

Habitat

Land and Water Stewardship Services Project Profile

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Avon Hills Scientific and Natural Area

Stearns County, Minnesota

For The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)



MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES				
I	Plant Community Reconstruction	Woodland/Forest reconstruction of agricultural fields (see below)	see below	see below
Ia	Reconstruction	Collect seed		
Ib	Reconstruction	Grow seedlings		
Ic	Reconstruction	Site preparation		
Id	Reconstruction	Herbivore control (e.g. erect enclosures)		
Ie	Reconstruction	Plant with seed or seedlings		X
If	Reconstruction	5-year Establishment management		X
2a	Rx Burn	Prepare burn break		X
2b	Rx Burn	Conduct burns		X



Avon Hills SNA is a 354-acre site located in Stearns County containing large tracts of mesic oak forest, tamarack swamp, and the rare bird species, Red Shouldered Hawk and Cerulean Warble. This SNA lies on the edge of a large patch of oak forest and is important in the role it can play in the protection of the interior forest and the habitat it provides to the rare bird species found here.

- Specific management goals for this SNA are to maintain, enhance, and restore the native plant communities, protect and enhance the habitat requirements for the SGCN found on the site, and protect any rare species or features found on the site.
- Management activities include plant community reconstruction through the conversion of agricultural fields to mesic oak forest and lowland forest. The reconstruction goal for the upland areas is to achieve similar species abundance and composition to that found in pre-settlement young growth stage (0-35yrs.) mesic oak forest. Seed will be gathered from various trees and shrubs growing on site and directly placed on site (acorns), or germinated in a DNR nursery until ready for planting (approx. 2-year growth period).
- Species that can be harvested for live stakes, such as *Cornus* spp., *Salix* spp., *Populus* spp., etc., will be used to begin the process of converting the low areas now under cultivation to lowland forest. Large colonies of reed canary will be controlled by various methods, primarily, through the displacement by woody species through natural succession, fostered with seed and planting activities. Alternatives of chemical control combined with a burning regime will also be considered in certain situations.
- Current conditions of this site require development activities such as site cleanup in locations where dumping of trash has occurred, removal or partial removal of a rock dam, fencing, and docks, the addition of signage and a designated parking area for the SNA.