

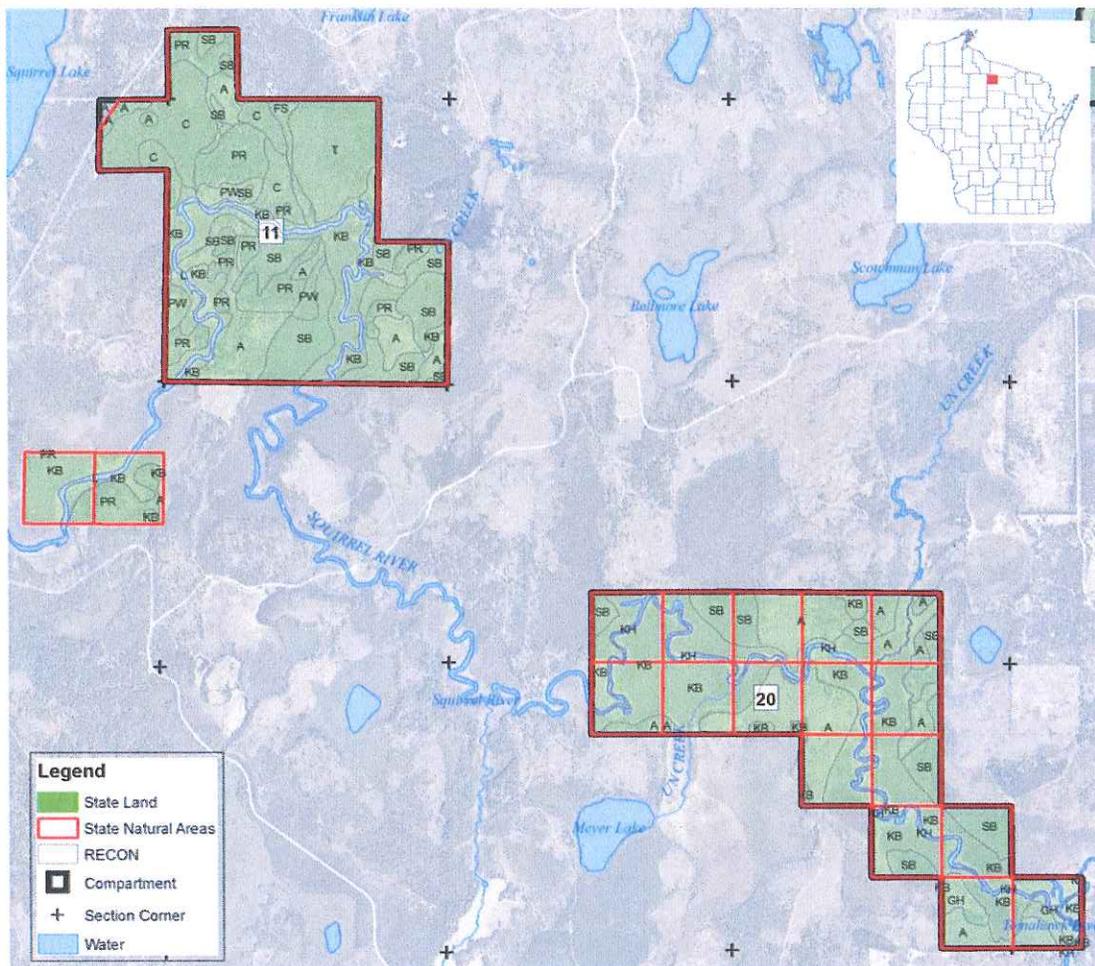


# Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area Interim Forest Management Plan

## Property Identifiers

Property Name: Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area  
 Counties: Oneida  
 Property Acreage: 1,370 Acres  
 Forestry Property Code: 4411, Compartment 11 and 4413, Comp 20  
 Master Plan Date: None

## Part 1: Property Assessment



## General Property Description

Squirrel River Pines features a fine example of northern dry-mesic forest situated on a narrow, sandy peninsula running northeasterly towards the river. The forest is dominated by a stand of old, large red pines. Surrounding the uplands is a large wetland complex of northern wet forest, northern sedge meadow, and alder thicket associated with the Squirrel River, a slow, warm, hard-water river that flows through the site. Squirrel River Pines was designated a State Natural Area in 1991.



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## Landscape and Regional Context

Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area is located within the Northern Highlands Ecological Landscape and is associated with the Vilas-Oneida Outwash Plains (212Xb03), Vilas-Oneida Sandy Hills (212Xb02) and Oneida Sandy Moraines (212Xb07) Land Type Associations. This property is part of the Squirrel - Tomahawk Rivers Terrestrial and Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Areas.

This property is found within a local landscape that is dominated by sandy uplands of pine and aspen and abundant lakes, small ponds and wetlands. The Squirrel River runs through the property and is tributary to the nearby Tomahawk River, which is part of the Upper Wisconsin River Watershed.

Land ownership in this area is dominated by private ownerships with some industrial forest, although the state-owned Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area is just to the south.

## Site Specifics

- **History of Land Use:** The original 240 acres was purchased from the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands in 1991. The parcel was barely managed, although the Minocqua winter park utilized a portion the land for a segment of their cross-country ski trail. In 1998, an additional 403 acres was added as part of the Great Addition. This land was purchased from industrial forest owners and was subject to intensive timber harvest form many decades. The final purchase of 720 acres occurred in 2007 again from the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. This purchase included 40 acres of minimally managed pines in the western 80 and much more intensively managed land bordering the Squirrel in the eastern unit. A blow down event occurred on the peninsula (stand 15) in 1991, resulting in a few downed pines and aspen. A light thinning took place in some areas historically and a few larger pines were cut at that time.
- **Current forest types, size classes and successional stages** – Squirrel River has 1,370 forest recon acres; 819 acres of forested, 551 non-forested:

Forest Type Description	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
Aspen	272	33%	20%
White Cedar	97	12%	7%
Fir Spruce *old code	10	1%	1%
Red Pine	123	15%	9%
White Pine	24	3%	2%
Black Spruce	224	27%	16%
Tamarack	69	8%	5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60%</b>

Forest Type Description	Acres	Percent of Non-Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
Herbaceous Vegetation	17	3%	1%
Muskeg Bog	484	88%	35%
Lowland Herbaceous Vegetation	24	4%	2%
Water	26	5%	2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40%</b>

- **Biotic Inventory Status** – Biotic Inventory has not taken place on this property.



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- **Deferral/Consultation Sites** – None have been designated.
- **High Conservation Value Forest** - Element Occurrences for Northern Dry-Mesic Forest and Northern Sedge Meadow are present on the property and are considered examples of HCVF.
- **Rare 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 in the uplands, but a comprehensive survey has not taken place. Purple loosestrife and reed canary grass are present in locations along the wetlands adjacent to the Squirrel River. Spot treatments of herbicide may be used to control invasive species.

## **Cultural and Recreational Considerations**

- **Cultural and archeological sites:** The Archaeological Sites Inventory database does not contain any records of Archaeological or Historical sites on this property.
- **Recreational Uses:** The Minocqua Winter Park grooms and maintains cross country ski trails on the property. The property is also open for fishing, hunting, trapping and sightseeing.

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## **Part 2: IFMP Components**

### **Site Objectives**

#### **Management approach**

Some forested upland and lowland portions of the property are managed passively, which allows nature to determine the ecological characteristics of these stands. The sedge meadow and lowland brush areas also do not require any active management at present, although if invasive species are found action may be taken.

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

The objective of forest management activities may include:

- identifying the needs of specific species, a group of species, or a natural community
- managing for understory (sub-canopy) vegetation
- mimicking natural disturbances
- managing for pre-settlement vegetation
- managing later successional species
- managing suitable sites for under-represented communities
- creating scientific study/observation/monitoring areas and opportunities
- determining how specific management schemes may benefit specific plant or animal species (including non-game species)
- converting/creating/maintaining:
  - cover-types (in the context of a local [stand or property] or landscape level)



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- nesting/mating/feeding areas
- habitat suitable for specific flora or fauna
- controlling and/or monitoring of invasive species
- preservation of a successional stage

Forest products may be a secondary benefit but shall not be the primary goal of management activities on State Natural Areas.

**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 and Property Manager should be contacted prior to establishment of timber sales on Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area.**

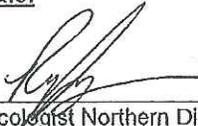
**All upland stands** – Prescribed fire may be used as a means of reducing understory brush and shade-tolerant tree species.

- **Pine** - No timber harvest will be conducted in Compartment 11, Stand 15 and the pines in the southwest 80 acres parcel. In other pine stands, use selective harvests to promote increased growth and vigor. Manage these stands to promote old growth characteristics over time, including increased representation of large pine, a diversity of tree ages, numerous snags and coarse woody debris.
- **Aspen** – 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, all pine and oak will be retained, and areas of advanced regeneration of these species will be protected and released.
- **Lowland conifer** – No active management in black spruce, tamarack and cedar stands.



# Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area Interim Forest Management Plan

Approvals:

  
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District Ecologist Northern District 7-14-14  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Forester Oneida County 7-11-14  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager for Squirrel River Pines SNA 9/8/14  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Area/Team Supervisor Oneida County 9/8/14  
Date