

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Monitoring the Implementation of Property Master Plans**

**Property:** Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area

**Master Plan Year:** 2010

**Goal 1: Protect, restore and manage priority natural communities and associated rare and declining species**

**1.1: Establish outreach and assistance programs**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Together with cooperating partners provide direct one-to-one technical assistance to area landowners.</li> <li>▪ Create a series of brochures and education displays that provide information about the history and importance of grassland, savanna and stream ecosystems in SW Wisconsin.</li> <li>▪ Share recommended conservation actions and priorities from Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan with other departments, agencies and organizations.</li> <li>▪ Work with local groups to establish a "Cooperative Weed Management Area".</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**1.2: Acquire, restore, and manage large permanent grassland areas and remnant habitat areas**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventory, protect and manage key lands to permanently protect and buffer managed grasslands in and surrounding BCA cores, as well as remnant prairies, oak savanna (oak openings), some high-quality oak woodlands, and priority streams that are of particularly high quality, support rare species, or contribute to permanent managed grassland areas.</li> <li>▪ Establish a course-grain habitat monitoring program that will include analyzing land-cover changes by tracking changes in habitat acreages using databases such as the EPA’s National Land Cover Database and the NRCS’s Natural Resources Inventory).</li> <li>▪ Use computerized mapping in conjunction with field cover-mapping to track progress of protection over time in BCA cores as well as in small sites such as high quality prairies, savannas, and stream reaches.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**1.3: Protect rare and declining species, including native plants, fish, grassland birds, mammals, prairie-dependent vertebrates and others**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Permanently protect, buffer, manage and restore the native communities and habitats that support those species.</li> <li>▪ Identify additional locations in the project boundary supporting rare species, including those that historically supported rare species but have not been sampled in recent years.</li> <li>▪ Develop a comprehensive long-term monitoring program for populations of target species that will allow the Department to evaluate progress toward protecting our priority natural communities and the species that depend on them.</li> <li>▪ Provide information to landowners highlighting specific management actions that would bene-fit rare species found on or near their land.</li> <li>▪ Consider restoring populations of rare species to locations where they were historically pre-sent and where habitat improvements indicate their likely long-term survival</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**1.4: Protect watersheds of warm-water and cold-water streams that have been designated as Outstanding or Exceptional Resource Waters and restore, protect and manage degraded (“Impaired”) streams and ri-parian corridors**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sample warm-water streams that have not been sampled in recent years to identify locations supporting rare aquatic species, including fish, reptiles and amphibians.</li> <li>▪ Establish or maintain existing long-term grass cover of 20 percent or more within priority watersheds.</li> <li>▪ Update stream designations and the state’s list of impaired waters by identifying waters not meeting their designated biological use.</li> <li>▪ Once conditions in the watersheds of priority warm-water streams have improved to the point that water quality concerns have been addressed, consider projects to restore stream channel morphology in degraded reaches of priority streams.</li> <li>▪ Monitor stream response (e.g., water quality, channel morphology, stream Index of Biotic Integrity, fish sampling) to protection and management activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**Goal 2: Develop and enhance compatible recreational opportunities such as hunting, bird-watching, trout and bass fishing, trapping, nature study, paddling, hiking, and appreciation of the area’s cultural history.**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide compatible recreational opportunities in the project area on lands acquired in fee, or work to secure public access on lands that are protected by easement.</li> <li>▪ Enhance recreational experiences by developing educational materials that highlight stream and grassland-related points of interest on or near Department properties.</li> <li>▪ Continue work through the Streambank Protection Program to increase public access to high quality fishing areas, particularly streams supporting brook trout and smallmouth bass.</li> <li>▪ Work with Wisconsin Department of Transportation and utility companies to enhance recreational opportunities and minimize negative aesthetic impacts of roadway and powerline corridors within the project area.</li> <li>▪ Promote the Southwest Savanna Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail in southwest Wisconsin, highlighting some of the many great birding opportunities in the project area.</li> <li>▪ Monitor usership patterns on public lands as funding allows, using tools such as onsite surveys, consultation with local units of government, and coordination with the Department of Tourism and other local recreation and sporting groups</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**Goal 3: Help sustain the area's rural agricultural landscape.**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Department and contributing Partners will provide staff to assist farmers and help them enroll in USDA programs that provide financial and technical assistance, such as CSP, and GRP.</li><li>▪ Protect and manage lands in a manner that is compatible with surrounding agriculture.</li><li>▪ Help reduce the land investments for some farmers interested in selling or easing valuable conservation lands, while continuing to farm remaining higher production lands.</li><li>▪ Provide input to USDA, DATCP, and our state and national legislators about conservation implications of proposed changes in farm policies and programs, and to recommend actions that would benefit both conservation and local producers.</li><li>▪ In some cases use land management tools, including management agreements or cropland rental, to continue project-compatible agricultural uses on Department owned land.</li><li>▪ Work with DATCP to create brochures and other educational materials and displays highlighting the history of farming in southwest Wisconsin, and the importance of maintaining grass-based agriculture to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.</li><li>▪ Promote the establishment of a Working Lands Initiative project in this project area.</li><li>▪ Encourage efforts on the part of producers to market agricultural products that are produced in a way that is compatible with grassland conservation.</li><li>▪ Monitor agricultural trends over time so project goals and strategies are adjusted to accommodate changing land use practices.</li></ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2013</i></b></p>	

**Goal 4: Work with local communities to help design and locate development in places that minimize impacts on grassland, savanna and stream ecosystems, while promoting a healthy rural economy.**

<p><b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work to incorporate consideration of natural resource conservation into local planning and decision-making processes.</li> <li>▪ Provide local communities with technical information on key natural resources within their planning jurisdiction, and become involved in comprehensive planning wherever possible.</li> <li>▪ Encourage and support local communities in their efforts to survey and assess key resources in areas that are the subject of current or future land-use planning.</li> <li>▪ Assist with local efforts to promote grassland-based tourism in the project area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accomplishments 2013</b></p>	

**Goal 5: Promote appreciation of historical, cultural, and archaeological resources.**

<p><b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When protection is warranted based on natural resources present, work to enrich the inherent value and public benefits of land protection where there is opportunity to encompass archaeological, cultural and historical features either on the site, or within its viewshed.</li> <li>▪ Obtain information from the State Historical Society on the locations of such historic and archaeological features and consider these data in land protection planning efforts</li> <li>▪ Work with state and local historical societies and local governments to create outreach materials describing important cultural, historical, and archaeological sites visible from Department properties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accomplishments 2013</b></p>	