

# Juneau County Land, Forestry & Parks Department

650 Prairie Street, Mauston, WI 53948

## 2021 Annual Work Plan



*Photo by Ashley Thompson*

**Juneau County**

**Land, Forestry, Parks & Zoning Committee**

Scott Wilhorn (chair)

Jerry Niles

Jim Parrett

Joe Lally

Ed Wafle

**Land, Forestry & Parks Department Personnel**

Brian Loyd, Administrator

Pat Cowan, Assistant Administrator

Courtney Curran, Administrative Assistant

Ashley Thompson, Forest/Parks Technician

Lynn Martin, Office Clerk

**DNR Forester**

Rob Anderson, Liaison

**JUNEAU COUNTY LAND, FORESTRY & PARKS  
2021 WORK PLAN**

The following is the proposed 2021 Juneau County Forest Work Plan. The plan is a requirement of the County Forest Administrator Grant Program implemented by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The plan supplements the County Forest 15-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan and focuses on the present needs of the County Forest and Recreation Program for the current year.

**OUR MISSION:**

The public resources contributing to the Juneau County Forest and Park system provide a major component for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of the community. The mission of the Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department is to manage, conserve and protect this natural resource base on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. The Department strives to provide quality recreational opportunities for the public while balancing broader State and National concerns for wildlife, endangered resources, water quality, soil conservation, and cultural heritage preservation.

**2020 GOALS**

**Establish timber sales to meet our allowable cut acres and management objectives**

The Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department will implement forestry practices that promote sustainability and multiple use of the forest. Timber sales on County lands are the main source of revenue for the County's Forest and Parks Program and also contribute towards reducing the tax levy. Harvesting timber is also very important for maintaining the health and vigor of the forest resources under County ownership. Protecting the local ecological integrity in the area of a timber sale is carefully considered before and during sale establishment.

The overarching desired future condition for the Juneau County Forest is to plan for and maintain the current distribution of cover types and age classes. Productive pine plantations will be rotated and replanted back to valuable timber species that are native and have historically done well. The Department also anticipates that overtime some change in specie distribution will occur naturally due to forest succession or changes in environmental conditions. When encountering a disease or pest infestation, consideration will be given to seed areas to jack pine after harvest to promote a species that benefits wildlife and has seen decline in Juneau County. Below the past, present and projected future conditions by acre of the Juneau County Forest timber types are presented in report # 207.



**Forest Structure - Past, Present, Future**

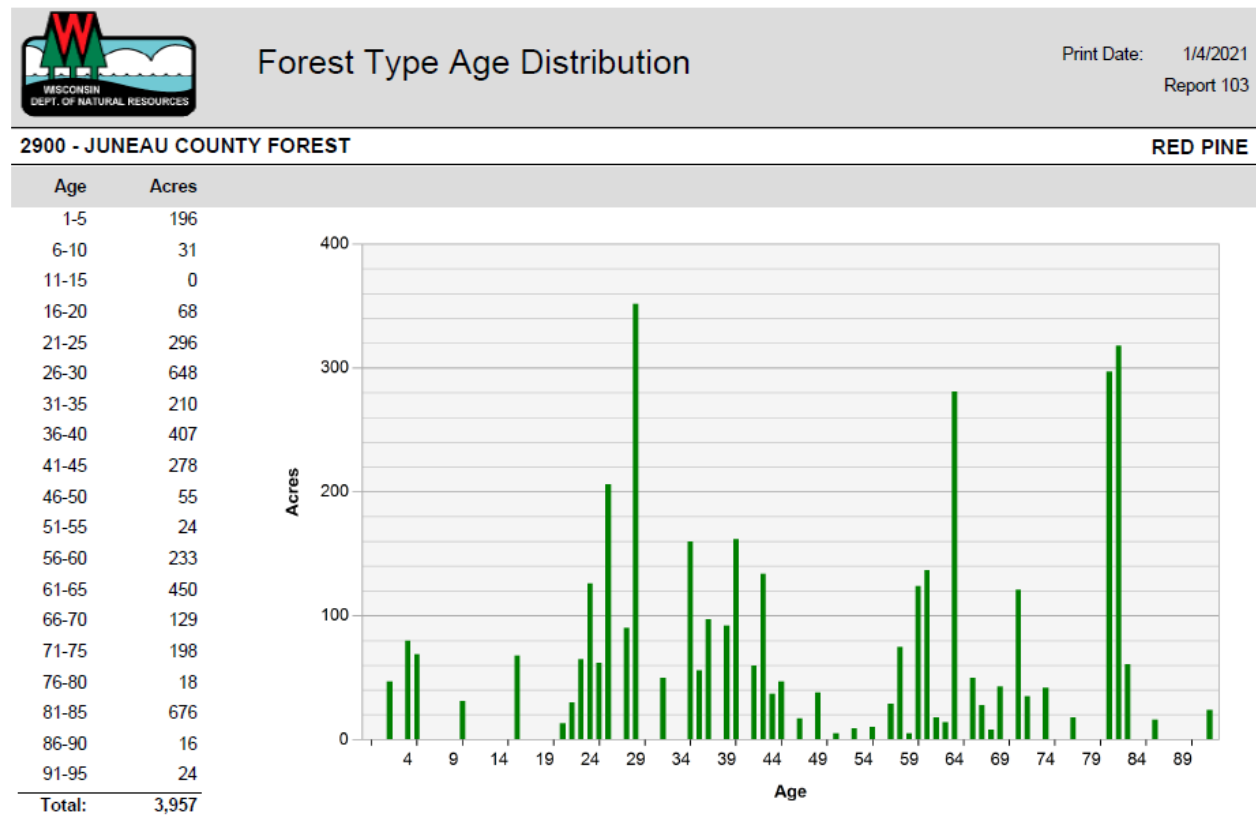
Print Date: 1/4/2021  
Report 207

**2900 - JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST**

Timber Text	Acres Past (1977)	Acres Present (2021)	Acres Future
ASPEN	2,360	1,891	1,891
BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	0	969	969
CENTRAL HARDWOODS	0	293	404
JACK PINE	4,348	2,393	2,828
NORTHERN HARDWOODS	0	0	127
OAK	646	1,782	1,458
RED MAPLE	0	237	321
RED PINE	2,396	3,957	4,009
SCRUB OAK	1,791	2,811	2,252
SWAMP HARDWOODS	0	130	130
TAMARACK	0	21	21
WHITE BIRCH	10	0	0
WHITE PINE	0	868	946
WHITE SPRUCE	0	2	2
<b>Total :</b>	<b>11,551</b>	<b>15,354</b>	<b>15,358</b>
CAMPGROUND	0	174	174
EMERGENT VEGETATION - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	326	326
EMERGENT WETLAND	0	129	0
FARMLAND	0	5	5
HERBACEOUS VEGETATION - *OLD CODE, RECODE	43	7	7
LOW - GROWING SHRUBS - *OLD CODE, RECODE	8	8	8
LOWLAND BRUSH - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	41	41
LOWLAND BRUSH - ALDER - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	14	14
LOWLAND BRUSH -WILLOW - *OLD CODE, RECODE	127	10	10
LOWLAND GRASS - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	380	380
MARSH - *OLD CODE, RECODE	523	762	762
MINOR STREAM	0	20	20

Another major consideration for us in planning forest management on the Juneau County Forest is the rotation age of red pine plantations. There are approximately 3,957 acres of red pine standing on the forest with 20% over 70 years old and another 25% of the acres between 50-70 years old.

Based on our own observation and discussions with colleagues, we suspect overall volume growth in our 75+ year old red pine plantations have slowed, leveled off or even gone into decline. To capture the value of our timber before losing volume we are implementing a plan to rotate the older stands and then replant those harvested sites. Report 103 below shows the age distribution of red pine planted on the Juneau County Forest. Pine plantations planted in the 1940s are nearing rotation age.



When looking at which County Forest stands may need management in the near future we consider timber type, age, species longevity, stand density and forest health. A tool developed by the WI DNR to assist foresters pinpoint eligible stands based on forest reconnaissance data is the Wisconsin Forestry Inventory and Reporting System or WisFIRS. The WisFIRS forest inventory system was used establish a 2021 harvest schedule by filtering out stands across the county forest that are nearing the age that will trigger a management action or timber harvest. The next step is to evaluate the forest stands scheduled in the 2021 harvest schedule to verify the results on the ground. After the harvest schedule is confirmed and any other forest management needs are considered, we establish timber sales to meet the harvest schedule and management objectives recommended by the inventory system. Below is a list of forest stands evaluated for harvest in 2021.

**2021 REGENERATION HARVEST:**

COMPARTMENT	STAND	ACRES	FOREST TYPE	TOWNSHIP
9	2	77	82 yr. old Red Pine	Armenia
9	1	4	54 yr. old Oak	Armenia
27	6	57	48 yr. old Jack Pine	Clearfield
22	18	19	84 yr. old Oak	Cutler
25	20	9	83 yr. White Pine	Cutler
25	1	4	71 yr. Red Pine	Cutler
15	13	36	83 yr. Oak	Necedah
2	8	24	76 yr. Oak	Finley

COUNTY FOREST REGENERATION HARVEST ACRES -- **Total Acres - 230**

**2021 THINNING TREATMENTS**

COUNTY FOREST THINNING ACRES

COMPARTMENT	STANDS	ACRES	FOREST TYPE	TOWNSHIP
7	7	32	4 <sup>th</sup> Thinning Red pine	Armenia
10	22	18	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thinning Red pine	Armenia
10	2	9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thinning Red Pine	Armenia
10	23	25	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thinning Red Pine	Armenia
13	8	83	1 <sup>st</sup> Thinning Red Pine	Armenia
17	1	12	Intermediate Thinning White Pine	Armenia
17	15	9	Intermediate Thinning Red Pine	Armenia

**Total Thinning Acres – 188**

Nine timber sales will be established from the harvest and thinning treatments for a total of 418 acres. County and DNR Forestry staff will prepare all timber sales for a competitive bid opening to occur during the Land, Forestry and Parks Committee March meeting.

**Monitor harvest activity to ensure timber sales are following contracts, avoiding damage and are paid for in accordance to our policies**

Timber sale administration and contract compliance is primarily the responsibility of the Juneau County Forestry staff, with help from DNR Foresters when needed. The Forestry Department will actively seek to ensure compliance with the cutting prescriptions developed for each timber sale when harvest activity is occurring to reduced mistakes and avoid excessive damage.

Juneau County receives 534 hours of forestry assistance from our DNR Liaison Forester and local Forestry Technicians each fiscal year. Currently over 362 hours (67%) of forestry assistance has already been provided in fiscal year 2020-2021. This has mainly been in the area of timber sale establishment, marking, cruising and jack pine seeding. Approximately 172 hours remain to be completed before June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The remaining hours of technical assistance will be dedicated to preparing timber sale cutting notices, updating field reconnaissance and karner blue butterfly surveys.

### **To regenerate harvested areas back to fully stocked stands when needed**

Reforestation is an important management activity that helps to assure that desirable timber species return to areas that have been harvested. In the fall of 2020 DNR Forestry/Fire Technician Scott Wilhorn and colleagues seeded approximately 25 acres of County Forest to jack pine after it was harvested. Equipment and operators to complete the seeding project were donated by the WI DNR. Additional jack pine seeding in 2021 is probable and will depend on sites being harvested before the fall.

During the spring 2021 planting season we aim to replant two sites in Armenia; a 70 acre red pine plantation on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and a second 55 acre site on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Together this effort will see approximately 138,000 tree seedlings planted. The Juneau County Forestry Department applied for and will receive a Sustainable Forestry Grant of \$8,150 dollars to assist funding the second 55 acre planting site.

### **Update the Juneau County 15-year County Forest Land Use Plan**

During the course of 2020 the Department began to update the current County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2006-2020) for the next 15-year period (2021-2035). The Plan is the official County Forest authority and provides policy guidance for management, recreation and protection. Currently more than half of the Chapters have been updated and have been posted on the Juneau County Forestry Department website. The remaining chapters will be reviewed and updated over the first quarter of 2021. Once the chapters are complete they will be available for public comment and review by the Land, Forestry, Parks and Zoning Committee. Once approved by Committee the County Board will be asked to approve the Plan before submitting the document to the WI DNR.

### **To provide for protection of the Juneau County Forest Lands and uphold forest certification standards**

In 2021 we will focus on the spread of invasive species on the Juneau County Forest and work to map their locations and concentrations. The more pressing concerns currently are with the spread of Buckthorn on County Forest Land in Necedah and Cutler Township, as well as Black Locust and Spotted Knapweed around the Wilderness Park grounds and surrounding County lands. During the new year we plan to work with our County Forest Liaison and WI DNR partners to develop strategies that will help control and reduce these invasive species before becoming well established.

During the summer of 2020 the Juneau County Forest was audited by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), two of the most widely recognized forest certification systems in North America. The Forestry Department organized a tour of ten different sites across the Juneau County Forest demonstrating different timber harvest, recreation and reforestation projects. The results for Juneau County and 3 other counties involved in the audit was a 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive clean sheet for the Wisconsin County Forest Association. There were no negative

findings or mandatory corrections reported between the two SFI and FSC auditors. The value of forest certification means that these forests conform to strict environmental, social and economic standards.

### **To ensure that the County Forest Roads are maintained in a safe and useable condition**

Juneau County has two permanent primary forest roads, 3.25 miles in Armenia and 2.34 miles in Cutler and Necedah Township. In total, the 5.59 miles of County Forest road qualify for the County Forest Road Aids Program and receive funding to maintain the road surface in an open and safe condition for the public. These roads often serve a variety of uses including forest management, fire protection and recreation. During 2021 we plan to inspect each road in the spring and fall, perform any grading or maintenance needed and mow back the road shoulders before the deer hunting season.

### **To oversee the Juneau County's Snowmobile trail system and work closely with the Juneau County Snowmobile Council to provide safe snowmobile riding opportunities**

The Juneau County Snowmobile Council helps maintain 247 miles of snowmobile trail in the county. The partnership between the council and Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department will continue to work towards improving the trail system for safety and enjoyment.

In 2020, we applied and received funding for the snowmobile trail maintenance grant totaling \$74,220.00 dollars. This grant will fund trail clearing, grooming, signing and minor bridge repairs throughout the 2020 – 2021 winter snowmobiling season.

Additionally, through snowmobile grants awarded in a previous year the Department recently was able to repair the Yellow River snowmobile bridge and approach ensuring continued use of the bridge and Finley trails this season and into the future.

### **To ensure that Juneau County's park and trail facilities are maintained in a safe, clean, and useable condition**

Each year the Juneau County parks and trails provide tremendous opportunities for recreational pursuits and benefits to the local economy. The Department staff will continue to maintain these facilities, and improve on safety and public enjoyment. Among our many park goals will be to work on fixing the heavily travel park roads at Castle Rock and Wilderness. Many reoccurring potholes have begun to plague both park entrances and most heavily traveled roadways. Coordination and help from the Highway Department will hopefully address this concern and lead to a plan to repave park roads in the near future.

At Kennedy Park we look to install a new vault pit toilet near the pavilion, a project that has been on hold. This will be the first major improvement to the park in decades. Another goal for Kennedy Park will be to develop a winter parking area for the public. The need for a nearby winter space to snowshoe, hike and dog walk has been growing and a space for winter parking is not currently available at Kennedy. This improvement would see more people take advantage of the park in the off season.

Developing a canoe/kayak access on the Yellow River has been discussed but not put into development as of yet. County Forest land in Finley that runs to the Yellow River will be assessed for a possible access point in hopes of connecting to the river corridor.

In 2021 there is also a need to continue work in the area of maintaining and improving our current park facilities. Examples of this include replacing old fire rings, replacing boards on picnic tables, painting and repairing signs throughout the campgrounds and parks. These tasks are ongoing and will see more of a focus this year to refurbish and repair infrastructure that has aged.

**Summary:**

In the New Year, the Department looks forward to building on past successes, continuing the work of sustainable forestry and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities for the public. We also look forward to working with the County Treasurer and Corporation Counsel's Office to return tax delinquent property to the tax roll. And lastly, the Department wishes to recognize and show appreciation to the Land, Forestry and Parks Committee and County Board for all the support and direction it provides.

This report has been respectfully submitted for the LAND, FORESTRY, PARKS AND ZONING COMMITTEE.

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Brian Loyd  
Juneau County Land, Forestry & Parks Administrator

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Scott Wilhorn – Chairperson

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Joe Lally

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Ed Wafle

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Jerry Niles

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Jim Parrett