

PROPERTY PLANNING COMMON ELEMENTS

COMPONENTS OF MASTER PLANS

GENERAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The following describes general property administration and management policies and provisions that apply to all DNR managed lands. This section contains information on **Resource Management**, which includes the following:

- Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species Protection
- Protection of Cultural Resources
- Tribal Consultation and Off-reservation Treaty Rights
- Collection of Wild Edibles
- Forest Products for Personal Use
- Water Quality Issues
- Forest Certification
- Forest Inventory and Management Planning
- Forest Pest Control
- Fire Suppression
- Authorized Response to Catastrophic Events
- Prescribed Fire
- Control of Invasive Species
- Chemical Use
- Non-metallic Mining

Resource Management

Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species Protection

Per state and federal laws, all endangered, threatened, and special concern species will be protected. The Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) Portal will be used to conduct an ER review prior to any management or development activity to ensure that any take associated with protected species is avoided or minimized. All applicable Broad Incidental Take Permits/Authorizations will be followed.

Protection of Cultural Resources

All cultural sites (including both archaeological sites and historic structures) occurring on public lands are protected against unauthorized disturbance under provisions of various federal and/or state laws, and burial sites (including cemeteries and mound sites) are protected on private lands as well.

Any management activities having the potential to disturb archaeological sites will only be undertaken after consultation with the department archaeologist. Any sites with cultural or historical value identified on the department properties or acquired with future land purchases will be managed in accordance with department guidance and statutory requirements (see Wis. Stats. 44.40 and Manual Code 1810.1). Archaeological and other cultural resource investigations may be necessary before a project is approved, and projects should designate funds for required investigations as a component of the project budget.



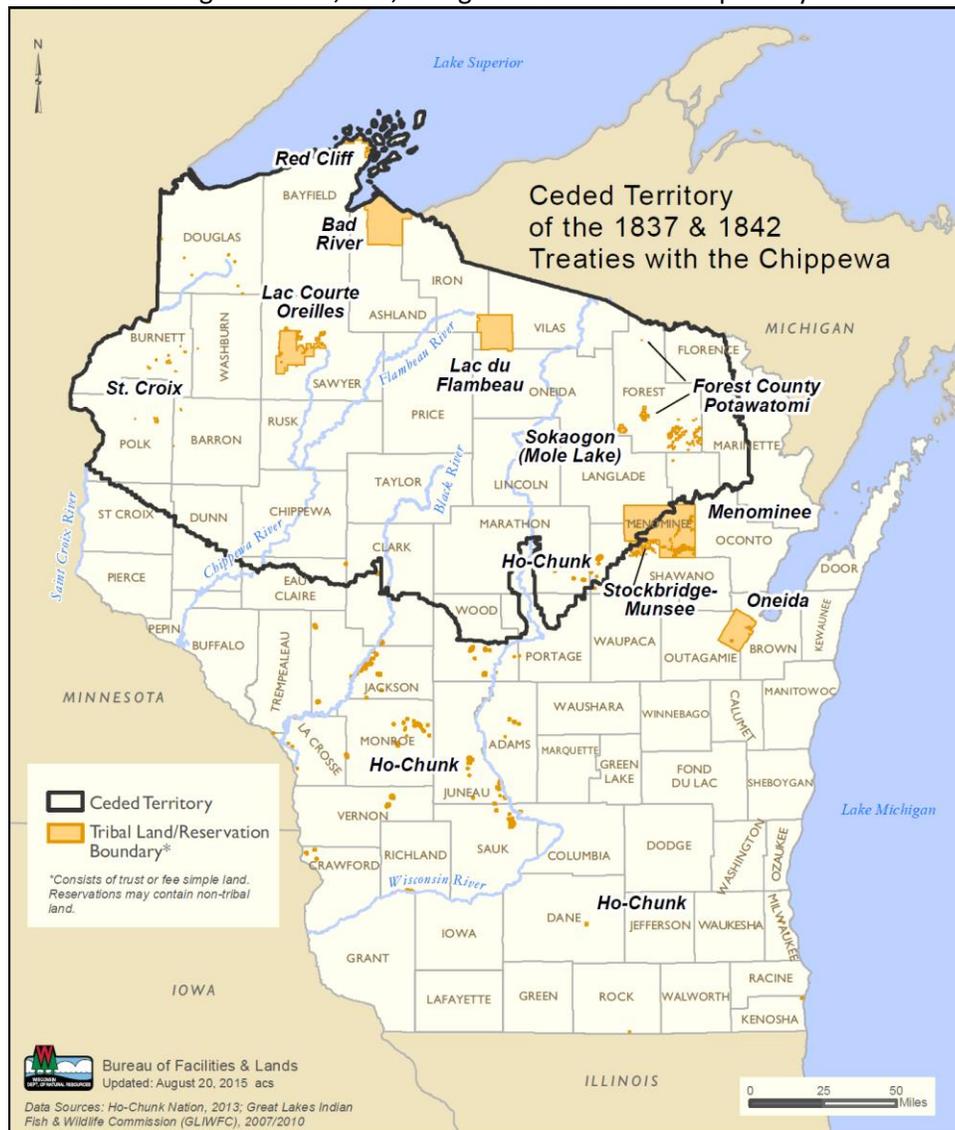
Property managers shall prevent physical disturbance of archaeological features on properties. This includes controlling woody species invasion. Managers shall follow DNR guidelines outlined in “Burials, Earthworks, and Mounds Preservation Policy and Plan”.

Cultural resources may be developed for scientific and educational purposes to the extent that the integrity of the resources is maintained.

Tribal Consultation and Off-reservation Treaty Rights

Native American tribes are independent, sovereign nations, as they were prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America. The Ojibwe Tribes ceded lands in the northern one-third of Wisconsin (known as the Ceded Territory; see map below) to the United States Government in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842. In those treaties, they reserved their right to hunt, fish, and gather within various publicly-owned lands. In 1983, in what is commonly referred to as the *Voigt* case, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit affirmed the off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering rights that the six Ojibwe Tribes of Wisconsin have. Accordingly, members of the Ojibwe Tribes of Wisconsin may hunt, fish, and gather on public lands within the Ceded Territory. These treaty rights are currently being exercised and implemented.

The scope of and regulations regarding these rights are not part of property master plans. However, the exercising of treaty rights relates to resource management which is directly within the scope of property master plans. Regarding wild rice specifically, to the Ojibwe wild rice is “manoomin,” the “food that grows on water”, and has been a central component of Native American culture for hundreds of years.



Consultation requirements exist that allow for government to government discussion via the Voigt Task Force prior to any actions that could affect wild rice abundance or habitat within the Ceded Territory. As provided in [NR 44.04\(7\)\(c\)](#), the department will make tribal governments aware of master planning activity that is located



near or adjacent to their reservation/trust lands. For the Ojibwe Tribes, the department will notify the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission of planning activity in the Ceded Territory.

Collection of Wild Edibles

Edible fruits and nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus, and watercress may be removed from DNR properties by hand without a permit for the personal consumption of the collector.

Forest Products for Personal Use

The cutting of willow branches and the collection of firewood for personal use at home is allowed on DNR properties with the permission of the property manager. A Forest Products Permit Form is required.

Water Quality Protection

Best management practices (BMP's) for agriculture (buffer strips along waterways, leaving crop residue on fields, plowing in spring instead of fall, contour plowing, etc.) greatly reduce sediment transport and turbidity problems that negatively affect water quality. Pre- and post-construction BMP's (seeding and mulching, silt fencing, straw bales, detention ponds, etc.) will be used on construction projects.

All forest management activities will comply with the most recent version of Wisconsin Forestry's BMPs for Water Quality, and with appropriate water regulation permitting requirements.

All applicable alterations to waterways, wetlands, or land-disturbing activities will comply with the applicable Wisconsin Administrative Code(s) or State Statute(s).

Maintenance of natural shorelines and a minimum 30-ft-wide associated buffer should be encouraged on state lands to protect water quality and maintain the aesthetic quality of water features for recreational boaters. Buffer strips on developed lots should be encouraged to intercept the runoff from lawns, which can carry excess nutrients, fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides directly to the water. Similarly, careful application of materials such as herbicides, which are used in land management, as well as their safe transport and storage, is important to prevent contamination of surface or groundwater.

The Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program is an important component of the federal Clean Water Act's (CWA) framework to restore and protect rivers, lakes, and streams. The program is comprised primarily of a two-part process. First, waterways that are impaired or in danger of becoming impaired are identified and second, for these waters, a calculation for pollutant reduction levels is assigned to meet approved water quality standards.

Impaired waters in Wisconsin are largely addressed through an analysis known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL is the amount of a pollutant a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. Many waterbodies in the state of Wisconsin are in the process of TMDL plan development or are in the pollutant reduction implementation phase.

Wisconsin has designated many of the state's highest quality waters as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) or Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs). Waters designated as ORW or ERW are surface waters which provide outstanding recreational opportunities, support valuable fisheries and wildlife habitat, have good water quality, and are not significantly impacted by human activities. ORW and ERW status identifies waters that the State of



Wisconsin has determined warrant additional protection from the effects of pollution. ORWs receive the state's highest protection standards, with ERWs a close second. ORWs and ERWs share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. They differ in the types of discharges each receives, and the level of protection established for the waterway after it is designated.

Forest Certification

In 2004, Wisconsin State Forests gained dual Forest Certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). In 2009, State Forests were re-certified under FSC and SFI and the balance of WDNR-owned land was added to the certification. Independent, third-party certification means that management of Wisconsin's DNR-owned land meets strict standards for ecological, social, and economic sustainability. Forest certification helps Wisconsin remain competitive in global markets that increasingly demand certified raw materials. Management of multi-use lands involves balancing the goals of conserving forestland, supporting economic activities, protecting wildlife habitat, and providing recreational opportunities. Objective review is also instrumental in improving how the department cares for the land it manages. Annual certification audit reports are available on the department's [Forest Certification webpage](#).

Forest Inventory and Management Planning

The DNR uses a forest inventory system (Wisconsin Field Inventory and Reporting System, or WisFIRS) to gather and record information about forested and non-forested areas on state-owned lands. "Forest reconnaissance" (often abbreviated as "recon") is a term used to describe the collective attributes of a forest stand. Examples of data collected by the forester include the species present, age, density, volume, height, diameter, ground cover, soil type, and the number of acres in a stand. The forester uses this information to determine an anticipated year in which a forest management treatment is needed. This information is computerized in a tabular format and linked to computerized maps. The data are available locally but the entire public land recon is maintained in a central database. Storing the recon database in a computerized format provides for the annual and long-term allowable harvest calculation and the associated stand harvest scheduling.

Wisconsin DNR lands use **area control** in the determination of sustainable timber harvest levels. Area control is a system whereby a certain number of acres, as opposed to volume, are identified each year for harvest consideration. Annual allowable timber harvest levels under area control determine the number of acres that can be harvested each year, on a sustained basis, without depleting the resource over time. These levels are calculated based on inventoried forest reconnaissance data collected by foresters, in combination with master planning considerations. A property's ecological, economic, and social constraints are considered in this determination. The forester uses this information to determine a predicted year of harvest for each stand of trees. The combination of these stands, and their associated treatments, represents the number of acres to be evaluated for harvest in a particular year. The annual allowable timber harvest is a long-term monitoring figure. Yearly fluctuations are common due to changing conditions created by storms, insect and disease infestations, changing timber markets, fires, or backlogged workload. The long-term allowable harvest acreage goal in the WisFIRS database is a more stable value that disperses highs and lows in the annual harvest schedule over the planning period, and is used to identify the annual allowable timber harvest goal for each property. DNR Forestry staff implement the sustainable harvest levels by conducting field exams to verify whether stands scheduled for management are ready for the prescription. If stands are not yet ready for management, WisFIRS is updated and the stands are rescheduled for future review. For stands that are ready for management, Forestry staff consult with staff in other DNR programs such as Natural Heritage Conservation, Fisheries, and Wildlife Management to ensure an integrated resource approach prior to implementing the proposed practice. When implementing the practice, silvicultural guidelines and BMPs for Water Quality and Invasive Species are followed.



Forest Pest Control

Wisconsin Statute 26.30 states, “It is the public policy of the state to control forest pests on or threatening forests of the state...”. Any significant forest pest events will be evaluated with consideration given to the property management goals and the potential threat of the pest to other landowners. Infestations will be managed according to the relevant management plan, if such exists. Responses to significant infestations from pests (e.g., emerald ash borer) include timber salvage or pesticide treatments. Any response to a significant pest outbreak or threat of a significant pest outbreak will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary team of scientists and communicated through press releases and notices to interested parties. If necessary, an immediate emergency response to prevent a major outbreak may be authorized by the Chief State Forester.

Fire Suppression

As stated in Wisconsin Statute 26.11, “The department is vested with power, authority and jurisdiction in all matters relating to the prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires outside the limits of incorporated villages and cities in the state except as provided in sub (2), and to do all things necessary in the exercise of such power, authority and jurisdiction.” Wildland fire suppression actions will consider the property management goals and the threats of the fire to life and property. Appropriate techniques will be used in each event to provide effective fire suppression while minimizing resource damage.

Authorized Response to Catastrophic Events

Catastrophic events are rare, but allowances must be made to provide management flexibility when they occur. These events may include severe flooding, ice and wind storms, insect and disease infestations, wildfires, or other catastrophic occurrences that have major impacts on property natural resources and infrastructure. The immediate management responses to these events will follow existing department protocols.

Wildfires, tree diseases, and insect infestations shall be controlled to the degree appropriate to protect the values of each management area. However, emergency actions may be taken to protect public health and safety, or as directed by the Chief State Forester to prevent a catastrophic incident from spreading to adjacent forest lands.

The appropriate management responses to catastrophic events are determined on a case-by-case basis with consideration of the property’s purpose, the objectives of the management area(s), and any authorized response outlined for the management area(s) in the plan. A master plan amendment to establish revised management objectives may be required if the event has altered the resource conditions to the point that the existing management objectives are no longer achievable or desirable.

Prescribed Fire

Prescribed fire is a management tool that mimics natural fire disturbance and helps control many woody plants and non-native invasives, improves the quality of wildlife habitat, reduces fuels to lessen wildfire hazard, and liberates nutrients tied up in dead plant material. It can help regenerate forest cover types such as oak, and create or maintain grassland/prairie and savanna/barrens habitat. Upland nesting cover used by pheasants, waterfowl, and songbirds is more productive if periodically burned. Some wetlands also benefit from fire. Prescribed fire may be used as a management tool where feasible and safe and as prescribed in the master plan.



Control of Invasive Species

Invasive non-native species are a major threat to the integrity of most of our native plant communities, and can significantly harm the ecological and recreational value of department lands. Invasive species include terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic plants, animals, and pathogens. In the absence of the competitors and predators that keep them in check in their native ranges, these species can invade natural habitats and proliferate, often dominating a community to the detriment and sometimes the exclusion of native species. In situations where invasive species become dominant, they may even alter ecological processes in a variety of ways. For example, buckthorn can limit or preclude the ability to apply prescribed fire; reed canary grass can alter hydrology by modifying surface water flow and clogging culverts; and non-native earthworms can inhibit tree regeneration. Some invasive species, such as emerald ash borer and the fungal and viral pathogens that cause white-nose syndrome, viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), and sudden oak death, can kill native species outright in a very short amount of time.

[Invasive species Best Management Practices \(BMPs\)](#) have been developed for forestry, urban forestry, recreation, rights-of-way, and wetlands and aquatic systems, and should be incorporated into management practices on DNR properties. Some level of inventory, control, and monitoring should be conducted on an annual basis. Property-wide inspections are ideal, but not always practical. At minimum, inspections should be conducted at entry points and dispersal corridors such as parking areas, campgrounds, trails, roads, waterways, rights-of-way, and areas where soil has been disturbed. If detected, invasive species should be controlled using appropriate and effective methods, including but not limited to the use of bio-control, herbicides, mowing, cutting, smothering, hand removal, or fire. Control methods may be restricted in certain sensitive management areas. Managers should refer to any specific management prescriptions for the property or area being treated before initiating control measures. Control activities should be monitored to assess effectiveness and determine if follow-up is needed.

Chapter NR 40, Wisconsin Administrative Code, the [invasive species rule](#), creates a comprehensive, science-based system with criteria to classify invasive species into two categories: "Prohibited" and "Restricted". This system is aimed at preventing new invasive species from getting to Wisconsin, and enabling quick action to control or eradicate those here but not yet established. Prohibited species must be reported and controlled wherever they are found. Anyone suspecting they have found a Prohibited species should send details to invasive.species@wisconsin.gov. Restricted species are those that are already too abundant or widespread for statewide control, although they may not yet be widespread at the local level. Therefore, prioritizing control of different species in different parts of the state is important. The department is creating a prioritization protocol that field staff will use to determine which invasive species and sites will be managed in different areas of the state.

The NR 40 rule limits the transportation, importation, and transfer of all regulated invasive species. In addition, it limits the possession of Prohibited species, thereby requiring control. It also includes preventive measures that are not species-specific but instead address common pathways that may allow invasives to spread. By following BMPs and other preventive measure, land managers and property users can minimize incidental spread of invasive species.

In addition to control of terrestrial invasives, preventing the movement, introduction, and spread of aquatic invasive species is also important to many department properties, where boating and fishing are popular. Policies and BMPs related to aquatic invasives include: cleaning and disinfecting boats and equipment before transport to another waterbody; prohibitions on transporting live fish or spawn away from waters; and rules governing transportation of bait species and surface water between waterbodies. These policies and BMPs, if followed by



all lake and river users, will greatly slow the introduction and spread of undesirable aquatic species. As with terrestrial species, any Prohibited species must be reported and controlled. A [permit](#) must be obtained before initiating any vegetation control work in waters of the state or in wetlands.

Chemical Use

Pesticides may be used for various purposes such as the control of invasive plants, controlling plant competition in vegetation regeneration areas, or insect control, except as restricted in the management prescriptions of a master plan. Pesticide use on DNR lands will follow all policies and procedures detailed in the Pesticide Use Manual Code (4230.1), which describes certification/licensing, training, approval, and reporting requirements for pesticide use.

Non-metallic Mining

The department may use gravel, sand, fill dirt, or other fill material from DNR-owned lands for department use. Under certain circumstances other government bodies or agencies may also have access to these materials. Section 23.20 of the Wisconsin Statutes states, “the department may permit any town, county, or state agency to obtain gravel, sand, fill dirt or other fill material needed for road purposes from any department-owned gravel pit or similar facility if this material is unavailable from private vendors within a reasonable distance of the worksite. The department shall charge a fee for this material commensurate with the fee charged by private vendors.”

Nonmetallic mining is regulated under the requirements of NR 135 Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation, Wis. Adm. Code, except for sites that do not exceed one acre in total for the life of the mining operation. Site reclamation under NR 135 is administered by the county. NR 135 requires mining sites to be located appropriately, operated in a sound environmental manner, and that all disturbed areas be reclaimed according to a reclamation plan. New sites will not be considered where they would impact geological or ecological features of significance or within any designated State Natural Area.

Department of Transportation (DOT) projects are exempt due to project reclamation requirements.

