

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, 2012 through December 31, 2012.

OUR 2012 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,845.05 acres.

2012 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,676,040.53. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$140,954.94 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$281,909.89 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$991,170.82 (70%) to the County Forestry Fund. From the County Forestry Fund, \$134,718.65 was distributed to the Highway Department, and \$127,286.23 was distributed to the Landfill Department for sales administered on those properties. Any unused budgeted funds and surplus revenues are transferred to the County CIP Program after the annual audit is completed.

DURING THE YEAR, 28 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$1,583,170.74.

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

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2012 totaled \$371,014.70. Of this amount, \$20,115.13 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring cost sharing.

REVENUE FROM WOOD SALES AND FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2013 TOTALED \$1,260.00. One wood sale (\$200.00) and seventy-seven 30-day permits (\$770.00) were issued. Twenty-nine permits (\$290.00) were extended.

TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS:

The forestry field crew hand planted approximately 15,000 2-year red pine seedlings on 15 acres where the mature red pine plantation had been clear cut in fall 2010.

Approximately 955.55 tons of biomass was harvested from 2 timber sales which resulted in an extra \$1,911.10 in revenue to the county.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI):

Approximately 743 acres of aspen release was completed in aspen regeneration areas by logging contractors as a requirement of their timber sale contract.

Approximately 5 acres of red pine south of Pine Tree Lane in the Town of Wilson was mechanically released by DNR staff.

SURVEYING: The majority of surveying done in 2012 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 30 of T35N R5E a monument was set at the E1/16NE.

In Section 35 of T33N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the NE1/4 NE1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the C1/16NE and E1/16NE.

In Section 36 of T33N 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 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary.

In Section 3 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the NE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary.

In Section 5 of T34N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and east lines of the W1/2 NW1/4 totally approximately 3/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the CW1/16 and N1/16NW.

In Section 23 of T34N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the S1/2 NW1/4 totally approximately 5/16 mile of boundary.

In Section 4 of T33N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and west lines of the SW1/4 NW1/4 totally approximately 1/2 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the CW1/16.

In Section 4 of T32N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and east lines of the W1/2 SE1/4 totally approximately 3/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the S1/16SE and CE1/16.

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 2012 we received approximately \$313.93/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$8,554.59. 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. Six culverts were replaced and several portions of road were re-ditched to improve drainage issues that were developing.

COUNTY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDS FOR 2012: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by completing the Bruce Lake boat landing as well as working on the Kordick and Ament Lake landings. Wildlife Habitat funds were used for hunter/walking trail improvements along with 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, fat 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 including the placement of a culvert was completed on a segment of trail and several other trail segments had additional improvement work conducted with the assistance of last year's RTA grant. A new State Recreational Trails Act grant was received to help perform trail maintenance projects in the Underdown in the upcoming year. The amount awarded to Lincoln County under this grant was \$6,972.73 and we must match these dollars for a total project cost of \$13,945.46.

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 2012. Rehabilitation work was conducted on the Harrison Hills ATV trail using grant dollars. We have been using non-lethal means in an integrated approach to control geese population issues at Tug Lake County Park. Additional control measures will be researched in the upcoming years.

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 2012, a two-year sustainable forestry grant which had been awarded by the state was completed which helped 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, Kordick Lake and Ament Lake Boatlandings was conducted, improvements to our primary gas tax roads and to the Underdown trailhead and recreational trails were made and renovations to the summer ATV trail continued in 2012. A grant to improve the Krueger Firelane was secured and will be completed in 2013. 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. We continue to implement our current plan.

LINCOLN COUNTY'S 2012-2013 SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROJECT was approved for \$78,437.50 consisting of 313.75 miles of trail @ \$250/mile. Seven clubs in the county

were contracted to maintain the total number of funded miles in Lincoln County. We were also awarded funding for two reroute projects, one for \$7625 in the Town of Russell and one for \$3741 in the Town of Scott. Both reroutes were the result of lost easements on the original trail.

ATV PROGRAM: We received trail maintenance aids of \$20,004.00 consisting of 198.5 miles of winter trails @ \$100/mile and \$26,675.00 consisting of 44.4 miles of summer trails at \$600/mile. Five snowmobile clubs contracted to maintain the funded miles of winter ATV trail in the county. These trails are part of the county's snowmobile trail system. The summer ATV 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. Lincoln County maintains the summer ATV trail system, and this year, the County contracted with the Harrison Hills ATV Club to assist with brushing and signing. We completed renovation work on the Otter Run Trail and began rehabilitation work on the Parish Road portion of the funded summer trail. We continued to implement an emergency signing system for the summer trail network which is compatible with the County's 911 system. Armstrong Creek Road and a portion of Camp Ave. were opened to ATV use year-round and Horn Lake Road was opened to ATV use from May 1 to Dec. 1. 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 is now participating in the permanent Utility Terrain Vehicle pilot program which began on July 1, 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. 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 2012 included 4 tax deed parcels that were sold for \$22,921.42.

BEAVER PROGRAM: The Lincoln County Forestry and Highway Departments continued to work with USDA APHIS 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. Lincoln County took part in the 2012 County Forest audit for both the FSC and SFI certification program.

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: 2012 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 virtually non-existent in 2012. After being devastated by brown spot disease in 2010, we were hoping for some sign of recovery by 2012. In light of the value of these northern rice beds to wildlife, DNR wildlife staff may intervene in 2013 and attempt to jump-start rice recovery with direct seeding in New Wood and Camp 26 flowages. Despite the flurry of activity in 2011, beaver problems were relatively few in 2012. Only one new dam was discovered, this time on the upstream end of the New Wood flowage. Wildlife Services was called in and the problem was quickly resolved.

Wildlife Openings

Openings maintenance focused on the New Wood block of the Lincoln County Forest in 2012. Dry conditions facilitated access and allowed for an earlier start. Also, very few equipment problems hampered progress in 2012. The only incident that shut down mowing was a flat tire caused by a deer antler. A total of 96 openings comprising 103 acres were mowed in 2012. The objective is to set back woody encroachment and restore a grass/forb community. All Lincoln County openings are on a 4 year rotation.

Wildlife Surveys

Wildlife surveys that were conducted on the Lincoln County Forest in 2012 included woodcock, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, turkey, bear, deer, and furbearer. Grouse and turkey surveys include spring breeding activity as well as later brood counts. Based on a drumming count in the New Wood area ruffed grouse numbers continued to approach the long-term average near the peak of the cycle. Most biologists anticipate a decline in 2013, but that remains to be seen. Spring and summer survey results were later confirmed by favorable fall hunter success. Summer deer observations are showing that fawn numbers are trending downward compared to the 10-year average. Ongoing research may reveal more insight into causes of fawn mortality and lead to management implications. The annual bear bait survey for Lincoln County indicated a continuation of lower visitation rates compared to the long-term average.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2012: John Deere 5100M Tractor and H260 Loader.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Kleinschmidt
Forest Administrator