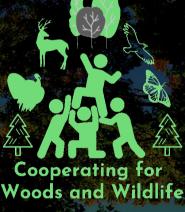
Cooperative Forest & Wildlife Habitat Management in Central Wisconsin

Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.



FEMC Conference 2021 Joshua Beneš Previous Executive Director







My new role at the University of Vermont...

Joshua Beneš

Assistant Director for Operations for the Mt. Mansfield Science and Stewardship Center Please feel free to contact me: jbenes@uvm.edu



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

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Fragmentation Concern: Wildlife Habitat



Source: Dr. Scott Hygnstrom, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point



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

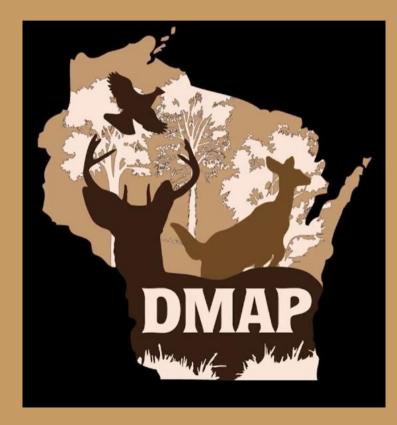


The need for cooperation





Wisconsin's Deer Management Assistance Program

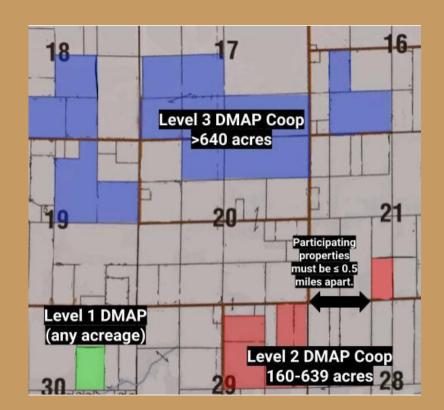


- A cooperative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and private landowners.
- Landowners receive habitat management assistance.
 - Access to informational materials.
 - Increased access for landowners to state professionals.
 - Workshops
 - Habitat management plans.



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 opportunites.



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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