

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 100

BACKGROUND

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
100	MISSION STATEMENT.....	2
105	GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN..	2
110	COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN	3
	110.1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING.....	3
	110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN.....	3
	110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN	4
	110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN	4
	110.5 UPDATING THE PLAN.....	4
	110.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING.....	4
115	FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING	5
	115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION COMMITMENT.....	5
	115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION.....	5
120	COUNTY AUTHORITY.....	6
	120.1 ORDINANCES.....	7
125	HISTORY.....	7
	125.1 STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT.....	7
	125.2 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION.....	9
	125.3 TRENDS.....	10
	125.4 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC RESOURCE.....	11

100 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Jackson County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. These resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society.

County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect and disease outbreaks, and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs including watershed protection and the protection of the biotic diversity, these same resources must also be managed to provide for sociological needs. These include the production of raw materials for wood-using industries that provide a wide variety of products fulfilling consumer demands, and provisions for recreational opportunities.

105 GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN (Hereafter referred to as the “Plan”)

The goal of the County Forest program is to be consistent with the mission statement and the purpose and direction of the County Forest Law as stated in s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., giving consideration to input from citizens and groups. The purpose of the County Forest Law being:

“ ... to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple use to assure maximum public benefits; to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”

110 COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

JACKSON COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN POLICY

This plan shall incorporate or reference all official County Forest policies, pertinent County regulations, planning documents and the needs and actions for the period 2021 through 2035.

This plan is the authority for management on county forest lands enrolled under Wisconsin County Forest Law s.28.11. This plan may be encompassed within required local planning efforts.

110.1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING

OBJECTIVES

Management planning shall be used to establish objectives, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and to promote an efficient and orderly program of development and management of the County Forest in the interest of:

- Determining needs and priorities.
- Achieving goals set forth in the mission statement of this plan.
- Satisfying the statutory requirements of s. 28.11, Wis. Stats.
- Satisfying requirements for participation in various state and federal aid programs.
- Providing broad long-term and detailed short-term guidelines for actions.

110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Section 28.11, Wis. Stats., places the responsibility for the plan development on the Committee with technical assistance from the Department and other agencies. The County Forest Administrator will take the lead at the committee's request. During development of the plan public participation should be utilized to provide for public participation throughout the planning process. Public participation and inputs into the plan should consider s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., which governs the County Forest program and provides the sideboards to which this plan must adhere.

Jackson County's public participation process is found in chapter 3000.

110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN

Comments received should be given consideration during plan development. The Committee will then present the plan to the County Board for their approval. Following County Board approval, the plan will then be forwarded to the Department for approval of the plan by the DNR as required by s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN

Each member of the County Board will have access to a copy of the plan at the time of initial review and approval. Updated official copies will be maintained by the Forest Administrator and available electronically.

Plan and future amendments will include electronic versions of the plan or plan amendments or electronic links to the documents that will be distributed to the following:

- Department of Natural Resources - Liaison and County Forest Specialist.
- Executive Director- Wisconsin County Forest Association.

110.5 UPDATING THE PLAN

Necessary changes in policy and procedure will be incorporated into the plan by amendment as required. Amendments to the plan will require approval by both the County Board and the Department of Natural Resources as stated in s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats. Changes to the official County Forest Blocking map require County Board approval. The annual county board approved work plan, budget, and annual accomplishment report are appended to the plan and do not require official DNR approval. In addition, changes to Chapters 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 do not require a plan amendment or official DNR approval, with the exception of the official County Forest Blocking map.

110.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING

The development of this plan and any future amendments to this plan will include considerations, and if warranted, participation in other local and regional planning efforts

115 FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING

The Committee will utilize procedure as set forth in the Department of Natural Resources Public Forest Lands Handbook no. 2460.5. Silviculture Guidance, supported by Wisconsin's forestry community and Silvicultural guidance Team may be referenced in forest management activities. WisFIRS will be utilized as the primary tool for forest management planning decisions. Additional resources such as forest habitat type classification, soil surveys, and DNR's Best Management Practices for Water Quality guidelines may be utilized in management decisions.

115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION GROUP ADMINISTRATION

As the certification group manager, the Department of Natural Resources will be responsible for overall administration of third-party certification efforts. The DNR County Forest Specialist will work in close cooperation with the Wisconsin County Forests Association in coordinating this effort. The group manager's responsibilities will include:

- Record keeping of certification
- Coordinating communication with the certification auditing firms
- Reporting and payment of fees
- Processing new entries and departures from the groups
- Internal compliance monitoring
- Dispute resolution

Detail on the certification group administration is maintained in the Public Forest Lands Handbook.

115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION

Jackson County's Commitment to Sustainable Forestry

Our county forests provide a vital contribution to the State and the world by providing economic, environmental and social benefits important to our quality of life. Jackson

County believes that accomplishing such sustainable forestry requires a commitment and partnership from all the groups and individuals that benefit from these public lands.

Jackson County's Commitment

Within the scope of the Wisconsin County Forest Law and the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Jackson County will implement forestry practices that promote forest sustainability and multiple use of the forest. These forestry practices include harvesting of raw materials at a level that is sustainable on the forest. Implementing the harvest of forest products also includes the protection of: special sites, wildlife, plants, water quality and aesthetics.

All forestland owners have a responsibility to provide sound forest stewardship. Jackson County will work in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other natural resources groups / agencies in providing sustainable forestry information to those landowners and individuals impacting forest sustainability in Wisconsin. We will support research efforts to improve the health, productivity, and management of forestlands both internally and through cooperative efforts. In managing the Jackson County Forest a spectrum of forestry practices will be employed to achieve our sustainable forestry objective. Both intensive and more extensive forest management techniques will be used to provide for wildlife, forest products, recreation, aesthetics, water quality, aesthetics and ecosystem maintenance. In keeping with this responsibility Jackson County is committed to Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) certification. Any changes to the certification will require the County Forest to follow the 15-year plan amendment procedure.

120 COUNTY AUTHORITY

The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Jackson County Forestry and Parks Committee of the County Board enforces the regulations governing the use of the County Forest.

120.1 ORDINANCES

The County ordinances that apply to the administration and management of the Jackson County Forest can be found in Chapter 14. In addition, the following will be considered in planning process.

- Zoning ordinance
- Floodplain - Shoreland Zoning ordinance
- Motorized recreation ordinance
- Non-Metallic Mining ordinance

125 HISTORY

125.1 STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1927, the State Legislature passed the Forest Crop Law, authorizing counties to create county forests. An opinion of the Attorney General with reference to the Forest Crop Law stated that the counties would be exempt from the owner's share of annual tax. In 1929 the law was amended to create the County Forest Reserve Law. In 1963, several major revisions were made, creating the County Forest Law s28.11. The most notable change was the creation of a permanent program of forests that would be managed in accordance with a 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan developed by the county, with the assistance of the Department of Natural Resources. Several grants and loans were created and remain available to counties to compensate for public uses of these county forest lands as stipulated in s28.11. To fulfill additional statutory obligations acreage share payments to towns are currently \$.30/acre, and towns with county forest land receive a minimum of 10% of the stumpage revenue from their respective County Forest each year.

In 2020, twenty-nine counties in Wisconsin owned approximately 2.4 million acres entered under the County Forest Law.

Much of the Jackson County Forest lies within an area known historically as the Great Swamp. This vast area, covering more than a million and a quarter acres of Central Wisconsin, consisted of low marsh and swamp lands with sandy uplands and dense stands of white pine and red pine. Most of the streams were too small to float logs, and overland access was difficult because of the wet terrain. The Great Swamp remained uncut into the

mid-1880's, nearly half a century behind the logging in surrounding areas with higher ground.

In 1885 a tremendous windstorm swept through the Great Swamp leveling huge tracts of timber. About the same time, D.A. and E.M. Goodyear, entrepreneurs from Portage, Wisconsin, were establishing a sawmill near Mather Station in northwestern Juneau County. In order to salvage the windthrown timber, the Goodyears constructed a narrow-gauge rail line into the heart of the remote pinery and founded a sawmill and a town called Goodyear. Other logging companies moved into the area, rail lines were extended and new towns were built. Within twenty years most of the pinery of the Great Swamp had been depleted, the mills were dismantled, and the towns were abandoned.

A period of land speculation followed the demise of logging. Realtors advertised the peat soils as rich black farmland to unsuspecting immigrants. Steam dredges were brought in to dig hundreds of miles of drainage ditches, lowering the water table and drying out the marshes. By the mid-1920's the new settlers found that farming was impossible. The peat soils had no mineral content and produced poor crops, while the sandy uplands had little organic matter and gave similar results. Droughts allowed the peat soils to catch fire and burn stubbornly. Late spring frosts and early fall frosts in the open marshlands made for short and unpredictable growing seasons. Drainage ditch taxes made meager incomes unlivable. The Great Depression ended most farming in the Great Swamp. Discouraged settlers abandoned their lands, or the federal government, through the Resettlement Administration, bought them out and relocated them to other areas.

Faced with extensive tax delinquent lands, the Jackson County Board of Supervisors, on May 2, 1933, adopted a resolution applying for the entry of 36,792.4 acres of land under the recently enacted County Forest Crop Law. The Jackson County Forest had been born. Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration crews were employed to begin restoration work of the depleted forest lands. According to Fred Rogers, a CCC forester and later a historian, there were three CCC camps located in Central Wisconsin. The City Point camp, located west of City Point near the old Pray Ranger Station, employed over

200 men at its peak on a variety of conservation projects. By 1937 the three camps together had built 35 bridges, 15 concrete dams, 100 miles of truck trails for fire access, planted nearly three million trees, built 95 miles of fire breaks, and spent over 1,000 man days fighting wild fires. By the end of 1943 the CCC had planted 8,848,000 trees on about 6,400 acres of County Forest land.

The County Forest continued to grow. By 1938 it totaled 96,300 acres. The County Forest has not had less than 100,000 acres since 1942. The first administrator of the Jackson County Forest was Kermit A. Hanson. He was hired at a salary of \$25.00 per month and an annual operating budget of \$6,960.00. Other former forest administrators included Bert Jones, Merlin Lambert, Robert Hess and James Zahasky. The first commercial timber sale on the County Forest was in 1940. The County sold 100 cords of jack pine to Fred Rhoades, Jr. of Black River Falls for \$2.10 per cord. The first tree planting machine was purchased for the County Forest in 1945.

125.2 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

Jackson County is a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association, Inc. (WCFA). This Association was incorporated on May 15, 1968 under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes, without stock and not for profit. The WCFA Board of Directors is composed of fifteen delegates elected from County Forestry Committees who are members of the Association and two members at large.

WCFA provides a forum for consideration of issues and policy that are common to all of the county committees responsible for their respective County Forest programs, including those programs encompassed under s. 28.11 and chapter 77, Wis. Stats. WCFA also provides leadership and counsel to County Forest administrators and forestry committees through regular meetings and active committees on legislative and recreational issues. WCFA develops and implements a strategic plan. The organization's mission statement is as follows:

Wisconsin County Forests Association provides leadership uniting the interests of

the world's largest county forest program while ensuring long term forest health and sustainability.

125.3 TRENDS

The values and uses of the Jackson County Forest contribute significantly to fulfilling many of society's ecological and socioeconomic needs now and in the future. Changing trends will impact the values and uses of the Forest in coming years.

- Wisconsin's forests are naturally changing due to forest succession. Most of the County Forest acreage statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid 1900's. Mid to late successional northern hardwood forests are replacing the early successional aspen-birch, oak and jack pine forests of the 1940's through the 1970's. The aspen cover type is key habitat for many of the state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. The county forest system currently has 15% of the State's public land base and 24% of the aspen resource.
- Conflict over timber management practices will likely continue to increase as more individuals and groups demand greater involvement in forestry decisions. Practices such as clearcutting and even-aged management will continue to be controversial. Efforts to educate the public on the merits of these sound forest management techniques will continue.
- Jackson County may experience funding problems as municipalities are being required to provide more services with less money. Potential losses of revenue from decreased shared revenues and resistance to tax increases may make county timber revenues increasingly important to the finances of county governments. This is complicated by increasing public pressure to reduce timber harvests on county forests.
- Increasing knowledge about a wider variety of species and their habitat needs is leading to a growing list of threatened and endangered species. This could lead to improvements in managing the forest and mitigating impacts to these species.
- Invasive exotic species pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Gypsy

moth, Asian long-horned beetle, garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle, Eurasian water milfoil, Phragmites, Spotted knapweed have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests.

- The Forest is considered to be an outdoor classroom serving all age groups. It consists of diverse communities with a large variety of plant and animal life giving ample opportunity for study and observation.

125.4 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC RESOURCE

As stated in State Statute 28.11 (1), the county forest program enables and encourages “the planned development and management of the county forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple-use to assure maximum public benefits to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”