

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER 100**

Rev. 05/21/19

**BACKGROUND**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
100	MISSION STATEMENT.....	
105	GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN..	
110	COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN .....	
	110.1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING.....	
	110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN.....	
	110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN .....	
	110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN.....	
	110.5 UPDATING THE PLAN .....	
	110.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING .....	
115	FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING .....	
	115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION COMMITMENT .....	
	115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION.....	
120	COUNTY AUTHORITY.....	
	120.1 ORDINANCES.....	
125	HISTORY.....	
	125.1 STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT.....	
	125.2 IRON COUNTY HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT .....	
	125.3 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION.....	
	125.4 TRENDS.....	
	125.5 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC RESOURCE.....	

**100 MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Iron County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. These resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society.

County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect and disease outbreaks, and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs including watershed protection, protection and maintenance of biotic diversity, these same resources must also be managed and provide for sociological needs, including the production of raw materials for wood-using industries that provide a wide variety of products fulfilling consumer demands, and provisions for recreational opportunities.

The official Iron County Forest Mission Statement (Adopted 2003) is included in Chapter XXX as Exhibit ###.##.

**Commented [PTT1]:** This is a basic mission statement edited by template team. This can be replaced with County specific language if it is available.

**105 GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN (Hereafter referred to as the "Plan")**

To administer the County Forest program consistent with the mission statement and the purpose and direction of the County Forest Law as stated in s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., giving consideration to input from citizens and groups. The purpose of the County Forest Law being:

"... to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple use to assure maximum public benefits; to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a

**Commented [PTT2]:** This section references state statute. Do not edit.

manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”

## 110 IRON COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

### COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN POLICY

This plan shall incorporate or reference all official County Forest policies, pertinent county regulations, planning documents and the needs and actions for the period 2021 through 2035.

This plan is the authority for management on county forest lands enrolled under Wisconsin County Forest Law s.28.11. This plan may be encompassed within required local planning efforts.

**Commented [PTT3]:** Edit to reference your County

**Commented [PTT4]:** This sentence is meant to encourage other planning efforts within your county to refer to this plan as the authority document for management on CFL

## 110.1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING

### OBJECTIVES

Management planning shall be used to establish objectives, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and to promote an efficient and orderly program of development and management of the County Forest in the interest of:

1. Determining needs and priorities.
2. Achieving goals set forth in the mission statement of this plan.
3. Satisfying the statutory requirements of s. 28.11, Wis. Stats.
4. Satisfying requirements for participation in various state and federal aid programs.
5. Providing broad long-term and detailed short-term guidelines for actions.

## 110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Section 28.11, Wis. Stats., places the responsibility for the plan development on the Committee with technical assistance from the Department and other agencies. The County Forest Administrator will take the lead at the committee’s request. During development of the plan public participation should be utilized to provide for public participation throughout the planning process. Public participation and inputs into the plan should

**Commented [PTT5]:** A county’s public participation process should be customized to fit the degree of interest on issues and management of the County Forest. It may vary depending on the stage of the planning process or with different stakeholders or segments of the plan.

The spectrum of public participation may vary from informing, consulting, involving or collaborating and the public participation techniques will change accordingly. Consider using available resources to assist with the public participation efforts. ie. UW-Extension

consider s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., which governs the County Forest program and provides the sideboards to which this plan must adhere.

Iron County's public participation process includes the following:

- Before DRAFT plan is written
  - Form Stakeholder Group including County Forest user groups
    - Towns, loggers, snowmobile, ATV, non-motorized sports, hunting, fishing, hiking, boating club, Chambers of Commerce
    - Minimum of 2 meetings with stakeholders to review existing plan and potential revisions
- Develop DRAFT plan
  - Review DRAFT with stakeholder group
  - Make amendments based on group feedback
- Public Hearing on DRAFT plan
- 30-Day Public Comment period
- Address comments and amend plan as necessary
- Approval of DRAFT by Iron County Forestry & Parks Committee
- Submit DRAFT to DNR for review
- Return to Iron County Forestry & Parks Committee for changes / amendments if necessary
- DRAFT plan to full Iron County Board of Supervisors for approval
- Return plan to DNR for FINAL approval

**Commented [PTT6]:** Note: Counties should detail their public participation process here. You can select from the following techniques appropriate for your County and County Forest, or add other techniques: General surveys, open houses, key community contact interviews, focus groups, guided tours, newsletters, websites, citizens advisory committees, informational meetings.

List not only the technique or level of involvement, but also identify where in the process it is / was employed. Detail how and when the public is to be involved.

Example:

<u>Stage of Process</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Tools/Techniques</u>
Draft Development	Inform	Newspaper, website
Preliminary draft	Consult	Public meeting, survey
Final draft completion	Inform	Open House

### 110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN

Comments received should be given consideration during plan development. The Committee will then present the plan to the County Board for their approval. Following County Board approval, the plan will then be forwarded to the Department for approval of the plan by the DNR is required by s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

### 110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN

Each member of the County Board will have access to a copy of the plan at the time of

initial review and approval. Updated official copies will be maintained by the Forest Administrator and available electronically

Plan and future amendments will be: Electronic versions of the plan or plan amendments or electronic links to the documents will be distributed to the following:

1. Department of Natural Resources - Liaison and County Forest Specialist.
2. Executive Director- Wisconsin County Forest Association

#### 110.5 UPDATING THE PLAN

Necessary changes in policy and procedure will be incorporated into the plan by amendment as required. Amendments to the plan will require approval by both the County Board and the Department of Natural Resources as stated in s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats. Changes to official County Forest Blocking map require County Board approval. The annual county board approved work plan, budget, and annual accomplishment report are appended to the plan and do not require official DNR approval. In addition, changes to Chapters 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 do not require a plan amendment or official DNR approval, with the exception of the official County Forest Blocking map.

**Commented [PTT7]:** Note that consensus of the team is that changes to the Chapters 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 do not require amendment of the plan by the full County Board. This allows changes to maps, ordinances, etc., as well as insertion of work plans and annual plans.

#### 110.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING

The development of this plan and any future amendments to this plan will include considerations, and if warranted, participation in other local and regional planning efforts.

**Commented [PTT8]:** County may want to intemize any other pertinent planning efforts.

#### 115 FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING

The Committee will utilize procedure as set forth in the Department of Natural Resources Public Forest Lands Handbook no. 2460.5. Silviculture Guidance, supported by Wisconsin's forestry community and Silvicultural Guidance Team may be referenced in forest management activities. WisFIRS will be utilized as the primary tool for forest management planning decisions. Additional resources such as forest habitat type classification, soil surveys, and DNR's Best Management Practices for Water Quality guidelines may be utilized in management decisions.

**Commented [EP9]:** Volume / CFI based planning????

Iron County has implemented a Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) Program for monitoring

growth and overall forest health in its northern hardwood timber type. This program is in the initial measurement phase but will provide excellent growth and health data for planning purposes. It is the goal of Iron County to harvest approximately 90% of annual growth of northern hardwood and aspen stands. Continued implementation of the CFI program will provide accurate, localized growth data for these planning decisions.

#### 115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION GROUP ADMINISTRATION

As the certification group manager, the Department of Natural Resources will be responsible for overall administration of third-party certification efforts. The DNR County Forest Specialist will work in close cooperation with the Wisconsin County Forests Association in coordinating this effort. The group manager's responsibilities will include:

- Record keeping of certification
- Coordinating communication with the certification auditing firms
- Reporting and payment of fees
- Processing new entries and departures from the groups
- Internal compliance monitoring
- Dispute resolution

Detail on the certification group administration is maintained in the Public Forest Lands Handbook.

#### 115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION

### **Iron County's Commitment to Sustainable Forestry**

Our county forests provide a vital contribution to the State and the world by providing economic, environmental and social benefits important to our quality of life. Iron County believes that accomplishing such sustainable forestry requires a commitment and partnership from all the groups and individuals that benefit from these public lands.

#### **Iron County's Commitment**

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Within the scope of the Wisconsin County Forest Law and the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Iron County will implement forestry practices that promote forest sustainability and multiple use of the forest. In the management of the Forest that will include the sustainable harvest of forest products, the protection of special sites, wildlife, plants, water quality and aesthetics.

All forestland owners have a responsibility to provide sound forest stewardship. Iron County will work in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other natural resources groups / agencies in providing sustainable forestry information to those landowners and individuals impacting forest sustainability in Wisconsin. We will support research efforts to improve the health, productivity, and management of forestlands both internally and through cooperative efforts. In managing the Iron County Forest a spectrum of forestry practices will be employed to achieve our sustainable forestry objective. Both intensive and more extensive forest management techniques will be used to provide for wildlife, forest products, recreation, aesthetics, water quality, aesthetics and ecosystem maintenance. In keeping with this responsibility Iron County is committed to both Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

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**Commented [EP13]:** Done

## 120 COUNTY AUTHORITY

The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Iron County Forestry and Parks Committee of the County Board enforces the regulations governing the use of the County Forest.

### 120.1 ORDINANCES

The county ordinances that apply to the administration and management of the Iron County Forest can be found in Chapter 1000XX - \_\_\_\_\_. In addition, the following will be considered in planning process.

**Commented [PTT14]:** Add or delete ordinances pertinent to your county as appropriate. Consider listing ordinances here or referencing them in the appendix

- Parks, Navigable Waters, and Forests
- Zoning ordinance
- Floodplain - Shoreland Zoning ordinance
- Motorized recreation ordinance
- Non-Metallic Mining ordinance

- Other (*individual counties list their ordinances here*)

## 125 HISTORY

### 125.1 STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1927, the State Legislature passed the Forest Crop Law, authorizing counties to create county forests. An opinion of the Attorney General with reference to the Forest Crop Law stated that the counties would be exempt from the owner's share of annual tax. In 1929 the law was amended to create the County Forest Reserve Law. In 1963, several major revisions were made, creating the County Forest Law s28.11. The most notable change was the creation of a permanent program of forests that would be managed in accordance with a 10 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan developed by the county, with the assistance of the Department of Natural Resources. Several grants and loans were created and remain available to counties to compensate for public uses of these county forest lands as stipulated in s28.11. To fulfill additional statutory obligations acreage share payments to towns are currently \$.30/acre, and towns with county forest land receive a minimum of 10% of the stumpage revenue from their respective County Forest each year.

In 2020, twenty-nine counties in Wisconsin owned approximately 2.4 million acres entered under the County Forest Law.

### 125.2 IRON COUNTY FOREST HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

During the economic depression years of 1931 and 1932, Iron County acquired over 30,000 acres of tax delinquent lands. By the fall of 1933, forest boundaries were established, and 22,151 acres were entered under the Forest Crop Law by County Board action. In August of 1934, Iron County received \$2,215.13 in forest aid from the State. Upon receipt of this money, the County was obligated to begin serious management of the Iron County Forest.

Fire protection and access (road construction and maintenance) were the main management activities from 1935 until 1960. In subsequent years, more lands were added to the Forest. In 1953, the Iron County Forest included 172,945 acres. Forest aid

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funding from the State increased proportionally with this growth. Presently, the Iron County Forest is the fourth largest county forest in the state with approximately 175,305 acres.

Timber sales and stumpage revenues from the Iron County Forest were minimal from World War II until the mid '70's. During these years, the Forest was re-establishing itself through natural regeneration, and growing out of the sapling-small pole class stages in which it had remained following the heavy cutting three decades prior. In the mid '70's, significant aspen stands had reached maturity and State DNR foresters were assigned to begin a systematic, comprehensive forest inventory (RECON) and timber sale establishment program. From 1978 until 1991, timber sales, on the Iron County Forest, were established by State DNR foresters. In 1991, Iron County hired its first professional field forester, in 1998 a second professional forester was added and in 2005, a third professional forester was hired as an Assistant Forest Administrator.

In 1999 a project was initiated to develop a Geographical Information System (GIS) to assist in the management of the Iron County Forest. By early 2003, the Forest was completely mapped and stand data were integrated. Iron County had a working GIS.

The early 2000's brought the development and implementation of a Geographical Information System (GIS) program in Iron County. By 2003 the GIS program was up and running. The operation of this system was initially developed and staffed through the Forestry & Parks Department but later became its own County department.

With the backlog of available timber for harvest, the timber program grew substantially in the early 2000's. An Assistant Administrator position was filled for a short time but was eventually replaced by the addition of 2 more field foresters bringing County staffing levels to their current levels. Timber harvest backlogs have been drastically reduced and harvest objectives have leveled off in recent years.

### 125.3 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

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Iron County is a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association, Inc. (WCFA). This Association was incorporated on May 15, 1968 under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes, without stock and not for profit. The WCFA Board of Directors is composed of fifteen delegates elected from County Forestry Committees who are members of the Association and two members at large.

WCFA provides a forum for consideration of issues and policy that are common to all of the county committees responsible for their respective County Forest programs, including those programs encompassed under s. 28.11 and chapter 77, Wis. Stats. WCFA also provides leadership and counsel to County Forest administrators and forestry committees through regular meetings and active committees on legislative and recreational issues. WCFA develops and implements a strategic plan. The organization's mission statement is as follows:

*Wisconsin County Forests Association provides leadership uniting the interests of the world's largest county forest program while ensuring long term forest health and sustainability.*

#### 125.4 TRENDS

The values and uses of the Iron County Forest contribute significantly to fulfilling many of society's ecological and socioeconomic needs now and in the future. Changing trends will impact the values and uses of the Forest in coming years.

- Wisconsin's forests are naturally changing due to forest succession. Most of the County Forest acreage statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid 1900's. Mid to late successional northern hardwood forests are replacing the early successional aspen-birch, oak and jack pine forests of the 1940's through the 1970's. The aspen cover type is key habitat for many of the state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. The county forest system currently has 15% of the State's public land base and 24% of the aspen resource.
- Conflict over timber management practices will likely continue to increase as more individuals and groups demand greater involvement in forestry decisions. Practices

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such as clearcutting and even-aged management will continue to be controversial. Efforts to educate the public on the merits of these sound forest management techniques will continue.

- Iron County may experience funding problems as municipalities are being required to provide more services with less money. Potential losses of revenue from decreased shared revenues and resistance to tax increases may make county timber revenues increasingly important to the finances of county governments. This is complicated by increasing public pressure to reduce timber harvests on county forests.
- Increasing knowledge about a wider variety of species and their habitat needs is leading to a growing list of threatened and endangered species. This could lead to improvements in managing the forest and mitigating impacts to these species. Mitigating measures have the potential to impede recreational and forest management activities. Refer to Chapter 800 (840) for specifics on this subject.
- Invasive exotic species pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Gypsy moth, Asian long-horned beetle, garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests. Refer to Chapter [REDACTED] for specifics on this subject.
- The Forest is considered to be an outdoor classroom serving all age groups. It consists of diverse communities with a large variety of plant and animal life giving ample opportunity for study and observation.

#### 125.5 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC RESOURCE

As stated in State Statute 28.11 (1), the county forest program enables and encourages "the planned development and management of the county forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple-use to assure maximum public benefits to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie."

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