



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: **Behning Creek Fishery Area (BCFA), Bone Lake – Rem. (BLR), Lotus Lake / aka East Lake (LL), Omer Springs / formerly Marquee Springs (OS), Snake Creek Springs (SCS), Wagon Landing Springs (WLS), Big Round Lake – Rem. (BRLR), Nimon Lake (NL), Pickerel Lake (PL), Twin Lake / aka Herby Lake (TL), Apple River – Rem. / aka Little Falls (ARR), and Osceola Mill Pond (OMP). Balsam Branch W.A., Black Brook Township W.A, Apple River Township W.A., Scattered Properties in: Alden, Black Brook, and Clear Lake townships.**

Properties from now on referenced by property initials if indicated above or by name.

County: **Polk**

Property Acreage: **BCFA - 131 acres, BLR - 54+ acres, LL - 30+ acres, OS - 47+ acres, SCS - 200 acres, WLS - 66+ acres, BRLR - 35+ acres, NL - 5 acres, PL - 46+ acres, TL - 3.95 acres, ARR - 27+ acres, and OMP - 6 acres, Balsam Branch W.A.- 175 acres, Black Brook Township W.A - 116 acres, Apple River Township W.A. - 80 acres, Scattered Properties in: Alden, Black Brook, and Clear Lake townships - 215 acres.**

Forestry Property Code(s): All under = **Other State Lands Property code 4987**

Compartment Numbers: **Balsam Branch W.A. #1, BCFA. #2, LL. #3, Black Brook Township W.A. #5, PL #9, ARR #8, BRLR #9, BLR #10, NL #11, SCS #12, Apple River Township W.A. #13, Scattered Properties in: Alden, Black Brook, and Clear Lake townships # 14, OMP #16, OS #18 and WLS #18, TL #20, and Alabama Lake #21.**

Master Plan Date: **BCFA - 12/13/1985**

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

General Property Description

Landscape and regional context:

Polk County contains portions of 4 of the 16 Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin. The properties covered by this plan are located within the Forest Transition, Northwest Lowlands and Western Prairie Ecological Landscapes.

These relatively small properties are found within local landscapes that are dominated by private land ownerships. Although woodlots are common, agricultural lands are prevalent near many of these properties. In addition, some of these parcels are adjacent to or near Federal and private lands that are managed for open grassland habitat.



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Compartments #14 and #18 are part of the Prairie Potholes Conservation Opportunity Area, which is designated for this area's importance as grassland species habitat.

Sub watersheds in this area include Wolf Creek, Balsam Branch and the Apple River. All these river systems are contained within the greater St Croix River watershed.

History of land use and past management:

- **BCFA** – Purchased 1962 – 1991 with numerous land trades for trout management purposes and Northern Pike spawning habitat for nearby Horse Lake. Used primarily for fishing and hunting.
- **BLR** – Purchased 1964 to limit development to protect spawning habitat for Muskellunge (primary) and also Northern Pike, Bass, and Panfish.
- **LL** – Purchased 1963 to protect rare lotus beds and a primary spawning area. Used for hunting, hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing.
- **OS** – Purchased 1985 for a natural spring pond that has a Brook Trout fishery and also maintained for prairie habitat. Used primarily for fishing, hunting, hiking, and also has a club snowmobile trail on property.
- **SCS** – Purchased 1965 to protect a natural spring and ponds that has a natural Brook Trout fishery. Primary uses are fishing and hunting.
- **WLS** – Purchased 1976 – 1977 to protect the spring pond and trout stream which empties into the Apple River to the west. Primary uses are fishing, hunting, and trapping.
- **BRLR** – Purchased 1967 to protect a primary spawning area for the lake and the mouth of the Straight River. It is also the primary access for motor boats to the lake.
- **NL** – Purchased 1963 to provide public access to Nimon Lake and is a walk in access only.
- **PL** – Purchased in 1958 to provide Public access to the lake that was later converted to a trout lake fishery. Primary uses are fishing and hunting.
- **TL** – Purchased 1957 and 1968 as a primary public access to the lake.
- **ARR** – Purchased 1961 and 1978 to protect trout fishery habitat and natural water falls. Primary uses are fishing, swimming, natural scenery, and some hunting.
- **OMP** – Purchased for restoration back to a trout stream after the main impoundment dam washed out due to heavy rains. Primary uses are fishing and hiking.
- **Balsam Branch Wildlife Area** is a 180 acre parcel that was donated to the department in 1967 by the American Game Protective Association. It has a 20 acre lake, with extensive wetland vegetation surrounding it. The outlet of the lake ties into the Balsam Branch and eventually leads to Lake Wapogasset. The uplands are mostly forested, but there is also an 8 acre prairie and scattered oak savannas. Management is beneficial to turkey, waterfowl, and deer, but pheasant and other wildlife are also found on this property. Past management includes planting native prairie, oak trees, and wildlife shrubs. Also, regular maintenance, including invasive species control. It is located in south central Polk County in sections 9 and 10 of T. 33N-R. 17W.
- **Laketown, Apple River, and Beaver Townships:**
Alabama Lake Wildlife Area was acquired in 2011 from West Wisconsin Land Trust. It consists of 2 acres of old field, 6.5 acres of lowland forest, and 3 acres of wetland. The east side of this long and narrow property touches Alabama Lake. The property is located in sections 7 and 8 of T36N-R18W. There has



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been no management done to date. Apple River Township contains forty acres of wetland with some upland forest in T34N-R16W section 12. There is no official access to this parcel, so management is limited to opportunities that present themselves. Beaver Township, T34N-R15W section 18, contains a 37 acre parcel that was acquired from the federal government in 1908 and was later enrolled under the Scattered Forest Lands program in 1956. It mostly consists of a large pond; there are some uplands that could be harvested if an opportunity presents itself.

- **Black Brook Township:** T32N-R16W, sections 21 (20 acres; 1979), 22 & 23 (96 acres; 1972, 1974), 28 (60 acres; 1974). These properties were primarily purchased for their individual attributes. While outside of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, these properties are quite nearby and generally lean toward a similar wetland and grassland management focus. They consist of forest, grassland, and wetland components. These properties have had tree removal, as well as grassland and wetland restorations.
- **Alden Township:** T32N-R17W, sections 22, (70 acres 2010), Sections 33 & 34 (84 acres; 1996). These parcels are critical pieces in the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area. Management, both past and present, is focused on restoring the wetlands, grasslands, and oak savannas that historically occurred in the area. While benefitting all wildlife, including deer and turkey, this management is especially beneficial to pheasants, grassland birds, and waterfowl.

Site Specifics

Acreage

Recon Acres	1225 acres
Forested Acres	526 acres
Non Forested Acres	699 acres

Forest Acreage Type

	<u>Stands</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Aspen	9	96
Misc. Deciduous	1	2
Northern Hardwoods	13	219
Oak	4	78
White Pine	1	28
Swamp Hardwoods	3	62
Tamarack	3	41

Non Forest Acreage Type

	<u>Stands</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Grass (upland and true)	4	30
Herbaceous Vegetation	6	123
Marsh	2	3
Lowland Grass (& veg)	10	300



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Water	1	9
Lowland brush (& alder)	4	32
Minor Lake	5	129
Upland Brush	2	18

Rare species- The NHI database lists a few elements as occurring with these properties. NHI screenings will be conducted prior to all future management activities.

Invasive Species – Buckthorn is the main non-native invasive specie that has encompassed many of forested acres for these properties and even taken over most of the understory. Honeysuckle is another invasive species that has high population in the forested acres. In the non-forested acreage; reed canary grass is very common.

Soils- Forested and upland soils are predominantly sandy loams, loamy sands, silt loam, and clay loam soils. The wooded and upland terrain varies from flat to strongly sloped. The lowlands are primarily peat and muck.

Cultural and Archeological site- some of these properties have noted special noted archeological and cultural concerns. Projects that will be conducted on these properties will follow the manual code procedures to avoid impacts to cultural and archeological sites.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

LL - Known archeological historical site in area. Property has limited access and a "no motorized vehicle" restriction and limited to no ground disturbance for the entire property.

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

Management Objectives (Outline primary forest management objectives):

Sustainably manage the forest resource to:

- Manage forest resources to maximize native wildlife species habitat by promoting aspen, white oak, northern pin oak, red oak, white pine and other northern hardwood and coniferous species.
- Use the Ecological Landscapes: Forest Transition and Wildlife Action Plan to guide forest management in the associated portions of the county.



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- Use Rapid Ecological Assessment for the Fishery Areas within the Southern Washburn, Polk, and Barron County Planning Group as a guide to managing for wildlife.
- Maintain the extent and quality of swamp hardwood, alder, bottomland hardwood stands and other wetland types.
- Maintain and/or create open fields and grasslands by controlling woody encroachment with mowing, prescribed burning or other habitat maintenance means.
- Control exotic species and prevent and/or reduce spread of exotics.
- Protect water quality, air quality, and undeveloped lake and river frontage.
- Manage to protect special concern, threatened and endangered species and protect/provide habitat for a variety of game and non-game wildlife species, including aquatic species. The wildlife Action Plan and NHI will be used as references for management.
- Swamp conifer and hardwood types should continue to be managed though timber harvesting when the need and opportunity arise. Many of these, however, are associated with sensitive areas such as springs, ponds and streams, and thus should be considered as non-harvest locations

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 WI DNR Silvicultural Handbook shall be utilized to manage all forest cover types.

- **Aspen:** Regenerate by clear-cutting (even-aged management). The rotation age for aspen varies based on site conditions, but it is generally 50-60 years. On some of the mesic sites an extended rotation of up to 70 years could be implemented. Large aspen stands should be divided and harvested years apart to increase age-class diversity. As appropriate, snags, high quality cavity, mast and conifer trees along with green tree retention areas will not be harvested. Green tree retention should be concentrated around and between ephemeral ponds, wherever possible.
- **Oak:** Maintain stands through even age management techniques and natural regeneration harvest systems appropriate for the stand and site conditions.
 - Site preparation to include soil scarification, herbicide treatments and prescribed burns may be necessary to establish regeneration.
 - Artificial regeneration from seed or seedlings may be necessary to establish reproduction prior to or after timber harvests when natural regeneration is not adequate.
 - Typically black oak and northern pin oak will undergo no intermediate thinning operations during the rotation length however true red oak may be thinned on a periodic basis to increase volume and value.



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- The Oak Chapter of the WI DNR Silviculture Handbook indicates the anticipated rotation lengths for oak. Site specifics will dictate the actual rotation length for individual stands however 20% of the oak cover type will be managed into extended rotation in order to establish snags and den trees for critical wildlife habitat
- Selection of the most appropriate silvicultural system for managing swamp hardwood and bottomland hardwood stands will be site specific. Based on the proximity of these stands to waterways and wetlands, silvicultural management requires consultation between the wildlife/fishery manager and the forester. Riparian zone management will incorporate relevant BMP's and shall implement measures appropriate to protect the scenic and aesthetic qualities of woodlands bordering waterways. Special management considerations include avoiding the introduction of reed canary grass into these stands and management to minimize the potential impacts associated with Emerald Ash Borer.
- Northern Hardwoods – maintain 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 125-130 ft², and thinning the stand down to 70-90 ft². 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.
- BMP's and shall implement measures appropriate to protect the scenic and aesthetic qualities of woodlands bordering waterways. Special management considerations include avoiding the introduction of reed canary grass into these stands and management to minimize the potential impacts associated with Emerald Ash Borer.
- Use BMP's for Invasive Species to help limit the introduction and spread of invasive species when conducting timber sales.
- Use BMP's for water quality when conducting timber sales.
- Endangered Resources Species Guidance documents will be consulted (ERCOMMON\\SpeciesGuidance\\SpeciesDocs) and the management guidance and avoidance sections will be used to determine how and if timber management can occur.

Approvals:



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Regional Ecologist *[Signature]*

Date 3-7-16

[Signature] 3/3/16
Forester _____ Date

Ronald F. Korman 3/3/16
Caron Cole 3-3-16

Michelle Carlisle 07 MARCH 2016
Property Manager _____ Date

[Signature] 3-7-16
Jeff Kampa 3/14/16

[Signature] 3/7/16
Area/Team Supervisor _____ Date *[Signature]* 3/28/16