

Dept. of Natural Resources: Seeking public comments on Central Sand Plains Draft Regional Master Plan

Posted on Monday, Jun 27, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public input on the [Central Sand Plains Draft Regional Master Plan and Environmental Analysis](#) which outlines proposed future resource management and public use and development of DNR-managed properties within the [Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape](#). The public may submit comments through a variety of opportunities, including in-person and virtual public meetings.

The Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape encompasses 3,420 square miles in central Wisconsin and includes portions of Adams, Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Portage, Waushara, and Wood counties. Department-managed properties in the Central Sand Plains include fishery areas, a state forest, state natural areas, state parks, wildlife areas, and various smaller parcels.

Significant resource management opportunities on the Central Sand Plains properties include extensive deciduous-coniferous forests, pine-oak barrens, rivers and streams, forested and open wetlands, extensive grasslands, and unique geological features such as sandstone cliffs and gorges. Primary recreational activities on the Central Sand Plains properties include hunting and trapping, trout fishing, hiking, camping, paddling, swimming, and ATV/UTV riding.

A master plan, guided by Chapter NR 44, Wisconsin Administrative Code, establishes the levels and types of resource management and public use permitted on department-managed properties. The Central Sand Plains Draft Regional Master Plan proposes management for over 70 DNR properties, including updates to management for many properties with existing NR 44-compliant plans in the region.

Highlights of the management proposed in Draft Regional Master Plan include:

- Protection and management of forests, pine-oak barrens, wetlands, and grasslands
- Maintenance and enhancement of existing high-quality coldwater fisheries
- Designation of three new state natural areas proposed on the Black River State Forest and de-designation of two existing state natural areas on Buena Vista Wildlife Area
- Access improvements, including additional boat access sites and parking areas, on wildlife areas, fishery areas, and state natural areas
- Improvements to existing facilities or construction of new facilities on state parks and the Black River State Forest

The department is also seeking public input on three options to address the farm-raised deer license and fence management at Sandhill Wildlife Area.

The public is encouraged to submit comments using [an online public input](#) form found on DNR's [Central Sand Plains Regional Master Plan webpage](#). Comments may also be made by downloading a [hard copy form](#) to be sent via U.S. Mail or email. Submit written comments by Aug. 5 to:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
c/o Yoyi Steele, DNR Property Planner LF/6
101 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707
Yoyi.Steele@wisconsin.gov or 608-590-6027

The public is invited to attend in-person or virtual public meetings to learn more about the plan and give comments. There will be opportunities for the public to view informational material about the draft plan, speak with DNR staff during the open house, and submit written comments.

The public is encouraged to visit the [Central Sand Plains Regional Master Plan webpage](#) for additional information about the project and to find input opportunities.

Following the close of the public comment period, the department will summarize the input received and adjust the plan as necessary before presenting the proposed master plan to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board for consideration.