

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

Property: Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit

Master Plan Year: 2011

Habitat Management Areas – general habitat management objectives

***MASTER PLAN
OBJECTIVES***

- Provide hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Establish and maintain linkages between similar habitat blocks to create travel corridors for the movement of species over time.
- Maintain isolated islands of old white and red pine forest.
- Actively manage the aspen- and oak-dominated forests to provide habitat diversity for primary game and certain non-game species.
- Maintain the primary flowages to maximize wildlife benefits; consider additional wetland enhancement projects to augment functional wetland base.
- Maintain current acreage of lowland brush (shrub-carr) wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat to a broad range of animals.
- Maintain current acreage of sedge meadow to provide habitat that supports many species.
- Maintain tamarack acreage and develop older, larger diameter trees to benefit species that require this community type.
- Protect hydrology of connected wetland basins, headwater streams, seeps, and other associated hydrologic features.

Habitat Management Areas – general habitat management objectives

Accomplishments 2012

- Objective 1. Hunting and trapping opportunities were provided on the Meadow Valley and Wood County wildlife areas via statewide framework. Hunting and trapping opportunities on Sandhill were provided by NR 10.22. Sandhill's "Learn to Hunt Deer" hunt was successfully conducted on the 3rd and 4th of November. Students harvested 23 deer during the hunt.
- Objective 2. No management actions to report.
- Objective 3. Isolated islands of old white and red pine forests are passively managed.
- Objective 4. 321 acres of timber, primarily oak and aspen, was harvested within the general habitat management area. The primary objective was to regenerate early successional forest to benefit ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other young forest dependent species. Harvest activities were conducted in compliance with the general management prescriptions outlined in the Sandhill/Meadow Valley master plan.
- Objective 5. Water level prescriptions were implemented for the 42 primary flowages on the Work Unit. Objectives ranged from late spring draw-downs to full pool management, depending upon the unique circumstances of each flowage. We conducted prescribed burns on the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest refuge pools of the Meadow valley Flowage complex to control brush and promote desirable vegetation. The total acreage affected by this management was 1000 acres. Conducted annual dam/dike inspections (n= 92) and prioritized the necessary repairs.
- Objective 6. Shrub-carr habitat is managed passively.
- Objective 7. Sedge meadow habitat is managed passively.
- Objective 8. Tamarack sites are managed passively.
- Objective 9. No management action to report.

Habitat Management Areas – ruffed grouse management objectives

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce optimum ruffed grouse habitat including nesting, forage and brooding environments. ▪ Provide high quality hunting opportunities for species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. 70 acres, primarily aspen, was harvested within the ruffed grouse management areas on the Wood County and Meadow valley wildlife areas. The primary objective was to regenerate early successional forest to benefit ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other young forest dependent species. Harvest activities were conducted in compliance with the general management prescriptions outlined in the Sandhill/Meadow Valley master plan.</p> <p>Objective 2. Hunter walking trails which traverse the properties are maintained annually to provide access into the management areas.</p>

Native Community Management Areas – barrens management objectives

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain, expand, and enhance the ecological function of the approximately 2,816 acres of barrens community within the management area with specific emphasis on prairie flora, especially wild lupine which is the sole food source for larvae of the Karner blue butterfly (Kbb), and two other rare butterflies. ▪ Manage for Kbb recovery objectives based on delisting goals stated in the Federal Recovery Plan and the Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). ▪ Protect and maintain animals associated with barrens habitat, with specific emphasis on invertebrates, rare birds, and reptiles. ▪ Increase connectivity between patches of barrens vegetation. ▪ Manage this type as a shifting mosaic of habitat in the context of dry forest to sand prairie.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Mowed 40 acres of oak brush on the Eisfeldt and Broadhead barrens to develop structural elements important to barrens-dependent species. Also, mowed 30 acres of brush and burned 80 acres on the Sandhill barrens to meet Karner Blue butterfly recovery requirements.</p> <p>Objective 2. Management is guided by the HCP with the objective of reaching recovery goals.</p> <p>Objective 3. Mow-only buffers, mowing restrictions, and burning restrictions are used to protect invertebrates from management actions.</p> <p>Objective 4. No management actions to report.</p> <p>Objective 5. No management actions to report.</p>

Native Community Management Areas – old forest management objectives

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and maintain approximately 5,700 acres of an older forest of longer lived species to benefit forest interior wildlife species. ▪ Passively manage for forested wetland habitats. ▪ Enhance forest structural diversity and development of old forest attributes such as standing dead snags, coarse woody debris, and large diameter trees. ▪ Protect water quality and hydrology. ▪ Maintain free flowing, naturally meandering stretch of the West Branch of Beaver Creek near Kingston and Beaver Creek near Blueberry Trail
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. The old forest management area within the Work Unit is managed passively.</p> <p>Objective 2. Forested wetlands are managed passively.</p> <p>Objective 3. Timber harvests adjacent to old forest sites consider the important structural elements of old forest management.</p> <p>Objective 4. All management actions on the Work Unit consider water quality and hydrology.</p> <p>Objective 5. These areas are managed passively.</p>

General Recreation Management and Use

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide high quality opportunities for upland game and waterfowl hunting, and trapping. ▪ Provide high-quality wildlife viewing opportunities for a broad range of migratory and resident species, including Sandhill cranes and two high priority SGCN – whooping crane and trumpeter swans
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Hunting and trapping opportunities are provided on the Meadow Valley and Wood County wildlife areas via statewide framework. Hunting and trapping opportunities on Sandhill were provided by NR 10.22.</p> <p>Objective 2. Visitors have tremendous viewing opportunities on the Work Unit. A broad range of game and non-game species are common with unique opportunities to view whooping cranes, sandhill cranes, and trumpeter swans. Sandhill also has a marsh tower to provide visitors with a unique perspective of marsh life. Other opportunities to view forest and wetland species occur along the 3.5 mile Swamp Buck Trail.</p>

Hunting and Trapping on Wood County and Meadow Valley Wildlife Areas

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain optimum upland habitat for game species such as ruffed grouse, woodcock and white-tailed deer. ▪ Conduct wildlife and user surveys to meet property or statewide priority inventory needs. ▪ Maintain areas with limited vehicle access to provide remote hunting and trapping experiences.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. 321 acres of timber, primarily oak and aspen, was harvested within the general habitat management area. The primary objective was to regenerate early successional forest to benefit ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other young forest dependent species. Harvest activities were conducted in compliance with the general management prescriptions outlined in the Sandhill/Meadow Valley master plan.</p> <p>In addition, 70 acres, primarily aspen, was harvested within the ruffed grouse management areas of the Wood County and Meadow valley wildlife areas. The primary objective was to regenerate early successional forest to benefit ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other young forest dependent species. Harvest activities were conducted in compliance with the general management prescriptions outlined in the Sandhill/Meadow Valley master plan.</p> <p>Objective 2. Population monitoring activities included Karner Blue butterfly flight surveys, ruffed grouse drumming survey, trumpeter swan aerial nest count and round-up, waterfowl brood survey, and duck banding.</p> <p>Objective 3. The primary trails are gated to limit “off-site” travel on the Work Unit.</p>

Wildlife Observation on Wood County and Meadow Valley Wildlife Areas

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain the 250-acre closed area on Ball Road Flowages and the 1,175-acre wildlife refuge area on Meadow Valley Flowage as resting/viewing areas for migrating waterfowl. ▪ Facilitate opportunities for wildlife viewing using the existing system of dikes to aid foot travel and public access roads for vehicle travel. ▪ Establish observation sites with interpretive signs at appropriate locations, which may be moved from time to time as habitat conditions and wildlife use change. ▪ Produce information materials to improve opportunities for wildlife observation.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. The Ball Road Flowage and the Meadow valley Flowage closed areas are clearly posted to limit disturbance to resting waterfowl.</p> <p>Objective 2. Property trails and dikes are mowed at least every other year for maintenance and to aid access for users.</p> <p>Objective 3. No management actions to report.</p> <p>Objective 4. The Meadow Valley property brochure was updated. General viewing opportunity information is included.</p>

Access and Trails on Wood County and Meadow Valley Wildlife Areas

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain Ditchbank and South Bluff Roads on Wood County WA. ▪ Maintain dikes to secondarily provide pedestrian access for hunters and trappers.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Graded (6 miles) the Ditchbank and South Bluff roads. Hauled and placed 500 tons of road base on South Bluff road to repair low sections.</p> <p>Objective 2. Mowed 34 miles to dikes (tops and slopes) on the Work Unit's flowages.</p>

Fisheries Management on Wood County and Meadow Valley Wildlife Areas

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Fisheries to evaluate the restoration potential for sustainable fisheries. If conditions and demand dictate, the Department may pursue a plan variance to implement the study findings and recommendations. ▪ Prohibit motorized boats on waters of Meadow Valley and Wood County Wildlife Areas (per NR 45.11(4)).
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. No management actions to report.</p> <p>Objective 2. Signs were posted at landings displaying this restriction</p>

Camping on Wood County and Meadow Valley Wildlife Areas

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate dispersed camping areas that will be available by permit during the fall hunting seasons (September – December) and the spring turkey season. ▪ Provide and maintain two designated dispersed camping areas on Wood County WA: the Ball Road and Amundson Road campgrounds. ▪ Provide and maintain a maximum of nine designated dispersed camping areas on Meadow Valley WA.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Campgrounds were posted with the new rules and property brochures are being revised to reflect these changes.</p> <p>Objective 2. The Ball Road and Amundson Road campgrounds were mowed and the vault toilets were cleaned. A damaged door at the Ball Road campground was replaced and both doors were painted.</p> <p>Objective 3. The 9 Meadow Valley campgrounds were mowed and vault toilets were cleaned. Six restroom doors were sanded and painted.</p>

Property: Sandhill Wildlife Area

Habitat Management Area

<p><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Place special management emphasis on the Gallagher Marsh complex due to its importance as a waterfowl management site.▪ Conduct deer research with sound management implications. Projects consistent with statewide deer management priorities will rank higher.▪ Conduct other resource-related research to fully utilize the opportunities that Sandhill offers.▪ Maintain the 4,500-acre closed area (NR 10.22, NR 11.13) on the north half of Sandhill Wildlife Area to provide food and shelter for migratory and resident wildlife population.
<p><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></p>	<p>Objective 1. Replaced the closed area signs and established a voluntary avoidance area to reduce disturbance to resting waterfowl and other marsh birds during fall migration. Rip-rapped 800 feet of shoreline on the south dike of G Flowage. Completed southern ½ of the West Fence dike renovation (1300 feet) adjacent to the West Fence Marsh; project included leveling and re-sloping.</p> <p>Objective 2. No management action to report.</p> <p>Objective 3. Supported master's project investigating porcupine ecology. Also, facilitated ongoing woodpecker and squirrel research by UW-Stevens Point undergraduates.</p> <p>Objective 4. The closed area is clearly posted and maintained per master plan.</p>

Native Community Management Area – North Bluff Old Forest and Yellow River Old Forest

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain as a floodplain forest reserve, an aquatic reserve and wetland protection site, and as an ecological reference area. ▪ Provide closed canopy or near closed canopy to benefit area sensitive species. ▪ Protect intact stands of bottomland forest. ▪ Provide opportunities for research and education on the highest quality native floodplain forests. ▪ Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Yellow River.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Passively managed</p> <p>Objective 2. Passively managed</p> <p>Objective 3. Passively managed</p> <p>Objective 4. No management actions to report.</p> <p>Objective 5. Passively managed</p>

Special Management Area

<p style="text-align: center;">MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide areas and facilities to support operations and administration needs and provide facilities to help deliver public services. ▪ Provide educational programs that develop outdoor skills emphasizing hunting, trapping, observing and other manners of enjoying wildlife resources and the outdoors. ▪ Provide interpretive and educational services that create an appreciation for wildlife resources and their management. ▪ Provide opportunities for education consistent with the statewide conservation education plan. ▪ Partner with Necedah National Wildlife Refuge on mutually beneficial education and outreach programs.
<p style="text-align: center;">Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Maintained the headquarters, Skill Center, dormitory and skills range to provide the necessary services to the program and visitors. Many updates were made at the Sandhill Skills Center including: painting the interior; replacing lighting in the classroom and hall; replacing the HVAC covers; installing new flooring in the classroom, kitchen, and hallway; and staining the exterior siding.</p> <p>Objective 2. Continued to provide educational services with a ½ time position. Primary activities included weekend workshops, High School Independent Study, and on/off site presentations.</p> <p>Objective 3. Began re-writing the Work Unit's property brochures to provide up-to-date information to visitors.</p> <p>Objective 4. Sandhill's niche within the statewide educational program is currently being discussed.</p> <p>Objective 5. Maintained communication the Necedah staff to partner on educational activities as opportunities arise.</p>

Public use management and development

<p style="text-align: center;">MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide hunting and trapping opportunities for small game, waterfowl and deer consistent with the experimental needs and educational goals of the property. ▪ As existing wildlife viewing towers become unusable, replace with universally accessible viewing structures that blend with the natural landscape, compliment local culture, and meet viewer needs. ▪ Maintain the 14-mile auto tour route referred to as the Trumpeter Trail. ▪ Maintain interpretive signs located along the trail to provide information on area wildlife, habitat management and unique features. ▪ Maintain the primitive 3.5-mile Swamp Buck Hiking Trail that meanders to the tower atop North Bluff. ▪ Maintain a minimum of three observation towers and approach paths accessible from the Trumpeter Trail to improve wildlife viewing opportunities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Implemented small game and waterfowl seasons on Sandhill. Seasons begin with the statewide seasons and end the weekend prior to the “Learn to Hunt Deer” hunt. The “Learn to Hunt Deer” hunt was held on the 3rd and 4th of November. Eighty-five students harvested 23 deer.</p> <p>Objective 2. Future project</p> <p>Objective 3. Graded the 14-mile Trumpeter Trail and mowed the shoulder. Also, hauled and placed 200 tons of road base to repair cave-ins and potholes.</p> <p>Objective 4. Began updating the property brochure and the Trumpeter Trail guide. The Friends of Sandhill are involved with these updates. Also, worked with Michigan Tech University (through a broader partnership) to develop interpretive signage highlighting early successional forest.</p> <p>Objective 5. The Friends of Sandhill conduct annual maintenance activities on the Swamp Buck Trail.</p> <p>Objective 6. Replaced steps on the Gallagher Marsh tower to ensure safe travel to the deck.</p>

Property: Wood County Wildlife Area

Habitat Management Area

<p>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintain the current aspen acreage as the dominant cover type.▪ Manage the Ball Road Flowages and the Ditchbank Road wetlands as emergent marshes.▪ Place special management emphasis on the Ball Road Flowages and the Ditchbank Road wetlands due to their importance as waterfowl management sites.▪ Maintain the established closed area (NR 11.13) to provide resting areas for migrating waterfowl.▪ Cooperatively manage South Bluff Tamaracks with Wood County to retain a relatively intact stand of regionally important forest community.
<p>Accomplishments 2012</p>	<p>Objective 1. Harvested 64 acres of aspen within the Ruffed Grouse management area on Wood County wildlife area to maintain this important forest type.</p> <p>Objective 2. Implemented scheduled water level manipulations on the Ball Road Flowages to encourage desirable vegetation and reduce woody encroachment.</p> <p>Objective 3. Completed renovation on the north dike of the 2nd Impoundment on the Ball Road Flowage complex. The project included re-sloping , leveling, and placing road base on 2700 feet of this dike.</p> <p>Objective 4. Clearly posted the closed area within the Ball Road Road flowage complex.</p> <p>Objective 5. This site is managed passively.</p>

Property: Meadow Valley Wildlife Area

Habitat Management Area

<i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Place special management emphasis on the Meadow Valley Flowage complex due to its importance as a waterfowl management site.
<i>Accomplishments 2012</i>	<p>Objective 1. Completed dike renovation on SE Refuge Pool of the Meadow Valley Flowage; work included re-sloping, leveling, and placing road base on 8000 feet on dike. Leveled and re-sloped 1100 feet North Pocket dike on the Meadow Valley Flowage; also re-constructed the spillway. Constructed road adjacent to borrow area into the North Pocket flowage (300 feet) on the Meadow Valley Flowage. Re-surfaced 1000 feet of East Amundson and NE lateral roads that needed additional material. Leveled the west dike of the North pocket ditch (2800 feet) on Northeast Pool. Rip-rapped 600 feet of east end on split dike and re-constructed spillway to the North Pocket. Leveled 200 feet of the east dike on the Southwest Refuge Pool on the Meadow Valley Flowage. Re-constructed 2 approaches and heavy gates into the Southeast and Southwest Refuge Pools. Replaced 2 heavy gates into the East Pool on the Meadow Valley Flowage</p>