

Wetland Management Planning Decision Matrix Wetlands Reserve Program

Easement Name: _____ Easement Number: _____

Easement Owner: _____

Prepared By: _____ Date Prepared: _____

Reviewed By: _____ Reviewed Date: _____

NOTE TO PLANNER^{*}: Make sure that you have ready access to the following reference documents while using this template. They can all be found at www.ia.nrcs.gov/technical/wrp_easement_management_references.

- WRP Purpose and Objectives (Conservation Programs Manual 514.01b & c)
- NRCS Field Office 6-Part Easement Folder (contains easement boundary map, location maps, soils map, etc.)
- Topographic map
- Aerial photo with delineation of Easement boundary and Management Area¹
- Aerial photo of 0.75 mile radius from the edges of the Management Area (Context Area²)
- Map of Iowa Wildlife Target Areas
- Species of Greatest Conservation Need lists
- Iowa Natural Areas Inventory;
<https://programs.iowadnr.gov/naturalareasinventory/pages/Logon.aspx>
- Species population separation distance table
- Iowa NRCS Native Plant Community Query Database;
<http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RestorationTools.html>

Where is easement area? Township _____, Range _____, Section _____

Describe the Context Area (List approximate acres of various wetland types and other land cover types. Identify prairie or wetland remnants onsite or within one mile.):

Overview description of the wetland and other areas on the easement; for wetland portions, provide any other information that can be readily attained such as restoration mix used:

^{*}This template is intended for use in wetlands that have soils that are poorly drained and very poorly drained, and should be used in conjunction with the Grassland and/or Woodland Management Planning Decision Matrix.

¹Management Area: That portion of the grassland that contains similar habitat communities and will receive the similar management prescription. A Management Area may be part of an easement or may include several easements. An easement might include more than one Management Area.

²Context Area: The area within 0.75 mile of the edges of the Management Area.

Complete for each Management Area:

1. Wetland classes and desired habitat types:

Cowardin Class ³		Habitat Type ⁴	Acres	Predominant Soil ⁵
Palustrine Wetlands	Emergent Herbaceous	Temporarily Flooded (PEMA)		
		Seasonally Flooded (PEMC)		
		Semi-permanently Flooded (PEMF)		
	Scrub-shrub	Permanently Flooded (PEMH)		
		Temporarily Flooded (PSSA)		
		Seasonally Flooded (PSSC)		
	Semi-permanently Flooded (PSSF)			
	Permanently Flooded (PSSH)			
Total Wetland Acres in Easement			Total Wetland Acres in Management Area	

2. Wildlife Target Area (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

³ This classification system has a hierarchical structure for five major systems -- Marine, Estuarine, Riverine, Lacustrine, and Palustrine. The five major systems are distinguished by a variety of hydrologic, geomorphologic, chemical, and biological characteristics. Subsystems and classes are defined by water regime and substrate. Classes and lower levels introduce vegetation life form and additional detail in vegetation, substrate, water chemistry, and soil characteristics.

⁴ Use the NRCS plant community descriptions, Native Plant Community Query Database and/or appropriate reference community to determine habitat type.

⁵ Specify Soil Map Units (SMU) of this habitat type within this Management Area.

3. For each habitat type identified in 1, what are the dominant vegetative species? (Extra table on the last page.)

Habitat type:						
Structure	Current % Cover	Desired % Cover	Species in order of prevalence (note as dominant, co-dominant or associated ⁶)	Undesirable / Invasive (check if yes)	Current Species % Cover	Desired Species % Cover
Mudflat and mudflat annuals						
Forbs						
Grass, sedges, and rushes						
Aquatic Emergents (bulrushes, cattails, other rooted aquatics)						
Submergent Vegetation						
Floating leaved vegetation						
Woody (trees & shrubs)						
Open Water ⁷						

⁶ **Dominant:** A plant species which predominates in a community because of its size, abundance or coverage (>25%).

Co-dominant: One of the most characteristic and prevalent species in a biotic community, but its abundance or coverage (10-24%) is not as great as that of a dominant species.

Associated: Species in a specific geographic area characterizing a community amongst dominant and co-dominant species (<10% cover).

⁷ Provide a cover range – the most accurate estimates can be made based on field conditions present June through September.

4. Are there any invasive species within the **Context Area** but **not found** on the **management area**? If yes, list species and percent cover (if known).

5. List the breaks in habitat contiguity and their approximate widths:
Breaks in contiguity include any public roads, rivers, streams or non-grassland land uses. Narrow breaks such as a fence line, field drainage ditch, or other breaks < 20 feet wide do not break continuity. Pathways under bridges should be evaluated by a biologist to determine whether or not they maintain habitat contiguity for herpetiles and mammals.

Break Type	Width

6. a. Taking into consideration breaks identified in question 5, how many contiguous acres of wetland (all herbaceous/non-woodland wetlands on hydric soils) occur within the Context Area?

- b. How many contiguous acres of wetland (all herbaceous/non-woodland wetlands on hydric soils) occur within the Management Area and on adjacent properties under similar management?

7. Are there water level management capabilities? If yes, describe what it is, what type of hydrologic manipulation is planned, purpose of manipulation, etc.

8. Are there fish present or evidence of fish (i.e. dead fish along the shoreline, presence of fish eating birds such as pelicans, poor water quality [green or cloudy water])?

9. For which WRP priority wildlife species/guilds⁸ is this management area suited for? (Utilize the Wetland Species of Greatest Conservation Need Table as a reference, paying particular attention to T, E, and S species if known to be found on the site or adjacent sites - use scientific sources such as Nature Serve, wetland species management requirement papers by FWS, DNR species profiles, etc.)

10. Are there State protected T&E species present on the management area or within the species population separation distance? Are there federally listed species for the county? Is there suitable habitat present for these species onsite? If so, management plan development and implementation will require consultation and concurrence with FWS and/or IDNR (contact the NRCS State Office). List the species and constraints on management activities.

11. What are the habitat requirements for the targeted wildlife species/guilds appropriate to the Management Area (what community type, structure, age class, etc., appropriate to supply the target wildlife habitat needs)?

12. What management practices are needed to meet the needs identified in 10? Provide the timing, extent and duration of the planned practices. Explain how each practice will be evaluated to determine whether the target species/guilds community and structural habitat requirements have been achieved?

13. Are there opportunities for further wetland restoration and improvements? If yes, explain.

⁸ Guild—A group of organisms that use the same ecological resources in a similar way.

Extra Table for Item 3.

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Open Water						