



Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: Tank Creek Fishery Area

County: Jackson

Property Acreage: 508 acres

Forestry Property Code(s): 2712

Master Plan Date: Concept Element Document – February, 1986.

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

The following items should be considered during the property assessment. Not all sections may be relevant for all properties.

General Property Description

- Landscape and regional context
- History of land use and past management

Tank Creek Fishery Area is a state owned property with the primary objective of providing fishing and hunting opportunities. It is located in west central Jackson County, Hixton Township, northwest of the City of Black River Falls and southeast of the Village of Hixton. This Fishery Area lies within the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape. Pre-European settlement vegetation primarily consisted of oak savanna in the uplands. Tank Creek is also a Class I Trout Stream, an Area of Special Natural Resources Interest (ANSRI), and an Exceptional Resource Water.

Tank Creek Fishery Area began in the early 1960's as a Wisconsin Highway Commission acquisition for the construction of Interstate 94. These lands were surplus to the Commission's needs and were purchased by the Conservation Commission (a predecessor of the Natural Resources Board). In 1962, the Jackson County Remnant Fisheries Program was established by the Conservation Commission. Shortly thereafter, the State of Wisconsin, through authority of the Wisconsin Conservation Department under Chapter 23.09 of Wisconsin Statutes and with federal aids approved under the Dingell – Johnson Act, initiated a land acquisition program on Tank Creek.

Several management practices have been completed on the acquired lands. Approximately three-quarters of a mile of stream thread received 3,378 feet of instream bank covers, bank rip-rap, and experimental stream bank brushing. One and one-quarter of a mile of fence was built to exclude livestock from the stream and one cattle watering/crossing area built. Additional trout habitat development was conducted in 2009.

Three large wooden routed fishery area signs were installed on the property as well as a 5 – car parking lot. All of the property boundaries were posted with "Public Fishing and Hunting" signs. Signage is checked on an annual basis.

Approximately 44 acres of open land were planted with 28,200 red pines while edge openings and fire breaks were left unplanted. A 6 – acre pine plantation was thinned resulting in harvest of



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100 cords of pulpwood. Approximately 970 wildlife shrubs were planted at 2 locations on the property.

A segment of the Jackson County snowmobile trail system runs along part of the southern edge of the property. The snowmobile trail is not a recreational use designated in the Tank Creek Master Plan for the property, but was allowed due to an error in initial location of the trail. The trail does not run through wooded areas of the property and is located on the fringe of the property between the existing forest edge and County Trunk Highway "A" road ditch.

PROPERTY CONTEXT/LANDSCAPE

Contextually, Tank Creek Fishery Area is situated in location that is moderately dissected and fragmented with agricultural fields and other open areas. Subsequently, opportunities for large block old forest development for area sensitive forest interior species are limited. However, opportunity does exist to develop an older white pine-red maple swamp natural community and the more fragmented setting offers great opportunities for "edge" game species and early successional "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" as identified within the state's Wildlife Action Plan. See below for species/opportunities.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

Although the property is not specifically listed in the Wildlife Action Plan's Implementation document for the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape (WCREL), three priority natural community types are listed in the document that the property contains; Coldwater streams, Southern Dry-mesic Forest (typed Oak in forest recon), Springs and Spring Runs. Species of Greatest Conservation Need associated with Coldwater streams, Springs and Spring runs, early successional Southern Dry-mesic forest, as well as the brushlands, small barrens openings, and open water areas of the property include; Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, American Woodcock, Blue-winged Teal, Whip-poor-will, Willow Flycatcher, Wood Turtle, Pickerel Frog, Dusted Skipper, Olympia Marble, and Leonard's Skipper. Although the white pine-red maple swamp natural community is not a priority in the WCREL, it is a priority in the Central Sands Ecological Landscape (CSEL). Because of the proximity of this property to the CSEL, and the limited existence of this community outside of central WI, consideration should be given to promoting an older white pine –red maple swamp natural community.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREA

The property does not fall within a Conservation Opportunity Area as identified within the Wildlife Action Plan.

NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY (NHI)/RARE SPECIES

Four rare species are listed for the general area in the Natural Heritage Inventory database at the time of this writing. Included are; one special concern mollusk, a state endangered fish, a state threatened bird, and a state threatened reptile.



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HIGHVALUE CONSERVATION FORESTS (HVCF) OR OTHER RESOURCES/NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES LIMITED IN THE LANDSCAPE

No High Value Conservation Forests have been identified on the Tank Creek Fishery Area.

BIOTIC INVENTORY STATUS

NR 44 compliant Biotic Inventory is complete:

http://intranet.dnr.state.wi.us/int/land/er/nhi/reports/DA_Streams_Report_FINAL_int.pdf. Tank Creek Fishery Area was NOT identified as an ecologically significant area within the assessment of Driftless Area Stream properties covered in the report.

CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES (INCLUDING TRIBAL SITES)

The Fishery Area has both Cultural and Archeological sites located within its boundaries. Contact with the State Historical Society is required prior to any activities near known sites.

RECREATIONAL USE

Fishing, hunting, and trapping are the primary recreational uses of the property. Access is provided by a 5 – car parking lot at the upper end of the property off Charcoal Road, parcels adjacent to County Trunk Highway A, and two public road crossings – Highway 95 and South Pole Grove Road. Tank Creek is a Class I brook and brown trout stream for its entire length. There are two unnamed lakes on the property, Lake 25-11 and 36-1. Fish species present in Lake 25-11 are unknown. A 2007 netting survey of Lake 36-1 found several fish species including black crappie, pumpkinseed sunfish, green sunfish, golden shiner, yellow bullhead, and black bullhead. Rainbow trout have also been stocked in 36-1 to provide a put and take trout fishery. Lake 36-1 has experienced low winter dissolved oxygen levels in some years since the 2007 netting survey which may have limited or altered its fish population. Hunting opportunities exist for whitetail deer, wild turkey, grouse, woodcock, squirrels, and black bear.

INVASIVE SPECIES

It was noted in the “Current Forest Types, Size Classes, and Successional Stages” the recon was completed in the winter of 2008. Invasive species were not noted due to the time of year the recon was taken. However, if invasive species are noted on the property control of invasive species will be considered with future forest management activities to ensure the health of the property.

SOILS

Tank Creek drains a soil association consisting of Norden, Hixton and Northfield loams and Boone sand. The area consists of hilly, rolling and steep soils on dissected sandstone uplands. Relief is predominantly 4 – 30%. Soil parent material is glauconitic and non-glauconitic sandstone and siltstone with local coverings of loess.

Boone fine sand and Boone fine sandy loam are the predominant soil types in the Tank Creek watershed. These soils are generally well drained, very droughty, and easily eroded. They are



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low in organic matter and mineral plant foods. Most of the land of this soil type adjacent to Tank Creek is abandoned as cropland. Current use is for some pasture, wildland or forest production.

Tank Creek bisects a narrow band of deep peats throughout most of its length. These soils consist of decaying vegetable matter at the surface and overlie sandy subsoil. They are located in level or depressed areas along the stream and have poor natural drainage.

Current Forest Types, Size Classes, and Successional Stages

Tank Creek Fishery Area is a 508 acre mosaic of oak, pine, swamp hardwoods, upland grass and brush, and wetlands. Recon was completed in 2008 during the winter months. The three largest cover types are oak, pine, and swamp hardwoods.

The property has 289 acres (56% of the property) of black and red oak. 52 acres of oak are seedling and sapling size trees (0 to 5 inches in diameter, 20 years old) and 237 acres are pole size timber (5 to 11 inches in diameter, 80 years old).

The property has 73 acres (14% of the property) of red pine, white pine, and jack pine. The red pine is a mix of pole timber (5 to 11 inches in diameter, 34 acres, 34 years old), small sawlog timber (9 to 15 inches in diameter, 7 acres, 68 years old), and large sawlog timber (greater than 15 inches in diameter, 4 acres, 70 years old). White pine is large sawtimber (greater than 15 inches in diameter, 14 acres, 70 years old). Jack pine is pole size timber (5 to 9 inches in diameter, 14 acres, 42 years old).

The property has 47 acres (9% of the property) of swamp hardwoods. The swamp hardwoods are pole size timber (5 to 11 inches in diameter, 70 years old).

The remaining cover types are lowland brush alder (33 acres), road right-of-way (28 acres), lakes – minor (12 acres), upland brush (11 acres), emergent vegetation (7 acres), herbaceous vegetation (4 acres), and lowland grass (4 acres).

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

Forest Management Objectives:

The primary forest management objective is to provide younger forest for both game species and early successional Species of Greatest Conservation Need while at the same time protecting water resources of the property. 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. Maintain oak cover types where feasible.
 - a. Diversify age classes with emphasis on developing younger stands
 - b. Crop tree release oak in young stands.
 - c. Regenerate oak stands where feasible and promote oak in young mixed hardwood stands.
 - d. Promote/retain larger diameter trees where feasible.
 - e. Increase coarse woody debris
2. Maintain conifer cover types
 - a. Promote older, large diameter white pine for wildlife and aesthetics
 - b. Increase coarse woody debris in white pine area
 - c. Protect hydrology of moist sites
3. Swamp hardwoods
 - a. Monitor ash resource for emerald ash borer



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- b. Promote species other than ash when conducting management
 - c. Promote large diameter red maple and promote yellow birch where it exists
 - d. Increase coarse woody debris
 - e. Protect hydrology
4. All Stands
 - a. Consider planting opportunities for desirable species such as oak and jack pine.
 - b. Control invasive plant species.
 5. Firebreaks/openings
 - a. Maintain these areas for fire protection and both game species and SGCN's.
 6. Wetlands – Protect hydrology of the current wetland cover types

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):

OAK - Almost half, 237 acres, of the Tank Creek property is 80 year old oak. Smaller, even-age harvests, over the next 25 years will be used to diversify the oak age class. Maintain and promote oak through planting, timber stand improvement methods, thinning, coppice, overstory removal, shelterwood, and other techniques described in the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook. Promote the growth and retention of large oak through techniques such as thinning. Reserve/legacy trees should be retained as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands to maintain a component of large mast trees and promote both snag trees and coarse woody debris for wildlife.

CONIFERS – Thin red pine plantations and dry site white pine every 8-10 years or when stocking warrants maintaining healthy, vigorous stands. Consider managed old forest or passive management of moist site white pine to develop large diameter trees, snags, and coarse woody debris. Leave dead and dying trees for wildlife habitat. Protect hydrology of moist sites through appropriate BMP's for water quality.

SWAMP HARDWOODS - Utilize uneven aged silvicultural methods such as thinning (especially from below) and group selection, as well as timber stand improvement methods and other techniques described in the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook to maintain/regenerate these stands and promote large diameter trees. Protect hydrology of moist sites through appropriate BMP's for water quality.

ALL STANDS – Follow forestry BMP's for invasive species control. Utilize mechanical and chemical treatment of invasive species where appropriate.

Firebreaks/Openings – Utilize mechanical and chemical treatment of undesirable species to maintain these areas.

WETLANDS - Protect hydrology through appropriate BMP's for water quality.



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Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date