Property Identifiers

Nugget Lake County Park

County: Pierce
Property Acreage: 759
Forestry Property Code(s): # 4802
Property manager: Scott Schoepp
Master Plan Date: NA

Part 1: Property Assessment

The following items should be considered during the property assessment. Not all sections may be relevant for all properties.

General Property Description
- Landscape and regional context
- History of land use and past management

Nugget Lake County Park is located in the Western Coulees and Ridges Ecological Landscape and has the following Landtype associations: 222Lc12 Eroded Pre Illinoian Ground Moraines.

The park was created through a multi-agency watershed project under the Federal Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act in the early 1970’s. Nugget Lake is a 116 acre impoundment created by a dam in Plum Creek which had a history of flooding. The Pierce County Soil and Water Conservation District was the project sponsor. The State of Wisconsin purchased the land. Pierce County developed, manages and maintains the park through a permanent easement. The lands that comprise the park were formerly in several farm ownerships. Plant communities were impacted by cropping, grazing, and timber harvest.

Site Specifics
- Current forest types, size classes and successional stages
  - Oak (47%) 265 acres of large sawtimber (15+” diameter) in 100 – 120 year age class, and 22 acres of large sawtimber (15”+ diameter) in the 130 - 140 year age class.
  - Northern Hardwoods (43%) 18 acres in the 0 – 5” diameter class, 29 acres in the 11” – 15” diameter class, and 217 acres in the 15” + diameter class.
  - Red Pine (1%) 7 acres of planted 40 -50 year age class small sawtimber (9-15” diameter) and poletimber (5-9” diameter); includes some white pine and spruce.
  - White Pine (1%) 7 acres of planted 15 – 20 year age class poletimber (5-9” diameter).
  - Grassland (10%) 60 acres cold season grasses, much lying in the intensive use areas of the park.

High Value Conservation Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape – the property is known to contain an exceptional example of “southern mesic forest” natural community that merits strong consideration for High Conservation Value Forest.
Biotic Inventory status – A Rapid Ecological Assessment/Biotic Inventory focusing on rare plants, rare animals, and high quality natural communities has not been completed for this property. However, cursory work has identified several features of exceptional conservation value. Notably, the property contains the highest quality example on public land of the southern mesic forest natural community type in the state. This example contains an exceptionally rich assemblage of spring ephemeral wildflowers including a number of rare species.

- Deferral/consultation area designations (refer to the following website): none

- Rare species – Two state threatened plants, 2 special concern plants, and one special concern bird are known to occur in the general vicinity of the park. There are 1-3 active bald eagle nests in the park. An osprey nesting platform was erected in the park several years ago. A recent osprey nesting attempt was terminated by a severe windstorm.

- Invasive species
  Park staff have aggressively worked on invasive plant control for several years. Common buckthorn, non-native bush honey-suckle, and garlic mustard, are present but at modest levels due to ongoing control efforts.

- Soils
  The park lies in the Otterholt-Spencer Association of gently rolling to steep upland ridges, very steep bluffs, gently sloping to steep valley slopes, narrow terraces, and bottomlands. The northern portion of the park borders the Derinda, Acid Variant-Gale, Thin Solum Variant, Association consisting of sloping to steep soils in valley located in the upper Plum Creek watershed. This association is unique that in the geologic past, this area was the site of the “Rock Elm Disturbance” which caused a vertical displacement of bedrock. Evidence of the disturbance can be seen in some of the geological features in the park.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations
- Cultural and archeological sites (including tribal sites)
  Cultural – No known/recorded sites.
  Archeological – No known/recorded sites.

- Recreational- The park provides opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, picnicking, cross-country skiing, canoeing, kayaking, boating (electric trolling motors only). Portions of the Park are open for hunting for the regular firearms deer season.

Part 2: IFMP Components

Management Objectives (Outline primary forest management objectives):

To manage and enhance the park’s scenic and landscape quality and insure vegetative cover type diversity and health.

- Aesthetics: Protect scenic views and allow forest cover to provide settings for solitude and privacy.
  Maintain the variety of forest types and plant communities within the park.
  Promote natural-appearing forest stands.
  Encourage the growth of large diameter trees.

- Forest Health: Allow for regeneration of portion of the forest through forest management and seek opportunities that enhance or maintain the overall health and vigor of the forest ecosystem.
- **Water quality:** Sustain the warm water fishery of Nugget Lake, the cold water fishery below Nugget Lake Dam, the local watersheds and water resources including erosion control along waterways, trails, and other property features.

- **Recreation:** Sustain large canopy cover and shade in picnic areas, campgrounds, along nature trails, and high use areas.

- **Habitat:** Provide habitat for a variety of both common and rare wildlife species by managing to maintain or create both older forest and early successional forest.

- **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.

**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) **OAK** - Maintain oak cover types where feasible. The park has a large acreage of oak type but much of it has an established understory of northern hardwood species. Extend rotation age from normally recommended 80-90 years to 120 years to spread oak harvest schedule. Consider some mid-age or near rotation age stands for harvest to diversify oak age classes and consider retaining the 22 acre 130+ year old oak stand for old growth and aesthetic attributes.

   a. Prioritize regeneration harvests on accessible south and west facing stands where the possibility of oak regeneration success is greater, or stands where terrain is suitable for site prep, pre and post-harvest treatments, and weeding necessary to maximize oak regeneration.

   b. Manage to convert to uneven-aged northern hardwoods where even-aged management will not be consistent with aesthetic, recreation, or ecological goals.

   c. On extremely steep inaccessible slopes permit natural succession to northern hardwoods via passive management

**NORTHERN HARDWOODS** - Manage northern hardwood stands through selection thinning to encourage the growth of large diameter trees, and provide appropriate crown closer to sustain spring ephemeral plants. Look for opportunities to maintain an oak component in these stands by retaining potentially long lived white and bur oak, and releasing advanced oak regeneration where found along field edges, etc.

**ASPEN** - Maintain a portion of the relatively small acreage of aspen type that occurs in the park, to provide early successional habitat.

**WHITE and RED PINE** – Planted conifers stands will be thinned to achieve large diameter, a natural spacing/distribution of trees, and promote native understory shrubs and herbaceous vegetation.

**ALL STANDS**

- Utilize BMP’s for Water Quality to protect stream, lake, and wetlands when conducting timber sales.
• Retain reserve/legacy trees as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands. Increase snags and coarse woody debris (where not a hazard).

• Follow DNR’s Species Guidance Documents:
  http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/guidance.asp. to protect rare species. In cases where species guidance documents haven’t yet been developed, avoidance to rare species will occur via practices such as time of year restrictions, modified harvest boundaries, and/or consultation with rare species experts.

• Identify and protect any Archeological or Historical sites prior to management activities.

• Utilize BMP’s for Invasive Species to help limit the introduction and spread of invasive species when conducting timber sales. Identify invasive plant species and implement control practices such as prescribed fire, hand pulling, chemical and mechanical control to eliminate or reduce negative impacts. Emphasize early detection and response when populations are small and easier to control; especially in post timber harvest areas where invasives reduce regeneration potential and where harvest disturbance creates opportunities for invasives to become established.

Approvals:

_Armund Bartz  12/8/2014
______________________________________________
Regional Ecologist                                                                            Date

Gary Zielske    12/8/2014
__________________________________________________________
Forester                                                                                              Date

Scott Schoepp   12/8/2014
__________________________________________________________
Property Manager                               Date

Ken Snow  12/8/2014
__________________________________________________________
Area/Team Supervisor                                                                      Date