

LINCOLN COUNTY FORESTRY, LAND AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

To the Honorable Board of Supervisors
Lincoln County, Wisconsin

The following is a report of the various activities of the Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Department from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010.

OUR 2010 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,845.05 acres.

2010 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,358,953.84. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$135,895.22 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$271,790.74 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$951,267.88 (70%) to the County Forestry Fund. Unused budgeted funds and surplus revenues are transferred to the County CIP Program after the annual audit is completed.

DURING THE YEAR, 39 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$1,404,248.80. This includes a timber sale located on Lincoln County Highway Department property which has an estimated value of \$104,832.50. The Forestry Department established and will administer this sale and upon completion, turn the revenue over to the Highway Department for its winter contingency fund.

TWENTY-SIX BOUGH PERMITS WERE ISSUED @ \$100.00 per permit = \$2,600.00.

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2010 totaled \$267,575.46. \$10,337.85 of this \$267,575.46 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring 50/50 cost share.

REVENUE FROM FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2010 TOTALED \$900.00. Sixty-nine 30-day permits (\$690.00) were issued. Twenty-one permits (\$210.00) were extended.

TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS: The forestry field crew hand planted approximately 11,000 2-year old red pine seedlings on 10 acres to reclaim a section of gravel pit in the Town of Harrison.

Approximately 4 acres of white birch seed tree harvesting was done with whole tree skidding during leaf off conditions, as a requirement of the timber sale contract, to prepare the site for natural seeding.

Approximately 4 acres of black ash were strip clear cut during frozen ground conditions to prepare the site for natural seeding.

Approximately 15 acres of red pine were clear cut with whole tree skidding as a requirement of the contract to prepare the site for planting.

Approximately 1461.23 tons of biomass was harvested from 5 timber sales which resulted in an extra \$2922.46 in revenue to the county.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI): Approximately 8 acres of Jack Pine south of Forester Road in the Town of Wilson was mechanically released by the county forest field crew.

Approximately 806 acres of aspen release was completed in aspen regeneration areas by logging contractors as a requirement of timber sale contracts.

SURVEYING: The majority of surveying done in 2010 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 3 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the west and south lines of the NW1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately ½ mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the C1/4 and CS1/16.

In Section 14 of T33N R5E a monument was set at the C1/16SW.

In Section 11 of T33N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and east lines of the NE1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately ½ mile of boundary. A monument was set at the E1/16SE.

In Section 9 of T33N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for a portion of the south line of the SE1/4 NE1/4 totaling approximately 800 feet of boundary.

In Section 10 of T33N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for east line of the NW1/4 NW1/4 totally approximately ¼ mile of boundary. A monument was set at the N1/16NW.

CONTINUED OUR COUNTY FOREST ROAD MAINTENANCE program including graveling, installing culverts, improving drainage, and regular grading and snowplowing of roads.

THE COUNTY FOREST ROAD AIDS PROGRAM: In 2010 we received approximately \$315.60/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$8,600.02. A GIS layer was developed showing the locations of culverts on our gas tax roads and these structures were identified by diameter and length, prioritized based on condition and placed on a replacement schedule.

COUNTY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDS FOR 2010: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by improving the High Lake boat landing as well as completing 8 acres of wildlife habitat improvement work in the Town of Wilson. Wildlife Habitat funds were used for hunter/walking trail improvements and expansions, green cover release and renovation and mowing of wildlife openings and trails.

THE UNDERDOWN RECREATION AREA is available for a variety of uses year round. Groomed and tracked X-C ski trails, snowshoe trails, horse trails, bike trails, hiking trails, and a snowmobile/winter ATV trail are all mapped and signed in the Underdown. Season trail passes were made available to the public to offset the cost of these trails. Several small bridges were constructed by the bike club on the single track bike trail where wet areas are crossed. A grant from the Wisconsin Horse Council was utilized to replace berms with gates on blocked roads, improve fencing at the trailhead and enhance the secondary loop road for future campground expansion. Signing improvements were also completed on several trail segments.

ORGANIZED AND/OR COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES WERE CONDUCTED on the County Forest in the Underdown Recreation Area by the Underdown Horse Club and the Wisconsin Off Road Bike Association (WORBA). The hiking and biking portion of the Stubborn Mule Adventure Race, sponsored by 180 Adventure was also held in the Underdown on July 17-18. This team sport combining various endurance events was held in the Merrill/Wausau area in 2010 and will help showcase and promote the recreational opportunities that the Underdown has to offer to silent sport users from outside the area. The Harrison Hills ATV Club held several club events in the Harrison Unit as well.

COUNTY PARKS ACTIVITIES: Regular maintenance of County parks and facilities was performed during 2010. Landscaping and the restroom facility were completed at the multi-use building located in the Harrison South ATV parking lot using grant dollars. Upgrades were made to the Otter Lake Nature Trail Boardwalk as part of an Eagle Scout project.

INVASIVE SPECIES: In 2007, a significant garlic mustard infestation was discovered in the Underdown Block of the County Forest and on adjacent private land. Our department took immediate action to try to control the spread of this invasive plant by conducting a search to find new infestations and applying herbicide where the plant was known to occur. Several other small, satellite colonies of this invasive plant have been found in other locations of the Underdown, Harrison and Wildwood Blocks. In 2010, a sustainable forestry grant which had been awarded by the state in 2008 was completed, and a new-two year grant was secured to cover the associated costs of fighting invasive species on the County Forest. Costs covered by this grant include the hiring of a contract herbicide applicator to spray the identified garlic mustard sites, mapping and monitoring known infested sites and educating users of the County Forest on invasive plant identification and control. We continue to use every avenue available to manage this problem on the County Forest.

LINCOLN COUNTY ACCESS PLAN: Final restoration work to the High Lake boat landing was completed, improvements to our primary gas tax roads and to the Underdown trailhead were made and renovations to the summer ATV trail began in 2010. A grant to improve Krueger Firelane was applied for but not secured due to lack of available funds. We will reapply for funding of this project in 2011. Continued work on acquiring access permits for private individuals that access their lands through the County Forest. Issued temporary access permits for individuals hauling forest products from private lands across the County Forest. A Recreation Officer continued working on the County Forest and helped reduce vandalism and restore order to our public lands and recreational facilities.

LINCOLN COUNTY'S 2010-2011 SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROJECT was approved for \$78,350.00 consisting of 313.4 miles of trail @ \$250/mile. Six clubs contracted to maintain 260.6 miles of trail and our department maintains 52.8 miles. Snowmobile trail rehabilitation funding was acquired to improve 3.9 miles of state-funded trail in the New Wood Block of the County Forest. This work will be completed in 2011.

ATV PROGRAM: We received trail maintenance aids of \$19,684.00 consisting of 195.3 miles of winter trails @ \$100/mile and \$20,015.00 consisting of 44.4 miles of summer trails at \$450/mile maintained by our department. Five clubs contracted to maintain 152.05 miles of winter trail and our department maintained 43.25 miles. The winter trails are part of our snowmobile trail system, while the summer mileage traverses through the Harrison Hills and links up with Langlade and Oneida County Trails as well as the communities of Gleason, Harrison, and the Pine Lake area. We completed a pit toilet building, landscaping and parking lot improvements at the Harrison Hills ATV trailhead on County Hwy B utilizing a \$28,500.00 grant. We began renovation work on 5.5 miles of trail North of Cinder Road on the funded summer trail using awarded grant money. Funding was also acquired to renovate 3.25 miles of trail south of Cinder Road. The work on both of these segments will be completed in 2011. Developed an emergency signing system for the summer trail network which will be compatible with the County's 911 system. Worked with ATV clubs in the Somo, Wilson, and Spirit Falls areas to identify possible sites for an ATV trail/route link. Explored development of a new trail north of Pine Lake in Harrison. Lincoln County participated in the second Utility Terrain Vehicle pilot program which began in May, 2010.

ICE AGE TRAIL: Several sections of the Ice Age Trail were relocated and/or reconstructed with the majority of the work being done in the New Wood area. Plans for trail improvements in the New Wood Park area were also developed and these trail enhancements will take place in 2011.

HARRISON FLOWAGE DAM: A hydraulic study was conducted to develop the estimated flood plain, profile, and table for the dam nonexistent, dam in place and dam failure scenarios during the 100-year flood. This information will be adopted as an amendment to the County Floodplain Zoning Ordinance as regulatory flood levels in order to keep new developments from occurring in areas lower than these estimated elevations and to secure a hazard rating for the Harrison Dam.

LAND SOLD, RATIFIED, CONFIRMED AND APPROVED by the Lincoln County Board in 2010 included 2 tax deed parcels that were sold for a total of \$19,465.86.

BEAVER PROGRAM: Continued to work with USDA APHIS and the Lincoln County Highway Department regarding beaver problems on the Lincoln County Forest and on the County road system.

FOREST CERTIFICATION: The Lincoln County Forest became SFI certified in March, 2005 and FSC certified in July, 2007. We worked on implementing necessary changes on the County Forest required by SFI and FSC forest certification.

DEPARTMENT SAFETY PLAN: Continued development and implementation of our department safety plan. The Lincoln County Public Works Safety Group (Highway, Forestry, Solid Waste and Maintenance Departments) are under contract with Alpha Terra Science to implement this plan. Programs are in place for hazardous communication, control of hazardous energy, confined space entry and excavation safety, emergency action and fire prevention plan, personal protective equipment, occupational noise exposure and bloodborne pathogens. Alpha Terra has set up a webpage for the user groups above to manage and maintain safety records.

DNR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: 2010 Accomplishments on the Lincoln County Forest
submitted by Rick Weide, DNR Wildlife Biologist:

Flowages

Water levels, vegetation, and wildlife were again monitored on Camp 26, Trapper Morrison, and Coffee Creek flowages. Rice production was adversely affected by brown spot disease in 2010. Brown spot is a fungus that can stunt or kill infected seedlings. Abundant moisture during the growing season may have promoted the growth and development of brown spot. In some cases entire flowages were impacted, leading to severely limited rice production in 2010. The status of this disease will be closely watched in 2011.

Wildlife Openings

Openings maintenance focused on the Harrison Hills block in 2010. The rolling upland dominated landscape with few wetland barriers, facilitated equipment access by mid-summer. A total of 80 openings comprising 61 acres were inspected and mowed as needed to set back woody encroachment and restore herbaceous cover.

Wildlife Surveys

Spring surveys in 2010 that included parts of the Lincoln County Forest included woodcock, ruffed grouse and turkey. Grouse and turkey surveys include spring breeding activity as well as later brood counts. Ruffed grouse may be trending downward slightly from the peak of their 10-year cycle. In addition, the annual bear bait survey indicated another year of consistently high bear numbers in Lincoln County. Summer deer observations (to obtain fawn: doe ratio), revealed increasing productivity in 2010. Furbearer and waterfowl surveys were also completed according to schedule.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2010: 2009 Ski-Doo Skandic Utility Snowmobile and 2010 John-Deere Lawn & Garden Tractor/Mower.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Kleinschmidt
Forest Administrator