Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name: **Governor Dodge**

Property Designation or Type: **State Park**

DNR Property Code Number: **9180**

Forestry Property Code(s): **2548**

Property Location - County(ies): **Iowa**

Property Acreage: **5,350**

Master Plan Date: **1984**

Property Manager: **Kathy Gruentzel**

Property Assessment

The following should be considered during the property assessment:

A. **Ecological Landscape description and property context**
Governor Dodge is located near the southern edge of the Western Coulees and Ridges Ecological Landscape which characterized by its highly eroded, unglaciated topography with steep sided valleys and ridges, high gradient headwaters streams, and large rivers with extensive, complex floodplains and terraces. Dendritic drainage patterns are well-developed in this mostly unglaciated Ecological Landscape. Natural lakes are restricted to the floodplains of large rivers. Large warm-water rivers are especially important here, and include the Wisconsin. Numerous spring-fed (cold-water) headwaters streams occur here. Coo-lwater streams are also common. Current vegetation is a mix of forest (41%), agriculture (36%), and grassland (14%) with wetlands (5%) mostly in the river valleys. The primary forest cover is oak-hickory. Maple-basswood forests that are dominated by sugar maple, basswood and red maple are common in areas that had not burned frequently. Dry rocky bluffs may support xeric stands of native white pine, sometimes mixed with red or even jack pine. Prairies are now restricted to steep south- or west-facing bluffs, unplowed outwash terraces along the large rivers, and a few other sites.

The park lies within the Hills and Valleys-Wisconsin River Drainage Landtype Association (222Lc18). The characteristic landform is hilly, and most of the sandstone bedrock is found within five feet of the surface. Soils in this landtype association are well drained and moderately well drained silts and loams with a silt loam or sandy loam surface over non-calcareous clayey or loamy residuum or over silty loess; most areas over limestone, sandstone, or shale bedrock.

B. **General property description – management, adjacent land uses, topography, soils, etc.**

Governor Dodge State Park is a 5,350 acre recreational park located in Iowa County. The park was established in 1948 and development began in 1954. The park is managed to meet both day use and overnight camping. Annual attendance exceeds 500,000 visitors and camper nights approach 100,000 a year. Approximately one million people live within an hour's drive of the park.

Current park facilities consist of 269 family campsites, eight large group campsites, a 12-unit horse camp and six remote backpack campsites. There are also nine picnic areas, two lakes with boat landings, two beaches including separate pet swimming areas, and over 50 miles of multiuse trails accommodating hikers, skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers, bikers, and horse riders.

The landscape within about five miles of the park is dissected, consisting of valleys, moderate to steep slopes, and ridge tops of variable width. Land use south of the park is mainly in agricultural production with scattered wooded slopes. North, east, and west of the park, slopes are mainly wooded with agriculture most commonly occurring on ridge tops and valley floors.

Soils within the park consist of sandy loams, loams, silt loams, stony silt loams, fine sandy loams, and cobbly fine sandy loams. Slopes are gentle to steep, and some soils are classified as moderately eroded. Some soils are occasionally flooded.

C. **Current forest types, size classes and successional stages (% of total park acreage)**
- **Oak:** (22%) 1106 acres; dates of origin 1878-1963; hardwood poles to large sawlogs.
- **Central hardwoods:** (10%) 492 acres; dates of origin 1910-1970; seedlings/saplings to large sawlogs.
- **Northern hardwoods** (2%) 123 acres; dates of origin 1935-1970; seedlings/saplings to small hardwood sawlogs.
- **Walnut:** (4%) 79 acres; 1 stand, date of origin 1878; large sawlogs.
- **Red pine:** (3%) 49 acres; 2 stands of plantation with date of origin 1958, 1 natural origin stand with date of origin 1890; plantations softwood poles, natural origin large sawlogs.
- **White pine:** (2%) 37 acres; 2 stands of plantation with dates of origin 1953 and 1980, 1 natural origin stand with date of origin 1898; plantations softwood poles to softwood small sawlogs, natural origin large sawlogs.
- **Fir spruce:** (1%) 28 acres; 2 stands of plantation with dates of origin 1960 and 1980; seedlings/saplings to softwood poles.
- **Aspen:** (1%) 23 acres; 1 stand; origin 1951; hardwood poles.
- **Non-forest cover types:** Campground (45%, 2282 acres), Upland brush (11%, 567 acres), Lake (4%, 224 acres), Lowland brush (1%, 63 acres)

D. **NHI: Endangered, threatened, Special Concern species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN):** 5 bird species, 2 mammal species, 5 invertebrate species,3 herptile species, 1 plant species, 3 natural community types, and 1 other.

E. **Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA), Important Bird Areas (IBA):** Included in Dodgeville Wyoming Oak Woodlands/Savanna COA. Almost entirely within Governor Dodge SP IBA.

F. **Significant cultural or archeological features:**
DNR and Wisconsin Historical Society records indicate the presence of archeological sites in Governor Dodge State Park

G. **Invasive species:** Non-native bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, wild parsnip, gypsy moth

H. **Existing State Natural Areas (SNA) designations/natural community types limited in the landscape:** Pine Cliff SNA that encompasses a pine relict natural community. The SNA may be considered a high conservation value forest. There are older stands of oak and other types that have potential for high conservation value forest. The SNA is an ecological reference area, and salvage of trees after a major wind event is not considered compatible with management objectives.

I. **Primary public uses (recreation)**
Recreational activities include camping, swimming, boating/canoeing, fishing, picnicking, nature study and birding, hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and hunting and trapping (archery and gun deer, turkey, and small game).

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

K. **Deferral/consultation area designations:** None

IFMP components

Management Objectives: (Outline primary forest management objectives):

1. Promote safety and aesthetics in public use natural areas and extensive recreation areas (master plan b.2.a, p 4) that were affected by the June 2014 tornados in the northern and southern parts of the park.
2. Because the SNA is an ecological reference area, only the existing trail will be cleared of downed trees. Hazard trees will also be managed on either side of the trail.
3. Manage conifer plantations and invasive species (statewide conifer and invasive species management variance 2014).

Property Prescriptions (Identify specific and pertinent prescriptions by area or forest type, including passive management areas, extended rotation, and other information that will help achieve the objectives)

1. Conifer plantations: thin as needed per department silvicultural handbook.
2. Salvage tornado damaged-areas:
   a. Use commercial timber sales (sawlog, pulp, biomass, etc.) to the extent possible. Damaged and undamaged standing trees within salvage areas may be retained depending on safety, aesthetic, ecological, and silvicultural considerations. Salvaged areas will be evaluated for the need of site preparation and planting.
   b. In areas where commercial sales cannot be used due to limits on logging equipment access, non-commercial hand work will be used.
3. Pine Cliff SNA: remove trees from established trails and manage hazard trees within the trail corridor. Manipulation/removal of vegetation and soil disturbance should be minimized to the extent possible.

Summary of Public Involvement and Comments Received

Maps (Optional)

a. Property Boundary and ownership Maps
b. Forest Cover Type Maps

Interim Forest Management Plan

PREPARED BY:

Property Manager — Date: 9-01-14

APPROVED:

Area Program Supervisor — Date: 9-22-14

REVIEWED BY:

Forester — Date: 9/22/14

District Ecologist — Date: 9/25/14