Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation (multiple small properties can be grouped):
Weirgor Springs Wildlife Area and Eddy Creek Fishery Area
County: **Sawyer**
Property Acreage: **Weirgor Springs – 2,303. Eddy Creek - 281**

Forestry Property Code(s): **Weirgor Springs – 5837. Eddy Creek - 5808**

Master Plan Date: **Weirgor Springs - 1983**

Part 1: Property Assessment (1-2 pages maximum)

General Property Description

- **Landscape and regional context**
  The properties are within the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape and are part of the following LTA's: Meteor Hills (212Xe01), Pipestone Hills (212Xd01), Jump River Ground Moraine (212Xd05), Exeland Plains (212Xd03)

  A portion of Weirgor Springs Wildlife Area is within the Blue Hills Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area (COA). Maple Creek and Little Weirgor Creek, both of which flow through Weirgor Springs WA, are within the Blue Hills Streams Aquatic COA.

  Neither of the properties is within Important Bird Areas.

  These properties are within a local landscape that is dominated by forest cover, with a minor agricultural element present to the east of the area. Northern hardwood forest is dominant, composed of sugar maple, basswood, and red maple, with some stands containing scattered hemlock, yellow birch, and/or white pine. The aspen-birch forest type is also abundant, and oak stands are fairly common. Forested and non-forested wetland communities are found throughout the area, with swamp conifer stands of tamarack and black spruce the most common of the forested types. These properties are adjacent to several large land ownerships, including Sawyer County Forest, the Lac Courte Oreilles Band and private forest industry.

  Riverine resources are abundant in the local region, with classified trout streams present on both properties, including Class I designated trout stream segments at both properties. Eddy Creek is part of the Couderay River watershed, while the creeks at Weirgor Springs WA drain into the Weirgor Creek and Brunet River watershed. All of these streams are tributary to the Chippewa River.

  History of land use and past management
  Eddy Creek Fish & Wildlife Area was established in 1956 as a trout fishing and public hunting area. Eddy Creek has a history of several dams being constructed and blown out by high water events dating back to the original structure put in place in 1918. Put and take trout fishing on the pond formed by these dams was very popular in past years, but water quality and fish habitat had declined dramatically by the 21st century. In 2007, the last remnants of a failed impoundment structure were removed from the stream and the waterway was returned to its natural state. The property is currently managed for wildlife

habitat, and is used most frequently for deer, bear and grouse hunting, trapping, and trout fishing.
Weirgor Springs Wildlife area was established in 1947 as a high quality public trout fishery and to protect the watershed. Considerable upland acreage was added to the property throughout the years during the course of stream and spring pond acquisition. Beaver activity and damage to trout water has been a concern throughout the history of the property. Currently, the property is managed to promote fish and wildlife habitat, with the most common uses being deer, bear, and grouse hunting, trapping, and trout fishing as well as non-consumptive wildlife viewing. A public snowmobile trail runs through the western edge of the property.

Site Specifics

- **Current (year 2012) forest types, size classes and successional stages**

Eddy Creek

*Aspen (72%) - 169 acres - 46% in the 16-20 year age class, 10% in the 46-66 year age class, 44% in the 71-75 year age class
*Bottomland Hardwoods (6%) - 15 acres in the 76-80 year age class
*Fir-Spruce (4%) - 9 acres in the 71-75 year age class
*Red Pine (12%) – 28 acres 8 acres in the 26-30 year age class, 8 acres in the 51-55 year age class, 12 acres in the 66-70 year age class
*Black Spruce (6%) - 13 acres in the 76-80 year age class

Weirgor Springs

*****Aspen (73%) - 1240 acres – 3% in the 1-5 year age class, 20% in the 6-10 year age class, 16% in the 11-15 year age class, 5% in the 16-20 year age class, 9% in the 21-25 year age class, 11% in the 26-30 year age class, 1% in the 31-35 year age class, 2% in the 36-40 year age class, 13% in the 66-70 year age class, 1% in the 66-70 year age class, 4% in the 71-75 year age class, 6% in the 76-80 year age class, 8% in the 81-85 year age class
*Northern Hardwoods (12%) – 203 acres in the 80-85 year class
*Oak (4%) – 66 acres in the 66-70 year age class
*Red Pine (3%) – 58 acres in the 56-60 year age class
*Black Spruce (1%) – 25 acres in the 100-105 year age class
*Swamp Hardwoods (2%) – 32 acres in the 116-120 year age class
*Tamarack (4%) – 68 acres – 72% in the 56-60 year age class, 28% in the 76-80 year age class

- **State Natural Area designations**
  No SNA designations are found within these properties.
- **High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) or other resources/natural community types limited in the landscape**
  No HCVF types are known from these properties.
- **Biotic Inventory status**
  Not yet completed or scheduled.
- **Deferral/consultation area designations**.
  No D/C sites are within the properties.
- **Rare species**
  A state-threatened animal occurs at Eddy Creek Fishery Area. Wood Turtle – THR (Eddy Creek)

- **Invasive species**
  No invasives are known on the Weirgor Springs property. Non-native honeysuckle is present within the Eddy Creek property.
- **Soils (From LTA descriptions)**

  At the Eddy Creek property, the characteristic landform pattern is hilly bedrock-controlled moraine. Soils are predominantly moderately well drained silt loam over acid sandy loam till.

  At Weirgor Springs WA, the characteristic landform patterns are undulating moraine and stream terraces, undulating outwash plain, and hilly collapsed moraine. Soils are predominantly somewhat well drained silt loam over dense, acid sandy loam till and outwash.

Cultural and Recreational Considerations

- **Cultural and archeological sites (including tribal sites)**

  There are no historical or archeological sites listed for these properties on the Archaeological Sites Inventory.

  These properties are adjacent or near Lac Courte Oreilles lands, and gathering of non-forest products by tribal members may be an important cultural use.

Part 2: IFMP Components

Management Objectives

Aspen
The primary objective is to regenerate this type using even-age management methods to the extent possible for the benefit of game and non-game wildlife. Age class diversity will be maintained, and green tree retention practices will be observed as appropriate. Efforts will be made to allow succession to northern hardwoods within a 150' riparian management zone adjacent to streams.
Northern Hardwoods
Regenerate stands utilizing uneven-aged or even-aged management techniques to increase wildlife values, nesting and cavity trees, and species diversity. Timber production will be a secondary value.
Oak
Efforts will be made to encourage long term maintenance oak regeneration for mast production as well as nesting and cavity trees utilizing even-aged management techniques.
Red Pine
These stands will be managed for timber production and eventually be converted through natural succession or seeding to other timber types.

Property Prescriptions

Aspen
Aspen will be harvested through even-aged coppice regeneration cuts. Large stands will be divided to increase age class diversity and edge cover. Green tree retention will be practiced in these stands while also focusing on snag and den/cavity tree retention. Routinely, all non-merchantable trees less than 1" will be

felled to encourage aspen regeneration. A 150' riparian management zone will be created along streams and ponds with the objective to succeed stands to northern hardwoods in an effort to discourage beaver activity in designated trout water.

Northern Hardwoods
Uneven-aged management methods will be used where possible to encourage long term multi aged diversity. Gaps will be created to encourage age class diversity and edge cover. Snags, cavity trees, and other trees that have special value to wildlife will be retained.

Oak
Even-aged management methods will be used to thin oak stands on Weirgor with focus on high quality tree retention, cavity/den tree retention, and coarse woody debris for wildlife benefit. Shelter-wood harvests or other even-aged harvest methods will likely be utilized to regenerate oak stands as stands near biological rotation ages.

Red Pine
These stands will be managed as even aged stands by periodic thinning every 10 – 15 years as required. Eventually these stands will succeed to other species naturally or will be direct seeded. Super canopy trees will be retained long term for diversity and aesthetic value.

Swamp Hardwoods
Management of swamp hardwood stands will be implemented according to a variety of methods as described in the DNR Silvicultural Handbook, with the primary goal being to enhance wildlife habitat. Focus will be given to retaining den/cavity trees and other individual trees of high value to wildlife.

Forested wetland species
Black spruce, balsam, and tamarack will be managed as even aged stands by clear-cutting methods under frozen ground conditions only. These stands are valuable to the properties due to increased diversity and cover for wildlife.

Approvals:

_____
Regional Ecologist Date

_____
Forester Date

_____
Property Manager Date

_____
Area/Team Supervisor Date