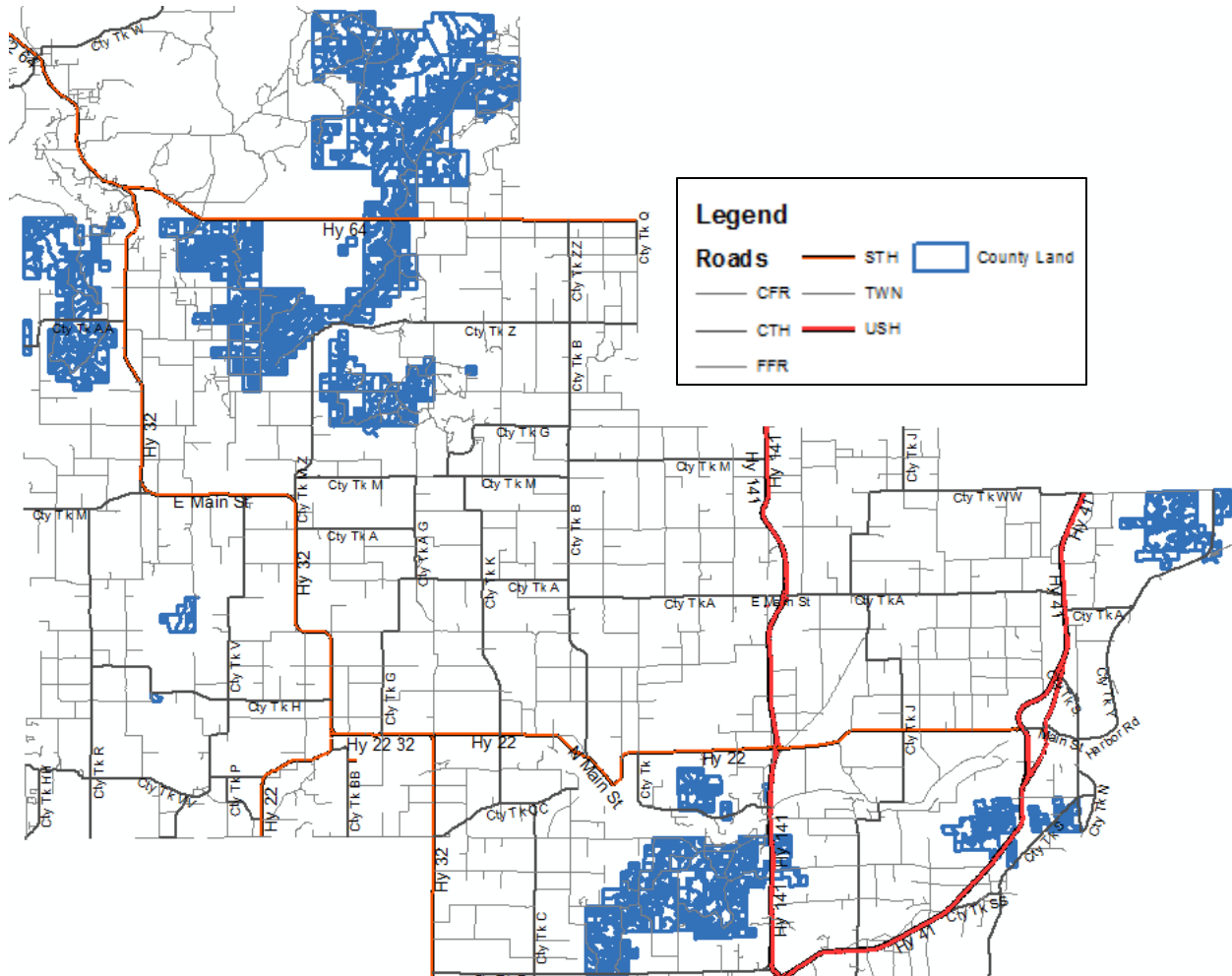


Oconto County Forestry and Parks Department 2017 Work Plan



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

1. Greg Sekela
2. Robert Pott
3. Al Stranz
4. Judy Burhandt
5. Vern Zoeller

Forestry and Parks Personnel:

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

DNR Forester:

1. Shelley Wrzochalski

2017 Work Plan

An annual work plan and budget based upon the comprehensive plan shall be prepared by the county forestry committee 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 (2006-2020) 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 43,315 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 maintain 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.

2017 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 (2006-2020) 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 2017 are below in table 1 and those stands that are scheduled for timber sale establishment in 2017 are located in Appendix A.

Table #1

Forest Type ▲	Annual Goal
A	297
H	54
MR	265
NH	73
O	52
OX	36
PR	374
PW	80
SB	55
SC	26
SH	134
SW	13
	1,459

A-Aspen, H-Hemlock, MR-Red Maple, NH-Northern Hardwoods, O-Oak, OX-Scrub Oak, PR-Red Pine, PW-White Pine, SB-Black Spruce, SC-Swamp Conifer, SH-Swamp Hardwoods, SW-White Spruce

Sale establishment is a cooperative team effort between the Oconto County staff and DNR forestry personnel. DNR provides the county 1028 hours to assist in forest management on County owned lands. About 45% of those hours have been used in 2016 and the remaining hours will be utilized in 2017. Those remaining hours will help Oconto County staff to evaluate all stands in Appendix A and conduct reconnaissance to ensure stand is 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. Currently there are 48 active timber sale contracts. Timber sales are offered for sale twice a year once in May and once in November. 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 no plans to artificially replant any sites in 2017. Stands cut 5-10 years ago that were allowed to regenerate naturally will be checked for species retention.

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. Below are recommendations for improving forest management from the 2016 County Forest Audit.

- a. SFI Minor Non-Conformances – Use of SFI Logos does not fully conform to Section 5-Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks. This was issued on a number of inconsistencies in the way that the SFI logo were depicted.
 - a. Oconto County doesn't use the SFI Logo on any documents it distributes. We only use our license code on our haul tickets. Thus no action will be needed by Oconto County.
- b. SFI Opportunities for Improvement – There is an opportunity for improvement in the criteria and implementation of stand level retention within larger aspen clear-cut blocks. Aspen is occasionally left in stands on the edges, riparian areas, and visual buffers. Aspen should be retained throughout stand if it is representative of the dominant species.
 - a. Oconto County will continue to follow Green Tree Retention guidelines. Oconto County will either work on retaining more dominant species of the stand or document that the dominant species of a stand is not naturally found on the site conditions of that stand.
- c. FSC Major Non-Conformances – Promotional use of trademarks, logos and references to FSC certification are out-of-compliance with the current Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by Certificate Holders FSC-STD-50-001 (V1-2) EN. Auditors found system-wide problem with use of FSC logos and trademarking.
 - a. Oconto County doesn't use the FSC Logo on any documents it distributes. We only use our license code on our haul tickets. Thus no action will be needed by Oconto County.

d. FSC Observations – 3 Observations were issued

- a. Green trees retained in even-aged harvests often do not include the dominant species on the site (e.g. aspen trees in an aspen regeneration harvest)
 - i. Oconto County will continue to follow Green Tree Retention guidelines. Oconto County will either work on retaining more dominant species of the stand or document that the dominant species of a stand is not naturally found on the site conditions of that stand.
- b. Timber sale maps in some cases were inaccurate and not detailed enough
 - i. Wetland identification on sale maps were not identified. Oconto County will start making maps more detailed to include wetland location.
- c. Contractors on some sales were not wearing the appropriate safety equipment
 - i. Oconto County will communicate with loggers the contract requirement to follow OSHA regulations. However, Oconto County is not required to enforce OSHA standards by the terms of the contract.

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. 2017 will see a cooperative agreement between land conservation and the Forestry department as a contractor will be hired to improve County land to promote northern pike spawning habitat. Forestry staff also completes mowing activities every year to maintain wildlife viewing and hunting trails.

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. Sites will try to be identified and treated 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.

7) To Ensure that the County forest roads are maintained for safe travel

Oconto County currently has 37 miles of county forest road certified by the DOT and approved by the DNR. County staff will maintain these roads according to s. 82.50, WI statute. Oconto County proposes to develop 5 more segments to be approved by the DNR in 2017. 4 segments are located in town of Mountain and 1 in the Town of Little River. These new segments are about .83 miles in length.

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 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 83 miles of ATV 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. 2017 improvements for Chute pond campground include two new shower facilities and upgrading living/office space at the field house building. These new facilities will address some health and safety hazards that were identified in previous years. Bay Shore Park will see a new well installed for campsite water access and a fish cleaning station install at the boat landing. A small unknown park parcel will be developed into what will be known as Couillardville Park. This will be a joint effort between the Parks Department and the Families of Couillardville Group. Oconto County will be reconstructing our public shooting range in 2017 with funding from Public Shooting Range Development Grant.

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

On October 27, 2016 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

Appendix B

X

Greg Sekela
Chairman

X

Robert Pott
Vice Chairman

X

Al Stranz
Committee member

X

Judy Burhandt
Committee member

X

Vern Zoeller
Committee member