

Resolution No. 75-20

2021 County Forest Work Plan

WHEREAS, Counties having lands entered as "County Forest Lands" under the provisions of S.S. 28.11 (5m) of the Wisconsin Statutes, may annually receive from the state a grant of up to 50% of the County Forest Administrator's wage and fringe, and

WHEREAS, an annual county forest work plan must be approved by and on file with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in order to qualify for the County Forest Administrator Grants, and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Annual Work Plan has been presented to the Washburn County Board of Supervisors.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we the Washburn County Board of Supervisors hereby approve the 2021 Annual Work Plan and participation in the County Forest Administrator Grant program.

Submitted for adoption this 10th day of November, 2020 by:

FISCAL IMPACT \$60,000.00

Motion for adoption by:
Supervisor S. Johnson

Seconded by:
Supervisor D. Wilson

Ayes 20, Noes 0, Absent _____

Forestry, Parks & Recreation Committee:

Sandy Johnson
Sandy Johnson, Chair

Hank Graber
Hank Graber, Vice Chair

Jerry Smith
Jerry Smith

Mark Radzjak
Mark Radzjak

Paul Johnson
Paul Johnson

I, Lolita Olson, County Clerk, do hereby certify that the Foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Washburn County Board of Supervisors at its meeting held on November 10th, 2020.

Lolita Olson
Lolita Olson, County Clerk

WASHBURN COUNTY FOREST

ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE WASHBURN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Following is the proposed Washburn County Forest work plan for the year 2021. The plan gives direction and meaning to the proposed County Forest budget. The plan further defines and supplements the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and emphasizes the current needs of the County Forest and recreational system.

I. FOREST MANAGEMENT / SILVICULTURE

A. TIMBER SALES

Timber harvests are not only important for the economic well being of Washburn County, but also for the health and vigor of the forest. This includes all aspects of the forest including wildlife, watershed protection, air quality, recreation, and many other noncommercial values. Professional implementation of proper forest management and harvest techniques is essential. The timber management goal is to produce sustained yields of forest products by scheduling timber sales as close as possible to achieve the average annual allowable cut. Compartment reconnaissance information from the Wisconsin Forest Reconnaissance System (WisFIRS) will be used to determine stands where timber cutting is needed. Washburn County Forest plans to offer for sale approximately 3,197 acres of new timber sales (excluding salvage operations due to unknown occurrences and re-advertising of defaulted timber sale contracts) in the following timber types in 2021:*

	<i>Annual Goal</i>	<i>Carry Over</i>	<i>Total</i>
Aspen	900 acres	146 acres	<u>1,046 acres</u>
Jack Pine	150 acres	0 acres	<u>150 acres</u>
Red Pine	400 acres	12 acres	<u>412 acres</u>
Red Pine – Regeneration	50 acres	-42 acres	<u>8 acres</u>
Northern Hardwoods	450 acres	157 acres	<u>607 acres</u>
Northern Hardwoods – Regeneration	50 acres	-8 acres	<u>42 acres</u>
Red Oak	600 acres	3 acres	<u>603 acres</u>
Red Oak – Regeneration	50 acres	-1 acre	<u>49 acres</u>
White Spruce & Balsam Fir	80 acres	0 acres	<u>80 acres</u>
Swamp Hardwood	100 acres	0 acres	<u>100 acres</u>
White Birch	50 acres	0 acres	<u>50 acres</u>
Other	50 acres	0 acres	<u>50 acres</u>

* Timber sale establishment will exceed these acreages in order to build a timber sale “bank”

B. REFORESTATION

1. As markets permit, attempt to sell jack pine sales associated with the 1980 Oak Lake Fire. As part of this, look for opportunities to post sale scarify approximately 50 acres of jack pine to promote regeneration.
2. Evaluate jack pine regeneration sites. Supplemental seed up to 50 acres as necessary.
3. Chemical and mechanical site preparation was conducted on 215 acres of red pine regeneration sites. These 215 acres are to be hand planted to containerized red pine stock in 2021.
4. Evaluate oak regeneration sites and conduct prescribed burns, as weather permits, on approximately 50 acres to release young oak from competition.

C. TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

1. Depending on Covid-19 impacts into 2021, and availability of the Gordon Prison Crew, release up to 50 acres of young red pine plantation by hand cutting competing vegetation.
2. Evaluate northern hardwood sites for regeneration issues and mow up to 50 acres to reduce ironwood competition and promote hardwood regeneration.

D. HABITAT/ECOSYSTEM PROJECTS

1. Continue efforts to establish difficult to regenerate forest types. Focus on regenerating jack pine, white birch, balsam, red oak, and other intolerant timber types, through planting, scarification, prescribed burning, and other silvicultural harvest methods. These forest types are declining across the region and a focused effort to retain them on the County Forest is important.
2. Attempt to increase levels of prescribed burning, with a focus on releasing oak seedlings from competition on oak regeneration sites.
3. Continue to finalize, modify and adapt the northern hardwood management matrix to aid in decisions on silvicultural prescriptions on sites where traditional methods have failed. Establish even aged harvests, in conjunction with site preparation where necessary, to regenerate hardwood on sites with poor quality timber.
4. Continue evaluating older red pine plantation growth rates and thinning response. Conduct final harvest on those older plantations where growth does not exceed mortality. Target these areas for site preparation and replanting after harvests are complete.
5. Refine annual allowable harvest projections for northern hardwood and red pine sites to adjust for even aged management and site regenerations.
6. Maintain procedure for entering aspen stands with second rotation harvest as part of annual allowable allotment for the species.

II. FOREST RESOURCE PROTECTION

A. FOREST FIRE PROTECTION

1. Maintain and improve fire lane system (gas tax roads)
2. Conduct annual partnership meetings to evaluate planning and operations
3. Consult with DNR during periods of high fire danger in order to modify timber sale activity during certain periods to reduce risk of ignition.
4. Support DNR wildfire suppression efforts where needed and in accordance with the Fire Control MOU. Assistance will be focused primarily on protecting Washburn County Forest, and adjacent, resources, with a secondary goal of providing assistance to other lands within the County. Staff resources will be allocated outside of the County only in cases of large project fires or in support of suppression on neighboring County Forest.
5. Continue focus of using Forestry Technicians as heavy equipment operators within DNR fire suppression operations.
6. Continue spring ATV closure

B. INSECTS AND DISEASE

1. Oak Wilt
 - Contract with DNR to conduct monitoring flights at least once during late summer to attempt

to detect new oak wilt infestations. Consider multiple flights as needed to provide coverage over all oak resources on the County Forest.

- Aggressively treat any infestations with “frill/girdle” method using chemical and subsequent removal of infected trees and healthy trees within the buffer zone.
 - Continue to assist private landowners, where practical, in treating and removing oak wilt infections that have the potential to impact County Forest. As oak wilt continues to move across the county, efforts should be focused on lands directly adjacent to county forest.
2. Emerald Ash Borer
 - Attempt to increase levels of black ash management as markets and weather conditions dictate. Focus on trying to convert primary stand types to swamp hardwood species other than ash.
 - Work to include white ash as a high priority of removal when managing northern hardwood stands. The goal is not to remove all ash, but rather pre-salvage as many high value trees as possible. Retain pole timber and small sawlog sized ash that are of good quality and vigorous in a way that are scattered across the stand.
 - Monitor for possible infestations.
 3. Other – continue to monitor for jack pine budworm, two-lined chestnut borer, and other potential pathogens and evaluate for management response.

C. INVASIVE SPECIES

1. Buckthorn
 - Continue to look for buckthorn infestations
 - Aggressively treat smaller patches, with internal staff using hand sprayers
 - Staff will carry chemical and sprayers in their vehicles during the time of year when basal stem treatment is effective and spot treat scattered patches/individuals when they are found.
 - The location and boundaries of larger patches will be submitted to the Forest Administrator for consideration of contract applications.
 - Continue to search for outside funding sources.
2. Honeysuckle – scattered patches are present and they will be treated in a similar manner as buckthorn.
3. Garlic mustard – there are no known infestations but monitoring will continue.

III. RECREATION

A. PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS

1. Totogatic Park
 - Complete any remaining construction components of the park expansion project, including boat launch parking area
 - Upgrade online reservation system to make it more compatible with current needs
 - Consider changing reservation restrictions to allow for longer booking windows within the rolling 11 month restriction on site reservation.
 - Upgrade electrical service in the southeast portion of the park.
 - Continue to allocate time from the Natural Resources Technician position during summer camping season to assist with parks operation and maintenance.
 - Add an additional Assistant Campground Manager position to work the new expansion area. Increase hours of existing position and look for opportunities to transfer daily, routine operational tasks to these 2 positions along with the Campground Host. This will allow for the Assistant Recreation Administrator to take a more active role as a manager rather than investing all of his energies and time into operational aspects.
2. Sawmill Park
 - Replace/repair broken hand pumps
 - Seek funding sources to replace pavilion

- Seek funding sources to replace dock system
 - Clean brush and debris remaining after oak wilt control efforts / tree removal in 2019
 - Continue to operate and maintain facility
3. Leisure Lake Youth Camp
- Develop a comprehensive plan to renovate the facility including a new kitchen, lodge floor, electrical upgrades, cabin repairs/replacements and possible addition of flush toilets and shower building
 - Look for funding sources to renovate the entire facility including an updated fee schedule
 - Develop a plan to implement renovations/upgrades with a goal of initiating project work in calendar year 2021.
 - Continue to operate and maintain facility
4. Dugan and Harmon Equestrian Campsites
- Evaluate Harmon Lake for sanitary dump station
 - Repair electrical service at Harmon
 - Consider eliminating camping at the Dugan Run facility and converting to day-use only.
 - Continue to monitor use by campers not associated with horse trail riding and consider additional restrictions as need arises.

B. MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

1. Snowmobile Trail System
- Continue to maintain snow trails program using maintenance grant program,
 - Apply for grant funding for any necessary bridge repairs/replacements and other trail improvements
 - Continue evaluating all bridges within the system with a goal of upgrading older bridges with engineer designed bridges.
2. ATV Trail System
- Continue to operate and maintain the official ATV/UTV trail system using maintenance grant programs.
 - Continue to operate and maintain bathroom and parking facilities at Trego, Sarona, Berry Road, and Hall Road.
 - Grade the entire trail system at least once during the season with County staff and equipment, including those sections of County Forest Roads that are trail connectors.
 - Re-deck the Hay Creek Bridge if treated timber materials are readily available and at a reasonable cost.
 - Construct the Casey Loop Rest Area project
 - Fund the Casey Creek culvert extension project on the Casey Loop
 - Rehabilitate portions of the Trail 39N and Stony Brook Trail east using grant funding
 - Relocate the Wild River Trail from Dilly Lake Road to Trego using grant funding
 - Apply for grant funding for any necessary bridge repairs/replacements and other trail improvements
 - Continue evaluating all bridges within the system with a goal of upgrading older bridges with engineer designed bridges.
 - Continue to work legislatively to push DNR to resume the state ATV/UTV trail standards project.
 - Continue to work legislatively to resolve conflicting program goals on trail rehabilitation and development standards that exist between county forest trail managers and the Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Council. The moratorium on new trail miles shall remain in place until a more collaborative relationship can be established.
 - Participate in legislative efforts to increase maintenance funding to help accommodate the influx of larger UTV's
 - Participate in legislative efforts to increase funding into ATV trail enforcement aids

- Participate in legislative efforts to prevent increasing statutory width definitions of UTV's
 - Make efforts to resolve the statutory issues with the proximity of the Tuscobia Trail to State Highway 48. If this issue is resolved, the option of the county acquiring an easement from DNR to operate and maintain that portion of the Tuscobia Trail in Washburn County should be revisited.
3. Other
- Continue to prevent efforts to allow 2-wheeled motorized trail systems
 - Continue to prevent efforts to allow winter UTV use on snowmobile trails other than the Wild River Trail and Shell Lake Grade.

C. NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

1. Ski Trails
- Evaluate both the Nordic and Totogatic Ski trails for touch up needs resulting from timber sale activities in 2019 and 2020. Reshape and repair as necessary.
 - Look for opportunities to recruit volunteer labor, likely through the formation of a local club, to assist with trail maintenance.
 - Continue to groom and maintain trails.
2. Wildcat Bike Trails
- Continue to facilitate local volunteer efforts to operate and maintain trail. Look for specific opportunities to partner with and assist the newly formed Rails on Trails club.
 - Apply for DOT directional signage on Highway 70
 - Plan for adding a bathroom, shelter and other amenities at the trailhead if funding is available.
 - Continue to push DNR for approval of the bike trail proposal running adjacent to the Wild River Trail from Spooner to the Beaverbrook ATV trail. Assist the club in construction efforts where needed.
3. Dugan Run Horse Trails
- Look for opportunities to recruit volunteer labor, likely through the formation of a local club, to assist with trail maintenance.
 - Evaluate usage to determine feasibility of long term operations
 - Mow trail system annually in late summer or early fall.
 - Monitor trail areas for invasive species

D. OTHER RECREATION

1. Continue to operate and maintain Minong Rifle Range
2. Seek funding to repair Big McKenzie Lake boat landing

IV. WILDLIFE RELATED PROJECTS

A. FLOWAGES

1. Continue planning efforts to remove/restore Black Brook Flowage. Discussions with DNR wildlife and DNR engineers in 2020 led to potential options to remove the structure without requiring intensive engineering plans. Continue discussions and develop a plan for removal in 2021. Seek grant funding, and as part of this, research options for creating a wetland mitigation bank.
2. Vandalism/tampering of the structure at Casey Creek Flowage resulted in significant damage to the spillway structure. Discussions with DNR staff have led to a general agreement that the best option is to remove the structure. As with Black Brook, look for opportunities to remove the structure in the most cost effective manner possible.
3. Continue efforts to develop a wetland mitigation bank as part of the Wolf Springs Dam #4 removal. This project was initiated in 2020 and it appears promising that conversion from open water habitat, back to wetland could provide for a wetland bank. Transfer the project to the Highway Department at such point as it appears to be a viable project.
4. As part of the Wolf Springs Dam #4 removal, and potential wetland bank, look for funding

options to bring Dam #3 into compliance.

5. Complete any necessary inspections or engineering on the Davis Flowage Structure.

B. WILDLIFE OPENINGS

1. Work with DNR Wildlife to evaluate the wildlife openings program. Priorities these openings and eliminate those with minimal benefit.
2. Purchase herbicide for wildlife openings treatment
3. Assist DNR with mowing where feasible.

C. OTHER WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATED PROJECTS

1. Continue to promote jack pine habitats
2. Continue to promote red oak, white birch and other declining species
3. Maintain gates
4. Seed logging trails where necessary.

V. FOREST ROADS

A. COUNTY FOREST ROADS

1. Grade entire 94 mile system and evaluate/repair trouble spots.
2. Prioritize mowing needs, mow approximately 10 miles.
3. Gravel north half of Shingle Camp Fire Lane
4. Use any remaining funds to begin gravelling those roads in used for ATV connections as part of the Casey Loop ATV Trail.

B. FOREST/LOGGING ROADS

1. Continue to implement Road and Access Plan
2. Plan all road expansions to minimize road density
3. Monitor for illegal use.

VI. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, STAFF/PERSONNEL

A. FACILITIES

1. Continue to operate and maintain shop facility
2. Replace at least one overhead door in the shop.
3. Continue to operate park model mobile home at Totogatic but consider transitioning from residence use to office.
4. Consider adapting the yet to be constructed maintenance building at Totogatic Park to include an office. This would require relocating the structure to a more centralized location.
5. Complete remaining landscaping at the new Forestry Office.

B. EQUIPMENT

1. Continue to operate and maintain existing fleet
2. Purchase replacement 4 x 4 vehicle for Recreation Officer
3. Purchase replacement semi-trail to replace aging/deteriorating unit.
4. Repair transmission on dump truck
5. Repair dozer undercarriage as planned maintenance.
6. Purchase drone using Sustainable Forestry Grant award.

C. PERSONNEL

1. Provide training opportunities to the newer employees (Technicians)
2. Continue to utilize Recreation Officer
3. Replace any positions if they become vacant.
4. Restructure campground operations with day to day tasks handled by Assistant Campground Managers/Host positions
5. Attempt to add an additional Assistant Campground Manager position to handle the expansion area.

D. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Time Standards

1. Coordinate with Washburn Team Leader to consolidate as many time standard hours into a minimum number of DNR staff in order to create efficiencies.

2. Focus time standards hours primarily on timber sale establishment. The Liaison Forester or County Forest staff will act as lead forester on these projects.
3. Heavy equipment hours on scarification and other site preparation duties will be conducted at the discretion of the County Forest Administrator

VII. OTHER

A. LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Continue to fund and utilize Recreation Officer Position
2. Continue to focus law enforcement efforts on ATV/UTV, permanent deer stands, and violations of Road and Access Plan and other violations of Chapter 50 of the Washburn County Municipal Code.
3. Continue to utilize ATV and Snowmobile Law Enforcement grant aids.

B. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

1. Work with Wisconsin County Forest Association via the Legislative/Certification Committee in engaging the state legislature and other offices to help protect forestry funding in the upcoming budget.
2. Participate in legislative efforts to re-authorize the County Forest Land Acquisition sub-program of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program. Attempt lobbying efforts to expand eligibility under this sub-program to include recreational development projects.

C. COUNTY FOREST PLAN

1. The Forestry Department opted to delay the final drafting of the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan due to Covid-19.
2. Finish drafting any remaining plan components in 2021, including public input and final approval by County Board.

D. TIMBER MARKETS

1. Continue to monitor market conditions and offer annual allowable harvest acreage as planned, while attempting to offer sales with higher likelihood of sale (older versus younger red pine, sales with aspen, etc.)
2. Look for opportunities to start discussions with county economic development staff to attempt to promote local value added industries.
3. Remain involved and up to date on a statewide “multi-stakeholder cooperative” effort that is focused either on purchasing the paper mill operations in Wisconsin Rapids, or developing a new kraft pulp, or wet lap pulp facility in Wisconsin. Investigate opportunities for Washburn County to invest in a multi-stakeholder cooperative.

E. FOREST CERTIFICATION

1. Continue to participate in SFI and FSC forest certification programs
2. Continue to evaluate cost/benefit of participation
3. The U.S. FSC standard is currently under revision to incorporate what are called International Generic Indicators. The draft of these revisions includes numerous changes that have potential to require much more intensive workload to remain certified, as well as significant acreage removed from the active management. Remain involved in efforts to prevent standards revisions as drafted. Numerous state agencies are involved in this effort as well. If the new standards are adopted as drafted, it will likely become too burdensome to remain certified under the FSC program.

F. LAND ACQUISITION

1. Follow the direction of the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan
2. Evaluate land trades and/or purchases presented to the Committee for possible County Board approval
3. Seek grant funding options for any proposals that the Committee approves pursuing.
4. There are no specific projects planned for 2021.