

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, 2009 through December 31, 2009.

OUR 2009 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,845.05 acres.

2009 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,240,127.94. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$124,012.79 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$248,025.47 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$868,089.68 (70%) to the County Forestry Fund.

DURING THE YEAR, 29 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$768,317.65.

TWENTY-FOUR BOUGH PERMITS WERE ISSUED @ \$100.00 per permit = \$2,400.00.

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2009 totaled \$164,590.33. \$34,111.00 of this \$164,590.33 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring 50/50 cost share.

REVENUE FROM WOOD SALES AND FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2009 TOTALED \$1,750.00. Four wood sales (\$300.00) and one hundred twenty-three 30-day permits (\$1,230.00) were issued. Twenty-two permits (\$220.00) were extended.

TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS: The forestry field crew hand planted approximately 14,000 2-year old red pine seedlings on 15 acres along Forrester Road in the Town of Wilson. This site was a jack pine stand that had been clear-cut and site prepped last year.

The forestry field crew v-bladed and hand planted approximately 2,200 2-year old red pine seedlings in a 2 acre site west of the Somo River in section 13 of the Town of Somo. The aspen regeneration in this area had been destroyed by beavers.

The forestry field crew planted approximately 3,500 2-year old red pine seedlings to complete a site that had been started in 2008 along Honey Road in the Town of Wilson.

The forestry field crew hand planted approximately 1,500 2-year old red pine seedlings in a reclamation project in the county gravel pit south of Theis Road in the Town of Harrison.

Approximately 51 acres of swamp conifer were clear cut with slash bunched and compacted as a requirement of the timber sale contract, to prepare the site for natural seeding.

Approximately 14 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 257.54 tons of biomass was harvested on a 17 acre timber sale in the town of Harrison which resulted in an extra \$515.09 in revenue to the county on this site.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI): Approximately 13 acres of white spruce south of the Averill Creek Firelane in the Town of Harding were mechanically released by the county forest field crew.

Approximately 5 acres of white spruce were mechanically released by the county forest field crew east of Camp Avenue in the Town of Harding.

Approximately 731 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 2009 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 4 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the SE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary.

In Section 14 of T35N R4E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the west line of the SW1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary.

In Section 30 of T33N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the east line totaling approximately 1 mile of boundary.

In Section 27 of T33N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the west line of the NE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the C1/4.

In Section 27 of T33N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north line of the NE1/4 SW1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the CW1/16.

In Section 20 of T33N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points between County Forest property boundary and a 3 acre cemetery within the SE1/4 SW1/4 totaling 1056 feet 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 2009 we received \$336/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$9,156.00.

COUNTY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDS FOR 2009: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by improving the Long Lake and Doering Lake boat landing as well as completing 5 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, hiring a summer intern to assist with wildlife opening maintenance 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. The final segment of single track bike trail was constructed utilizing club labor to completely remove these trails from the horse trail. A grant from the Wisconsin Horse Council was utilized to improve the well at the trail head and enhance the campsites.

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 2009. A restroom was constructed at the multi-use building location in the Harrison South ATV parking lot using grant dollars.

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 and Harrison Blocks. In 2009, a two-year sustainable forestry grant from the state was utilized to cover the associated costs of fighting invasive species on the County Forest which included the hiring of a contract herbicide applicator to spray the identified garlic mustard sites. We continue to treat known locations with herbicide, monitor roads and trails for new sites, and educate adjacent property owners and user groups about invasive species in an attempt to control this problem on the County Forest.

LINCOLN COUNTY ACCESS PLAN: We completed road and landing improvements for access to Doering Lake and also completed final renovation work to the Long Lake Boatlanding. We continue to 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 2009-2010 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. Funding was applied for and received for a 2.4 mile mandatory re-route where a private landowner's easement was lost on Corridor 19.

ATV PROGRAM: We received trail maintenance aids of \$19,530.00 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 152.75 miles of winter trail and our department maintained 43.2 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 ATV Trails and the communities of Gleason, Harrison, and the Pine Lake area. We utilized a \$28,500.00 grant to construct a pit toilet building at the Harrison Hills ATV trailhead on County Hwy B. Parking lot improvements will also be made at this location in 2010. We completed renovation work at various locations on the funded summer trail. Worked with ATV clubs in the Somo, Wilson, and Spirit Falls areas to identify possible sites for an ATV trail/route link and supported the opening of a section of CTH T to ATV traffic. Explored development of a new trail north of Pine Lake in Harrison. Lincoln County also participated in the Light-Utility Vehicle pilot program which ended in September, 2009.

BEAVER PROGRAM: 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.

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: 2009 Accomplishments on the Lincoln County Forest submitted by Rick Weide, DNR Wildlife Biologist:

Flowages

Water levels were monitored and managed as needed on Camp 26, Trapper Morrison, and Coffee Creek flowages. Rice production appeared to be about average this year. The growth and development of beds in the Harrison Flowage are showing promise and no supplemental seeding was conducted in 2009. As planned, a more thorough survey of flowages on the County Forest began in 2009. Morrison Flowage was first on the list and on June 22 a canoe was used to take a closer look. Plant communities were the primary focus. Sedge was the dominant emergent, with scattered cattail also present. Submerged aquatics were comprised of sparsely distributed water shield. This apparent lack of species diversity prompted a drawdown beginning in late June. By exposing bottom sediments, accumulated organic matter begins to break down, releasing nutrients and stimulating germination of wetland plants. The increased species diversity should provide important food and cover for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species as water levels are restored. As time permits, additional investigations will be conducted in 2010, and management potential/options will be evaluated.

Wildlife Openings

Openings maintenance focused on the New Wood block in 2009. Relatively dry conditions facilitated equipment access by early summer. A total of 72 openings comprising 75 acres were mowed to set back woody encroachment and restore herbaceous cover. Another 10 openings (9 acres) that had become degraded and lacked a significant grass component were rotavated and replanted with a mix of grass and clover. Most of the openings that become candidates for renovation were identified in a 2007 intern study. GPS and other data collected in 2007 have proved to be useful for planning and record-keeping related to the opening program.

Wildlife Surveys

Spring surveys in 2009 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 appear to be at or near the peak of their 10-year cycle. In addition, the annual bear bait survey, summer deer survey (to obtain fawn: doe ratio), furbearer, and waterfowl surveys were completed according to schedule.

The results of disease surveillance of the northern deer herd became available in early 2009. This survey included parts of the County Forest and included testing for chronic wasting disease and tuberculosis. At least for now, test results did not reveal the presence of these diseases in Lincoln County.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2009: There were no equipment purchases made in 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Kleinschmidt
Forest Administrator