

10-Year Preserve Management Plan

2026 – Amendment 2
Lake Ripley, Jefferson County, Wisconsin

*Prepared by Lake Ripley Management District (LRMD) Lake Manager, Lianna Spencer, and
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Amendment 2 – 2026

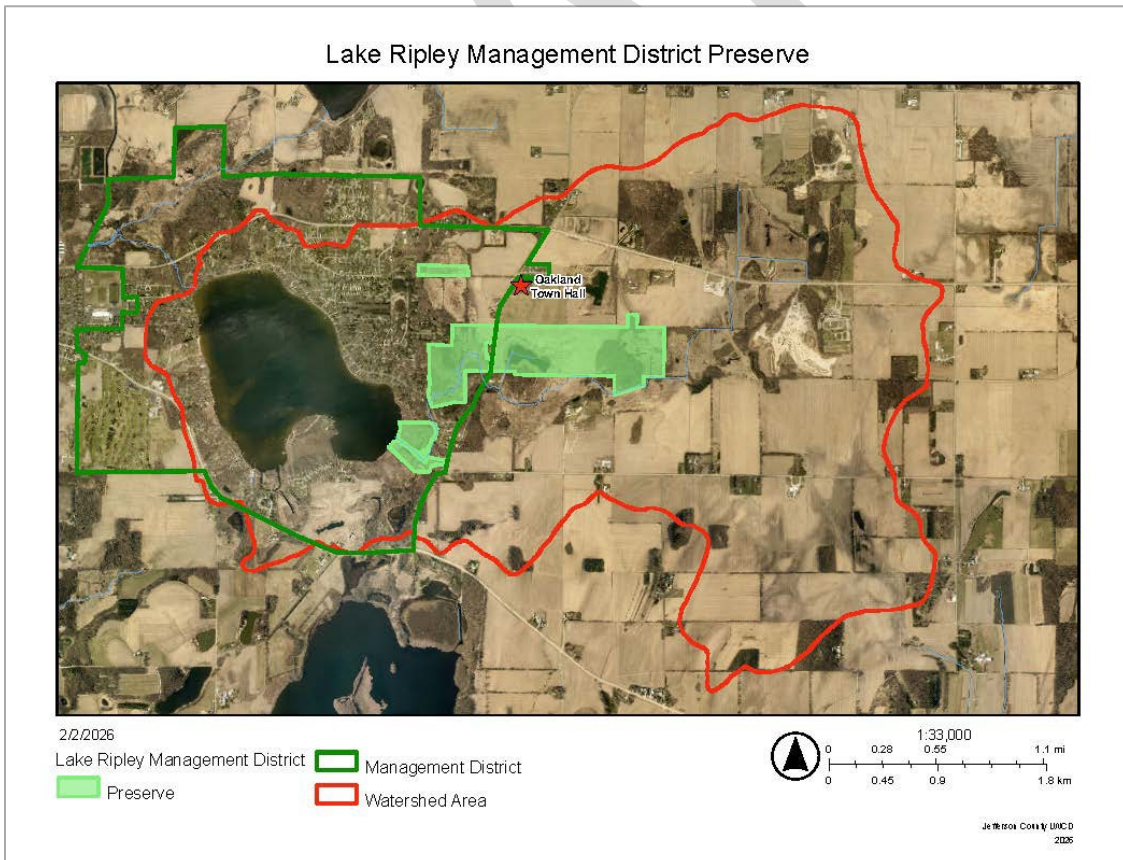
10-Year Preserve Management Plan, Lake Ripley Management District, Jefferson County, Wisconsin

Introduction

This is the second amendment to the 10-year Preserve Management Plan. The original plan was approved and published by both the District and the Department of Natural Resources in December 2021, with the first amendment being approved and published in September 2024.

Since the 2024 Amendment was published, the District was gifted an 8.714-acre parcel of wetlands, and has purchased two new properties that border the inlet creek. One property is 11.9-acres, and the other property is 18.873-acres. With these three new properties, the Lake District Preserve now includes 246 (245.991) acres.

The following document is the second amendment to the District's '10-year Preserve Management Plan' so as to include these three new properties and provide management plans for them.



Picture 1: A map of the 244-acre District Preserve.

Wetland Zone 4

This 8.7-acre wetland was donated to the District by Oakland Hills, LLC., in August 2025. Oakland Hills, LLC. is building a subdivision called 'The Preserve at Oakland' that is just east of this wetland. This donation helped the subdivision reach a zoning requirement for dedication and reservation of lands ([Article 3-Subdivisions and Platting, Section 16-29\(c\). – Dedication and reservation of lands. Jefferson County Municipal Code](#))

This land lies roughly a quarter of a mile (~1,350 feet) north of Upland Prairie 1. It is located west of County Road A and south of Highway 18. This acreage is not contiguous with the rest of the Preserve.



Picture 2 :The western portion of Wetland 5 contains a native sedge meadow plant community. dominated by Tussock Sedge (Carex stricta). Other natives include Marsh Milkweed, Blue-joint Grass (Calamagrostis Canadensis), with patches of native willow shrubs and Reed Canarygrass becoming established. July 1, 2026

Prior to European settlement, this wetland was part of a large sedge meadow complex that was contiguous with Wetland 1. Early agricultural practices would have utilized this wetland for grazing and harvesting marsh hay. Beginning in the mid-20th century, the greater wetland began to be drained with a series of at least seven shallow drainage ditches that run north to south; these feed into a deeper drainage ditch that is adjacent to the

southern border of the property. The timing and duration of the ditching and the following agricultural practices leave the parcel divided into two distinct plant communities.



Picture 3: The drainage ditches that run north to south seen during the spring of 2010.

The eastern half of the property was the most disturbed by agricultural practices and is now dominated by reed canary grass with encroachment from native and non-native shrubs. Despite the thick presence of reed canary grass, there are some native sedges and other plants growing in its understory. This wetland complex stays wet year-round.

The western half of the property may never have been plowed, or if it did, only for a few years. It was, however, used for cutting marsh hay for decades after the creation of the drainage ditch system. Today, this half is dominated by a sedge meadow plant community, with tussock sedge as the dominant species, as well as other native plants, such as swamp milkweed, marsh pea, marsh fern and bluejoint grass. Reed canary grass is present on the western property line and is slowly establishing itself throughout the rest of the sedge meadow.

The property has a small, approximately quarter-acre upland in the lower center. In 1937, this upland was an oak savanna; today, the canopy of bur oak trees has closed, creating a forest community with little herbaceous understory.



Picture 4: The eastern half of Wetland 5 is dominated by reed canary grass and punctuated by native willow species and European buckthorn. July 1, 2026.

The District accesses this wetland through an access easement between two homesite parcels. The plan is for these parcels to have houses built on them. The access easement will run between these two homesites, with a 20' corridor so that the District is able to get any needed machinery into Wetland Zone 4. The easement leads in to 'Outlot 5'; this outlot is not owned by the District. Through attorneys, the District was able to carve out an area that is 656 square feet, which is technically in 'Outlot 5'. This area is essential to provide the District with legal access to the donated outlot ('Outlot 2'), which will be called Wetland Zone 4.

The District strives to be good neighbors. Any work that is done in this area will be done in such a way to minimize disruption to neighbors and other adverse impacts upon surrounding properties, whenever possible.

A part of Outlot 5 of The Preserve at Oakland - Phase 2, being located in the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 4, and part of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 5, Township 6 North, Range 13 East, Town of Oakland, Jefferson County, Wisconsin



1. A legal description has been provided on a separate sheet as Exhibit A.

PROJECT NO. JD-20-24 SHEET 1 OF 1

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Picture 5: Wetland Zone 4.

Management Goal: Keep invasive species and woody canopies to a minimum to maintain wetland cover, maximizing soil holding and sediment trapping abilities.

Desired Plant Community: Sedge meadow and oak savanna

Intervention Management Actions:

1. Cut and herbicide any large buckthorn during the winters of 2027 and 2028.

Management Actions:

1. Annual meander survey, preferably one in each season. Create and continually update a species list during these surveys.
2. Manage undesirable species (such as, but not limited to Canada thistle and Dame's rocket) through different management actions including but not limited to: habitat manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, population monitoring, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, and mechanical control, as the annual budget and volunteer participation allows.
3. Forestry mowing and/or hand clearing followed by spot-herbiciding of woody species of undesirable species including but not limited to: buckthorn, honeysuckle, gooseberry, and multiflora rose. During the growing season, apply foliar herbicide application to any resprouts of woody species.

4. Monitor and manage the reed canary grass population through different management actions, including but not limited to: removing seed heads, digging it out, burning, mowing, and herbicide treatments (as annual budget allows). Because of the presence of many natives among the reed canary grass, grass-specific herbicide could be applied at scale to restore the sedge meadow.

Wetland Zone 5A

This 18-acre parcel was purchased by the District in August 2025 as part of a 19-acre property.

Collectively, Wetland Zone 5A and 5C are known as the Inlet Marsh. In pre-settlement times, this wetland was mostly a sedge meadow that also supported a few patches of tamarack trees. The inlet creek meandered through the wetland, and when it flooded in the spring, northern pike and walleyes would spawn in the vegetation along the banks and in the marsh.

Since European settlement, the marsh and stream have been highly altered. Aerial photographs from 1937 show evidence of previous grazing of the sedge meadow. A small area of oak savanna occurred at the north end of the property and the beginning of the current gravel driveway that extends to the south was already in place. Around 1940, the inlet stream was completely channelized, and an additional parallel channel was also dredged. In the 1970s, the channelized stream was widened in places to allow the area to be used as a marina. All of the dredged areas have since filled in with sediment and are now so shallow that kayak navigation is no longer possible during baseflow conditions.

In the photos below (Pictures 7-9), you can see Wetland Zone 5A, 5B and 5C and how it has changed throughout the years.

The spoils from the dredging appear to have been used to partially fill some of the wetland, creating slightly drier areas that have since been maintained as lawn. Some trees and other woody vegetation colonized those areas. The former oak savanna is now a closed canopy forest.

The sedge meadow plant community has shrunk over the years due to the alterations described and due to a lack of management. These remaining natural areas are threatened by invasive cattail species and natural succession to native and invasive woody vegetation.



Picture 6: July 19, 1937



Picture 7: April 21, 1955



Picture 8: September 14, 1963



Picture 9: September 14, 1971



Picture 10: Foreground: sedge meadow being overtaken by invasive cattail in Wetland Zone 5. Tamarack swamp in the upper right. September 16, 2025.



Picture 11: Channelized and widened portion of the stream near the inlet. The former marina areas are full of decomposing, wooden docks and form exposed mud flats during low water. September 16, 2025.

There is an active bald eagle nest in the adjacent wetland. Bald eagles are federally protected through the [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#). Any work we do on this wetland needs to abide by federal regulations.

The District strives to be good neighbors. Any work that is done in this area will be done in such a way to minimize disruption to neighbors and other adverse impacts upon surrounding properties, whenever possible.



Picture 12: Wetland Zone 5A

Management Goal: Keep invasive species and woody canopies to a minimum to maintain wetland cover, maximizing soil holding and sediment trapping abilities.

Desired Plant Community: Sedge meadow, shallow marsh, tamarack swamp.

Intervention Management Actions:

1. Manage and monitor the poison sumac, as allowed.
2. Cut and herbicide any buckthorn or other invasive or undesired trees.
3. Install property boundary stakes and signs.

Management Actions:

1. Annual meander survey, preferably one in each season. Create and continually update a species list during these surveys.
2. Improve herbaceous cover by seeding or planting native plant plugs.
3. Develop and implement projects along or within the inlet stream to help improve water quality within Lake Ripley, the surrounding wetlands, and the inlet stream.
4. Manage the invasive, hybrid cattail and narrow-leaf cattail grass using the most efficient management actions. These management actions include but are not limited to: habitat manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, mechanical control, and water-level control, as the annual budget allows.
5. Manage undesirable species (such as, but not limited to Canada thistle and Dame's rocket) through different management actions including but not limited to: habitat manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, population monitoring, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, and mechanical control, as the annual budget and volunteer participation allows.
6. Forestry/brush mowing and/or hand clearing followed by spot-herbiciding of woody species of undesirable or invasive species including but not limited to: buckthorn, honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and multiflora rose. During the growing season, apply foliar herbicide application to any resprouts of woody species. Control native broad-leaved woody species to encourage the growth of sedge meadow herbaceous species.
7. If needed, annually or biannually mow the wetland to prevent saplings and any invasive species from growing. Mowing practices can happen more often or not at all, depending on the condition of the wetland.
8. Participate in the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey monitoring program to assess the status of the anuran population.
9. Participate in the Wisconsin Odonata Survey program to assess the status of the Odonata population.

Wetland Zone 5B

This wetland section is 0.7 acres and was included in the 19-acre land acquisition. In pre-settlement times this area would have been a part of Wetland Zone 5A, therefore it would have had the same plant composition. This area was a sedge meadow that also supported a few patches of tamarack trees. The sedge meadow plant community has shrunk over the years due to the alterations described and due to a lack of management. This wetland was altered in the 1970s when the stream was channelized.

Over the last 30 years, this area has been mowed as a recreational area for nearby residents. This area would be a good demonstration site for a shoreline habitat improvement project.

The District strives to be good neighbors. Any work that is done in this area will be done in such a way to minimize disruption to neighbors and other adverse impacts upon surrounding properties, whenever possible.



Picture 13: Wetland Zone 5B.

Management Goal: Maintain and improve the wetland's function of protecting the inlet creek.

Desired Plant Community: Sedge meadow.

Intervention Management Actions:

1. Cut and herbicide any buckthorn or other invasive woody species growing along the shoreline.
2. Install property boundary stakes and signs.

Management Actions:

1. Annual meander survey, preferably one in each season. Create and continually update a species list during these surveys.
2. Participate in the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey monitoring program to assess the status of the anuran population.
3. Participate in Wisconsin Odonata Survey program to assess the status of the Odonata population.
4. If needed, annually or biannually mow the wetland to prevent saplings and any invasive species from growing. Mowing practices can happen more often or not at all, depending on the condition of the wetland.
5. Install a shoreline buffer along the inlet creek shoreline with help from DNR grants, Healthy Lakes and Rivers grants, other grants or budgeted funding.
6. If needed, add additional signage to indicate Lake District property.

Wetland Zone 5C

This 8-acre wetland was purchased by the District in October 2025. This parcel's address is N4117 County Road A, Cambridge, WI, 53523.

In pre-settlement times, this wetland was mostly a sedge meadow that also supported a few patches of tamarack trees. The inlet creek meandered through the wetland, making this a large wetland complex. Consistent with Wetland Zone 5A, this wetland has been highly altered. The stream was widened and channelized through this wetland, with an additional parallel channel dredged through this area.

This wetland's plant composition now consists of wetland species such as cattails, narrow-leaved loosestrife and native sedge species. Over the next few growing seasons, the District will be able to produce a species list for this area.

The District strives to be good neighbors. Any work that is done in this area will be done in such a way to minimize disruption to neighbors and other adverse impacts upon surrounding properties, whenever possible.

Bald Eagle Nest

There is a large bald eagle nest in a cottonwood tree in this wetland. Bald eagles in Wisconsin are protected under the [Federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) and the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#).

Bald eagles active nesting season begins in January, with the adults reassessing their territory and maintaining their nests. Starting in February the eagles will lay eggs, and the nesting season continues through the end of June. Any general activity under the nest or tree within 330 feet is considered a disturbance, and is federally prohibited. Most eaglets are taking their first flight, or fledging, by the end of June.

During the active nesting season (January-June), do not perform any disturbance activities under the nesting tree or within 330 feet. This would include any mowing practices. Mowing practices can be done July through December, with precautions of the eagle nest.



Picture 14: Bald eagle's nest in the District's wetland.



Picture 15: Wetland Zone 5C.

Management Goal: Maintain and improve the wetland's function of protecting the inlet creek. Keep invasive species and woody canopies to a minimum to maintain wetland cover, maximizing soil holding and sediment trapping abilities.

Intervention Management Actions:

1. If applicable, cut/herbicide buckthorn and other woody invasive species.

Management Actions:

1. If needed, annually or biannually mow the wetland to prevent saplings and any invasive species from growing. Mowing practices can happen more often or not at all, depending on the condition of the wetland.
2. Annual meander survey, preferably one in each season. Create and continually update a species list during these surveys.
3. Improve herbaceous cover by seeding or planting native plant plugs.
4. Develop and implement projects along or within the inlet stream to help improve water quality within Lake Ripley, the surrounding wetlands, and the inlet stream.
5. Manage hybrid cattail and invasive cattail grass through different management actions including but not limited to: habitat manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, mechanical control, and water-level control, as the annual budget allows.
6. Manage undesirable species (such as, but not limited to Canada thistle and Dame's rocket) through different management actions including but not limited to: habitat

manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, population monitoring, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, and mechanical control, as the annual budget and volunteer participation allows.

7. Forestry mowing and/or hand clearing followed by spot-herbiciding of woody species of undesirable species including but not limited to: buckthorn, honeysuckle, gooseberry, and multiflora rose. During the growing season, apply foliar herbicide application to any resprouts of woody species.
8. Participate in the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey monitoring program to assess the status of the anuran population.
9. Participate in Wisconsin Odonata Survey program to assess the status of the Odonata population.
10. If needed, add additional signage to indicate Lake District property.

Maintained Herbaceous Area 1

This 3-acre area was a part of the 11-acre purchase.

These portions of the property have had a long history of agricultural use, followed by urban development. A small mobile home park existed towards the southern end of the parcel from the 1970s to the 1980s. Since then, the area has been maintained in a park-like condition with large silver maples on the lower end, and spruce and red cedar trees on the upland near County Highway A.

There is a garage, a shed, two outhouses and a well pump in the western half of this area. These buildings will be maintained, with the exception of the outhouses. There is an old fence along County Highway A that may be removed.

There is a bridge that leads from Maintained Herbaceous Area 1 to Wetland Zone 5A. This bridge is part of a 'Joint Footbridge Easement Agreement' that was created in July 2025 during negotiations for the sale of the property. This easement is between the District, Knisely, LLC. and Bright Star Investments, LLC.

Please refer to Figure #2 below. Under the Easement Agreement, Parcel A (yellow on the figure below) is the District's 11 acres, Parcel B is the house property owned by Knisely, LLC., and Parcel C is the property owned by Bright Star Investments, LLC.

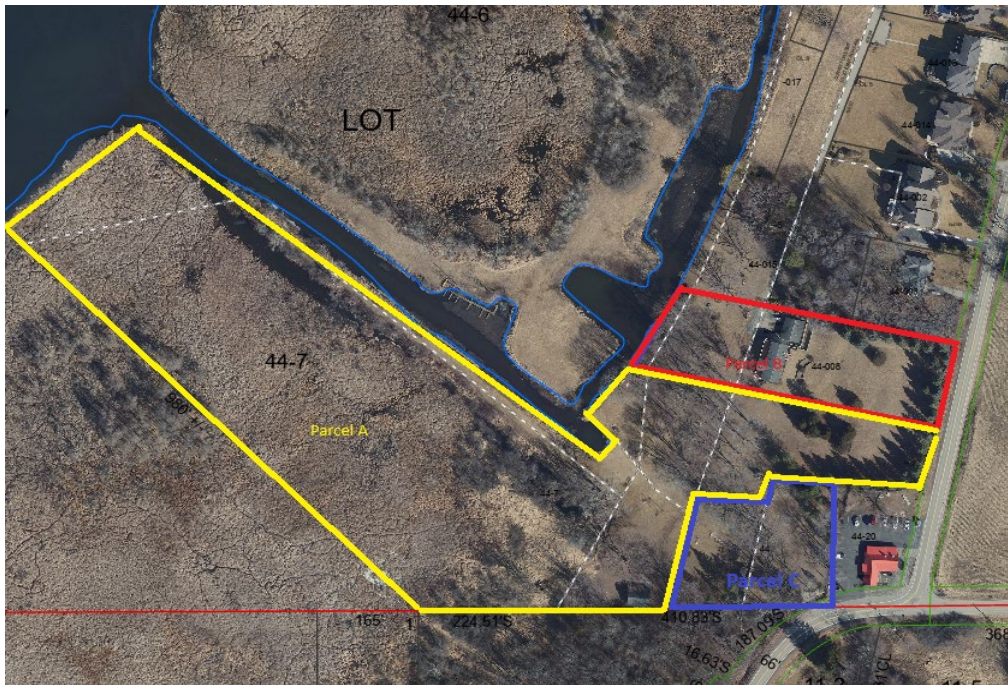


Figure 2: Footbridge Easement Agreement map



Picture 16: The bridge that joins our 11-acre and 18-acre parcels.



Picture 17: Herbaceous Area 1 as seen from the south. The red garage is District property.



Picture 18: Herbaceous Area 1 as seen from the eastern side of the property.

The District strives to be good neighbors. Any work that is done in this area will be done in such a way to minimize disruption to neighbors and other adverse impacts upon surrounding properties, whenever possible.



Picture 49: Maintained Herbaceous Area 1

Management Goal: Maintain area by keeping invasive species and nuisance woody canopies to a minimum, in order to maximize soil holding and sediment trapping abilities.

Intervention Management Actions:

1. Install property boundary stakes and signs.

Management Actions:

1. Mow annually, biannually or as often as needed to prevent any woody saplings or invasives from growing.
2. Manage undesirable species (such as, but not limited to Canada thistle and Dame's rocket) through different management actions including but not limited to: habitat manipulation, nutrient management, biomanipulation, pesticide application, water level manipulation, population monitoring, chemical control, prescribed fire, biological control, and mechanical control, as the annual budget and volunteer participation allows.

3. Forestry mowing and/or hand clearing followed by spot-herbiciding of woody species of undesirable species including but not limited to: buckthorn, honeysuckle, gooseberry, and multiflora rose. During the growing season, apply foliar herbicide application to any resprouts of woody species.
4. Participate in the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey monitoring program to assess the status of the anuran population.
5. Participate in Wisconsin Odonata Survey program to assess the status of the Odonata population.
6. Trim or remove trees to maintain tree health during the time allotted to protect the eagle's nest.
7. If needed, remove the wooden fence along Highway A.
8. If needed, add signage to the property. Be clear about the intentions of the property's use.

Glossary

- Canopy closure - the proportion of shrub and ground layer that is covered in shade or shade flecks at noon on a sunny day.
- [Oak Savanna or Oak Opening](#) - an open savanna community with a heavy prairie component. The best quality sites have a canopy with 5-40% closure but can be as high as 60% closure, often with large canopy gaps in between trees.
- [Oak Woodland](#) a type of savanna that is intermediate between more open oak opening and more closed canopied oak forests. The best quality sites have a canopy 41-65% closure but can vary from 30-80% closure
- [Sedge Meadow](#) - an open wetland community is most typically dominated by tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) and Canada bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*).
- [Shrub Carr](#) a wetland community dominated by tall shrubs such as red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*), and various willows (*Salix* spp.)
- [Tamarack Swamp](#) (Southern) forested minerotrophic wetland community is dominated by tamarack (*Larix laricina*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*).