

St. Croix

Wetland Management District

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	1
Introduction	1
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	1
The National Wildlife Refuge System	1
District Purposes	3
District Vision	3
Purpose and Need for Plan	3
History and Establishment	4
Legal Context	4
 Chapter 2: The Planning Process	 5
Meetings and Involvement	5
Publication of the Draft CCP	5
Issues	6
Habitat Management	6
Habitat Loss and Fragmentation	7
Land Acquisition	7
Visitor Services	8
Service Identity	8
Wilderness Review	8
 Chapter 3: The District Environment and Management	 9
Introduction	9
Wetland Management District	9
Geographic/Ecosystem Setting	9
Historic Vegetation	9
Land Use/Cover	9
Migratory Bird Conservation Initiatives	19
Wildlife Species of Management Concern	21
Other Conservation and Recreation Lands in the Area	22
Wisconsin Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need	22
Socioeconomic Setting	25
Potential District Visitors	25
Climate and Climate Change Impacts	26
Observed Climate Trends	28
Scenarios of Future Climate	28

Key Issues in the Midwest	28
Reduction in Lake and River Levels	28
Agricultural Shifts	28
Changes in Semi-natural and Natural Ecosystems	29
Geology and Soils	30
Water and Hydrology	30
District Resources	30
Wetlands	30
Plant Communities	32
Plant Communities Associated with Wetlands	32
Plant Communities Associated with Uplands	33
Grasslands	33
Shrub-Scrub	34
Forests	34
Shrubs and Trees in Fencerows	34
Fish and Wildlife Communities	35
Birds	35
Mammals	35
Amphibians and Reptiles	35
Invertebrates	35
Fish	35
Threatened and Endangered Species	36
Threats to Resources	36
Invasive Species	36
Drainage and Pesticides	36
Rural Development	37
Administrative Facilities	37
Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation	37
Museums and Repositories	39
Visitor Services	39
Other District Uses	40
Current Management	40
Habitat Management	40
Wetland Management	40
Grasslands	41
Forests	42
Cropland	42
Management of Resident Species	43
Habitat Management: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program	43
Land Acquisition	43
Monitoring	44
Visitor Services	44
Hunting	44
Fishing	46
Interpretation, Wildlife Observation, and Photography	46
Environmental Education	46

Pest Management	46
Archaeological and Cultural Resources	46
Farm Service Agency Conservation Easements	46
Existing Partnerships	47
Chapter 4: Management Direction	49
Introduction	49
Goals and Objectives	49
Goal 1: Habitat	49
Goal 2: Wildlife	54
Goal 3: People	57
Goal 4: Land and Visitor Protection	62
Chapter 5: Plan Implementation	65
Introduction	65
New and Existing Projects	65
Minimum District Operations Needs	65
Prairie Restoration on WPAs and Easements	65
Enhance Biological Program (District Biologist)	65
Expand District Prescribed Fire and Fuels Removal Program (Lead Range Technician)	66
Enhance Visitor Services Program (Seasonal Tractor Operator)	66
Control of Invasive Species, Noxious Weeds and Woody Invaders	66
Replace Facilities (Headquarters and Maintenance Facilities)	66
Staffing	66
Partnership Opportunities	67
Step-Down Management Plans	67
Monitoring and Evaluation	69
Plan Review and Revision	69
Appendix A: Finding of No Significant Impact	71
Appendix B: Glossary	75
Appendix C: Species List	81
Appendix D: Regional Conservation Priority Species	109
Appendix E: Compliance Requirements	115
Appendix F: Compatibility Determinations	123
Appendix G: Literature Cited	125
Appendix H: RONS and MMS	129
Appendix I: List of Preparers	133
Appendix J: Response to Comments Received on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan	137

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Location of St. Croix Wetland Management District	2
Figure 2: Barron County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	10
Figure 3: Burnett County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	11
Figure 4: Dunn County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	12
Figure 5: Pepin County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	13
Figure 6: Pierce County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	14
Figure 7: Polk County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	15
Figure 8: St. Croix County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	16
Figure 9: Washburn County, Wisconsin, St. Croix Wetland Management District	17
Figure 10: Historic Vegetation for the St. Croix Wetland Management District	18
Figure 11: Current Landcover for the St. Croix Wetland Management District	20
Figure 12: Prairie Potholes, Eastern Tallgrass and Prairie Hardwood Transition Bird Conservation Regions	21
Figure 13: Other Conservation Lands in the Area of St. Croix WMD	23
Figure 14: Wisconsin Ecological Landscapes	24
Figure 15: Wisconsin Groundwater Contamination Susceptability Model	31
Figure 16: Focus Areas, St. Croix Wetland Management District	45
Figure 17: Locations of Conservation Easements, St. Croix WMD	48
Figure 18: Current Staff, St. Croix WMD	68
Table 1: Landcover in the St. Croix Wetland Management District	19
Table 2: Socioeconomic Characteristics, St. Croix Wetland Management District	25
Table 3: Population Projections 2005-2025 in St. Croix WMD Counties	26
Table 4: Current and Proposed Staffing Under the CCP	67