Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name: Belmont Mound
Property Designation: State Park
DNR Property Code: 9045
Forestry Property Code: 3301
Property Location: Lafayette County
Property Acreage: 274
Master Plan Date: none
Property Manager: John Arthur

Property Assessment

The following should be considered during the property assessment:

A. Ecological Landscape description and property context:
Belmont Mound State Park is located in the Southwest Savanna Ecological Landscape which is part of Wisconsin's Driftless Area, a region that has not been glaciated for at least the last 2.4 million years. The topography is characterized by broad, open ridgetops, deep valleys and steep, wooded slopes. This ecological landscape is underlain by sedimentary bedrock, especially dolomites and sandstones. The drainage patterns of streams in the Southwest Savanna are dendritic, which is a pattern characteristic of unglaciated regions but absent or uncommon in most of Wisconsin. Flowing waters include warm-water rivers and streams, cold-water streams and springs. Natural lakes are virtually absent, although there are a few associated with the floodplains of the larger rivers. Impoundments have been constructed on some rivers and streams, and check dams have been built in ravines to hold storm and snow runoff. The Southwest Savanna was once dominated by fire-dependent natural communities representing the continuum of prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland and oak forest. Agricultural crops (corn, soybeans, small grains, hay) cover 70% of this Ecological Landscape, with lesser amounts of grassland (mostly pasture), forest and residential areas. The major forest types are oak-hickory and maple-basswood. Prairie remnants of varying quality persist in a few places, mostly on rocky hilltops or slopes that are too steep to farm. Some pastures have never been plowed, and those that historically supported prairie may retain remnants of the former prairie flora. Pastures with scattered open-grown oaks still exist in some areas, mimicking oak savanna structure. A complement of native plants persists in some of these pastured savannas.

The park is within two different landtype associations (LTA). About the northern ¾ of the park is within the Platteville Savannah LTA (222Le02). The characteristic landform pattern is sloping with summits, shoulders and back-slopes of ridges common. Greater than 70% of the area has bedrock within five feet of the land surface. Soils consist of well-drained silty and loamy soils with a silt loam surface over calcareous and non-calcareous clayey, sandy or loamy residuum or over non-calcareous silty loess; most
areas are over dolostone, limestone or sandstone bedrock. About 65% of the LTA is in agricultural land with another 11% in grassland. Roughly 21% is in upland broad-leaved deciduous forest.

The southern ¼ of the park is in the Military Ridge LTA (222Le01). The characteristic landform pattern is steep with summits and shoulders of ridges common. Bedrock is between 100 feet and 50 feet of the land surface. Soils consist of well-drained and moderately well-drained silty and loamy soils with a silt loam surface over calcareous and non-calcareous clayey, sandy or loamy residuum or over calcareous silty loess: most areas are over dolostone, limestone, or sandstone bedrock. About 79% of the LTA is in agricultural land with another 9% in grassland. Roughly 9% is in upland broad-leaved deciduous forest.

B. General property description – management, adjacent land uses, topography, soils, etc.
Belmont, from the French belle monte, means "beautiful mountain." The top of Belmont Mound is 1,400 feet above sea level which is about 200 feet above the surrounding landscape. From the top of the mound in the center of the park, you can see for many miles in all directions. Wisconsin's First Capitol historic site is a half mile west of the park. Acquisition of land for the park began in 1963.

The park has been operated, under contract, by the Belmont Lions Club since 1982.

Past management at Belmont Mound State Park has included capital development, trail maintenance, boundary posting and fencing and reclamation work. Approximately 40 acres of the park is planted to row crops each year.

Belmont Mound State Park is about two miles north of the village of Belmont, around seven miles northeast of Platteville and roughly ten miles southwest of Mineral Point. The landscape within about five miles surrounding the park is dominated by agriculture, most of which is in row crops. There is forest adjacent to the park on the northern border. Otherwise, in the surrounding landscape, there are scattered small woodlots and some forested areas along streams.

Soils at the park are almost all silt loams on variably steep slopes; some of the soils are typed as moderately eroded. On the mound itself are rock outcrops with a rubbly soil complex on 30-60% slopes. There is a fairly small amount of clayey soils associated with ephemeral streams.

C. Current forest types, size classes and successional stages (% of total recreation area acreage)
- **Northern Hardwoods**: (48%) 134 acres; dates of origin 1852-1910; large sawlogs, hardwood small sawlogs. Include 80 acres in SNA.
- **Central Hardwoods**: (26%) 71 acres; dates of origin 1915, 1958; large sawlogs, hardwood small sawlogs.
- **Walnut**: (4%) 11 acres; date of origin 1973; large sawlogs
- **Non-forest Cover Types**: grasslands (18%, 51 acres; includes about 40 of row crop), picnic area (4%, 10 acres).

D. NHI: Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern, Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)
Three Special Concern plants have been documented as occurring within one mile of Belmont Mound; two of the species are based on historical records. There is one endangered amphibian.
E. **Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA), Important Bird Areas (IBA):** Belmont Mound is not within a COA or IBA.

F. **Significant cultural or archeological features:** Belmont Mound SP contains at least one archaeological or historical site. Activities with potential to disturb archaeological or historical sites will only be undertaken after consultation with the DNR Archaeologist.

G. **Invasive species:** Invasive species known to occur at the park include non-native bush honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, Japanese barberry, common buckthorn, black locust, white mulberry, dame's rocket, garlic mustard and crown vetch. This list is not all inclusive.

H. **High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF), existing State Natural Areas (SNA) designations, or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape:** There are is one SNA at the recreation area: Belmont Mound Woods. The SNA features very good examples of southern mesic and dry-mesic forests located on the northern flank of an outlying exposure of Niagara dolomite. This 80-acre tract was designated in 1981. The stands of older forest outside of the SNA at Belmont Mount are not currently considered HCVF but may be in the future.

I. **Primary public uses (recreation):** Recreational activities include hiking, nature study and bird watching, hunting and trapping. The picnic area includes picnic shelters (built between 1989 and 1993), a water source and a bathroom. The observation tower, which was built on top of the mound in 1966, has been closed since spring 2011 for safety reasons.

J. **Biotic Inventory Status:** None scheduled.

K. **Deferral/consultation site designations:** None designated

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**IFMP components**

**Management Objectives:** (Outline primary forest management objectives):

1. Allow the central and northern hardwood types to regenerate naturally while encouraging oak and black walnut in these cover types whenever possible.
2. Retain sufficient canopy closure to maintain suitable habitat for forest interior species, including birds.
3. Maintain structural complexity for dependent animal species, unless standing snags and legacy trees pose a safety risk.
4. Preserve the integrity of known archaeological and historical features by following DNR Manual Code1810.1 (Historic Preservation), the department's Burials, Earthworks, and Mounds Preservation Policy & Plan, state statutes and federal laws.
5. Conduct invasive species management where needed to ensure regeneration of adequate numbers of desirable tree species.
6. Manage Belmont Mound Woods SNA as an old-growth forest reserve, rare plant habitat site and as an ecological reference area.

**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)

1. Commercial timber sales and non-commercial practices may be used to achieve management objectives.
2. **Hardwood stands:** manage in accordance with the department's silvicultural handbook. Use uneven-aged management techniques (single tree selection and gaps) to promote
northern hardwood and central hardwood timber types. Individual gaps will not exceed 0.5 acre in size while maintaining 70% canopy closure overall for forest interior birds. Where gaps are created via commercial harvest, cut all unwanted woody vegetation taller than 4 feet to promote regeneration of desirable tree species such as oak, walnut and hard maple. Natural regeneration of oak will most likely fail for a variety of reasons. Maintain an oak component in hardwood stands as long as possible. Manage the oak resource present on the property where feasible. In the stands where central or northern hardwood maintenance or conversion is chosen, efforts will be made to plant oak into the largest gaps to keep an oak component in these stands. On the sites where oak regeneration can be accomplished without significant investment, use management techniques, especially patch selection, to maintain a large component of oak on site.

3. **All stands**: retain standing dead snags and reserve/legacy trees as groups or individuals (26 inch+ DBH) throughout the property within harvested stands. Adhere to best management practices for water quality and invasive species in all management activities. Skid trail grades on slopes greater than 15 percent will be avoided. This will be limited in project layout design and further controlled during project administration.

4. **Invasive species**: identify invasive plant species and implement control practices such as hand pulling and biological, chemical, and mechanical control to eliminate or reduce negative impacts. Invasive species control efforts outside of the SNA should focus on tree regeneration areas where invasive species may negatively impact regeneration of preferred tree species. Black locust is a priority species.

5. **Belmont Mound Woods SNA**: native species are managed passively, allowing nature to determine the ecological characteristics of the site. Exceptions include control of invasive plants and animals, maintenance of existing facilities and access to suppress fires. Salvage of trees after a major wind event is not considered compatible.

Summary of Public Involvement and Comments Received
One public comment was received. It was in support of this IFMP.

Maps (Optional)

a. Property Boundary and Ownership Maps
b. Forest Cover Type Maps
Interim Forest Management Plan

PREPARED BY:

[Signature]
Property Manager
Date: 2-17-2017

APPROVED:

[Signature]
Area Program Supervisor
Date: 2-17-2017

REVIEWED BY:

Matthew Singer
Forester
Date: 2-18-2017

[Signature]
District Ecologist
Date: 2-17-2017