority species of greatest conservation need”. As of this time, HCVF locations have not been catalogued. Sites will need to be evaluated on an individual basis, based on habitat type, species possibly impacted, and activity proposed.

- **Biotic Inventory Status:**  
Completed 2011.
- **Deferral/Consultation Area Designations:**  
Draft sites developed. Not completed.
- **Rare Species:**  
A comprehensive list can be found in the “Rapid Ecological Assessment for Central Wisconsin Wildlife Areas Property Group”.
- **Invasive Species:**  
The primary high-priority invasive species present is glossy buckthorn, having been found in several locations. Additional invasive species surveys are needed.
- **Soils:**  
The soils of McMillan were formed in depressions and drainage ways of ground moraines, and are poorly drained silt loams and mucks.

## **Cultural and Recreational Considerations**

Given the close proximity to the City of Marshfield, McMillan Marsh sees extensive recreational use. In addition to offering excellent opportunities for waterfowl hunting, the property also offer excellent opportunities for hunting upland birds, deer, bear and small game. Hiking, sightseeing and birding opportunities also exist.

Historical, cultural and archaeological sites are also found across the property. The area was used extensively by native peoples living in the area prior to European settlement.



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## Part 2: IFMP Components

**Management Objectives:** The primary forest management objective is to provide younger forest for both game species and early successional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (especially prairie chickens and other grassland birds). A second objective is to provide small blocks of old forest and scattered old trees for mast production, cavity trees and snag trees for wildlife benefits.

- 1) **Aspen & Early Successional Types**
  - a. Promote aspen where it exists and/or appropriate.
  - b. Maintain age-class diversity within the compartment and across the property.
  - c. Improve variety within aspen stands by maintaining or developing a strong oak component within the aspen areas.
- 2) **Hardwood – Swamp and Northern**
  - a. Promote large blocks of hardwoods in areas not currently dominated by aspen or other species.
  - b. Thin to promote larger diameter classes and develop legacy trees.
  - c. Investigate old-growth opportunities and enhance / improve where feasible.
  - d. Increase hardwood block connectivity by improving / expanding corridors of hardwood timber types.

### Property Prescriptions:

**Aspen** – Maintain aspen cover type by regenerating the stand using a simple coppice system. Favor winter harvesting for more abundant regeneration as well as reduced soil impact. Rotation age is generally 50 years. Stands on wet sites may need harvest prior to 50 years, as early as 40 years. Aspen growing on high quality sites may have their rotation age pushed back to 55 to 60 years. Achieve age-class diversity by flexing rotation age within the compartment as well as across the landscape.

**Swamp Hardwoods** – Maintain and expand large blocks of swamp hardwoods where the currently exist. Expansion may be possible in areas currently mixed with aspen cover, but where aspen is ill-suited. Thin stands periodically to improve overall stand health, species composition, and density. Generally, thinning when stand basal area reaches 125-130ft<sup>2</sup>, and thinning the stand down to near 80 ft<sup>2</sup>. Growth rates in some of these stands is quite slow, and management schedules would need to be adjusted accordingly.

**Northern Hardwoods** – Maintain and expand large blocks of northern hardwoods where they exist. Thin stands periodically to improve overall stand health, species composition, and density. Generally, thin when stand basal area reaches 125-130ft<sup>2</sup>, and thinning the stand down to 70-90ft<sup>2</sup>. A great deal of fine-tuning can go into management prescriptions for each specific hardwood site to customize the management for a wide variety of silvicultural, ecological, and wildlife objectives.



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## Additional Resources:

*“Rapid Ecological Assessment for Central Wisconsin Wildlife Areas Property Group” – June 2012*

*“SNA Guidance to Inventory Personnel Regarding Attributes of Areas That Merit Designation as High Conservation Value Forests on Forest Certified State-owned Lands (HCVF)” – May 2009*

## Approvals:

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Regional Ecologist Date

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Forester Date

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Property Manager Date

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Area/Team Supervisor Date