

The Rationale used to Determine the Four Representative Sample Areas

By definition representative areas are designated to serve one or more of three purposes: 1) to establish and/or maintain an ecological reference condition; 2) to create/or maintain an under-represented ecological reference condition; and 3) to protect a feature that is sensitive, rare, or unique on the landscape. Using that definition:

Representative Sample Areas

1. McKinley Prairie- A rare example of a southern prairie with prairie obligate species. This area will be monitored and maintained to preserve its unique prairie attributes. Therefore, the McKinley Prairie serves purposes 1, 2 and 3 above.
2. Bear Island- Bear Island in Leech Lake is an undeveloped island with unusual plant communities because of its location in a warmer lake-effected micro-climate. The county land on Bear Island will be monitored and maintained in an undeveloped state in order to protect its unique qualities. Therefore, Bear Island serves purposes 1, 2 and 3 above.
3. 1976 Jack Pine Fire Area- This area is a rare example of naturally occurring jack pine following a 1976 wildfire in Cass County. Natural reproduction of jack pine often takes place in areas where fire has occurred due to the abundant release of seed from the cones which may otherwise remain sealed for 10-15 years. Stands like this are becoming rare on the landscape due to the suppression of fires. This stand will be monitored. Therefore, the 1976 Jack Pine Fire Area serves purposes 1, 2 and 3 above.
4. The 655 Acre Deep Portage Preserve- The Preserve was originally created as a “Natural and Scientific Area” with the intent that no timber harvest would occur within its boundaries. Timber cover types within the preserve include mature aspen, paper birch, jack pine and red pine. These cover types will be monitored to see what occurs when they are allowed to become decadent and deteriorate over time. Therefore, the Deep Portage Preserve serves purpose 1 above.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Minnesota DNR were consulted to determine what areas they had designated that fit the definition and purposes of representative sample areas. Also, several agency and professional experts were asked to provide input on the four representative sample areas listed above.

This rationale will be included in the Forest Resource Management Plan when it is updated in the near future. Until then, this rationale will be made available on the website for the public.