



COULEE EXPERIMENTAL FOREST

LaCrosse County, Wisconsin



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The 3,000 acre (1,214 ha) Coulee Experimental Forest located on land owned by the state of Wisconsin was formally dedicated in 1960. The Coulee consists of upland oak forests, experimental tree plantings, ridge-top open fields, rock outcroppings, and several small “goat prairies” on steep topography. Much of the research initiated on the Coulee looked at the effect of land use and steep land management on floods, soil erosion, and stream sedimentation. Other studies examined the adaptability of various tree species and classes of planting stock to different sites to guide landowners in their tree planting programs. Although the experimental forest is owned and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources it is leased to the Northern Research Station for forest research and related scientific purposes through a long-term (15 year) lease agreement. The lease was last renewed on December 30, 2004.

Assets:

Scientists: No Northern Research Station scientists are conducting research on the Coulee at this time.

Cooperators: Past collaborators included the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, Wild Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Audubon Society, and Whitetails Unlimited.

Needs:

Annual operating costs: The Coulee Experimental Forest is leased from the state of Wisconsin by the Northern Research Station for a nominal fee per year for forest research and related scientific purposes.

The Coulee Experimental Forest is administered by:

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More About the Coulee Experimental Forest

Location: Lat. 43°48' N, long. 91° W

The Coulee Experimental Forest is located in LaCrosse County, WI, about 2 hours northwest of Madison, near the Wisconsin-Minnesota border.

Vegetation: The ridge tops of the Coulee, formerly used for agricultural crops, are now planted to pines, spruces, larches, and mixed hardwoods. Species and seed source experimentation were part of the reforestation projects here. Some open land remains and is currently rented by neighboring farmers. Natural and established prairie sites are managed for native plants and wildlife habitat. The forest is predominantly an oak-hickory type with red and white oak, shagbark hickory, basswood, and elm providing the major volume. The steeper slopes are productive because they were never used for agriculture as fields or pasture.

Climate: The average annual temperature at Coulee is 44 °F (6.7 °C), with summer maximum temperatures occasionally exceeding 100 °F (38 °C) and winter minimums as low as -40 °F (-40 °C). Average annual precipitation is 35 inches (864 mm), with the highest rainfall usually occurring during the growing season. Average annual snowfall is 45 inches (1,118 mm). Average length of the growing season is 138 days.

Research—past and present: Past research on the Coulee Experimental Forest focused on the effects of land use and steep land management on flooding, erosion, and sedimentation. There are no active research projects on the Coulee Experimental Forest. Reforestation, including the adaptability of various tree species and classes of planting stock to different sites was also a research focus.

Research opportunities: Opportunities for research are available on the Coulee through coordination with the Northern Research Station and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Facilities: There are no facilities on the Coulee Experimental Forest.

More information can be found at: <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/ef/locations/wi/coulee/>