

**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, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

OUR 2011 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,845.05 acres.

2011 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,589,571.46. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$157,578.12 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$315,155.79 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$1,116,837.55 (70%) to the County Forestry Fund. The revenue distributed to the County Forestry Fund includes \$7,328.04, from a sale administered on Highway Department property which will be transferred over to that Department. Any unused budgeted funds and surplus revenues are transferred to the County CIP Program after the annual audit is completed.

DURING THE YEAR, 31 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$1,554,804.95. This includes a timber sale with an estimated value of \$121,295.00 located on Lincoln County Solid Waste Department property where the Landfill expansion project will take place. The Forestry Department established and will administer this sale and upon completion, turn the revenue over to the Solid Waste Department. Two direct sales were also sold on non-forest crop county property with an estimated value of \$16,264.08.

TWENTY-TWO BOUGH PERMITS WERE ISSUED @ \$100.00 per permit = \$2,200.00.

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2011 totaled \$281,872.48. Of this amount, \$15,896.13 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring 50/50 cost share.

REVENUE FROM WOOD SALES AND FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2011 TOTALED \$1,340.00. One wood sale (\$20.00) and one hundred 30-day permits (\$1,000.00) were issued. Thirty-two permits (\$320.00) were extended.

TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS:

The forestry field crew hand planted approximately 3,000 2-year tamarack and 2,800 3-year old white spruce seedlings on 6 acres to reclaim an area of beaver meadow where the trees had been killed west of highway T in the Town of Somo.

Approximately 44 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 7 acres of black ash were strip clear cut during frozen ground conditions to prepare the site for natural seeding.

Approximately 15 acres of v-blade work were done by the county crew to prepare the site for planting in spring 2012.

Approximately 1535.11 tons of biomass was harvested from 3 timber sales which resulted in an extra \$3,070.22 in revenue to the county.

#### TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI):

Approximately 1187 acres of aspen release was completed in aspen regeneration areas by logging contractors as a requirement of their timber sale contract.

SURVEYING: The majority of surveying done in 2011 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 24 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north line of the NW1/4 NW1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the N1/16NW.

In Section 24 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary bordering the Town of Wilson Town Hall property located in the NW1/4 NW1/4 totaling approximately 1/8 mile of boundary. 1 inch rebar were set at the east corners of the Wilson Town Hall property.

In Section 30 of T35N R5E a monument was reset at the NW1/4.

In Section 14 of T33N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north and east line of the SE1/4 SE1/4 and for the north and east line of the NW1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately 1 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the E1/16SE, C1/16SE, CE1/16, and C1/4.

In Section 14 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the east and north line of the SW1/4 totaling approximately 1 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the C1/4.

In Section 18 of T35N R4E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north line of the SE1/4 and the north line of the NE1/4 SW1/4 totally approximately 3/4 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the CW1/16.

In Section 24 of T34N R4E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the east line of the NE1/4 totally approximately 1/2 mile of boundary.

In Section 13 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the NW1/4 NW1/4, the south line of the NE1/4 NW1/4, the west line of the SW1/4 NE1/4, and the north line of the NE1/4 SW1/4 totally approximately 1 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the CW1/16, C1/4, CN1/16, and W1/16NW.

In Section 24 of T33N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the east line of the W1/2 totally approximately 1 mile of boundary.

In Section 9 of T33N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and west line of the E1/2 NE1/4 totally approximately 3/4 mile of boundary.

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 2011 we received approximately \$314.41/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$8,567.73. 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 and placed on a replacement schedule.

COUNTY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDS FOR 2011: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by improving the Bruce Lake boat landing as well as completing 9 acres of wildlife habitat improvement work in the Town of Harding. 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. Signing and trail improvements were also completed on several trail segments. Drainage improvement work was completed on two campsites. Application was made for state Recreational Trails Act grant dollars to perform trail maintenance projects in the Underdown. Grant dollars were awarded in the amount of \$7,295.10. Lincoln County must match these dollars for a total project cost of \$14,590.20.

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) and in the Harrison Unit by the Harrison Hills ATV Club.

COUNTY PARKS ACTIVITIES: Regular maintenance of County parks and facilities was performed during 2011. Rehabilitation work was conducted on the Harrison Hills ATV trail using grant dollars. Two informational signs were constructed and erected on the Harrison Hills ATV Trail 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 two-year 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. We continue to use every avenue available to control this problem on the County Forest.

LINCOLN COUNTY ACCESS PLAN: Restoration work to the Bruce Lake Boatlanding was conducted, improvements to our primary gas tax roads and to the Underdown trailhead and campsites were made and renovations to the summer ATV trail continued in 2011. 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 2012. 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 5-YEAR OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN was developed in conjunction with North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning, the City of Tomahawk, The City of Merrill, local townships and special interest groups. The Plan was approved by the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors on January 17, 2012 and is effective January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2016.

LINCOLN COUNTY'S 2011-2012 SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROJECT was approved for \$78,350.00 consisting of 313.4 miles of trail @ \$250/mile. Lincoln County turned over the 52.8 miles of trail that the Forestry Dept. had been maintaining over to two clubs. As a result, the six clubs in the county contracted to maintain the total number of funded miles in Lincoln County. We were also awarded rehabilitation funding of \$2,633 for improvement work to be done on a bridge crossing the Somo River in the Town of Somo.

ATV PROGRAM: We received trail maintenance aids of \$20,004.00 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. Lincoln County turned over the 43.25 miles of winter ATV trail that the Forestry Dept. had been maintaining over to two clubs. As a result, five clubs in the county contracted to maintain the total number of funded miles of winter ATV trail in the county. We received approval for 3.2 miles of additional winter ATV maintenance funding on two previously non-funded segments of trail. 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 renovation work North of Cinder Road and began rehabilitation work on the Otter Run portion of the funded summer trail. Developed and implemented an emergency signing system for the summer trail network which is 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 and will end June 30, 2012.

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. Trail improvements in the vicinity of New Wood Park were also conducted and these trail enhancements were completed by the Mobile Skills Crew of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Our department constructed a set of steps to improve the trail between New Wood Park and Campground in an area where a hillside had eroded and was becoming a safety hazard for people who use the trail or park.

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 a 100-year flood. This information was 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. As a result, the hazard rating for the Harrison Dam was re-assigned from high to low.

LAND SOLD, RATIFIED, CONFIRMED AND APPROVED by the Lincoln County Board in 2011 included 1 tax deed parcel that was sold for \$4,003.25.

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: 2011 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 again limited in 2011. After being devastated by brown spot disease in 2010, it appears that recovery may take several years. The value of these northern rice beds to wildlife cannot be overstated, and we will be monitoring flowages closely in 2012. Meanwhile, beavers discovered DNR flowages again after a 2 year absence. Water control structures and spillways at Camp 26 and Coffee Creek were plugged several times in 2011. DNR personnel eventually shot 6 beavers, and no further problems were observed as the year drew to a close

#### Wildlife Openings

Openings maintenance focused on the northwest units of the Lincoln County Forest in 2011. At times during the summer wet conditions made access to many openings nearly impossible. The Highway T block was especially difficult due to wet ground. In addition, equipment breakdowns hampered progress. Drier weather in September allowed access to remaining openings. With no further breakdowns the 2011 openings project was completed only slightly behind schedule. The total number of openings inspected came to 92. Eighty-nine openings comprising 100 acres were eventually mowed to set back woody encroachment and restore a grass/forb community.

Wildlife Surveys

Wildlife surveys in 2011 that were conducted on the Lincoln County Forest included woodcock, ruffed grouse, turkey, bear, deer, and furbearer. Grouse and turkey surveys include spring breeding activity as well as later brood counts. Ruffed grouse numbers were in line with 2010, indicated by spring drumming activity and later confirmed by fall hunter success. Summer deer observations revealed a slight upward trend in the number of fawns seen. In contrast, the annual bear bait survey indicated a significant drop in visits to bait stations compared to prior years. Furbearer and waterfowl surveys were also completed according to schedule

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2011: 2011 Ford F-150 Pickup.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Kleinschmidt  
Forest Administrator