



# The future of the forest is in your hands!

We all have a role to play in land stewardship. Whether you are a student, landowner, or interested in volunteering, you can make a difference in central Wisconsin.

If you do not own land, consider the management of public lands where you hike, hunt, or fish. Connect with the land managers of the property, learn about their management objectives, and ask them how you can help. Also, be sure to buy certified sustainably managed paper and wood products.

If you own a woodland in Wisconsin, there are a number of programs and organizations that can provide stewardship guidance for you and your woods.



**Managed Forest Law:**  
State program for forest management and property tax benefits.  
dnr.wi.gov keyword MFL



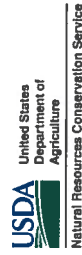
**WI Tree Farm:**  
Program that supports sustainable forest management.  
www.witreefarm.org



**My Wisconsin Woods**  
A public, private partnership serving woodland owners across Wisconsin.  
mywisconsinwoods.org



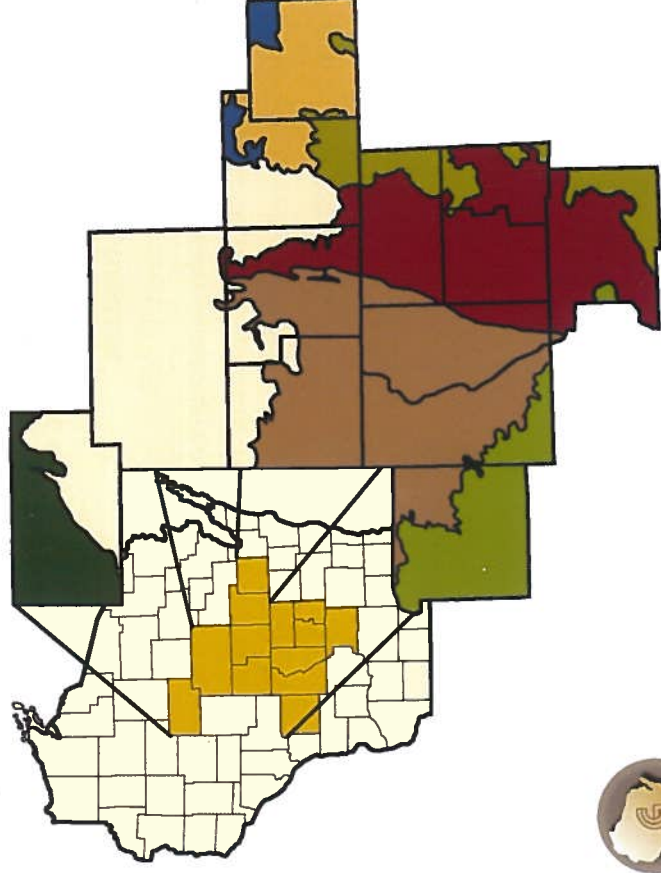
**Deer Management Assistance Program:**  
State program for learning how to improve habitat and manage wildlife.  
dnr.wi.gov keyword DMAP



**EQIP / CSP:**  
Federal cost share for forest and habitat improvement.  
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov



**Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association:**  
Educational community of fellow woodland owners and professionals.  
wisconsinwoodlands.org



## Golden Sands RC&D Ecological Landscapes

- North Central Forest
- Forest Transition
- Central Sand Plains
- Western Coulees & Ridges
- Northern Lake Michigan Coastal
- Central Lake Michigan Coastal
- Southeast Glacial Plains
- Central Sand Hills

Golden Sands RC&D is a regional conservation 501(c)3 nonprofit. We work in 13 counties in central Wisconsin that contain eight different ecological landscapes. The Oz Natural Area serves as an example of the Forest Transition Ecological Landscape. We encourage you to visit our website to learn more about other

Demonstration Forests and to get involved in woodland and wildlife habitat management. Our website provides information about land management programs, cost share for habitat improvement, and/or tax benefits. There are lots of ways you can get involved in the land management movement in Wisconsin. We want to help landowners connect to state and federal programs that will work for them. With proper forest management, we hope more landowners across Wisconsin see the benefits of productive and healthy forests and wildlife habitat.

[www.goldensandsrcd.org/livingclassrooms](http://www.goldensandsrcd.org/livingclassrooms)  
Questions? Call our office: 715-343-6215

**Printed: July 2021**

This organization is an equal opportunity provider.

# Waupaca County



## Demonstration FOREST

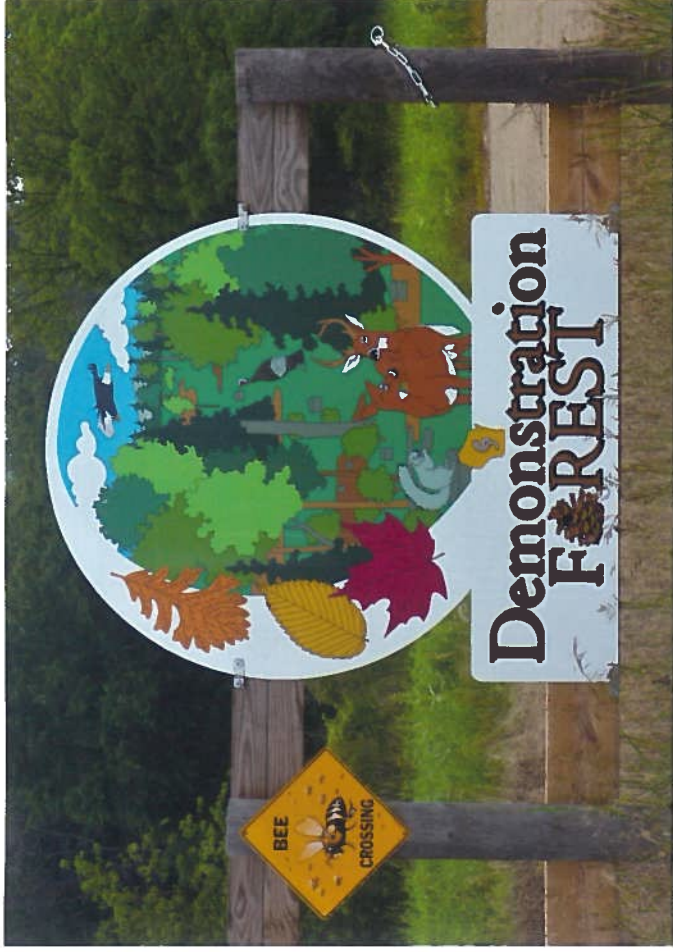
# Oz Natural Area

This is private property! Please call Golden Sands RC&D to schedule a free site visit with the landowner.



**The Golden Sands RC&D  
Demonstration Forest Network**

"Connecting Communities to Land Stewardship"  
www.goldensandsrcd.org/livingclassrooms  
715-343-6215



## Welcome to the Oz Natural Area!

For years, Kari Esbensen and Russ Bukiewicz drove past and admired this beautiful wooded hillside and wetland. In 1995, they purchased the 34 acre property to prevent the parcel from being subdivided and developed. Since 1995, Kari and Russ have managed the property, later named the Oz Natural Area and Center for Biodiversity Education, to increase native species diversity and provide wildlife habitat, aesthetic benefits, and educational opportunities for their community. Kari, Russ and their family intensively manage the property to control invasive species including buckthorn, Japanese barberry, and garlic mustard. In pursuit of their property goals, Kari and Russ have utilized cost-share programs available through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The property is conveniently located within the city limits of Waupaca, which makes it a great location for educational events and a haven for urban wildlife.

## The Oz Natural Area Tour

### Area 1: Prairie Restoration

This area of the property is being restored to prairie to provide habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly as part of the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. These small blue butterflies rely on wild lupine to survive. The landowners cleared brush from this area in 2020 and planted native prairie species including wild lupine in 2021. The prairie will also provide habitat for other species including monarch butterflies and other important pollinators. Brush will be cut or mowed to maintain the prairie.

### Area 2: Savanna Transition

This area is being managed as an oak savanna. The landowners are strategically leaving white oaks and removing other species to allow the oaks access to sunlight and to grow large, open branches. Reduced competition and lots of sunlight support the production of acorns which are an important food source for turkeys, deer, and other animals.

### Area 3: Wetland Benefits

A marshy pond occupies the southeast part of the property which provides a source of drinking water for wildlife and the perfect breeding and feeding area for waterfowl and amphibians. On spring evenings the area is flooded with a chorus of spring frogs including wood frogs, spring peepers, American toads, and chorus frogs. The landowners have placed wood duck boxes around the perimeter to provide additional nesting areas for waterfowl. Wetlands are an important landscape feature because they act like a sponge, absorbing floodwater and filtering out pollutants while replenishing groundwater.

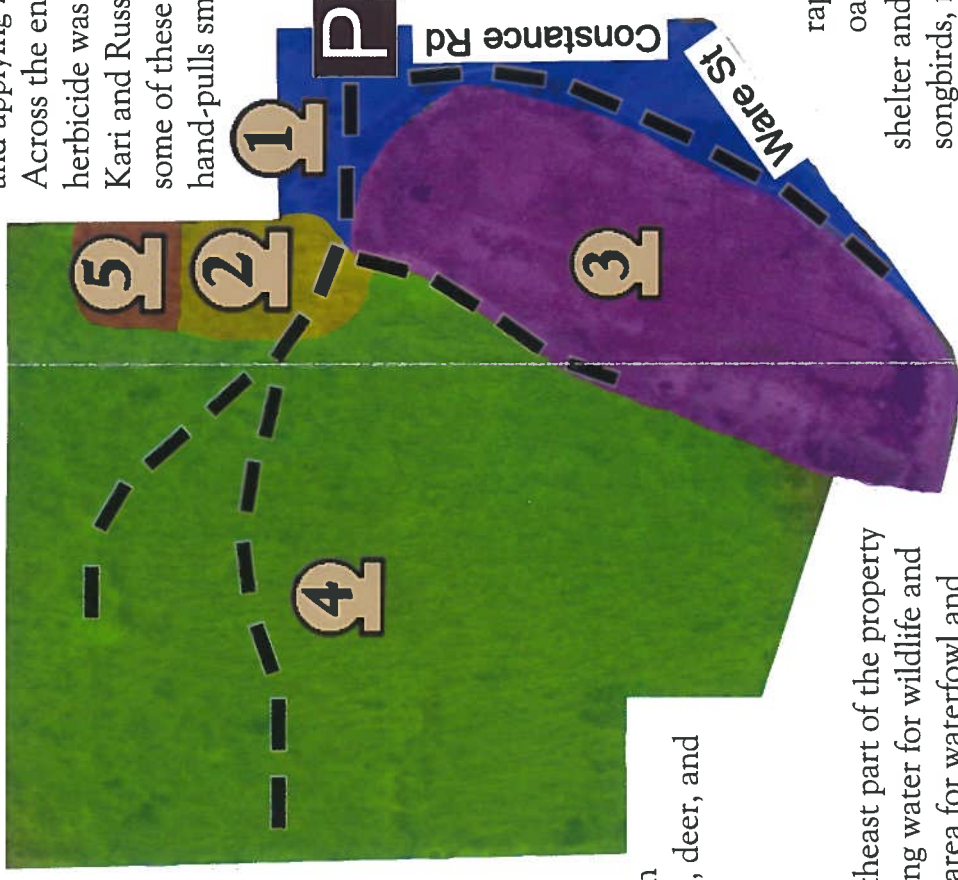
### Area 4: Invasive Plant Control

In this area, various methods have been utilized to remove and control invasive buckthorn, Japanese barberry, autumn olive, Oriental bittersweet, and garlic mustard. Removing invasive plants opens space for diverse native plants to grow which provide high-quality wildlife habitat. Herbicide was sprayed onto the leaves of dense stands of invasive plants. This practice is called foliar herbicide application. Other areas received basal bark treatment. This method involves mixing herbicide with oil and applying it to the lower bark of a tree or shrub. Across the entire area, some plants were cut and herbicide was immediately applied to the cut stump.

Kari and Russ hired restoration contractors to assist with some of these herbicide applications. The family also hand-pulls smaller invasive plants. Yearly maintenance is required to properly manage the property and the invasive plants. Over time, the family hopes to reduce the invasive plant populations to a level that will require less effort to control.

### Area 5: Welcoming Wildlife

Large trees in this area were killed by oak wilt. Oak wilt is a fungal disease that spreads underground via root connections and by insects carrying the fungal spores. The disease causes rapid death of red oak trees. Trees killed by oak wilt were left standing to provide shelter and food for wildlife including woodpeckers, songbirds, flying squirrels, and raccoons.



**Thank you to these Demonstration Forest sponsors!**

