

Cooperative Forest & Wildlife Habitat Management in Central Wisconsin



Golden Sands
Resource Conservation
& Development Council, Inc.



**Cooperating for
Woods and Wildlife**

FEMC Conference 2021
Joshua Beneš
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My new role at the University of Vermont...

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Sustainable Agriculture



Healthy Forests



Clean Water



Abundant Wildlife



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Presentation Outline

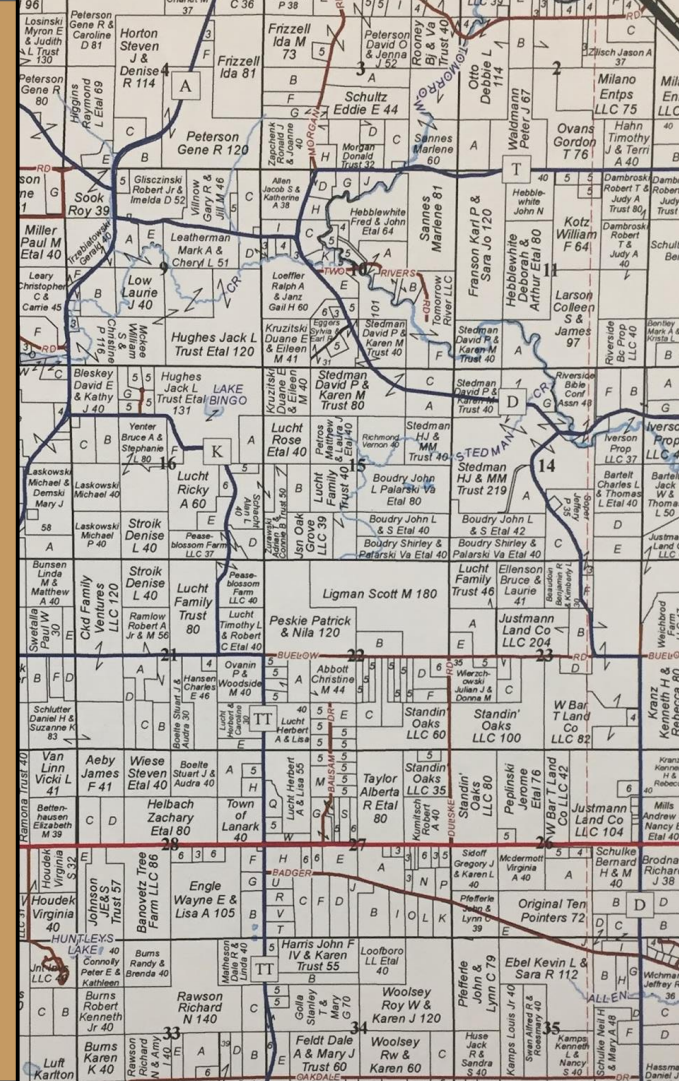
- Conservation concerns associated with fragmentation
- Need for cooperation among private landowners
- State of Wisconsin's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP)
- Cooperating for Woods and Wildlife (CFWW) program
- Models for cooperative efforts among private landowners that may be adopted in the northeast



Landscape Fragmentation

- What is fragmentation?
- In Wisconsin - 1997 forest parcel average = 37 acres. In 2013 - 26 acres.
- 80% of Wisconsin landowners cite wildlife as a reason for owning land

Source: Wisconsin's 2020 Forest Action Plan



Fragmentation Concern: Wildlife Habitat



Fragmentation Concern: Invasive Species

- Invasive plants pose a threat to forest regeneration and wildlife habitat.
- Smaller parcels = more challenging to coordinate invasive plant control efforts



Fragmentation Concern: Forestry Economics

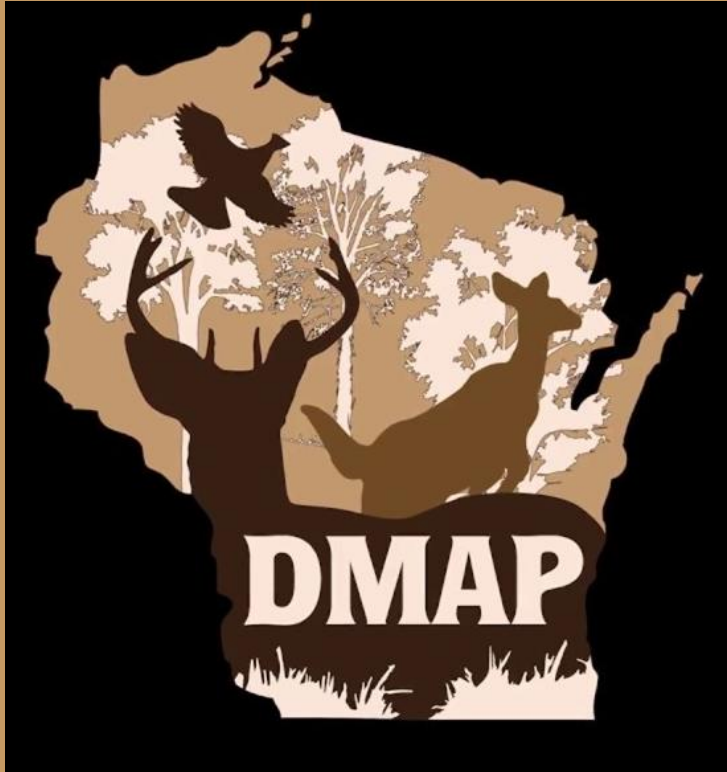
- Smaller parcels = less efficiency allowed for timber sales
- Proper forest management contributes to healthier forest ecosystems



The need for cooperation



Wisconsin's Deer Management Assistance Program

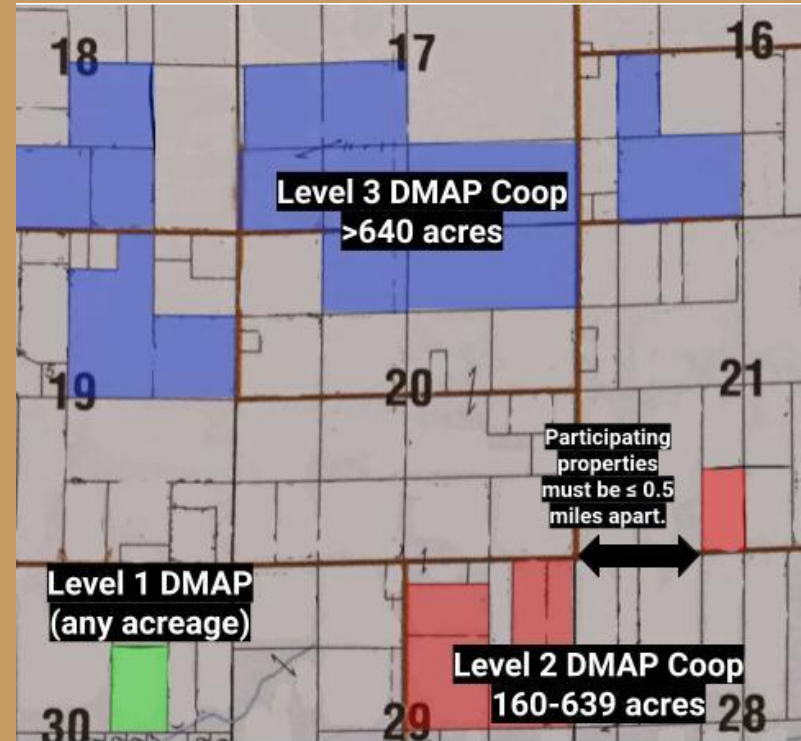


- A cooperative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and private landowners.
- Landowners receive habitat management assistance.
 - Access to informational materials.
 - Increased access for landowners to state professionals.
 - Workshops
 - Habitat management plans.



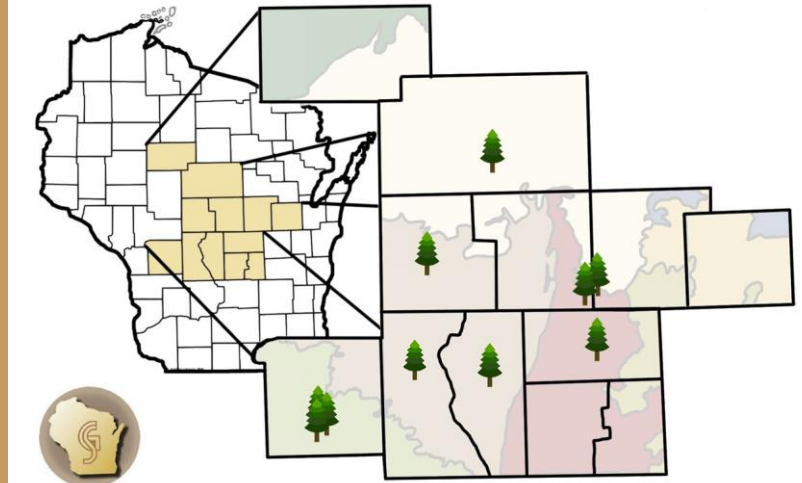
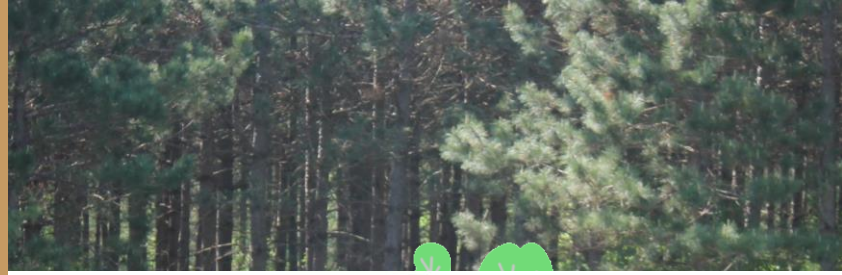
Deer Management Assistance Program

- Opportunity for private landowners to learn about managing their property for wildlife
- Individual vs. Cooperative
- Level 1, 2 and 3
 - Costs
 - Benefits
- Non-regulatory
- Private land remains private
- Platform which facilitates regional management



Program Launch 2015-2020

- USFS funded with match from state and local partners.
- Regional management focus
- Connecting landowners with natural resource professionals
- Level 3 DMAP cooperatives
- 8 county area (Marathon, Wood, Portage, Waupaca, Juneau, Adams, Monroe, and Waushara)



Formation of Cooperatives

- Step 1: Identify priority areas
- Step 2: Organize and hold landowner meeting
- Step 3: Identify landowners willing to become the group leader
- Step 4: Assist landowners with connecting and communicating with neighbors
- Step 5: Held follow-up meetings after landowners received their site visit



Cooperating for Woods and Wildlife: New program

- Another USFS grant with match support from state and local partners
- Expanded our reach to 12 Counties
- Enroll 10,000 acres to DMAP
- Restore 100 acres of Karner blue butterfly habitat



Cooperating for Woods and Wildlife: 2017-2021 Achievements

- >13,500 acres enrolled
- >125 landowners enrolled
- >100 acres of Karner blue butterfly habitat restored
- Countless landowner connections and landowner opportunities.



Cooperative Models that may work in New England and New York?

- Nonprofit model:
 - Cold Hollow to Canada - Vermont
- State program model:
 - None that I am aware of in the northeast?
- Land taxation model:
 - Integration within current use?



Learn more:

<https://www.goldensandsrcd.org/cfww>



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Questions?

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