

Juneau County Land, Forestry & Parks Department

650 Prairie Street, Mauston, WI 53948

2023 Annual Work Plan



Photo by Ashley Bell

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

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**JUNEAU COUNTY LAND, FORESTRY & PARKS
2023 WORK PLAN**

The following is the proposed 2023 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 Programs 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 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.

2023 GOALS

Establish timber sales to meet our annual harvest goal and management objectives

The Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department implements 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 resource under County ownership. Protecting the local ecological integrity in the area of a timber harvest is carefully considered before and during sale establishment.

The long-term goal or desired future condition for the Juneau County Forest is to plan for and maintain the current distribution of cover types and age classes. Ensuring that native tree species are promoted and occupy their preferred sites. Productive tree plantations will be rotated and replanted back to valuable pine 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. Report #207 below shows the predicted expansion and contraction trends for each forest cover type. Past acreage is taken from the earliest recorded reconnaissance data. Future acreage is based on the management objective for each stand.



Forest Structure - Past, Present, Future

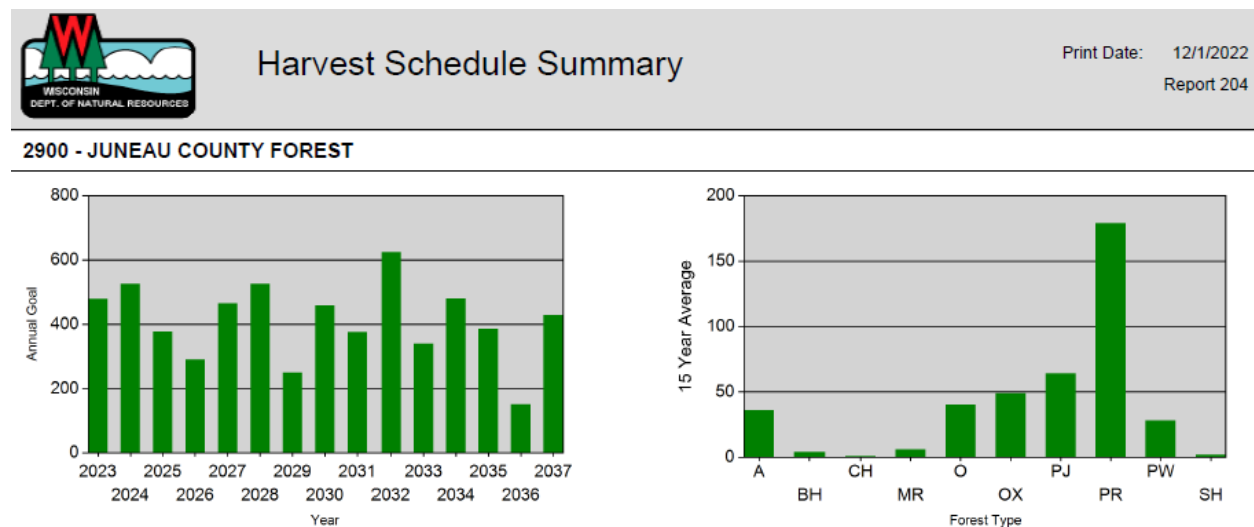
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Report 207

2900 - JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST

Timber Text	Acres Past (1977)	Acres Present (2022)	Acres Future
ASPEN	2,360	1,886	1,886
BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	0	971	971
CENTRAL HARDWOODS	0	294	405
JACK PINE	4,348	2,316	2,760
NORTHERN HARDWOODS	0	0	126
OAK	646	1,784	1,424
RED MAPLE	0	237	320
RED PINE	2,396	4,091	4,193
SCRUB OAK	1,791	2,793	2,254
SWAMP HARDWOODS	0	129	129
TAMARACK	0	21	21
WHITE BIRCH	10	0	0
WHITE PINE	0	908	944
Total :	11,551	15,430	15,433
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	6	6
LOW - GROWING SHRUBS - *OLD CODE, RECODE	8	7	7
LOWLAND BRUSH - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	42	42
LOWLAND BRUSH - ALDER - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	14	14
LOWLAND BRUSH -WILLOW - *OLD CODE, RECODE	127	9	9
LOWLAND GRASS - *OLD CODE, RECODE	0	380	380
MARSH - *OLD CODE, RECODE	523	764	764
MINOR STREAM	0	22	22
MOTORIZED VEHICLE TRAIL	0	5	5

When looking at which specific 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 Wisconsin DNR to assist Foresters pinpoint eligible stands for management is the Wisconsin Forestry Inventory and Reporting System or WisFIRS. The WisFIRS forest inventory system helps us establish annual harvest goals by identifying stands across the County Forest that are nearing the age where a management action like thinning or a timber harvest is needed. The next step in the process is to verify the results on the ground and to develop an appropriate action. After the annual harvest schedule is confirmed and any other resource, wildlife, or aesthetic considerations are addressed, we establish multiple timber sales to meet the annual harvest schedule and management objectives recommended for the year.

Projected annual harvest goals for the next 15 years are show below in Report #204. To reduce backlog, the annual harvest goal would define the upper harvest limit goal while still practicing sustainable forestry. Our long-term aim is to reduce the peaks and valleys of the annual harvest schedule to produce a consistent, sustainable harvest each year.



Year	Annual Acreage Goals (All Forest Types)
2023	479
2024	526
2025	376
2026	291
2027	465
2028	526
2029	249
2030	459
2031	375
2032	625
2033	339
2034	480
2035	386
2036	150
2037	429
Total:	6,155

Below is a list of forest stands evaluated for harvest in 2023 to meet the annual harvest goal.

2023 REGENERATION HARVEST:

Compartment	Stand	Acres	Forest Type	Age	Township
8	6	102	Oak	47	Armenia
8	1	15	Oak	47	Armenia
11	9	38	Oak	47	Armenia
10	11	43	Jack Pine	41	Armenia
14	9	10	Red Pine	69	Armenia
17	10	78	Red Pine	57	Armenia
17	11	5	Jack Pine	50	Armenia
17	12	9	Red Pine	30	Armenia
23	14	23	Red Pine	84	Cutler
23	15	6	White Pine	84	Cutler
23	28	12	Red Pine	84	Cutler
24	1	35	White Pine	82	Cutler
30	1	4	Red Pine	66	Clearfield
30	5	8	Red Pine	64	Clearfield

COUNTY FOREST REGENERATION HARVEST ACRES -- **Total Acres 388**

2023 THINNING OR IMPROVEMENT CUTTING

Compartment	Stand	Acres	Forest Type	Age	Township
10	14	12	Red Pine	71	Armenia
10	20	25	Red Pine	44	Armenia
14	14	33	Red Pine	26	Armenia
14	3	25	White Pine	69	Armenia
14	29	12	Red Pine	28	Armenia
17	12	5	Red Pine	30	Armenia
23	4	7	Red Pine	47	Cutler
26	2	40	Red Pine	31	Clearfield
26	14	23	Red Pine	30	Clearfield
30	8	19	Oak	123	Clearfield
30	7	9	White Pine	64	Clearfield

COUNTY FOREST THINNING ACRES -- **Total Thinning Acres 210**

Eight timber sales will be established from the harvest and thinning treatments for a total of 598 acres. Though this total harvest is above the annual harvest goal it includes some additional acres of pine stands in decline that are being harvested for forest health. 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 511 hours of forestry assistance from our DNR Liaison Forester and local Forestry Technicians each fiscal year. Currently over 321.8 hours (63%) of forestry assistance has already been provided in fiscal year 2022-2023. This has mainly been in the area of timber sale establishment, marking, cruising and reconnaissance. Approximately 189.2 hours remain to be completed before June 30th, 2023. The remaining hours of technical assistance will be dedicated to preparing timber sale cutting notices, updating field reconnaissance and Karner blue butterfly surveys.

Annual Gross Timber Sale Receipts

	<i>County Forest</i>	<i>Community Forest</i>
2009	\$245,059.52	\$28,522.76
2010	\$155,713.43	\$156,102.13
2011	\$154,370.95	\$115,510.18
2012	\$238,306.33	\$212,764.75
2013	\$280,091.20	\$-
2014	\$161,055.68	\$69,680.81
2015	\$475,019.07	\$116,465.22
2016	\$195,800.62	\$55,460.02
2017	\$246,442.54	\$30,012.57
2018	\$256,164.61	\$182.91
2019	\$640,666.82	\$2,049.20
2020	\$341,621.99	\$-
2021	\$399,622.54	\$-
2022	\$716,157.00	\$-
Avg.	\$321,863.74	

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. During the spring 2021 planting season 125 acres were replanted to red pine in Armenia Township. The Department received a sustainable forestry grant award worth \$8,150.00 that helped offset costs in preparing the planting site and hiring a hand crew.

In April of 2022, the Department replanted a 79 acre pine plantation that was harvested 2 years prior in Armenia. This planting effort was completed by a hand crew in under a day with 62,000 tree seedlings. The tree seedlings were provided at zero cost through a commitment by Alliant Energy who intend to plant 1 million trees over the next 10 years in their service area (parts of Wisconsin and Iowa). This commitment saved Juneau County approximately \$16,000 in seedling costs in 2022.

Several planting sites in Clearfield and Armenia are being considered for reforestation in 2023 though at this time sites have yet to be worked with equipment to establish planting rows. There are approximately 240 acres, with the possibility of more, in need of groundwork in preparation for planting which may fall in the year 2024 depending on scheduling with contractors.

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

In 2023 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.

The most recent audit of the Juneau County Forest was conducted in late summer of 2020 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 2nd consecutive clean sheet for the Wisconsin County Forest Association. There were no negative findings or mandatory corrections reported between the two SFI and FSC auditor teams. The value of forest certification means that these forests conform to strict environmental, social and economic standards.

Last year 4 different County Forests were audited under several new standards and a few minor areas of improvement were documented. When recommendations are developed from the SFI and FSC audit report findings the Wisconsin County Forest Association will work with County Forests to improve upon the areas identified in the report to better forest management.

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 2023 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.

The 3.25 miles of County Forest road in Armenia Township was signed and opened to ATV and UTV riders during the summer of 2021. The Department will continue to monitor the use of the forest road by users to see if any additional maintenance or issues evolve. Short term observations of opening the trail to this use have so far have been positive, and the Petenwell ATV Club have been very helpful in the process.

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

Each year the Juneau County snowmobile clubs sign and maintain 262 miles of snowmobile trail in the County with club volunteers. The partnership between the clubs and Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department will continue to work on enhancing the trail system for safety and enjoyment.

In 2022, we applied and will receive funding for a snowmobile trail maintenance grant totaling \$78,660.00 dollars. This grant will fund trail clearing, grooming, signing, and minor bridge repairs carried out by the snowmobile clubs throughout the upcoming snowmobiling season.

The Department also applied for and were awarded a snowmobile grant from the WI DNR for \$103,000.00 dollars to retro-fit and re-deck a former railroad bridge in the City of Elroy. The railroad bridge serves as a vital snowmobile link connecting the Omaha Trail through Elroy to the "400" and Elroy-Sparta State Trails. In recent years the bridge had become unsafe and closing the crossing became necessary. With the grant award the Department was able to bid out a project to repair the bridge in September and a new bridge deck was installed ready for the snowmobile season on December 12, 2022.

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, improve on safety and public enjoyment. Among our many park goals will be to work on fixing the heavily traveled roads at Castle Rock and Wilderness. Many reoccurring potholes have begun to plague both park entrances and the most heavily traveled roadways. This past summer several days were dedicated to patching potholes at Castle Rock Park. Both Parks are seeing an increasing number of visitors and constant vehicle traffic throughout the summer.

The quiet surroundings of Kennedy Park continue to attract locals and dog walkers, plus a small number of special events. Each fall Kennedy Park host the Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association Broadhead Shoot the weekend before the archery season opens. Kennedy Park has hosted the Scenic Bluffs Conference Cross Country Meet in 2021 and will for the first time host the Wisconsin Scholastic 3D and Field Archery tournament in June next year. In the future we hope to develop a winter parking area at Kennedy Park 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 certainly see more people take advantage of the park in the off season.

The Bass Hollow Park and 3 mile horseback riding trail is a popular destination for horse-riders, hikers and groups that rent the pavilion for reunions and graduation parties. Improvements made to the park in 2022 include repainting of the pavilion, outhouse and picnic tables, and the donation of a new park bench placed by the playground structure. The park bench was gifted by the Friends of Bass Hollow and former Forestry and Park Administrator Dale Dorow.

The new year will see the start of a large scale project to update Area A at Castle Rock Park. A State Stewardship grant with matching funds approved by the County Board will be used to install new electric lines, campsite electrical pedestals, replace two old outhouses with new structures, and build a new shower building where the old one stands. The project will also make improvements to the roads in Area A which will greatly modernize the oldest camping area of the park.

In Closing:

The Department looks forward to building on past successes, continuing the work of sustainable forestry and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities for the public. We are excited to be receiving a significant grant award that will bring a lot of improvements to Area A of Castle Rock Park. 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.

Brian Loyd
Juneau County Land, Forestry & Parks Administrator

Chris Zindorf – Chair

Ray Feldman

Jack Jasinski

Betty Manson

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