

# Master Plan Variance or Amendment

Variance

Amendment

Property Name: Interstate 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 landuse classification, with revised maps as appropriate):

The following will be added to Section VIII C 2 of the master plan:

The specific forest management activities described below may be immediately carried out to begin to implement the general forest management activities provided for in the master plan. Additional forest management activities are to be considered and detailed in the next master plan revision. The specific locations of the areas to be managed are shown on the attached map of compartments 310 and 320

## **Compartment 310 Stand Description, Objective, Management Prescription**

**Stand 37** is approximately 58 acres. It consists of large sawlog sized (15+inches diameter at breast height) of northern hardwood species. The majority of the species are sugar maple, northern pin oak, white oak, and basswood. The understory contains little to no regeneration of desirable native tree species, and many areas have little to no ground layer (only bare dirt exposed). The dense crowns of these large sawlog-sized trees are shading out any possibility of regenerating desirable forest species. Forest management activities will consist of a marked thinning to open up the stand and provide more sunlight to the understory and promote regeneration of desirable native forest vegetation. The guidelines in the forestry silvicultural handbook are to be followed. Designated use areas will not be negatively impacted during or after vegetation cuts.

**Stand 30** is approximately 3 acres of miscellaneous deciduous hardwood species. The sawlog sized trees (11+ inches diameter at breast height) are mainly boxelder, with a few white ash and hackberry. The understory is very thick with buckthorn and honeysuckle brush. The management objective for this stand is to create a better wildlife habitat and to promote desirable native tree species to grow. Forest management activities will consist of cutting most of the trees and treating all the buckthorn, boxelder, and honeysuckle to prevent them from resprouting. The few white pine and oak trees scattered throughout the stand will be left for aesthetics, wildlife habitat, and as a seed source. Replanting would be considered if desired species (e.g., oak species, sugar maple, and basswood) have difficulty regenerating.

**Stand 33** is a 2 acre red pine plantation planted in the 1930's. The current density level is very thick causing the trees to grow taller with no to little radial growth. This creates a condition where these trees are highly susceptible to wind damage. The management objective on this stand is to create large red pine trees for aesthetics around the interpreter center. Forest management will consist of thinning the plantation to reduce the basal area (measure of density) by marked selection harvest, focusing on removing high risk trees, release the crop trees, cut the cull and low vigor trees, and improve spacing of the trees to allow growth. This action will also help establish a more natural appearing stand.

## **Compartment 320**

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

**Stand 1** is a 21 acre oak stand that is approximately 120 years old. This area contains mainly white oak, pin oak, bur oak, and ironwood trees. The general size of these trees is pole sized (5-11 inches diameter at breast height) with a few scattered sawlog sized trees. Little to no regeneration in the understory is occurring, except for ironwood and buckthorn. The objectives of this stand it to try to regenerate oak to provide future habitat for wildlife and to try to keep oak forest in the landscape. Forest management activities will be a two-cut shelterwood harvest, leaving 60-70 percent crown closure until final harvest. Aesthetic values will be protected. Timber cuts will retain the large trees with adequate canopy cover to provide a park-like feel, while also promoting lower re-vegetation of new growth. Stand 1 will be a shelter wood harvest leaving the best trees and opening up the canopy to promote re-vegetation.

**Stand 4** is an 11 acre mature aspen stand. Aspen is highly valuable for a variety of wildlife species. These aspen trees are over-mature and beginning to fall over. Without a regeneration harvest here soon the aspen habitat may be lost. The objective of this management action is to regenerate the aspen using coppice regeneration method. Harvesting is restricted to winter to avoid disturbance of an archeological site present here.

Both Stands 1 and 4 are part of a sustainable forestry grant to remove the buckthorn from the understory. This is the beginning stages of promoting regeneration of native desirable vegetation.

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

1. Provide signs, handouts, public meetings to explain the what, where and why of these management activities.
2. Conduct harvesting in winter only, when park usage is minimal and to reduce impacts to biological resources.
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".
5. Avoid bedrock glades and other sensitive biological features for log yards, skid trails, and other associated harvest activities.

An endangered species review was conducted, and there are no conflicts within the harvest area.

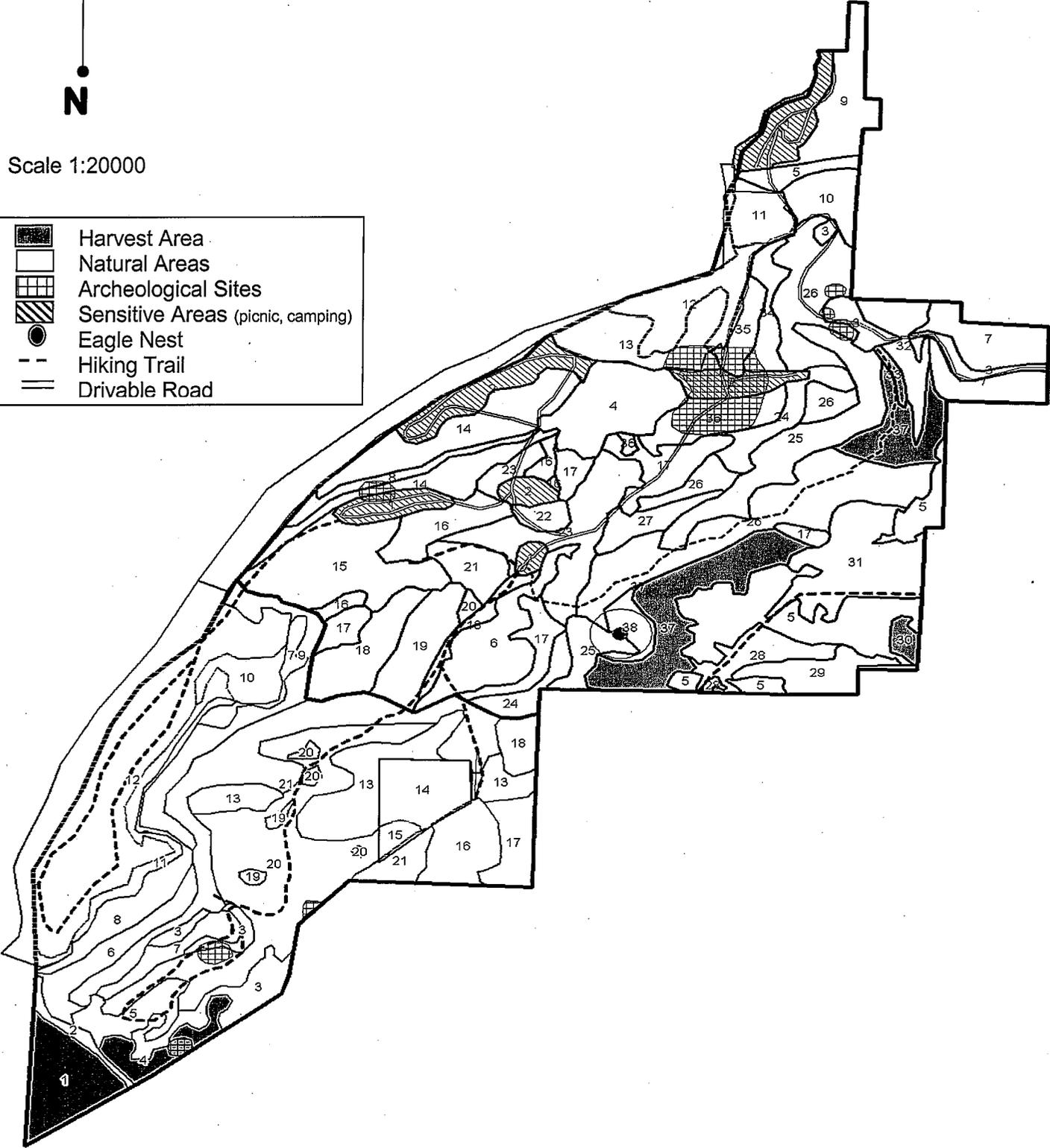


# Interstate State Park Forest Compartments 310 and 320



Scale 1:20000

	Harvest Area
	Natural Areas
	Archeological Sites
	Sensitive Areas (picnic, camping)
	Eagle Nest
	Hiking Trail
	Drivable Road





Variance/Amendment Initiator or Author; Kurt Dreger

Job Title: Park Superintendent – Interstate Park

**Supporting Approvals**

Tom Watten Date; 1-12-11  
Department Master Planning Manager, LF

Kurt Dreger Date; 1/10/11  
Property Manager

A.D. Shick Date; 1/11/11  
Program Bureau Director

Jamie Steunderf Date; 1/12/11  
Lands Division Administrator

**Others with a special interest;**

Signature: Chris Br... Date; 1/11/11  
Title: Section Chief, Wisconsin State Parks

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date; \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date; \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Supporting Information**

**Purpose and need for the plan change** (include background and history as appropriate):  
Currently the 1979 Master Plan for Interstate Park provides generally for forest management but is vague on how forest and other vegetation management will be carried out. The proposed plan variance identifies specific actions to be taken prior to the revision of the master plan.

Since 1979 significant forest management activities have not been done in the park. A number of forest stands are in critical need of management to promote the desired aesthetic conditions and forest regeneration and to remove undesirable or invasive tree and shrub species.

- The northern hardwood stands are maturing with no reproduction of desirable canopy trees occurring. It would be beneficial to create more diversity in age to promote a healthy community. It would be beneficial to utilize these large native trees for a seed source to provide regeneration.
- The aspen stand is mature and starting to deteriorate from age. It is beneficial to keep this forest cover type within the park for habitat diversity. The best way to regenerate aspen is using the coppice regeneration method, which may not be successful if cutting is delayed.

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

Section VIII C 2 of the current Interstate Park Master Plan states:

#### *Vegetative Management*

*Vegetative management techniques will be used to maintain and enhance the safety, aesthetic quality and wildlife habitat of the park. Pathological tree removal will occur to insure a healthy timber stand. Intensive recreation area will be maintained to appear as natural as possible so as to harmonize with the rest of the park landscape.*

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

The primary benefit is the long term management plan that is being developed for Forestry Management to maintain and promote desirable trees (i.e., oak, maple, and aspen), keeping the desired visual aesthetics, and making good use of a natural resource. Delaying action until after the master plan revision (in about 5 yr.) will allow some currently undesirable conditions to further worsen and the some opportunities for stand regeneration may be compromised.

### **Additional anticipated benefits:**

Another benefit would be the education possibilities, showing the visitors of the park how good forest practices can maintain a healthy and aesthetically pleasing forest.

**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:**

Continue to allow the forest to age with the unavoidable consequence of trees dying with little new regeneration of desirable species occurring. This may allow invasive species an avenue to spread.

**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 outdated Master Plan of Interstate 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 all neighbors of the park and a notice in the local paper and a public meeting.

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

## Attachment B

# 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.

