

SFRMP Special Management Area Plan		ol
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Special Management Area Summary		
Type:	Great Gray Owl Management Area	
Name:	Sprague Creek Watershed Protection Area (WPA)	
Subsection:	Agassiz Lowlands (212M)	
NPC System:		
Size (acres):	11,664 acres	
Land Status:	Land within Lost River State Forest administered by Forestry and Sprague Creek Peatland SNA administered by the Scientific and Natural Areas Program. Area falls across 2 Wildlife Areas (Baudette and Roseau River) and a small portion of Roseau Lake WMA falls within the watershed protection area (WPA).	
Other:	Additional Information regarding the Roseau Bog Owl Management Unit and Great Gray Owl Reserve Area can be found in plans written by Katie Haws entitled MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROSEAU BOG OWL MANAGEMENT UNIT (1987) and the SPRAGUE CREEK PEATLAND WATERSHED PROTECTION AREA INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TIMBER AND GREAT GRAY OWLS (2006)	
Local Patch Map		Landscape Patch Map
Brief SMA Descriptions		
Current conditions		
<p>During the last approximately 20 year time frame much of the tamarack in the area has died from insect damage (larch beetle). Photo interpretation shows damage is worse in some areas of the landscape than others; 2010 photos show some smaller understory tamarack might have less beetle damage. The Great Gray Owl Reserve area appears to be heavily damaged by beetles and may no longer provide nesting or foraging habitat for owls. Additionally, based on FSI data, many of the black spruce and tamarack stands are <75 yrs old.</p>		
10-year SMA management intent		
<p>Maintain or improve forested areas within the Watershed Protection Area (WPA) for Great Gray Owls and other forest species such as Northern Hawk Owl and those listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (e.g., Black-billed Cuckoo, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Connecticut Warbler and Winter Wren among others). Clear portions of brushland areas within the WPA to provide openings for Great Gray Owl foraging habitat and to benefit other species that may use these openings (e.g., Sharp-tailed Grouse, American Woodcock, and Golden-winged Warbler among others). Many of these species use similar habitats as the Great Gray Owl including lowland conifers, edges of bogs and other openings. Allow for regeneration of tamarack in the beetle infected areas or consider encouraging black spruce in areas heavily damaged by beetles. Options include creating small openings for owl foraging, reserving clusters of trees that include snags and seed trees, and allowing stands to increase in age/size structure so that nesting trees (>12 inches dbh) and dense, closed canopy is available to be used by juvenile owls for cover and protection. Cuts could include irregular edges to allow for perch sites for foraging owls. Forestry and Wildlife Managers as well as Nongame Staff will collaborate to achieve these goals.</p>		
Measureable goals for the planning period		

Manage primarily for older growth forest in this area with small openings (<5 acres) for Great Gray Owl foraging habitat. Increase tamarack regeneration within the insect damaged area. Consider encouraging black spruce in some of the areas with beetle damaged tamarack and creating boggy openings for Great Gray Owl foraging habitat. Brushland treatment in this area may result in larger openings, but these could also serve as foraging areas for owls. Protect trees, particularly nest trees (>12 inches dbh). Increase the availability of nesting structures (snags, broken-topped dead or deformed trees).

50-year SMA Goal

Great Gray Owls need large expanses of dense, closed canopy stands, particularly tamarack and black spruce for nesting, adjacent to open, boggy areas for hunting. Perch trees must be maintained in or adjacent to open areas. Increase/maintain larger sized trees (>12 inches dbh) as these are often used for nest locations by ravens, hawks and owls. Great Gray Owls do not construct their own nests; they use nests constructed by other species. Management of the entire Watershed Protection Area will consistently allow some areas that meet the needs of Great Gray Owls at all times, while allowing harvest and other management activities.

Direction or considerations for specific stands

Harvest operations should be limited to December through February on frozen ground to limit impact to breeding birds and prevent peat compaction. Additional considerations, to be determined after consultation among Forestry, Wildlife, and Ecological and Water Resources staff.