

## **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, 2014 through December 31, 2014.

OUR 2014 COUNTY FOREST consists of 100,843.05 acres.

2014 TIMBER SALES REVENUE TOTALED \$1,657,234.69. This revenue is distributed as follows: \$164,180.54 (10%) to Towns with County Forest Lands; \$328,361.31 (20%) to the County General Fund; and \$1,164,692.84 (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, 33 TIMBER SALES WERE SOLD with an estimated value of \$2,045,739.54.

SIXTEEN BOUGH PERMITS WERE ISSUED @ \$100.00 per permit = \$1,600.00.

GRANT REVENUES administered by the Forestry, Land & Parks Department during 2014 totaled \$308,895.58. Of this amount, \$13,858.41 was provided by Lincoln County for those grants requiring cost sharing.

REVENUE FROM WOOD SALES AND FIREWOOD PERMITS DURING 2014 TOTALED \$2,370.40. Three wood sales (\$270.40) and one hundred 30-day permits (\$1,500.00) were issued. Forty permits (\$600.00) were extended.

### TREE PLANTING/SITE PREP/BIOMASS:

The planting of approximately 35,000 2-year old red pine seedlings on a 40 acre site in the Town of Wilson was done by Superior Forestry Services out of Arizona for \$68.80/acre.

Approximately 18 acres of black ash site prep and 4 acres of swamp conifer site prep was completed by logging contractors as a requirement of their timber sale contract.

Approximately 28 acres of seed bed site prep was done in Harrison with a bulldozer by the DNR using turkey stamp money.

Biomass was removed from approximately 200 acres of timber sale area, totaling \$ 10,106.36.

### TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT (TSI):

Approximately 321 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 2014 was in conjunction with the Lincoln County Surveyor.

In Section 11 of T33N R5E monuments were set at the CE1/16 and C1/16SE.

In Section 31 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and west lines of the NE1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary.

In Section 30 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north line of the SW1/4 NW1/4 totaling approximately 1/4 mile of boundary.

In Section 3 of T33N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and east lines of the SE1/4 SW1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the CS1/16 and at 4 lot corners.

In Section 3 of T33N R8E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and east lines of the NW1/4 SE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the CE1/16 and C1/16SE.

In Section 4 of T32N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the north and east lines of the SW1/4 NE1/4 totaling approximately 1/2 mile of boundary. Monuments were set at the CN1/16 and C1/16NE.

In Section 4 of T32N R7E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the south and west lines of the N1/2 NW1/4 totaling approximately 3/4 mile of boundary. A monument was set at the W1/16NW.

In Section 8 of T35N R5E, 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.

In Section 17 of T35N R5E, T-style fence posts were placed at various points along County Forest property boundary for the a portion of the east line of the NW1/4 NE1/4 totaling approximately 1/20 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 2014 we received approximately \$313.85/mile for maintaining 27.25 miles of roads for a total of \$8,552.61. A GIS layer was developed several years ago 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. All high priority culverts have been replaced and we are now focusing our efforts on roadside brushing and ditching.

COUNTY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDS FOR 2014: We continued work on our County Conservation Aids grant for improving lake access by improving the Horn Lake boat landing. With the early snow this fall, we were not able to accomplish all of the work planned for 2014, so we will complete work on access to Bus and Tahoe Lake in 2015. Wildlife Habitat funds were used for the mowing of wildlife openings and trails. The development of parking lots for hunters in the Newwood Block will continue in 2015.

THE UNDERDOWN RECREATION AREA is available for a variety of uses year round. Groomed and tracked X-C ski trails, snowshoe trails, horse trails, single track 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. New gates were installed in various locations to accommodate horse drawn wagon events for the Underdown Horse Club. A new groomer for the ski trail that was purchased using donated funds continued to be utilized. Several segments of Cross-County ski trail had additional improvement work conducted with the assistance of this year's RTA grant. 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 2014. 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. Improvements were made to the trusses and roof of Shelterhouse A at Newwood Park and several new campfire rings were installed within our campground system

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. The Forestry Department has provided training and publications to user groups of the County Forest and to townships within the county on how to identify invasive plant species so that they can assist our department with early detection.

LINCOLN COUNTY ACCESS PLAN: Restoration work to the Horn Lake Boatlanding 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 2014. A second grant to apply crushed gravel to the Krueger Firelane was secured and will be utilized for this purpose in 2015. 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 2013-2014 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. In addition, supplemental maintenance funding was approved at 67.2% statewide making the portion paid out to Lincoln County's clubs \$49,445.65.

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. Winter ATV maintenance funding was acquired for 5.6 miles of additional trail which will be applied towards our 2015 funded mileage. Our 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 Beaver Trail 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 in our area. Our department acquired funding for the development of a new summer ATV trail north of Pine Lake in Harrison. Construction of this trail began in fall 2014 and our plan is to have it completed in 2015. 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 Harrison area. We continue to work with our local chapter to provide quality facilities and address issues as they arise.

HARRISON FLOWAGE DAM: An owner-responsible inspection of the Harrison Dam is required every 10 years in order to keep the dam in conformance with state law. The dam was scheduled for its routine inspection in 2014, and we hired Becher-Hoppe Associates to complete this report. The results of the inspection were submitted to the DNR as required and we worked towards correcting the deficiencies identified to bring the dam in compliance with state code.

**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 2014 included 4 tax deed parcels that were sold for \$10,428.50, two county owned parcels sold for \$56,358.00 and two parcels sold for Social Services for \$12,060.00.

**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. As part of our county safety plan, the county implemented a group made up of employees as a first response team. This team is trained in CPR and first aid and will respond to any medical emergency to make the work place safer for employees and the public.

**DNR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:** 2014 Accomplishments on the Lincoln County Forest submitted by Shelby Hiestand, DNR Wildlife Biologist:

### **Flowages**

Water levels and wildlife were actively monitored on Camp 26, Trapper Morrison, and Coffee Creek Flowages in 2014. There were no active issues involving beavers, but there were issues with muskrats burrowing into dikes at all three flowages and clogging the Trapper Morrison control structure. Work will need to be performed in 2015 on all dikes to patch muskrat holes to prevent potential breach of the dikes.

Coffee Creek and Trapper Morrison both have old beaver debris in the spillways that will need to be removed in 2015.

The dikes were mowed on Camp 26 and Coffee Creek Flowages.

Rice production was good on Camp 26 Flowage this year with plenty of wildlife and waterfowl use.

### **Wildlife Openings**

Openings maintenance was performed on the Under-Down unit in 2014. A total of 78 openings were inspected totaling approximately 60 acres. 69 openings were mowed, 3 were abandoned due to access

issues and poor quality, we were unable to access 3 openings due to wet trail conditions and 3 openings will need to be reseeded in 2015.

Hunter walking trail mowing was mostly limited to trails leading to wildlife openings. Wet conditions were present throughout most of the area.

Mowing is performed with the objective of setting back woody encroachment and promoting herbaceous (grass/forb) cover to benefit deer, woodcock, ruffed grouse, turkeys and many other wildlife species. Openings are mowed on a 4 year rotation.

### **Wildlife Surveys**

Wildlife surveys in 2014 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 2013, indicated by spring drumming activity and later confirmed by fall hunter success. Summer deer observations revealed a slight downward trend in the number of fawns seen. Bear bait visitation numbers were consistent with previous years. Furbearer and waterfowl surveys were also completed according to schedule.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN 2014: Ford F-150 Supercab 4x4 pickup truck and a Honda TRX500 4x4 ATV.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Kleinschmidt  
Forest Administrator