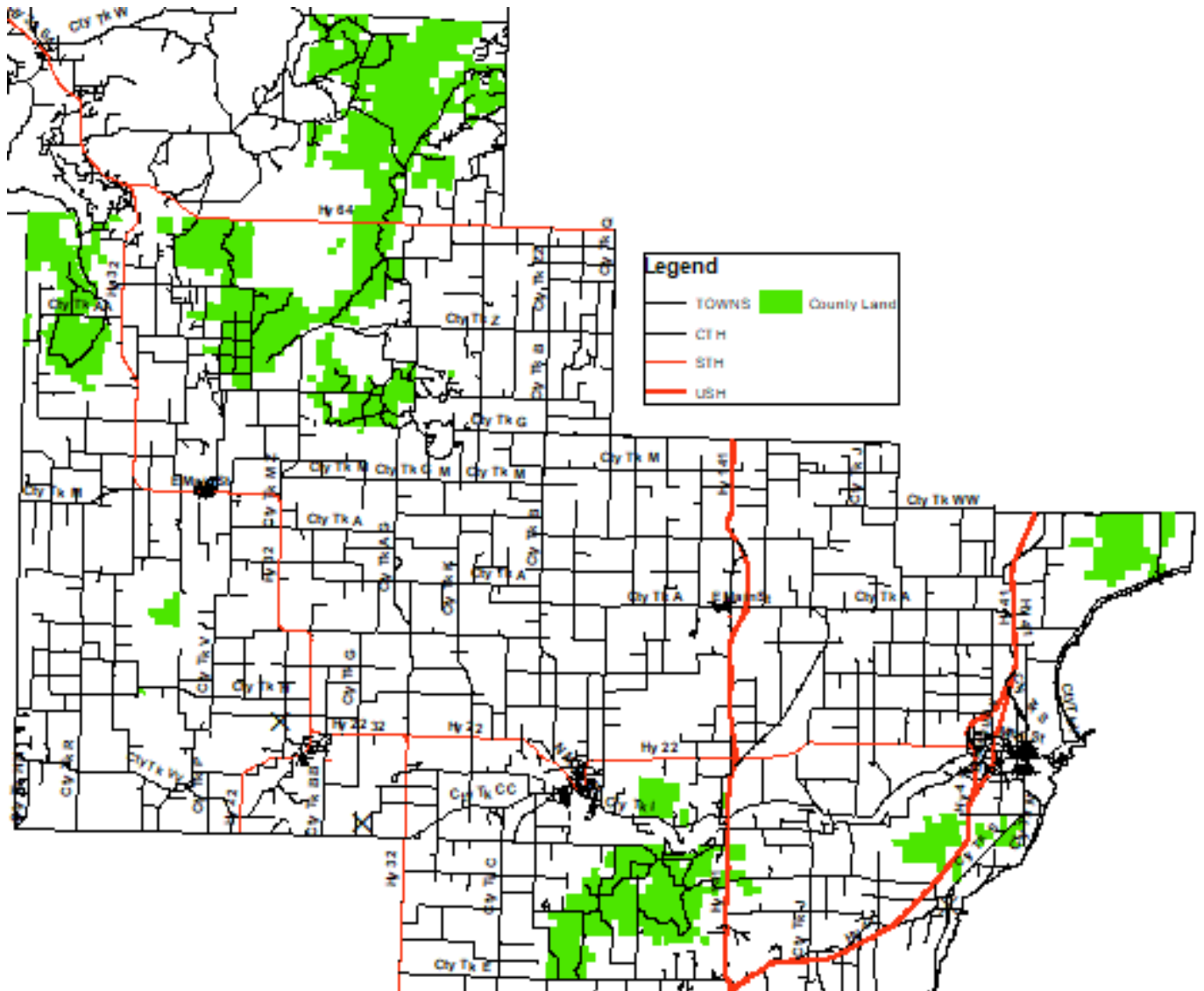


# Oconto County Forestry and Parks Department 2021 Work Plan



## Oconto County Forest, Parks, Recreation/ Information Systems Sub-Committee:

1. Greg Sekela
2. Robert Pott
3. Al Stranz
4. Judy Burhandt
5. Tim Cole

## Forestry and Parks Personnel:

1. Monty Brink, Administrator
2. Dave Borisch, Assistant Administrator
3. Jim Oninski, Forest Tech
4. Chris Firgens, Forest Tech

## DNR Forester:

1. Stephen Kaufman

## **2021 Work Plan**

An annual work plan and budget based upon the comprehensive plan shall be prepared by the Oconto County Forest, Parks & Recreation Subcommittee of the Oconto County Board of Supervisors with the assistance of a forester of the department. The plan shall include a schedule of compartments to be harvested and a listing by location of management projects for the forthcoming year. In addition the plan shall include other multiple-use projects where appropriate. A budget, listing estimated expenditures for work projects, administration and protection of the forest, shall accompany the annual plan both to be submitted to the County Board for approval at the November meeting.

The plan is a requirement of the County Forest Administrator Grant Program implemented by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The plan supplements the County Forest 15-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2021-2035) and emphasizes the current needs of the County Forest and Recreation Program. The work plan focus is based on the current and future need of the 43,766 acres of County forest, 37.61 miles of County forest roads, 15 parks including 2 campgrounds, 12 boat landings, 25+ miles of bridle trails, 7.75 miles of x-skiing, 439.2 miles of snowmobile trail, 84 miles of ATV/UTV trail, and 50.1 miles of County maintained state trails.

### **Our Mission Statement**

#### **Forestry**

The mission of the Oconto County Forestry Department is to promote the planned development and management of the county forest for optimum production of forest products, together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, and watershed protection, giving full recognition to the concept of multi-use for maximum public benefit.

#### **Parks & Recreation**

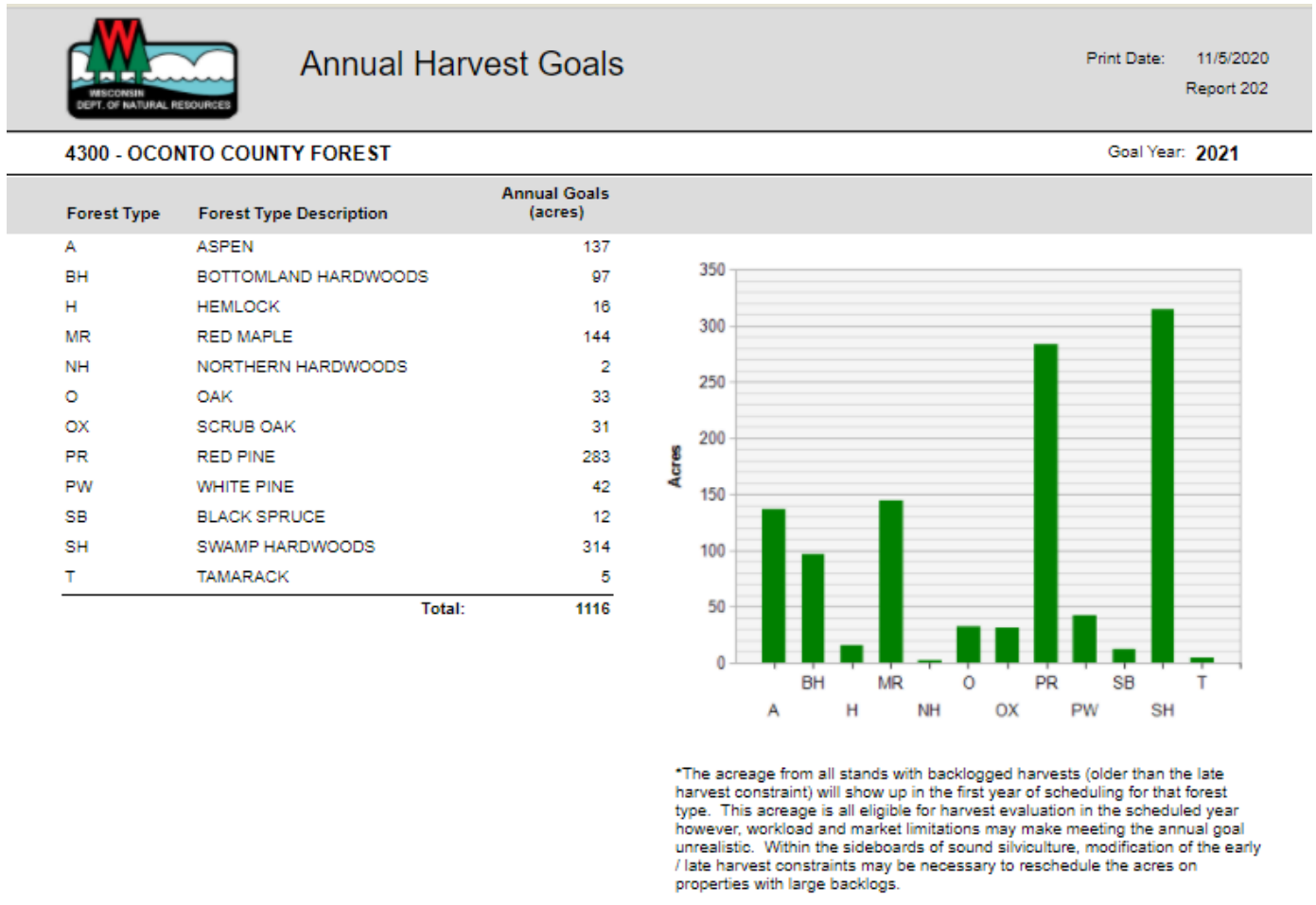
The mission of the Oconto County Parks Department is to provide recreational opportunities by developing, managing, and programming all park lands and trails, also, to promote an appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the natural resources.

# 2021 Goals

## 1. Establish timber sales to meet our allowable cut acres and management objectives

Within the Wisconsin County Forest Law Program (s. 28.11, WI Statue) and the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2021-2035) Oconto County Forestry Department will develop forestry practices that will promote sustainability and multi-use of the forest. Many items (i.e. wildlife, watershed protection and endangered/cultural resources etc.) concerning natural resources are considered when conducting all aspects of a timber sale. Allowable cut acres for 2021 are below in table 1 and those stands that are scheduled for timber sale establishment in 2021 are located in Appendix A.

**Table #1**



Sale establishment is a cooperative team effort between the Oconto County staff and DNR forestry personnel. The DNR provides the county 1070 hours to assist in forest management on County owned lands. Those hours will help Oconto County staff to evaluate all stands in Appendix A and conduct reconnaissance to ensure stands are ready for harvest based on sustainability of that species and concerning natural resources before being established for sale.

## **2. To ensure that timber sales are following contract specifications**

Timber sale administration is a joint effort between Oconto County and DNR staff. Timber sales are offered for sale once a year in May. County forestry staff conduct all scaling and collect weight scale tickets to be billed by forestry staff. Timberbase software and Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (Wisfirs) are used to manage opened timber sales. Timber sale revenue is accounted for in a segregated account managed by Oconto County Finance Department.

## **3. To regenerate stands back to fully stocked stands for future sustainability**

Reforestation naturally or artificially is an important management practice that helps assure that desirable timber species return to the areas that have been harvested. Natural regeneration species include aspen, birch, maple, and oaks while jack pine and red pine are best regenerated by artificial methods of planting seedlings. Red pine plantations respond best to intermediate thinning treatments every 10-12 years. This rotation of thinning will promote growth and increase stocking. Oconto County has started planning to artificially replant sites. Replanting is a multiple year process, starting with the harvest of the standing timber currently on site. Site preparation can then take place which may include mechanical (\$75/acre) and/or chemical treatments (\$100/acre). Trees or seeds can be planted to restock the area for future forest products, habitat, and erosion control (\$50/acre). If competition from undesirable species occur after planting then another chemical treatment may have to be done (\$100/acre). Stands cut 5-10 years ago that were allowed to regenerate naturally will be checked for species retention. Regeneration of ash stands is being researched to keep ahead of the emerald ash borer. In 2021, Oconto County will plant a 78-acre red pine stand in Sections 28 and 29 of the Town of Breed.

## **4. To maintain compliance with certifying bodies**

Oconto County Forestry Department will continue its commitment to third-party certification from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This commitment is demonstrated through practice of sustainable forest management, upholding certification standards and training.

## **5. Identify wildlife habitat improvement areas**

Wildlife openings are coordinated with the DNR. Many wildlife habitat improvements are completed by DNR on County Forest Land every year. A cooperative agreement between Land Conservation and the Forestry Department will improve County land to promote northern pike spawning habitat. Forestry staff also completes mowing activities every year to maintain wildlife viewing and hunting trails. Some wildlife opening may be burned by WDNR staff. Oconto County will be exploring the use the apple and hawthorn trees in the wildlife openings to provide additional food sources for wildlife. American Bird Conservancy applied for a grant to treat non-merchantable blown down stands of early successional species that work will be done on Oconto County land. Oak release will be looked at for a few stands in 2021. Other misc. projects will be explored to further develop wildlife habitat, food source and user enjoyment to viewing wildlife.

## **6. Provide protection to resources located on Oconto County Forest lands**

County staff and DNR will increase monitoring for invasive plant species moving on to County land from multiple sources. Oconto County will be entering into contract with Timberland Invasive Program to assist in identifying sites and treat those areas when feasible. No known disease outbreaks are known on the County Forest. Endangered and cultural resources will be researched before timber sale establishment. Data will be protected according to the license agreement between the County and the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation. New sightings will be documented according to the agreement also. Large areas of the county forest have been inventoried and in 2021 the county will move forward with more intensive efforts to remove these invasive plants from the property. Sustainable Forestry Funding has been secured to treat invasive in the Town of Bagley and Town of Abrams.

**7. To Ensure that the County forest roads are maintain for safe travel**

Oconto County currently has 37 miles of county forest roads certified by the DOT and approved by the DNR. County staff will maintain these roads according to s. 82.50, WI statue. To comply with certification requirements mentioned above, a review of all roads will be conducted to ensure roads meet Best Management Practices (BMP's). Grading and adding stone consume the most time in maintaining these roads. Culvert replacement is another top priority in maintaining County forest roads.

**8. To engage with US Forest Service through DNR to implement Good Neighbor Authority**

Oconto County has a Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Wisconsin through 2025 to assist with the implantation of the Good Neighbor Authority, allowing State of Wisconsin to assist the USDA Forest Service with sustainable management of the National Forest in Wisconsin. Oconto County will commit up to 500 hours to this project.

**9. To oversee the recreation trail systems to provide for safe travel by all users**

Oconto County entered into a partnership with DNR to maintain the Oconto River State trail and Nicolet State trail. Annual inspections will be conducted to evaluate the sections of trail. Improving the surfacing and brushing the sides to allow for safe travel by users is a major priority. Grant funds will be the main source of revenue in making these improvements. Oconto County also oversees the maintenance by clubs of 421 miles of snowmobile and 84 miles of ATV/UTV trail. Oconto County will apply crusher fines and sodium chloride to sections along Highway 32 to control dust. In addition, Oconto County will rehab multiple locations of ATV trail, primarily on the Nicolet State Trail. Oconto County also partners with clubs to maintain cross-country skiing trails and bridle trails. These partnerships are very important to the county to maintain.

**10. To maintain parks and facilities in a clean, safe and usable condition**

Oconto County provides many opportunities for recreational users. Staff will continue to improve safety and public health concerns to improve public enjoyment of all facilities we have to offer.

**11. Develop a budget listing the estimated expenditures for work projects, administration and protection of the forest**

On October 29, 2020 the Forestry and Parks budget was approved as presented to County Board. A detailed list of expenditures can be seen in Appendix B.

Appendix A

Harvest Schedule

[2021 HarvestScheduleSummary.pdf](#)

## Appendix B

2021 Budget

[2021 Budget.pdf](#)

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Greg Sekela  
Chairman

X

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Al Stranz  
Vice Chairman

X

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Robert Pott  
Committee member

X

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Judy Burhandt  
Committee member

X

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Tim Cole  
Committee member