

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 800

INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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800 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- (1) To introduce and communicate to the public, the County Board of Supervisors, and to the Wisconsin DNR, the integrated resource approach that forestry, wildlife and other natural resource staff will use on the Jackson County Forest during this planning period.
- (2) To provide "Integrated Resource Management Units" (IRMU) that will identify and summarize the natural resources, social and physical management potential and opportunities for each unit.

805 INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Integrated Resource Management is defined as: "the simultaneous consideration of ecological, physical, economic, and social aspects of lands, waters and resources in developing and implementing multiple-use, sustained yield management" (Helms, 1998)

This balance of ecological, economic, and social factors is the framework within which the Jackson County Forest is managed. This broad definition describes the content of everything within this comprehensive land use plan. Previous chapters have discussed in depth many of the social and economic issues.

For the purpose of this chapter, the scope of Integrated Resource Management includes:

- Forests, habitats, biological communities
- Wetlands and waters
- Wildlife and endangered resources
- Soils and minerals
- Cultural and historical resources
- Cooperative Resource Management with private entities

Management of one resource affects the management or use of other resources in an area. Managing each use or resource by itself is less effective than managing

all of them in an integrated way. This is a field level approach to integrated resource management. Management decisions are made while considering that each site is part of a larger ecosystem. Similarly, the development and implementation of this plan also considers other planning efforts in order to provide for broader scale management.

The working definition of Integrated Resource Management means, in large part, keeping natural communities of plants and animals and their environments healthy and productive so people can enjoy and benefit from them now and in the future.

The remainder of this chapter is written to help communicate how the Forest is managed on an integrated resource approach.

810 SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

The definition of sustainable forestry in the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the Wisconsin Statutes is as follows:

"the practice of managing dynamic forest ecosystems to provide ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits for present and future generations" NR 44.03(12) Wis. Adm. Code and s..28.04(1)e, Wis. Stats.

For the purpose of this chapter, sustainable forestry will be interpreted as the management of the Forest to meet the needs of the present without knowingly compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (economic, social, and ecological) by practicing a land stewardship ethic which integrates the growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, and wildlife and fish habitat. This process is dynamic, and changes as we learn from past management.

810.1 TOOLS IN INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

810.1.1 Compartment Reconnaissance (recon)

The County will support and utilize the compartment reconnaissance procedures as set forth by the DNR Public Forest Lands Handbook 2460.5.

810.1.2 Forest Habitat Classification System

The Forest Habitat Classification System (*A Guide to Forest Communities and Habitat Types of Central and Southern Wisconsin; Kotar, et al.*) is a natural classification system for forest communities and the sites on which they develop. It utilizes systematic interpretation of natural vegetation with emphasis on understory species.

The Forest Habitat Classification System is an ecological tool that promotes a common language for interpreting site capability based on potential natural vegetation. Its primary use is the assessment of biological potential of upland forest sites. Through the application of Forest Habitat Classification, land managers are better able to assess site potential of current stands, identify ecological and silvicultural alternatives, predict the effectiveness of possible silvicultural treatments, assess feasible management alternatives, and choose appropriate management objectives.

Data will be collected in order to classify the entire forest. This information should be collected along with, and made part of, the compartment reconnaissance system during regular field inspections.

810.1.3 Soil Surveys

Forestry staff's knowledge of forest ecology and their experience across the landscape can assist in associating forest habitat types and site indices with soil type information. These associations can be beneficial in determining management prescriptions for specific sites. Detailed soil surveys will be made a

part of the compartment reconnaissance system and continue to be correlated to the Forest Habitat Classification system.

Soil survey information can be obtained from the Natural Resource Conservation Service office in Black River Falls.

810.1.4 National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units/Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin

Integrated resource management recognizes that an individual forest site is part of a larger landscape, and management activities can have an impact beyond a specific site. The National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU) is a useful tool in understanding natural landscapes.

The Wisconsin DNR uses Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin (DNR Handbook 1805.1) which is an ecological land classification system based on the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU). Ecological landscapes distinguish different land areas by ecological characteristics. A combination of physical and biological factors including climate, geology, topography, soils, water, and vegetation are used. They provide a useful tool and insight into ecosystem management. Land areas identified and mapped in this manner are known as ecological units.

Landtype Associations (LTA's) are considered landscape-scale ecological units, and are identified by surface geology, patterns of vegetation, soil parent materials, and water tables. Most LTA's are between 10,000 and 300,000 acres in size.

Each landtype association contains a general description of characters such as landform, historic vegetation, current vegetation, water resources, land area, socioeconomic data, agriculture, population, and ecological opportunities.

Goals can be developed for an LTA based in part on its capability, productivity, unique character, and the scarcity or abundance of similar LTA's in the state, region or beyond. Objectives for vegetation management, wildlife habitat, ecological restoration, and recreation use can be tailored to the characteristics and potentials of the ecosystem.

810.1.5 Integrated Pest Management

Integrated Pest Management objectives is defined as:

“the maintenance of destructive agents, including insects, at tolerable levels, by the planned use of a variety of preventive, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable”

The Committee has the authority to approve and direct the use of pesticides and other reasonable alternatives in an integrated pest management program on the Forest.

Refer to Chapter 600 (610.3) for detailed integrated pest management strategies.

810.1.6 Best Management Practices for Water Quality

A practical and cost-effective method to minimize adverse water quality effects from sustainable forestry operations on the County Forest is to use "best management practices" (BMP's) as described in Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Field Manual. Consistent with the BMP manual, (page 6), Jackson County will use BMP's on the Forest with the understanding that the application of BMP's may be modified for specific site conditions with guidance from a forester or other natural resource professional. Modifications will provide equal or greater water quality protection or have no impact on water quality. Areas with highly erodable soil types, close proximity to streams or lakes, or steep slopes may require measures in excess of those outlined in the manual. All Jackson County employees practicing forestry will

receive BMP training. Jackson County will encourage BMP training of all logging contractors that operate on County timber sales.

810.1.7 Forest Fire Management

810.1.7.1 Uncontrolled Fire Refer to Chapter 600

810.1.7.2 Prescribed Fire

Prescribed burning on the County Forest plays a role in sustainable forestry management. Many of the plant communities present today are the result of wild fires.

As the needs are presented to regenerate or maintain timber types or other plant communities, the Committee will evaluate the costs and benefits of each opportunity. Increased regulations, the county's cost of completing the burn, and the risk of breakouts and uncontrolled fires will have to be considered with any benefits of vegetation management through prescribed burning.

All prescribed burning will be done in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes 26.12, 26.14, and the DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook 4360.5 and in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources per section 605.5 of this plan.

810.1.8 Outside Expertise, Studies and Survey

Additional data necessary to make management decisions on the County Forest will be sought from agencies or individuals, who in the Committee's opinion, are best equipped to provide that service. This data will be used as appropriate for management planning.

810.1.8.1 Water Resources

The DNR fisheries biologist and the water management specialist will provide surveys, studies, and technical advice as necessary to prepare and carry out recreational planning affecting waters on the County Forest. (Also see Chapter 840.6)

810.1.8.2 Wildlife Resources

DNR wildlife biologists will implement population and habitat surveys, provide technical advice, and direct assistance needed for wildlife management planning and implementation on County Forest lands. (Also see Chapter 840) Wildlife projects are identified and implemented in collaboration with the County Forest administrator, DNR Wildlife Biologist, DNR liaison forester, and the Committee.

810.1.8.3 Soil Resources

Soil maps and surveys prepared by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) will be used in various phases of planning.

810.1.8.4 Mineral Resources

The DNR may provide information for management of gravel and other mineral resources. (Also see Chapter 515.2).

810.1.8.5 Wetland Resources

Maps prepared by the DNR's Bureau of Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, may be utilized for identifying wetlands. Although not comprehensive, particularly in forested areas, these maps are a good initial tool for identifying wetlands on County Forest lands. Assistance and technical advice will be requested from the DNR water management specialist when wetlands may be affected by management practices. The Army Corps of Engineers will also be consulted as appropriate. In addition, Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality will be used. (See 820.2.2).

810.1.8.6 Navigable Streams

The DNR's water regulations specialist will be consulted when navigable stream crossings or navigable stream management projects are being planned. (See 840.6.5). Best Management Practices for Water Quality will be used. . The Army Corps of Engineers will also be consulted as appropriate.

810.1.8.7 Floodplains

Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be used to identify floodplains. The County zoning staff may be consulted regarding management activities in floodplains.

810.1.8.8 Cultural Resources

Management planning will take into consideration historical and archaeological sites. More information may be obtained from the State Historical Society or the DNR's archeologist.

810.1.8.9 Entomology / Pathology

Wisconsin DNR forest pest staff will provide information and consultation as requested by the County. (See Chapter 610)

810.1.8.10 Endangered Resources

DNR endangered resource staff will provide Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) information and are available for consultation on endangered resources issues.

810.1.9 Local Silvicultural Field Trials

To date, numerous field trials have been completed or are ongoing on the County Forest. These trials include:

Shelter wood cuts for oak, patch clear cuts for oak, direct seeding for jack pine, scarification with seed trees cuts for jack pine and prescribe burning for jack pine and oak.

A compilation of silvicultural trials on State and County lands is available at:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/sciences/silviculture/index.html>

810.1.10 Local Citizen Involvement

Jackson County Forestry, Parks and Recreation Committee meetings are open to the public. The Committee will listen, evaluate and incorporate, where appropriate, the public's input into management of the County Forest. The Committee meets once a month to conduct forestry and parks business.

820 BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITY TYPES

A community is an assemblage of different plant and animal species, living together in a particular area, at a particular time in specific habitats. Communities are complex and dynamic systems named for their dominant plant species.

Species/community information has been condensed to familiarize the reader with the make-up of the Forest.

Refer to Chapter 130.1.4 for more information

820.1 FORESTED COMMUNITIES

The forested cover types are made up of variety of size classes (regeneration, sapling-pole, and saw timber) and structure (canopy, layers, ground vegetation, dead and downed material, and inclusions). Forested communities within the Jackson County Forest cover approximately 80% of the Forest.

Forest cover types associated with the County Forest are:

Aspen - 28%. Consisting of primarily aspen species often found in combination with paper birch and red maple

Oak - 28%. Dominated by red oak, white oak, black oak and associated with other hardwoods.

.Red Maple - 5%. More than 50% red maple. Often associated with aspen and white birch.

White Pine - 8%. More than 50% white pine.

Red Pine - 7%. More than 50% red pine.

Jack Pine - 18%. More than 50% jack pine.

Fir-Spruce - 1%. Consisting of swamp border or upland types with mixed species, predominately balsam fir and spruce associated with white pine, cedar, red maple, aspen, and birch

Tamarack - 4%. More than 50% swamp conifer species with tamarack predominating.

Scrub oak - 1%. Consisting of a majority of poorer quality oak (often northern pin oak) capable of only fuelwood or cellulose fiber production.

820.2 NON-FORESTED COMMUNITIES

Non-forested communities within the Jackson County Forest cover approximately 20% of the forest. In broad categories, they are: upland (5%), wetland (89%) and water (6%).

Non-forested habitats are important components of management within the County Forest. Upland and wetland non-forest types provide important habitat for distinct groups of species.

The following provides a general description of the non-forested communities:

820.2.1 Upland Non-Forest (5%)

Upland Non-Forest areas of the County Forest include:

Grass openings – consists of upland grasses, such as brome, quack, bluegrass, timothy, big and little bluestem, and Indian grass.

Prairie - ground cover predominantly of prairie plants.

Herbaceous vegetation - ground cover predominated by herbaceous species with bracken fern, sweet clover, giant ragweed, stinging nettle, upland aster, goldenrod, and prairie dock being common.

Shrub openings - primarily upland sites less than 10% stocked with tree species but having 50% or more of the area stocked with taller growing, persistent shrubs. This includes, but is not limited to, shrubs such as hazel, gray dogwood, juneberry and prickly ash.

Rock outcrops and sand banks - rock outcrops include rocky talus, and bedrock material.

820.2.2 Wetlands (89%)

Wisconsin State Statutes define a wetland as “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation, and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.”

Wetland communities are recognized to be a complex association of plants and animals, soils and water levels. They are fragile systems that undergo rapid degradation when affected by incompatible uses and unskilled management. Wetlands provide many functional values including shoreline and flood protection, water quality protection, groundwater recharge, and animal and plant habitat. Jackson County’s policy is to preserve, protect and manage the wetlands under its jurisdiction in a manner that recognizes the natural values of wetlands and their importance in the environment. To this end the County will:

- 1) Recognize wetland values in management plans.
- 2) Cooperate with the DNR in preparing wetland inventories and essential wetland information.
- 3) Maintain control of vital wetlands under its jurisdiction when to relinquish such control would risk substantial site alteration and subsequent degradation of wetland values vital to the area and the state.

- 4) Minimize adverse changes in the quality or quantity of the flow of waters that nourish wetlands.
- 5) Cooperate with local, state and national agencies and citizens to increase understanding of the importance of wetlands and the need for land and water stewardship in guiding development decisions.
- 6) Cooperate with the DNR in wetland management activities that would enhance the quality and diversity of wetlands in the county and the region.

Wetlands are transitional habitats between upland and aquatic eco systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or where the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands are made up of 15 descriptive types (adapted from PUBL-WZ-029-94). They include:

Shallow, open water – wetlands characterized by submergent, floating and floating-leaved aquatic vegetation such as pondweed, water lilies, water milfoil, and duckweed. Water depths are generally less than 6.6 feet.

Deep marshes - wetlands characterized by emergent vegetations such as cattails and pickerel weed and floating leaved plants such as white and yellow water lily and watershield. Water depths of 6 feet are typically found on deep marshes.

Shallow marshes - wetlands characterized by persistent emergent vegetation such as cattails and pickerelweed, etc., and water depths to 1.5 feet.

Sedge meadow - wetlands characterized by sedges and cattails. Surface water depths to 6 inches in winter and early spring, and exposed saturated soil surface in summer.

Fresh (wet) meadow – wetlands dominated by grasses, such as red-top grass and the invasive, non-native, reed canary grass, and by forbs such as giant golden rod growing on saturated soils.

Low prairie – wetlands with open, herbaceous plant communities covered by low-growing plants. They are dominated by native grasses and forbs associated with prairies, such as prairie cordgrass, big bluestem, and New England aster.

Central poor fen – a rare wetland plant community in Wisconsin. They are found in wet, seepage sites that have an internal flow of groundwater that is rich in chemical compounds and creates harsh, alkaline soil. Species like the shrubby cinquefoil, Ohio golden rod, and sterile sedge are characteristic.

Open bog – wetlands that are composed of living sphagnum moss growing over a layer of acid peat. Herbs and low shrubs colonize the mat and immature or stunted trees of black spruce and/or tamarack may be scattered through the area.

Coniferous bog – wetlands similar to open bogs, except that mature black spruce and/or tamarack trees are the dominant species growing on the sphagnum moss mat. Black spruce and heath family shrubs are characteristics of acid peat, whereas tamarack can grow in calcareous peats.

Shrub-Carrs – wetlands composed of tall deciduous shrubs growing on saturated to seasonally flooded soils. They are usually dominated by willows or red-osier dogwood. Non-native shrub species invade shrub-carrs, especially where drainage and pasturing have disturbed the area. In particular, honeysuckle and buckthorn can invade quickly.

Alder thicket – wetlands similar to shrub-carrs, but dominated by speckled alder. It can also include other shrub species like high bush cranberry and sweet gale.

Lowland hardwood swamp – wetlands dominated by deciduous hardwood trees. Soils are saturated during much of the growing season, and may be

inundated by as much as a foot off standing water. Species include black ash, red maple, yellow birch, and northern white cedar.

Floodplain forest – wetlands dominated by mature, deciduous hardwood trees growing on alluvial soils associated with riverine systems. These wetlands often occur in the backwaters and depressions of rivers, which retain water for a long period into the growing season. Typically they include northern and southern wet-mesic hardwood forest associations. Floodplain forests support diverse plant and animal species because they serve as migration corridors.

Seasonally flooded basin – wetlands in poorly drained, shallow depressions that may have standing water for several weeks a year, but are usually dry for much of the growing season. Typical species include smartweeds, beggarsticks, and wild millet. These basins often support an abundance of plant seeds and invertebrates, which make them ideal feeding and resting areas for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds.

820.2.3 Open Water Habitats (6%)

Open water habitats are permanently flooded lands below the deep-water boundary of wetlands. Water is generally too deep to support emergent vegetation. Presence of these aquatic habitats within a forest landscape greatly increases the number of wildlife species that can potentially occur. They include rivers, lakes, flowages and streams.

Lakes - lakes, ponds, and flowages in excess of 40 acres in an area; or rivers in excess of 1/8 of a mile in width.

Streams - intermittent or permanent watercourses with slow water velocities and are usually defined as being less than 1/8 mile in width.

Rivers - wetlands and deep-water habitats contained in a channel through which the water flows and associated with forested riparian zones.

830 PLANT COMMUNITIES MANAGEMENT

Jackson County recognizes the importance of maintaining the diversity of the Forest under an ecosystem approach. The process involved in making management decisions to encourage, or not to encourage, specific species or communities is complex. It includes an understanding of:

- Objectives of the County Forest.
- Integration of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU - landforms, soils, climate, vegetation classification at multiple scales).
- Application of habitat type classification to identify ecological potentials and silvicultural alternatives.
- Past, present, and future desired condition.
- Surrounding ownership patterns and their generalized objectives.
- Socio-economic needs.

830.1 SILVICULTURE

Plant communities are normally managed within the guidelines found in the *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook 2431.5.* Silviculture is the practice of controlling forest composition, structure, and growth to maintain and enhance the forest's utility for any purpose. Typically, silvicultural guidelines are written to encourage a stand to contain the greatest quality and/or quantity of timber under either an even-, or uneven-aged system.

A summary of management on the Jackson County Forest is described as follows:

830.1.1 Jack pine

Jack pine is a shade intolerant species that occurs throughout the sand regions of the Forest and is managed on even-aged bases. This species is shade intolerant and is normally regenerated by wildfire. Full sunlight, prepared seedbed, and heat are the key conditions provided by fire. With the control of wildfire, other techniques have become necessary in order to perpetuate this type.

Successful methods used in this county' include: 1) pre or post harvest scarification. This method is most advantageous from an economic and ecological standpoint, lending itself to a more natural condition. Jack Pine sentinel trees maybe left to assure adequate seed source. 2) Direct seeding following some sort of site disturbance. 3) Planting has been successful; however, it requires more expenditure and administration.

From a landscape perspective, the jack pine type is declining as it is converted either successionaly or through planting to another species. Jackson County Forest should attempt to minimize conversion of jack pine to other species in order to stem long-range decline of this forest type.

830.1.2 Aspen Management

Aspen is a shade intolerant species that is found throughout various areas of the forest and is managed on an even-aged basis. This means that aspen needs full sunlight to regenerate and the best method for creating optimum conditions for stand replacement is clearcutting.

The aspen type is recognized as providing habitat values to a wide variety of wildlife species as well as being an important species for economics and fiber production.

The extent of this vital resource has been steadily declining since the 1960s. The chief reasons for the decline are: 1) lack of harvest as stands reaches maturity 2)

natural succession and 3) selective harvest. In all instances, the end result is conversion to more shade tolerant timber types or non-commercial brush species.

Jackson County is committed to maintaining its aspen acreage and will accomplish this by regenerating the mature aspen stands through the use of clearcuts. Aesthetic concerns can be mitigated by retaining pine and/or hardwood tree species on the sites, limiting the size of harvests, and creating irregularly shaped sale boundaries.

830.1.3 Oak

Oak is a shade intolerant species that is found throughout the areas of the forest and is managed on even-aged bases. This species was maintained and regenerated with repeated uncontrolled fires. With the control of wildfire, other techniques have become necessary to perpetuate this type.

Jackson County has tried a number of silvicultural practices to encourage oak regeneration with varying degrees of success. It is the County's policy to continue to encourage oak where feasible and to keep it as a stand component. Practices such as regeneration cuts, varied sale sizes and shapes, distributions and timing of harvests and varied cutting methods can contribute to oak success.

830.1.4 White Pine

White pine is an important tree for a number of wildlife species. Total numbers of wildlife species tend to be higher in mixed white pine types than in pure dense stands of old field or pine plantations. As certain Central Forest stands mature they take on old growth characteristics of mainly white pine and oak types.

Jackson County Forest is naturally converting to more white pine as the age of the forest is increasing. The County will encourage white pine where it has been determine using silvicultural methods that it is most suitable species for the site.

830.2 Trees Locally Difficult to Regenerate

There are certain tree species, whose home ranges are within the County Forest, that are difficult to regenerate. In many cases, this difficulty is related to the exclusion of fire from the environment. In other cases this may be due to browsing by deer. Oak, normally found within the county, are sometimes found to be difficult to regenerate:

Oak

Oak tends to favor habitat types that are also suitable for white pine and red maple species. On many sites, normal thinning practices tends to promote these other species. In many cases regeneration under nearly pure oak stands trends toward red maple and white pine. Over time, the shade tolerant seral stage will replace the oak. The difficulty in regenerating oak on these sites appears to be related to lack of soil disturbance and the increase competition from white pine and red maple with the removal of fire from the landscape.

Oak has very high wildlife value due to its mast production and tendency to produce cavities that are suitable for wildlife dens. It also has high timber value in pulpwood and saw log-sized timber. Because of these factors, oak is important to be retain on the Jackson County Forest.

Silvicultural trials on adjacent County Forest using prescribed burns coupled with shelterwood harvests appear to be successful. However, conducting prescribed burns on a large scale has proven difficult. Scarification and other methods will continue to be investigated.

830.3 Exotic Plant Species of Concern

Exotic or non-indigenous invasive plant species can cause significant ecological and economic damage to the Forest. Some invasive species, such as common and glossy buckthorn and spotted knapweed eliminate not only wildflowers but also limit the regeneration of tree species. Keeping them from dominating the understory is critical to

the long-term health and economic viability of the forest. Currently, Jackson County Forest has few significant infestations of invasive plants. With training, vigilance, and control efforts, new infestations can be managed or eliminated.

830.4 LEGALLY PROTECTED PLANT SPECIES

There are some plants in Wisconsin that are afforded protection under the Federal Endangered Species Law, the State Endangered and Threatened Species Law (s. 29.604 Wis. Stats. and NR 27 Wis. Adm. Code), or both. Under Wisconsin State Law, no one may possess or sell any wild plant that is listed without a valid endangered or threatened (ET) species permit. On public lands or lands one does not own, lease or have permission of the landowner, one may not cut, root up, sever, injure, destroy, remove, transport, or carry away a listed plant without an ET species permit. There is an exemption on public lands for forestry, agriculture and utility activity under the state law.

In the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) program the DNR tracks information on these species in the State. Found in chapter 900.7 is a list of legally protected plants known to occur in Jackson County (on or near the County Forest).

830.5 OTHER PLANT SPECIES AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF CONCERN – NHI

The NHI program at the DNR also tracks information on rare species and natural communities, in addition to legally protected species.

830.5.1 Special Concern Plants

Special Concern Species are those species in which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected, but not yet proven. The main purpose of this category is to focus attention on certain species before they become threatened or endangered. Found in chapter 900.7 is a list of Special Concern plant species known to occur in Jackson County (on or near the county forest).

830.6.2 Natural Communities

Similarly, specific records of natural communities are also tracked. Found in chapter 900.7 is a list of natural communities that had been recorded in Jackson County (on or near the County Forest).

840 WILDLIFE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

840.1 BACKGROUND

For the purpose of this plan, wildlife will include all native birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and insects with a strong focus on the natural communities in which they live. Wildlife biologists emphasize habitat management that interrelates and benefits wildlife, and complements sound forestry practices. Concerns about the biological diversity of the County Forest and how it fits into the regional, continental and global perspective, may cause wildlife management to place increased emphasis on segments of the forest community. Practices such as old growth, snag and den tree management, access management, forest openings maintenance, oak management, and aspen maintenance, can be priorities in the dynamics of forest management. A primary goal of wildlife management on the Jackson County Forest is to provide a diversity of healthy ecosystems necessary to sustain native populations for their biological, recreational, cultural and economic values.

840.1.1 Technical Planning

Planning will be a cooperative effort of the administrator, DNR liaison forester and wildlife biologist in formulating management plans and utilizing wildlife management techniques for the overall protection and enhancement of the forest community, of which wildlife is a key component.

840.1.2 Guidelines

DNR manual codes on Endangered and Threatened Species Permits Issue (1724.5), Feasibility Studies and WEPA Analyses for Establishing or Modifying Property Project Boundaries (2105.1), Guidelines for Defining Forest-Wildlife Habitat Management (2112), Forest Opening Maintenance and Construction (2112.1), and the Public Forest Lands Handbook (2460.5), are important references and guidelines in wildlife planning efforts.

840.1.3 Inventory

Habitat needs will be determined by analysis of forest reconnaissance information. Population estimates will be conducted periodically by DNR wildlife, endangered resources personnel, and other trained cooperators.

840.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND AREAS OF FOCUS

In applying this Plan to the forest, the following areas of focus were identified in achieving Plan objectives:

840.2.1 General Management Policies

Forest management practices may require modification to benefit wildlife and biodiversity in certain situations. Jackson County has developed guidelines for forest management they include the following:

- 1) General Timber Sale Guidelines.
- 2) Field Timber Sale Establishment Guidelines.
- 3) Sensitive Species Management Guidelines.

The guidelines are found in chapter 915.9

840.3 HABITATS OF IMPORTANCE

Important habitat types are those cover types known to be of importance to certain native wildlife and whose absence would make that wildlife significantly less abundant. These shortages may be on a local or broader scale. The following habitat types can be considered important:

840.3.1 Aspen

The aspen type is recognized as providing habitat values to a wide variety of wildlife species. This type will continue to be regenerated, with consideration given to reserving scattered den and mast-producing trees in the process.

840.3.2 Jack pine

Jack pine and its associated plant understory provide a vital mix of breeding and winter habitat for many wildlife species. This type will become increasingly important on the Forest as conversion to other tree species occurs on private lands. Jack pine habitat maintenance will be a high priority.

840.3.3 Forest openings

Permanent grass openings are essential to well-balanced wildlife habitat. Openings will be maintained where they exist or be developed where needed.

840.3.4 Lowland conifer

Tamarack and Black Spruce types are important for winter cover for many wildlife species. These forest types will be maintained where practical.

840.3.5 Oak

The oak type is important to wildlife because of its cavity-forming potential and mast production. Future management will focus on protecting and regenerating this type.

840.3.6 Forest Game Species

The management of forest game (white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, black bear, elk, turkey and numerous furbearers) is centered on maintaining early successional species such as aspen, jack pine, and black oak. Aspen and oak are the primary species of importance.

Manual Code 2112 is a Wisconsin DNR document that establishes guidelines for measuring forest game habitat. It has been used like a barometer to measure changes in forest wildlife habitat. While the scope of Manual Code 2112 can be narrow (deer habitat units compared with landscapes and ecoregions) by today's management standards, the impacts are broad.

Foresters, in concert with wildlife biologists, will continue to monitor forest game species and adjust land management prescriptions where appropriate.

840.3.7 Forest Non-Game Species

Efforts will be made with the DNR to inventory existing populations, identify needs, and maintain valuable habitat types.

Sharp-tailed Grouse populations have been steadily declining due to a loss of large grass and shrub openings. Sharp-tailed Grouse are an indicator species for other barrens and grassland dependent species. A shift towards larger clear cuts where they will benefit Sharp-tailed Grouse and incorporate existing openings will be sought by wildlife managers as well as a let it burn policy.

Elk were once native to Wisconsin, especially the central and southern parts of the state where grass and large openings dominated. Elk are being considered to be reintroduced to Jackson County. Barrens management that will benefit Sharp-tailed Grouse and other grassland and shrub land species will also benefit elk. At this time no change in land management will occur specifically for elk, but may occur to increase the barrens landscape component.

840.3.7.1 Neotropical Migrant Birds

Neotropical migrant birds (NTMB) are songbirds that breed in North America and winter in Central and South America. There are over 120 species of NTMBs that spend a portion of each year in Wisconsin. Different NTMBs utilize a wide variety of habitats including forests, shrubs, and grasslands. Warblers, tanagers,

vireos, thrushes, swallows, blue-winged teal and hummingbirds are some examples of NTMBs. In addition, these species play an important role in forest health by consuming large amounts of insects, including forest pest species such as gypsy moths and forest tent caterpillars.

In recent years, several neotropical species have experienced significant declines in population. These declines likely reflect a reduction in suitability, or a loss of habitat where these species breed, overwinter and/or migrate. Grassland birds seem to be experiencing the most precipitous declines range wide, due to a loss of habitat both in North America and on the wintering grounds in South America. However, species that nest in forests or shrublands, such as the cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler, and veery are also declining nationwide.

In some cases these declines may be tied to forest fragmentation. There are two forms of forest fragmentation, each with different impacts on forest birds. One form of forest fragmentation occurs when portions of a forest are converted into non-forest cover types (urbanization and agricultural). This is permanent fragmentation and poses the greatest threat to all forest wildlife. The second type is the fragmentation of habitat or cover type. This habitat fragmentation occurs naturally due to local geological features or can be a result of human activity (harvest activity). Both kinds of forest fragmentation have impacts on neotropical birds including changes in competition for resources, predation rates, and perceived quality of habitat. Each species of NTMB responds to forest disturbance differently. Since there are so many neotropical migrants that utilize a wide variety of habitats and successional stages it's difficult to make generalizations as to the impacts of forest management on the health of certain bird populations. Species such as chestnut-sided warblers and mourning warblers benefit from early successional species produced by clearcutting. Species that rely on more mature forests or interior forests, such as ovenbirds or black-throated blue warblers, will be negatively impacted by intensive forest management. To assure a rich diversity of NTMBs in Wisconsin's forests, emphasis should be

placed on forest management guidelines that promote habitat for NTMBs with the most specialized habitat needs.

Forests and associated wetlands of the western Great Lakes, including Wisconsin, support some of North America's highest densities and most diverse assemblages of breeding birds (Howe et al. 1996). While some forest/shrub species mentioned above are decreasing, according to the Federal Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), the majority of forest/shrub species that breed in Wisconsin are increasing.

Wisconsin's private, County, State, and National Forests are still relatively intact and have regained much of their structural and compositional diversity that was once reduced in the big "Cutover" in the early 1900's.

As habitat is lost and fragmented by development on private lands, Wisconsin's County Forests continue to provide increasingly important habitat to numerous NTMB species that occur in a wide variety of forest types and age classes.

840.4 LEGALLY PROTECTED ANIMAL SPECIES

The Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Lacey Act together provide for the protection of wild animals threatened with extinction. The State Endangered and Threatened Species Law also requires that the State assume responsibility for conserving wild animals by restricting and regulating the taking, possession, transportation, processing, or sale of endangered or threatened wild animals within its jurisdiction. Further, the Federal Migratory Bird Act and the Eagle Protection Act provide additional protection for certain species of birds. Because animals usually travel freely from one property to another, they belong to everyone. Therefore, if a species is legally protected, it is protected anywhere it occurs in Jackson County. A list of protected animal species is found in chapter 900.7 known to occur on Jackson County Forest.

840.5 OTHER ANIMALS OF SPECIAL CONCERN – NHI

Just as with plants, the DNR tracks information on rare animal species when some problem of abundance or disturbance is suspected but not yet proven. The main purpose of this category is to focus attention on certain species before they become threatened or endangered. Found in chapter 900.7 is a list of Special Concern animal species known to occur in Jackson County (on or near the County Forest).

840.6 FISH AND WATERS MANAGEMENT

Public waters shall be managed to provide for optimum natural fish production, an opportunity for quality recreation, and a healthy balanced aquatic ecosystem. Emphasis will also be placed on land-use practices that benefit the aquatic community. Management of County Forest lands will attempt to preserve and/or improve fish habitat and water quality.

840.6.1 Technical Planning

Management of all waters within the County Forest is the responsibility of the DNR. Technical assistance will be provided by the local fisheries biologist. Studies and management will be conducted in the manner described in DNR Fish Management Handbook 3605.9.

840.6.2 Water Surveys

Comprehensive lake and stream surveys on the County forest will be conducted by the DNR fisheries biologist as required. The publication, "Surface Water Resources of Jackson County", contains additional information relative to these waters.

840.6.3 Population Surveys

Surveys of fish populations in waters within the County Forest will be conducted by the DNR as required and will generally run concurrently with water surveys. Fish management programs will be guided by these surveys.

840.6.4 Lake Management

Management of lakes within the County Forest will be consistent with the capability of the resource and any unique aspects associated with that resource.

840.6.5 Stream Management

Trout streams on the County Forest will be managed to protect and enhance their quality. Streams containing warm water or cool water species will be managed to perpetuate their inherent qualities. Corresponding land and water use practices will be consistent with this policy. Maps inventorying water resources can be found in the appendix to this plan (Chapter 900).

840.6.6 Best Management Practices for Water Quality

Protection of water resources in the county will be consistent with the “Wisconsin Forestry Best Management Practices (B.M.P.s) for Water Quality”. Examples of these protective measures are:

1. Uncut riparian zones
2. Erosion control measures
3. Stream bank protection

840.6.7 Shoreland Zoning

Jackson County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is found in chapter 905.2.3.

840.6.8 Access and development

Access and development of County Forest waters will be limited to those activities consistent with the above water management policies. See Chapter 740 also for further information on water access.

840.6.9 Important Water Resources

Management activities adjacent to these water resources, or in areas with sensitive soils or severe slopes, should consider measures above and beyond the customary BMP practices. County staff may work with the local DNR water resources staff to develop site-specific measures where appropriate. An inventory of water resources can be obtained from DNR Water staff for the County.

850 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

850.1 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

For the purposes of this plan, biological diversity will be interpreted to reference the variety and abundance of species, their genetic composition, and the communities, ecosystems, and landscapes in which they occur. It also refers to ecological structures, functions, and processes that occur in ecosystems to sustain the system as viable entities. The forest landscape, a mosaic of plants and animals of various sizes and ages, are in constant flux due to succession from both natural and planned events.

Opportunities to manage Jackson County Forest lands toward these ends will be continued and improved provided they are deemed to be in the public's best interest by the Committee and within the framework of the County Forest Law (s.28.11 Wis. Stats.).

850.2 HABITAT FRAGMENTATION

The adoption of management plans and strategies developed cooperatively with neighboring forest owners and managers will help to consider fragmentation on a landscape level. A continued program of encouraging land acquisition within the forest blocking will decrease negative impact of forest fragmentation by land uses other than forestry.

850.3 HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS / AREAS (HCVF) AND EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES

High Conservation Value Forest management is found in Chapter 530.