

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Wildlife and Natural Areas of the Lower Chippewa River Plan

Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recognizes that the Master Plan for the Wildlife and Natural Areas of the Lower Chippewa River must reflect the people it serves, and encourages citizen input in the plan development process. This plan outlines the public participation strategy for soliciting public review and input into the development, evaluation, and adoption of the Master Plan for the Wildlife and Natural Areas of the Lower Chippewa. This assemblage of properties includes all the Wildlife and Natural Areas within the boundaries of the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area: Tiffany, Dunnville and Big Swamp Wildlife Areas and Nine Mile Island and Caryville Savanna Natural Areas. Also included are scattered Wildlife and Natural Area lands.

Master Plan development will be based on and be influenced by existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, management opportunities and resources capabilities, surveys, judgment of resource management experts and public opinion. The local and regional recreational supply and demand, economic and social needs also will be considered. Property management alternatives are influenced by these factors with the final plan being a balance of key benefits.

The master plan and planning process will be guided by the following state regulations:

- The plan will be developed within the parameters of Administrative Code NR 44, which governs Master Planning for DNR properties.
- The Wildlife Areas will be managed under authority of Sec. 23.09 (2)(d)3 Wis. Statutes. Natural Areas will be managed under authority of Sec. 23.27 Wis. Statutes.
- Wildlife Areas are managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code NR 1.51 and 1.61. Natural Areas are managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code NR 1.32 (Natural Resources Board Policies).
- Public use activities on DNR properties are, in part, governed by Administrative Code NR 45.

The Planning Process

The Master Planning process is divided into three primary phases:

Phase 1

Phase one is the preparatory work. Reliable, current information on the property's resources, public uses, as well as on regional demands and opportunities are an important foundation for planning. Prior to the public announcement that plan development is starting the Department is busy updating natural resource

and recreational use data for the properties and collecting regional data in order to better understand the properties' capabilities and potential functional role in the region.

Phase 2

Phase two is plan development. It begins with a formal announcement that the planning effort is underway. This is soon followed with a process to identify important issues to be addressed in the planning process and establish draft property vision and goals. This will help focus the planning effort. Then alternative management and use strategies will be developed and evaluated. The last step of phase 2 is to develop the draft master plan and the environmental impact assessment. How the public can give input into these activities is discussed below.

Phase 3

Finally, phase three, is presentation of the draft, revised Master Plan to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

Opportunities for Participation in Planning

The Department's goals for public involvement in master planning are to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of their properties, and to provide a means for interested people to stay informed about the planning progress. Public review and comment will be formally sought at key milestone points during the plan's development and approval process (planning phases 2 and 3 discussed above). However, it should be noted that public comments are welcomed at any time. If needed, the Department may conduct additional public reviews or public involvement activities at any time during the planning process.

The formal public input points in the process are:

1. The identification of important planning issues and the formulation of the property vision and goals
2. Review and comment on the draft plan and the environmental impact analysis, and lastly,
3. The Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to provide input to them when they consider the plan's approval.

Ways You May Make Your Voice Heard

Public Meetings: DNR staff will hold informal public meetings at key points of the master-planning process (described above) to present and discuss information on the property and plan proposals, and to listen to your comments and suggestions. These meetings will be held in the vicinity of the property.

Other ways to comment: If you are unable to attend a meeting, or if you think of comments you want to give after the meeting you may submit comments to the planning team by e-mail, postal-mail or by phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

How the Department will Provide Planning Information to You

April 24, 2009 Draft

Issue Press Releases

Press releases will be issued at key stages of the project to announce public meetings, provide information updates and to solicit public comments.

Direct Mailings (postal and e-mail)

A list of interested and potentially affected parties, including local and state media, will be developed and maintained. This contact list will be used to keep these parties informed about upcoming planning events. Mailings and e-mails will be sent at key points in the planning process to provide valuable information about the property and planning issues; to announce meetings, or the availability of drafts for review, and to inform about other planning developments.

The public contact list is tailored for each planning project. However it typically includes affected landowners and businesses, recreational users, sporting clubs, environmental groups, local and state news media, local and county governments, other state and federal agencies, and Indian Tribes. Throughout the planning process the Department actively solicits interested parties to add to the list. You may put your name on the list or add a friend by contacting the Department at the address or phone number given at the end of this document.

Web Page

The Department will set up a special state forest master planning web page where information about the property, the planning process, draft plan documents, notices, planning progress reports and other important planning information will be posted.

Planning Reports

After each formal public input step the Department will send out a planning report to communicate the results of each public-input step. Additionally, when needed, a progress report will be prepared to keep you informed on the status of the plan's development. These will be sent to everyone on the planning contact list and posted on the master planning website.

Special Meetings

Additional public meetings may be held, if needed, at various stages of the planning to discuss specific issues in depth. All meetings will be publicly announced. Focus group meetings may be held with selected representatives to work through special management issues or other concerns that may arise.

Consultation with Other Governmental Units

Throughout the planning process the master planning team will also be consulting on a government-to-government basis with local governments, state and federal agencies, and affected Indian Tribes on mutual planning issues.

How Decisions will be Made

To develop an effective property master plan, the Department listens to many voices. Recreation users, commercial interests, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials, other government agencies, and tribal representatives, and other interested persons or groups are all encouraged to

participate. Input received at each major step in the planning process will be considered as the Plan is developed.

Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the Plan will be made based on the type of property, its capabilities, and the best role of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Further, the plan must comply with applicable Federal Laws, State Statutes, Administrative and Department Codes, and facility design standards.

While a broad range of interests will be listened to and considered in developing a proposed master plan, the final decision-making responsibility and authority on the master plan rests with the DNR's citizen policy-making Natural Resources Board.

Contact Information:

To give comments or suggestions on the planning process and review materials, or to sign up for the planning mailing list contact:

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