

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Master Plan and Environmental Analysis



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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acquisition authority: The Legislature authorized the department to acquire and manage land for a variety of conservation and recreation purposes including state forests, parks, wildlife areas, fishery areas, recreation areas, trails, and natural areas (§23.09(2)(d), Wis. Stats.). In addition, the department is authorized to acquire and manage lands and facilities such as forest nurseries, experimental stations, fish hatcheries, and game farms, to support conservation and recreation properties. The Natural Resources Board approves the establishment of department properties for conservation and recreation purposes, which includes a formal name, a designation, an acreage goal and a project boundary (see below). Together these form the acquisition authority and the approved name or authority (typically the name of a property) under which the department can acquire land.

Acreage goal: The number of acres the department is approved to acquire within a given project boundary.

Administrative Code: The set of rules promulgated by state agencies to interpret and enforce laws (statutes) passed by the Legislature. Rules promulgated by DNR are given the prefix 'NR' for 'natural resource rule'.

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV): As defined in §340.01(2g) Wis. Stats, a commercially designed and manufactured motor-driven device that has a weight, without fluids, of 900 pounds or less, has a width of 50 inches or less, is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and travels on three or more low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires.

Amendment: See 'Master Plan Amendment'.

Best Management Practice (BMP): An action, or combination of actions, that is determined to be an effective and practicable means of achieving a management objective.

Deed Acres: Acreage derived from DNR Land Record System based off the acquisition deed and described in the legal description. The acres described in a deed often differ by a small amount from the acres calculated using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. See "GIS acres" below.

Ecological Landscapes: Sixteen areas of Wisconsin with distinct ecological attributes and management opportunities that can be used to identify the best areas of the state to manage for different natural communities, habitats, aquatic features, and native plants and animals from an ecosystem management perspective. The boundaries are substantially based on the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units developed by the U.S. Forest Service, with some subsections combined to produce a manageable number of units.

Ecosystem management: A system of planning, protecting, managing, and restoring ecosystem composition, structure, and function to ensure sustainability across a range of spatial and temporal scales and to provide desired ecological, economic, and social conditions and benefits.

Forest certification: Independent, third-party certification programs that verify that forest management meets strict standards for ecological, social, and economic sustainability. DNR lands are dual certified under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standards.

GIS acres: Acreage calculated from DNR spatial datasets using a Geographic Information System (GIS). When applied to DNR-managed lands, there will usually be slight differences between GIS acres and deed acres due to different methods of collecting and recording parcel geometry.

Habitat classification: Generalizations of cover types from the Wisconsin Field Inventory & Reporting System (WisFIRS) used for property planning.

Handbook: A DNR guidance document that contains procedures, standards, instructions, and techniques on a specific, focused topic.



Land management classifications: Classifications authorized and described in ch. NR 44, Wis. Admin. Code and are applied to a property or management area within a property to describe the general management objective for that area as determined during the master planning process. Land management classifications generally frame the types of land management and public use activities that will be pursued in each management area.

Manual Code: A DNR policy/procedure document. Manual Codes are established to communicate specific procedures that employees need to follow to comply with department policies or Administrative Codes.

Master Plan: A document that describes the authorized resource management, recreation management, and facility development that may take place on a DNR property. Master plans for DNR properties are developed according to the guidelines set forth in ch. NR 44, Wis. Admin. Code and require approval by the Natural Resources Board. At heart, master plans are “instruction manuals” that describe the property’s vision, goals and objectives, the recreational uses and habitats that will be provided, and the management strategies and techniques that will be used.

Master Plan modifications: In some situations, conditions or opportunities change at properties that result in a need to modify master plans. Chapter NR 44, Wis. Admin. Code provides three methods to change master plans:

Master Plan Revision: A master plan revision process is pursued when there is a need to potentially change property-level goals or objectives. This degree of change nearly always leads to changes in the management purposes and objectives for much of or the entire property. Revisions must be approved by the Natural Resources Board.

Master Plan Amendment: An amendment process is used when proposed modifications include a change to the management objectives for one or a few management areas on a property, but not a change to the overall property’s goals or objectives. In these cases, there is usually a need to change one or more of the “land management classifications” assigned to management areas.

Amendments must be approved by the Natural Resources Board.

Master Plan Variance: A change in management activity or use described in a master plan that is consistent with the area’s land management classification and does not constitute a change in an objective for management or public use of the area as specified in the plan. That is, variances are used when the department seeks to achieve the objectives for a management area in a different or additional way. Examples could include using new habitat management techniques or adding a recreational use to an area. Variances do not entail a change to a property’s land management classifications nor its goals and objectives. A variance may be approved by the DNR Secretary or a Division Administrator.

Natural Community: An assemblage of different plant and animal species living together in a particular area, at a particular time, in a particular habitat, interacting with one another and with the abiotic environment around them, and subject to primarily natural disturbance regimes. Assemblages that are repeated across a landscape in an observable pattern constitute a community type. No two assemblages are exactly alike.

Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI): A methodology and database for collecting, characterizing, storing, and managing data on rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the state. Wisconsin’s NHI program is housed in DNR’s Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.

Natural Resources Board (NRB): A 7-member citizen board that sets policy for the department and exercises authority and responsibility in accordance with governing state laws. Wisconsin’s NRB approves all master plans as well as plan revisions and amendments.



NR 44: Chapter in the Wisconsin Administrative Code that authorizes, establishes, and describes the process for developing master plans for DNR properties.

Primary Site: Ecologically important site identified on a department property through a biotic inventory or assessment. Primary Sites are delineated because they encompass the best examples of: rare and representative natural communities; documented occurrences of rare species populations; and/or opportunities for ecological restoration or connections. These sites warrant high protection and/or restoration consideration during the development of property master plans.

Project boundary: Spatial representation of an area (e.g., a property) within which the department has authority to acquire land. A project boundary represents an area of acquisition authority.

Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA): A department study of existing outdoor-based recreation opportunities and future recreation needs around the state. The study identifies future needs for providing high-quality recreation experiences and the role of DNR properties in helping meet those needs. The final report can be viewed on the DNR website at: dnr.wi.gov, keyword: ROA.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN): Wildlife species (including invertebrates, birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians) in Wisconsin that are in need of conservation action because they: are already listed as threatened or endangered; are at risk due to threats to their life history needs or habitats; are rare due to declining populations, abundance, and/or distribution; show declining trends in their habitats and populations. SGCN are identified in Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP): A report that periodically evaluates status, trends, demand, and needs for outdoor recreation throughout the state. The SCORP is a primary source of information on outdoor recreation in Wisconsin.

Statutory property designation: The official designation of a property (e.g., State Park, State Wildlife Area, State Forest, State Natural Area, etc.), authorized and defined in Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code, that describes what the primary purpose of the property is and, therefore, frames the general scope of land management and public use that can take place there.

Tension Zone: An area of transition between two distinct ecological zones. There is a pronounced tension zone in Wisconsin that runs from northwestern to southeastern Wisconsin, separating the northern forest (including the boreal element) from the southern forest and prairies. Many species reach the limits of their ranges in this zone.

Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV): A motor driven device, sometimes referred to as a "side-by-side" designed to be used primarily off-highway that has a net weight of less than 2,000 pounds, four or more low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires. Additionally, the vehicle must have a steering wheel, a tail light, a brake light, two headlights, a width of not more than 65 inches, and a roll bar or similar device designed to reduce the likelihood of injuries as the result of a rollover, all as originally manufactured in accordance with §23.33(1)(ng) Wis. Stats. Golf carts, low-speed vehicles, dune buggies, mini-trucks, homemade, tracked, or modified vehicles are not utility terrain vehicle.

Variance: See 'Master Plan Variance'.

Wildlife Action Plan (WAP): The comprehensive plan for the conservation of rare and declining species and their habitats in the state. The Wisconsin WAP identifies Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and lays out a strategy to conserve and sustain them and their habitats for future generations.

Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA): A state law designed to encourage informed decision-making by state agencies. WEPA requires state agencies to consider the effects of their policies, plans, programs, and actions on the



quality of the human environment. WEPA created Chapter 1.11, Wisconsin Statutes. DNR's WEPA responsibilities are further described in ch. NR 150, Wisc. Admin. Code.

Wisconsin Field Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS): A database and web-based application used by DNR staff to store habitat data collected in the field, and to plan for and track vegetation management practices.

COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ATV | All-terrain vehicle |
| BMP | Best Management Practices |
| CTH | County Highway |
| DNR | Department of Natural Resources |
| EL | Ecological Landscape |
| NHI | Natural Heritage Inventory |
| NHC | Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation |
| NR 44 | Chapter NR 44, Wisconsin Administrative Code, Master Planning for Department Properties |
| NRB | Natural Resources Board |
| OHM | Off-highway motorcycle |
| PILT | Payment in lieu of taxes |
| SCORP | Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan |
| SGCN | Species of Greatest Conservation Need |
| SNA | State Natural Area |
| STH | State Highway |
| UTV | Utility task vehicle |
| WisFIRS | Wisconsin Field Inventory and Reporting System |
| ROA | Recreation Opportunity Analysis |



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CHAPTER 1 : OVERVIEW OF PLAN AND PROPERTIES

PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The purpose of this master plan is to guide management of department properties in the Western Prairie region of Wisconsin. A master plan establishes the levels and types of public uses that are permitted on a property as well as the authorized resource management and facility development that will take place. All DNR properties are required to have a master plan (NR 1.60, Wisconsin Administrative Code). Master plans are developed according to guidelines set forth in Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter NR 44. The formation of master plans benefits the public and the department by clearly defining management of the public resource and ensuring management follows a defined track, regardless of staff changes. As a result of this plan, the DNR properties in the Western Prairie region will continue to provide high-quality natural resources, recreational experiences and sustainable timber resources for present and future generations.

This regional plan builds upon the substantial foundation laid by previous master plans, wildlife and fisheries program guidance and biotic inventories conducted over the last several decades. The planning process considers comments received during public meetings and public comment periods, including involvement of partner agencies and interest from local officials.

THE REGION: WESTERN PRAIRIE ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

The Western Prairie Ecological Landscape (WP EL, or simply EL) covers St. Croix and half of Pierce counties, with small portions of Polk and Dunn counties (Figure 1.1). Descriptions of natural resources, socio-economic characteristics and recreational resources for this region are provided in extensive detail in Chapter 23 of the Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (WDNR, 2015a). All chapters of this reference book are accessible on the Wisconsin DNR website (dnr.wi.gov) keywords “Ecological Landscapes” then “Western Prairie.” A summary of the natural resources, socio-economic characteristics, and recreational resource opportunities of the Western Prairie is provided in Chapter 3 of this document.



Figure 1.1. The 16 Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin, with the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape highlighted.

ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

This landscape is Wisconsin's Prairie Pothole Region: a rolling glaciated topography of native prairie, pothole lakes and scattered ponds and wetlands, most notably within a grassland management complex known as the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) -- a collaborative conservation effort shared by federal, state, local, and citizen-based natural resource organizations.

The lower St. Croix River on the western border is part of the St. Croix-Namekagon National Scenic Riverway. The Willow, Kinnickinnic and Apple rivers are the major secondary streams. The Kinnickinnic River above River Falls is a designated Outstanding Resource Water and is known for some of the highest numbers of naturally reproducing trout per mile in the United States.

Bedrock that underlies the surface of the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape was deposited in the Paleozoic Era and is predominantly sandstone and dolomite. Major glacial formations are till plains, end moraines, and outwash plains. The dominant soil is well-drained and loamy with a silt loam surface. Historically, vegetation consisted of the largest percentage of tallgrass prairie and brush habitat of all the ecological landscapes in the state. Changes to the landscape have occurred over time and agricultural lands have replaced many of the prairies, brush, and grasslands. Almost half the current vegetation in the landscape is agricultural crops and another third of the area is nonnative grassland with smaller areas of open water, open wetlands, and urban areas. Large forests are generally scarce, found mostly along the river corridors. These include maple-basswood and oak-hickory with lesser amounts of lowland hardwoods.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Prairies, Grasslands, Savannas**
- **Lower St. Croix River Corridor**
- **Kinnickinnic River Corridor**
- **Coldwater & Coolwater Streams**

The most extensive management opportunity offered in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape is for grasslands (WDNR, 2015a). Though native prairie acreage has been reduced to very small scattered remnants, the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, established in 1999, and the scattered federal Waterfowl Production Areas have protected several large areas of open (nonforested) landscape, and these now represent the best chances to maintain or increase habitat conditions required by many important grassland species, especially birds. The grasslands of the Western Prairie have supported many rare and declining grassland birds, including species that are area sensitive or have other specific habitat needs that are not being met in most other open areas of the state.

WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA

The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) (Map A-2) delineates the boundary for a collaborative management, multi-partner project within this landscape. Rare prairie pothole features occur here and provide the eastern most extent of a vast prairie pothole region that stretches across Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana and south-central Canada. The WPHRA project area includes prairie remnants from one of the largest prairies once present in Wisconsin. In 1998, the department completed a Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement for the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, which was approved by the Natural Resources Board.

Protecting and restoring grassland, wetland and oak savanna habitat within the WPHRA is a *partnership* goal shared with many agencies and private conservation organizations such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Croix County, Town of St. Joseph, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Landmark Conservancy, Star Prairie Land Trust, Standing Cedars, Carpenter Nature Center, Pheasants Forever, The Prairie Enthusiasts, and Ducks Unlimited. The intent is to protect and restore suitable habitat throughout the WPHRA in a checkerboard pattern, combining working farms with



prairie, savanna and wetlands. The scope of the project is based on biodiversity and ecosystem management concepts.

Historically, parts of this ecological landscape (especially the northwestern portion) contained a dense concentration of the small shallow seepage lakes referred to as “prairie potholes.” The concentration of such “pothole” ponds and associated wetlands in the former prairie landscape of southwestern Polk and northwestern St. Croix counties is unique in Wisconsin, and the potential exists for restoring the rich mosaic of prairie, sedge meadow, marsh, and open water that formerly occurred there.

RECREATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

The Western Prairie properties feature resources that attract visitors from both Wisconsin and across the United States, especially from the Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area. The region contains diverse outdoor recreation opportunities provided by state, county, and federal lands.

Within this landscape, approximately 36,800 acres, or only 5.3% of all land and water, is publicly owned. This is significantly less than the statewide average for public land ownership of 19.5% and ranks this landscape 13th out of the 16 ELs in Wisconsin. Demand for places to recreate is high given the proximity of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Land cover, ownership, and land use patterns partly determine the types of recreation that are available to the public. In the WP, there is a much higher percentage of agricultural and grassland and a lower proportion of forest and wetland compared to the rest of the state. Resources available for land and water based public recreation include:

- 12,500 acres of public waters
- 15,900 acres of state recreational lands
- 8,700 acres of federal lands
- 5,890 acres of State Parks
- 2,860 acres of State Natural Areas

Public lands in the WP EL offer a wide variety of recreational activities including hunting, fishing, trapping, motorized and nonmotorized trail activities, paddling, camping, wildlife watching and appreciation and scenic viewing. The Willow, St. Croix and Kinnickinnic Rivers are a special draw for this area with scenic bluffs and areas for boating, nature enjoyment and fishing. The number of recreational facilities such as lakes, trails and campgrounds in the WP is not as high as in other parts of the state. Even though there aren’t as many public facilities available, the usership of the existing properties is high with over a half a million visits annually to Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks. Willow River State Park has the third highest visitation rate in the state. The Western Prairie region has almost 570 miles of trails (motorized and nonmotorized) yet ranks 13th out of the 16 regions in trail density (miles of trail per square mile of land). Similarly, this region ranks 15th out of 16 in number and density of campgrounds (both public and privately owned).

Bicycling in the Western Prairie covers a diverse array of road cycling, mountain/fat tire biking, and off-road trail riding. Bicycling opportunities exist both on and off department properties throughout the region. All roads, except major highways, are open to bicycling and road cyclists readily take advantage of this opportunity. Bicycling opportunities exist within and adjacent to numerous DNR properties.

Funds primarily from sales of Wisconsin hunting and trapping licenses, from the federal Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program (Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act), and donations from Partnerships contribute to the purchase and management of the WP properties.



TRIBAL RESOURCES ON CEDED TERRITORY

A portion of the Western Prairie region lies within the Ceded Territory of the state. The St. Croix tribe is within the Western Prairie ecological landscape.

Native American tribes are independent, sovereign nations, as they were prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America. The Ojibwa Tribes ceded lands in the northern one-third of Wisconsin to the United States government in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842. In those Treaties, they reserved their rights to hunt, trap, fish and gather within various publicly-owned lands. Treaty rights are currently being exercised and implemented by the Ojibwe Tribes within the Ceded Territory.



Figure 1.2. Ceded Territory of the 1837 and 1842 Treaties.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPERTIES

The Western Prairie Regional Master Plan contains approximately 14,000 acres of department-managed lands. The properties consist of state wildlife areas, fishery areas, natural areas, public access sites, habitat areas, and parks (Map A-1). Properties with boundaries in more than one ecological landscape planning region are generally assigned to the planning region in which most of their acreage resides.

An overview of the Western Prairie properties is provided in Table 1.1. For an exhaustive list of properties in this regional master plan, please see Appendix A.

Table 1.1. Overview of Prominent Properties in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

| Department-managed Lands | County | Deed Acres |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Cylon Wildlife Area | St. Croix | 2,875 |
| Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area | St. Croix | 1,389 |
| Kinnickinnic State Park | Pierce | 1,278 |
| Osceola Hatchery | Polk | 348 |
| St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area | St. Croix | 1,082 |
| Willow River State Park | St. Croix | 2,918 |
| Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (19 Properties) | Polk & St. Croix | 3,880 |



CHAPTER 2 : PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND USE

WESTERN PRAIRIE – VISION FOR THE PROPERTIES

The Western Prairie properties are vital contributors to the preservation of Wisconsin's only 'prairie pothole region' which consists of rolling prairie-covered hills interspersed with lakes, ponds and scattered wet depressions. They contribute to the Midwest ecoregion of prairie potholes that extends west into Minnesota. These properties help protect unique water resources including the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway that flows along the entire west boundary, and inland tributaries with designation of Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters. Western Prairie properties provide abundant recreational opportunities on both land and water that include small watercraft opportunities, hunting, fishing, trapping, multiple trail uses, gathering, wildlife watching, camping and educational opportunities. The abundance and diversity of natural resources and nationally recognized scenic river and fishing corridors attract countless visitors from afar.

Recreational opportunities on these properties and in this landscape are supported in part by community, regional and government partnerships that support sustainable habitat management for current and future generations.

GOALS

- Provide opportunities for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, wildlife viewing, scenic enjoyment, nature study, and trail-based recreational uses that are compatible with the properties' statutory designations and capabilities, and consistent with regional habitat and recreation goals.
- Restore, manage and perpetuate the major natural community habitats, especially the oak savannas, surrogate grasslands, and prairie remnants and coldwater streams in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape, using principles of ecosystem management and sustainable forestry.
- Provide habitat for wildlife that are dependent on oak savanna, surrogate grassland and native prairies and for fish and wildlife associated with the wetlands, rivers and coldwater streams.
- Manage in ways that contribute to the protection and preservation of the Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters, floodplain corridors, wetlands, lakes, and rivers especially the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.
- Maintain and enhance ecological connectivity between natural community habitats, especially prairie, and on a landscape scale, promote their sustainability in partnership with nearby town, county, state, federal and tribal land managers.
- Contribute to the local and regional economies through management of nature-based recreational opportunities, and sustainably produced forest products.



PROPERTIES OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

The properties of the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape with management described in this document are comprised of state wildlife, fishery, habitat areas, habitat restoration areas, natural areas, parks and public access sites. Appendix A includes a complete listing of DNR-managed properties in the Western Prairie.

LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

All management areas of department properties must be assigned a land management classification (LMC) per NR 44. The management area's land management classification describes the general management objective for the area. These classifications are determined during the master planning process and help identify the preferred set of actions to achieve short and long-term objectives. Only management activities or techniques identified or referenced in this master plan and compatible with the site's ecological capability may be pursued in these management areas. Land management classifications defined in this plan are mapped beyond DNR-managed lands to include project boundaries. This ensures parcels purchased within a project boundary after this plan's approval have management objectives assigned. Management Areas described in this plan reflect only those acres currently owned and/or managed by the department. Those properties purchased after this plan's approval and falling outside a land management area will be assigned a land management classification following the process described in NR 44.

DNR properties within the Western Prairie have been assigned the following land management classifications:

Habitat Management Area (HMA) (NR 44.06(5)): The primary objective for HMAs is to provide integrated upland, wetland and/or aquatic habitat management that meets critical life-cycle needs for a variety of plant and animal species. Typically, the emphasis is to provide habitats needed to sustain productive game species populations. Areas that initially do not have desired habitat conditions but have a high potential to be restored may be included under this classification.

Native Community Management Area (NCMA) (NR 44.06(6)): NCMA's are managed to perpetuate pre-settlement plant and animal communities, whether upland, wetland, or aquatic, and protect the biological diversity of the native ecosystems. A native community is a distinct and reoccurring assemblage of indigenous flora and fauna associated with a particular set of physical characteristics. Areas that initially do not have the desired community conditions but have a reasonable potential to be restored may be included in this classification. All traditional recreational uses, such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and nature enjoyment, are allowed on NCMA's unless an area needs to be closed to protect a rare species during breeding season or to protect a very fragile habitat.

Recreation Management Area (RMA) (NR 44.06(8)) with Type 3 and 4 Recreational Use Settings: Lands in this classification are managed to provide and maintain land and water areas, and facilities for outdoor public recreation and education.

Scenic Resources Management Area (SRMA) (NR 44.06(9)): Scenic Resources Management Areas protect, maintain and enhance for long-term public enjoyment lands or waters having unique aesthetic qualities or outstanding scenic beauty and lands where managing for aesthetics is a primary concern due to significant or special public use of the area.

Special Management Area (SMA) (NR 44.06(7)): Lands in this classification are managed to provide and maintain areas or facilities for special uses not included under other land management classifications.



Total acreage of each land management classification assigned to department properties is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 0.1. Land Management Classifications and Department Property Acres in this plan

| Land Management Classification | Total Planned GIS Acres |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Habitat Management Area | 9,161 |
| Native Community Management Area | 1,464 |
| Recreation Management Area | 3,005 |
| Scenic Resources Management Area | 271 |
| Special Management Area | 161 |

FOREST CERTIFICATION

The management classifications listed in Table 2.1 reflect that all DNR-managed lands, including state parks, fishery areas, wildlife areas and natural areas have been audited by an independent third party to the Forest Stewardship Council® and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® forest management standards (license codes FSC®C006979 and SFI®-00059) and are recognized as being well managed. These certifications emphasize the state’s commitment to responsible management and conservation of its forestlands that support economic activities, protect wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities.

HABITAT CLASSIFICATIONS

A tiered habitat classification system that identifies property land cover is provided for most property-specific sections. Smaller properties such as state-owned islands and public access sites may not have this table. Habitat classifications in property section land cover tables give a broad perspective. Fifteen potential classifications provide a general overview. These mask finer details included in ecological community descriptions (e.g. a bog or fen becomes a generic wetland type). Chapter 3 details regional and property-specific natural community descriptions for properties in this plan and are based on inventories of plant and animal communities thereby giving the “ground up” perspective.

Some of the detail lost in the broader habitat classifications is shown as Wisconsin Field Inventory & Reporting System, or WisFIRS database cover types, in each table. The plan lists representative WisFIRS cover types, but potentially not all cover types for a property, to indicate which Common Elements for habitat type (as shown in Table 2.2) might be applicable to a given property. Common Elements apply to all properties, unless otherwise noted. By giving representative WisFIRS types, property managers and the public can better understand which Common Elements are most relevant. On any property, including smaller properties that do not have a habitat classifications table in this plan, property managers may refer to WisFIRS when planning property management, to gain a more detailed understanding of the property’s land cover.



COMMON MANAGEMENT FOR ALL PROPERTIES

Common Elements Overview

DNR properties, while diverse in the resources they offer, are governed under the same state statutes, administrative codes and processes, and share many standard practices for habitat and property management. Given this, the department has developed a set of Common Elements: procedures commonly used by the department which apply broadly to many situations addressed in master plans. Common Elements apply to all properties, unless otherwise noted in the individual property's management plan.

Common Elements for DNR Property Management

Common Elements can be viewed on the department webpage for property planning. See dnr.wi.gov key words: property planning common elements.

Common Elements are grouped into three categories:

Master Planning Process

The Master Planning Process Common Element provides an overview of how the department conducts planning, including phases in the process, variances and amendments, and public involvement.

Components of Master Plans

The Components of Master Plans Common Elements are divided into four major categories: general property management practices, real estate management practices, habitats and their management, and recreation facilities and their management. These describe most of the common DNR practices for managing department lands.

Background and Supporting Information

The Background and Supporting Information Common Elements contain references, definitions, and other supporting information used during the planning process.

All Common Elements are based on existing department codes, policies, handbooks, and common practices. General property management, recreation management, and real estate management practices are similar on all properties, no matter their resources. Habitat management on any given property varies widely given the variety of resource situations that might be present.

Table 2.2 shows the Habitat Management Common Elements applicable to a property when a habitat classification is present. It also shows Common Elements available for general habitat management categories, taxa-specific management, and management practices.



Table 0.2. Habitat Management Common Elements

| Habitat Classification | Common Element Documents Available | |
|---|--|---|
| Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmland | |
| Forested Wetland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Spruce Bottomland Hardwoods Ephemeral Pond Forested Seep | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swamp Hardwoods Tamarack White Cedar |
| Oak Opening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oak Savanna | |
| Oak Woodland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oak Savanna (Woodland) | |
| Open Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coldwater Streams Impoundments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes Warmwater Streams |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergent Wetland Sedge Meadow | |
| Shrub Wetland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland Shrub Alder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland Shrub Dogwood |
| Upland Shrub | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upland Shrub | |
| Upland Broad-Leaved Deciduous Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspen Northern Hardwoods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oak and Oak Dominated Mixed Forest Red Maple White Birch |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balsam Fir White Spruce Conifer Plantation Jack Pine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Pine White Pine |
| Upland Grass | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prairie | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surrogate Grasslands |
| General Habitat Management | | |
| General Habitat Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fisheries Management General Forest Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Wildlife Habitat Management |
| Taxa-Specific Habitat Management | | |
| Taxa-Specific | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat Hibernacula Herptile Hibernacula Migratory Bird Stopover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mussel Habitat Turtle Nesting Site |
| Practices | | |
| Terrestrial Habitat Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear-cut Coppice Direct Seeding and Planting Farming Practices Grazing Group Selection Intermediate Treatment Mowing, Brushing & Haying Overstory Removal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive Management Patch Selection Pesticide Treatments Prescribed Fire Seed Tree Shelterwood Single Tree Selection Site Preparation |
| Aquatic Habitat Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Passage Instream Practices Lake Aeration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streambank Practices Water Level Manipulation |



EXAMPLE USE OF COMMON ELEMENTS

A sample step by step use for Table 2.2, is as follows:

1. The Badger State Wildlife Area land cover table (Table 2.3) shows upland grass is present. Property management for the Badger State Wildlife Area in this plan states Common Elements for Habitats and their Management apply to the property. The property manager references Table 2.2.
2. Table 2.2 shows Prairie and Surrogate Grasslands Common Elements are available for the Upland Grass Habitat Classification. The property manager, using her knowledge of the property and DNR land cover databases, knows surrogate grasslands are present on the property.
3. The property manager then accesses the DNR Property Planning website and views the Surrogate Grassland Common Element. The Surrogate Grassland Common Element describes authorized management for surrogate grasslands.
4. Since the property plan stated Habitats and their Management Common Elements applied to the property, all management considerations and practices described in the Surrogate Grassland Common Element are authorized – unless noted otherwise in the property plan section.
5. The property manager may then implement the management for surrogate grasslands following the Surrogate Grassland Common Element and any applicable property-specific objectives and prescriptions.

The land cover table for any property or management area shows Habitat Classifications. On larger properties, the land cover table may also show representative WisFIRS cover types (as Table 2.3 does). Either can be used for identifying the applicable Common Elements. State-owned Islands, State Public Access sites and other smaller DNR properties may not have land cover tables included in the property section of the plan. If a land cover table is not present in the property section, and the property management described includes Habitats and their Management Common Elements, the property manager should use WisFIRS to determine land cover and applicable Common Elements.

Table 2.2 shows all Common Elements applicable to each Habitat Classification. Only those Common Elements for Habitats and their Management associated with the habitat classifications present on a property are authorized. Returning to the Badger State Wildlife Area example, because the Upland Grass habitat classification is present, and Table 2.2 shows both Prairie and Surrogate Grassland Common Elements, both are authorized for use. As are any Common Elements shown in Table 2.2 as associated with Upland Broad-Leaved Deciduous Forest or Shrub Wetland. However, Barrens, Oak Savanna and Upland Shrub Common Elements are not, because those habitat classifications are not present on the property.

Table 0.3. Example Property Land Cover Table

| Badger State Wildlife Area | | | |
|---|--------------|----------------|---|
| Habitat Classification | Acres | % Cover | Representative WisFIRS Cover Types |
| Upland Broad-Leaved Deciduous Forest | 100 | 50 | Aspen, Northern Hardwoods |
| Upland Grass | 50 | 25 | Surrogate Grassland |
| Shrub Wetland | 50 | 25 | Alder |



ROAD MANAGEMENT AND VEHICLE ACCESS

Access to and within DNR properties is on a variety of roads including state and county highways, town roads and DNR-managed roads. Roads managed by other governmental units, including townships, counties and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, are outside the scope of this regional master plan.

These management and public access roads provide access for managing timber, improving fish and wildlife habitat, fighting fires or managing prescribed burns, and recreating among other important activities that take place on department lands. Management roads closed to public vehicles are gated or signed.

Department roads not open to public vehicles are typically maintained as primitive or lightly developed roads. They provide access for management vehicles and equipment, as well as foot-access-ways for hunters and hikers.

On primitive roads, which are often used only seasonally and are not regularly maintained, ruts and downed trees may be present. Maintenance is completed on primitive roads as needed. Public access roads managed by the department generally are constructed and maintained as either lightly developed or moderately developed roads. The property manager may determine which of these road standards to apply on a case by case basis.

The Existing Road Infrastructure theme within the DNR Property Planning Viewer shows the current DNR-managed road network on each property. Properties that do not show roads have no DNR-managed roads. Roads open to public vehicles and those closed are shown. No change in the open or closed status of the roads shown is in this plan.

The following road management objectives and prescriptions are applied to properties in the Western Prairie.

Road Management Objective

- Provide a network of roads and parking lots or areas within the properties that meet land management and recreational access objectives, while minimizing environmental impacts and management costs.

Classifications of DNR-managed roads defined

The roads managed by the department fall into four different development level classifications. The classifications reflect a range of development and maintenance standards. Most roads are primitive, lightly or moderately developed.

The road classifications are defined by NR44.07(3) and are as follows:

Primitive road: A primitive road shall be a temporary road, a permanent seasonal road or a permanent all-season road which is primarily a single lane with a maximum sustained cleared width normally not exceeding 12 feet, it has no or little grading, with limited cut and fill, is surfaced with primitive or native materials and has a maximum speed design of 15 mph. Due to the variability of roadbed conditions at different times and places, some primitive roads might not be negotiable by ordinary highway vehicles.

Lightly developed road: A lightly developed road shall be a temporary road, a permanent seasonal road or a permanent all-season road which is primarily a single lane with a maximum sustained cleared width normally not exceeding 16 feet, is lightly to well-graded with minimal cut and fill, is surfaced with primitive, native or aggregate materials except in limited special use situations where asphalt may be used, and has a maximum speed design of 15 mph. Due to the variability of roadbed conditions at different times and places, some lightly developed roads might not be negotiable by ordinary highway vehicles.

Moderately developed road: A moderately developed road shall be a permanent seasonal road or a permanent all-season road which typically is 2-lane, but may be one-lane, have a maximum sustained cleared width normally not exceeding 45 feet for 2-lane and 30 feet for one-lane, a well-graded roadbed and may have moderate cuts and fills and shallow ditching, has a surface of aggregate, asphalt or native material, and a maximum design speed of 25 mph.

Fully developed road. A fully developed road shall be a permanent all-season road with a cleared width normally of 50 feet or more, a roadbed with cuts and fills as needed, an aggregate, asphalt or other paved surface and be designed for speeds exceeding 25 mph.



Road Management Prescriptions

- Maintain the network of roads shown in the Existing Road Infrastructure theme within the DNR Property Planning Viewer for properties within the Western Prairie at their designated development level.
- Maintain designated public access roads and parking lots or areas as open for public use as shown in the Existing Road Infrastructure theme of the DNR Property Planning Viewer. Roads shown as open seasonally may be periodically closed (e.g. not maintained in winter) or be open for specific time periods, such as fall hunting seasons. Time periods during which seasonal roads are open or closed are determined by the property manager.
- Maintain permanent roads in a sustainable condition following the standard road management protocols in the Property Access Common Element.
- When public access and department management needs demand, change road development levels and public use status through the master plan variance process set in ch. NR 44.04(4) Wis. Adm. Code.



GENERAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AND USE

All department-owned lands within the Western Prairie are open to traditional outdoor recreational uses including hunting, fishing, and trapping, except in refuges as posted. Other activities allowed on these lands include wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, paddling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, collection of wild edibles, and nature study. Edible fruits and nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus, and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for personal consumption by the collector. However, collection of seeds, roots, or other plant parts is prohibited. Individual properties may offer additional recreational opportunities such as motorized or nonmotorized trail activities or camping. Details on additional recreational offerings can be found within individual property sections of this plan.

Foot travel (including skiing and snowshoeing) is allowed on all department lands, service roads, dikes, berms, and firebreaks unless otherwise noted. Areas closed to foot travel may include wildlife refuges, closed easements, or areas temporarily restricted during habitat management activities, such as timber cutting or prescribed burns, due to safety concerns.

Motorized vehicle access is available on designated public access roads and parking areas. Snowmobiles and ATVs/UTVs are allowed only on trails and routes designated for their use. Allowances exist for motorized use by individuals with mobility impairments under the power-driven mobility device regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information on these allowances, please refer to the 'Disabled Accessibility' paragraphs in the Property Access Common Element. Information on rules governing public use of department-owned lands is found in ch. NR 45, Wisc. Admin. Code.

The following management priorities and protocols apply to all properties in this regional master plan. If property-specific management objectives and prescriptions described in this document conflict with these management priorities and protocols, the property-specific management takes precedence.

GENERAL RECREATION AND PUBLIC USE PROTOCOLS

- Install, maintain, and monitor parking areas, access roads, boat access sites, and signage consistent with department rules and policies, and as appropriate to the property designation.
- Support research activities as appropriate to the property designation through the Scientific Collector's Permit or Research License Application and Authorization.
- Look for opportunities to enhance accessibility of current facilities and provide new accessible facilities as feasible and appropriate to the property designation.

Additional property-specific public use management prescriptions are included in the individual property sections of this chapter.



PROPERTY MAPS: WEB VIEWER USE

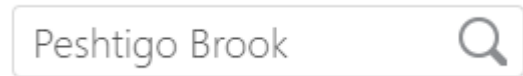
Property maps in this plan are primarily housed in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer. Links to five different map types (DNR and Other Lands, Recreation, Roads, Land Cover and Land Management Classifications) can be found in Table A.1 in Appendix A and in many of the property sections. To access mapping data for properties without using the links in Table A.1 or the property section of this plan, follow these three steps:

1. Open the Property Planning Viewer

Visit the [Property Planning Viewer home page](#) and click the  button.

2. Locate the property you want to view

Enter the name of the property in the Search bar in the upper right corner of the viewer. Correct spelling is necessary, but entering the entire name is not.



Matching records appear in the Search Results pane. In this example, a search for “Peshtigo Brook” returns one State Natural Area, two DNR Project Boundaries, and one feature for DNR-managed Land.

Click on the type of feature you want. In most cases, this will be DNR Project Boundary.



Finally, click the name of the property you want to view, and the map will automatically zoom to that property. There may be more than one DNR Project Boundary result for the same property, as in this example. You may have to click through multiple results to view the full extent of the property.



When you click on a search result, the Viewer highlights the feature on the map. To clear the highlight and improve the visibility of map layers and features, click the “Locate & Identify” tab on the top menu bar, then click “Clear Selected.”

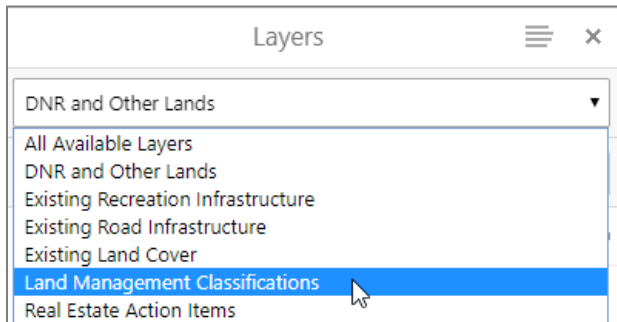


3. Choose a map theme

The default map theme is DNR and Other Lands. To view a different map theme, click the “Home” tab on the top menu bar and then click “Show Layer List.”



Then, select a theme from the Layers drop-down menu.



To learn more about additional capabilities of the Property Planning Viewer, click the “User Guide” button on the “Additional Resources” tab in the top menu bar.



Properties in this plan with more than one land management classification also have PDF maps available.

STATE WILDLIFE AREAS OF WESTERN PRAIRIE

CYLON WILDLIFE AREA

This property provides the region with a popular hunting and trapping area in a setting that consists of a gradient from wetlands, sedge meadow, and grasslands to upland hardwoods. It is noted as being one of the largest tracts of contiguous habitat in the area. Habitat types on the property are considered among the highest habitat priorities for western Wisconsin by the department.



PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Located in northwest St. Croix County, Cylon Wildlife Area lies at the confluence of the North Fork of the Willow River and Black Brook as they meander towards St. Croix River. Eight miles of the Willow River and one mile of Black Brook flow through the property. Other waterbodies on the property include open water pothole wetlands managed for waterfowl production.

The property is a well-known and popular destination for its primary public use activities of hunting, trapping and fishing. It is also known for its compatible recreation and educational opportunities including wildlife observation, hiking, snow shoeing, and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Special Attributes

Cylon Wildlife Area is within the Prairie Potholes Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. This COA is of statewide significance for its surrogate grasslands, pothole lakes and oak openings. This property became a state wildlife area to provide public access to and protect one of the last remaining large tracts of wild land in St. Croix County. The large expanses of wetlands, rivers and creeks that flow through the center of the property adds to this wildness by creating a sense of remoteness.

State Natural Area: The Cylon State Natural Area is comprised of three parcels that total 155 acres.

Archeological: One of the first European settlers in the Cylon region was Otto Neitge, known locally as “The Dutch Hunter.” His remains lie in an unmarked grave on the property near his former home foundation.

Willow River: The Willow River within this property is a Class II trout stream. A low-density native brook trout fishery is present here.

State Ownership: 2,875 acres

Fee Title: 2,645 acres

Easement: 230 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



GENERAL RECREATION AND PUBLIC USE PRIORITIES

- Provide opportunities for high-quality nature-based recreational activities as appropriate to and compatible with property designations and capabilities.
- Accommodate research and educational activities that are consistent with the primary management purposes of the properties and with user safety.
- Improve accessibility for mobility-impaired individuals where feasible.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Access

Easements

Public easements provide additional hunting and fishing on the property's northern unit, within the property project boundary.

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 5 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to or within the property provide numerous public access points to the property. There are two miles of open primitive roads and 0.2 miles of closed primitive roads that are DNR-managed on the property (Map B-1). Six parking areas are provided, surfaced with gravel or grass.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

A local snowmobile club has a snowmobile land use permit with the department for the use and maintenance of a snowmobile trail across the north unit (gated/closed during summer).

The department maintains hay harvest agreements (permit) with local farmers to help maintain several grasslands on the property.

Land Cover

The property consists of upland hardwoods and a substantial portion of sedge meadow, wetlands, forested wetlands of tamarack and black spruce, grassland and open water. Old growth natural-origin red and white pine stands are a small, but important conservation component. Pine plantations are being converted to native coniferous and upland deciduous forest. Numerous restored wetlands in the form of embankments, ditch plugs, and dug-out potholes for waterfowl provide much of the remaining acreage.

Table 0.4 lists the land cover of Cylon Wildlife Area as shown in broad habitat classifications and WisFIRS cover types. The WisFIRS subcategories are a representative sample of cover types present; others likely exist on the property.

Table 0.4 Cylon Wildlife Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 1,045 | 40 |
| Aspen | 734 | 28 |
| Central Hardwoods | 75 | 3 |



| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Northern Hardwoods | 33 | 1 |
| Oak | 184 | 7 |
| White Birch | 19 | 1 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 189 | 7 |
| White Pine | 185 | 7 |
| White Spruce | 4 | <1 |
| Forested Wetland | 249 | 10 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 73 | 3 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 131 | 5 |
| Tamarack | 45 | 2 |
| Shrub Wetland | 526 | 20 |
| Wetland Shrub | 209 | 8 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | 317 | 12 |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 353 | 14 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 9 | <1 |
| Minor Stream | | |
| Upland Grass | 217 | 8 |
| Cool Season Grass | 74 | 3 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 144 | 5 |
| Developed | 2 | <1 |
| Parking Area | | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Cylon Wildlife Area is divided into two land management areas with distinct classifications (Map B-2).

- Area 1: Cylon Forest, Wetlands and Grassland Habitat Management Area
- Area 2: Cylon SNA Native Community Management Area

AREA 1: CYLON FOREST, WETLANDS AND GRASSLAND

Classification: Habitat Management Area

Size: 2682 acres

This management area includes all portions of the property not included in the State Natural Area.

Timber management is focused on oak, aspen and alder to promote habitat for popular game species on the property including white-tail deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, and wild turkey. Restoration of historic wetlands that were previously ditched and drained for agriculture is showing good progress. Since 1968, many wetlands have been restored through the placement of ditch plugs and dams. In the northern unit, approximately ½-mile of ditch construction and 34 potholes were dug in marsh areas to create breeding ponds for waterfowl. Four flowages on the southern unit are maintained for waterfowl via water control structures. Native prairie grass and wetland restoration projects on the property provide nesting cover for waterfowl, pheasants and other bird habitat.

Within the management area, the North Fork of the Willow River flows westward, as does a portion of Black Brook. They eventually empty into the St. Croix River. The Willow River provides valuable wildlife habitat within a setting of wetlands and a mixed forest of native conifers and northern hardwoods. Red oak stands, aspen, mixed hardwoods, upland and lowland brush, swamp hardwood and conifer, tamarack, pine, old fields and openings comprise additional habitat.

Table 0.5 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 1. Land cover is not anticipated to significantly change.

Table 0.5. Cylon Forest, Wetlands & Grassland Habitat Management Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 1,007 | 41 |
| Aspen | 728 | |
| Central Hardwoods | 76 | |
| Northern Hardwoods | 23 | |
| Oak | 161 | |
| White Birch | 19 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 164 | 6 |
| White Pine | 160 | |
| White Spruce | 4 | |
| Forested Wetland | 244 | 10 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 73 | |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 131 | |
| Tamarack | 41 | |
| Shrub Wetland | 288 | 12 |
| Wetland Shrub | 28 | |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | 260 | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 511 | 21 |
| Emergent Wetland | 146 | |
| Sedge Meadow | 336 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 29 | |
| Open Water | 9 | <1 |
| Upland Grass | 217 | 9 |
| Cool Season Grass | 74 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 144 | |
| Developed | 2 | <1 |

Area Management

Objectives

- Maintain the sedge meadow, emergent marsh and deep-water marsh community types on all sites where they occur, restoring the hydrology, extent and quality of them for the benefit of wildlife, particularly habitat for waterfowl nesting, brood rearing, and migratory stopover.
- Provide opportunities primarily for hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife observation.
- Protect and enhance Willow River and Black Brook stream ecology and the integrity of their interconnected fish and wildlife habitats that consist of natural communities with diverse composition.
- Provide a forested stream corridor of mixed tree species composition, with old-forest characteristics such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse, woody debris.



- Provide high-quality, naturally occurring, mixed-age deciduous and coniferous forest habitat at a variety of age classes to support wildlife species, with an emphasis on aspen, oak, and native conifers.
- Provide young forest habitat by managing aspen, oak, and alder on the property to benefit associated wildlife species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance the ecological function of the Western Prairie grassland community.

Prescriptions

- Work with partners to develop up to two each of waterfowl and deer hunting blinds that offer a rugged, yet manageable experience for disabled users; develop as feasible.
- Work with partners to develop and maintain small (1 acre) food plots and native wildlife shrub plantings in strategic locations to benefit wildlife on the property, and to provide additional cover and hunting/viewing opportunities for public users.
- Maintain wetlands as habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species and to promote opportunities for hunters, trappers and wildlife viewing.
- Manage wetland habitat by periodically manipulating water levels to mimic natural fluctuations to benefit waterfowl use and improve shorebird habitat, to benefit wetland floral and faunal communities, and facilitate vegetative management practices. Conduct periodic partial and/or complete drawdowns as needed to promote the resurgence of desirable wetland species like smartweeds, arrowheads and bidens that provide food and stopover habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl.
- Conduct timber sales and other management techniques that mimic natural disturbances to enhance aspen, oak, alder, other hardwood stands and native conifers, to create a diversity of age classes. Reserve some mature oaks and pines as seed trees and allow some trees to mature and die within the forests to provide standing snags and coarse woody debris.
- Maintain structural diversity by providing large, fully-developed trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris. Allow large legacy trees to provide savanna structure, mast crops and seed trees.
- Over time, convert existing pine plantations to native conifers and natural-origin aspen, oak, and other hardwoods, reserving some planted pine trees for diversity.
- Follow the [General Wildlife Habitat Management](#) and [General Forest Management](#) Common Elements.
- Follow Common Elements for property management regarding [Protection of Cultural Resources](#).
- Develop no additional recreational features or other infrastructure. Monitor and discourage unauthorized ATV and other motorized use.

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Reference Table 0.5 and use Table 2.2 to determine applicable Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this regional plan.



AREA 2: CYLON STATE NATURAL AREA

Classification: Native Community Management Area

Size: 155 acres

This management area is known as Cylon State Natural Area (SNA). It is comprised of three existing units embedded within the southern unit of Cylon Wildlife Area on nearly level topography along the Willow River. It features woods and sedge meadows with a mix of both northern and southern plant species. Species diversity is attributable to the site's location near Wisconsin's vegetation "tension zone," a band running from northwest Wisconsin to the southeast. Largely determined by climactic factors, both southern and northern species occur here. The portion with closed canopy forest is composed of large northern pin oak, white oak, and bur oak with basswood, red maple, and white pine. Red maple and American elm are common in the sapling layer. Ironwood dominates the sub-canopy layer and hazelnut and blackberry occur in the shrub layer. The sedge meadow is comprised of wire-leaved sedges mixed with white meadowsweet and steeplebush.

This area was designated a State Natural Area in 2010 and represents some of the highest quality areas within Cylon Wildlife Area, one of the largest remaining tracts of natural habitat remaining in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape.

Table 0.6 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 2. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.6 Cylon SNA Native Community Management Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 43 | 28 |
| Aspen | 8 | |
| Northern Hardwoods | 10 | |
| Oak | 25 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 25 | 16 |
| White Pine | | |
| Forested Wetland | 5 | 3 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | <1 | |
| Tamarack | 5 | |
| Shrub Wetland | 2 | 1 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 79 | 51 |
| Emergent Wetland | 13 | |
| Sedge Meadow | 39 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 27 | |
| Upland Grass | 1 | <1 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |



Area Management

Objectives

- Maintain and continue restoring the representative natural community types, including the diversity of wetlands and protection of the ecological gradient from lowlands to uplands.
- Promote old forest characteristics, including biologically mature trees, large diameter trees, structural diversity, standing and fallen coarse woody debris, and an uneven canopy in the forested portions.

Prescriptions

- Passively manage the forested uplands.
- In general, allow natural processes and passive canopy management to determine the ecological characteristics of the management area. Natural community improvement projects such as prescribed burning, limited tree cutting, girdling and treatments of herbicides may be used, when doing so will assist in maintaining or increasing representative species.
- Follow [Northern Sedge Meadow and Southern Sedge Meadow](#) Common Elements.
- Monitor and control invasive species, especially for common buckthorn, since it has limited presence and should be controlled before it becomes problematic. Follow department protocol in Common Elements, which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.

Common Elements

Apply Common Elements for General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.

ST. CROIX ISLANDS WILDLIFE AREA

The unique setting of this property provides a popular hunting, fishing and trapping area among high-quality wetlands and a small forest of central hardwoods. Habitat types on the property are listed as the highest habitat priorities for western Wisconsin.



PROPERTY OVERVIEW

St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area is located along the St. Croix River in northwestern St. Croix County. This unique property includes numerous islands and wetland habitats with prominent wooded bluffs along the St. Croix River. It includes the confluence of the Apple River with the St. Croix River. Situated about 4.5 miles northwest of Somerset, this property was initially purchased from St. Croix County in 1946. Additional acquisitions include a 184-acre donation from The Nature Conservancy.

The property is managed to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and wildlife observation along this scenic riverway. Compatible recreation and educational opportunities exist for activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and wild-edible gathering; however, there are no designated facilities to support these additional activities.

Special Attributes

St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area is identified as an aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) of continental significance by the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. It merits this distinction for its populations of fish and rare invertebrates, such as mussels and dragonflies, with additional significance for its habitat as a major migratory bird stopover area.

State Natural Areas: Apple River Canyon State Natural Area was designated here in 1978, and the St. Croix Islands State Natural Area was designated within the property in 2010.

St. Croix River: The St. Croix River and adjoining lands are a designated National Scenic Riverway by the National Park Service.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Access

Easements

A 33-foot wide public access easement exists off of 208th St. through private property to aid the public in accessing the eastern portion of the property by foot.

State Ownership: 1,082 acres

Fee Title: 1,080 acres

Easement: 2 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 1.5 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to or within the property provide numerous access points. One parking area, surfaced with gravel or grass is located on the north end of the property. A primitive DNR road, less than one-half mile, provides seasonal access to the parking area from Rice Lake Road (Map C-1).

Water Access

The property has one carry-in access near the parking lot off of Rice Lake Road. Canoes and kayaks may be carried in from the parking area to the water; however, this access is not adequate for larger boats. Nearby public boat access areas including one on the Apple River and Ferry Land Road to the north offer additional water access.

Land Cover

Table 0.7 lists the land cover of St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area as shown in broad habitat classifications and WisFIRS cover types. The WisFIRS subcategories are a representative sample of cover types present; others likely exist on the property.

Land cover is primarily open wetlands, forested wetlands, open water and some upland forest bluff lands consisting of oak woodlands. The remaining acreage is grassland, including restored prairie.

Table 0.7 St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 127 | 10 |
| Oak | | |
| Oak Woodland | 186 | 15 |
| Oak Woodland | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 0 | <1 |
| Red Pine | | |
| Forested Wetland | 230 | 19 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 640 | 52 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 54 | 5 |
| Cool Season Grass | 35 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 19 | |
| Developed | 1 | <1 |
| Parking Area | | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area is composed of the following two management areas (Map C-2).

- Area 1: Islands, Floodplain and Blufflands Native Community Management Area
- Area 2: Apple River Canyon Native Community Management Area



AREA 1: ISLANDS, FLOODPLAIN AND BLUFFLANDS

Classification: Native Community Management Area

Size: 1064 acres

The Islands, Floodplain and Blufflands Native Community Management Area is primarily a floodplain comprised of islands within a channel of sloughs, backwater lakes, braided stream channels, stands of emergent aquatic vegetation, old-growth lowland forest, and the delta of the Apple River. It includes the St. Croix Islands and Floodplain State Natural Area. Abundant flowing springs on the north and east banks provide exceptional habitat for mussels and darters in the east channels. Fish include crystal darter, gilt darter, greater redhorse, common shiner, pumpkinseed, speckled chub, river redhorse, and bass. Resident water birds include great blue heron, bald eagle, marsh wren, and belted kingfisher.

Stands of emergent vegetation are extensive, and depending on water depth, are dominated by arrowhead, river bulrush, softstem bulrush, reed grass, and huge patches of cordgrass.

Lowland forest is dominated by silver maple with some large individuals reaching 35" in diameter. Canopy associates include green ash, hackberry, black willow, and elm. Understory vegetation is variable and often undeveloped after annual flooding and scouring. Sedges, catchfly grass, smartweed, and sensitive fern are common. Wet prairie includes cardinal flower, swamp milkweed, Joe-pye weed, jewelweed, water horehound, culver's root, obedience plant, monkey-flower, and great blue lobelia. The breath and diversity of habitats supports abundant wildlife.

A small segment of steep wooded bluffland along this stretch of the St. Croix River, designated by the National Park Service as National Scenic Riverway, is dominated by oak woodlands, predominantly black oak. Bordering the woodland on top of the bluff are grasslands containing cool season grasses and restored prairie.

Land Cover

Table 0.8 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 1. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.8 Islands, Floodplain and Blufflands Native Community Management Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Oak Woodland | 186 | 18 |
| Oak Woodland | | |
| Forested Wetland | 230 | 22 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | <1 | <1 |
| Red Pine | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 602 | 59 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 5 | <1 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |
| Developed | <1 | <1 |
| Parking Area | | |



Area Management

Objectives

- Protect lowland to upland habitats, including Emergent Marsh, Floodplain Forest, Wet Prairie and adjoining bluffs along the lower St. Croix River valley, keeping in mind the integrity of their interconnected fish and wildlife habitats of natural communities with diverse species composition.
- Provide and maintain a structurally and functionally diverse old-growth floodplain forest comprised of large diameter silver maple and mixed bottomland hardwood species.
- Protect, manage, and enhance natural communities for ecological values and rare species habitat needs.
- Provide opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife observation.
- Maintain the oak woodland habitat to support associated wildlife species.
- Minimize the spread of oak wilt within the oak woodland.
- Maintain the Scenic Riverway to preserve the aesthetics of forested bluffs visible from the St. Croix River valley.

Prescriptions

- In general, use passive management to allow natural processes to shape and preserve this area of the Scenic Riverway. In general, allow natural processes to determine the ecological characteristics.
- Allow natural processes and passive canopy management to determine the structure of the floodplain forest. Retain snags and coarse woody debris to promote old growth characteristics.
- Allow natural processes, prescribed fire, and processes that mimic natural disturbance to determine the structure of the wet prairie.
- Monitor and [control invasive species and forest pathogens](#) described in Common Elements, which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.
- Follow the [Oak Woodland Management](#) Common Elements.
- Monitor the impact of emerald ash borer on ash trees and respond if appropriate using the most current version of DNR Emerald Ash Borer Silviculture Guidelines and best available science and techniques. Maintain the potential to reforest the site and prevent conversion to reed canary grass. Include consultation among Natural Heritage Conservation, Forestry, and Wildlife Management.

Common Elements

Apply Common Elements for General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



AREA 2: APPLE RIVER CANYON

Classification: Native Community Management Area
 Size: 182 acres

This management area includes Apple River Canyon State Natural Area. It features a deep (100-140 feet), narrow (150 feet) gorge along the Apple River about two miles upstream from its confluence with the St. Croix River. The Apple River is a shallow stream flanked by steep high cliffs on both sides. The canyon lies a few miles south of the limits of Glacial Lake Grantsburg, and presumably the gorge was formed during the period of drainage of the lake. A cross-section of the gorge reveals thin layers of glacial outwash and Oneota dolomite (Ordovician), a massive layer of Jordan sandstone (Cambrian), Lodi shale (Cambrian), Nicollet Creek dolomite (Cambrian), and Franconia sandstone (Cambrian).

Vegetation is interesting due to the nearly east-west orientation of a segment of the gorge, creating north and south walls with contrasting sunlight, moisture, and temperature conditions. Uplands to the north are oak forest, with the south-facing upper slope including a strip of prairie grasses. South-facing cliffs include lichens and mosses, with the lowest talus slope a floodplain forest. There is northern dry-mesic forest on the north-facing talus, cryptogams on the northern cliffs and narrow prairie on the upper slope.

Land Cover

Table 0.9 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 2. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.9. Apple River Canyon Native Community Management Area

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 127 | 61 |
| Oak | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | <1 | <1 |
| Red Pine | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 38 | 18 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 44 | 21 |
| Cool Season Grass | 35 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 14 | |

Area Management

Objectives

- Manage this area as a significant geological feature and as an ecological reference area.
- Protect lowland to upland habitats, including Floodplain Forest, Dry Prairie and adjoining bluffs and cliffs along the Apple River canyon, keeping in mind the integrity of their interconnected fish and wildlife habitats of natural communities with diverse species composition.
- Protect, manage, and enhance natural communities for ecological values and rare species habitat needs.
- Provide opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife observation.
- Provide opportunities for research and education.

Prescriptions

- In general, allow natural processes to determine the ecological characteristics of the management area.
- Monitor and control invasive species, especially Yellow Archangel, an 'early detection' species under review for inclusion in ch. NR 40, Wisc. Admin. Code for Invasive Species Identification, Classification and Control. Follow department protocol in [Common Elements](#), which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.

Common Elements

Apply Common Elements for General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



STATE HABITAT AND FISHERY AREAS OF WESTERN PRAIRIE

State Habitat and Fishery Areas in this region protect headwater springs and river tributaries, with access to coldwater, coolwater and warmwater streams in an open setting of native grasslands, wetland potholes and marshes, and least of all, woodlands.

Many of these properties are managed to enhance and protect native prairies consistent with the goals of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA). These properties lie adjacent to or near USFWS-managed Waterfowl Production Areas and include areas of overlapping priority focus. Grasslands, stream segments and wetlands in this region are on the list of department-identified priority habitats. DNR properties provide optimal habitat for hunting, trapping, fishing and compatible recreation opportunities. These properties include:

- Bierbrauer State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Baldwin State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Black Brook State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Casey Lake State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Clay Corners State Habitat Area
- Deer Park State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Emerald Valley State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Erin Prairie State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area
- Lundy Pond State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Manion State Habitat Area
- Nagel State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- New Richmond State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Oak Ridge State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Oden State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Osceola Creek State Habitat Area
- Parker Creek State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Ray Morrison Memorial State Habitat Area
- Rush River State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Simon Prairie State Habitat Area – WPHRA
- Snake Creek Spring State Habitat Area
- Spring Meadow State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Star Prairie Seed Farm State Habitat Area - WPHRA
- Ten Mile Creek State Habitat Area – WPHRA
- Wagon Landing Statewide Spring Pond
- Willow River State Habitat Area - WPHRA

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND PRESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL STATE HABITAT AND FISHERY AREAS IN THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

State Habitat and Fishery Areas in the Western Prairie are similar in their function and environmental context. This similarity allows the areas to be managed in much the same way.

Management described in this section applies to all State Habitat and Fishery areas in this chapter. Follow additional objectives and prescriptions as they appear for specific properties. If the management described below for all habitat areas conflicts with a property-specific objective or prescription, follow the property-specific management.

Objectives for all Habitat Areas

- Protect and restore upland to lowland habitats, especially the grasslands, oak savannas, and prairie remnants, keeping in mind the integrity of the interconnected fish and wildlife habitats of adjoining bluffs,



floodplain forests, the lower St. Croix River valley, the Kinnickinnic River valley, and coldwater, coolwater, and warmwater streams.

- Provide opportunities primarily for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation.
- Continue to collaborate with USFWS and share resources where possible to ensure that shared management goals for these intermingled federal/state properties are efficiently and effectively achieved.
- Manage forest resources to encourage native wildlife species habitat. Promoting bur oak, white oak, red oak, aspen and other regional hardwood and coniferous species where appropriate.
- Preserve and restore grassland streamside vegetation. Discourage willow thickets and young saplings. In limited, appropriate areas, provide forested stream corridors of mixed tree species composition, with old-forest characteristics such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris.
- Maintain consistency with the fisheries management objectives described in fisheries program management plans.
- Provide fish and wildlife benefits on wetlands, particularly habitat for fish spawning and waterfowl nesting, brood rearing, and migratory stopover.
- Protect and enhance avian and herptile nesting opportunities where appropriate.
- As needed, develop and/or maintain limited, sustainable, small, lightly developed parking areas and walk-in trails along the river corridors to provide access for fishing and other nature-based recreational uses.

Prescriptions for all Habitat Areas

- Explore the feasibility of working with partners to develop up to two each of waterfowl and deer hunting blinds that offer a rugged, yet manageable experience for disabled users; develop as feasible.
- Use prescribed fire, mowing, haying, and grazing to maintain and restore grasslands and oak savannas for pheasants, nesting waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife.
- If planting or seeding is considered for natural community restoration, use seeds or plugs from local genotypes where possible. Use only species that would historically have occurred on the site.
- Monitor and [control invasive species](#) per department protocol in Common Elements, which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.
- Maintain structural diversity of forests by providing large, fully-developed trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris in appropriate areas.
- Conduct timber sales, prescribed burns and other management techniques that mimic natural disturbances to enhance native grasslands, oak savanna and other oak forests, aspen, other hardwoods and native conifers.
- Convert pine plantations over time to grasslands, aspen, oak, other hardwoods and native conifers through timber management techniques that mimic natural events.



- When possible, work with partners and neighboring landowners to implement practices on public and private lands that improve habitat and water quality and move towards holistic watershed management. Host an annual partnership meeting to set short term goals based on yearly progress. Discuss opportunities for collaboration.
- Seek to partner with external groups to develop interpretive information for these properties.
- Work with partners to retain or develop and maintain small (1 acre) food plots and native wildlife shrub plantings in strategic locations as needed to benefit wildlife, and to provide additional cover and hunting/viewing opportunities for public users.
- Inspect and maintain signage to clarify boundaries between Waterfowl Production Areas and DNR lands.
- Remove beaver and beaver dams consistent with the DNR Beaver Management Plan to maintain and enhance the coldwater fish community.
- Salvage operations due to catastrophic wind, ice, fire, disease or insects may take place or instead, passive management may occur. Prior to salvage, consult a team comprised of Fisheries, Wildlife, Forestry, and Natural Heritage Conservation to determine salvage or management, considering the original objectives of the area.
- Locate, construct, and maintain access trails on routes that minimize the potential for soil erosion, and install environmental protection measures as needed.
- Develop and maintain access parking at a vehicle capacity appropriate for the use level of the property and to a development level that is sustainable and provides adequate environmental protection.
- Monitor the impact of emerald ash borer on ash trees and respond using the most current version of DNR Emerald Ash Borer Silviculture Guidelines and best available science and techniques. Include consultation with a team comprised of Fisheries, Wildlife, Forestry, and Natural Heritage Conservation.
- Follow the [General Wildlife Habitat Management](#), [General Fisheries Management](#), [General Forest Management](#), [Remnant Prairie](#), [Surrogate Grasslands](#), [Sedge Meadow](#), [Oak Savanna](#), [Coldwater Streams](#), and [Warmwater Streams](#) Common Elements.

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Cross-reference Table 2.2 with each property's land cover to determine applicable Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



BIERBRAUER STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Bierbrauer State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northern St. Croix County, five miles north of New Richmond and two miles east of Star Prairie. The property was purchased in 1974 to protect the large shallow lake and wetlands on the property.

It is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape scale wetland and grassland restoration project.

Special Attributes

The property is embedded in a 274-acre U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Waterfowl Production Area that provides excellent grassland habitat for upland game.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Bierbrauer SHA is managed to provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation. The property is especially popular for pheasant and deer hunting. Information is available from USFWS St. Croix Wetland Management District regarding recreational opportunities, regulations and access for the WPA federal portion of the wetland.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately one-tenth of a mile of County Highway CC provides access to the east side of the property. A large parking area and access are available to the south off 235th St., located on adjacent USFWS Waterfowl Production Area property. There are no department-managed roads or parking areas.

Water Access

Access to Bierbrauer Lake is walk-in access only.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

Managed grazing may be used on this property in partnership with USFWS on the surrounding Waterfowl Production Area in order to maintain grassland and oak savanna habitat.

Land Cover

Bierbrauer Lake, a shallow 24-acre water body, and the open wetland habitat that surrounds it, cover over half the property. The remaining habitat consists of upland grass and oak opening.



State Ownership: 65 acres

Fee Title: 65 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Table 0.10 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Bierbrauer State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.10. Bierbrauer State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Oak Opening | 3 | 5 |
| Oak Opening | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 18 | 26 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 24 | 35 |
| Upland Grass | 24 | 35 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



CASEY LAKE STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Casey Lake State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in central St. Croix County six miles northwest of Baldwin. The property is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.



Two small dikes on the property form impoundments to enhance waterfowl habitat.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Casey Lake SHA is managed to provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation. The property is known for hunting opportunities that include pheasant, deer, grouse, woodcock, and waterfowl. Casey Lake provides limited fishing opportunities as it is a shallow lake that often winter kills.

A seasonal Class 2 dog training area is located on the northwest corner of the property (Map D).

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 1.7 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to Casey Lake SHA provide access to visitors, and two parking areas are located on the south side of 130th Ave. There are no department-managed roads.

Water Access

Casey Lake is reachable by walk-in access.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The department may use hay harvest agreements (permits) with local farmers to help maintain several grasslands on the property.

Land cover

Land cover is a mix of restored prairie, upland shrubs, oak and aspen forests. There are wetlands that surround Casey Lake. A seasonal Class 2 dog training area (25 acres) is located on the northwest corner of the property; it has the same habitat management objectives and prescriptions as the entire property.

Table 0.11 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Casey Lake State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

State Ownership: 364 acres

Fee Title: 364 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Table 0.11. Casey Lake Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 136 | 38 |
| Aspen | 64 | |
| Oak | 72 | |
| Upland Shrub | 36 | 10 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 17 | 5 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 23 | 6 |
| Upland Grass | 148 | 41 |
| Cool Season Grass | 24 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 124 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and the additional property-specific objective and prescription below.

Objective

- Maintain a seasonal 25-acre Class 2 dog training area (s. NR 17.05(2) Wis. Admin. Code).

Prescription

- Maintain existing dikes and water control structures. However, some structures may be removed, and others added, wherever necessary after evaluation and consultation following department guidelines for water control structures.

CLAY CORNERS STATE HABITAT AREA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Clay Corners State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in north-central Pierce County eight miles east of River Falls. The property was donated to DNR from the Kinnickinnic Chapter of Pheasants Forever to be managed for wildlife habitat. The property consists of restored grasslands and central hardwoods habitat.



PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Clay Corners SHA is managed to provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation. The property is noteworthy for pheasant and deer hunting.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately ½-mile of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property provide public access. There are two natural-surface parking areas on the property along 770th Ave. Approximately ½-mile of closed, primitive DNR road on the property provides management access (Map E-2).

Land Cover

Restored grassland habitat covers most of the property. Upland deciduous forests of predominately northern hardwoods are located in the interior of the property near an unnamed stream.

Table 0.12 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Clay Corners State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.12. Clay Corners State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 46 | 32 |
| Northern Hardwoods | 44 | |
| Oak | 3 | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | <1 | <1 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 100 | 68 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |

State Ownership: 151 acres

Fee Title: 151 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).

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DEER PARK STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Deer Park State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northern St. Croix County on the Polk County border approximately five miles east of Star Prairie. The property consists of two separate parcels located about ½-mile apart. A grassland/wetland complex of 80 acres comprises the western parcel, while the eastern parcel consists of grassland with a remnant oak savanna. The property was purchased in 2001 as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.

Special Attributes

A very small remnant oak savanna is located on the eastern parcel of this property, which represents habitat that was historically present in this region.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Deer Park SHA offers opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 6.6 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property provide public access. A natural surface parking area is provided on the east parcel, off the north side of 235th Ave. A ¼-mile of closed, primitive DNR road on the property is used for management access (Map E-1).

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

Managed grazing may continue on this property as needed, to maintain grassland and oak savanna habitat.

Land Cover

Habitat consists primarily of upland grass, predominately restored native species. A small open wetland/marsh is located on the western parcel, maintained in part by a 90-foot ditch plug. There is a small remnant oak savanna, approximately one acre in size.

Table 0.13 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Deer Park State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.



State Ownership: 214 acres

Fee Title: 214 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Table 0.13. Deer Park State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 12 | 6 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 197 | 94 |
| Cool Season Grass | 24 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 172 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie State habitat areas (page 31).



EMERALD VALLEY STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Emerald Valley State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in east-central St. Croix County nine miles northeast of Baldwin. The property consists of restored grasslands with a small woodlot comprised of northern hardwoods. The property is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. The property was donated to DNR from the Kinnickinnic Chapter of Pheasants Forever in 2005 to be managed as wildlife habitat.

The regional wildlife benefit from the management of this property as an open grassland community through prescribed fire and mechanical and chemical control of woody species.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Emerald Valley SHA is managed to provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 0.4 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property provide visitor access on the south end of the property. One natural surface parking area is provided off the north side of 160th Ave. There are no department-managed roads.

Land Cover

Restored grasslands provide the majority of habitat on the property. A small, oak-dominated upland deciduous forest exists in the north-central portion.

Table 0.14 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Emerald Valley State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.



State Ownership: 156 acres

Fee Title: 156 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Table 0.14. Emerald Valley State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 15 | 10 |
| Oak | | |
| Upland Shrub | 7 | 5 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Upland Grass | 131 | 85 |
| Cool Season Grass | 53 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 78 | |
| Developed | <1 | <1 |
| Parking Area | | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



ERIN PRAIRIE STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Erin Prairie State Habitat Area (SHA) features restored grasslands and consists of four non-contiguous parcels located in central St. Croix County approximately two miles east of New Richmond. The property is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.

There are two remnant prairies located on this habitat area. One on the western unit and one on the eastern most unit.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Erin Prairie SHA provides wildlife habitat and opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and other outdoor nature-based recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 0.8 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property or that intersect the property provide public access. One parking area is provided on the southernmost parcel, along the east side of 170th St. No department-managed roads are present.

Land Cover

Restored grasslands are the primary habitat on the four parcels of Erin Prairie State Habitat Area. Nine acres are remnant prairie. Open wetlands and shrub wetland habitat contribute to species diversity, along with an 11-acre central hardwoods stand on the southernmost parcel.

Table 0.15 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Erin Prairie State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.



State Ownership: 150 acres

Fee Title: 150 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Table 0.15. Erin Prairie Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 11 | 8 |
| Central Hardwoods | | |
| Upland Shrub | 18 | 12 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 6 | 4 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 41 | 28 |
| Emergent Wetland | 18 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 23 | |
| Upland Grass | 70 | 48 |
| Cool Season Grass | 9 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 51 | |
| Remnant Prairie | 9 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATION

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



KINNICKINNIC RIVER FISHERY AREA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area is comprised of numerous small shoreline parcels in Pierce County as this river flows southwest and through the City of River Falls. Public fishing and hunting easements to the river provide additional recreation access. The Kinnickinnic River supports one of the highest density naturally reproducing brown trout fisheries in Wisconsin. Brook trout are abundant in the South Fork of the Kinnickinnic River and are also present in the mainstem and many of the smaller tributary streams throughout the fishery area.

Within this fishery area, the river and its tributaries are low gradient and flow through wooded corridors within an agricultural landscape. Habitat restoration since the 1950's is evident throughout the mainstems of the Kinnickinnic, Parker Creek, and South Fork of the Kinnickinnic rivers. The Kinnickinnic River originates north of the fishery area in a series of springs in central St. Croix County and flows south through the City of River Falls into Pierce County. It empties into the St. Croix River within Kinnickinnic State Park, south of the City of Hudson.

The property is managed to protect the trout stream and wildlife habitat including its vital springs, and to provide opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping and compatible outdoor recreational pursuits.

Special Attributes

The Kinnickinnic River itself includes 25 miles of Class 1 trout stream and is listed as an Outstanding Resource Water. The fishery area includes parts of two Class 1 tributaries including Parker Creek and Sumner Creek and a Class 2 tributary, Nye Creek.

State Natural Area: The Kinnickinnic Wet Prairie State Natural Area consists of 45 acres on a 120-acre parcel of this fishery area, next to the Parker Creek tributary. While wet prairie was once common, this area is one of few remaining wet prairie remnants in this ecological landscape.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The property is a popular destination for fishing, hunting, and trapping. Stream and riparian habitat management projects have been conducting as needed for decades within the fishery to improve and maintain the coldwater fish community as well as provide public fishing access. Native grassland areas have been planted/restored since the early 2000's to help manage for wildlife such as pheasants, turkeys and other grassland birds. The property is also used to hike, snowshoe, view wildlife, gather wild edibles, and canoe/kayak in the Kinnickinnic River.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 7 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property or within the property provide numerous public access areas. A half-mile of closed, primitive DNR-managed road is used for management on the property (Map F-1). There are 14 public parking areas provided, surfaced primarily with gravel or grass.



State Ownership 1,389 acres

Fee Title: 1,235 acres

Easement: 154 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Water Access

There are two disabled access fishing locations on the property.

Canoes and kayaks can be carried to the water from parking areas, bridge crossings or road rights-of-way. Nearby public boat access areas also offer water access.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

DNR maintains fencing, vegetation management and maintenance agreements with local landowners and conservation organizations which help protect and maintain the coldwater fish community, and the riparian and upland habitat of the Kinnickinnic River and its tributaries.

Local snowmobile clubs have land use permits with the department for the use and maintenance of two snowmobile trails (gated/closed during summer).

Land Cover

Planted prairies cover the majority of the Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area, along with both open and forested wetlands, and wetland shrubs. Tag alder swamps are prevalent. Uplands are comprised of aspen, mixed hardwood and conifer. The Kinnickinnic River and its tributary streams meander throughout the property.

Kinnickinnic Wet Prairie SNA supports many native prairie plants. Numerous springs and seeps are also present.

Table 0.16 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.16. Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 40 | 3 |
| Central Hardwoods | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 82 | 7 |
| Red Pine | 57 | |
| White Pine | 24 | |
| Forested Wetland | 97 | 8 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 39 | 3 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 229 | 19 |
| Emergent Wetland | 173 | |
| Wet Prairie | 56 | |
| Upland Grass | 692 | 59 |
| Cool Season Grass | 62 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 630 | |
| Developed | 2 | <1 |
| Parking Area | | |



MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Although Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area consists of two land management areas, they are both managed the same and have identical habitat management classifications (Map F-2). In recognition of a 45-acre State Natural Area that exists within one of the property parcels, a separate delineation is provided. While over time this SNA has lost some of its wet prairie characteristics, it is not managed differently than the habitat on the remainder of the property.

- Area 1: Fishery Habitat Management Area (1,349 acres)
- Area 2: Kinnickinnic Wet Prairie SNA Habitat Management Area (45 acres)

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie State Habitat and Fishery Areas (page 31) and the property-specific objectives and prescriptions noted below, to both management areas one and two.

Objectives

- Protect, restore and enhance the coldwater fish community of the Kinnickinnic River and the integrity of its interconnected riparian, fish and wildlife habitats, while providing adequate public access for compatible recreational use.
- Protect and restore the Wet Prairie within the SNA and wherever it occurs throughout the property.

Prescriptions

- Conduct instream and riparian habitat restoration and maintenance projects as needed to preserve, restore and maintain the coldwater fish and native habitat communities.
- In addition to the [Remnant Prairie](#) management prescriptions, interseed local-ecotype prairie grass species missing from these native communities, especially for the Wet Prairie on the SNA.
- Maintain and restore large desirable super canopy trees to provide shade for the coldwater fish community along the classified trout streams.
- Follow DNR guidance in the Beaver Management Plan to control and remove beaver and their dams on coldwater streams.
- Work with neighboring property owners and partner groups to protect, restore and maintain instream and riparian habitats, and to maintain public fishing access.



MANION STATE HABITAT AREA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Manion State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northwest Pierce County, three miles west of River Falls. It supports a small but high-quality oak savanna with open-grown bur oaks, surrounded by restored grasslands. The property was donated to DNR from the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, supported in part by the Kinnickinnic Chapter of Pheasants Forever.



Special Attributes

This site is important as an intact, actively managed example of a globally rare natural community and supports an important population of a state endangered plant. Oak Openings were formerly common in the Western Prairie landscape, but few examples remain.

State Ownership: 158 acres

Fee Title: 158 acres

Easement: 0 acres

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Manion SHA provides wildlife habitat and opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and other outdoor nature-based recreation.

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 0.3 miles of County Highway FF forms the northern boundary of Manion SHA. A DNR parking area on the north end provides access from the county highway. There are no department-managed roads.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The UW-River Falls Student Resource Management Club has been a partner by volunteering time on habitat management projects through the Adopt-a-Wildlife Area program.

Land cover

The property supports a small but high-quality oak savanna surrounded by restored grassland. Large open-grown bur oaks provide shade over native dry prairie plants. The oak savanna and other areas on the property were likely once grazed. Other scattered open areas on the property were historically farmed and have been restored to tallgrass prairie. Small interspersed forests of central hardwoods provide additional diversity and habitat for wildlife on the property.

Table 0.17 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Manion State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.



Table 0.17. Manion State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 42 | 27 |
| Northern Hardwoods | | |
| Oak Opening | 12 | 7 |
| Oak Opening | | |
| Upland Grass | 104 | 66 |
| Cool Season Grass | 21 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 83 | |
| Developed | <1 | <1 |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one habitat management area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



NAGEL STATE HABITAT AREA – WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Nagel State Habitat Area (SHA) features restored prairie habitat in central St. Croix County, seven miles southeast of New Richmond and less than 10 miles from Cylon Wildlife Area. The property is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. There are two restored wetlands on site as well as a well-established stand of shrubs that provide an optimal food source for wildlife. The property was donated to DNR by the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust through collective efforts of private individuals including the Nagel Family, Ducks Unlimited, and the Kinnickinnic, Indianhead and Racine chapters of Pheasants Forever.

Two tributaries of the Kinnickinnic River on the property have small dikes that provide waterfowl habitat impoundments.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The grassland wildlife habitat provides opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and other outdoor nature-based recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

The southern boundary of Nagel SHA runs along approximately 0.6 miles of 140th Ave. One parking area on the north side of 140th Ave provides access to the property. There are no department-managed roads.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The Nagel Family has partnered with DNR through the Adopt-a-Wildlife Area program to help with habitat management and public access.

Land Cover

Restored prairie provides the majority of habitat on Nagel SHA. Along two intermittent streams, there are shrub and emergent wetlands, with small open wetlands formed by two dikes. A seven-acre stand of planted red pine in the northeast corner will be converted to native forested species or grassland, once the stand reaches maturity and is harvested.

Table 0.18 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Nagel State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to have significant changes.



State Ownership: 204 acres

Fee Title: 204 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Table 0.18. Nagel State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 13 | 6 |
| Central Hardwoods | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 7 | 3 |
| Red Pine | | |
| Upland Shrub | 7 | 4 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 27 | 13 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 4 | 2 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 149 | 72 |
| Cool Season Grass | 22 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 127 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



OAK RIDGE STATE HABITAT AREA-WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Oak Ridge State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northern St. Croix County three miles east of the village of Star Prairie. The property includes wetlands important to waterfowl production and much of the large, shallow Oak Ridge Lake. It consists of two square-shaped parcels approximately ½-mile apart that surround the lake itself. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Waterfowl Production Area of over 1100 acres entirely surrounds the DNR property.



Special Attributes

The property is managed collaboratively with USFWS as a Waterfowl Production Area and as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. Together, both the DNR property and the surrounding USFWS lands provide excellent habitat for grassland wildlife and waterfowl.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Oak Ridge SHA is open to trapping and hunting deer during open seasons and closed seasonally to hunting to protect waterfowl, per s. NR 11.042 Wis. Admin. Code. Recreational opportunities also exist for fishing, trapping and other nature-based activities. Information is available from USFWS St. Croix Wetland Management District regarding recreational opportunities, regulations and access for the WPA federal portion of the wetland.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 1.5 miles of adjoining town roads provide property access along the southern and eastern boundary. There is a closed, primitive DNR-managed road used for management purposes on the eastern portion of the property (Map E-1).

Water Access

Access to Oak Ridge Lake is limited to carry-in access only. Care should be taken to help protect this waterfowl resting area during the closed season.

Land Cover

Open wetland/marsh and upland restored prairie provide the majority of habitat. Small areas of upland deciduous forest and upland shrub habitat adjoin the wetlands.

Table 0.19 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Oak Ridge State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

State Ownership: 200 acres

Fee Title: 200 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

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Table 0.19. Oak Ridge State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 14 | 7 |
| Aspen | 4 | |
| Oak | 10 | |
| Oak Opening | 9 | 5 |
| Oak Opening | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 95 | 48 |
| Emergent Wetland | 36 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 58 | |
| Upland Grass | 77 | 40 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and property-specific objectives and prescriptions below.

Objectives

- Maintain, restore, and enhance the ecological functions of the Western Prairie grassland and wetlands.
- Provide contiguous landscape habitat for waterfowl production in collaboration with USFWS.
- Maintain the 1-acre waterfowl banding site.

Prescriptions

- Post and maintain signage that establishes this property as a waterfowl closed area, per s. NR 11.042, Wis. Admin. Code.



ODEN STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Oden State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northeastern St. Croix County nine miles northeast of Baldwin and less than a mile west of Cylon Wildlife Area. The property consists almost entirely of restored grasslands and wetlands, providing excellent habitat for grassland wildlife. A small segment of the Willow River meanders across the south end of the property. Oden SHA is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.



State Ownership: 251 acres

Fee Title: 251 acres

Easement: 0.15 acres

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Oden SHA provides opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 1 mile of township roads and another 0.3 mile of easement road provides public access to Oden SHA. There is a closed, primitive DNR-managed road used for habitat management on the eastern portion of the property. There is one natural surface parking area is provided on the west boundary of the property, off from 200th St.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

Hay harvest agreements with local landowners are being used to help maintain grasslands on this property.

Land Cover

A mix of upland grassland with open and shrub wetland habitats cover Oden State Habitat Area. Wetlands are found in the Willow River floodplain in the southern and northeastern portions of the property and in the central part of the property, where a series of dikes form a small impoundment used by waterfowl.

Table 0.20 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Oden State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Maps

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Table 0.20. Oden State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 4 | 2 |
| Aspen | | |
| Oak Opening | 2 | 1 |
| Oak Opening | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 40 | 16 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 57 | 23 |
| Emergent Wetland | 18 | |
| Sedge Meadow | 39 | |
| Upland Grass | 144 | 58 |
| Cool Season Grass | 24 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 120 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and property-specific objectives and prescriptions below.

Objectives

- Maintain, restore, and enhance the ecological function of the Western Prairie grassland and wetlands.

Prescriptions

- Monitor and control invasive species per department protocol in Common Elements, which may include the use of herbicides.
- Maintain existing dikes and water control structures. However, some structures may be removed, and others added, wherever necessary after evaluation and consultation following department guidelines for water control structures.



PARKER CREEK STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Parker Creek State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in south-central Polk County about three miles southwest of Amery. Parker Creek itself bisects the property roughly into east and west portions. The western portion features a mix of high-quality restored prairie grassland habitat and restored wetlands. The eastern portion of the property features Parker Creek, a small Class III trout stream within a setting of wetlands and forested areas.

Parker Creek SHA is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. Historically, the area was used for agriculture, though not heavily for row crops. Prior to the early 1950's, the property was impounded by a dam on the Apple River at Little Falls.

Special Attributes

Parker Creek SHA is part of the Star Prairie Grassland Bird Conservation Area. It also is within the Northwest Pothole Priority Area for the [North American Waterfowl Management Plan](#). USFWS manages two waterfowl production areas that border both the west and east sides of Parker Creek. Additionally, it includes both the northern border of the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape and the southern border of the Forest Transition Ecological Landscape.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Parker Creek SHA provides opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping, hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, wildlife viewing, and gathering of wild edibles.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 2.4 miles of public, non-DNR roads run adjacent to and bisect the property, providing numerous public access areas. A north-south township road (120th St.) cuts through the property west of Parker Creek. There are two parking areas, one on each half of the property. The eastern portion of the property features a parking area along 120th St. just east of Parker Creek. Approximately 0.38 miles of closed, primitive DNR road on the property is used for management (Map G).

Water Access

Parker Creek can be accessed from a parking lot off of 35th Street on the north end of the property, and from where the creek crosses 30th Street on the southern end of the property.

Land Cover

Open grassland consisting mostly of restored prairie, natural and restored wetlands and scattered forests of northern hardwoods, aspen, oak and boxelder cover the property. Parker Creek is flanked by a northern sedge



State Ownership: 631 acres

Fee Title: 631 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

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meadow with tag alder and aspen. The uplands are managed towards complete grassland restoration, while the needs of the fishery resource are also supported.

Table 0.21 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Parker Creek State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.21. Parker Creek State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 83 | 14 |
| Aspen | 35 | |
| Miscellaneous Deciduous | 18 | |
| Northern Hardwoods | 29 | |
| Oak | 2 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 18 | 3 |
| Red Pine | 16 | |
| White Pine | 2 | |
| Shrub Wetland | 53 | 9 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 60 | 10 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 374 | 64 |
| Cool Season Grass | 20 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 353 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and the property-specific **objectives** and prescriptions below.

Objectives

- Protect the intact wetlands and restore altered wetlands.
- Maintain, restore and enhance the coldwater fish community in Parker Creek.
- Maintain aspen and alder in a diversity of age classes along Parker Creek.



Prescriptions

- Conduct instream and riparian habitat restoration and maintenance projects as needed to preserve, restore and maintain the coldwater fish community.
- Regenerate aspen and alder through a variety of management techniques along Parker Creek to provide a diversity of age classes for young forest species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock.



RAY MORRISON MEMORIAL STATE HABITAT AREA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Ray Morrison Memorial State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in north-central Pierce County, nestled around the Trimbelle River, a popular trout stream that intersects the property flowing south towards the Mississippi River. The property includes restored grassland, floodplain forest and marsh in a regional setting of rolling topography of wetland, grassland and forest. The south fork of the Kinnickinnic River is less than a mile north. The property was donated to DNR as two separate parcels, one donated from Kinnickinnic Chapter of Pheasants Forever and one from Ducks Unlimited.



State Ownership: 65 acres

Fee Title: 65 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Special Attributes

The property adjoins land owned by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and West Wisconsin Land Trust, creating the 338-acre Trimbelle River Conservation Area.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The property provides opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 0.8 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to or within the property provide access. County Road W runs along the eastern border of the property. There are no department-managed roads or parking areas. Parking is along nearby public road rights-of-way.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The Kinnickinnic Chapter of Pheasants Forever has an Adopt-a-Wildlife Area agreement to help provide funds for management of grasslands and pheasant habitat on this property.

Local snowmobile clubs have land use permits with the department for the use and maintenance of snowmobile trails (gated/closed during summer).

Land Cover

Restored grasslands, floodplain forest and marsh habitat characterize this property. Land cover is a mix of open and forested wetland habitat in the Trimbelle River floodplain. The more upland portions of the property feature grassland habitat consisting of cool season grasses and planted prairie/warm season grasses.

Table 0.22 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Ray Morrison Memorial State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Maps

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Table 0.22. Ray Morrison Memorial State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Forested Wetland | 22 | 38 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 27 | 45 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 10 | 17 |
| Cool Season Grass | 3 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 8 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



RUSH RIVER STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Rush River State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in southern St. Croix County approximately four miles southwest of Baldwin. Its public ownership protects 1.2 miles of Rush River shoreline where this river bisects the property. Rush River SHA is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.



PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The property provides opportunities for public hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor activities.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

An easement at the northwest corner of the property off 190th St. provides walk-in access for public use. No department-managed roads or parking areas exist on the property.

Water Access

Rush River is accessible by foot travel only, along the easement on the north side of the property.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

There is a management access agreement for DNR only along the north edge of the private residence off of 190th St.

Land Cover

Rush River SHA consists primarily of restored prairie on the uplands and cool season grasses along the floodplain of the Rush River. There are also some areas with natural growing and planted shrubs for wildlife.

Table 0.23 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Rush River State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

State Ownership: 122 acres

Fee Title: 121 acres

Easement: 0.5 acres

Maps

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[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Table 0.23. Rush River State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Shrub | 8 | 7 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | <1 | <1 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 5 | 4 |
| Minor Stream | | |
| Upland Grass | 109 | 89 |
| Cool Season Grass | 45 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 64 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



SPRING MEADOW STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Spring Meadow State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in south-central Polk County approximately four miles northeast of Star Prairie. The property is adjacent to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Area. Spring Meadow SHA is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.



Special Attributes

The property is managed collaboratively with USFWS as a Waterfowl Production Area and as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area. Together, both the DNR property and the surrounding USFWS lands provide excellent habitat for grassland wildlife and waterfowl.

State Ownership: 154 acres

Fee Title: 154 acres

Easement: 0 acres

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 0.4 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to the property provide access. There are no department-managed roads or parking areas.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

Managed grazing to maintain grasslands on the southern portion of the property may continue in partnership with USFWS.

Land Cover

A large open wetland/marsh is found on the southern edge of the property. Restored native prairie is found surrounding this wetland. Some oak woodland is also present on the southern portion of the property. The northern portion of the property contains cool season grass, one restored wetland and one natural wetland.

Table 0.24 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Spring Meadow State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Table 0.24. Spring Meadow State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 18 | 11 |
| Oak | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 81 | 50 |
| Emergent Wetland | 40 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 41 | |
| Upland Grass | 62 | 39 |
| Cool Season Grass | 41 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 21 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



TEN MILE CREEK STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Ten Mile Creek State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northern St. Croix County two miles south of New Richmond. The property is intermixed within an 804-acre grassland/wetland complex of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Areas and state habitat areas. It is managed as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project.



Special Attributes

The property is managed collaboratively with USFWS as a Waterfowl Production Area and as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area. Together, both the DNR property and the surrounding USFWS lands provide excellent habitat for grassland wildlife and waterfowl.

State Ownership: 222 acres

Fee Title: 222 acres

Easement: 0 acres

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The property provides opportunities for public hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 1 mile of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to or crossing the property provide public access. A natural surface parking area on the east side of 120th St. is provided. There are no department-managed roads.

Land Cover

Habitat consists primarily of high-quality grassland and wetlands in the lowland areas surrounding Ten Mile Creek. There are also small areas of oak forest on the upland portions of the property.

Table 0.25 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Ten Mile Creek SHA. Land cover is not anticipated to change.



Table 0.25. Ten Mile Creek State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 34 | 16 |
| Aspen | 3 | |
| Oak | 32 | |
| Upland Shrub | 5 | 2 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 7 | 3 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 41 | 19 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Upland Grass | 127 | 59 |
| Cool Season Grass | 21 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 106 | |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31).



WILLOW RIVER STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Willow River State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in western St. Croix County five miles east of Hudson, just east of Willow River State Park. The property lies within the heart of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. It includes extensive restored prairie, with shallow pothole lakes, marsh, wetlands, including several restored wetlands, and oak openings.



Special Attributes

The property is part of an area specifically identified in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan as a Conservation Opportunity Area of statewide significance for pothole lakes, grasslands and Oak Opening. It is one of the highest priority areas for grassland bird management in the state (Sample and Mossman, 1997).

The property is managed collaboratively with USFWS as a Waterfowl Production Area and as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area. It is adjacent to the federal 283-acre Three Lakes Waterfowl Production Area. Together, both the DNR property and the surrounding USFWS lands provide excellent habitat for both grassland and aquatic wildlife.

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Willow River SHA provides opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, and gathering of wild edibles. The property is particularly noted for its pheasant, deer, and waterfowl hunting. A seasonal Class 2 dog training area is provided on a portion of the property (Map H). A nearby hunting club and shooting range borders the property to the northwest on private land.

Access

Roads and Parking Areas

Approximately 2.3 miles of public, non-DNR roads provide numerous areas of public access. There is less than one-tenth mile of open and 0.8 miles of closed primitive DNR-managed roads on the property (Map H). Three parking areas surfaced primarily with gravel or grass are provided.

Water Access

Canoes and kayaks can be carried from parking areas or road rights-of-way to the water.

Administrative

Land Use and Partner Agreements

Local snowmobile clubs have land use permits with the department for the use and maintenance of snowmobile trails (gated/closed during summer).

State Ownership: 833 acres

Fee Title: 833 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)



Land Cover

The property provides a rolling matrix of restored prairie, oak savanna, and several natural and restored shallow wetlands, pothole lakes, and marsh. The pothole lakes are small hard-water seepage lakes with submerged and emergent aquatic vegetation, including wild rice. This area as a whole provides ideal waterfowl breeding habitat.

Hennessey Springs in the southeast portion recharges the wetlands. Three waterfowl habitat impoundments, each controlled by dikes, are in the southwest portion of the property along what was once a tributary to the Willow River. A fourth impoundment is located on the south-central portion. Small red and white pine plantations are in the process of being gradually thinned, towards the goal of eventual conversion/restoration to native prairie.

A bird dog Class 2 seasonal training area (18 acres) is provided on the property.

Table 0.26 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Willow River State Habitat Area. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.26. Willow River State Habitat Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 47 | 5 |
| Aspen | 5 | |
| Oak | 42 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 63 | 7 |
| Red Pine | 34 | |
| White Pine | 27 | |
| White Spruce | 2 | |
| Upland Shrub | 13 | 2 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Oak Opening | 22 | 3 |
| Oak Opening | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 109 | 13 |
| Emergent Wetland | 48 | |
| Shallow Lake/Deep Marsh | 61 | |
| Open Water | 70 | 8 |
| Upland Grass | 516 | 60 |
| Cool Season Grass | 34 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 482 | |
| Developed | 2 | <1 |

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.



Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and the property-specific objective and prescription below.

Objective

- Maintain the 18-acre seasonal Class 2 dog training area (s. NR 17.05(2) Wis. Admin. Code).

Prescription

- Over time, convert existing pine plantations to native prairie.



STAR PRAIRIE SEED FARM STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Star Prairie Seed Farm State Habitat Area (SHA) is located in northern St. Croix County, six miles northeast of New Richmond. This unique property is used to grow and harvest native prairie plant species for restoration efforts in the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA), a landscape-scale wetland and grassland restoration project. It includes up to 38 different plots of native grass and forb species including some state threatened and endangered species. The seed is harvested and processed in the building on site.

The Seed Farm lies within a large complex of restored grasslands and wetlands which are managed by the DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, providing excellent grassland habitat for upland game.



State Ownership: 58 acres

Fee Title: 58 acres

Easement: 0 acres

Special Attributes

The seed that is produced here is used by DNR and USFWS for restoration of native grasslands within the WPHRA. The original seed used to establish the plots on this seed farm was harvested from remnant prairies found throughout the WPHRA. Using this local genotype seed source for prairie restoration efforts within the WPHRA assures the highest quality restoration possible. The property is managed collaboratively with USFWS with some assistance from volunteers and a partnership with The Prairie Enthusiasts.

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The entire property is managed as one Habitat Management Area.

Property Management

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for all Western Prairie state habitat areas (page 31) and the property-specific objective below.

Objective

- Manage this property through a partnership with USFWS to grow and harvest native prairie plant species used for restoration efforts in the WPHRA.

OTHER PROPERTIES MANAGED AS STATE HABITAT AREAS

Eight additional state habitat area properties (see page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) are noted below in Table 0.27. Links to the Property Planning Viewer for the properties in this section are available in the Appendix Table A.1.

Table 0.27 Other DNR Properties Managed as State Habitat Areas

| Property | GIS Acres | County | Land Management Classification |
|--|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Baldwin State Habitat Area - WPHRA | 40 | St. Croix | Habitat Management Area |
| Black Brook State Habitat Area - WPHRA | 207 | Polk | Habitat Management Area |
| Clear Lake State Habitat Area | 5 | Polk | Habitat Management Area |
| Lundy Pond State Habitat Area - WPHRA | 36 | St. Croix | Habitat Management Area |
| New Richmond State Habitat Area - WPHRA | 77 | St. Croix | Habitat Management Area |
| Osceola Creek State Habitat Area | 6 | Polk | Habitat Management Area |
| Simon Prairie State Habitat Area - WPHRA | 7 | St. Croix | Habitat Management Area |
| Snake Creek Spring State Habitat Area | 197 | Polk | Habitat Management Area |
| Wagon Landing Statewide Spring Pond | 69 | Polk | Habitat Management Area |

Special Attributes

Although relatively small, these properties collectively contribute to conservation of the native prairie and wetland ecosystem important to the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Apply Management Objectives and Prescriptions for All Western Prairie Habitat Areas (page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) to all properties in Table 0.27. Apply Common Elements for General Property Administration and Habitats and their Management. Determine land cover and reference Table 2.2 to identify applicable Common Elements for habitat types located on each property.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROPERTIES OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

DNR owns properties in the Western Prairie that help the department carry out its mission but are primarily operational and administrative in their function. This property is listed in Table 0.28. This regional master plan does not describe specific operations or development of these properties. Operational and administrative properties are managed under other state administrative processes.

Table 0.28. Western Prairie Administrative Properties

| Property | Deed Acres | Map |
|------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Osceola Hatchery | 348 | DNR & Other Lands |

Land Management Classifications

The property in Table 0.28 includes a portion designated as Special Management Area. Further details are included in the following section entitled, Osceola Hatchery.



OSCEOLA HATCHERY

Osceola Hatchery is one of 17 department fish hatchery and rearing stations that raise millions of fish every year for stocking in lakes and rivers where there is no or little natural reproduction. Hundreds of waters statewide get this type of help to provide more fishing opportunities for anglers.



PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Osceola Hatchery is located in Polk County six miles south of St. Croix Falls, just east of the St. Croix River. This hatchery is one of 17 properties in Wisconsin that support angler recreation. Since 1935, the department has used Osceola Hatchery to raise feral strain brook trout and domestic rainbow trout for distribution throughout Wisconsin. A series of external raceways are used to rear fish to adult size and an internal facility is used to incubate eggs and rear hatchlings to fingerling stages.

State Ownership: 348 acres
Fee Title: 348 acres
Easement: 0 acres

Special Attributes

State Natural Area: Osceola Bedrock Glades State Natural Area, partially embedded within the northwest part of the property, was designated in 2002. It is co-owned by DNR and the National Park Service.

St. Croix River: The St. Croix River and adjoining lands are a designated National Scenic Riverway by the National Park Service.

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classification](#)

Land Cover

The property consists mostly of upland hardwoods, wetlands, streams and hatchery infrastructure.

Table 0.29 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of WisFIRS cover types (see Land Cover Map).

Table 0.29 Osceola Hatchery Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 152 | 45 |
| Aspen | 4 | |
| Central Hardwoods | 20 | |
| Northern Hardwoods | 27 | |
| Oak | 97 | |
| Oak Woodland | 23 | 7 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 32 | 9 |
| White Pine | 9 | |
| Red Pine | 17 | |
| White Spruce | 7 | |



| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Forested Wetland | 33 | 10 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 21 | |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 12 | |
| Shrub Wetland | 24 | 7 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 44 | 13 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 11 | 3 |
| Minor Stream | 5 | |
| Open Water | 6 | |
| Upland Grass | 12 | 4 |
| Cool Season Grass | | |
| Developed | 9 | 3 |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Osceola Bedrock Glades State Natural Area is open to the public for hiking, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and cross-country skiing. Other designated areas of the Osceola Hatchery are open to the public for hiking and hunting; however, the area that surrounds the administrative facilities is closed to public hunting, trapping, and fishing. Public tours of the hatchery are available by prior reservation.

Access

Roads and Parking

Approximately 2 miles of public, non-DNR roads adjacent to or within the property provide numerous public access points to the property. There are approximately 0.14 miles of open moderately-developed roads and 1.8 miles of closed lightly and moderately-developed roads that are DNR-managed on the property (Map I-1). One parking area (paved) is located near the hatchery facilities.

Osceola Bedrock Glades SNA has no DNR road access or parking area; however, there are two gravel-surface parking areas located on the National Park Service portion of the SNA, with an undesignated footpath to DNR land.

MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Osceola Hatchery is divided into three land management areas with distinct classifications (Map I-2).

- Area 1: Osceola Bedrock Glades State Natural Area, Native Community Management Area
- Area 2: Osceola Hatchery Habitat, Habitat Management Area
- Area 3: Osceola Hatchery Facilities, Special Management Area



AREA 1: OSCEOLA BEDROCK GLADES STATE NATURAL AREA

Classification: Native Community Management Area

Size: 23 acres

This management area consists of the DNR-managed portion of Osceola Glades State Natural Area (SNA). Osceola Bedrock Glades SNA is a 32-acre area situated primarily within the northwest part of the Osceola Hatchery, located in Polk County. The SNA is co-owned by DNR and the National Park Service. The natural communities and uncommon species habitat found within Osceola Bedrock Glades State Natural Area warrant continued recognition as a State Natural Area.

This SNA includes one of only four acid bedrock glades in Wisconsin. Bedrock glades are sparsely vegetated communities that develop on exposed relatively flat bedrock. Such communities are rare because exposure of bedrock is itself a rare phenomenon in the state.

The site is located within the St. Croix River Important Bird Area, which contains habitat for floodplain forest birds including bald eagle, red-shouldered hawk, prothonotary warbler, Louisiana waterthrush and herons. The bluffs and marshes provide nesting habitat for numerous swallow species, bitterns, rails, and heron rookeries.

Table 0.30 shows the habitat classification for DNR land within Osceola Bedrock Glades SNA. The distinctive glade flora is exceptionally rich in ferns, mosses, and fungi. Vegetation is often dominated by low-growing herbs or if trees are present, they are thin, gnarly, and stunted. Patches of woodland with a canopy of oaks are present in the surrounding area. Below the glades and outside the current SNA lies a cold, fast-flowing stream fed by hardwater springs. On the opposite side of the stream, southwest of the existing SNA glades and located on steep north- and east-facing slope lies a small but good-quality Southern Mesic forest dominated by sugar maple and basswood.

Forest Certification

For the purposes of forest certification, Osceola Bedrock Glades SNA is considered high conservation value.

Table 0.30. Osceola Bedrock Glades State Natural Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover | Representative WisFIRS Cover Types |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Oak Woodland | 23 | 100 | Oak Woodland |

Area Management

Apply General Property Management Practices Common Elements. Guidance is on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this plan.

Objectives

- Protect the Bedrock Glade and Oak Woodland and manage the property as a reserve and ecological reference area.

Prescriptions

- In general, allow natural processes to determine the ecological characteristics of the management area. Habitat management may include some thinning of canopy, understory manipulation and shrub control via brushing. Prescribed fire may be used to mimic natural disturbance patterns.
- Monitor and control invasive species per department protocol in Common Elements, which may include the use of herbicides.



AREA 2: OSCEOLA HATCHERY HABITAT

Classification: Habitat Management Area

Size: 166 acres

This management area includes all portions of the property outside of the SNA and not within the fish hatchery facilities administrative area. The north unit is bisected by an unnamed creek that joins the backwaters of the St. Croix River. It is comprised of upland forest, mainly medium to large diameter oak and northern hardwood (maple, ash, basswood) species. The understory is either open due to heavy deer browse or invasive non-palatable shrub, with many springs along the creek. The southern unit is mainly swamp hardwood or central hardwood species like elm, cherry, red maple, or basswood with a heavy understory of invasive shrubs, along with open marsh along the creek. This unit is bisected by State Highway 35. Timber management is focused on maintaining the health of the oak, northern hardwoods and pine habitat.

Table 0.31 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 2. Land cover is not anticipated to significantly change.

Table 0.31. Osceola Hatchery Habitat Management Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 62 | 39 |
| Aspen | 2 | |
| Central Hardwoods | 20 | |
| Northern Hardwoods | 27 | |
| Oak | 13 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 9 | 6 |
| Red Pine | 4 | |
| White Pine | 5 | |
| Forested Wetland | 33 | 21 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 21 | |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 12 | |
| Shrub Wetland | 21 | 13 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 19 | 12 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 10 | 6 |
| Minor Stream | 4 | |
| Open Water | 6 | |
| Upland Grass | 6 | 4 |
| Cool Season Grass | | |

Area Management

Objectives

- Provide opportunities primarily for hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife observation.
- Protect and enhance stream ecology and the integrity of the interconnected fish and wildlife habitats that consist of natural communities with diverse composition.
- Provide a forested stream corridor of mixed tree species composition, with old-forest characteristics such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse, woody debris.
- Provide high-quality, naturally occurring, mixed-age deciduous and coniferous forest habitat at a variety of age classes to support wildlife species, with an emphasis on aspen, oak, and native conifers.
- Provide young forest habitat by managing aspen, oak, and alder on the property to benefit associated wildlife species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Prescriptions

- Maintain wetlands as habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species and to promote opportunities for hunters, trappers and wildlife viewing.
- Conduct timber sales and other management techniques that mimic natural disturbances to enhance aspen, oak, alder, other hardwood stands and native conifers, to create a diversity of age classes. Reserve some mature oaks and pines as seed trees and allow some trees to mature and die within the forests to provide standing snags and coarse woody debris.
- Follow the [General Wildlife Habitat Management](#) and [General Forest Management](#) Common Elements.

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Reference Table 0.5 and use Table 2.2 to determine applicable Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements can be found on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this regional plan.



AREA 3: OSCEOLA HATCHERY FACILITIES

Classification: Special Management Area

Size: 161 acres

The Osceola fish hatchery facilities are the focal point of this management area, which includes hatchery grounds, buildings and lands that serve a role in fish propagation, including the residence of the hatchery manager. (Note: this area is closed to public hunting, trapping and fishing.) Land cover of this area is comprised mainly of large, old bur and white oak overtopping young cherry, red maple, and oak seedlings and saplings. Oak wilt is heavy in this area. There are two small areas of older planted red pine and spruce. One is along County Highway S and has been thinned twice. The other is adjacent to the hatchery driveway and buildings and has been thinned once. Invasive shrubs dominate the understory close to the buildings.

Table 0.32 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 3. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.32 Osceola Hatchery Facilities Special Management Area Land Cover

| Habitat Classification | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 89 | 57 |
| Aspen | 2 | |
| Central Hardwoods | <1 | |
| Miscellaneous Hardwoods | 3.5 | |
| Oak | 83 | |
| Scrub Oak | <1 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 23 | 15 |
| Red Pine | 12 | |
| White Pine | 4 | |
| White Spruce | 7 | |
| Forested Wetland | <1 | <1 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 3 | 2 |
| Wetland Shrub - Alder | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 24 | 15 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 1 | <1 |
| Minor Stream | | |
| Upland Grass | 6 | 4 |
| Cool Season Grass | | |
| Developed | 9 | 6 |

Area Management

Apply General Property Management Practices Common Elements. Guidance is on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this plan.

Objectives

- Provide and maintain the grounds and facilities for the administration and maintenance support of the fish hatchery according to relevant statutes, administrative policies and directives. As such, this area is closed to public hunting, trapping and fishing.
- Provide high-quality, naturally occurring, mixed-age deciduous and coniferous forest habitat at a variety of age classes to support wildlife species, with an emphasis on aspen, oak, and native conifers.
- Provide young forest habitat by managing aspen, oak, and alder on the property to benefit associated wildlife species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Prescriptions

- Conduct timber sales and other management techniques that mimic natural disturbances to enhance aspen, oak, alder, other hardwood stands and native conifers, to create a diversity of age classes. Reserve some mature oaks and pines as seed trees and allow some trees to mature and die within the forests to provide standing snags and coarse woody debris.
- Follow the [General Wildlife Habitat Management](#), [General Forest Management](#) and [Conifer Plantations](#) Common Elements.



STATE PARKS OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

KINNICKINNIC STATE PARK

This property includes one of the finest examples of river delta in Wisconsin, where the Kinnickinnic River flows into the St. Croix River, with outstanding water quality and a deep river valley. The park includes an abundance of recreational opportunities, including swimming, kayaking, hiking, hunting, and trapping.



PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Kinnickinnic State Park is in Pierce County, seven miles from the City of River Falls and approximately 30 miles east of the Twin Cities.

The park features the last two and a half miles of the Kinnickinnic River, including its confluence with the St. Croix River. A large sand delta is found at the junction of the rivers. The delta constricts the St. Croix River to about one-quarter of its normal width. This constriction causes a substantial increase in the current and keeps this area free from ice. Bald eagles fish in this open water during winter.

The Kinnickinnic River is a well-known coldwater trout stream that supports an abundant population of brown trout. The Kinnickinnic River valley supports a rich variety of birds. Up to 90 species may be observed daily during spring migration and more than 140 species, about half of all Wisconsin nesting bird species, have been identified nesting in the river valley.

Outstanding Resource Waters: The Kinnickinnic River is designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW). ORWs are surface waters which have the state's highest protection standards. They provide outstanding recreational opportunities, support valuable fisheries and wildlife habitat, and have good water quality with no allowable industrial or municipal discharges.

State Natural Area (SNA): Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta SNA contains an undisturbed river gorge with a diversity of plant communities and features one of the finest examples of river delta in Wisconsin.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Kinnickinnic River flows freely through a valley that is bordered by dry-mesic to mesic hardwood forests and frequent exposures of dolomite and sandstone bedrock. In some locations, the bedrock outcrops form a deep, steep-sided gorge flanked by extensive series of cliffs. On the dry exposures the cliffs support species adapted to dry site conditions and sparse vegetation; on shaded or moist sites, relicts of northern communities, including stands of coniferous trees and shrubs, may persist. In some areas along the lower river, the cliffs are moist due to groundwater seepage through fractures or pores in the bedrock and have high potential to support rare plants and animals. Small waterfalls are present in some of the short box canyons that are tributary to the Kinnickinnic River. At scattered locations on the slopes and bluffs above the Kinnickinnic River, small prairie and savanna remnants occur. Rare plant

State Ownership: 1,278 acres

Fee Title: 1,278 acres
Easement: 0 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

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[Land Management Classifications](#)



populations have been documented at several of these prairie and savanna sites, some of which are most characteristic of grasslands in the northern Great Plains and reach their easternmost range in Wisconsin's Western Prairie Ecological Landscape.

Land Cover

Table 2.33 lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Kinnickinnic State Park.

Apart from minor changes to oak stands and units of upland grass, the other land cover types are not anticipated to change and will be maintained as the current type. Many of the oak stands are anticipated, through natural succession, to change in composition to more mesic, deciduous tree species. Several small, difficult to maintain upland grass units will be planted or allowed through succession to become a woodland habitat.

Table 0.33 Kinnickinnic State Park Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover | Anticipated % Cover Change |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 534 | 42 | |
| Aspen | 31 | 2 | |
| Central Hardwoods | 254 | 20 | +2% |
| Oak | 240 | 19 | -2% |
| Walnut | 10 | 1 | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 139 | 11 | |
| Miscellaneous Coniferous | 3 | <1 | |
| White Pine | 135 | 11 | |
| Forested Wetland | 119 | 9 | |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | | |
| Open Water | 30 | 2 | |
| Upland Grass | 451 | 35 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | | |
| Developed | 10 | 1 | |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

During summer months, the sand delta is crowded with watercraft, many of which moor overnight. Popular activities include swimming, hiking, picnicking, water skiing, sunbathing, kayaking, fishing and hunting/trapping. As many as 300 kayakers each weekend have been reported paddling on the Kinnickinnic River. In winter cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and sledding are popular. The proximity to the Twin Cities makes the park popular with non-resident visitors who arrive by both boat and automobile.

Access

Roads and Parking



Kinnickinnic State Park has roughly two miles of open DNR roads (Table 2.34; Map J-1). Access points to the park exist along CTH F, 770th Avenue, and 820th Avenue. The park has 9 parking lots, mixed between paved and unpaved.

Table 0.34 Kinnickinnic State Park Miles of Road Access

| Road Classification | Open to Public | Open Seasonally to Public | Closed to Public (DNR Staff Service Road) |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---|
| Primitive Road | 0 | 0 | 0.1 |
| Lightly-Developed Road | 0 | 0 | 0.2 |
| Moderately-Developed Road | 2.1 | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Non-DNR public road access | 3.2 | | |

Water Access

Many visitors access the park by water. A canoe/ kayak access point for the Kinnickinnic River is located upstream in the City of River Falls. The primary takeout on the river is in Kinnickinnic State Park at the CTH F parking area. There is extensive beach access on the St. Croix River where visitors can swim, fish and boats can moor.

Public Use

Camping

There are no traditional upland campsites in the park.

Boats moor during the day on the sand delta beach. This is a large draw for the region with as many as 300 boats mooring per day in the summer. Overnight users must sleep on their boat; there is no tent camping on the beach.

Day Use Areas

Four day use areas are provided at Kinnickinnic State Park. The picnic areas allow visitors to relax while viewing the Kinnickinnic and St. Croix Rivers. There is one rustic playground in Kinnickinnic State Park; this unique playground has most of its equipment made from sticks and logs. The swimming beach area is a major summer draw and is popular with swimmers, sunbathers and picnickers. The sledding hill is located in the center of the park near the Valley Picnic Area and is a popular winter location for families in the area.

Trails

Approximately 9.2 miles of hiking trails wind through hills, woodlands and prairies, varying in level of difficulty. For example, the Orange Trail is a wooded trail that follows the steep bluff edge atop the Kinnickinnic River valley, and the Yellow Trail is a loop along the forest and prairie edge. The Pink, Brown and Blue trails on the northeast side of the park are highly used and open to hiking and snowshoeing. The trails on the northwest side of the park (Yellow, Green, Purple, and Orange) are signed and groomed exclusively for classic cross-country skiing.

One ADA accessible trail follows an unnamed paved path in the St. Croix picnic area, which is used to access the Delta Overlook.

Table 0.35 Kinnickinnic State Park Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|--------|------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Pink | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 1.6 | Lightly Developed |
| Yellow | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.3 | Lightly Developed |
| Green | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.1 | Lightly Developed |
| Purple | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.0 | Lightly Developed |
| Brown | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.1 | Lightly Developed |
| Orange | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 0.5 | Lightly Developed |
| Blue | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.7 | Lightly Developed |
| Red | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 2.9 | Lightly Developed |
| Black | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.1 | Fully Developed |

Other Recreation Facilities

Table 0.36 Other Kinnickinnic State Park Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Overlook (ADA Compliant) | Developed scenic overlook. Viewing area for visitors to observe the Kinnickinnic and St. Croix rivers. |
| Overlook | Scenic overlook with a bench and informational kiosk. Viewing area for visitors to observe the Kinnickinnic River. |

Administrative

Support Facilities

Table 0.37 Kinnickinnic State Park Support Facilities

| Support Facility | Description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Park Entrance Visitor Station | The Park Entrance Visitor Station serves as a park office and visitor contact station. It is seen once entering the park off 820 th Ave. |



| | |
|---|--|
| Park Maintenance Shop and Storage Building | The park maintenance shop and storage buildings are located approximately ¼ mile down the State Park Road from the park’s main entrance. |
|---|--|

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. have a formal Friends Group agreement and Concessions agreement with the department to assist in supporting park operations.



MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Kinnickinnic State Park is composed of six land management areas with distinct NR 44 land management classifications (Map J-2).

- Area 1: Day Use and Camping Area
- Area 2: Southern Recreation Area
- Area 3: River Delta Area
- Area 4: Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta SNA Area
- Area 5: River Bluffs Corridor Area
- Area 6: St. Croix River Bluff Area

Property-Wide Management

Apply property-wide management objectives and prescriptions to all areas within Kinnickinnic State Park.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain, protect and enhance the park's natural and scenic settings and the natural-appearing character of the park, emphasize managing for aesthetics.
- Largely maintain the existing diversity of forested and non-forested habitat types (cover types) for scenic diversity and wildlife benefits. Provide forested areas with mixed tree species composition and old-forest characteristics, such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris.
- Sustain the coldwater fishery of the Kinnickinnic River.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Where feasible, promote the growth and retention of larger trees, and allow select legacy trees, primarily oak and pine, to mature and die within the forest. Reduce the ash component to lessen impacts of future emerald ash borer infestation.
- Passively manage natural-origin white pine. This stand is found on steeper slopes within the park. Non-commercial silvicultural treatments may be considered to maintain the health and vigor of this stand. Thin pine plantations to produce a more natural appearance and larger trees. Allow the stand to naturally convert to a native forest type or, if more appropriate, convert to grassland.
- To the degree feasible and practicable, design and conduct vegetation and other management activities to maintain and enhance an attractive, natural appearing landscape. Near trails and other public use areas, use visual quality management techniques to minimize and rapidly reduce secondary, negative visual quality impacts of management activities. Ensure language guaranteeing proper completion and compliance with aesthetics practices is included in

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Use land cover data and Table 2.2 to determine applicable Common Elements. Management described in Common Elements, which conflicts with management described in this document is not applicable.

Guidance for use of Common Elements is on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



timber sale and silvicultural activity contracts. The property manager will identify the level of visual sensitivity, according to [Managing Forests on Wisconsin State Park Lands](#) visual sensitivity levels.

- In the non-intensive use areas, conduct timber harvests, prescribed burns and other management treatments in ways that mimic natural disturbance.
- In and around intensive use sites, maintain and promote native shrubs for screening. Sustain large canopy cover and shade in picnic areas, campgrounds and other high use areas. Remove hazardous, diseased and defective trees in these areas.
- Provide and maintain turf areas in intensive use facilities as appropriate, and conduct management and maintenance activities as needed, such as mowing, brushing, erosion control and maintaining landscaping at these sites.
- As practicable, maintain grassland habitat through mowing and/or prescribed fire. Plant oak in grassland areas that cannot be maintained through mechanical maintenance or prescribed burning.
- Enhance grassland restoration and maintenance by controlling (or target during thinning) hardwood species that are aggressive invaders of grasslands, such as box elder, elm, ash, and cottonwood along forest edges.
- Thin “hard” grassland/forest edges to establish more natural prairie/forest transition, especially where young bur oak may be released.
- Sustain and enhance water resources by following best management practices for runoff management and erosion control along waterways, trails and other property features.
- Unless noted otherwise for a specific management area, following a catastrophic event (e.g. wind, fire, ice damage, forest pests), timber salvage and restoration may be done after consultation and direction by the district ecologist or Parks and Recreation program ecologist, forester and property manager. Salvage and restoration operations should focus on safety and meeting overall aesthetic and other vegetation management objectives.
- Monitor and control invasive and pest species, especially those ch. NR 40, Wis. Admin. Code prohibited species and other invasive species of concern, when detected on the property. Follow current department guidance for Amur cork, emerald ash borer and any other prohibited, exotic and invasive species detected. Follow property specific species management plans and department protocol for invasive species in the Common Elements, which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.

Recreation Objectives

- Provide and maintain attractive and safe grounds in and around intensive-use sites. Provide improved day use experiences by upgrading existing or adding new facilities as needed.
- As demand and capability exist, provide a sustainable system of trails for varied skill levels for biking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and other nonmotorized uses.
- Provide barrier-free recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities and skill levels as conditions and opportunities allow.
- Provide opportunities for interpretation, education and scientific research.
- Continue to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and trapping.



Recreation Prescriptions

- Unless noted otherwise in the management area-specific sections, maintain existing trails and day use facilities at current development levels. Construct new facilities as prescribed in the individual management area sections.
- For trail siting, design, construction, and maintenance follow the applicable standards and/or procedures in NR 44, the Department Trails Handbook (Handbook 2540.5), the Department Design Standards Handbook (Handbook 8605.1), and department trail guidelines. Locate and design trails to protect sensitive resources including rare species and habitats, provide enjoyable user experiences, and minimize maintenance. Site all new trails or rerouted sections of existing trails with consultation of the property manager, and others as appropriate, including the district ecologist and forester.
- As needed, develop and maintain additional parking facilities at levels appropriate to known and anticipated property use and local conditions at the site, consistent with property resources.
- Maintain existing and build new partnerships with volunteers and external groups to build and maintain recreation-based facilities and programs.
- Follow the hunting and trapping seasons specific to state parks as determined by the Natural Resources Board (s. 29.089(1m), Wis. Stats.). Information about specific dates and allowable areas is available online and from property offices. Note: Season dates for some state park system properties are not identical to Wisconsin's wildlife areas, state forests and other public/private lands.



AREA 1: DAY USE AND CAMPING AREA

Classification: Recreation Management Area
 Recreation Use Setting: Type 4
 Size: 416 Acres

AREA OVERVIEW

Kinnickinnic State Park's Day Use and Camping Area is the developed part of the park located north of the Kinnickinnic River. This area in the park contains the main park road and parking lots, office, maintenance shop, most of the designated picnic areas, overlook, and the majority of developed hiking trails. This area is managed primarily for aesthetics and recreation. This area also includes sites identified for future development.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 1. Minor changes to the land cover would take place as development of campgrounds and other new park facilities occur.

Table 0.38 Day Use and Camping Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover | Anticipated % Cover Change |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 219 | 54 | |
| Aspen | 17 | 4 | |
| Central Hardwoods | 91 | 22 | +6 |
| Oak | 111 | 27 | -6 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 7 | 2 | |
| White Pine | | | |
| Forested Wetland | 8 | 2 | |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | | |
| Upland Grass | 166 | 41 | |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | | |
| Developed | 7 | 2 | |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Public Use

Day Use Areas

Table 0.39 Day Use and Camping Area - Day Use Areas

| Day Use Area | Facilities | NR 44 Development Standard |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Kinnickinnic Overlook Picnic Area | Picnic Tables, Grills and Trail access | Rustic |
| St. Croix Picnic Area Overlook and Playground | Hand Pump Water, Picnic Tables, Grills, Vault Bathroom Building, Playground, Delta Overlook, Trail Access. | Rustic |
| Sledding Hill and Valley Picnic Area | Sledding hill, Bench, Picnic Tables, Grills, Trail Access | Rustic |

Trails

Table 0.40 Day Use and Camping Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|--------|------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Pink | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 1.6 | Lightly Developed |
| Yellow | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.3 | Lightly Developed |
| Green | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.1 | Lightly Developed |
| Purple | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 1.0 | Lightly Developed |
| Brown | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.1 | Lightly Developed |
| Orange | Hike | Classic Cross-country Ski | 0.5 | Lightly Developed |
| Blue | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.7 | Lightly Developed |
| Black | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.1 | Fully Developed |



Other Recreation Facilities

Table 0.41 Other Day Use and Camping Area Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Overlook (ADA Compliant) | A developed scenic overlook that offers visitors the opportunity to safely observe the Kinnickinnic River and St. Croix River. |

Administrative

Support Facilities

Table 0.42 Day Use and Camping Area Support Facilities

| Support Facility | Description |
|---|---|
| Park Entrance Visitor Station | The Park Entrance Visitor Station serves as a park office and visitor contact station. It is seen once entering the park off 820 th Ave. |
| Park Maintenance Shop and Storage Building | The park maintenance shop and storage buildings are located approximately ¼ mile down the State Park Road from the park's main entrance. |

Area Management

Apply property-wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the natural-appearing character of the management area, including scenic views of Kinnickinnic and St. Croix rivers, to provide high-quality settings for nonmotorized recreational use.
- Maintain the area's diverse cover types for wildlife and ecological benefits.
- Provide and maintain attractive and safe grounds and facilities for intensive outdoor recreation activities.
- Protect the water quality of the Kinnickinnic and St. Croix Rivers.
- Maintain a healthy tree canopy and, where feasible, promote the growth and retention of larger trees in day use areas, campgrounds, and along trails. Remove hazardous, diseased and defective trees.
- In appropriate locations in campgrounds and day use areas establish, maintain and promote native trees and shrubs for screening.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- In intensive use areas, provide and maintain turf areas as appropriate; conduct management and maintenance as needed, such as mowing and brushing.
- Reserve legacy trees of white and bur oak and natural-origin white pine, allowing them to age and die within the forest.
- Design and conduct vegetation and other management activities to maintain and enhance an attractive, natural-appearing landscape to the degree feasible and practicable. Use visual quality management techniques to minimize and reduce secondary, negative visual quality impacts of management activities.
- Maintain grassland and savanna areas through mowing and/or prescribed fire as practicable, Plant to oak any areas that cannot be maintained through mechanical maintenance or prescribed burning.
- Create open grown savanna by crop tree release of young bur oak that occur along some of the grassland edges, where opportunities exist, Thin “hard” grassland/forest edge to establish more natural prairie/forest transition, especially where young bur oak may be released. Where access to this area is good, fuelwood permits/plots may be used.
- Enhance grassland restoration and maintenance by controlling (or target during thinning) hardwood species that are aggressive invaders of grasslands along forest edges, such as box elder, elm, ash and cottonwood.
- Primarily passively manage oak stands, allowing most stands to naturally convert to other hardwood types except as noted below.
- Where feasible and opportunities exist, regenerate and maintain oak using small scale commercial harvests. Select stands to maintain through consultation of the property manager, area forester, and district ecologist and with consideration of site characteristics and the impact on aesthetics and recreational uses.
- Actively convert pockets of oak impacted by oak wilt to other hardwood types such as central and northern hardwoods.
- Opportunities exist for maintenance and regeneration of an oak component in some of the central hardwood stands. Favor white and bur oak over red or black oak. Release young oak that occur in these stands (for example, via marked fuelwood plots or non-commercial treatments) to enhance their survival and increase growth. Similar treatment could be applied to less abundant species such as walnut, hackberry, etc. to maximize diversity within these stands.
- Maintain aspen in the area near the Brown Trail and other areas where feasible, otherwise allow aspen stands to naturally convert to central hardwoods.
- Follow the most current version of DNR Emerald Ash Borer Silviculture Guidelines.
- Follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)



Recreation Objectives

- Provide a variety of quality camping opportunities commensurate with demand including developed modern family, modern group and rustic hike-in/cart-in sites.
- Maintain and enhance a sustainable system of trails for varied skill levels for biking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and other nonmotorized uses.

Recreation Prescriptions

- Construct modern family, modern group and rustic hike-in/cart-in campgrounds and their associated facilities as needed and feasible based on overall campsite occupancy rates, demand within the region, and capability within the park. Prior to constructing new camping facilities, follow the variance process under NR 44.04(4) to establish the location and receive public input on the planned facilities.
- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail system. As needed and feasible, develop and maintain appropriate parking areas and other support facilities to serve trail system users. The parking capacity should not exceed the use level of the area and the lots should be constructed at a development level that is sustainable.



AREA 2: SOUTHERN RECREATION AREA

Classification: Recreation Management Area
 Recreation Use Setting: Type 3
 Size: 463 Acres

AREA OVERVIEW

The Southern Recreation Area is located south of the Kinnickinnic River and is dominated by large grasslands bisected by deep wooded valleys. This area is minimally developed and includes a trail for hiking and snowshoeing and several small parking areas. It has been identified for potential trail development. Management of this area is predominantly focused on providing a rustic recreational experience while protecting the unique resources of the park.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 2. No substantial changes to land cover are anticipated.

Table 0.43 Southern Recreation Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 136 | 29 |
| Aspen | 7 | 2 |
| Central Hardwoods | 109 | 23 |
| Oak | 12 | 3 |
| Walnut | 7 | 2 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 46 | 10 |
| Miscellaneous Coniferous | 3 | 1 |
| White Pine | 43 | 9 |
| Forested Wetland | 4 | 1 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Upland Grass | 283 | 60 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Public Use

Trails

Table 0.44 Southern Recreation Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|-------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Red | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 2.9 | Lightly Developed |

Area Management

Apply property-wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the natural-appearing character of the area and the scenic views of Kinnickinnic and St. Croix Rivers and provide settings for solitude and privacy.
- Largely maintain the area’s existing diversity of habitat (cover) types for scenic values and wildlife and ecological benefits.
- Protect the water quality of the Kinnickinnic and St. Croix Rivers.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Maintain grassland and savanna areas through mowing and/or prescribed fire as practicable. Plant to oak any areas that cannot be maintained through mechanical maintenance or prescribed burning.
- Plant or allow succession to become a woodland habitat to small, difficult to maintain upland grass units.
- Where opportunities exist, create open grown savanna by crop tree release of young bur oak that occur along some of the grassland edges. Thin “hard” grassland/forest edge to establish more natural prairie/forest transition, especially where young bur oak may be released. Where access to this area is good, fuelwood +permits/plots may be used.
- Enhance grassland restoration and maintenance by controlling (or target during thinning) hardwood species that are aggressive invaders of grasslands – box elder, elm, ash, and cottonwood, along forest edges.
- Opportunities exist for maintenance and regeneration of an oak component in some of the central hardwood stands. Favor white or bur oak over red or black oak. Release young oak that occur in these stands (perhaps via marked fuelwood plots or non-commercial treatments) to enhance their survival and increase growth. Similar treatment could be applied to less abundant species such as walnut, hackberry, etc. to maximize diversity within these stands.
- Except as noted below, primarily passively manage oak stands, allowing most stands to naturally convert to other hardwood types.



- Regenerate and maintain oak using small scale commercial harvests where feasible. Select stands to maintain through consultation of the property manager, area forester, and district ecologist and with consideration of site characteristics and the impact on aesthetics and recreational uses.
- Actively convert pockets of oak impacted by oak wilt to other hardwood types such as central and northern hardwoods.
- Use small scale commercial harvest to maintain existing aspen stands in the Bennett Tract. Otherwise, allow aspen stands to naturally convert to central hardwoods, or actively manage to convert to desired cover type including planting trees.
- Maintain reserve and legacy trees of oak and pine, allowing them to mature and die within the forest. Increase coarse woody debris and snags (where not a hazard).
- Reduce proportion of ash species to lessen impacts of future emerald ash borer infestation.
- For each of the cover (habitat) types in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)

Recreation Objectives

- Provide and maintain trail systems of varied development levels for a range of nonmotorized recreational uses.

Recreation Prescriptions

- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, develop and maintain a network of primitive to lightly developed sustainable bicycling trails. These may include bicycle touring trails, off-road bicycling trails, and constructed singletrack trails. Provide support facilities, such as vault toilets, as needed.
- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail system. As needed and feasible, develop and maintain appropriate parking areas and other support facilities off County Highway F and 770th Ave to serve trail system users. The parking capacity should not exceed the use level of the area and the lots should be constructed at a development level that is sustainable.

AREA 3: RIVER DELTA AREA

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Classification: | Recreation Management Area |
| Recreation Use Setting: | Type 4 |
| Size: | 53 Acres |

AREA OVERVIEW

The River Delta Area consists of a large sandbar and wooded floodplain created by the Kinnickinnic River emptying into the St. Croix River. It is heavily used by boaters and provides the opportunity for overnight mooring. The River Delta Area includes a developed swimming beach and a picnic area. This area is managed primarily for recreation.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 3. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.45 River Delta Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Forested Wetland | 11 | 76 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Open Water | 2 | 13 |
| Developed | 2 | 11 |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES**Public Use****Day Use Areas****Table 0.46 River Delta Area Day Use Areas**

| Day Use Area | Facilities | NR 44 Development Standard |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Swimming Beach and Picnic Area | Designated Swimming Beach, Bench, Picnic Tables, Grills and Seasonal Vault Bathroom Building | Rustic |



Trails

Table 0.47 River Delta Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|-------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Black | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.1 | Fully Developed |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Allow natural processes to determine the structure of the delta.
- Maintain the natural-appearing character of the management area.
- Provide fish and wildlife benefits on wetlands, particularly habitat for fish spawning, herptile nesting, and waterfowl nesting, brood rearing, and migratory stopover.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Passively manage bottomland hardwoods.

Recreation Objectives

- Provide and maintain public access to the water for fishing, swimming and other recreational uses.

Recreation Prescriptions

- Maintain the current river access trail and associated picnic area facilities.
- Maintain and improve department dock and launch facilities.

AREA 4: KINNICKINNIC RIVER GORGE AND DELTA SNA

Classification: Native Community Management Area

Size: 88 acres

AREA OVERVIEW

Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta SNA contains an undisturbed river gorge with a diversity of plant communities and features one of the finest examples of river delta in Wisconsin. The deep river valley, cut into glacial drift, sandstone, and limestone, contains dry-mesic forest on the sheltered north-facing slope and xeric oak-cedar woods and small prairie openings on the exposed south-facing slope. The steep south bank contains large beds of Canada yew and walking fern under a forest of sugar maple, ironwood, and white pine. The steep, thin-soiled slope contains hepatica, common polypody fern, walking fern and other mesic woodland plants. Dripping to dry cliffs are found intermittently throughout the valley. On the south side of the river is the Devil's Mixing Bowl - a series of cascades originating in a deep box canyon and emptying into a small pool. A spectacular example of dripping cliffs is found within this canyon. At the head of the canyon the sheer walls support a ribbon of bulblet ferns growing along a high shelf. From this shelf, water falls 10 feet to the canyon floor and down the cascades. The lower waterfall is dry except in wet seasons. Numerous mosses and lichens blanket the canyon floor. Of special geomorphologic interest is the large semi-open delta deposited by the Kinnickinnic River as it flows into the St. Croix River.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 4. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.48 Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta SNA Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 23 | 32 |
| Central Hardwoods | 8 | 10 |
| Oak | 16 | 22 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 9 | 12 |
| White Pine | | |
| Forested Wetland | 28 | 39 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Open Water | 13 | 17 |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Manage the site as a reserve for dry prairie and shaded cliff, as a significant geological feature and as an ecological reference area.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Allow natural processes, along with prescribed fire, and other practices that mimic natural disturbance to determine the structure of the dry prairie and associated gorge and cliff communities.
- Restore and maintain open areas around appropriate rock structures as an important habitat component for herptiles.
- Allow natural processes to determine the structure of the delta.
- Provide opportunities for research and education on the highest quality native prairies and depositional delta features.

Recreation Objectives

- Protect scenic views of the Kinnickinnic River Valley and provide a largely undeveloped setting for solitude and privacy.

Recreation Prescriptions

- If demand exists, develop and maintain a primitive trail that would enter the SNA from the southeast corner north of 770th Ave. and allow access to a popular viewing area on the south side of the Devil's Den or Devil's Punchbowl. The viewing area may require some fencing to limit access and for visitor safety. The trail would then exit the SNA to the west to the rest of the Southern Recreation Area of Kinnickinnic State Park. Exact trail location is to be determined with coordination between the district ecologist and the property manager. Develop trails specifically routed to protect sensitive resources.
- Place an informational kiosk at the roadside parking area that includes a property map and a list of what activities are lawful on the property, including SNA information.
- Develop no additional recreational facilities or features.



AREA 5: RIVER BLUFFS CORRIDOR AREA

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Classification: | Scenic Resources Management Area |
| Recreation Use Setting: | Type 3 |
| Size: | 267 Acres |

AREA OVERVIEW

The River Bluffs Corridor Area encompasses the park's section of the Kinnickinnic River and its adjacent bluffs. Lower elevations are made up of wetlands and floodplains, while upper elevations are dominated by hardwood forests and old growth white pine. The Kinnickinnic River offers a scenic paddling opportunity. The area has minimal development but does include a single paved parking area and canoe launch. Topography is steep and highly erodible. Management of this area is predominantly focused on providing a rustic recreational experience while protecting the unique resources of the park.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 5. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.49 River Bluffs Corridor Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 108 | 40 |
| Aspen | 7 | 3 |
| Central Hardwoods | 25 | 9 |
| Oak | 76 | 28 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 75 | 28 |
| White Pine | | |
| Forested Wetland | 68 | 25 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | | |
| Open Water | 16 | 6 |
| Upland Grass | 1 | <1 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |



PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Public Use

Trails

Table 0.50 River Bluffs Corridor Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|-------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Red | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 2.9 | Lightly Developed |

Other Recreation Facilities

Table 0.51 Other River Bluffs Corridor Area Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|---------------------|---|
| Overlook | A scenic overlook with a bench and informational kiosk. This viewing area offers visitors the opportunity to safely observe the Kinnickinnic River. |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Provide a scenic and rustic paddling opportunity on a stream corridor of mixed tree species composition, with old-forest characteristics such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris.
- Protect avian and herptile nesting opportunities.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Passively manage oak on steep, inaccessible slopes. Permit natural succession to northern hardwoods.
- Passively manage natural-origin white pine. This stand is found on steeper slopes within the park. Non-commercial silvicultural treatments may be considered to maintain the health and vigor of this stand.
- For each of the cover (habitat) types in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)



Recreation Objectives

- Provide and maintain public access to the Kinnickinnic River for fishing and carry-in canoe/kayak access.

Recreation Prescriptions

- Maintain the current river access site and carry-in canoe/kayak launch located off County Highway F. If feasible, provide vault toilet(s) at the site.
- If needed, conduct minimal clearing of instream obstructions to maintain a navigable channel on the river.
- Maintain the scenic overlook and limited segment of the nonmotorized recreation trail that extends into the area from the Southern Recreation Area.



AREA 6: ST. CROIX RIVER BLUFF AREA

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Classification: | Scenic Resources Management Area |
| Recreation Use Setting: | Type 3 |
| Size: | 62 acres |

AREA OVERVIEW

The St. Croix River Bluff Area contains the scenic wooded river bluffs overlooking the St. Croix River. This area is generally very steeply sloped and is dominated by mature oak woodland with scattered natural-origin white pine. These bluffs help give the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway its character. This area is primarily undeveloped except for a paved access road that allows access to the river delta and beach. Management of this area is primarily passive and will focus on aesthetics and maintaining a natural river corridor.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 6. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.52 St. Croix River Bluff Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 48 | 95 |
| Central Hardwoods | 21 | 43 |
| Oak | 24 | 48 |
| Walnut | 2 | 4 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 1 | 1 |
| White Pine | | |
| Upland Grass | 1 | 1 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | | |
| Developed | 1 | 1 |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain the St. Croix River bluff-lands in a scenic, natural-appearing and undeveloped condition with low evidence of management activity.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Except for control of invasive species, manage the entire area using primarily passive management, allowing natural processes to determine the structure of the forest. Take action as necessary to control invasive species.
- Prescribed fire may be used to maintain pockets of remnant dry prairie and oak woodland.



WILLOW RIVER STATE PARK

Willow River State Park showcases the Willow River with Little Falls Lake, Willow Falls, deep gorges, three overlooks, and breathtaking panoramas. The park is among the most visited in Wisconsin and it includes a large variety of recreation opportunities.

The park includes globally rare pine/oak barrens habitat that supports abundant wildlife species, although it is small. Habitat is valuable for waterfowl, furbearers and herptiles and offers a high-quality opportunity for deer, turkey and waterfowl hunting.



PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Willow River State Park has become one of the most popular parks in Wisconsin. With easy accessibility from Interstate 94, this property offers a variety of recreational activities for park visitors. Located in St. Croix County, the park is six miles northeast of the City of Hudson, WI and roughly 30 miles east of the Twin Cities, drawing a high number of visitors from both inside and outside of Wisconsin.

The Willow River flows through the property and creates Little Falls Lake (via Little Falls Dam). Willow Falls is the park's main attraction offering deep gorges, three high overlooks, and breathtaking panoramas.

The park's varying topography promotes a wide range of cover types. Oak, upland grasslands, and open wetlands encompass 80% of the property's total habitat, creating the park's exceptional mix of water and terrestrial natural resources and recreation opportunities. Historically much of the land was canvased by prairie. Prairie and upland grass still cover a significant portion of Willow River State Park, with most of these grasslands being prairie restorations. Remnant prairie still exists on localized areas of the park. Wildlife is abundant throughout the park.

The Willow River, designated as an Exceptional Resource Water, is of ecological significance because it has so far maintained its coldwater natural community status in the face of major land use and land cover changes. This is important as coldwater and coolwater streams support distinct assemblages of aquatic organisms. Additionally, the Willow River and its tributary Ten Mile Creek support the only known populations of a Special Concern aquatic invertebrate in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Cover

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Willow River State Park. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

State Ownership: 2,918 acres

Fee Title: 2,906 acres

Easement: 12 acres

Maps

Click the links to access each map type in the online DNR Property Planning Viewer.

[DNR & Other Lands](#)

[Recreation](#)

[Roads](#)

[Land Cover](#)

[Land Management Classifications](#)



Table 0.53 Willow River State Park Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 1265 | 44 |
| Aspen | 3 | <1 |
| Oak | 1262 | 44 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 103 | 4 |
| Red Pine | 58 | 2 |
| White Pine | 45 | 2 |
| Upland Shrub | 94 | 3 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Forested Wetland | 150 | 5 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 24 | 1 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 125 | 4 |
| Shrub Wetland | 18 | 1 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 148 | 5 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 194 | 7 |
| Upland Grass | 786 | 27 |
| Cool Season Grass | 422 | 15 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 293 | 10 |
| Remnant Prairie – Dry-Mesic | 70 | 2 |
| Developed | 114 | 4 |

PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Summer activities in the park include camping, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, and swimming. Fishing is a popular activity at the park as well, as the river is stocked with trout. Some warmwater species such as panfish, bass and northern pike can be found in the lake and below the dam. Winter visitors also find the park a busy place. Groomed cross country ski trails are the winter highlight of the park, while ice fishing and snowshoeing also take place. Hunting and trapping is allowed in some parts of the park at various times throughout the year.

Access

Roads and Parking

There are 3.6 miles of open DNR-managed roads on the property (Map K-1). Numerous access points to the park from non-DNR public roads also exist, including County Highway A, County Highway E, County Highway I, River Road, and Trout Brook Road. Nelson Farm Road enters the park from the North and provides several points of access. There are 20 parking lots, mixed between paved and unpaved, located throughout the park. Parking is also available at individual campsites.



Table 0.54 Willow River State Park Roads

| Road Classification | Open to Public | Open Seasonally to Public | Closed to Public (DNR Staff Service Road) |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---|
| Primitive Road | 0.1 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Lightly-Developed Road | 0.2 | .1 | 3.2 |
| Moderately-Developed Road | 3.0 | 2.1 | .1 |
| Non-DNR public road access | 9.7 | | |

Water Access

A developed boat launch with parking facilities is located on the south side of Little Falls Lake. No gas or electric motors are allowed on the lake making it ideal for persons interested in fishing, paddle sports, sail boating and wildlife viewing.

Property Use

Camping

Willow River State Park has a total of 150 family campsites and 4 group campsites. The 100 Campground, built in 2010, is located near the park entrance. This campground is fairly open with only a handful of sites with partial shade. The 200 Campground, which opened in the spring of 2011, located near the old park office site, is more wooded than the 100 Campground. All of the new sites have access to new restroom facilities and several of the sites are designed to accommodate camping units up to 50 feet. The 1970's era 300 campground is a secluded campground developed in a wooded area of the park. Campsites are well spaced with heavy tree and shrub growth separating sites. This campground has more limitations on the size of camping units. The group campground has four hike-in or cart-in sites and can accommodate groups up to 40 people each. The group camp has access to vault toilets, running water, and a small picnic shelter. Winter camping is available in the 200 Campground.

Table 0.55 Willow River State Park Campgrounds

| Campground | Facilities | Number of Sites | NR 44 Development Standard |
|------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 100 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, showers, playground equipment, electric receptacles | 50 | Modern |
| 200 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, electric receptacles | 30 | Modern |
| 300 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, showers, playground equipment, electric receptacles | 70 | Modern |
| Group Campground | Vault Toilets, pressurized water, picnic shelter | 4 | Rustic |

Day Use Areas

Three day use areas are provided at Willow River State Park. The picnic areas and picnic shelter allow individuals and groups to relax in the park and view the Willow River. Tables and grills are available at a variety of locations throughout the park. There are three playgrounds at Willow River State Park: in the beach picnic area, in the 100 Campground, and in the 300 Campground. There are also large patches of open grass in the beach picnic area for recreational activities and sports. Overlook locations exist throughout the park and offer safe enjoyment of the park's waterfalls.

Table 0.56 Willow River State Park Day Use Areas

| Day Use Area | Facilities | NR 44 Development Standard |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Beach, Picnic and Swim Area | Open-air non-reservable shelter, flush toilet building, seasonal vault toilet building, pressurized water system, picnic tables, grills, playground equipment | Modern |
| Dam Picnic Area | Open-air reservable shelter, flush toilet building, pressurized water system, picnic tables, grills, ADA accessible fishing piers | Modern |
| Boat Launch and Picnic Area | Vault toilet building, picnic tables, grills and boat launch, pet area | Rustic |

Trails

Willow River State Park has a total of 19 miles of hiking trails. The most popular hiking trail destination is the Willow Falls and the scenic overlooks of the river valley. All trails from the dam to the nature center and up to the 300 campground are paved and ADA accessible.

During the winter the park has approximately four miles of packed trails on the north side of the river available for pet owners and activities like snowshoeing, dog sledding and hiking. The park's nine miles of cross-country ski trails on the south side of the river are groomed and tracked by volunteers for skate and traditional stride style skiing. 1.6 miles of snowshoe trails can be accessed from the 200 campground parking area, one of which gives snowshoers an additional route to the Willow Falls area.

A one-half mile self-guided, paved nature trail is situated behind the nature center. A one-half mile natural surface trail providing access to the park's natural playground can be accessed from the nature trail or the boat launch parking lot.

Table 0.57 Willow River State Park Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|------------------------------------|------------|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Burkhardt (Pink) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 4.0 | Lightly Developed |
| Hidden Ponds Nature (Black) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.5 | Moderately Developed |
| Natural Playground | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.5 | Lightly Developed |
| Knapweed (Orange) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.0 | Lightly Developed |



| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----|-------------------|
| Little Falls (Green) | Hike, Bike and Rollerblade | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.7 | Fully Developed |
| Mound Trail (White) | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 1.1 | Lightly Developed |
| Nelson Farm (Silver) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 3.7 | Fully Developed |
| Oak Ridge (Brown) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.1 | Fully Developed |
| Pioneer (Yellow) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.2 | Lightly Developed |
| Trout Brook (Purple) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.4 | Lightly Developed |
| Whitetail (Red) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.7 | Lightly Developed |
| Willow Falls Hill (Gray) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.4 | Fully Developed |
| Willow Falls (Blue) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1 | Lightly Developed |
| Snowshoe (Green) | Unmaintained | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.6 | Primitive |
| Snowshoe (Brown) | Unmaintained | Snowshoe, Hike | 1 | Primitive |

Other Recreation Facilities

The nature center is about two miles west of the park entrance next to the beach picnic area. Visitors can explore the many hands-on displays and see live animals. Park naturalists host many interpretive programs throughout the year at the center.

Table 0.58 Other Willow River State Park Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Overlooks | Four scenic overlooks exist within the park. These viewing areas offers visitors the opportunity to safely observe Little Falls Lake, Willow River and Willow Falls. |
| Nature Center and Gift Shop | The Nature Center and Gift Shop display area and classroom are primarily operated by the park's friends group: The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. They provide educational programming and classes for park visitors and school groups, sponsor many of the park's activities and special events, and support park operations. |

Administrative

Support Facilities

Table 0.59 Willow River State Park Support Facilities

| Support Facility | Description |
|------------------|-------------|
|------------------|-------------|



| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Park Entrance Visitor Station | The Park Entrance Visitor Station serves as a park office and visitor contact station. It is seen once entering the park off County Highway A. |
| Maintenance Building | The Maintenance Building is located ½ mile from the park entrance. It provides storage, equipment and tools for maintaining park functions. |

Land Use and Partner Agreements

The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. have a formal Friends Group agreement and Concessions agreement with the department to assist in supporting park operations.



MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Willow River State Park is composed of four land management areas with distinct NR 44 land management classifications (Map K-2).

- Area 1: Day Use and Camping Area
- Area 2: Northern Recreation Area
- Area 3: Northeast Area
- Area 4: Upland Grass Area

Property-Wide Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions to all Areas within Willow River State Park.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Provide high-quality scenic settings for nonmotorized recreational use.
- Maintain, protect and enhance the park's natural and scenic settings and the natural-appearing character of the park, emphasizing managing for aesthetics.
- Largely maintain the existing diversity of forested and non-forested habitat (cover) types for scenic diversity, wildlife and ecological benefits.
- Provide forested areas with mixed tree species composition and old-forest characteristics, such as large trees, standing snags and abundant coarse woody debris.
- Provide and maintain attractive and safe grounds in and around campgrounds, day use areas and other intensive-use sites. Provide improved day use experiences by upgrading existing or adding new facilities as needed.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Where feasible, promote the growth and retention of larger "legacy" trees (mainly white/bur oak), allowing them to mature and die within the forest.
- Increase coarse woody debris and snags.
- Reduce the ash component to lessen impacts of future emerald ash borer infestation.
- To the degree feasible and practicable, design and conduct vegetation and other management activities to maintain and enhance an attractive, natural-appearing landscape. Near trails and other public use areas, use visual quality management techniques to minimize and rapidly reduce secondary, negative visual quality impacts of management activities. Ensure language guaranteeing proper completion and compliance with aesthetics practices is included in timber sale and silvicultural activity contracts. The

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Use land cover data and Table 2.2 to determine applicable Common Elements. Management described in Common Elements, which conflicts with management described in this document is not applicable.

Guidance for use of Common Elements is on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



property manager will identify the level of visual sensitivity, according to [Managing Forests on Wisconsin State Park Lands](#) visual sensitivity levels.

- In the non-intensive use areas, conduct timber harvests, prescribed burns and other management treatments in ways that mimic natural disturbance.
- In picnic areas, campgrounds and other designated intensive use areas, sustain large canopy cover and shade where possible. Remove hazardous, diseased and defective trees. Where appropriate, maintain and promote native shrubs for screening. Replace non-native shrubs with native species.
- Provide and maintain turf areas in intensive use facilities as appropriate, and conduct management and maintenance activities as needed, such as mowing, brushing and erosion control.
- As practicable, maintain grassland habitat through mowing and/or prescribed fire. Plant oak in grassland areas that cannot be maintained through mechanical maintenance or prescribed burning. Enhance grassland restoration and maintenance by controlling (or target during thinning) hardwood species that are aggressive invaders of grasslands; box elder, elm, ash, and cottonwood along forest edges. Thin “hard” grassland/forest edges to establish more natural prairie/forest transition, especially where young bur oak may be released.
- Sustain and enhance water resources by following best management practices for runoff management and erosion control along waterways, trails and other property features.
- Unless noted otherwise for a specific management area, following a catastrophic event (e.g. wind, fire, ice damage, forest pests) resulting in widespread tree loss, timber salvage and restoration may be considered with consultation and direction by the district ecologist or Parks and Recreation program ecologist, forester and property manager. Salvage and restoration operations should focus on safety and meeting overall aesthetic and other vegetation management objectives.
- Monitor and control invasive and pest species, especially those ch. NR 40, Wis. Admin. Code prohibited species and other invasive species of concern when detected on the property. Follow current department guidance for Amur cork, emerald ash borer and any other prohibited, exotic and invasive species detected. Follow property specific species management plans and department protocol for invasive species in the Common Elements, which may include the use of prescribed fire and herbicides.

Recreation Objectives

- As demand and capability exist, provide a sustainable system of trails for varied skill levels for biking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and other nonmotorized uses.
- Provide barrier-free recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities and skill levels as conditions and opportunities allow.
- Provide opportunities for interpretation, education and scientific research.
- Provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and trapping.
- Maintain Little Falls Lake to provide fishing, kayaking, canoeing and nonmotorized boating opportunities.



Recreation Prescriptions

- Unless noted otherwise in the management area-specific sections, maintain existing trails and day use facilities at current development levels. Construct new facilities as prescribed in the individual management area sections.
- For trail siting, design, construction and maintenance, follow the applicable standards and/or procedures in NR 44, the Department Trails Handbook (Handbook 2540.5), the Department Design Standards Handbook (Handbook 8605.1), and department trail guidelines. Locate and design trails to protect sensitive resources, including rare species and habitats, in order to provide enjoyable user experiences and minimize maintenance. Site all new trails or rerouted sections of existing trails with consultation of the property manager, and others as appropriate, including the district ecologist and forester.
- Develop and maintain additional parking facilities at levels appropriate to known and anticipated property use and local conditions at the site, consistent with property resources.
- Maintain existing and build new partnerships with volunteers and external groups to build and maintain recreation-based facilities and programs. The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks Inc. is a group organized for the charitable and educational purpose of supporting, assisting and promoting the DNR with interpretive, scientific, historical, educational and related visitor services at Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks.
- Follow the hunting and trapping seasons specific to state parks as determined by the Natural Resources Board (s. 29.089(1m), Wis. Stats.). Information about specific dates and allowable areas is available online and from property offices. Note: Season dates for some state park system properties are not identical to Wisconsin's wildlife areas, state forests and other public/private lands.
- Work with partners to establish a bicycle trail to connect the park and popular destinations outside the park. If a connection outside the park is developed, develop and maintain a moderately to fully-developed multi-use trail from the northwest park boundary to the Day Use and Camping Area.



AREA 1: DAY USE AND CAMPING AREA

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Classification: | Recreation Management Area |
| Recreation Use Setting: | Type 4 |
| Size: | 646 acres |

AREA OVERVIEW

The Day Use and Camping Area of Willow River State Park is the primary use area located south and east of the Willow River and Little Falls Lake. This management area contains all four existing campgrounds, the designated picnic areas, boat launch, Nature Center, Office, Shop, and the majority of the trails. This part of the park is heavily used all seasons of the year. The vegetation component of this area consists primarily of oak and northern hardwoods on rolling terrain and bluffs overlooking the lake and river.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Cover

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 1.

No substantial changes to land cover are anticipated other than by natural succession. The pine plantations in this area will continue to be managed to promote large old growth trees. Some more open grassland areas adjacent to the 100 and 200 campgrounds have been planted to trees and shrubs for converting these areas to northern hardwoods.

Table 0.60 Day Use and Camping Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 360 | 56 |
| Oak | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 48 | 7 |
| Red Pine | 40 | 6 |
| White Pine | 8 | 1 |
| Upland Shrub | 19 | 3 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Shrub Wetland | 18 | 3 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Water | 6 | 1 |
| Upland Grass | 82 | 13 |
| Cool Season Grass | 78 | 12 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 3 | <1 |
| Remnant Prairie – Dry-Mesic | <1 | <1 |
| Developed | 133 | 18 |



PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Public Use

Camping

Table 0.61 Day Use and Camping Area Campgrounds

| Campground | Facilities | Number of Sites | NR 44 Development Standard |
|------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 100 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, showers, playground equipment, electric receptacles | 50 | Modern |
| 200 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, electric receptacles | 30 | Modern |
| 300 Campground | Flush toilet, seasonal vault toilet, showers, playground equipment, electric receptacles | 70 | Modern |
| Group Campground | Vault Toilets, running water, picnic shelter | 4 | Rustic |

Day Use Areas

Table 0.62 Day Use and Camping Area Day Use Areas

| Day Use Area | Facilities | NR 44 Development Standard |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Beach Picnic and Swim Area | Open-air non-reservable shelter, flush toilet building, seasonal vault toilet building, pressurized water system, picnic tables, grills, playground equipment | Modern |
| Dam Picnic Area | Open-air reservable shelter, flush toilet building, pressurized water system, picnic tables, grills, ADA accessible fishing piers | Modern |
| Boat Launch and Picnic Area | Vault toilet building, picnic tables, grills and boat launch, pet area | Rustic |

Trails

Table 0.63 Day Use and Camping Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Hidden Ponds Nature (Black) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.5 | Moderately Developed |
| Natural Playground | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.5 | Lightly Developed |
| Knapweed (Orange) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.0 | Lightly Developed |



| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----|-------------------|
| Little Falls (Green) | Hike, Bike and Rollerblade | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.7 | Fully Developed |
| Oak Ridge (Brown) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.1 | Fully Developed |
| Pioneer (Yellow) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.2 | Lightly Developed |
| Trout Brook (Purple) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1.4 | Lightly Developed |
| Whitetail (Red) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.7 | Lightly Developed |
| Willow Falls Hill (Gray) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 0.4 | Fully Developed |
| Willow Falls (Blue) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 1 | Lightly Developed |
| Snowshoe (Green) | Unmaintained | Snowshoe, Hike | 0.6 | Primitive |
| Snowshoe (Brown) | Unmaintained | Snowshoe, Hike | 1 | Primitive |



Other Recreation Facilities

Table 0.64 Other Day Use and Camping Area Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Overlook | One scenic overlook exists along the Willow River. This viewing area offers visitors the opportunity to safely observe Willow River and Willow Falls. |
| Nature Center And Gift Shop | The Nature Center and gift shop, display area, and classroom is primarily operated by the park's friends group: The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. They provide educational programming and classes for park visitors and school groups, sponsor many of the park's activities and special events, and support park operations. |

Administrative

Support Facilities

Table 0.65 Day Use and Camping Area Support Facilities

| Support Facility | Description |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Park Entrance Visitor Station | The Park Entrance Visitor Station serves as a park office and visitor contact station. It is seen once entering the park off County Highway A. |
| Maintenance Building | The Maintenance Building is located ½ mile from the park entrance. It provides storage, equipment and tools for maintaining park functions. |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the natural-appearing character of the management area and its diverse cover types to provide high-quality settings for nonmotorized recreational use.
- Provide and maintain attractive and safe grounds and facilities for intensive outdoor recreation activities.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Passively manage stands of red and black oak and aspen, allowing natural conversion to other hardwood types. However, actively convert pockets of oak impacted by oak wilt to other hardwood types.
- As long as practicable, actively manage by using release or other tools to maintain the existing white oak component.
- Thin pine plantations to produce a more natural appearance and larger trees. Allow the stand to naturally convert to a native forest type or, if more appropriate, convert to grassland.



- For each of the cover (habitat) types in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)

Recreation Objectives

- Provide high-quality opportunities for camping and day use by maintaining and upgrading existing facilities and expanding or adding new facilities commensurate with demand and capability.
- Provide and maintain a variety of trails of varied development levels for a variety of nonmotorized uses, including hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and biking.
- Provide education and interpretation regarding the cultural and natural history of the park and its current flora and fauna.

Recreation Prescriptions

- Maintain and upgrade the existing campgrounds.
- Expand the existing campgrounds or add additional campgrounds and associated facilities as needed based on overall campsite occupancy rates, demand within the region, and capability within the park. Prior to major campground expansion or new development, follow the variance process under NR 44.04(4) to develop the proposal and receive public input.
- Evaluate building a multipurpose nature center/education facility at a similar location and purpose to the existing nature center, but larger, with modern amenities and better accommodations to serve the public. Seek public input on the concept plan. If found desirable and feasible, work with partners to fundraise and then construct.
- Develop an ADA accessible cabin near the main day use area and campground if feasible and there is demand. Provide an ADA accessible trail connecting the cabin to the nature center, parking lot, existing ADA accessible trail and campground.
- If a regional trail connection is developed through the Northern Recreation Area, extend the trail to the Day Use and Camping Area.
- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail system. As needed and feasible, develop and maintain appropriate parking areas and other support facilities to serve trail system users. The parking capacity should not exceed the use level of the area and the lots should be constructed at a development level that is sustainable.



AREA 2: NORTHERN RECREATION AREA

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Classification: | Recreation Management Area |
| Recreation Use Setting: | Type 4 |
| Size: | 1,438 acres |

AREA OVERVIEW

The Northern Recreation Area of Willow River State Park is located north of the Willow River and Little Falls Lake and extends southwest along the river corridor to the braided delta where the river meets Lake Mallalieu. Most of this area is undeveloped except for two challenging hiking trails and the north portion of the Willow Falls area. This area contains several overlooks and has spectacular views of the river valley, lake, and waterfall. Most of this management area is covered with dense oak and northern hardwood forest except for a grassland complex in the northwest corner.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Cover

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 2. No substantial changes to land cover are anticipated other than by natural succession.

Table 0.66 Northern Recreation Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 743 | 52 |
| Aspen | 3 | <1 |
| Oak | 741 | 52 |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 26 | 2 |
| Red Pine | 17 | 1 |
| White Pine | 9 | 1 |
| Upland Shrub | <1 | <1 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Forested Wetland | 109 | 8 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | | |
| Shrub Wetland | <1 | <1 |
| Wetland Shrub | | |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 48 | 3 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 186 | 13 |
| Upland Grass | 328 | 23 |
| Cool Season Grass | 320 | 22 |
| Remnant Prairie – Mesic | 8 | 1 |
| Developed | <1 | <1 |



PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Public Use

Trails

Table 0.67 Northern Recreation Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Burkhardt (Pink) | Hike | Hike, Snowshoe, Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 4.0 | Lightly Developed |
| Nelson Farm (Silver) | Hike | Classic and Skate Cross-country Ski | 3.7 | Fully Developed |

Other Recreation Facilities

Table 0.68 Other Northern Recreation Area Recreation Facilities

| Recreation Facility | Description |
|---------------------|---|
| Overlooks | Three scenic overlooks offer visitors the opportunity to safely observe Little Falls Lake, Willow River and Willow Falls. |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the natural-appearing character of the management area and its diverse cover types to provide high-quality settings for nonmotorized recreational use.
- Provide and maintain attractive and safe grounds for intensive outdoor recreation activities.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Passively manage stands of red and black oak and aspen, allowing natural conversion to other hardwood types; except, actively convert pockets of oak impacted by oak wilt to other hardwood types while maintaining white or bur oak when present.
- Actively manage by using release or other silvicultural tools to maintain the existing white and bur oak component as long as practicable.
- Where opportunities exist, manage for a grassland-oak woodland continuum.
- Passively or actively manage aspen stand to convert to a desired cover type.



- Thin pine plantations to produce a more natural appearance and larger trees. Allow pine plantations to naturally convert to a desired hardwood type or, if more appropriate, convert to grassland.
- Maintain existing grasslands unless there is consensus to convert to a wooded cover type.
- For each of the cover (habitat) type in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)

Recreation Objectives

- Provide opportunities for rustic, walk-in/cart-in camping, if demand warrants.
- Provide quality off-road bicycling opportunities.
- Maintain opportunities for rock climbing.

Recreation Prescriptions

- As needed and feasible, construct a rustic hike-in/cart in campground and associated facilities. Prior to major campground expansion or new development, follow the variance process under NR 44.04(4) to develop the proposal and receive public input.
- As needed and feasible, develop and maintain additional parking at a capacity appropriate for and not exceeding the use level of the area. The lots should be constructed at a development level that is sustainable. Potential lot locations include off 115th Ave, Nelson Farm Road, River Road, and Trout Brook Road.
- Develop and maintain a network of primitive to lightly developed sustainable bicycling trails. Site trails with consultation with the property manager, district ecologist, forester and others as appropriate. Provide support facilities, such as vault toilets, as needed.
- Allow for a regional trail to pass through the Northern Recreation Area and connect to the Day Use and Camping Area, provided the trail logically connects to a trail segment outside the park boundary. The development standards should complement, to the extent practical, those used on the regional trail segment outside the park boundary
- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail system.
- Continue to work with partners such as Wisconsin Climbers Association and Minnesota Climbers Association, to promote and manage recreational rock climbing



AREA 3: NORTHEAST AREA

Classification: Habitat Management Area
 Size: 528 acres

AREA OVERVIEW

The Northeast Management Area of Willow River State Park is located north and east of the Town of Burkhardt. It lies adjacent to County Rd. I, A, and E and consists of the upper river corridor and adjacent upland. Along with the Willow River there are several wetlands and ponds providing unique aquatic habitats. The area is transected on the west side by an abandoned railroad grade that provides access to that area. This area is mostly undeveloped. There is one hiking trail connecting two parking lots along the river. This area consists of a mix of oak bluff and wetland, prairie, and lower quality woodlands and shrubs.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 3. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.69 Northeast Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 161 | 31 |
| Oak | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 28 | 5 |
| White Pine | | |
| Upland Shrub | 55 | 10 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Forested Wetland | 40 | 8 |
| Bottomland Hardwoods | 24 | 5 |
| Swamp Hardwoods | 16 | 3 |
| Open Wetland/Marsh | 106 | 20 |
| Emergent Wetland | | |
| Open Water | 2 | <1 |
| Upland Grass | 133 | 25 |
| Cool Season Grass | 19 | 4 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 144 | 22 |

Trails

Table 0.70 Northeast Area Trails

| Trail | Summer Use | Winter Use | Length (Miles) | NR 44 Trail Standard |
|----------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Mound Trail (White) | Hike | Snowshoe, Hike | 1.1 | Lightly Developed |

Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Management Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the natural, rustic appearing character of the management area to provide opportunities for largely undeveloped recreational and enjoyment of solitude and remoteness.
- Maintain the forested areas with mixed tree species composition; and develop or enhance old-forest characteristics, such as large trees (particularly oak and pine), standing snags and abundant, coarse woody debris.
- Provide fish and wildlife benefits on wetlands, particularly habitat for fish spawning, herptile nesting, and waterfowl and grassland bird nesting, brood rearing, and migratory stopover.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Passively manage stands of red and black oak and aspen, allowing natural conversion to other hardwood types; except, actively convert pockets of oak impacted by oak wilt to other hardwood types while maintaining white or bur oak when present.
- Actively manage by using release or other silvicultural tools to maintain the existing white and bur oak component as long as practicable.
- Where opportunities exist, manage for a grassland-oak woodland continuum.
- Thin pine plantations to produce a more natural appearance and larger trees. Allow pine plantations to naturally convert to a desired hardwood type or, if more appropriate, convert to grassland.
- Maintain existing grasslands unless there is consensus to convert to a wooded cover type.
- For each of the cover (habitat) type in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Forest Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)
 - [Bottomland Hardwoods](#)
 - [Upland Shrub](#)
 - [Emergent Wetland](#)



Recreation Prescriptions

- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail.
- Cooperate with partners to establish a trail if a county recreational trail is developed on the old Hudson to New Richmond railroad grade, which passes through this management area.



AREA 4: UPLAND GRASS AREA

Classification: Habitat Management Area

Size: 258 Acres

AREA OVERVIEW

The upland Grass Management area is in the southeast corner of the park. This prairie area was once farmed and has been restored to native grasslands. It provides habitat for native grassland birds, pheasants, turkeys, deer and other animals.

NATURAL RESOURCES**Land Cover**

The table below lists the habitat classifications (land cover) and the approximate acreage of cover for Area 4. Land cover is not anticipated to change.

Table 0.71 Upland Grass Area Land Cover

| Land Cover | GIS Acres | % Cover |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upland Deciduous Forest | 1 | <1 |
| Oak | | |
| Upland Coniferous Forest | 1 | <1 |
| Red Pine | | |
| Upland Shrub | 20 | 8 |
| Upland Shrub | | |
| Upland Grass | 243 | 92 |
| Cool Season Grass | 6 | 2 |
| Planted Prairie/Warm Season Grass | 168 | 63 |
| Remnant Prairie – Dry-Mesic | 70 | 26 |
| Developed | <1 | <1 |



Area Management

Apply Property-Wide management objectives and prescriptions in addition to the following management objectives and prescriptions.

Natural Resource Objectives

- Maintain and enhance grasslands to provide habitat for grassland birds and opportunities for wildlife observation and hunting.
- Protect and enhance avian nesting opportunities where appropriate.

Natural Resource Prescriptions

- Maintain grasslands through mowing, prescribed fire or grazing. Maintain upland shrub component as appropriate.
- Convert pine plantations to grasslands.
- For each of the cover (habitat) type in the management area, follow the standard management practices described in the Common Elements guidance documents listed below, unless the standard practice is superseded by the management area-specific prescriptions.
 - [General Wildlife Habitat Management](#)
 - [Surrogate Grasslands](#)

Recreation Objectives

- Provide opportunities for wildlife observation, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Recreation Prescriptions

- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, maintain the nonmotorized trail system for multiple trail uses.
- In accordance with visitor needs and as feasible, develop and maintain additional lightly developed nonmotorized trails for multiple uses.



STATE PARK TRAILS

Multiple-Use Trails

Many popular recreational activities are trail-based. The uses and demands on state park trails are constantly evolving and managers often cannot foresee demands for trails that may arise in the future. To ensure the park can adapt to future demands, in appropriate circumstances, current and future trails have been designated as multiple-use. Authorization for trail use in this plan are as follows:

Existing Trails

The property manager is authorized to recommend changes to designated uses on existing trails to meet changes in use demand. Where multiple uses are allowed, only those uses that are reasonably compatible are allowed; and in the event significant conflicts between different user groups occur, some uses of the trail may be discontinued. A use may be allowed only if the trail complies with the Department Design Standards (Handbook 8605.1) or department trail guidelines for the use. Cross-country ski trails have a special winter use limitation; that is, hiking or snowshoeing is not allowed on snow covered, designated cross-country ski trails [NR 45.04(3)(j)]. The designated (allowed) uses of all trails shall be indicated by signs and on property maps. Property managers may also move trail segments as needed to make them more sustainable or to improve user experience. Prior to changing the use of a trail, an internal review process shall take place. Approval authority shall be determined by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation Management. As may be appropriate, the public will be afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed use change.

New Trails or Major Expansions of Existing Trails

New nonmotorized trails or trail loops authorized in this plan may be added to accommodate expanding demand for existing nonmotorized uses or to accommodate a new use. All new trails must be compatible with the recreational and resource management objectives of the property and management area as well as comply with the Department Design Standards (Handbook 8605.1) or department trail guidelines for the intended use. As may be appropriate, prior to initiating any new trail development, the public will be afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the proposal.

Where state law, administrative code or department policy do not allow an activity authorized under this plan, the activity is not authorized. Under this plan, “nonmotorized use” allows bicycles equipped with an electric motor (e-bikes) in accordance with s. NR 45.05(3)(em), Wis. Adm. Code. The department may designate a trail open to other bicycle use as open to motor bicycles equipped with electric motors as defined under s. NR 45.05(3)(em), Wis. Adm. Code.



STATE PUBLIC ACCESS SITES

Western Prairie state public access site offers access to waterbodies. As required by NR 1.90, Wis. Adm. Code, it is the goal of the State of Wisconsin to provide, maintain and improve access to Wisconsin's navigable lakes, rivers, and streams for the public. The state public access site shown in Table 2.72, will follow the management described in this section. Any property designated as a state public access site during the period this plan is in effect will also follow the management described in this section.

Table 0.72 Western Prairie State Public Access Sites

| Property Name | County |
|---|-----------|
| Bass Lake State Public Access – St. Croix | St. Croix |

Special Attributes

Bass Lake State Public Access – St. Croix site is located in St. Croix County. Visitors obtain access to Bass Lake from the public boat landing here. Bass Lake includes Panfish, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike and Walleye. The lake itself (not included in this property) is approximately 370 acres with a maximum depth of 33 feet.

Property Management

NR 44 Land Management Classification

All state public access sites in the region are classified as Type 4 Recreation Management Areas.

Management Objectives

- Provide, maintain, and improve access for the public to the region's waterways appropriate to each water's ability to support such access.
- Alone or in cooperation with local government, exercise DNR management and regulatory responsibilities to assure levels and types of use of navigable waters are consistent with protection of public health, safety and welfare, including protection of natural resources.

Management Prescriptions

- Maintain or improve current surfacing of boat launches as appropriate for use level and waterbody capacity.
- Manage upland vegetation to minimize erosion, minimize run-off and control exotic invasive species, while providing the best public access.
- Implement aquatic and terrestrial invasive species educational and control efforts as needed.
- Work with St. Croix County, the Town of Erin Prairie and local partnerships to consider development of access to the Willow River near the right-of-way off CTH T from county land adjacent the river near the CTH K intersection. Develop boat access for fishing and paddling as feasible.

Common Elements

Apply General Property Management Practices and Recreation Facilities and their Management Common Elements.

Apply Habitats and their Management Common Elements. Use land cover data and Table 2.2 to determine applicable Common Elements.

Guidance for use of Common Elements is on page 9. If management described in this plan conflicts with Common Elements, apply the management described in this document.



Chapter 3: Regional and Property Analysis

REAL ESTATE

OVERVIEW

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (department) purchases land to manage and protect natural resources and to provide recreational opportunities to all residents and visitors to the State of Wisconsin. Through the land acquisition program, wetlands, forests, scenic areas, prairies, savannas, wildlife and fish habitat, rare species habitat, glacial features and other resources are being protected and managed.

The Real Estate Section within the department's Bureau of Facilities and Lands acquires land through fee title, easements, donations and leases. The section also conveys leases, easements, agreements and permits associated with land ownership. The section also manages the selling of land no longer necessary for the state's use for conservation purposes. It implements the payment in lieu of tax system (PILT), resolves trespass settlements and engages in other activities aimed at preparing the land for long-term public use and benefit.

REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND MASTER PLANNING

Through master planning, the department's entire real estate portfolio is reviewed and analyzed. The topics listed below are all considered and reviewed during a planning process. This analysis allows the department to identify future real estate management goals, which are then included as a part of the master plan.

Land Acquisition

The department acquires lands under the authority of s. 23.09(2)(d), Wis. Stats., from willing sellers. At times, it is in the best interest of the department and landowner for the department to acquire partial rights to a property (easement or lease). Acquisition priorities are identified in the master plan and are, in most cases, visually represented through the department's project boundaries.

Acquisitions for department properties vary from year to year and are based on several factors, such as resource management or recreation needs and the availability of funding, which may be from a variety of sources.

Land Sales

The department's Natural Resources Board (NRB), at times, may sell lands and structures under its jurisdiction, except central or district office facilities, when the NRB determines that those lands are no longer necessary for the state's use for conservation purposes (s. 23.15 (1), Wis. Stats.). Upon receiving payment, the department deposits the funds into the conservation fund to be used exclusively for the purpose of purchasing other land for the creating and establishing of public hunting and fishing grounds, wildlife and fish refuges, state parks, and land in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (s. 23.15 (4), Wis. Stats.).

Conveyed Easements, Access Permits, and Land Use Agreements

Conveyed Easements provide access across state property for utilities, town roads, county highways and in some cases individuals. Easements are permanent and cannot be changed by a master plan. Access Permits provide access across state property to private land owners adjacent to department lands. Land use agreements provide for a variety of uses on a department property that are consistent with the property's master plan, such as bicycle trails.



Payment in Lieu of Taxes

The department makes an annual payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) under ss. 70.113 and 70.114, Wis. Stats., to the appropriate municipality for all property it owns in fee title. More detailed information on how the department pays PILT may be at dnr.wi.gov by searching for the keyword "PILT".

Project Boundaries and Stream Bank Easement (SBE) Eligible Streams

Project boundaries and stream bank easement eligible streams are established areas on the landscape, created by a Natural Resources Board (NRB) action, as a preferred area where the department may acquire land. Through the planning process, changes on the landscape and changing recreation and resource needs are identified. These factors may lead to proposed changes to the boundary or SBES in a master plan, under the authority in Manual Code (MC) 2212, MC 2105.2, MC 2210.03, s. 23.094, Wis. Stats and NR 51.60 Admin. Code.

Acquisition Authority

An acquisition authority is created by the NRB, which allows the department to acquire land for a specific purpose/land use. An example of this is the authority to purchase land for Devil's Lake State Park. This authority identifies a targeted area on the landscape within a project boundary to be used for state park purposes. Another example is the Statewide Public Access authority, which allows the department to acquire lands adjacent to rivers and lakes to provide public access to waterways. This authority does not have specific project boundaries; it is statewide in nature. As such, it allows lands to be acquired along these water features anywhere in the state. New, or changes to, existing acquisition authorities are sometimes proposed as a part of the master plan.

Acquisition Goal

When an acquisition authority is created by the NRB, an acquisition acreage goal for that authority is also established. This is the total acreage that can be acquired by the department under that specific acquisition authority. Acquisition goal changes are sometimes proposed as a part of the master plan.

Property Naming

Under the authority of MC 2281.1, the NRB has the authority to name a property that has not been expressly named by the Legislature. Property name changes are sometimes proposed during a master plan.

Property Re-designation

Under the authority of NR 1.415, Wis. Admin. Code, the NRB has the authority to periodically review land use designations (acquisition authorities) to determine whether a re-designation will secure better management. Property re-designations are sometimes proposed during a master plan.



CHAPTER 3 : REGIONAL AND PROPERTY ANALYSIS

The Regional and Property Analysis component of this plan describes the ecological, cultural, economic, and recreational context of the Western Prairie region and the considerations for planning that arise from that context. Regional context characterizes property resources within the ecological landscape and highlights their degree of significance both regionally and locally. This analysis identifies important ecological and recreational needs of the region, and potential social demands or constraints affecting these properties.

The regional analysis is a useful tool for evaluating the importance of each property in meeting the region's needs. The regional boundaries for this plan are based on the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape. The analysis describes the existing natural resources, recreational, and socio-economic context of the Western Prairie.

ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES OF WISCONSIN

The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (WDNR, 2015a) is a reference book that delineates the 16 Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin. Ecological landscapes are areas with similar ecology and management potential. Each landscape chapter within the book contains descriptions of ecological resources and socioeconomic condition descriptions of Wisconsin's role in sustaining these resources within regional and global perspectives and management opportunities best suited to the region. This analysis draws from Chapter 23 of The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin, which describes the Western Prairie. Descriptions of natural resources, socio-economic characteristics and recreational resources for this region are provided in great detail in Chapter 23 of The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin. The entirety of this chapter is incorporated by reference for purposes of this planning document. All chapters of this reference compendium, including some that compare and contrast regional attributes, are accessible on the Wisconsin DNR website (dnr.wi.gov) keywords "Ecological Landscapes" then "Western Prairie."

WESTERN PRAIRIE

The Western Prairie (WP) Ecological Landscape covers St. Croix and half of Pierce counties, with small portions of Polk and Dunn counties. It encompasses 1,090 square miles (697,633 acres) and represents 1.9% of Wisconsin's total area. Figure 1.1 shows the WP landscape in relation to the other Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin.

This landscape is Wisconsin's Prairie Pothole Region: a rolling glaciated topography of native prairie, pothole lakes and scattered ponds and wetlands, most notably within a grassland management complex known as the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area; a collaborative conservation effort shared by federal, state, local, and citizen-based natural resource organizations.

The lower St. Croix River on the western border is part of the St. Croix-Namekagon National Scenic Riverway. The Willow, Kinnickinnic and Apple rivers are the major secondary streams. The Kinnickinnic River above River Falls is a designated Outstanding Resource Water and is known for some of the highest numbers of naturally reproducing trout per mile in the United States.

Bedrock that underlies the surface of the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape was deposited in the Paleozoic Era and is predominantly sandstone and dolomite. Major formations are till plains, end moraines, and outwash plains. The dominant soil is well-drained and loamy with a silt loam surface. Historically, vegetation consisted of the largest



percentage of tallgrass prairie and brush habitat of all the ecological landscapes in the state. Changes to the landscape have occurred over time and agricultural lands have replaced many of the prairies, brush, and grasslands. Almost half the current vegetation in the landscape is agricultural crops and another third of the area is nonnative grassland with smaller areas of open water, open wetlands, and urban areas. Large forests are generally scarce; found mostly along the river corridors. These include maple-basswood and oak-hickory with lesser amounts of lowland hardwoods.

ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This section summarizes the ecological characteristics and management opportunities that exist in the Western Prairie. Information is sourced from numerous documents, primarily:

- The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin: an assessment of ecological resources and a guide to planning sustainable management (WDNR, 2015a)
- Rapid Ecological Assessments (O' Connor, Staffen, & Doyle, 2018) (Isenring & Staffen, 2011)
- Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WDNR, 2015c)

The most extensive management opportunity offered in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape is for grasslands (WDNR, 2015a). Though native prairie acreage has been reduced to very small scattered remnants, the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, established in 1999, and the scattered federal Waterfowl Production Areas have protected several large areas of open (nonforested) landscape, and these now represent the best chances to maintain or increase habitat conditions required by many important grassland species, especially birds. The grasslands of the Western Prairie have supported many rare and declining grassland birds, including species that are area sensitive or have other specific habitat needs that are not being met in most other open areas of the state.

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) (Map A-2) delineates the boundary for a collaborative management, multi-partner project within this landscape. At present, department HRA-designated properties consist of approximately 3,880 acres that showcase many native prairie plants and wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat. The department acreage goal within the WPHRA project area is 15,000 acres. Rare prairie pothole features occur here and provide the eastern most extent of a vast prairie pothole region that stretches across Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana and south-central Canada. The WPHRA project area includes prairie remnants from one of the largest prairies once present in Wisconsin.

Protecting and restoring grassland, wetland and oak savanna habitat within the WPHRA is a partnership goal with many agencies and private conservation organizations such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Croix County, Town of St. Joseph, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Landmark Conservancy, Star Prairie Land Trust, Standing Cedars, Carpenter Nature Center, Pheasants Forever, The Prairie Enthusiasts, and Ducks Unlimited. The intent is to protect and restore suitable habitat throughout the WPHRA in a checkerboard pattern, combining working farms with prairie, savanna and wetlands.

The goal of the WPHRA partnership project is to permanently protect 20,000 acres of native grassland and wetland habitat, about 10% of the historical grassland and wetland acreage within this ecological landscape. The project area includes remnants of one of the largest prairies historically occurring in the state, along with a mix of prairie pothole ponds, lakes, and marshes. The scope of the project is based on biodiversity and ecosystem management concepts.

Historically, parts of this ecological landscape (especially the northwestern portion) contained a dense concentration of the small shallow seepage lakes referred to as “prairie potholes.” The concentration of such “pothole” ponds and



Chapter 3: Regional and Property Analysis

associated wetlands in the former prairie landscape of southwestern Polk and northwestern St. Croix counties is unique in Wisconsin, and the potential for restoring the rich mosaic of prairie, sedge meadow, marsh, and open water that formerly occurred there should be pursued to the degree possible.

Priorities for the WPHRA include preservation of both small native prairie remnants and large blocks of surrogate grassland suitable for grassland birds. Within the WPHRA there are four Bird Conservation Areas (BCA), designated by a USFWS Joint Venture with DNR: Star Prairie BCA, Willow River BCA, Erin Prairie BCA, and Rush River BCA. These areas are used to strategically concentrate grassland restoration work for maximum benefit to grassland birds. Grassland and wetland habitats are restored in strategically scattered blocks throughout the area. An assessment of quality prairie remnants within the project area was completed early in the feasibility stage of the WPHRA.

Unique features and significant management opportunities noted within this section are associated with distinctive natural communities, aquatic features, and select habitats. This relationship is portrayed in Table 3.1 (below) taken directly from The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (WDNR, 2015a).



Table 3.1. Ecological Features and Associated Natural Communities, Aquatic Features, and Selected Habitats

| Ecological Feature | Associated Natural Communities, Aquatic Features, and Selected Habitats |
|---|--|
| <p>Grasslands: Prairies, sedge meadows, surrogate grasslands, pastures, savannas</p> | <p>Oak Opening Dry Prairie Dry-mesic Prairie Emergent Marsh Mesic Prairie Wet Prairie Southern Sedge Meadow Northern Sedge Meadow Surrogate Grasslands Submergent Marsh Wild Rice Marsh Ephemeral Pond Inland Lake</p> |
| <p>Lower St. Croix River corridor</p> | <p>Northern Dry-Mesic Forest Southern Dry Forest Southern Mesic Forest Floodplain Forest Oak Openings Oak Woodland Cedar Glade Alder Thicket Shrub-carr Wet Prairie Bedrock Glade Dry Cliff Wet Cliff Warmwater River</p> |
| <p>Kinnickinnic River corridor</p> | <p>Northern Dry-Mesic Forest Southern Dry-Mesic Forest Southern Mesic Forest Oak Openings Oak Woodland Dry Prairie Sand Prairie Dry Cliff Wet Cliff Coldwater Stream Coolwater Stream</p> |
| <p>Coldwater and coolwater streams</p> | <p>Coldwater Stream Coolwater Stream Springs and Spring Runs</p> |
| <p>Miscellaneous opportunities</p> | <p>Scattered populations of rare species and natural communities</p> |

An “ecological feature” is a natural community or group of natural communities or other significant habitats that occur in close proximity and may be affected by similar natural disturbances or interdependent in some other way. Ecological features were



defined as management opportunities because individual natural communities often occur as part of a continuum (e.g., prairie to savanna to woodland, or marsh to meadow to shrub swamp to wet forest) or characteristically occur within a group of interacting community types (e.g., lakes within a forested matrix) that for some purposes can more effectively be planned and managed together rather than as separate entities. This does not imply that management actions for the individual communities or habitats are the same. See Chapter 7, “Natural Communities, Aquatic Features, and Selected Habitats of Wisconsin,” for definitions of natural community types.

ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES – LANDSCAPE LEVEL

An ecological management opportunity refers to a chance to sustain or restore the environment in or to an ecologically beneficial state. Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (WDNR, 2015a) lists the following as outstanding opportunities for management within the Western Prairie:

- Grassland management at large scales is still possible here. The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area will be the primary project used to achieve grassland management goals by Wisconsin DNR and its partners.
- The St. Croix River and its corridor of wetlands, prairies, and forested bluffs represent an exceptionally important complex of natural features. Among the biologically richest rivers in Wisconsin, it has exceptionally high value for rare fish and mussels. Natural communities here are used heavily by migratory and resident birds.
- The Kinnickinnic River valley from River Falls to the St. Croix River stands out for its diverse array of natural communities, bedrock and aquatic features, and numerous rare species populations.
- Scattered prairie, savanna, and forest remnants of high ecological value need to be identified and protected where possible. Oak Openings were formerly common here (over 10% cover). The remnants present today occur mostly on drier, steeper sites not converted for agriculture. There is restoration and management potential for increasing oak opening and savanna areas.
- The spring-fed upper reaches of several coldwater and coolwater streams offer opportunities to protect important aquatic habitats.
- Miscellaneous opportunities include scattered rare species populations, natural communities, and habitats not discussed elsewhere.



Considering Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan identifies ecological priorities within each Ecological Landscape. Priorities represent the natural communities in each Ecological Landscape that are most important to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). This concept is represented by the highlighted “priorities” section shown in the center of Figure 3.1. SGCN are native wildlife species with low or declining populations that are most at risk of no longer being a viable part of Wisconsin’s fauna. The center “priorities” can also be used to determine which natural communities provide the most habitat for SGCN and rare plants (Figure 3.1). For detailed information specific to the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape and these properties, including lists of species and the habitats with which they are associated, please see the Wildlife Action Plan and the appendices in the property-specific Rapid Ecological Assessments (O’ Connor, Staffen, & Doyle, 2018).

Rare Animals

Wisconsin’s Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) Working List includes those animal species that are listed either at the Federal or State level. As of 2009, NHI documented 55 rare species within the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape including 11 birds, three herptiles, 19 fishes, and 22 invertebrates. These include two U.S. Endangered species, 15 Wisconsin Endangered species, 16 Wisconsin Threatened species, and 24 Wisconsin Special Concern species.

Rare Plants

The rare plant database of WDNR’s Natural Heritage Inventory contains records for 26 vascular plant species occurring within the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape that are currently listed as Endangered (six), Threatened (six), or Special Concern (14) by the State of Wisconsin.

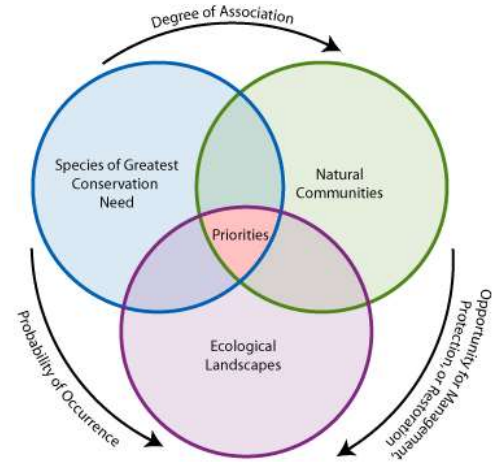


Figure 3.1. Illustration of the process used to identify Ecological Priorities in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan.

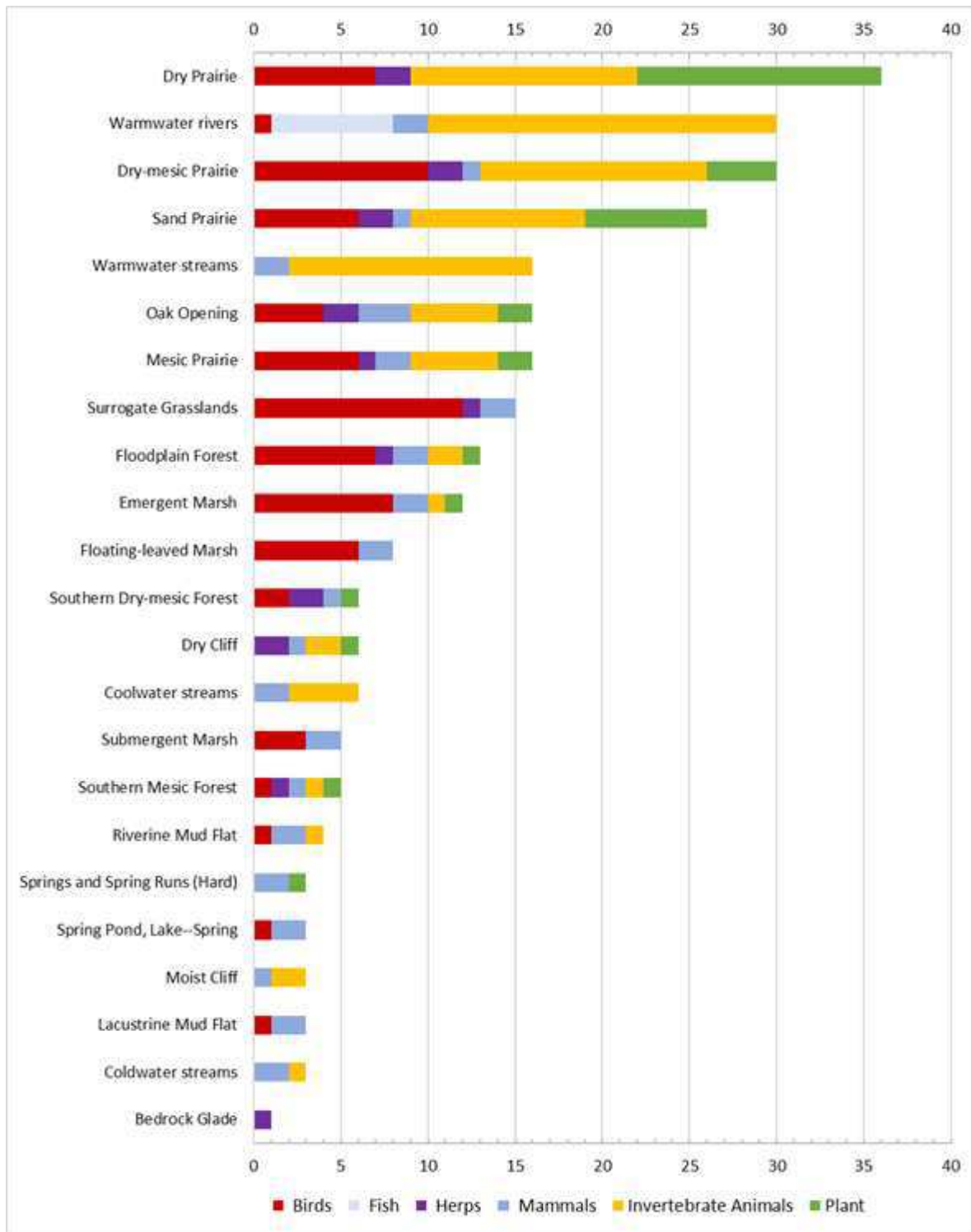


Figure 3.2. Number of SGCN and Rare Plants Highly or Moderately Associated with Natural Communities that have High or Moderate Opportunities for Protection, Restoration or Management in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape. Teams of species and natural community experts and professionals assigned association scores to each species and natural community combination and opportunity scores to each natural community and ecological landscape combination. Each combination was ranked by team participants as high, moderate, low or none.

ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT SITES

Primary Sites: Site-specific Opportunities for Biodiversity Conservation

“Primary Sites” encompass the best examples of rare and representative natural communities and include documented rare species populations with opportunities for restoration or connections. They are identified during the Rapid Ecological Assessment (REA) process and included in REA reports, specifically prepared by the department for special consideration during the master planning process. Primary Sites warrant high protection and/or restoration. All Primary Sites are considered High Conservation Value Forests for purposes of Forest Certification.

REAs also help summarize projects that collected biological inventory information about DNR properties. They document and help evaluate potential habitat for rare species and identify natural community management opportunities. The planning team considered the REAs and the primary sites they identified when planning management for the properties of the Western Prairie.

REA reports are accessible to the public via the department’s webpage. See the Rapid Ecological Assessment for the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape (WDNR 2018).

ADDITIONAL REGIONAL & PROPERTY ATTRIBUTES

Additional large-scale research and planning efforts that identify significant ecological attributes or designations are described in this section.

Land Legacy Report

The Land Legacy Report (Pohlman, Bartlet , Hanson III, Scott, & Thompson, 2006) was designed to identify Wisconsin’s most important conservation and recreation needs for the next 50 years. The following “Legacy Places” received the highest rankings (four-five stars); such rating indicates restoration and conservation actions are likely to succeed.

- Lower St. Croix River
- Kinnickinnic River
- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan: Conservation Opportunity Areas

The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WDNR 2015) identifies Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) in Wisconsin that contain ecological features, natural communities, and/or Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) habitat for which Wisconsin has a unique responsibility for protecting, when viewed from the global, continental, upper Midwest, or state perspective. The COAs in this landscape include:

- **Lower St. Croix River COA:** *continental significance* for aquatic opportunities.
- **Lower St. Croix Uplands COA:** *continental significance* for terrestrial opportunities.
- **Prairie Potholes COA:** *statewide significance* for terrestrial opportunities to manage for globally oak savanna and associated grassland species.
- **Apple River COA:** *continental significance* for aquatic opportunities.
- **Kinnickinnic River Gorge COA:** *continental significance* for terrestrial opportunities.



RECREATIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The WP ecological landscape is rich in outdoor recreation activities. The landscape has a high percentage of grassland and provides important water-based recreational resources throughout the ecological landscape; creating an environment in which many different recreational opportunities can be pursued. The abundance and diversity of natural resources makes the Western Prairie region a popular destination for people from around Wisconsin and the Midwest; especially the Twin Cities Metro Area of Minnesota.

Recreation along, on, and in Wisconsin's waters is important to the character and quality of life in the state and supports a vital tourism industry. In St. Croix and Pierce counties this is evidently true. Important rivers such as the Kinnickinnic, St. Croix, Willow, Apple, and Trimble provide many miles of inland shoreline, trout streams and canoe/kayak miles in these counties. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a sizeable and significant river resource in Wisconsin. It crosses the Western Prairie on its 154-mile path southward from the St. Croix Flowage, in Douglas County, to its confluence with the Mississippi River at the southern edge of Pierce County. The St. Croix River was designated as a National Scenic Riverway in 1968 for its remarkable scenic, recreational and geologic values. It is one of the last undisturbed, large floodplain rivers in the upper Mississippi River System. The riverway is a combination of natural and cultural resources and aesthetic and recreational values.

The recreational activities this planning process focused on are nature-based and motorized activities that generally take place in natural or undeveloped settings. The information summarized in this section and gathered during the public input process is used to determine how DNR properties, in conjunction with other public lands, can best meet the region's recreation needs. The purpose of the property and its natural resources are considered when developing the objectives and prescriptions that shape the recreation components of the master plan.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following summarizes outdoor recreational activities that occur on department properties in the Western Prairie. The information for these summaries is sourced from several documents, including:

- Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin: an assessment of ecological resources and a guide to planning sustainable management (WDNR, 2015a)
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (WDNR, 2018a)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (Pohlman, Bartlet , Hanson III, Scott, & Thompson, 2006)
- Recreation Opportunity Analysis (ROA) for Mississippi River Corridor Region (WDNR, 2018b)

The regional master planning process is organized around the natural boundaries of ecological landscapes. However, the data and information sources used in examining the recreational resources often use political boundaries. The SCORP reports data for the entirety of Wisconsin. The recreation opportunity analysis for the Mississippi River Corridor region includes information for the counties beyond just the Western Prairie landscape of Pierce and St. Croix counties. To the extent possible, this section addresses recreation opportunity in the WP ecological landscape. When information is referring to a larger region that contains the WP, it is noted as such. This section is organized by category of activity.



WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Fishing

Fishing is a popular activity in the Western Prairie. The Willow, St. Croix, Kinnickinnic, Rush and Trimbelle rivers are a special draw for this area with scenic bluffs and areas for boating, nature enjoyment and fishing.

The Mississippi River Corridor ROA (WDNR, 2018b) noted fishing from a boat, canoe and shore fishing as among the most popular activities for the region.

The department offers access through improved boat launches on many of its properties, and shore fishing is allowed on all department lands. The department has many fishery areas to protect the headwaters of streams and critical spawning habitat for fish. These areas are all open to shore fishing, but not all have boat access.

Canoeing/Kayaking

Canoeing and kayaking opportunities are plentiful within the region. High-quality water resources and a network of glacial watersheds throughout the landscape provide a variety of paddling experiences. The St. Croix, Kinnickinnic, Willow, and Apple rivers vary in character, size, flow, and surrounding vegetation and land forms creating a unique experience on each. Many department properties have canoe/kayak launches and several offer campsites that can only be accessed by paddling. Canoes and kayaks can be carried into waters from any department property.

Motorboating

The relatively few inland lakes compared to the rest of Wisconsin limits motorboating activities such as tubing and water skiing. The St. Croix River is popular for driving motorboats and the scenic bluffs along the shoreline draw boaters to enjoy swimming in the bay areas, fishing and nature enjoyment. Mississippi River Corridor Recreation Opportunity Analysis reported motorboating to be an activity that people participate in at a higher rate in the region than other portions of Wisconsin.

TRAIL-BASED ACTIVITIES

Hiking, walking, or running on trails

Hiking or walking is the most popular recreational activity undertaken in Wisconsin (SCORP). All DNR lands, and most other public lands in the region, are open to hikers. However, the level of development of trails, if they exist, varies dramatically across properties.

Bicycling

[St. Croix River Crossing Trail](#) accommodates bicycle and pedestrian traffic. It was constructed in phases 2018-2019 and designated with a bicycle and pedestrian lane on the new St. Croix Crossing bridge. It loops 4.7 miles and uses the existing Stillwater Lift Bridge, which was converted to a bicycle and pedestrian bridge.

Bicycling in the WP landscape is a diverse activity that encompasses road cycling, mountain/fat tire biking, and off-road trail riding. It is increasing in popularity and there are opportunities for new-bicycling opportunities on and off department properties in the WP. All roads, except major highways, are open to bicycling and road cyclists readily take advantage of this opportunity.



Motorized Trail Activities

Motorized trail-based recreation covers four similar, but distinct, activities: snowmobiling, ATV/UTV riding, four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle driving, and off-highway motorcycle riding. There are two-types of motorized access to department lands for these activities: access for street legal vehicles on roads maintained for public use, and trails and routes for motorized vehicles. Snowmobiles are somewhat unique in their seasonal nature and in that local and regional clubs maintain large networks of snowmobile trails that cross private lands. These regional trail networks usually use department lands primarily as connectors between long trail segments.

NON-TRAIL ACTIVITIES

Gathering Wild Edibles

Many Wisconsinites gather wild nuts, berries, plants, and mushrooms on public and private lands. In the SCORP survey, 37% of respondents indicated they gather wild edibles at some point during the year. All department properties are open to this activity.

Hunting and Trapping

Hunting and trapping are among Wisconsin's most cherished traditions and most department properties are open to hunting, except for designated areas closed to hunting for all or part of the year. Hunting is allowed on all undeveloped public property, private Managed Forest Law (MFL) land designated as open, industry owned forest lands in the region and other private lands.

The department has launched recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts to bring additional hunters into the activity. R3 is not a series of events or one-time activities meant to promote the sports of hunting and fishing, but rather an effort to continuously engage with and provide participants the opportunity to have high-quality experiences while hunting and fishing. The master planning team sought to aid R3 efforts by creating a plan that, if properly implemented, ensures the department's properties can provide the high-quality experiences in hunting and fishing that keep participants in the sports. As the Mississippi River Corridor ROA noted, this is especially important in the Western Prairie where hunting and fishing are already popular activities.

Wildlife Viewing, Outdoor Education and Interpretation

The Western Prairie grasslands, wetlands and rivers have abundant wildlife and create excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing, nature photography, and outdoor education. There are opportunities to take part in nature-based education at many of the properties. Several of the properties have developed facilities specifically for nature study and environmental education; including Willow River State Park and Kinnickinnic State Park. The Western Prairie is the best ecological landscape in Wisconsin for visitors to learn about native prairie, pothole lakes and the Kinnickinnic River Corridor. Outdoor education and nature photography are also facilitated by DNR partners in the region.

Camping

Camping takes place in a variety of settings in the Western Prairie, from primitive sites that are accessible only by hiking and offer few accommodations outside of a fire ring; to well-developed accessible sites with electrical hookups. Camping is not allowed on every property. Willow River State Park offers the full range of camping opportunities, with opportunities to expand and be developed at Kinnickinnic State Park.



LAND USE, SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Underlying socioeconomic and cultural contexts are important in understanding the needs of the public when planning the properties of the Western Prairie. Due to the method by which economic and cultural data is collected and made available, the context given here is for the entirety of the primary counties intersected by the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape, rather than for the landscape itself. The demographic and economic data for these two counties (Pierce and St. Croix) are derived from two sources: United States Census Bureau and “The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin.”

LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Ownership of public land in the Western Prairie is only 36,000 acres; or stated another way, 5.3% of all land and water in Wisconsin is publicly-owned in Western Prairie (WDNR 2005a). This is significantly less than the statewide average of 19.5% and ranks this landscape 13th of 16 with the percentage of public land ownership. This ecological landscape has the second highest percentage of land in agriculture with 71% in Pierce County and 66% for St. Croix County (WDNR, 2015a)

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population, Income, and Housing

The two counties that make up the majority of the WP EL are traditionally rural and agricultural but are rapidly coming under the influence of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The population density of the WP counties is reflective of the region’s rapid growth with 97 persons per square mile (statewide average ~ 105 persons/mi²). As of 2010, the total population of Western Prairie counties was 125,364 people. This approximates 2.2% of the state’s population and is close to the average population density statewide. Rapid population growth in the Western Prairie counties is reflective of the commuters who work in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and live in this area.

Combined housing density in the WP counties is 38.7 housing units per square mile of land which is less than the state average of 48.5 units per square mile. Similar to population, the housing density is higher in St. Croix county due to the ease of the commute from the twin cities. Seasonal and recreational homes make up only combined average per county of 1.5% which is considerably lower than the statewide average of 6.3% per county.

Per capita income is generally higher than the statewide average which likely indicates that many Western Prairies households have two wage earners. Unemployment rates are close to the statewide average of 3-4%.

Economic Sectors

Economic sectors accounting for the highest percentage of jobs in the WP are government, tourism-related, manufacturing (non-wood), retail trade and health care/social services. Other important sectors are agriculture, fishing, hunting, and construction (WDNR, 2015a).

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The history of human resource use and settlement in the WP is fragmentary and often poorly understood. There are many gaps of understanding of the cultural evolution of the early peoples in the Western Prairie. It is likely that during the Euro-American settlement, the Santee Dakota people inhabited this part of the state. In the 18th century, the Chippewa people had also moved into this area which led to tensions and feuding between the two tribes.



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Dutch and Polish immigrants jumpstarted the expansion of agriculture in the area with only four farms in 1850 that multiplied to 5,295 by 1890. Farming in Western Prairie counties reached its maximum in 1900 with 6,466 farms. Over the early part of the 20th century, the type of farming in Western Prairie underwent some fundamental changes with the increased emphasis on dairy farming. Farm numbers in the WP decreased 11% between 1970 and 2002 with 3,810 farms in 1970 and 3,374 in 2002. This ecological landscape has the second highest percentage of land in agricultural.

Currently the WP counties are primarily rural and agricultural but are rapidly coming under the influence of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Population and housing density remain below state averages but are rapidly increasing, especially in St. Croix County.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The following information summarizes ecological and recreation considerations for planning and management in the Western Prairie. This section is meant to be a summary of the type of information the department uses when making master planning decisions. Information is sourced from numerous documents, including:

- The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin: an assessment of ecological resources and a guide to planning sustainable management (WDNR 2015)
- Rapid Ecological Assessments (O' Connor, Staffen, & Doyle, 2018)
- Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WDNR 2015)
- Terrestrial and Wetland Habitat Priorities
- Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (WDNR, 2018a)
- Recreation Opportunity Analysis (ROA) for the Mississippi River Corridor Region (WDNR, 2018b)

The master planning process accounts for both ecological and recreation considerations. Though the two may seem distinct, they are intertwined as outdoor recreation opportunities are shaped by the ecological characteristics of a property. The ecological information presented here also influences recreation planning on DNR properties.

ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pre-planning analysis revealed the following significant management opportunities for DNR properties within the Western Prairie:

- Grasslands: Prairies, Surrogate Grasslands, Savannas. Grassland management at large scales is still possible here. The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area will be the primary project used to achieve grassland management goals by Wisconsin DNR and its partners.
 - Scattered prairie, savanna, and forest remnants of high ecological value need to be identified and protected where possible. Oak Openings were formerly common here (over 10% cover). The remnants present today occur mostly on drier, steeper sites not converted for agriculture. There is restoration and management potential for increasing oak opening and savanna areas.
- Lower St. Croix River Valley - The St. Croix River and its corridor of wetlands, prairies, and forested bluffs represent an exceptionally important complex of natural features. Among the biologically richest rivers in Wisconsin, it has exceptionally high value for rare fish and mussels. Natural communities here are used heavily by migratory and resident birds.
- Kinnickinnic River Valley, Floodplain, and Adjoining Bluffs - The Kinnickinnic River valley from River Falls to the St. Croix River stands out for its diverse array of natural communities, bedrock and aquatic features, and numerous rare species populations.
- Coldwater and Coolwater Streams. The spring-fed upper reaches of several coldwater and coolwater streams offer opportunities to protect important aquatic habitats.



Chapter 3: Regional and Property Analysis

Natural Communities and Priority Habitats on DNR-managed properties

Natural communities and priority habitats on DNR properties are the bedrock considerations for master planning. These define the ecological resources present on a property. In seeking to maximize habitat and wildlife benefits within the constraints of fiscal resources available, DNR created a list of priority habitats. The top-rated priority habitats for western Wisconsin are listed in Table 3.2. Reference source not found.. “Western Wisconsin DNR Priority Habitats” on properties in the Western Prairie

| Terrestrial/Wetland | Aquatic |
|---|---|
| Cool season grass | Coldwater Streams |
| Deep marsh/shallow lakes (hemi-marsh goal) | Mississippi River |
| Oak savanna/woodlands | Springs and Spring Runs (hard) |
| Old Forests (pine, relic hemlock, floodplain forest, oak) | Springs and Spring Runs (soft) |
| Remnant and planted prairie in historic prairie area | Warmwater Rivers (including large rivers) |

The natural communities present on a property influence its habitat types and often include more detailed land cover descriptions than those used in WisFIRS habitat type. The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WDNR, 2015c) and the Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (WDNR, 2015a) identify the following 23 natural communities for which there are “High” or “Moderate” opportunities for protection, restoration, or management on DNR-managed properties in the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bedrock Glade | Oak Opening |
| Coldwater streams | Riverine Mudflat |
| Coolwater streams | Sand Prairie |
| Dry Cliff | Southern Dry-mesic Forest |
| Dry Prairie | Southern Mesic Forest |
| Dry-mesic Prairie | Spring Pond |
| Emergent Marsh | Springs and Spring Runs (Hard) |
| Floating-leaved Marsh | Submergent Marsh |
| Floodplain Forest | Surrogate Grasslands |
| Lacustrine Mud Flat | Warmwater Rivers |
| Mesic Prairie | Warmwater Streams |
| Moist Cliff | |



Species-Specific Considerations

Specific plant and animal species that inhabit the priority habitats and natural communities of the Western Prairie properties were also considered in the planning process.

Priority Species Management

The Western Prairie is the only place in Wisconsin where it is possible to maintain and manage wildlife associated with a prairie-pothole habitat complex at a large scale (WDNR 2015). Priority species in the WP include grassland birds, waterfowl and pollinator species, such as the Monarch butterfly and the federally endangered, regal fritillary butterfly.

Grassland Bird Habitat Management

St. Croix and Pierce counties contain prairie grasslands which are among the highest-ranking priority landscapes for grassland bird management (Sample & Mossman, 1997).

Bird Species - Resident and Migratory

The diversity of habitats on department properties in this region offer important resources for numerous bird groups. Large interconnected grasslands and prairie pothole wetlands with their associated open water areas provide important foraging and nesting areas for migratory birds such as waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and water birds. Emergent aquatic plants such as wild rice, bidens, hard and soft-stem bulrush, cattails, smartweed, and arrowheads are present in these wetlands. Open water areas of these wetlands teem with amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates; and mudflats with abundant invertebrates and insect larvae. These areas are important to sandhill cranes, Canada geese, tundra and trumpeter swans. Migratory raptors use the open areas to hunt waterfowl, shorebirds, and other species.



Western Prairie properties lie within the U.S. Prairie Pothole Region, an area of the northern Great Plains that includes midgrass and tallgrass prairies containing thousands of shallow ponds and wetlands often referred to colloquially as “potholes.” This ecological landscape is the easternmost extension of the Prairie Pothole Region centered in the Northern Great Plains, which lies primarily west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains in the north central United States and south-central Canada (WDNR 2015). It is important to maintain populations of the many declining species of grassland and wetland birds that use these habitats. There are bird species breeding here, such as the loggerhead shrike, that are now found more frequently in areas south and west of Wisconsin. Grassland bird species with a limited state range but that nest in the Western Prairie include the western meadowlark, Henslow’s and Grasshopper sparrow, bobolink and dickcissel.

Expanses of prairie grassland communities provide nesting and foraging habitats for other migratory birds, including upland sandpipers, meadowlarks, and whip-poor-wills. Birds from the arctic and boreal regions sometimes winter here, including golden eagle, short-eared owl, rough-legged hawk, northern hawk owl, northern shrike, snow bunting, and common redpoll. These birds depend on the vast grasslands and wetlands. Other wintering birds of conservation importance include Lapland longspurs, horned larks, and snow buntings.

Game Species and Other Wildlife on Department Properties

Common game species in the area include Canada geese, ducks, ring-necked pheasant (non-native), white-tailed deer, and wild turkey. The deer populations in the Western Prairie are large compared to populations prior to Euro-American settlement. Relatively mild winters have increased winter survival and allowed the deer herd to increase.

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In recent years, this region has supported larger populations of wild pheasants than the other two department pheasant survey regions in Wisconsin. An important warmwater fishery supports northern pike, walleye, bass, and panfish. The coldwater streams are heavily used trout fishing areas and support native brook trout as well as populations of non-native brown trout and to a lesser extent, rainbow trout. The St. Croix River is one of the most important rivers for rare mussels in Wisconsin and perhaps in the Upper Midwest.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters (ORW and ERW) on wp properties

These officially designated waters (ch. NR 102.11 Wis. Admin. Code) provide outstanding recreational opportunities, support valuable fish and wildlife habitat, are not significantly impacted by human activities, and are recognized as being the highest quality waters in the state. ORWs comprise less than 1% of over 15,000 rivers, lakes, and waterbodies in WI; they typically do not have any point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water (for instance, no industrial sources or municipal sewage treatment plants) and no increases of pollutant levels are allowed (WDNR, 2016b). If a waterbody has existing point sources at the time of designation, it is more likely to be designated as an ERW. Examples include:

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW)

- Rush River (one segment totaling 25 miles)

Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW)

- St. Croix River (three segments totaling 55 miles)
- Apple River (one segment)
- Kinnickinnic River (three segments totaling 36 miles)
- Willow River (six segments totaling 9 miles)
- Parker Creek

Wetland Gem Designation

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association identifies 10 high-quality sites in the Western Prairie as "Wetland Gems" in its publication, Wisconsin Wetland Gems (Wisconsin Wetland Association, 2018). The 'gems' on DNR properties are:

- St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area
- Oak Ridge Lake on Oak Ridge State Habitat Area

Connecting Uplands to Protection of Groundwater and Surface Waters

The Western Prairie Properties and surrounding lands drain to one of the highest quality rivers in northwest Wisconsin and in the state: the St. Croix River (federally designated Wild and Scenic River). There are also numerous high-quality lakes, wetlands, and streams fed by the water moving over and through this landscape. The water quality of these surface waters and the health of the organisms they support is dependent on both the quantity and quality of the groundwater recharging them and the runoff that enters them over land. It is likely that the many acres of sand providing filtration have helped protect and enhance the quality of these surface waters over past centuries.

The soils in the area can transmit precipitation to the groundwater rapidly. Any pollutants or contaminants that contact the ground surface can affect groundwater quality directly, and surface water quality indirectly. Careful land management to prevent migration of materials applied to the land (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) is important to



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prevent seepage to groundwater or runoff to surface water. Safe transport and storage of materials that could be considered contaminants (in either groundwater or surface water) is also important on and around these properties.

RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS

Outdoor recreation in the Western Prairie is diverse. From kayaking, bicycling, camping and hiking to snowmobile riding and hunting, residents and visitors take part in a wide variety of activities. Extensive investigation into the recreation needs and opportunities of the public are recorded in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and Recreation Opportunity Analysis (ROA). The information from the SCORP and ROA used in the planning for the properties is noted in the Recreation Resources and Opportunities of the Western Prairie section of this chapter. In considering recreational opportunities the planning team considered a number of factors, including:

- Existing regional opportunities on department and other public lands.
- Public use priorities as identified by previous reports and public comments
- Ecological capabilities of individual properties to support recreational activities.

Additional Public Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Lands in the Western Prairie

This planning process is intended for Wisconsin DNR owned properties. However, to properly examine the true scope of recreation activities in the Western Prairie, department lands were considered in the context of recreational opportunity on other public lands. Thus, this planning effort considered available opportunity on lands open to the public that are not owned by DNR when addressing recreational challenges and opportunities in the Western Prairie. Prominent public conservation lands in the WP, outside this planning effort, help serve the public's recreational needs and include:

State Trails in Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

Although WP counties have almost 570 miles of recreational trails, they rank 13th out of 16, in terms of trail density. Compared to the rest of the state, there is a lower density of all trail types except snowmobile trails.

Water Trails in Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

Water trails in Wisconsin provide a network of access points, resting places and attractions for users of water craft on lakes and rivers. Those in the WP include:

- Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

County Properties in Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

County-owned lands within the WP Ecological Landscape also provide opportunities for public recreation that are complementary to state-owned (DNR) lands. Prominent examples of these public resources include:

- Pierce County Parks
- St. Croix County Parks and Forests

Federal Properties in Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

Federal forest and park lands offer opportunities for public recreation. In the WP region, these properties include:

- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, managed by National Park Service
- St. Croix Wetland Management District, Waterfowl Production Areas



- Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Important Recreation Resources

The WP EL has over 36,800 acres, or 5.3% of all land and water is publicly owned. This is significantly less than the statewide average of 19.5% and ranks this landscape 13th out of the 16 ELs in Wisconsin. Demand for places to recreate is high given the proximity of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Land cover, ownership, and land use patterns partly determine the types of recreation that are available to the public. In the WP, there is a much higher percentage of agricultural and grassland and a lower proportion of forest and wetland compared to the rest of the state. Resources available for land and water based public recreation:

- Over 12,500 acres of public waters
- 15,900 acres of state recreational lands
- 8,700 acres of federal lands
- Approximately 5,890 acres of State Parks
- 2,860 acres of State Natural Areas

The public lands in the WP EL offer a wide variety of recreational activities including hunting, fishing, trapping, motorized and nonmotorized trail activities, paddling, camping, wildlife watching and appreciation and scenic viewing. The Willow, St. Croix and Kinnickinnic rivers are a special draw for this area with scenic bluffs and areas for boating, nature enjoyment and fishing.

The number of recreational facilities such as lakes, trails and campgrounds in the WP is not as high as in other parts of the state. While not as many public facilities are available, the usership of the existing properties is high, with over half a million visits annually to Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks. Willow River State Park has the third highest visitation rate in the state. The WP counties have almost 570 miles of trails (motorized and nonmotorized) but rank 13th out of the 16 ELs in overall trail density (miles of trail per square mile of land). Similarly, the WP ranks 15th out of the 16 ELs in both the number and density of campgrounds (both public and privately owned).

Regional Recreation Needs

The Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA) (DNR 2018) that covers the WP is the chapter for the Mississippi River Corridor region. The ROA development solicited public input about popular recreation activities in Wisconsin regions, and inquired about recreational needs and shortages, through open house meetings and online public surveys. In addition, by using information gathered from the results of a 2016 survey about recreation participation and needs that was administered to a random number of Wisconsin residents, the department also developed the 2017-2022 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Together with the ROA, DNR identified recreation opportunities that the public most desired in the Mississippi River Corridor Region and the potential role of DNR properties in helping to meet these needs.

Popular activities in the WP include bicycling (all kinds); camping; canoeing/kayaking; cross-country skiing / snowshoeing; fishing from a boat, canoe or kayak and from shore; harvesting wild edibles; hiking, walking and running on trails; swimming; and wildlife/bird watching. In terms of recreation shortages and needs, additional opportunities for bicycling, camping, fishing, and hiking were commonly cited as needs by respondents in this region.



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The ROA used the information from both the SCORP survey and ROA public input to group most-needed recreation activities into high, medium, and low categories. The table below list activities ranked as future recreation considerations for the WP EL.

| Mississippi River Corridor Priority Recreation Considerations |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bicycling (touring and road riding)• Bicycling- mountain biking /off road biking• Bird or wildlife watching• Camping- developed and primitive• Canoeing or kayaking• Cross country skiing• Dog walking• Fishing- lake and river from a boat, canoe or kayak• Fishing- stream or river from a shore or wading• Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.• Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking• Hunting-big game• Nature photography• Participating in nature-based education programs• Picnicking• Snowshoeing• Visiting a beach, beach walking |

Several properties in the WP EL may have potential to meet some of the recreational considerations listed above. The planning process evaluates the potential and suitability of the properties to add or expand these activities to help meet future recreation needs.

RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS

The proximity of this ecological landscape to the Twin Cities metropolitan area has intensified the pressure for recreational opportunities on the existing state-owned properties in the WP EL. The steadily increasing population base and subsequent development in the WP counties is increasing recreational demands. Additionally, this EL has a lower percentage of land in public ownership than the fifteen other landscapes in the state. This poses a challenge to accommodate a rapidly increasing user base with a small base of public property availability.

Recreational needs and shortages are identified for this landscape in the Mississippi River Corridor Recreational Opportunities Analysis (DNR 2018). Additional opportunities for bicycling, camping, water access for canoeing and kayaking, and hiking were identified as some of the potential considerations during the property master planning process.



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APPENDIX A: PROPERTIES OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIE

Table A.1 lists all properties included in the Western Prairie Regional Master Plan. This table provides property administrative designations (e.g. State Habitat Area) and defines the NR 44-plan in which management for the property is written.

Table A.1. Properties of the Western Prairie Regional Master Plan

| Property | NR 44-Compliant Plan |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Baldwin State Habitat Area WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Bass Lake State Public Access – St. Croix | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Bierbrauer State Habitat Area-WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Casey Lake State Habitat Area WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Clay Corners State Habitat Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Clear Lake State Habitat Area-WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Cylon Wildlife Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Deer Park State Habitat Area-WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Emerald Valley State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Erin Prairie State Habitat Area-WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Kinnickinnic State Park | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Lundy Pond State Habitat Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Manion State Habitat Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Nagel State Habitat Area WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| New Richmond State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Oak Ridge State Habitat Area-WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |



Appendix A: Properties of the Western Prairie

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Oden State Habitat Area WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Osceola Creek State Habitat Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Parker Creek State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Ray Morrison Memorial State Habitat Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Rush River State Habitat Area- WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Simon Prairie State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Snake Creek State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Spring Meadow State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Star Prairie Seed Farm State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Ten Mile Creek State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Trimbelle River Headwaters Stream Bank Easement | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Wagon Landing Statewide Spring Pond | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Willow River State Habitat Area - WPHRA | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |
| Willow River State Park | Western Prairie Regional Master Plan |

Note: Certain named lands shown on DNR maps are composed entirely of easements. These lands are not listed in this table as they do not require master plans because DNR does not manage them. These lands are noted as easement areas in the Property Planning Viewer



REGIONAL LOCATOR

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Western Prairie Properties*

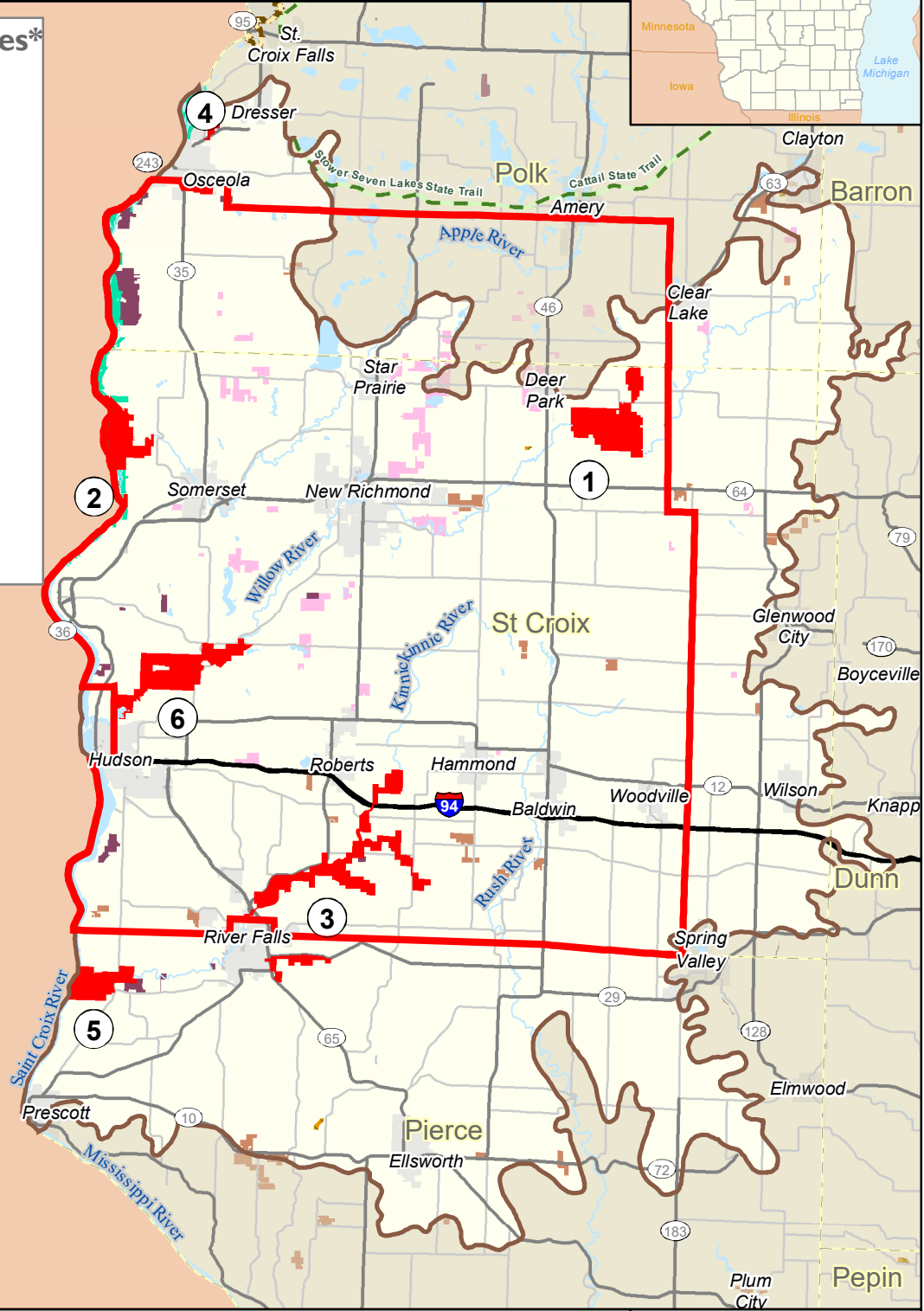
- 1 Cylon Wildlife Area
- 2 St Croix Islands Wildlife Area
- 3 Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area
- 4 Osceola Hatchery
- 5 Kinnickinnic State Park
- 6 Willow River State Park

* See Map A-2 for location of 24 Habitat Restoration properties

Project Boundaries Included in Master Plan

- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area
- Other project boundaries

Note: Project Boundary does not necessarily equal DNR Managed Land



MINNESOTA



- Western Prairie Ecological Landscape
- Surrounding Ecological Landscape
- Stewardship Grant Lands (Open to Public Access)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service Land
- National Park Service
- Voluntary Public Access Land
- NRCs Wetland Reserve Program (Closed to public access)
- State Recreation Trail
- Ice Age Trail

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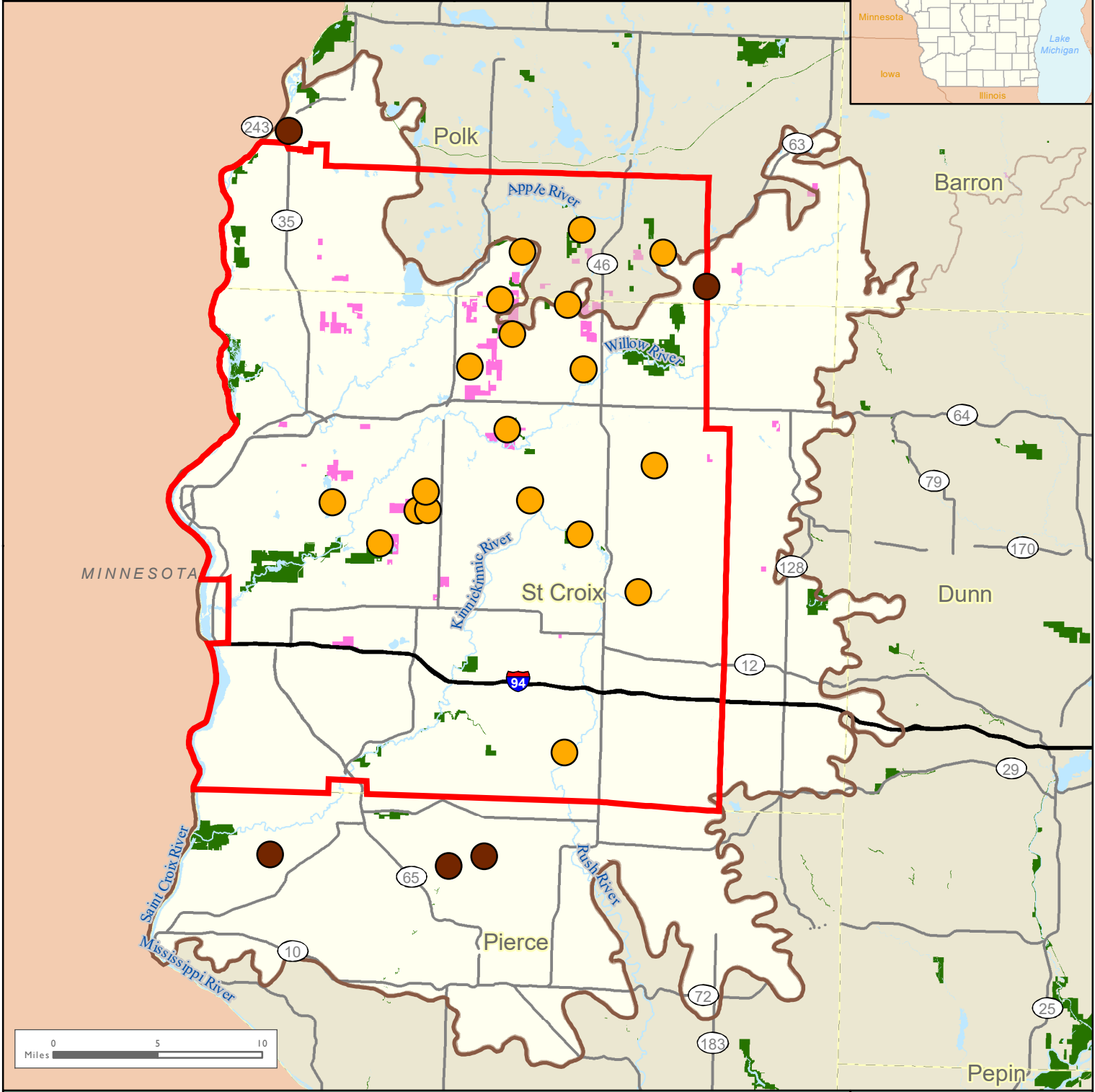
EL-WP-MP-A-I jmk

MAP A-1

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WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA (WPHRA)

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



● WPHRA property (19)

● Outside the WPHRA, with similar management (5)

Note: Points show property locations only and are not to scale.

■ DNR Managed Land

■ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Land

□ Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Project Boundary

□ Western Prairie Ecological Landscape

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August 07, 2020

EL-WP-MP-A2

jmk

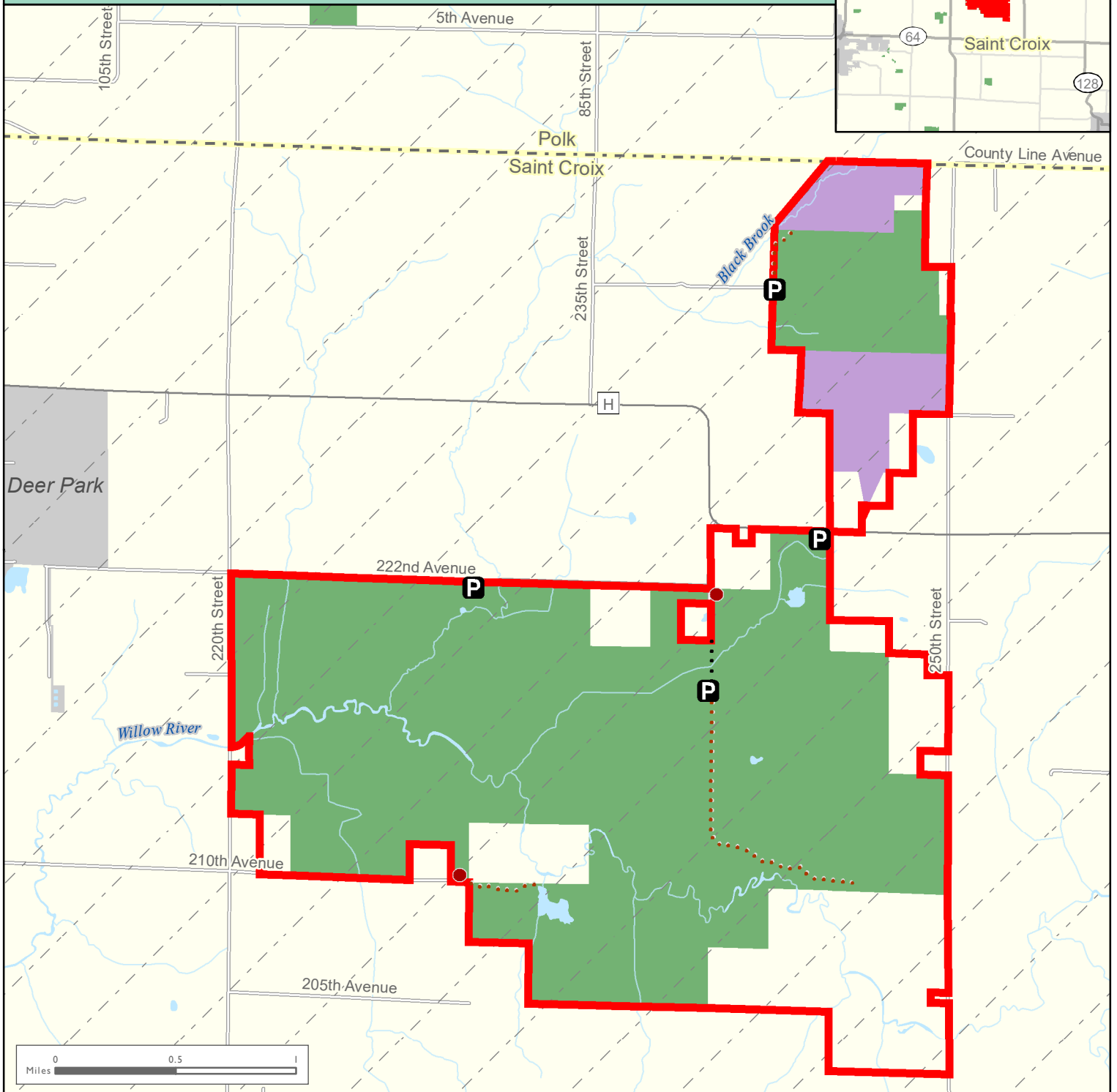
MAP A-2

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CYLON WILDLIFE AREA

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Project Boundary

- Cylon Wildlife Area
- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

DNR Fee Title

- DNR Fee Title
- DNR Easement
- Parking Lot
- Parking Area Available

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification

- Primitive Road

Motorized Public Use

- Open = **Black**
- Closed = **Red**

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Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-7345-B1 jmk

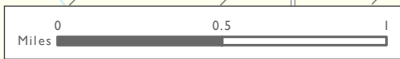
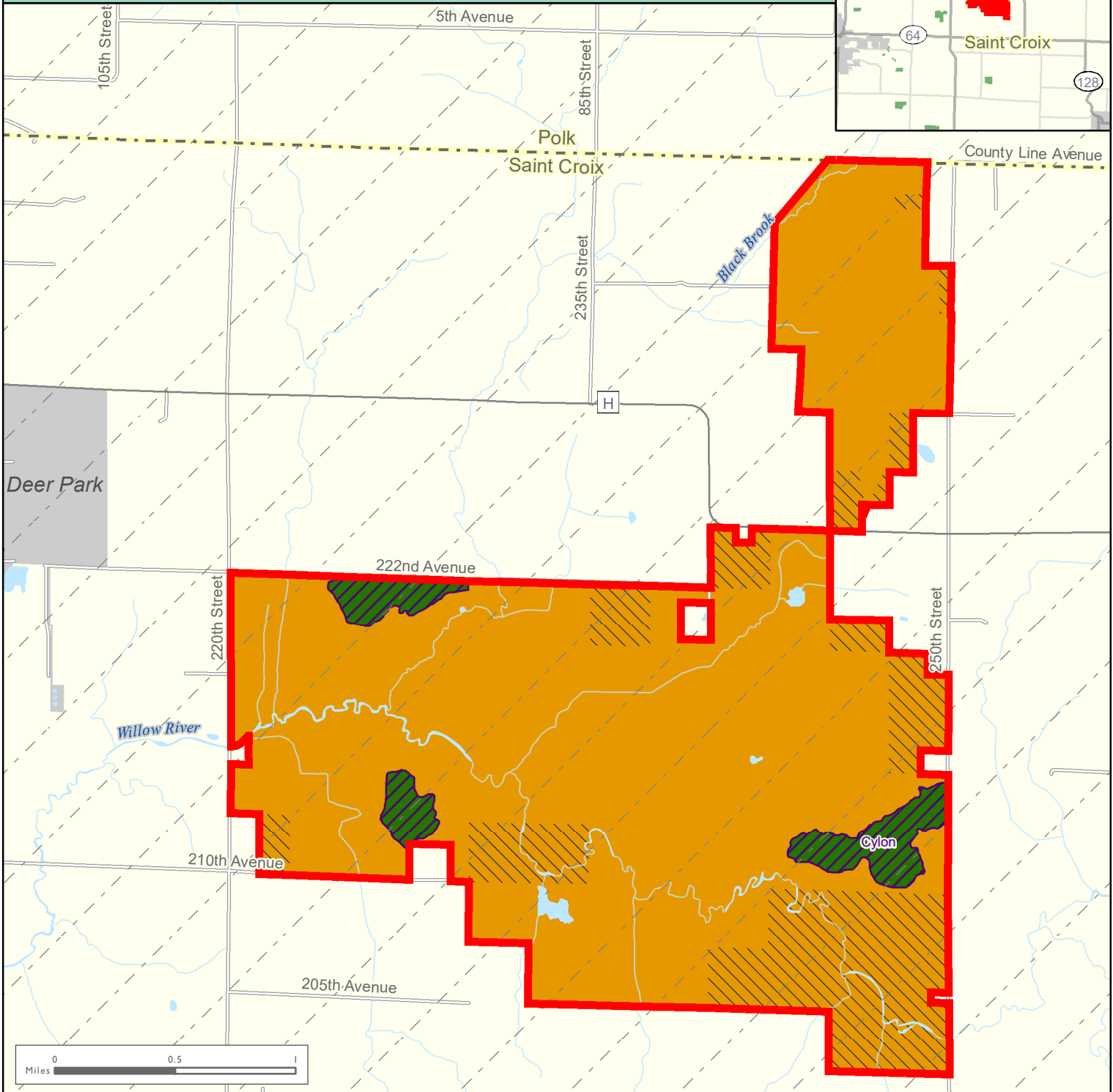
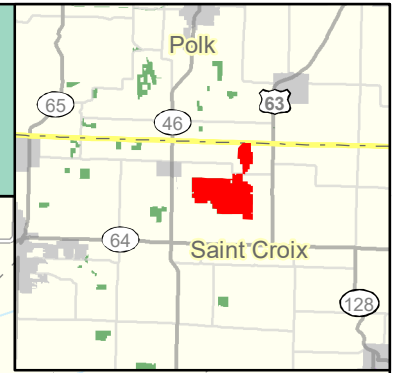
MAP B-I

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CYLON WILDLIFE AREA

LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Project Boundary

Cylon Wildlife Area

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

Habitat Management Area

Area 1: Cylon Forest, Wetlands and Grassland

Native Community Management Area

Area 2: Cylon State Natural Area

State Natural Area

Not DNR Managed Land

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Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-7345-B2 jmk

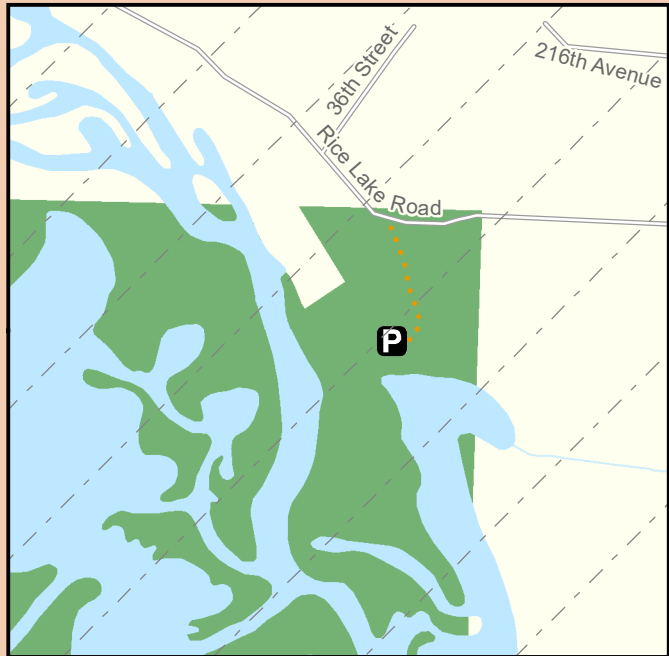
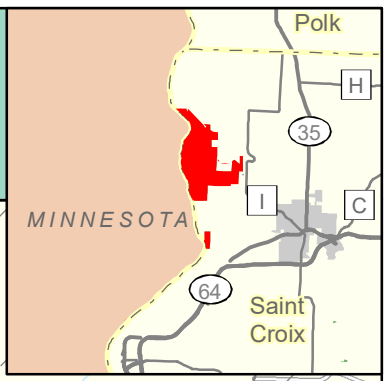
MAP B-2

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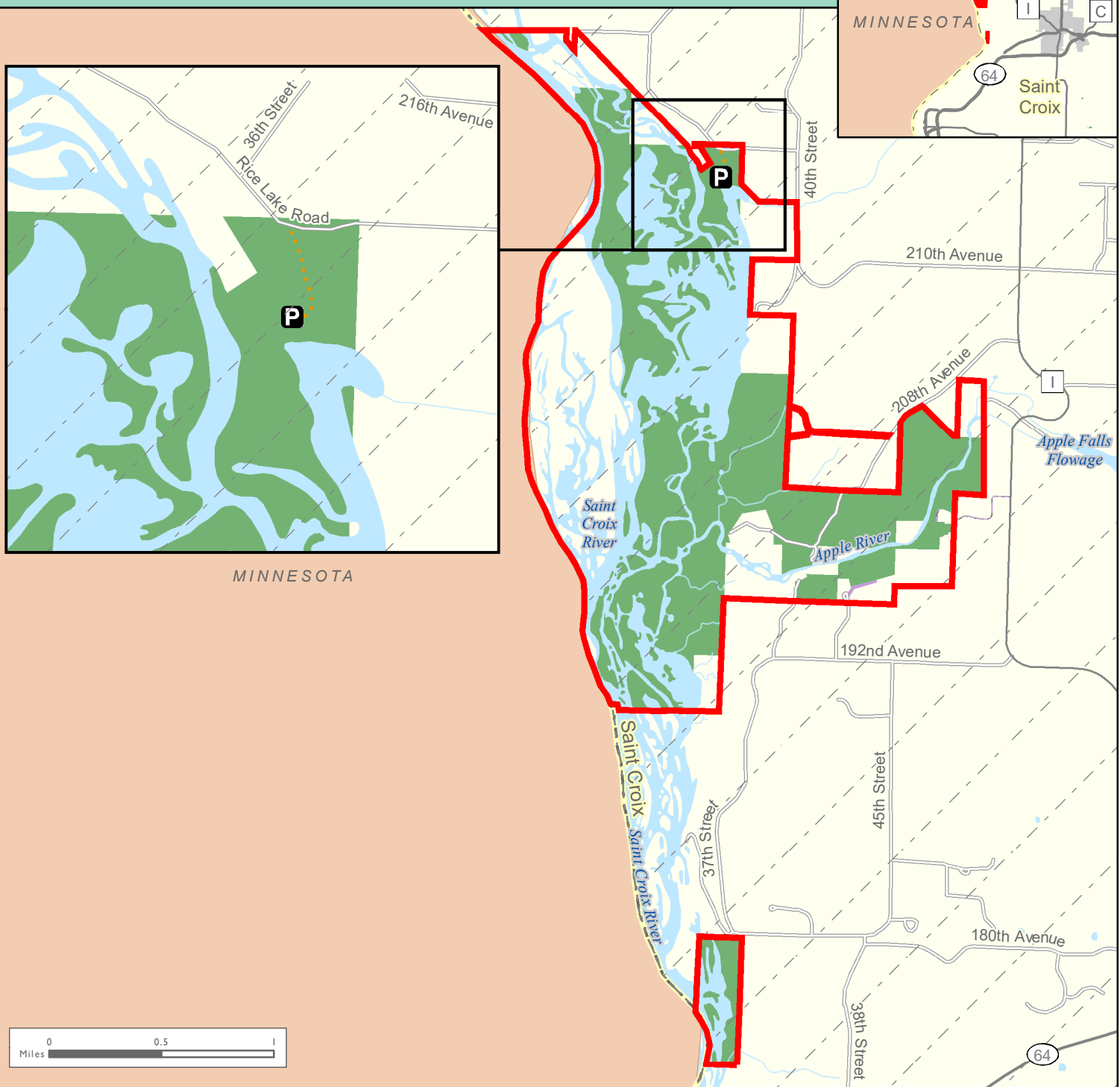
ST CROIX ISLANDS WILDLIFE AREA

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



MINNESOTA



Project Boundary

- St Croix Islands Wildlife Area
- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

- DNR Fee Title
- DNR Easement
- DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access)
- Parking Lot

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification

- Primitive Road

Motorized Public Use

Seasonal = **Orange**

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Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-8610-C1 jmk

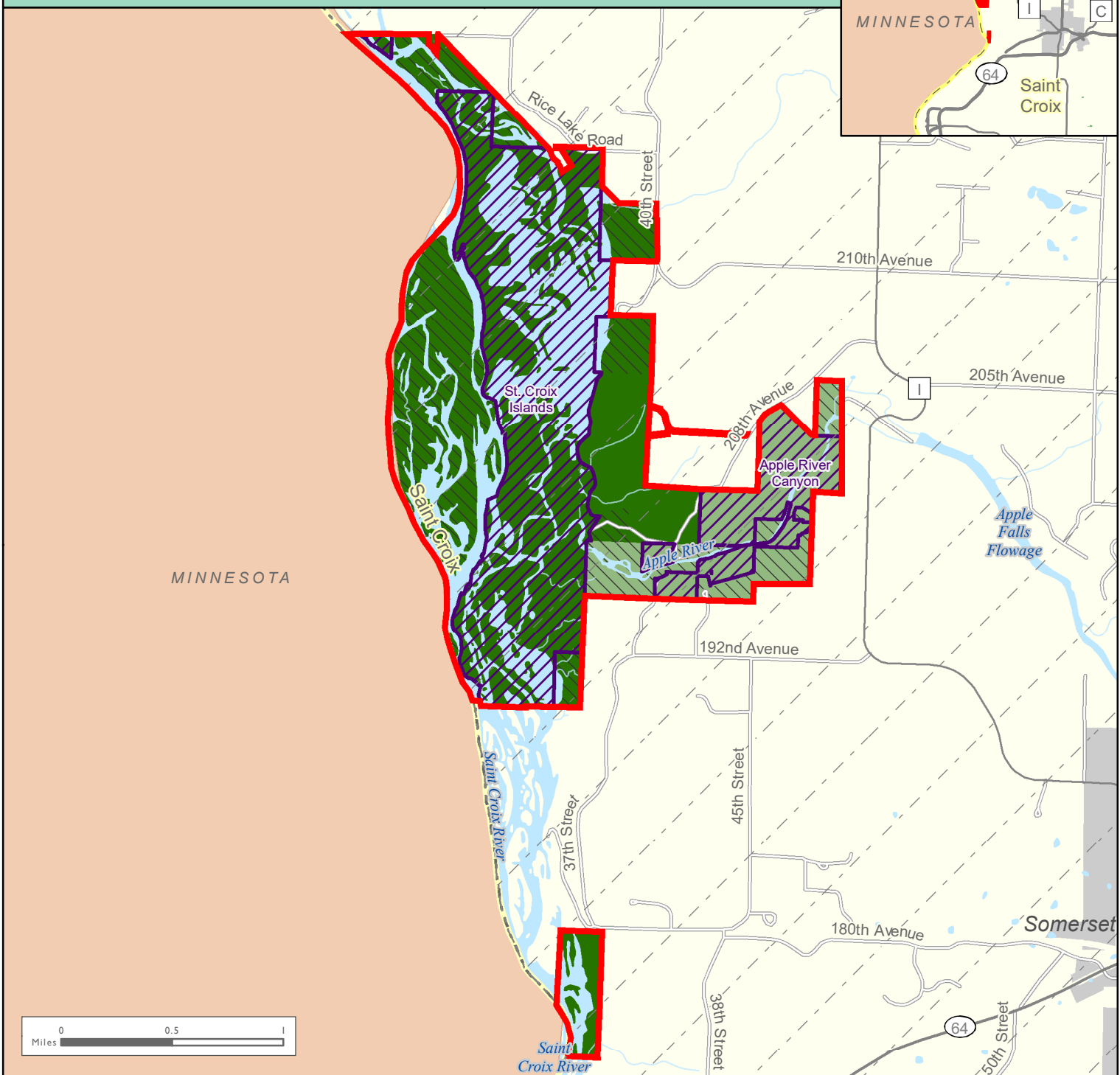
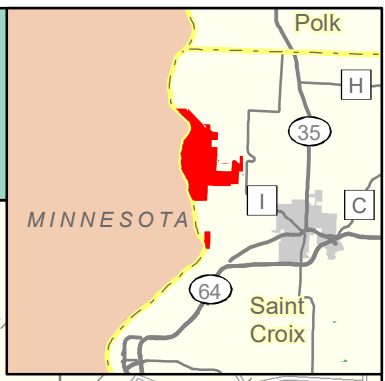
MAP C-1

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ST CROIX ISLANDS WILDLIFE AREA

LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Project Boundary

- St Croix Islands Wildlife Area
- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

Native Community Management Area

- Area 1: Islands, Floodplain and Blufflands
- Area 2: Apple River Canyon
- State Natural Area
- Not DNR Managed Land

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Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-8610-C2 jmk

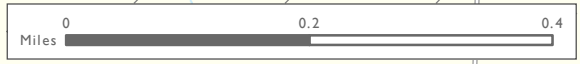
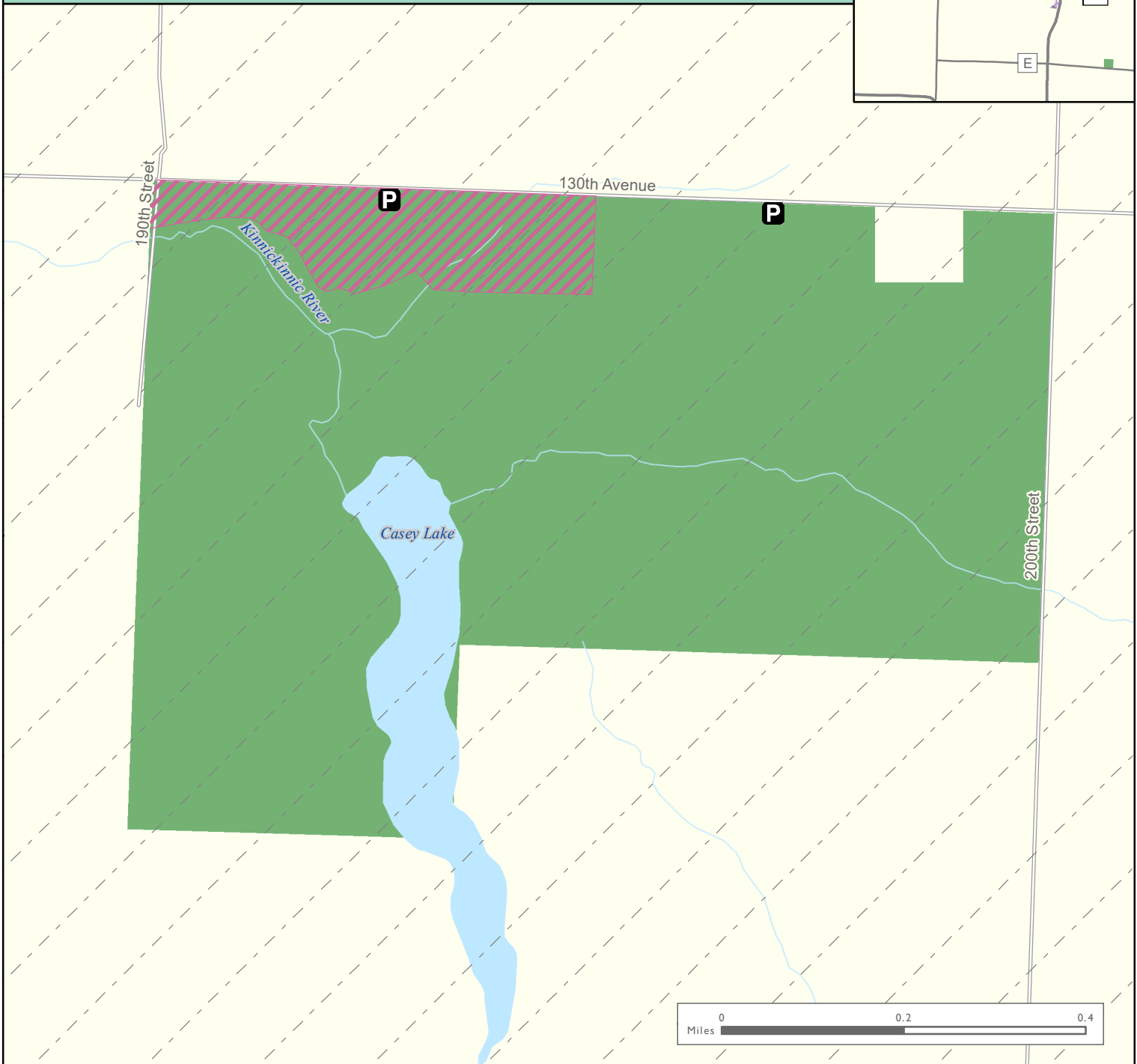
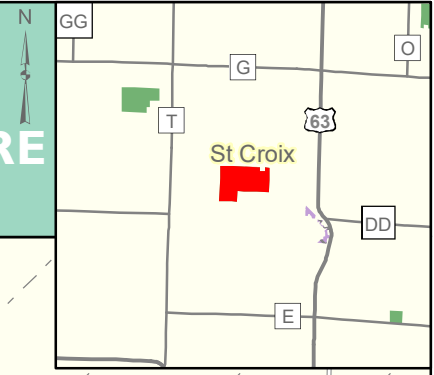
MAP C-2

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CASEY LAKE STATE HABITAT AREA - WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA




EXISTING RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Project Boundary

Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

-  DNR Fee Title
-  Parking Lot
-  Dog Training Area

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Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-8500-D jmk

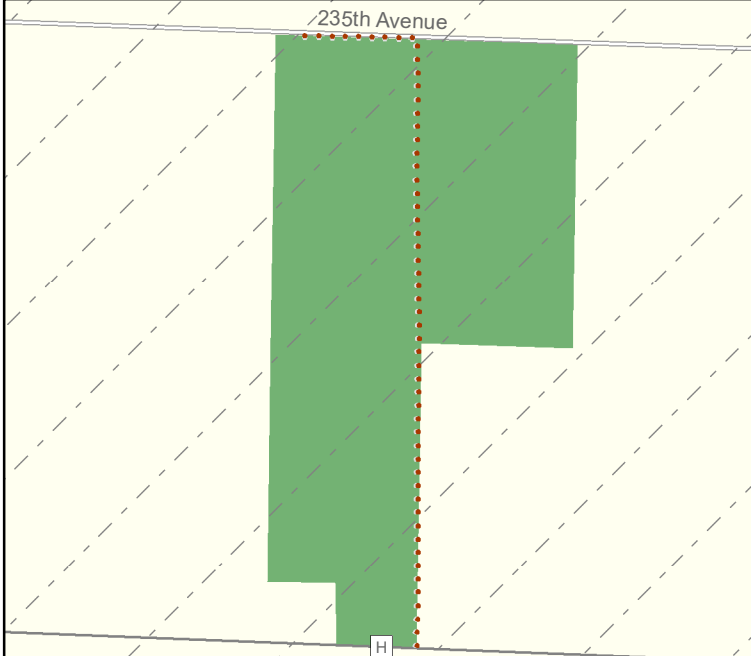
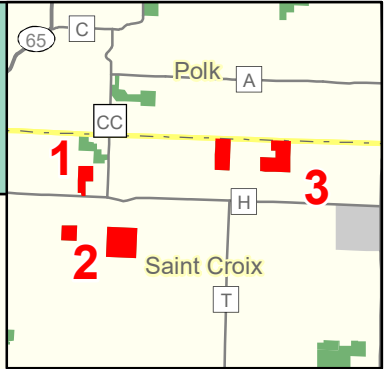
MAP D

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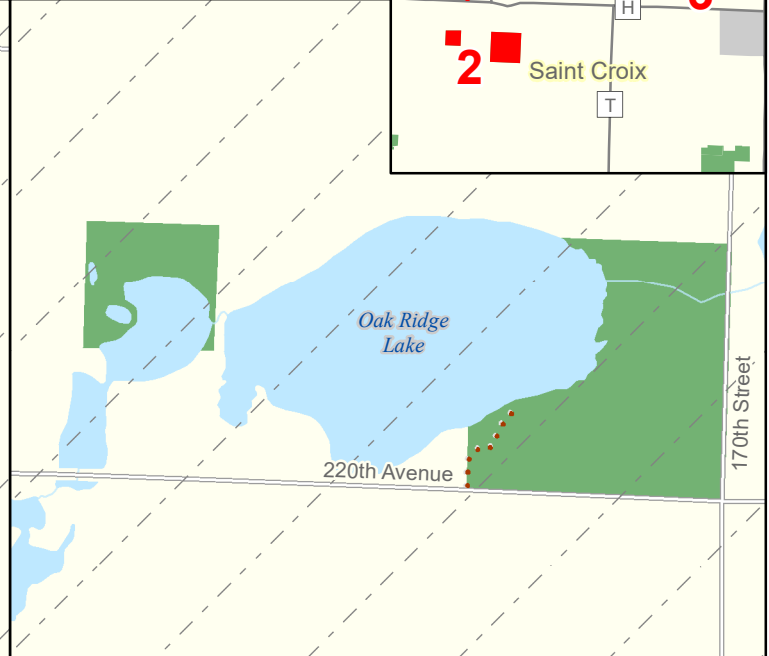
STATE HABITAT AREAS

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

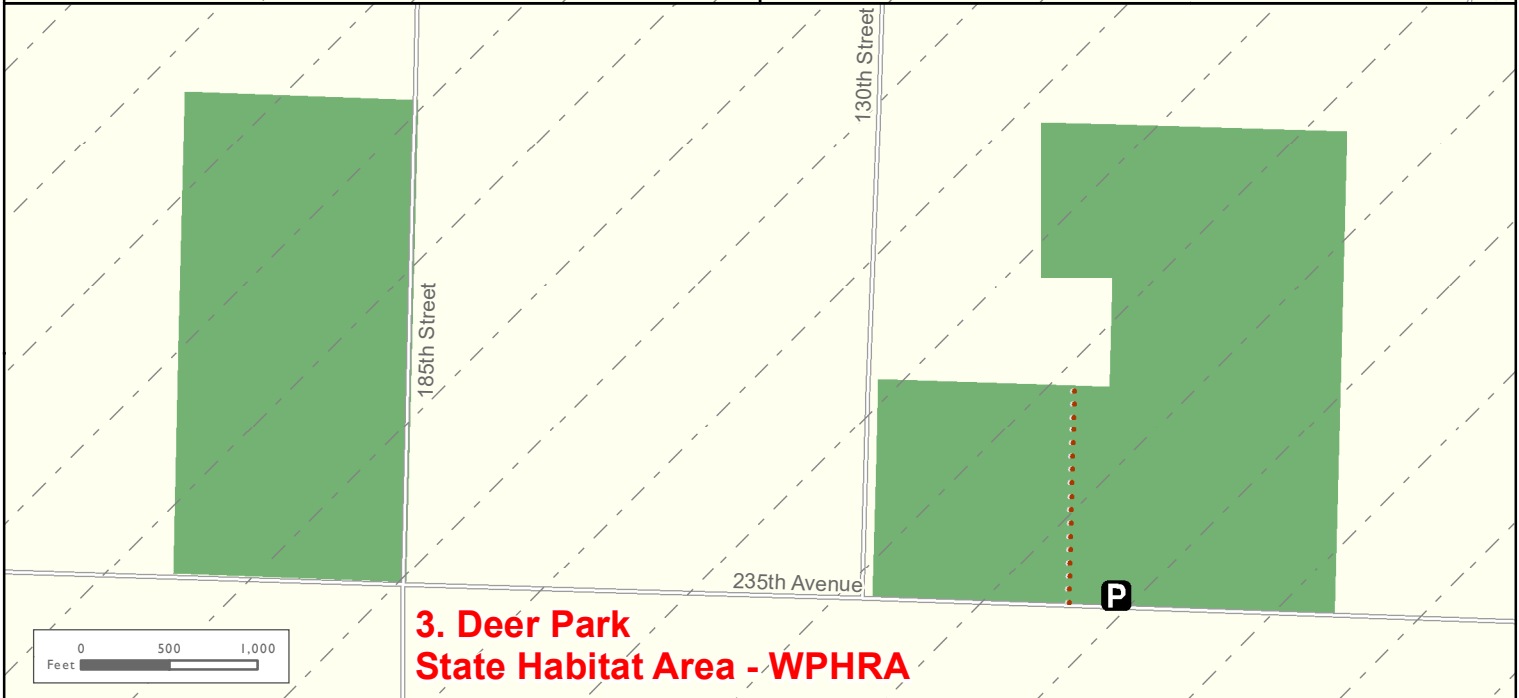
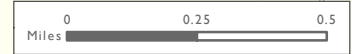
Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



1. Star Prairie Seed Farm State Habitat Area - WPHRA



2. Oak Ridge State Habitat Area - WPHRA



3. Deer Park State Habitat Area - WPHRA



Project Boundary
 Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

DNR Fee Title
 Parking Lot

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification
 Primitive Road

Motorized Public Use
 Closed = **Red**

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

 Bureau of Facilities and Lands
 Aug 15, 2020
 EL-WP-8500-E1 jmk

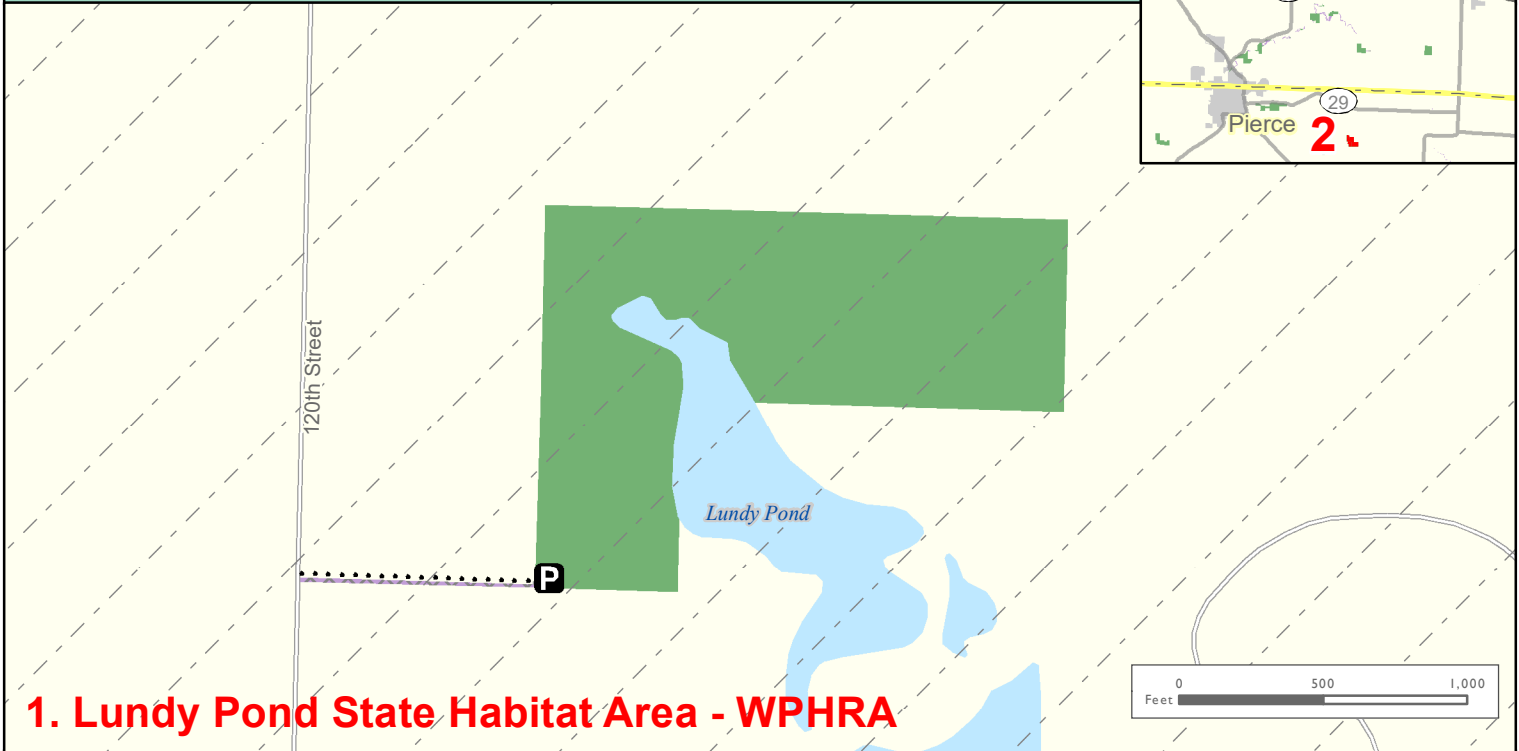
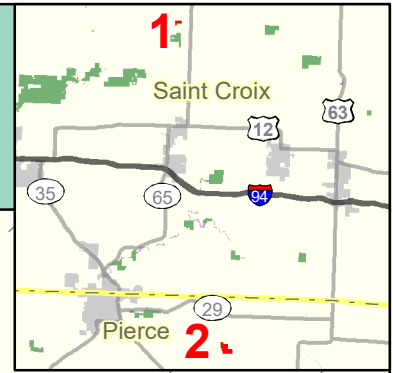
MAP E-1

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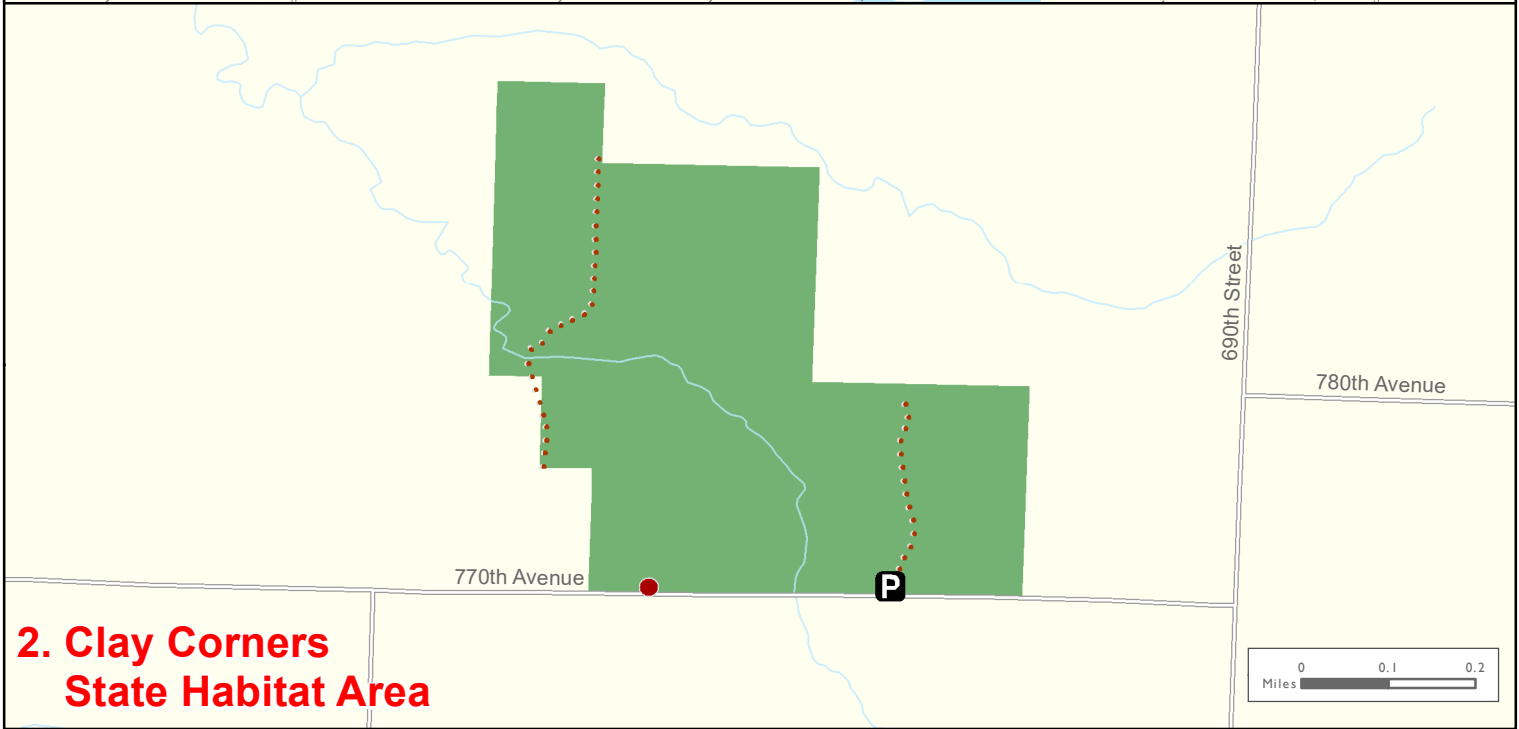
STATE HABITAT AREAS

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



1. Lundy Pond State Habitat Area - WPHRA



2. Clay Corners State Habitat Area

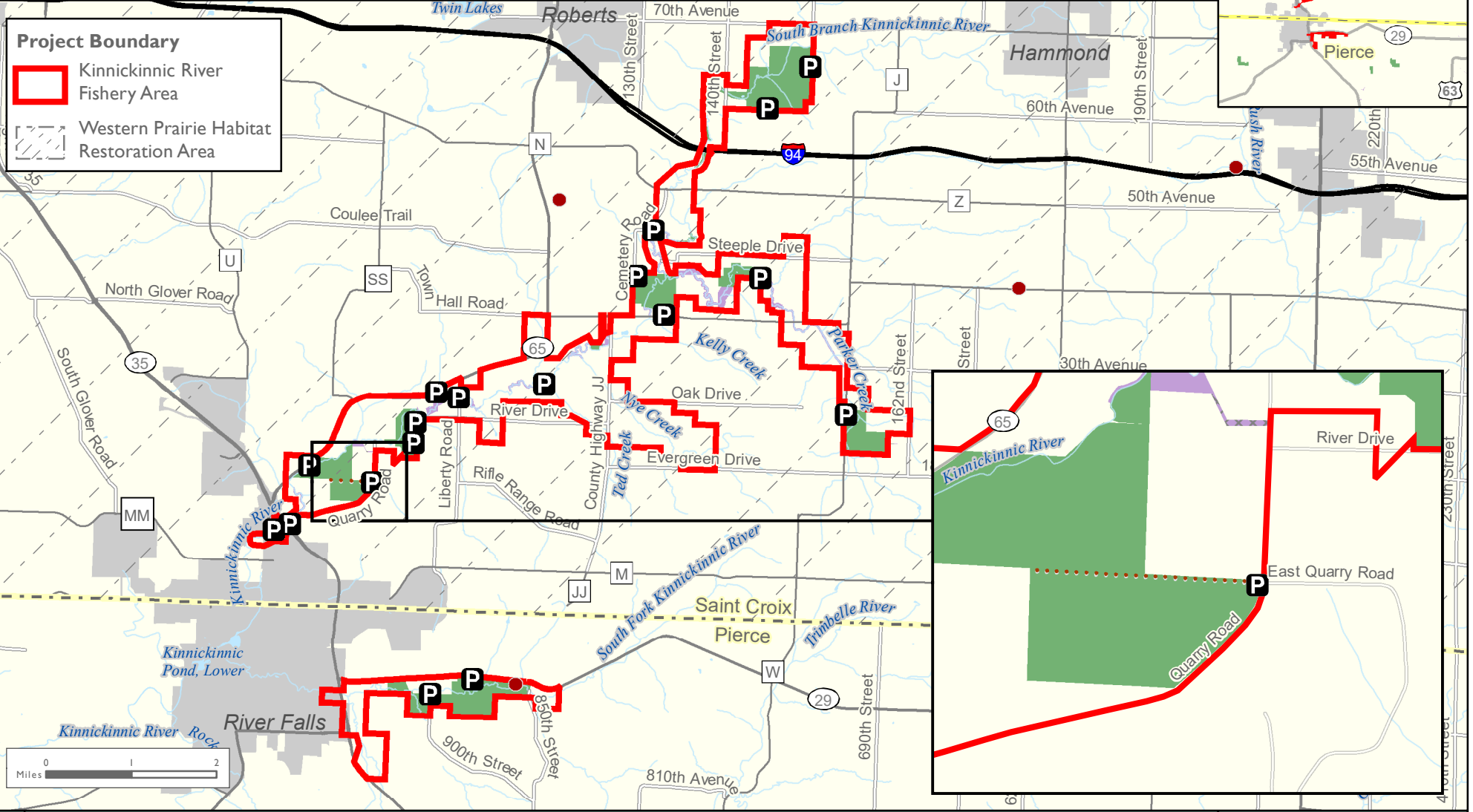
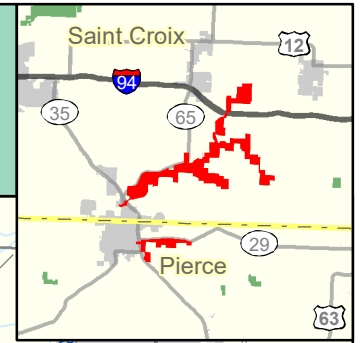
| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Project Boundary</p> Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DNR Fee Title DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access) Parking Lot Parking Area Available | <p>DNR Roads Key</p> <p>NR 44 Road Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••• Primitive Road <p>Motorized Public Use</p> <p>Open = Black</p> <p>Closed = Red</p> | <p>WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES</p> <p>Bureau of Facilities and Lands Aug 15, 2020</p> <p>EL-WP-8500-E2 jmk</p> <h1>MAP E-2</h1> |
|---|--|---|---|

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KINNICKINNIC RIVER FISHERY AREA

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



MAP F-1

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Bureau of Facilities and Lands

Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-1200-F-1 jmk

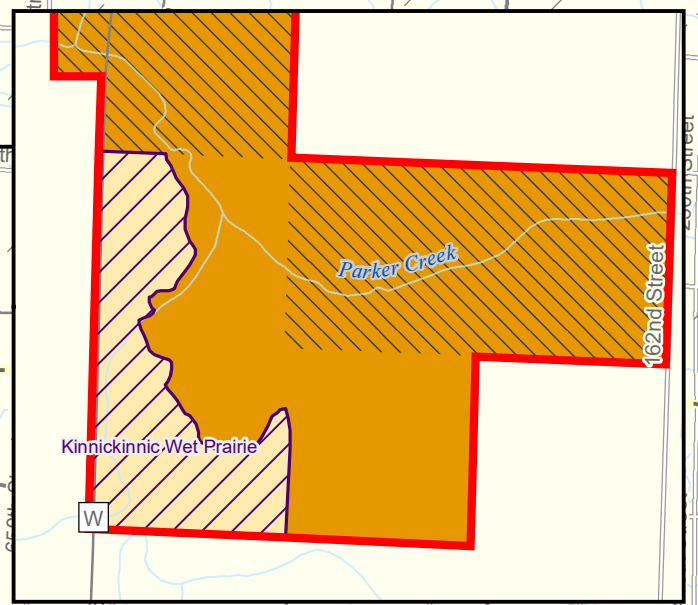
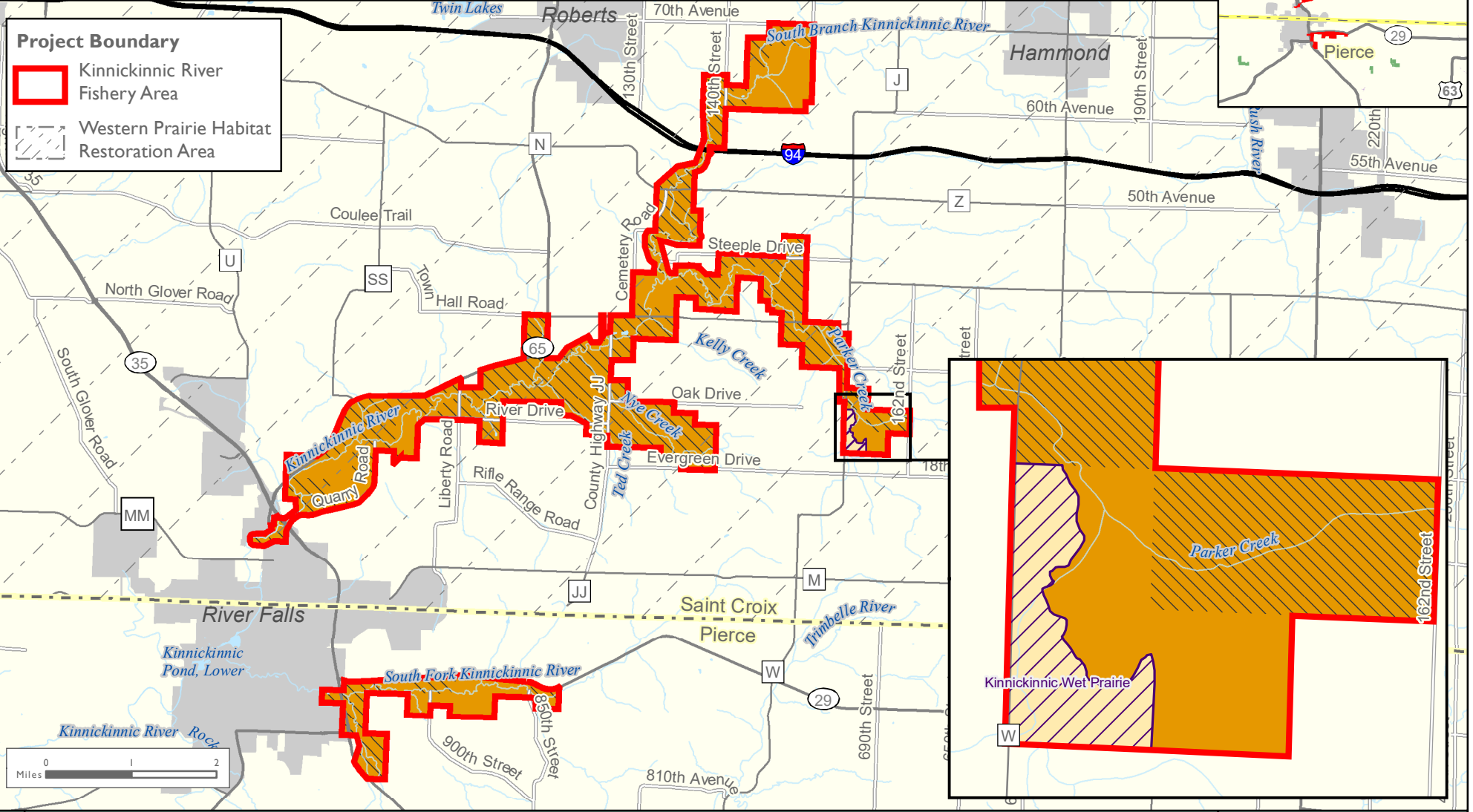
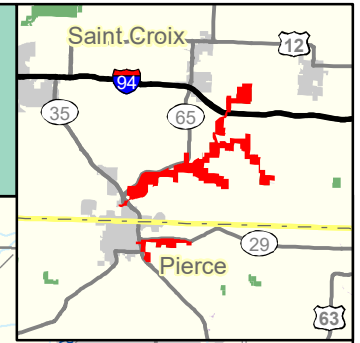
MAP F-1

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KINNICKINNIC RIVER FISHERY AREA



LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



MAP F-2

Habitat Management Area

-  Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area
-  Kinnickinnic Wet Prairie State Natural Area

-  State Natural Area
-  Not DNR Managed Land

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of
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Aug 17, 2020

EL-WP-1200-F-2 jmk

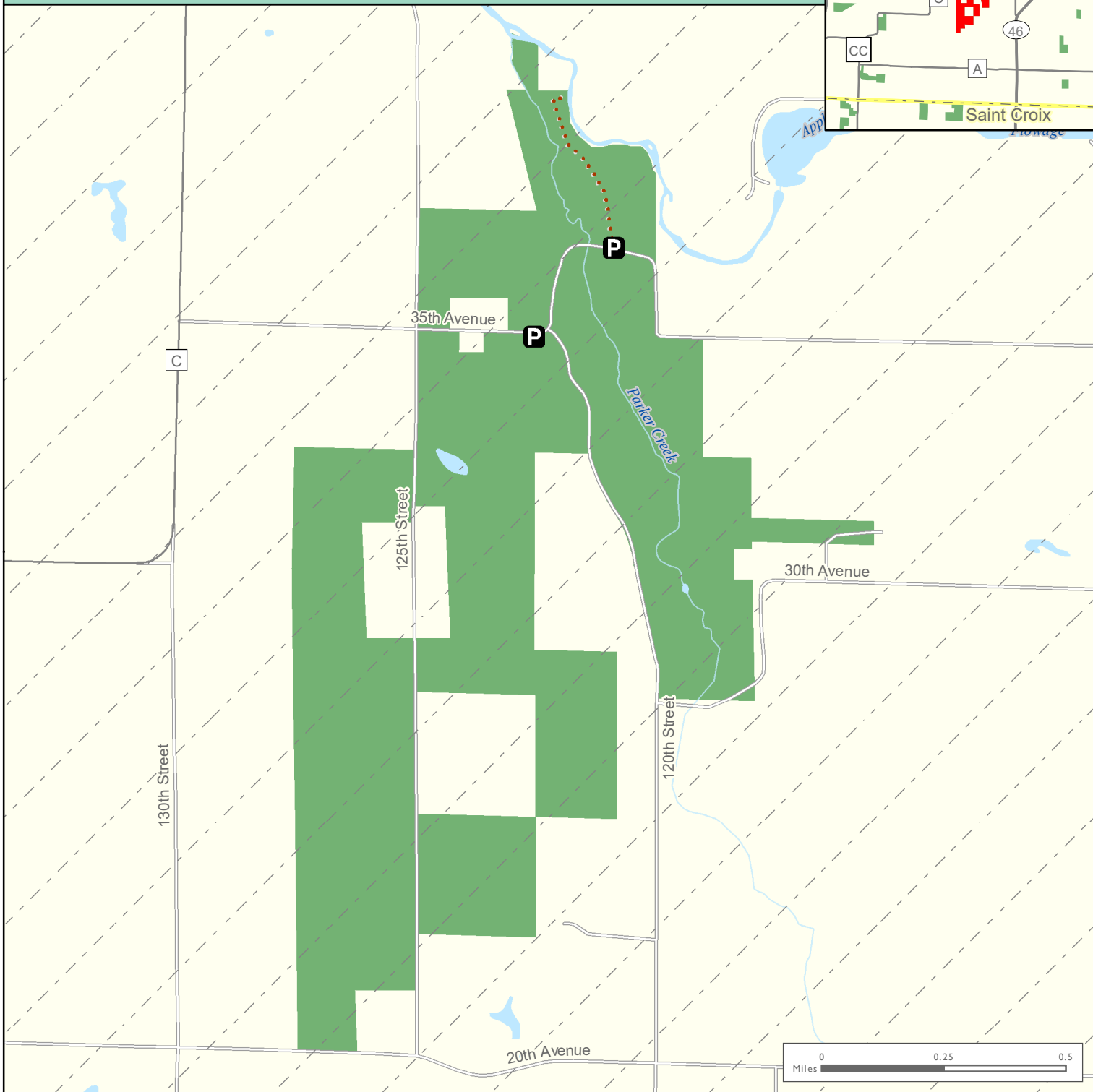
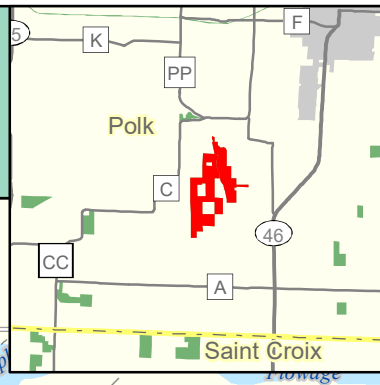
MAP F-2

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PARKER CREEK STATE HABITAT AREA - WPHRA

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



Project Boundary

 Western Prairie
Habitat
Restoration Area

 DNR Fee Title

 Parking Lot

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification
•••• Primitive Road

Motorized Public Use
Closed = **Red**

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of
Facilities and Lands
Aug 15, 2020

EL-WP-1865-G jmk

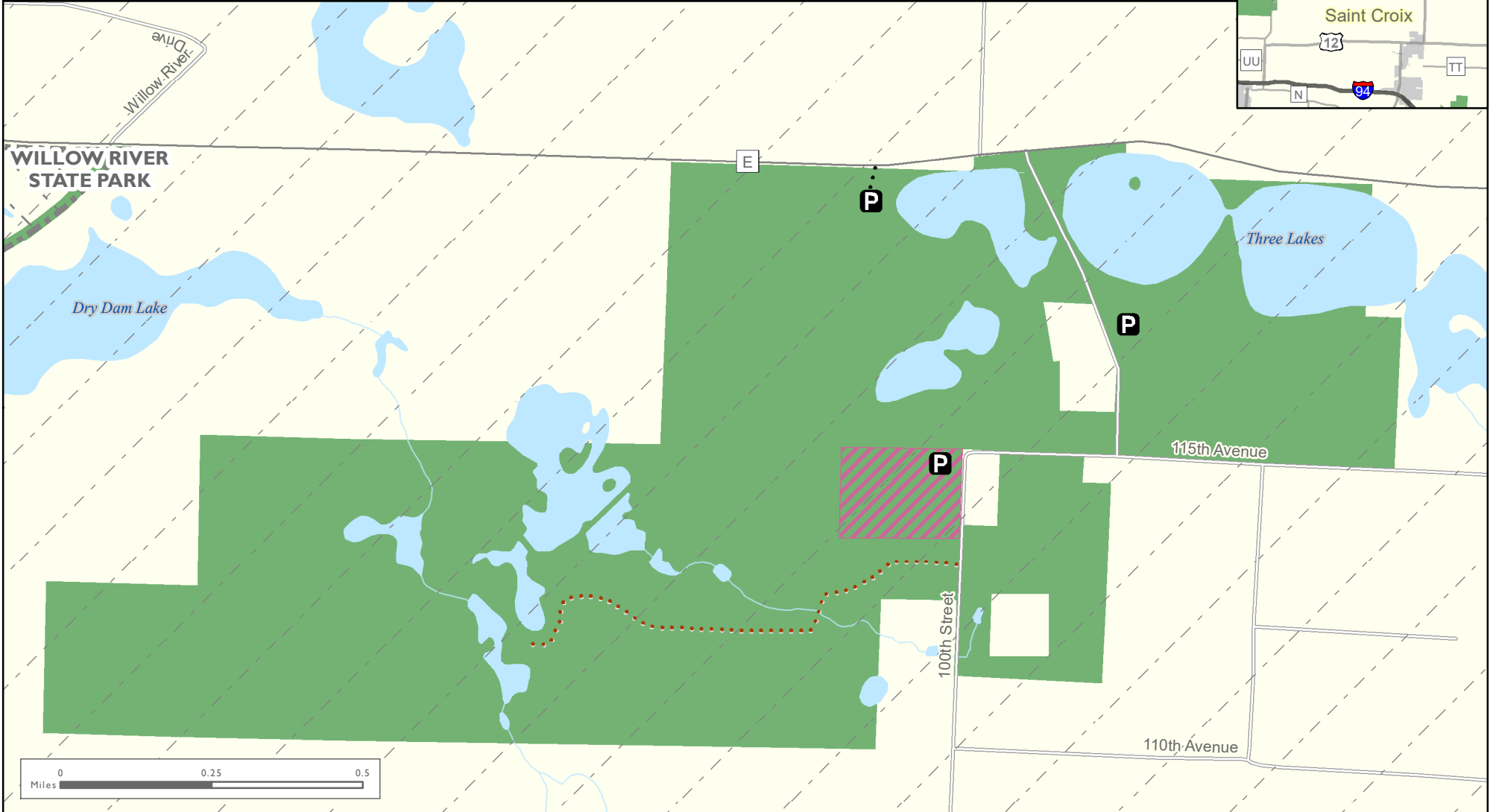
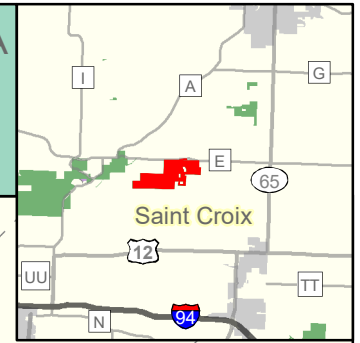
MAP G

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WILLOW RIVER STATE HABITAT AREA - WESTERN PRAIRIE HABITAT RESTORATION AREA

EXISTING ROAD AND RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



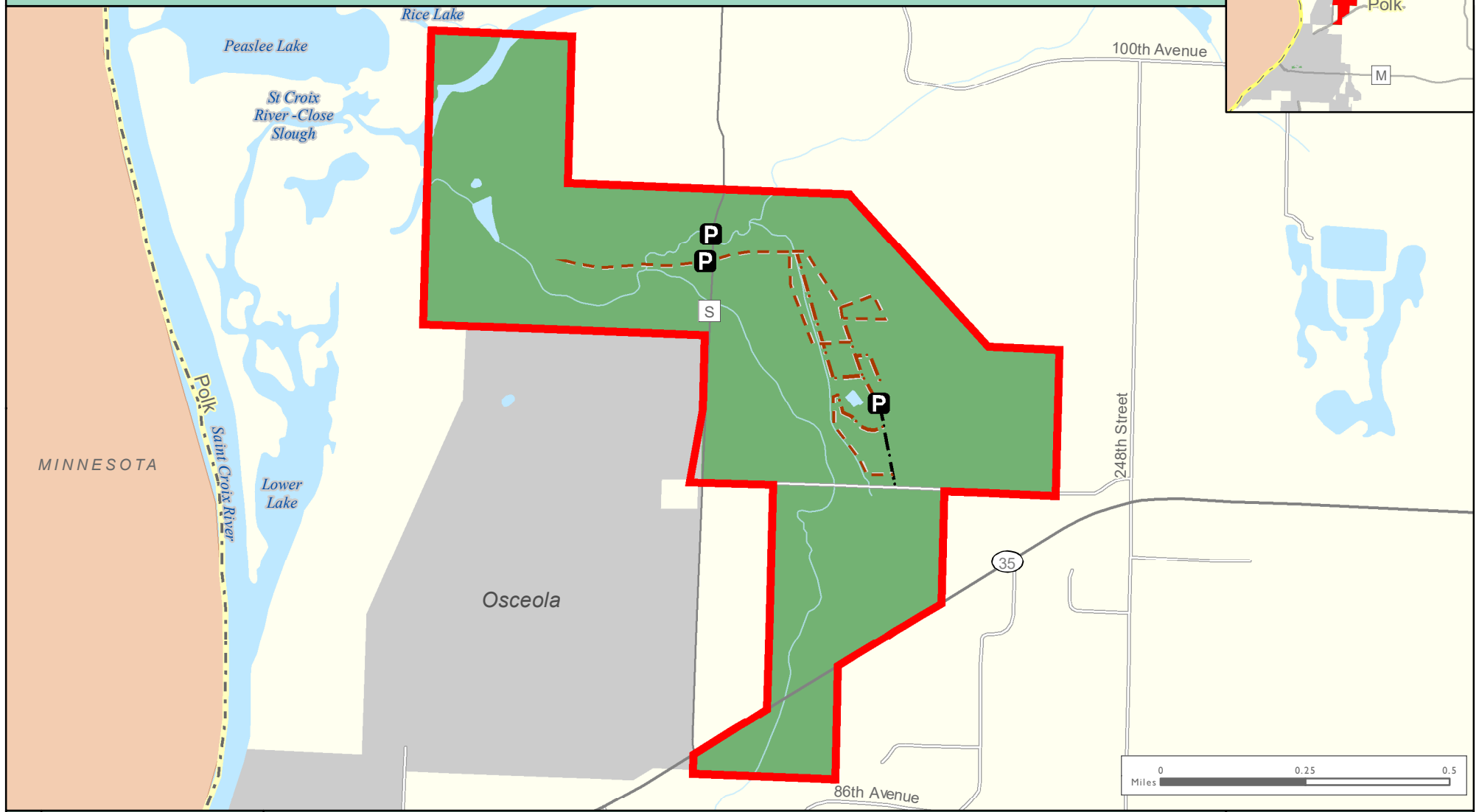
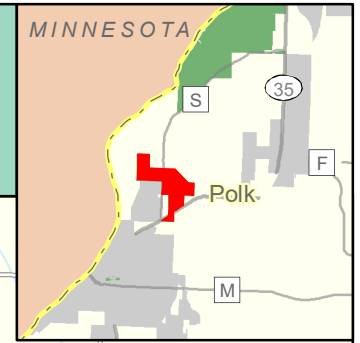
| | | | | | |
|--------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| MAP H | Project Boundary | DNR Fee Title | DNR Roads Key | | WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Bureau of Facilities and Lands Aug 15, 2020 EL-WP-8840-H jmk MAP H |
| | Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Other Project Boundary | Dog Training Area Parking Lot | NR 44 Road Classification Primitive Road | Motorized Public Use Open = Black Closed = Red | |

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OSCEOLA HATCHERY

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



MAP I-1

Project Boundary

Osceola Hatchery

DNR Fee Title

Parking Lot

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification

- Moderately-developed Road
- Lightly-developed Road

Motorized Public Use

- Open = **Black**
- Closed = **Red**

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Bureau of Facilities and Lands

Aug 17, 2020

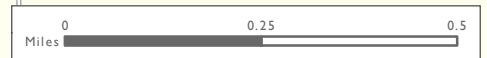
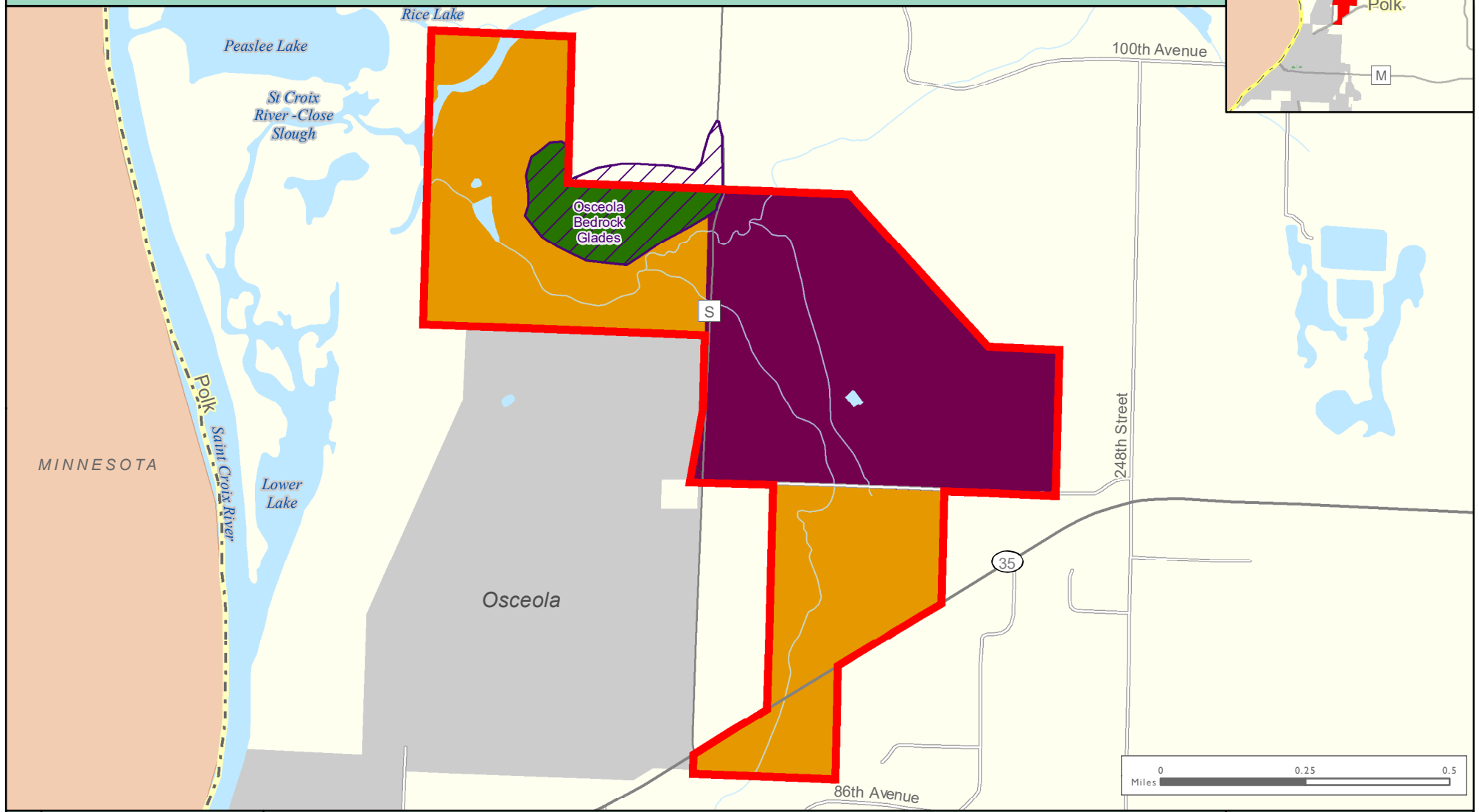
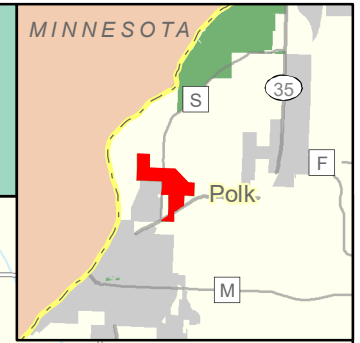
EL-WP-1850-11 jmk

MAP I-1

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OSCEOLA HATCHERY LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



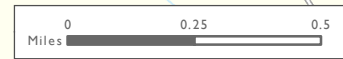
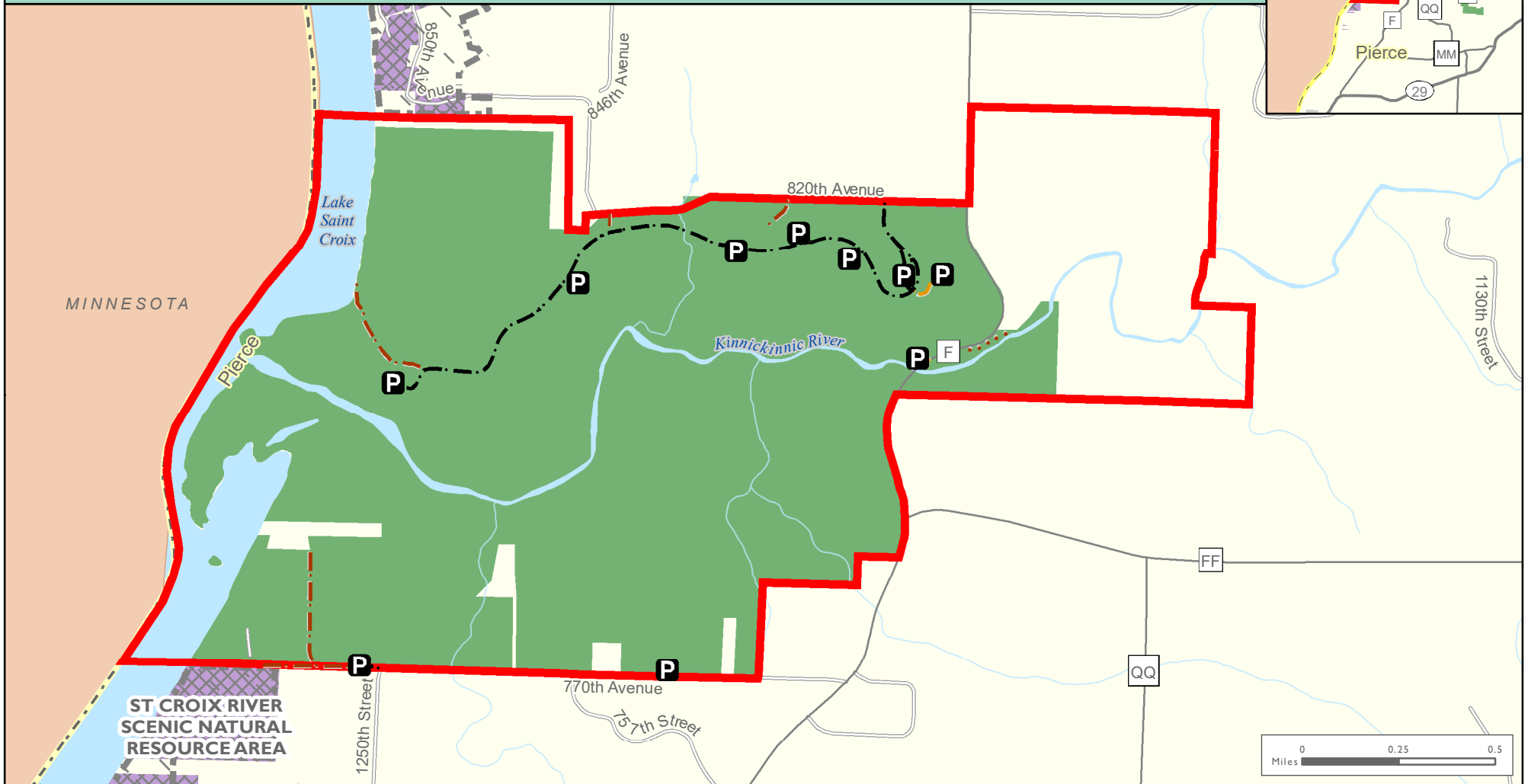
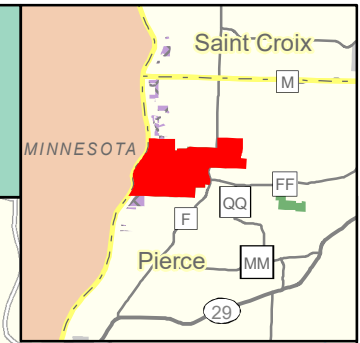
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|----------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| MAP I-2 | Project Boundary [Red outline] Osceola Hatchery | Native Community Management Area [Green hatched] Area 1: Osceola Bedrock Glades SNA | Special Management Area [Purple] Area 3: Osceola Hatchery Facilities | [White hatched] Not DNR Managed Land |
| | Habitat Management Area [Orange] Area 2: Osceola Hatchery Habitat | [Purple hatched] State Natural Area | <p>WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Bureau of Facilities and Lands Aug 17, 2020 EL-WP-1850-12 jmk MAP I-2</p> | |

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KINNICKINNIC STATE PARK




EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Western Prairie Ecological Landscape






Project Boundary

-  Kinnickinnic State Park
-  Other Project Boundary

-  DNR Fee Title
-  DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access)
-  Parking Lot

DNR Roads Key

NR 44 Road Classification

-  Moderately-developed Road
-  Lightly-developed Road
-  Primitive Road

Motorized Public Use

- Open = **Black**
- Closed = **Red**
- Seasonal = **Orange**

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Aug 17, 2020

EL-WP-9265-J1 jmk

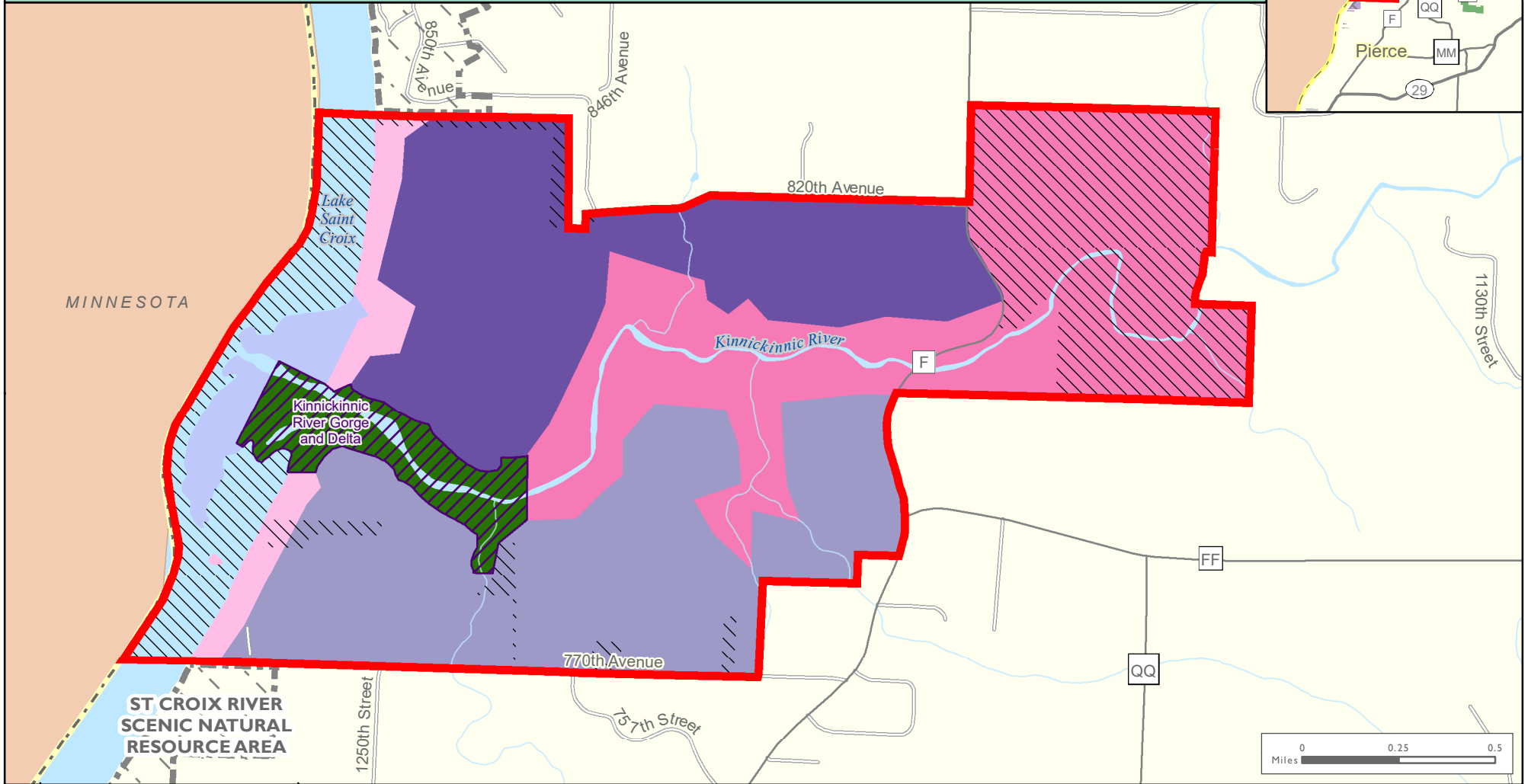
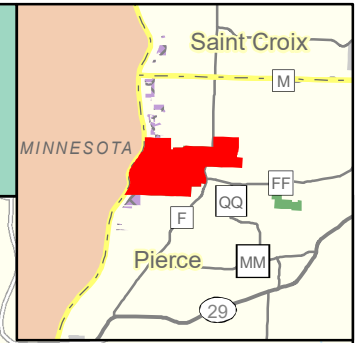
MAP J-1

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KINNICKINNIC STATE PARK

LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Ecological Landscape



Project Boundary

Kinnickinnic State Park

Other Project Boundary

MAP J-2

Recreation Management Area

- Area 1: Day Use and Camping
- Area 2: Southern Recreation
- Area 3: River Delta

Native Community Management Area

- Area 4: Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta SNA

Scenic Resources Management Area

- Area 5: River Bluffs Corridor
- Area 6: St Croix River Bluff

- State Natural Area
- Not DNR Managed Land

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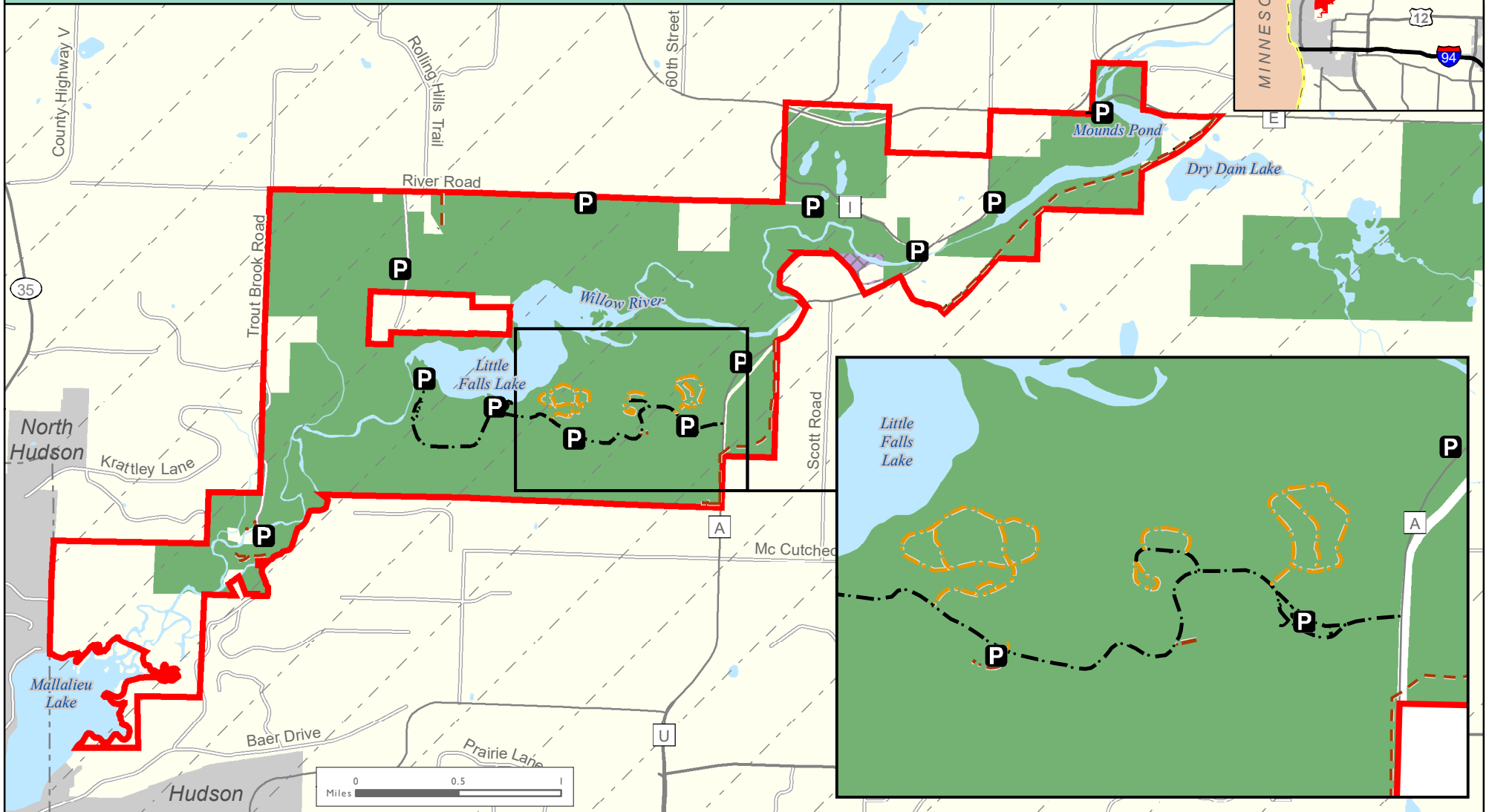
MAP J-2

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WILLOW RIVER STATE PARK

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

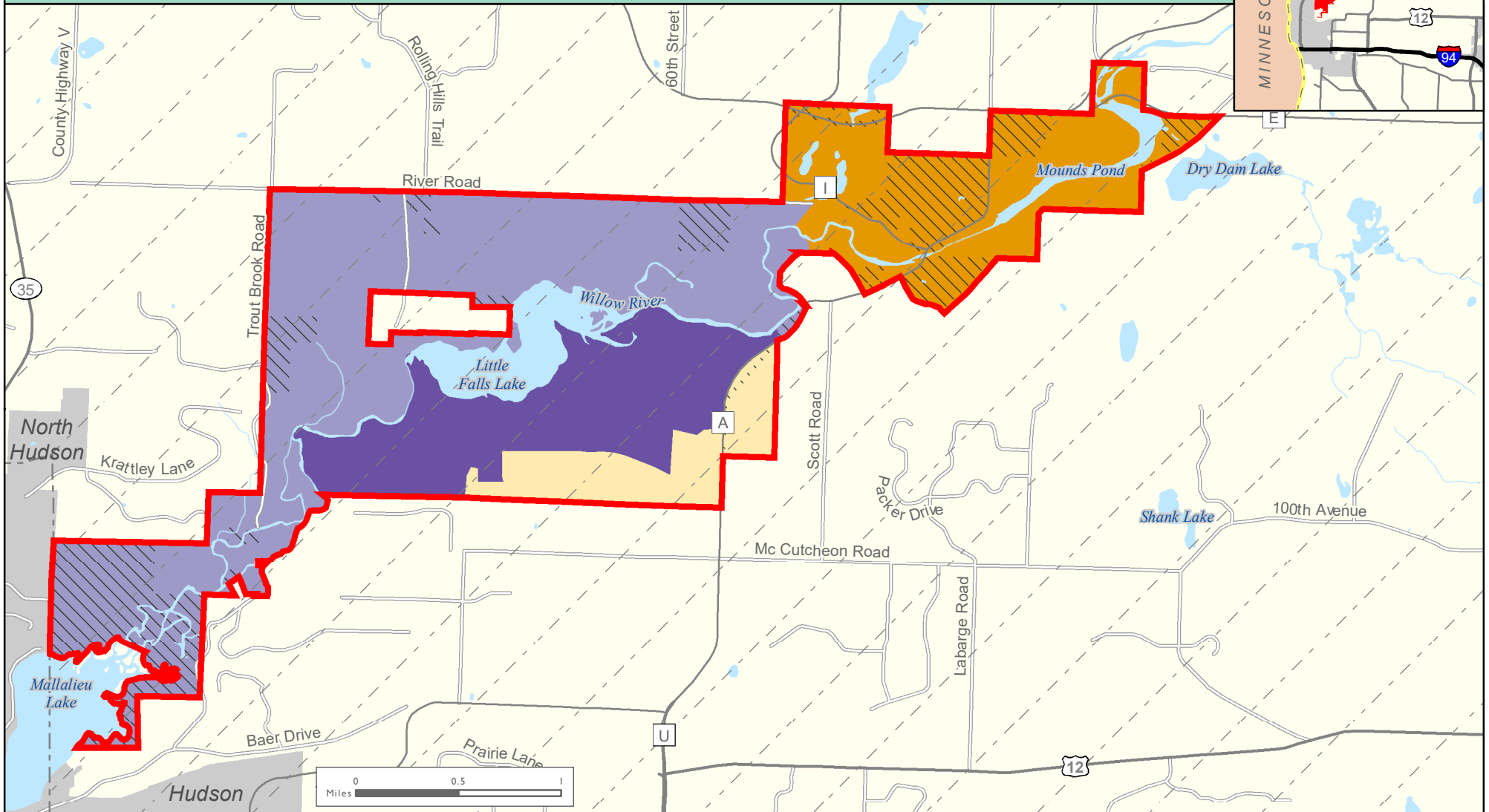
Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



| | | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| MAP K-1 | Project Boundary Willow River State Park Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area | DNR Fee Title DNR Easement (Closed to Public Access) Parking Lot | DNR Roads Key NR 44 Road Classification Moderately-developed Road Lightly-developed Road Primitive Road | Motorized Public Use Open = Black Closed = Red Seasonal = Orange | WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Bureau of Facilities and Lands Aug 17, 2020 EL-WP-9560-K1 jmk MAP K-1 |
| | <p>The data shown on this map have been obtained from various sources, and are of varying age, reliability and resolution. This map is not intended to be used for navigation, nor is this map an authoritative source of information about legal land ownership or public access. Users of this map should confirm the ownership of land through other means in order to avoid trespassing. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding accuracy, applicability for a particular use, completeness, or legality of the information depicted on this map.</p> | | | | |

WILLOW RIVER STATE PARK LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Western Prairie Regional Master Plan



MAP K-2

Project Boundary

- Willow River State Park
- Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area

Recreation Management Area

- Area 1: Day Use and Camping
- Area 2: Northern Recreation

Habitat Management Area

- Area 3: Northeast
- Area 4: Upland Grass

Not DNR Managed Land

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of Facilities and Lands
Aug 17, 2020

EL-WP-9560-K2

jmk

MAP K-2

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