

2025 ANNUAL WORKPLAN FOR THE FOREST AND TRAILS DIVISION OF THE CHIPPEWA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF LAND CONSERVATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Forest and Trails Division of the Department of Land Conservation and Forest Management is responsible for management of the County Forest and various recreational trails distributed throughout the county. LCFM will work in collaboration with:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Chippewa County Highway Department on road and equipment maintenance.
- User groups and volunteers to maintain and develop recreational trails.
- Private contractors to complete necessary projects that are beyond staff capacity.

Staffing and Labor Resources available in 2025 include:

Forest and Trails Division

County Forest Administrator – Full Time

Assistant County Forest Administrator – Full Time

Annual Forest & Trails Maintenance Technician– Part Time, 975 hours

Seasonal Forest & Trails Maintenance Technician– Part Time, 975 hours

DNR Forestry Staff

County Forest Liaison directed tasks - 1048 hours

Non-Forest & Trails LCFM Staff

FTE Department Director ~330

FTE Accountant ~ 500

Office Administrator ~200

Environmental Engineer ~ 100

SECTION A. FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

I. Timber Sale Establishment

In 2025 LCFM will again set a goal of establishing approximately 800 acres of new timber sales. Reconnaissance data from the Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) will assist in identifying stands suitable for management. Actual acreage will vary depending on site inspections of individual stands and determination of silvicultural needs. The following chart lists anticipated acreages to be established within each compartment:

2025 harvest acres scheduled by compartment in WisFIRS																	
Compartment	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	12	13	14	21	22	23	25	26
Acres	17	80	19	45	33	31	68	35	18	7	21	7	25	123	45	55	32
Compartment	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	40	41	43	44	45
Acres	127	27	96	38	15	65	23	51	16	7	28	54	29	32	96	99	91
Total scheduled acreage for 2025 is 1,555																	

Anticipated timber sales in 2025 will include two public bid openings to be held in May and November of approximately 8-10 sales, managing 400+/- acres in both sale offerings. If currently established ash sales get contracted another Swamp Hardwood timber sale may be established to mitigate losses EAB.

Non-Commercial Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) activities will include:

1. Testing the effectiveness of TSI techniques and assessing the feasibility of contracting out herbicide or mechanical treatment to release oak from competition in recently regenerated stands. Once treatment recommendations and cost estimates are created the financial implications of contracting TSI treatments can be presented to the Committee.
2. Release of small pockets of oak, hemlock and white pine regeneration through mechanical or herbicide TSI treatment occurs across the forest as sales are established and time allows.
3. Scarification using a dozer straight blade or dragging anchor chains to promote oak regeneration.
4. Treatment of invasive species where known locations exist and control is feasible.

II. Timber Sale Administration

Year-round timber sale administration is an essential part of County Forest management. Administration includes: sale inspections, scaling wood, correspondence with contractors, stumpage record entries and deposits, road layout, calculation and payment of town and state severance allotments, reporting harvest volumes, preparing contracts and extensions.

Weather, market conditions, and harvest restrictions influence contractor's ability to complete contracted timber sales. Staff will assist logging contractors attempting to complete contracts in a timely manner.

After bids were awarded at the November Committee meeting, dependent on contractors finishing up work, there will be approximately 41 timber sales under contract containing approximately 2,231 acres of timber to be harvested. The budgeted timber sale revenue for 2025 is \$676,709.00.

III. Forest Inventory and Reconnaissance

Field reconnaissance is used to assess geographical, structural and compositional attributes of forest resources. Forest inventory data is collected, stored and updated systematically and stored in WisFIRS. The database is used to analyze existing resources, evaluate management alternatives and assist in the development and implementation of short and long-term management plans.

Efforts over the last several years have improved the quality of the information WisFIRS uses to schedule forest management activity. The County will continue to improve management planning by improving the reporting of work planned and accomplished in WISFIRS.

Though several stands have been evaluated on an individual basis 2019 was the last year the County conducted comprehensive reconnaissance of oak regeneration. In all stands which have had the first harvest of a shelterwood silvicultural system WDNR and County and DNR staff will evaluate regeneration and site preparation or timber stand improvement needs.

IV. County Forest Roads and Access Trails

Permanent Primary Roads

1. Assume lead responsibility to conduct county forest road certification and administer County Forest Road Aids from the State Department of Transportation.
2. Utilize County Highway Department to complete grading and major repairs of certified county forest roads. LCFM will assist with minor repairs and maintenance by mowing ROWs.
3. Replace culverts as necessary within budget limits.

Permanent Secondary and Temporary Roads

1. Regularly provide custodial maintenance of the County Forest to control litter, illegal dumping, graffiti, and vandalism in the County Forest. Conduct routine inspections to identify unauthorized motor vehicle use, areas of excessive erosion, failing culverts and other maintenance needs. Conduct limited grading to repair damage and install best management practices where needed.
2. Mow the following areas: Mud Creek Trail (~ 2.0 miles), Hickory Ridge Ski/Horse Trail Systems (~16 miles), Harold Walters Memorial Forest/River Road Ski Trail (~3.4 miles), Kempers Woods (~2 miles), Pine Harbor Woods (~1 mile), and Yellow River Woods (~1 mile).
3. Mow secondary access roads subject to motor vehicle use under frozen ground conditions: Ruby Game Trail (~4.6 miles), Tealey Creek Game Loop (~3.2 miles),
4. Work in cooperation with the Sheriff's Dept., DNR Conservation Wardens, and Corporation Counsel to enforce motor vehicle use laws, illegal dumping, and other property damage violations.

V. County Forest Special Use Units & Type B Tax Deed Parcels

State Statutes (Chapter 28.11(4)) allow for the designation of certain properties as "County Forest Special Use". The Forest & Trails Division manages seven (7) properties totaling 1,614 acres with such designation. These properties are not suited primarily for timber production and do not lie within the Blocking Boundary. Special Use lands are suitable for scenic value, outdoor recreation, public hunting and fishing, water conservation, and other multi-use activities.

Chippewa County Forest Special Use Units include:

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|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Pine Harbor (Campground) | 2. Kempers Woods |
| 3. Gilberts | 4. Harold E. Walters Memorial Forest |
| 5. Round Lake (Day Use Park) | 6. Otter Lake (Campground & Day Use Park) |
| 7. Yellow River | |

Chippewa County Policy 308 assigns management responsibility for the 20 scattered Type B Tax Deed parcels to the Land Conservation & Forest Management Department. Parcel sales are managed by the Planning & Zoning Department. Chapter 16 of the Code of Chippewa County regulates the use of those parcels with the same regulations as the County Forest. Staff are working to implement the management recommendations made by the Committee in 2022.

Planned Activities:

1. Establish and administer timber sales, maintain and improve access roads.
2. Continue to update maps, website information and signs for non-Parks properties.
3. Facilitate local volunteers performing trail maintenance and improvement projects.

VI. Fish and Wildlife Management

1. Encourage volunteers, trappers and other conservation organizations to assist in the inspection, operation, and maintenance of wildlife flowages, including impoundment mowing, repair, and beaver detritus removal.
2. Assist LCFM Engineering staff in dam failure analysis of Low Hazard Large Dams.
3. Seed steep areas of landings and roads to provide wildlife habitat and resist invasive plant species.
4. Analyze aspen species composition and continue to modify rotation ages to maximize habitat management (i.e. early entry and extended rotations where appropriate).

VII. Surveying and Boundary Line Establishment

1. Locate and mark private property lines as requested by private landowners or for timber sales.
2. Request assistance from County Surveyor to identify boundaries and resolve encroachments.

VIII. Land Acquisition

1. Consider land acquisitions within and adjacent the County Forest Blocking Boundary on an ongoing basis. Pursue funding from DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program and other sources when purchases are proposed.
2. Encourage State Natural Areas program staff to expand the Ohmart Wetlands and Tealey Creek Cedars SNAs with previously purchased County Forest properties.

IX. Invasive Species

1. Use control measures on garlic mustard and buckthorn in select sites within forest stands, along the ATV trail and adjacent the Deer Fly Trail.
2. Spray wild chervil along the Old Abe Trail from Hwy S to the Wissota Bridge and inspect the entire trail for invasive species.
3. Work to raise awareness and facilitate user groups' capacity to identify, monitor, and control invasive species in the County.
4. Swamp Hardwoods management to mitigate losses due to Emerald Ash Borer.

SECTION B. RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Recreational trails contribute to the community's quality of life, improves public health and promotes tourism. The Forest & Trails Division is responsible for the planning, development and coordination trail maintenance efforts. Tasks are accomplished through organized user groups, individual volunteers, third party service contracts and staff maintenance.

Planned Activities

1. Old Abe State Trail:

- A. Conduct the maintenance of 20 miles of trail, including tree removal, mowing, surface repair, sweeping, bridge maintenance, signing and trail pass sales.
- B. Coordinate with volunteers to mow and maintain approximately 6 miles of horseback trail adjacent to the paved trail.
- C. Install picnic tables at the Anson Trailhead.
- D. Coordinate maintenance of the Anson Trailhead pit toilets with Lake Wissota State Park.
- E. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.

2. Bike Trails & Riverview Reserve:

- A. Conduct maintenance of 1.7 miles of bike and pedestrian trails at Riverview Reserve.
- B. Permit the annual FOHRT mountain bike race at the Hickory Ridge Bike Trail system.
- C. Apply for a grant to construct a warming house and storage shed at the Hickory Ridge trailhead.
- D. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.

3. Snowmobile Trails:

- A. Facilitate the Chippewa Valley Snowmobile Organization (CVSO) efforts to improve and maintain approximately 427 miles of state-funded snowmobile trails.
- B. Administer DNR grant funding: snowmobile trail maintenance, supplemental funding, and bridge projects. Administer associated grant contracts in cooperation with CVSO.
- C. Cooperate with the CVSO to complete requests for additional funded trails.
- D. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.

4. ATV Trails:

- A. Facilitate the Chippewa Valley ATV Council (CVATVC) efforts to improve and maintain approximately 23 miles of state funded ATV trail.

- B. Coordinate with the Highway Department to maintain 8 miles of TROUTE.
 - C. Assist CVATVC with maintenance of trailheads and toilet facilities.
 - D. Administer DNR grant funding for ATV/UTV Trail and TROUTE Maintenance.
 - E. Renew and implement the maintenance agreement maintenance of County Forest ATV Trails.
 - F. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.
5. Ice Age National Scenic Trail:
- A. Facilitate the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) efforts to improve and maintain 19 miles of trail located in the County Forest.
 - B. Facilitate efforts to reduce road use and relocate onto sections that highlight glacial features.
 - C. Permit the annual Chippewa Moraine Ultra Marathon on the Ice Age Trail.
6. Horse Trails:
- A. Facilitate the Chippewa Valley Trail Riders efforts to improve and maintain approximately 28 miles of horseback riding trail.
 - B. Empty manure collection bins and land spread per management plan.
 - C. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.
7. Cross Country Ski Trails:
- A. Facilitate the Friends of the Hickory Ridge Trail efforts to maintain approximately 17 miles of high quality groomed trail.
 - B. Permit the Powder Keg Race bike, ski and snowshoe at the Hickory Ridge Trail system.
 - C. Mow and clear downed trees from the Hickory Ridge Ski Trails in early fall.
 - D. Mow and clear downed trees from the River Road Ski Trail.
 - E. Enroll and coordinate users under the County Volunteer Policy.
9. Boat Landings:
- A. Inspect and maintain landings on Bass Lakes #2 and #3, Hay Meadow Flowage #1, Horseshoe Lake, Townline Lake and Knickerbocker Lake.

SECTION 3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1. Implement the 2021-2035 Chippewa County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
2. Manage workload to assure a safe working environment, adequate support and supervision for staff while implementing the Division work plan.
3. Monitor 2025 budget and prepare 2026 budget, including Capital Improvement Project requests.
4. Pursue private contracts for technical, construction and forestry services to increase productivity and efficiency in meeting work plan objectives.
5. Provide support to the Committee and County Board with development and implementation of policy relating to the County Forest, recreational trails, and Type-B tax deed parcels.
6. Respond to public inquiries regarding the County Forest and recreational trails.
7. Plan workload, recruit, train, and manage a new Annual Forest & Trails Maintenance Technician.
8. Improve website design to improve user experience and facilitate dissemination of information.
9. Cooperate with the Sheriff's Dept. to provide law enforcement in the County Forest.