



Tom Lawin & Drywood Creek Wildlife Area Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: TOM LAWIN and DRYWOOD CREEK WILDLIFE AREAS

County: CHIPPEWA

Property Acreage: 2,161 (TLWA) 40 (DCWA)

Forestry Property Code(s): 911 (TLWA) 906 (DCWA)

Master Plan Date: Feasibility Study 1991 (TLWA)

Property Assessment

Tom Lawin Wildlife Area (TLWA) is a 2,161 acre property (additional acreage is leased for public hunting) located two miles southeast of Jim Falls and its boundaries lie within the Town of Anson and Town of Arthur. There are access points on highways K and S. Drywood Creek Wildlife Area (DCWA) is a landlocked, 39-acre parcel located 0.5 miles northeast of TLWA.

The primary objective of the both properties is providing waterfowl and upland game habitat. The properties are surrounded by private lands so it is important that users know and respect the property boundaries. The TLWA is situated in an area that is heavily dissected and fragmented with agricultural fields and open wetlands. The property contains over 75% open, nearly treeless habitat. Opportunities for large block old forest development to benefit area sensitive, forest interior birds are limited.

LANDSCAPE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Hydrology: The TLWA lies in the transition zone between two [ecological landscapes](#): the Forest Transition and the North Central Forest, although it is best represented by the Forest Transition.

Forest Transition: This landscape has large areas of wetlands and a number of generally low-gradient streams that range from small coldwater streams to large warm water rivers. Major river systems draining the Forest Transition include the Wolf, Wisconsin, Black, Chippewa, and St. Croix.

Glacial till is the major type of material deposited, and the prevalent landforms are till plains or moraines. Post-glacial erosion, stream cutting, and deposition formed floodplains, terraces, and swamps along major rivers. Wind-deposited silt material (loess) formed a layer 6 to 24 inches thick.

North Central Forest: Natural lakes are rare, and limited to riverine floodplains and a few scattered ponds within the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The hydrology of the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape has been greatly disrupted by past drainage, channelization, impoundment construction, and groundwater withdrawal. Rivers, streams, and springs are common and found throughout the North Central Forest Landscape. Several large man-made flowages occur here such as the Chippewa and Mondeaux. There are several localized but significant concentrations of glacial kettle lakes associated with end and recessional moraines (e.g., the Perkinstown, Bloomer, and Valhalla/Marenisco Moraines.)

Current Land Cover: Landcover is highly variable by subsection, dominant landform, and major land use. The Forest Transition stretches east to west across most of Wisconsin north of the Tension Zone and is heterogeneous. The eastern part of the [Forest Transition Ecological Landscape](#) remains heavily forested, the central portion is dominated by agricultural uses, and the west end is a mixture of forest, lakes, and agricultural land. Ground flora show characteristics of both northern and southern Wisconsin as the Forest Transition landscape lies along the tension zone.



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HISTORY OF LAND USE AND PAST MANAGEMENT

Originally called the Jim Falls Wildlife Area, the DNR leased hunting rights on 5,000 acres of private lands beginning in the 1950's. In 1991, WDNR began purchasing property and the Tom Lawin Wildlife Area was established. Since then 2,161 acres were purchased and the department leases 769 acres of private lands. In the recent past, 271 acres of wetlands on the state owned land have been restored and agricultural fields have also been removed from a sharecropping program and converted into warm season grasses. A total of 212 acres of grasslands have been restored so far. The overall objective is to establish a 4,520 acre wildlife area (acquisition boundary).

TLWA is a designated hen-rooster hunting area. Hen and rooster pheasants are stocked weekly beginning the week before opening weekend through November. DNR staff periodically mows and uses controlled burning to maintain grassland habitat at TLWA for waterfowl nesting cover and a number of other upland birds. Forest management has included timber harvesting, scarification, tree planting and alder shearing.

DCWA was purchased in 1961, is landlocked, and has had no management since purchased.

CURRENT FOREST TYPES, SIZE CLASSES AND SUCCESSIONAL STAGES

TLWA is a 2,161 acre of a wetlands, grass, aspen, oak/hardwoods, and pines mosaic. Majority of the area is low and wet (56% of the acres are keg, lowland brush, marsh and ponds). Grass areas and farmland are the second largest types (21%). Forested acreage (505 acres or 23% land base) includes aspen, white birch, oak, bottomland and central hardwoods, and a small component each of tamarack, white pine and jack pine. DCWA consists of about half forested acreage that includes mostly red maple, aspen and oak. The remainder of DCWA is wetland tag alder.

Aspen/White Birch:

There are currently 323 acres of aspen/white birch timber type. In 2010 a harvest of 20 acres in this type was established. Aspen is a short lived, intolerant species that is an important component of upland habitat. Regeneration is primarily achieved through coppice harvesting (clearcut). Current age distribution includes about 72 acres of over mature aspen in the 60 to 80 year range. These acres are naturally converting over to primarily red maple and white pine as the aspen dies out. There are 145 acres of aspen and 105 acres of white birch in the age range of 15 to 50 years old.

Management will be geared toward maintaining the aspen timber type acreage on the TLWA by using a rotation age of 50 years. On average annually, approximately 7 acres of aspen will be harvested to maintain the type. Since marketable sale volume often requires a 20 to 30-acre harvest size, an aspen timber sale will be established approximately every 4 to 5 years.

The majority of the white birch timber type on the TLWA is associated with the wetland sedge community and is part of a state designated natural area. Passive management will be applied in most of the white birch type. The state designated natural area will add structural diversity to the property.

Oak:

There are currently 63 acres of oak on TLWA. Due to the loamy sand / sandy loam soils and areas of high water table, the oak consists of mostly black, burr and red oak with site indexes that range from 45 to 60 feet at 50 years of age. There is a hardwood component of maple, aspen and birch mixed in. These stands typically reach forest product maturity between 80 and 100 years of age. After that time, individual trees begin to decline in vigor and timber quality. As mortality occurs, red maple becomes established in the understory in the partial shade conditions. This invasion of red maple is a concern if it replaces oak regeneration in the future. As cavity trees and snags are an important habitat component, some oak mortality is desired. These trees provide ecological legacies and structural diversity to the forest. Management of the oak will use a 100-year rotation age to promote cavity and snag development, and at the same time regenerate some acres to young oak.



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The oak is all located in 3 adjacent patches separated by wetlands. Oak regeneration opportunities will likely be limited when it comes time to remove mature trees. The management objective will be to maintain about 2/3rds of this type in managed old growth oak and regenerate about 1/3rd of the oak in patches that provide the best opportunity. Oak regeneration techniques include coppice harvest, shelterwood and seed tree. Scarification and maple elimination may also be needed. Harvest of the oak is scheduled in approximately 2020.

WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

The Wildlife Action Plan for both the Forest Transition and North Central Forest landscapes identifies large wetland complexes as good conservation areas, although TLWA is not specifically identified. The Lawin Sedge Meadow SNA features an expansive open sedge meadow complete with nearly equal elements of northern and southern species. Many sedge meadow indicator species are present including several Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Breeding birds include American bittern, northern harrier, black-billed cuckoo, alder flycatcher, sedge wren, veery, golden-winged warbler, Nashville warbler, clay-colored sparrow, yellow-headed blackbird, and bobolink. The forested acreage is fragmented by wetlands and agriculture, offering great opportunities for “edge” game species and early successional “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” as identified within the state’s Wildlife Action Plan.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREA

This property is not located within an identified COA however, as stated above, it does provide good opportunities for protecting natural wetland communities.

NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY - RARE SPECIES

At the time of this plan (2012) no endangered or threatened species are listed within the TLWA/DCWA geographic area. Within the 1 mile buffer, one state bird species and one plant species of special concern are listed. NHI screening will be conducted prior to all future management activities.

HIGH VALUE CONSERVATION FORESTS (HCVF) OR OTHER RESOURCES/ NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES LIMITED IN THE LANDSCAPE

The Lawin Sedge Meadow State Natural Area (SNA) includes 279 acres within the TLWA. The meadow changes from a tussock sedge and bluejoint grass dominated meadow in the northwest to wiregrass in the central portion and then tamarack in the southeast. The site is comprised of two separate units with shallow impoundments between them but with seemingly little impacts on the meadows themselves.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index.asp?SNA=628>

BIOTIC INVENTORY STATUS: There is no known biotic inventory for this property.

CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES (INCLUDING TRIBAL SITES)

No archaeological or historical sites have been identified by the Wisconsin Historical Society on the AWA.

RECREATIONAL USES

Hunting and trapping are the primary recreation uses of these properties. Trails and roads provide access into the property. The area consists of gently rolling, loamy sand/sandy loam upland soils interspersed with lowland peat and marshlands. These additional recreational opportunities exist at Tom Lawin Wildlife Area:



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- Cross country skiing (no designated trail)
- Hiking (no designated trail)
- Horse riding trail (on designated trail)
- Hunting - pheasant (hen and rooster area)
- Birding
- Wild edibles/gathering
- Wildlife viewing

INVASIVE SPECIES

There are no known invasive species as an inventory has not been taken. There is high potential for invasive establishment due to the access by recreationists.

SOILS

Most soils in the Forest Transition Landscape are moderately well-drained sandy loams from glacial till. The area includes sandy soils formed in outwash, as well as organic soils, and loam and silt loam soils on moraines. Drainage classes range from poorly drained to excessively drained. Density of the till is generally high enough to impede internal drainage, so there are many lakes and wetlands in the Forest Transition. Soils throughout the landscape have silt loam surface deposits formed in aeolian loess, about 6 to 24 inches thick in much of the area.

Soils in the North Central Forest Landscape consist of sandy loams, sands, and silts. Organic soils, peats and mucks, are common in poorly drained lowlands.

TLWA includes predominantly sandy loam and loamy sand uplands (soil series Amery, Barronett, Billett, Cable, and Mahtomedi) and muck soils in the lowlands (Beseman and Seeleyville).

FUTURE MANAGEMENT -TLWA

The majority of the property is managed as a wetland/grassland complex to provide habitat for waterfowl and upland wildlife species. Upland management consists of maintaining trails, prescribed burning, sharecropping, mowing and small timber sales to provide habitat for grouse, woodcock, and mammals including deer, bear and furbearers. The property also maintains a number of artificial nesting boxes for waterfowl. The primary forest management objective is to provide younger forest for both game species and early successional Species of Greatest Conservation Need. A second objective is to provide small blocks of old forest and scattered old trees for mast production, cavity trees and snag trees for wildlife benefits.

The table below shows the total acreage by timber type and the projected allowable harvest from 2013 to 2027. On average a timber harvest will be established every 3 years on the property.

Timber Type	Acres	Annual Allowable Cut
Aspen/White Birch	323	7
Oak/Hardwoods	64	4
Central Hardwoods	29	2
White Pine	19	1
Bottomland Hardwoods	37	0
Tamarack/Jack Pine	33	0
Totals	505	14



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Forest Management Objectives:

1. Maintain timber types through forest management practices with primary focus on aspen and oak.
2. Conduct timber sales to provide a variety of succession stages with a harvest interval of 3 years.
3. Use harvest patterns to meet nesting, shelter, and feeding habitat needs.
4. Identify invasive species and implement practices to eliminate/minimize impact to property.
5. Identify rare/endangered species and protect/provide habitat.

Property Prescriptions

1. Coppice harvesting to maintain aspen and oak.
2. Managed old growth of approximately 40 acres of oak.
3. Periodic thinning of white pine stands.
4. Use mowing, prescribed burning, and herbicides to maintain grass cover.

Approvals:

Regional Ecologist Date

Forester Date

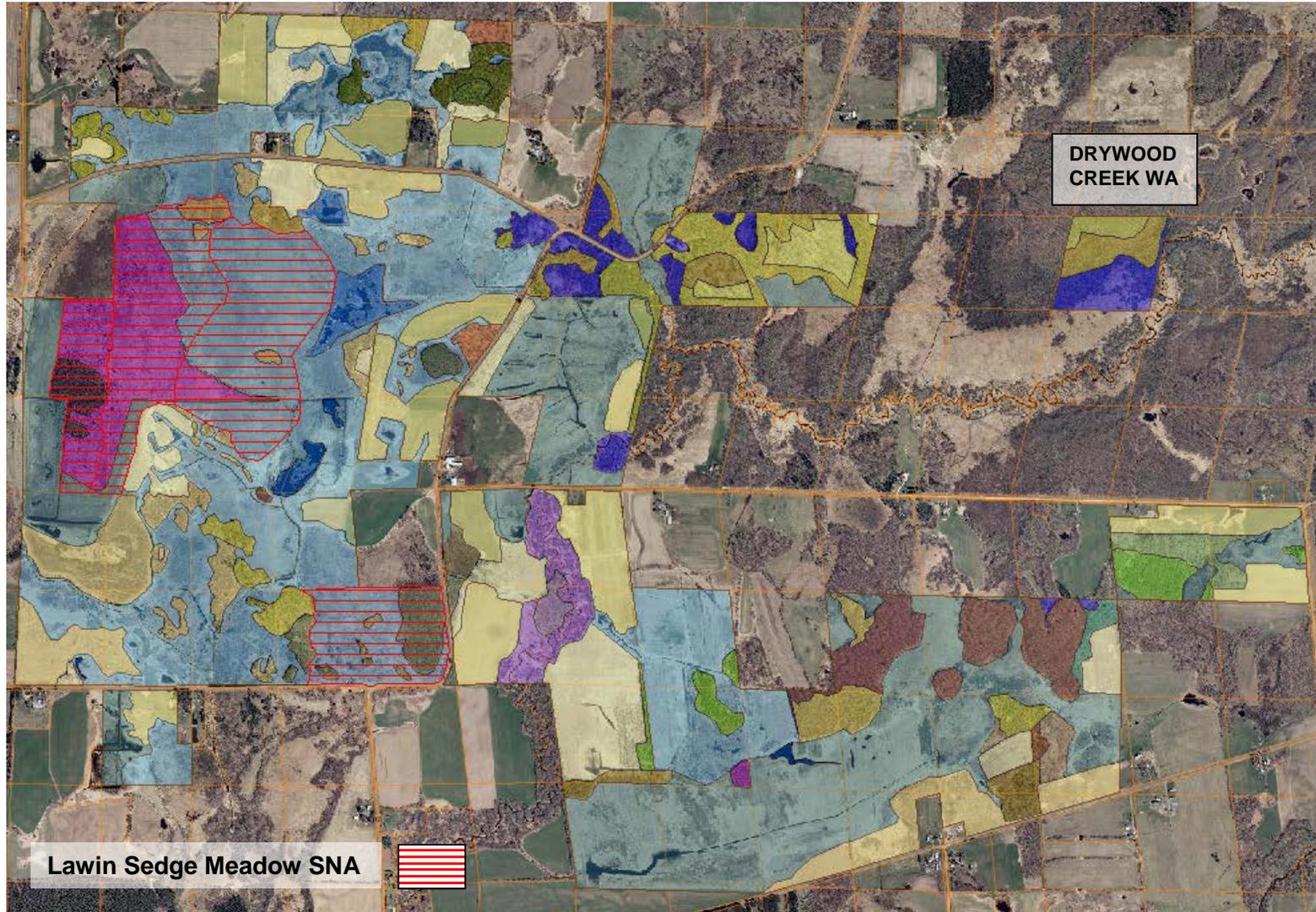
Property Manager Date

Area/Team Supervisor Date



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AIR PHOTO OF TOM LAWIN & DRYWOOD CREEK WILDLIFE AREA





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