

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REV: 05/21/19

**CHAPTER 300**

**DESCRIPTION OF FOREST AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
<b>300</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF FOREST .....</b>	
300.1	COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP.....	
300.2	NATURAL FEATURES .....	
300.2.1	Topography .....	
300.2.2	Geography.....	
300.2.3	Geology & Soils.....	
300.2.4	Biological Communities .....	
300.2.5	Vegetative Cover Types.....	
300.2.6	Fish and Wildlife.....	
300.2.7	Rare and Endangered Resources.....	
300.2.8	Water.....	
300.3	CULTURAL FACTORS .....	
300.3.1	Economy .....	
300.3.2	Education and Research.....	
300.4	OTHER PUBLIC LANDS OWNERSHIP .....	

### 300 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST

#### 300.1 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP

The County Forest is composed of \_\_\_ management compartments ranging in size from \_\_\_\_\_ acres to nearly \_\_\_\_\_ acres. Within the county forest boundaries approximately \_\_\_ percent of the land is county owned with most of the remaining \_\_\_ percent in small private holdings. A map of these compartments can be found in the Appendix.

Commented [PTT1]: Insert data as appropriate

Commented [EP2]: Add line about state-owned land as well

#### 300.2 NATURAL FEATURES

##### 300.2.1 Topography

The Iron County Forest, located in the northwestern part of the state, lies primarily within the \_\_\_\_\_ physiographic region(s) of Wisconsin. The topography of the forest and surrounding area has glacial origin. The glaciers eroded hilltops and filled valleys, thus reducing relief. Elevations range from \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the county forest to \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_. The terrain ranges from \_\_\_\_\_ (gently rolling / flat / hilly) in the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the forest.

Commented [PTT3]: Insert data as appropriate

*Add features that relevant to your County Forest.*

Commented [PTT4]: You may want to reference chapter 800 and/or 4000 if your county elects to create integrated resource management units. More detail on units can be documented in those chapters.

##### 300.2.2 Geography

Iron County has a land area of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres, plus another \_\_\_\_\_ acres of water included in lakes and streams. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the land in the county is classified as forest land. The County Forest contains approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

Commented [PTT5]: Insert data as appropriate

Appendix 1000 contains maps showing the location of the County Forest.

##### 300.2.3 Geology and Soils

The soils of Iron County have been derived largely from the weathering of the glacial drift

Commented [PTT6]: Insert data as appropriate

deposits and show a great variation within relatively short distances. Since the glacial period, the soils have been modified by water action, wind, and the accumulation and incorporation of organic material. Soil types on the County Forest range from (*give general description*) in the \_\_\_\_\_ portions of the Forest to (*give general description*) in the \_\_\_\_\_. A generalized soil map can be found in the Appendix. Detailed soils information is available from the USDA Web Soil Survey ([websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov](http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov)).

### 300.2.4 Ecological Landscapes

Ecological Landscapes are regions in Wisconsin containing similar ecology and management opportunities. Each landscape can present unique management opportunities and challenges. These landscapes are essentially based on the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFUE) (Cleland et al. 1997). More information on the 16 Ecological Landscapes defined within Wisconsin is available at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/landscapes/index.asp?mode=Choose>

The Iron County Forest lies within the North Central Forest and Northern Highland Ecological Landscape(s)

**Commented [EP7]:** Double check titles and coastal plain boundary

*Select landscapes appropriate for your forest.*

*Superior Coastal Plain - Far northern Wisconsin landscape adjacent to Lake Superior. Soils generally poorly drained clays with forest types dominated by aspen and boreal forest. Found in the northern portion(s) of the County Forest*

**Commented [PTT8]:** Itemize Ecological Landscape information as appropriate. Consider more detail on the specifics of your landscapes as desired.

*North Central Forest – Found across northern Wisconsin. Soils generally sandy loams, sands and silts with forest types dominated by northern mesic forest types such as northern hardwood, aspen-birch and spruce-fir.*

*Northern Highland???*

#### 300.2.4.1 Land Type Associations

*Land type associations are units of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFUE) classification system. They are much smaller than Ecological Landscapes and are generally based on glacial features. They can be useful for planning at finer scales*

**Commented [PTT9]:** Counties may elect to provide detail on the smaller scale Land Type Associations. Add or delete at your discretion.

within a landscape. The following Land Type Associations are present within the Ecological Landscapes of the Iron County Forest. More information is available at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/landscapes/index.asp?mode=detail&Landscape=11> (or links specific to other landscapes)

**Commented [EP10]:** North Central, Northern Highland, etc.

### 300.2.5 Vegetative Cover Types

Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the Iron County Forest land base is forested, and approximately \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the Iron County Forest is non-forested. Forested uplands are comprised of primarily northern hardwoods, aspen, hemlock, balsam fir, spruce, and white and red pines (~~mixed hardwood, aspen, oak, balsam fir, white pine, jack pine~~) while cedar, tamarack, black ash, spruce, and balsam fir (~~fir spruce, lowland hardwoods, tamarack, cedar~~) occupy the forested lowlands. Non-forested includes types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, rock outcroppings, grass openings, shrubs and bogs.

**Commented [EP11]:** Verify RO are non-forested

### FORESTED COMMUNITIES

The forested cover types are made up of a variety of size classes (*regeneration, sapling-pole, and saw timber*) and structure (*canopy, layers, ground vegetation, dead and downed material and inclusions*).

Forest cover types associated with the County Forest are:

*List type, percent, and description.*

*May want to include a pie chart of the cover types, also the change in the cover type and future trends. See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.*

**Commented [PTT12]:** Provide summary descriptions as text, charts, graphs, etc. WisFIRS is the most likely data source

### NON-FORESTED COMMUNITIES

Non-forested habitats are important components of management within the County Forest. Upland and wetland non-forest types provide important habitat for distinct groups of species.

Upland Non-Forest

Upland non-forest areas of the County Forest include:

Grass openings- consist of upland grasses such as brome, quack, bluegrass, timothy, big and little bluestem, and Indian grass.

Herbaceous vegetation- ground cover predominated by herbaceous species with bracken fern, sweet clover, giant ragweed, sting nettle, upland aster, goldenrod, and prairie dock being common.

Shrub opening- primarily upland site less than 10% stocked with tree species but having 50% or more of the area stocked with taller growing, persistent shrubs. This includes hazel, dogwood, juneberry, sumac, alder, willow, and prickly ash.

Rock outcrops- include rocky talus and bedrock.

See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.

#### **Wetlands**

Wisconsin State Statutes define a wetland as “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation, and which has soil indicative of wet conditions.” Wetland communities are recognized to be a complex association of plants and animals, soils and water levels having special natural values. They provide many functional values including shoreline and flood protection, water quality protection, groundwater recharge, and animal and plant habitat. Therefore, it is the policy of Iron County to preserve, protect, and manage wetlands under its jurisdiction in manner that recognizes the natural values of wetland and their importance on the environment. Scientist distinguish dozens of wetland types, characterized by vegetation, soil type and degree of saturation or water cover. Some of the more prominent types found on the County Forest include:

Aquatic bed- plants growing entirely on or in a water body no deeper than 6 feet. Plants may include pondweed, duckweed, lotus and water-lilies.

**Marshes-** characterized by standing water and dominated by cattails, bulrushes, pickerelweed, lake sedges and/or giant bur-reed.

**Sedge or “wet” meadows-** these wetlands more often than not have saturated soils rather than standing water. Sedges, grasses and reeds dominant, but may also have blue flag iris, marsh milkweed, sneezeweed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster.

**Scrub/shrub-** these areas, which include bogs and alder thickets, are characterized by woody shrubs and small trees such as tag alder, bog birch, willow and dogwood.

**Forested-** these areas, include bogs and forested floodplain complexes, are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, green ash and silver maple.

Forest management is conducted on many of the forested wetlands with activities occurring primarily during frozen conditions. See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.

### 300.2.6 Fish and Wildlife

Wisconsin supports over 650 different types of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish as well as millions of invertebrates. Management of county forest lands and the biotic communities they support provide a mix of habitat types and ages for a wide range of wildlife species. Each species, or interacting group of species, do best under different conditions. County forest lands provide a full range of habitats from open grasslands/barrens to mature forests, from bogs to forested wetlands, from spring ponds to lake shorelines. County forest staffs work closely with WDNR fish and wildlife managers and conservation organizations to identify and manage critical habitat for breeding, migrating and wintering fish and wildlife.

While the Iron County Forest provides for a wide range of fish and wildlife species, current management strategies or programs have emphasized the following species and/or communities:

**Commented [PTT13]:** pick for your county wildlife species or program/project that you have or want to emphasize – ie. barrens/sharp tailed-grouse, Kirtlands warbler, ruffed grouse/\_\_\_\_\_ grouse management area, waterfowl/impoundment, brook trout/in stream work)

*Note: Provide statement on any fish or wildlife inventory or research that has occurred on your forest. Include species lists in appendix if any have been done*

### 300.2.7 Rare and Endangered Resources

A review of the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) indicates the presence of a number of rare species, natural communities and unique natural features on the Iron County Forest. All land disturbing projects will include an evaluation phase, to determine whether an NHI screening is required.

The Natural Heritage Inventory Database is the most comprehensive source of rare species data for Wisconsin. These data are used for a variety of purposes including research, land management, state land master planning, community planning, conservation planning and review of public and private activities across the state. The NHI Portal is currently available to DNR staff and County Forest staff who hold a data sharing license.

The Wisconsin Historical Preservation Database is the most comprehensive source of cultural resources for Wisconsin. These data are used for a variety of purposes including research, land management, state land master planning, community planning, conservation planning and review of public and private activities across the state. The Wisconsin Historical Preservation Database is currently available to DNR staff and County Forest staff.

### 300.2.8 Water

Iron County has \_\_\_\_\_ acres involving \_\_\_\_\_ named lakes, \_\_\_\_\_ flowages and \_\_\_\_\_ miles of streams. Of this total, \_\_\_\_\_ miles are classified as trout streams.

Within the County Forest boundaries there is a variety of fishery resources. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ named and \_\_\_\_\_ unnamed lakes have all or portions of their shoreline under county ownership. In addition, the county owns frontage on over \_\_\_\_\_ named trout streams totaling over \_\_\_\_\_ miles. A complete inventory of the surface water resources in Iron County can be found in **Appendix, Appendix**.

Iron County also has \_\_\_\_\_ streams totaling \_\_\_\_\_ miles which are classified as Outstanding and

**Commented [PTT14]:** Insert data as appropriate to your county and county forest.

Exceptional Resource Waters including:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: An entire listing of the outstanding and exceptional resource waters can be found in Wisconsin Admin. Code NR102.10 and 102.11.*

### 300.3 CULTURAL FACTORS

#### 300.3.1 Economy

The importance of the County Forests to Wisconsin’s economic health continues to rise. County Forests sustain over 60,000 full-time jobs derived from logging, trucking, paper production, manufactured building materials, and lumber. Many other jobs are created in such businesses as the expanding printing industry and are located far from the forested northland. County Forests are major contributors to the \$24 billion forest industry in Wisconsin.

In addition, the lands managed by these 29 counties provide an important recreation resource to complement our state’s valuable tourism industry. Tourists spend valuable money at local businesses. By providing 2.4 million acres of public recreation land, we bring tourists to our state. As population increases and public access to privately owned forestland decreases, the need for accessible lands unquestionably will assume an ever more important role. **More information on the economic impact of the County Forest program can be found at <https://www.wisconsincountyforests.com/>**

**Commented [EP15]:** Maybe include Iron’s factsheet for 2019 in Appendix

**Production** of forest products and spin-off industries derived from the recreational opportunities on the Forest and the forest products it produces are vitally important to Iron County’s economic well-being. Forest industry is the **#1** ranked employer in the County. Recreation is ranked #\_\_\_\_\_. This information can be found at the following link: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestbusinesses/factsheets.html>.

**Commented [PTT16]:** Fact sheets for individual counties are available at the link listed.

#### 300.3.2 Education and Research



Education and research continue to be critical components in making decisions that affect our natural resources. As public needs and demands of our forest and its products increase, we must be prepared to assure that sound decisions result. To this end, Iron County encourages and supports research efforts that relate to the forest, and educational opportunities that will promote a better understanding of forest communities and management.

#### 300.4 OTHER PUBLIC LANDS OWNERSHIP

Iron County Forest shares a common boundary with the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, Northern Highlands – American Legion State Forest, Underwood Grade Wildlife Area, Moose Lake Natural Area, and Caroline Lake Natural Area. Roads and trails are connected without interruption between the public lands providing for a more enjoyable experience for the user groups. Iron County Forest will continue to form and build on these relationships with other adjacent public lands in the best interest of the public.

**Commented [PTT17]:** Template language is very basic. Provide detail here on how your forest may abut, interact with, impact other public lands ownerships (if at all). Consider forest management prescriptions, trails, roads, etc.

**Commented [EP18]:** Verify and edit to include all