

OCONTO COUNTY FOREST AND PARKS DIVISION 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

This report details the major accomplishments this department completed in 2017 based on the needs of 43,705.83 acres of County forest, 37 miles of County forest roads, 15 parks including 2 campgrounds, 11 boat landings, 25+ miles of bridle trails, 7.2 miles of x-skiing, 421 miles of snowmobile trail, 83 miles of ATV trail, and 50.1 miles of County maintained state trails.

FORESTRY

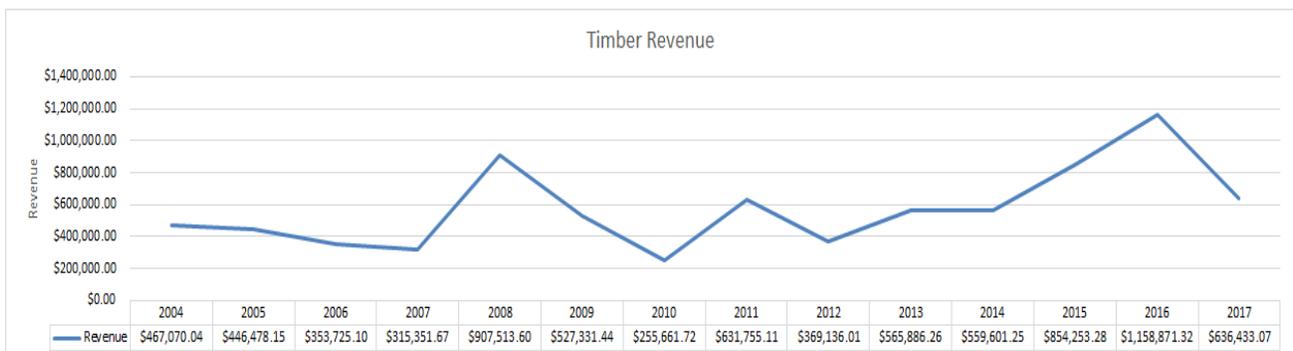
The Oconto County Forest is comprised of 43,705.83 acres and divided into six management units. Oconto County continues our commitment to Forest Certification with both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) as the standard for sustainable forestry.

2017 Timber Sales Sold

Oconto County used reconnaissance data to schedule stands for examination. Timber sales were established with the assistance of the WI DNR staff with 1123.5 hours. The Forest & Parks Timber Sale was held May 24, 2017. The department entered into contracts with loggers for the following:

Tracts Offered	17	Total Appraised Value of Tracts Sold:	\$ 471,988.90
Tracts Receiving Bids	16	Total Bid Value of Tracts Sold:	\$ 593,698.18
Tracts with No Qualifying Bid	1	Percent Increase Over Appraised Value	25.79%
Number of Qualifying Bids	70	Acres Sold	687
Avg Qualifying Bids per Tract	4	Average Acres of Sold Tracts:	43
		Average \$ per Acre Sold:	\$ 864.19

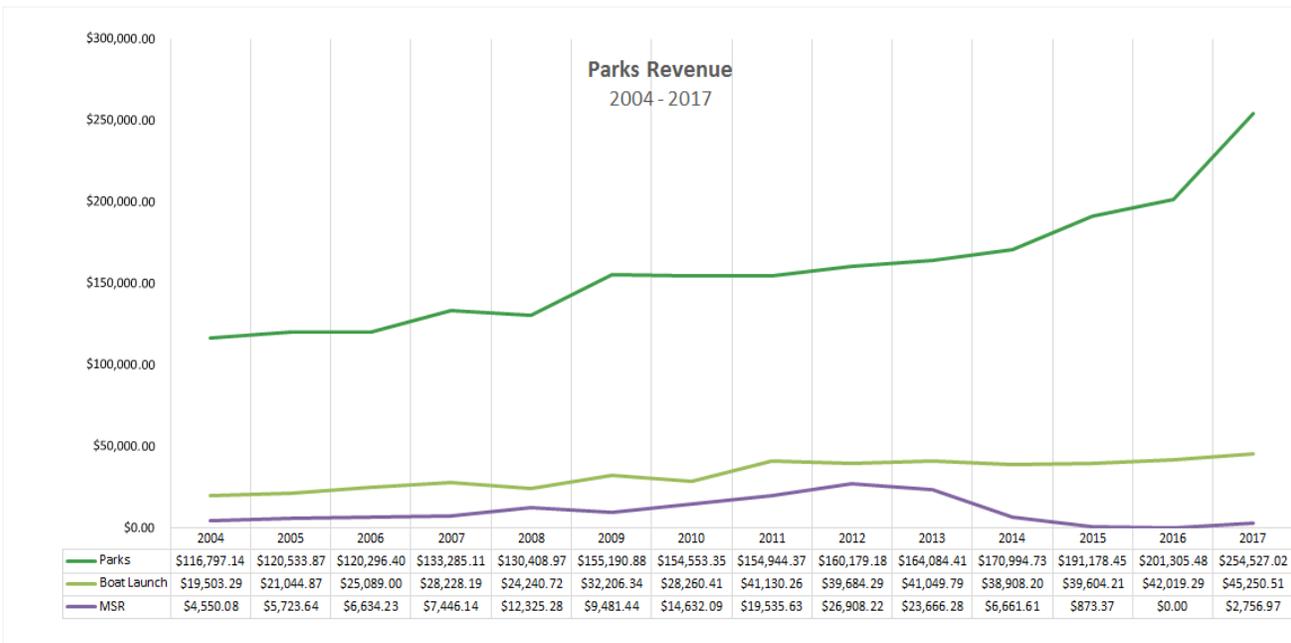
In 2017 the department closed out 21 timber sales that encompassed 733 acres. The department extended 16 timber sale contracts that were due to expire in 2017 for one additional year. Wood cutters purchase permits in the amount of \$708.83 to cut down wood after sales were closed. Timber revenue in 2017 was \$636,433.07. There are 12 Oconto County townships that receive 10% of the timber revenue based on the number of county forest acreage. 2017 Payments totaled 116,287.13, based off of 2016 revenue. The following chart compares previous year's revenues.



PARKS

There are 15 designated park areas controlled by the Parks Department. In 2017 Couillardville Park got a face lift with the help from The Friends of Couillardville Park. A historical marker and memorial pavers were installed to

commemorate the original settlers. Department staff cleared dead trees and an old concrete burning pit. The Parks online Reservation system was up-dated to make the site more user friendly. Enhancements to the site included enabling campers to make reservations a year in advance, edit, change or cancel a reservation.



Chute Pond

There were many changes to the Chute Pond Campgrounds in 2017. The County entered into a contract with Northern Adventures, Dennis Heise, as caretaker of the Chute Pond Campgrounds. The caretaker accommodations received a few improvements prior to the new person starting. The fieldhouse bathrooms were completely renovated to accommodate ADA regulations. Seasonal campers were greatly surprised at upgrades the county completed to Chute Pond. Campers received a new picnic table, new gravel on pads and roadway, and a new bathroom and shower facilities.

North Bay Shore Recreation Area

In 2017 two wells were drilled at NBS. One was to replace an existing failing well that serviced the campground and one well was to support the new fish cleaning station.

Boat Landings

Oconto County charges a user fee at the County owned boat landings. The Annual User Fee stickers are now placed in the driver's side window which assists in enforcement. The user fees covered all maintenance costs for 2017. A privacy fence replaced at North River Road Boat Landing was the only major improvement at boat launches in 2017.

Machickanee Shooting Range

In 2017 the Highway Department broke ground on the renovations to the Machickanee Shooting Range. Athens Lumber Company was awarded the contract to construct the No Blue Sky Shooting Shelters which were completed in October. Construction went smoothly, however, cost exceeded grant funds. A grant amendment was applied for and received to cover the overrun. Grant is in the process of being closed out for reimbursement from the DNR. The Machickanee Shooting Range held a grand opening on October 26, 2017 and closed for the winter on December 31. The revenue generated, after being closed for 3 years, was \$2,756.97, which was good for only two months of business. The range will reopen on March 15, 2018 and will be open Thursday – Saturday from 8:00 am to 4:00pm and Sunday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

RECREATION

Oconto County contracts will use groups to keep the trails safe and maintained. Club contracts were renewed for 2017. Non-motorized sports are cross-country skiing and horseback riding currently and mountain biking clubs are looking at developing trails on County land. Motorized sports continue to grow and are an important economic impact to the county.

State Recreational Trails

Oconto County manages 2 State Recreational Trails. The Oconto River and the Nicolet State Recreational Trail. These trails are owned by the WI DNR, in which Oconto County has a 20 year easement to maintain these trails. Trail inspections of these trails this year yield minor concerns that were passed on to the clubs that manage those trail sections. The majority of the trail maintenance is performed by the Snowmobile and ATV Program. The Nicolet State Trail had some heavy damage from the summer storms which the county received grant funding to help with clean up expenses. State trails qualify for Recreational Trail Aids, a federal program managed by the DNR. RTA funds were applied for and the following were received in 2017:

- RTP-786-16M – 2017-2019 Nicolet State Trail Rehab – Awarded \$39,282.50
- RTP-787-16M – 2017-2019 Hidden Bear Trail Rehab – Awarded \$3,625.00
- RTP-788-16M – 2017-2019 McCaslin Brook Bridge Rehab – Awarded \$8,407

ATV/UTV Trails

The Oconto County ATV/UTV program is funded by the State WI DNR. In 2017, Oconto County had 83 miles of state funded ATV Trails and 29 miles of state funded Troute Trails. Following are the ATV grants received in 2017:

- ATV-3621 – 2017-2018 ATV/UTV Trail Maintenance – Awarded \$58,685
- ATV-3488T – 2017-2018 Troute Maintenance – Awarded \$9,608.27
- ATV-3766S – 2017 ATV Summer Trail Storm Damage – Awarded \$17,550
- ATV-3709 – Summer Trail Boardwalk Rehab – Awarded \$26,250
- ATV-3707 – Spice Lake Inlet Bridge Rehab – Awarded \$5,500

The following ATV/UTV Grants were completed in 2017:

- ATV-3421 – 2016-2017 ATV Trail Maintenance – Total cost \$58,300
- ATV-3488T – 2016–2017 Troute Maintenance – Total cost \$8,519.24

Snowmobile Trails

The Oconto County snowmobile program is funded by the WI DNR. Oconto County in turn has maintenance agreements with local clubs to maintain these trails. In 2017, Oconto County had 421.00 miles of funded trails and 31.20 miles of non-funded club trails. The following snowmobile grants was received in 2017:

- S-5009 – Trail Maintenance 2017-2018 – Total Cost \$126,300
- S-4894 – McCaslin Brook Bridge Rehab - \$4,204
- S-5077 – Spice Lake Inlet Bridge Rehab – Awarded \$5,500

The following snowmobile grants were completed in 2017:

- S-4709 – Trail Maintenance 2016-2017 – Total Cost \$105,250
Supplemental funding of \$96,391.82

County Owned Dams

The heavy rains that hit the County in 2017 required many inspections of county owned dams. The month of June saw staff traveling to Townsend and Reservoir Flowages twice a week to adjust water levels. Weso spillway embankment dam continues to need cleaning out of debris deposited by beavers. Reservoir Dam required its bi-annual inspection by a certified engineer. Minor repairs of slopes were noticed from people walking down the sides of the dam. Repairs were made in August. Eight dams were looked at and pictures taken to document current conditions. One dam under County control was not located in 2017.

Other Grants Completed

2017 Good Neighbor Authority Contract was for Oconto County to provide 500 hours to complete authorized activities. Oconto County received one timber sale project of approximately 100 acres of oak shelter-wood marking and red pine thinning. Oconto County was reimbursed \$8,011.37, but only had expenses of \$7,576.72. This resulted in a profit for the County of \$434.65.