

## Master Plan Variance or Amendment

Variance

Amendment

**Property Name:** Council Grounds State Park

**Date the Current Master Plan Approved:** 1979

*(Changes to plans approved after 1996 must follow the requirements of NR 44.04.)*

**Proposed Change to the Master Plan** (The specific master plan language changes and any change in land use classification, with revised maps as appropriate):

The following will be added to Section II B of the master plan:

The specific forest management activities described below may be immediately carried out to implement the general forest management activities provided for in the master plan. Additional forest management activities are to be considered when the master plan is revised. The specific locations of the areas to be managed are shown on the attached map.

### **Compartment 300**

#### **Stand Description, Objective, Management Prescription**

**Stand 1** is approximately 19 acres. This stand is dominated by large sawtimber-sized white pine that originated in the late 1800's. Red pine in the southern half of the stand also became established in the late 1800's; pines and other species became established towards the north end of the stand in the following decades. There has been no apparent management other than to remove trees that fell on to the Park's loop road during the tornado. Tornado-damaged trees will be removed in a few selected areas. Only individual trees that are readily accessible from existing roads and trails and pockets of damaged and downed trees will be cut. Natural aspen root sprouts and seed from the surrounding stand of trees are expected to regenerate young trees in the cut areas of this stand. The majority of the stand will be untouched to break up the visual impact of harvesting as much as possible.

**Stand 18** is approximately 20 acres. This area is a cultivated field in 1939 aerial photos. It is now dominated by a small sawtimber-size Scotch pine that was planted about 1954, perhaps for Christmas tree production. Seventeen acres of it is almost pure Scotch pine plantation and 3 acres of it is a mix of Scotch, red, and white pine. The 17-acre portion received significant damage with numerous pockets and scattered individual trees blown down. The combination of storm and a stand of poorly formed, non-native Scotch pine over a dense understory of non-native invasive brush species (Tartarian honeysuckle and some common buckthorn) led to a decision to do a harvest of all trees (clear-cut) over the majority of the 17 acres of pure Scotch pine. Replanting the clear-cut portion of the stand with a combination of long-lived native conifer and hardwood species will be done after a control effort of the brush is completed. In the 3-acre area where red and white pine are also present, all Scotch pine will be removed and the weaker and suppressed red and white pine will be thinned. Future management will focus on the extant white and red pine.

**Stand 23** is approximately 6 acres and is a combination of small sawtimber-sized red pine and spruce planted in the 1940's - 1950's and mixed hardwood species (ash, red and silver maple, box elder, bur, red, and northern pin oak) that established naturally at about the same time. There has been no apparent management other than to reactively remove those trees that fell on to the Park's loop road. There was enough damage throughout Stand 23 that it will be gone through completely to remove damaged timber and also thin the remaining areas where needed. There will be a good mixed of species and sizes left in place, both conifer and hardwood. Scattered snags that do not pose a safety risk to park visitors will be left in place. A combination of existing seedlings and seed from the surrounding stand is expected to regenerate young trees within this stand. A small amount of supplemental hand planting could be done in stand 23 to help shift over to longer-lived species in pockets where invasive shrubs (especially Tartarian honeysuckle) is now growing. Pockets of honeysuckle would be cut or run down during the harvest.

**These Actions will be Taken to Inform Park Users and Minimize Visual and Biological Impacts:**

1. Provide signs, handouts, and posting to a web site to explain the what, where and why of these management activities.
2. Conduct harvesting in winter only when park usage is low and impacts to biological resources are minimal.
3. Slash will be removed and stumps will be cut low in visually sensitive areas, such as along designated trails. In other areas slash will be flattened or laid flat to promote decomposition.
4. Timber selection and harvests shall be consistent with the "Managing Forests on State Park Lands" (see attachment A).

**Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered Plants and Animals**

Steps taken to protect the Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered plants and animals for which potential habitat exists in the harvest area shown below.

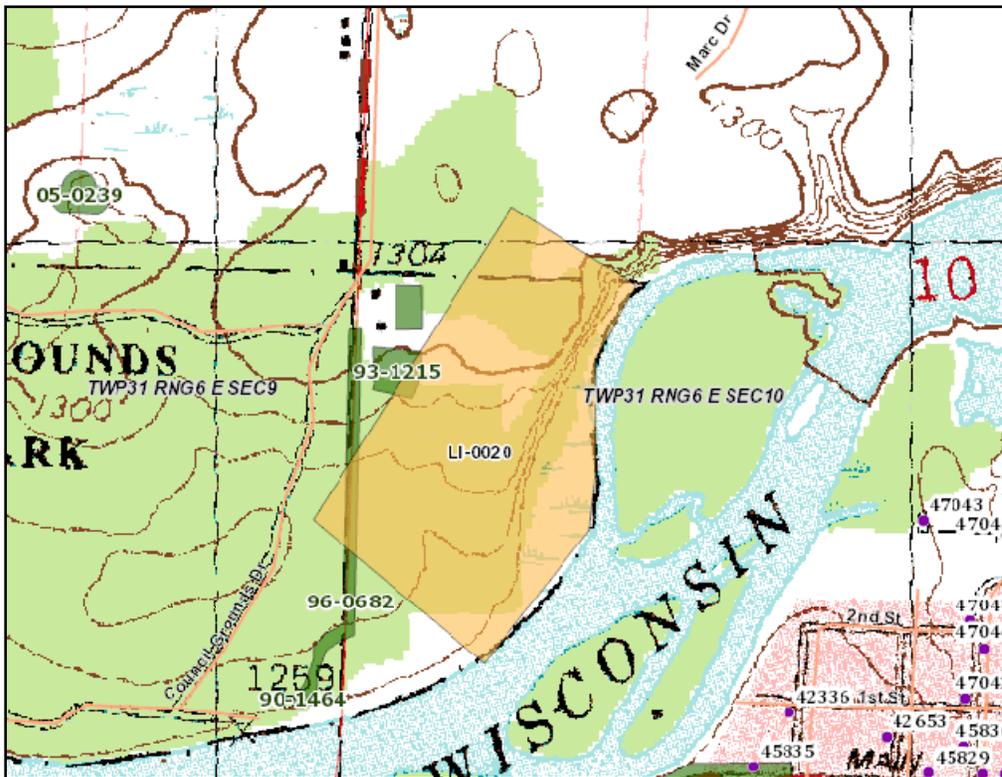
1. A state special concern and federally protected bird for which management guidelines have been developed. Protection addressed by winter harvesting when the bird is not utilizing those nesting sites, along with the establishment of a two-part "protection zone." If a nest is located, a 330 feet protection zone will be left unharvested. Timber harvesting that falls in the protection zone is to be completed by March 15.
2. A State Endangered plant. Protection addressed by winter harvest with frozen ground conditions. Preferred habitat for this species includes openings in pine barrens. Habitat for this species may be improved in part of the harvest area by cutting back the closed canopy of invasive brush.
3. A State Special concern plant. This species is not known from the stand, but there is an old record from the area (in the Wisconsin River valley, 1893). Protection addressed by winter harvest with frozen ground conditions. Habitat for this species may be improved in part of the harvest area by cutting back the closed canopy of invasive brush.
4. A State Threatened reptile. Protection addressed by winter harvest with frozen ground conditions and following Best Management Prescriptions for water quality.

## Historical and Cultural Resources

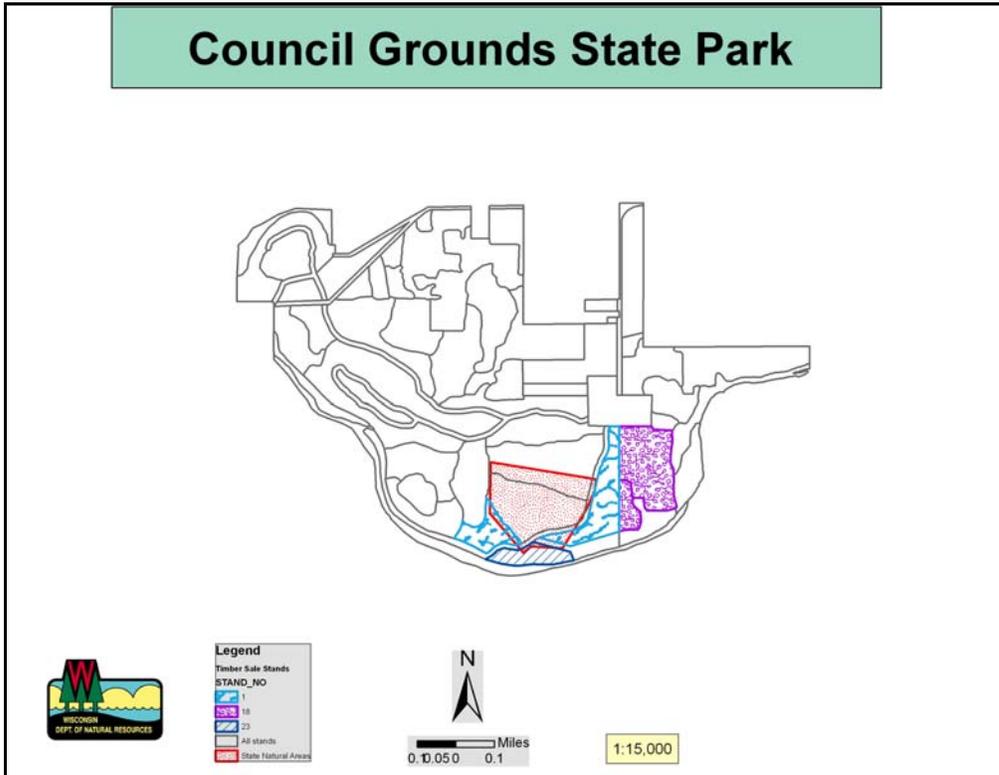
Portions of this harvest parcel are co-incident with an historic farmstead/cemetery recorded by the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS); cf. attached map of site LI-0020 location (orange area).

This site area is protected against unauthorized disturbance under provisions of WI stats 157.70(2r), as follows: "Except as provided under subs. (4) and (4) and ss. 157.111 and 157.112, no person may intentionally cause or permit the disturbance of a burial site or catalogued land to a catalogued burial site. This subsection does not prohibit normal agricultural or silvicultural practices which do not disturb the human remains in a burial site or the surface characteristics of a burial site." The WHS has approved harvesting in this area with the following conditions:

1. No new road cuts (i.e., existing roads can be used), no stump pulling within recorded/mapped site area.
2. Tree tips should be examined for obvious human remains when cut and/or as tips are moved back into place (if such is done).
3. If any suspected remains are recognized, area should immediately be flagged with flagging tape and further activities in immediate area must halt (DNR staff will contact the Departmental Archaeologist for further information on how to proceed).



Council Grounds State Park  
Forest Compartment 300



## **Supporting Information**

### **Purpose and need for the plan change (include background and history as appropriate):**

The 1979 Master Plan for Council Grounds State Park restricts forest management to the removal of individual trees for safety, aesthetics, and insect disease control in developed and use areas. The proposed plan variance identifies specific actions to reduce hazard trees, replace a dominant non-native tree species, and reduce potential insect infestations resulting from the 2011 tornado that will be taken prior to the revision of the master plan.

On 10 April, 2011 a tornado went through the eastern portion of Council Grounds State Park, including part of Krueger Pines State Natural Area. Immediately after the tornado, timber management concentrated on removing trees that blocked roads or were hazards. The proposed salvage timber sale will complement and extend the initial clean-up effort. The proposed timber sale is located in 3 stands, including parts of Stand 1 and 23 and all of Stand 18. All three stands have pockets of heavily damaged and downed timber that could serve as a source for growing populations of wood damaging insects that would then be able to move into the surrounding stands causing further damage. In addition, due to a lack of past thinning, many of the other timber stands in the park are over-stocked with trees. This has led to them not being as healthy and vigorous as is desirable and possibly not able to withstand major attacks from insects and disease. Stands 1 and 23 are bordered by the main loop road through the park. That same road is also what separates stands 1 and 23 from Krueger Pines SNA (stand 2 on the attached map).

### **How the proposed plan change is supported by or is inconsistent with the property vision, goals and objectives or other plan provisions:**

Section II B of the current Council Grounds Master Plan states:

#### *Vegetative Potential*

*Much of the potential development areas and the existing use areas contain desirable tree species such as white pine and several northern hardwood species. Any dead, dying or high-risk trees should be removed from these areas. Any cutting operations in the park will be restricted to removal for safety and aesthetics or cutting for insect disease control. The overall management program for the park should be directed toward preserving its natural appearance without sacrificing the safety of the public as the timber type gradually passes from pine to hardwoods.*

### **Anticipated primary benefits of the proposed plan change (include only information not presented in the purpose and need section above):**

The primary benefits are the reduction of hazard trees resulting from tornado damage, the reduction of potential insect infestations that could expand into adjacent stands, and the replacement of the invasive non-native Scotch pine with native species.

### **Additional anticipated benefits:**

### **Unavoidable adverse impacts (attach an Environmental Analysis if one was prepared):**

There may be some short term land scarring from harvesting. Negative aesthetic impacts will be mitigated by closely following aesthetic management guidelines.

**Summary of any alternatives considered:**

No action which would result in increased maintenance of removing hazard trees by park staff. Potential for Scotch pine invade adjacent stands and replace more desirable native tree species.

**Compatibility with statutes, codes, and department policies:**

Forestry Management is supported by the Bureau of Parks and other Department policies. Our limitation at this time is the Master Plan for Council Grounds State Park. The proposed management will not set a new precedent as similar forest management activities have and are occurring on other state parks.

**Federal aid limitations** (cite if any federal aid moneys are involved with either acquisition or management of the property and whether the proposed plan change is compatible with the aid requirements or if a federal review of the proposal is required):

The proposed action is fully compatible.

**Public review process used** (summary of who was notified about the proposal or otherwise reviewed the proposal and the meetings, mailings and other techniques used):

There will be public review, involving a letter to park neighbors, presentation to the park's Friend's group, a notice in the local paper and a posting on a website.

**Description of the support and/or opposition to the proposal** (include reasons for the various positions taken and any unresolved issues or concerns):

# Attachment A

## Wisconsin State Park System Guidance for Managing Forest Lands

### **Background**

Wisconsin's forested lands are some of our state's most valuable resources, prized by visitors and citizens alike. People come to these special places for moments of quiet reflection or simply to be in the great outdoors. They pursue recreational opportunities ranging from biking and hiking to camping, wildlife watching, and cross country skiing.

Scenic beauty — or “visual quality” — is one of the primary reasons people choose to spend their recreation and vacation time in or near forested areas and within Wisconsin State Park System (WSPS) properties. They are also attracted by the serenity and solitude of the outdoors. Forested landscapes inspire spiritual and emotional connections resulting in deeply personal experiences for many people.

Protecting and enhancing this sensory experience is a priority for those entrusted with managing WSPS properties. In addition, management must work to sustain healthy communities that provide economic, social, and ecological benefits, now and for future generations. This careful oversight of our natural resources is a cornerstone of the WSPS mission.

This document provides guidance related to the management of WSPS forested lands, including desired outcomes that will preserve the value of these resources for millions of WSPS visitors, into the future.

### **Opportunities for Management**

Forested lands on WSPS properties include a wide variety of natural community types, as well as altered landscapes. These various types of forests allow for different types of management activities that should be determined through careful planning (including property master plans and resource management plans) and consultation with foresters, wildlife managers, and other resource experts. All management actions must be consistent with the ecological capability of the landscape, optimize forest health and maintain or enhance the recreational, aesthetic, and other social aspects of the property.

Forest management activities may be undertaken to accomplish a variety of objectives on a property. Forests altered by human activities like fire suppression, development, or removal of hazard trees may be managed to restore the lands to a natural condition. Landscapes disturbed by natural phenomena such as tornadoes, fires, pests, or disease may be managed by allowing recovery to occur naturally. In cases where visitor safety or park developments are threatened, more active management efforts may be necessary. And, forests affected by exotic species or nuisance wildlife may be restored through more intensive management activities.

Just as forested lands reflect a diversity of habitats, so, too, forest management encompasses many different approaches. In some cases, management activities are virtually undetectable to property visitors. In others, timber sales are obvious, at least in the short-term. Over time, as these landscapes regenerate, the scenic beauty is restored and the benefits of management become much more apparent. In all cases, management must be conducted with both the forest resource and the visitors in mind.

## Visual Quality Management

Property visitors place an extremely high value on the aesthetics and scenic beauty of forested lands. Thus, visual quality is one important aspect of integrated forest management. Visual quality management can:

- Enhance the aesthetic value of forested lands for recreational users, contributing to a healthy tourism economy.
- Encourage public acceptance of forest management and timber harvesting, thereby building support for Wisconsin's forest industries.
- Minimize visual and audible impacts of forest management activities including perceived size of harvest areas, presence of logging slash, timber harvest landing operations, road building, site preparation, and herbicide treatment.
- Promote more natural-appearing forest stands.
- Provide opportunities to educate property visitors about forest management practices, benefits of sustainable forestry, and other related concepts.

Within any property, different forested landscapes have varying levels of visual sensitivity that are determined by factors including:

- Perceived degree of sensitivity to landscape aesthetics of users of that travel route,
- Volume and type of use the travel route or recreation area receives, and
- Speed of travel within the route or area.
- Terrain/topography

Based on these factors, the WSPS identifies three levels of visual sensitivity to be applied to forested lands. The definitions of these various levels of sensitivity will assist the property manager and forester in development of prescriptions specific to each site being managed. Language insuring proper completion and compliance with aesthetics practices should be included in timber sale and silvicultural activities contracts.

### Most Sensitive

Applies to travel routes and use areas where **significant public use occurs** and where **visual quality is of high concern** to typical users.

*Examples of such areas may include picnic areas, campgrounds, nature study areas, local roads, recreational lakes and rivers, designated trails and surrounding viewshed and other areas that provide a high level of scenic quality.*

### Moderately Sensitive

Applies to travel routes or recreation areas, not identified as "most sensitive," **where visual quality is of moderate concern** to typical users. These types of areas provide **moderate to high scenic quality but less significant public use.**

*Examples of these areas may include public highways and local roads, recreational lakes and rivers, and areas receiving a moderate amount of public use outside designated use areas.*

### Less Sensitive

Applies to travel routes, recreation areas or all other lands, not identified as "most

sensitive” or “moderately sensitive,” **where visual quality is of less concern to typical users.**

*Examples of these areas may include remote local roads and low-volume local forest roads, areas removed from designated use areas with limited access, and remote areas receiving minimal public use.*

By attempting to manage visual quality of forested lands based on these categories and following the Forest Management Guidelines, Timber Sale Handbook and Aesthetic chapter of the Silviculture Handbook, property managers can minimize visitor disruption and maintain or enhance scenic resources.

### **Overall Management Priorities**

Sustaining healthy forests is a vital role of WSPS properties, and the key to sustaining healthy forests is pro-active management. To ensure that management practices are consistent with the goals and objectives of the WSPS, several management priorities have been established but may vary depending on site characteristics:

- Aesthetics: Protect scenic views and allow forest cover to provide settings for solitude and privacy.
- Recreation: Sustain large canopy cover and shade in picnic areas, campgrounds, along nature trails, and high use areas.
- Habitat: Provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and plants, including endangered and threatened species.
- Forest Health: Allow for regeneration of the forest through quality forest management and seek opportunities that enhance or maintain the overall health and vigor of the forest ecosystem.
- Pest management: Manage invasive plant and animal species, pests, diseases, and nuisance wildlife through prevention, control, and eradication activities.
- Education and research: Provide opportunities for interpretation, education, and scientific research.
- Water quality: Sustain and enhance local watersheds and water resources including erosion control along waterways, trails, and other property features.

The Wisconsin State Park System has created these priorities for forest management experts to utilize when preparing forest management plans for WSPS properties. These priorities take into consideration both visitor demands and the need for sustaining high quality, healthy forests. Of course, site capabilities help define sustainable forestry practices. Each particular growing space has its own set of environmental conditions affecting tree growth. To achieve long-term health and vitality of forests, factors like soil type, aspect, and climate that influence moisture and nutrient supplies must be considered. The art and science of sustainable forestry blends program priorities with site capabilities to adapt high quality forest management systems.

### **Desired Outcomes**

By considering these overall priorities and managing for visual quality, property managers and resource professionals can prepare property and/or site specific forest management prescriptions that will create desirable outcomes for the WSPS. These desired outcomes include:

- Maintenance and/or enhancement of visually acceptable and functional forest cover for areas within easy view of WSPS users, particularly in picnic areas and campgrounds, along waterways and trails, and next to park roads and scenic outlooks.
- Use of appropriate forest management techniques to prevent or minimize damage from pests, disease, and nuisance wildlife.
- Planning of approved timber harvests to maintain visual quality in high and moderate use areas; require buffers between harvest areas and designated use areas, roads, and trails; and require immediate attention to negligent harvest practices. Consider contract language that includes specifications for waste, stump heights, forest fire prevention, slash management, sale area use and cleanup, and best management practices.
- Restoration of natural forest communities where practical.
- Development of areas for education and interpretation on topics such as forest protection and management.

## Attachment B Planting Plan for Stand 18

Tree Planting Plan for Council grounds State Park  
T31N R6E Section 10 SWSW NWSW

Dawn Bishop, Council Grounds Park Manager - Phone: 715-539-2035  
Bill Millis, DNR Forester - Phone: 715-536-2152

Field Number	Acres	Current Cover	Planting Year	Main Soil & Topography
1	17	Scotch Pine and brush	2013	Sandy Loam – Site is flat – well drained in most areas.
<b>Total Acres</b>	17			

A decision may be made in the summer of 2012 to put off all these dates for 1 year to allow the root systems of the cut trees to rot down more, making a more suitable planting site.

### SITE PREPARATION:

- **Winter 2011/2012:** Tornado damaged plantation of Scotch pine and non-native invasive brush will be clear cut.
- **Late August 2012:** The designated planting area should be broadcast sprayed soon after August 15 to kill brush and grasses.
- **October 2012:** The site will be lightly disc trenched to remove slash and other logging debris, clearing the rows for planting.

### TREE ORDER:

- **Fall/Winter 2012:** Trees will be ordered from Griffith State Nursery. Selections were made for trees that were native to the site and either long-lived or would be aesthetically pleasing to park users.

### Likely Order:

Field Number:	Species - First Choice:	Species – Second Choice:	Quantity:
1	White pine – 3 yr. old	White Pine – 2 yr. old	5000
	Red Pine – 3 yr. old	Red Pine 2 yr old	2500
	Red Oak – 1 yr. old	Bur Oak – 1 yr. old	2500
	Bur Oak – 1 yr. old	Red Oak - 1 yr. old	2500
	White Birch – 2 yr. old	White Pine - 3 yr. old	2500
			<b>Total: 15,000</b>

### SPACING AND LAYOUT:

- **Spring 2013:** Trees will be planted 6 feet apart within the row and rows will be 8 feet apart. A 6x8 foot spacing is approximately 900 trees per acre.

- **Spring 2013:** Maintenance trails and fire breaks will be put in place during planting.

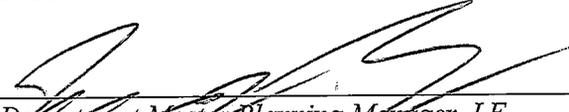
**MAINTENANCE:**

- **Summer 2013 and on:** Mowing the fire breaks and trails will be done by park staff. This will also aid in limiting some rodent damage. Mowing could be done once or twice per growing season with the most important mowing occurring prior to winter when the rodents do the most damage.
- **Late Fall 2013 or Spring 2014:** 1st follow-up herbicide release. If needed band spray a herbicide for grass and weed control over the top of the seedlings. The chemical used depends on the species that actually get planted and needs to be FSC and SFI approved.
- **Spring 2014:** Replanting of skips or dead spots may be done if needed.
- **Late Fall 2014 or Spring 2015:** 2<sup>nd</sup> follow-up herbicide release. If needed, band spray a herbicide for grass and weed control over the top of the seedlings. The chemical used depends on the species that actually get planted and needs to be FSC and SFI approved.

Variance/Amendment Initiator or Author: Dawn Bishop

Job Title: Park Superintendent-Council Grounds State Park

**Supporting Approvals**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Master Planning Manager, LF Date: 11/23/12

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager Date: 1-19-12

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Bureau Director Date: 1/24/12

  
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Lands Division Administrator Date: 1/24/12