

## **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, 2013 through December 31, 2013.

OUR 2013 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,845.05 acres.

2013 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,289,049.48. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$128,675.37 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$257,350.69 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$903,023.42 (70%) to the County Forestry Fund. Any unused budgeted funds and surplus revenues are transferred to the County CIP Program after the annual audit is completed.

DURING THE YEAR, 26 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$1,193,704.25.

TWENTY-THREE BOUGH PERMITS WERE ISSUED @ \$100.00 per permit = \$2,300.00.

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2013 totaled \$303,414.41. Of this amount, \$17,516 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring cost sharing.

REVENUE FROM WOOD SALES AND FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2013 TOTALED \$1,285.00. One wood sale (\$40.00) and fifty-seven 30-day permits (\$855.00) were issued. Twenty-six permits (\$390.00) were extended.

### TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS:

The forestry field crew filled in approximately 4,000 2-year red pine seedlings on a 15 acre site planted in 2012 in Wilson and approximately 4,000 2 year old red pine seedlings on a gravel pit reclamation site in Harrison.

A 40 acre site was site prepped for planting in 2014 with the use of a Bracke Scarifier and skidder rented from the DNR in Tomahawk.

Approximately 10 acres of white birch, 38 acres of swamp conifer and 10 acres of black ash site prep was completed by logging contractors as a requirement of their timber sale contract.

No biomass was harvested from Lincoln County Forest in 2013.

### TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI):

Approximately 638 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 Jack Pine south of Forrester Rd in the Town of Wilson was mechanically released by DNR staff.

SURVEYING: The majority of surveying done in 2013 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 23 of T34N R4E a monument was set at the CW1/16.

In Section 27 of T34N R5E monuments were set at the N1/16NE, C1/16NE, and CN1/16.

In Section 32 of T35N R5E monuments were set at the CW1/16, C1/16SW, and W1/16SW.

In Section 31 of T35N R5E a monument was set at the C1/16SE and two witness monuments were set at the CE1/16.

In Section 30 of T35N R5E monuments were set at the CW1/16, C1/16NW, and W1/16NW.

In Section 18 of T35N R6E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south line of the SE1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the S1/16SE and C1/16NE.

In Section 33 of T35N R4E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the east line of the SW1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the E1/16SE, C1/16SE and S1/16SE.

In Section 7 of T33N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north, east, and west lines of the SW1/4 NE1/4 totaling approximately 3/4 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the C1/16NE and CN1/16.

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 2013 we received approximately \$313.30/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$8,537.55. 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 2013: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by completing the Bus Lake boat landing as well as working on the Kordick and Ament Lake landings. Wildlife Habitat funds were used for the development of parking lots for hunters in the Newwood Block 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 by this club. A new groomer for the ski trail was purchased using donated funds. Several segments of Cross-County ski trail 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 \$7,282.41 and we must match these dollars for a total project cost of \$14,564.82.

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 2013. 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 addition to Garlic Mustard, other invasive species have been discovered on County Forest property. Glossy Buckthorn, Japanese Barberry, Crown Vetch, Leafy Spurge and Japanese Knotweed have been found in areas of Underdown and Harrison. Steps are taken to control or eradicate these species when they are found. A GIS Layer is maintained to identify every known location of invasive plant species on the county forest. We will continue to monitor and treat known infestations while being observant for new species and infestations on the County Forest.

LINCOLN COUNTY ACCESS PLAN: Restoration work to the Bus Lake, Tahoe 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 2013. A grant to improve the Krueger Firelane was secured and utilized for this purpose. Several parking lots were constructed in Newwood for recreationalists to use. 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 contracts with the Harrison Hills ATV Club to assist with brushing and signing. We completed renovation 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. Worked with ATV clubs in the Somo, Wilson, and Spirit Falls areas to identify possible sites for an ATV trail/route link. Participated in the development of the Northern Wisconsin ATV/UTV Council to assist organizations in enhancing ATV/UTV and other recreational opportunities. We applied for funding for the development of a new trail north of Pine Lake in Harrison. Lincoln County continues to participate in the permanent Utility Terrain Vehicle 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. We continue to work with our local chapter to provide quality facilities and address issues as they arise.

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.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE: Our Timberbase software was upgraded to the Timberbase 2013 program and was also migrated from the Access server to the SQL server which will allow this program to work within Lincoln County's system much more efficiently.

LAND SOLD, RATIFIED, CONFIRMED AND APPROVED by the Lincoln County Board in 2013 included 2 tax deed parcels that were sold for \$9,715.00.

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: 2013 Accomplishments on the Lincoln County Forest  
submitted by Shelby Hiestand, DNR Wildlife Biologist:

Unfortunately, there was no Wildlife Management staff in Lincoln County during much of 2013, including key wildlife survey windows. I contacted my predecessor Rick Weide to compile the majority of this information.

Flowages

Water levels, vegetation, and wildlife were again monitored on Camp 26, Trapper Morrison, and Coffee Creek flowages. Rice production is unknown for 2013. Beaver problems were relatively few in 2013. Only one new dam was discovered, this time on the Coffee Creek flowage. Wildlife Services was called in and the problem was quickly resolved.

Wildlife Openings

Openings maintenance focused on the Harrison Hills block of the Lincoln County Forest in 2013. A total of 82 openings comprising 86 acres were mowed in 2013. There were very few maintenance issues in 2013. 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 were completed in late winter or spring for grouse, woodcock, and bear. Grouse survey included spring breeding activity. Based on a drumming count in the New Wood area ruffed grouse numbers were on a downward trend, however later flush rate surveys were consistent with previous years. The annual bear bait survey for Lincoln County indicated a continuation of average visitation rates compared to the long-term average, and the highest rate since 2010. Continuation of all wildlife surveys will occur in 2014.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2013: Ford F-750 truck with heavy duty platform and John Deere 595 backhoe implement for our tractor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Kleinschmidt  
Forest Administrator