

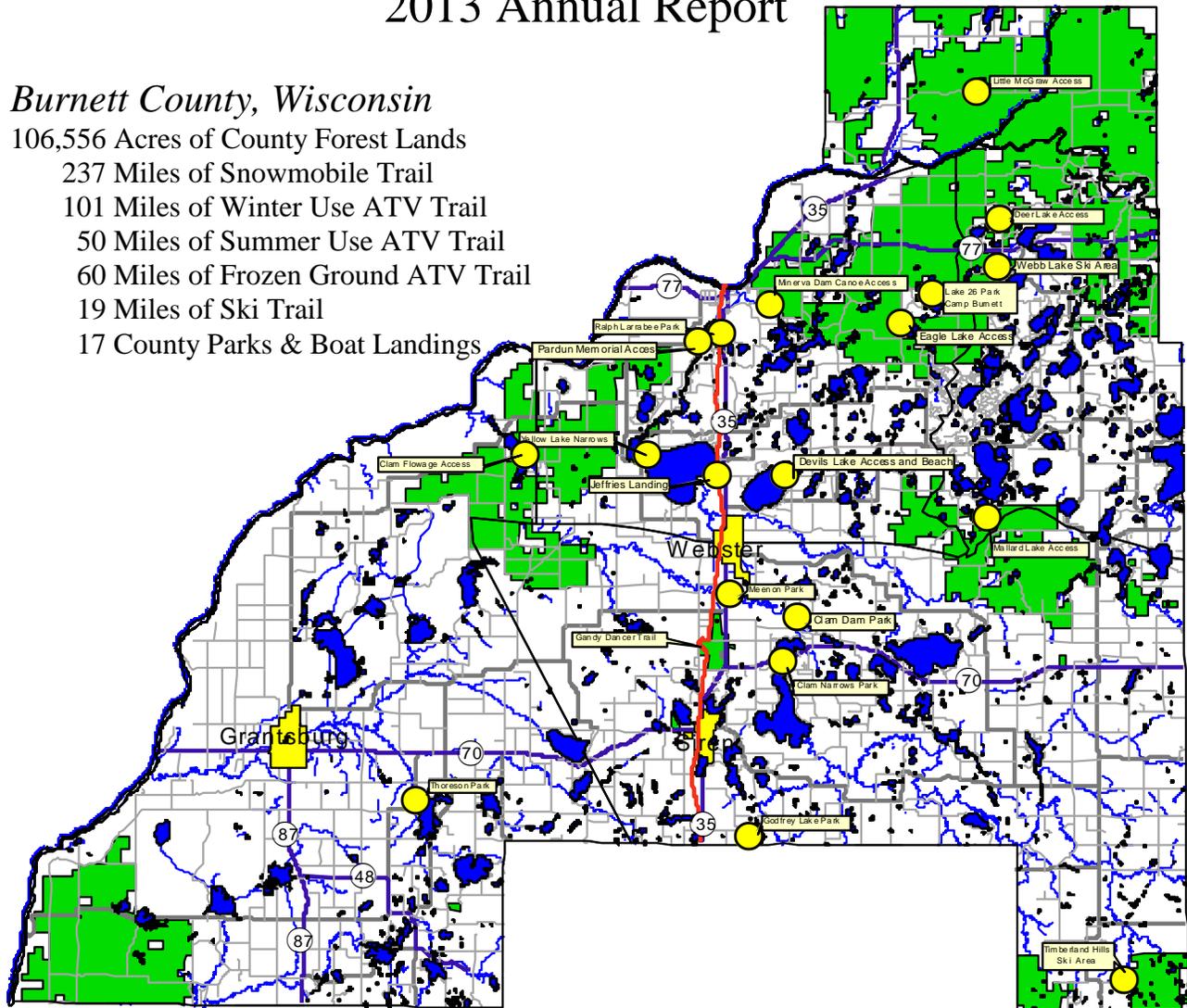
Burnett County Forest & Parks

7425 County Road K, Siren, WI 54872

2013 Annual Report

Burnett County, Wisconsin

106,556 Acres of County Forest Lands
237 Miles of Snowmobile Trail
101 Miles of Winter Use ATV Trail
50 Miles of Summer Use ATV Trail
60 Miles of Frozen Ground ATV Trail
19 Miles of Ski Trail
17 County Parks & Boat Landings



Burnett County Natural Resources Committee

Clifford Main
Edgar Peterson
Norman Bickford
Gene Olson
Brent Blomberg
Donald Taylor
Wayne Burmeister

County Forest & Parks Personnel

Jason Nichols, Administrator
Mark Diesen, Assistant Adm.
Susan Ingalls, Forest/Rec. Coordinator
Kari Letch, Bookkeeper
Tory Jeske, Technician

DNR Foresters

Robert Hauser, Liaison
Mark Gossman, Forester

**BURNETT COUNTY FOREST & PARKS
2013
ANNUAL REPORT**

This report shows our goals and accomplishments for year 2013. The work accomplished in 2013 is based on the current needs of the 106,556.86 acres of County Forest, the 17 day-use parks and boat landings, 3 swimming beaches, 50 miles of summer ATV trail, 101 miles of winter ATV trail, 237 miles of snowmobile trail, 20 miles of bike trail, and the 1 rustic youth camp that encompasses Burnett County.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Burnett County Forest and Parks Department is to provide part of the base for satisfying the ecological and socioeconomic needs of Burnett County. And to manage, conserve and protect our resources and facilities in a safe, sustainable condition for present and future generations. All while balancing sociological and economic needs, recreational opportunities, and plant and animal diversity.

2013 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal #1: To establish timber sales to meet or exceed our allowable cut acres.

**Narrative:
TIMBER HARVEST**

Timber harvests that are properly designed and completed are vital to maintaining a healthy and vigorous forest. Many social, environmental, and economic benefits are provided by a managed harvest program. Professional implementation of proper forest management and harvest techniques are essential. The timber harvest goal is to produce a sustained yield of forest products using harvest techniques that are suited to the regeneration and the growth needs of each forest type. The long-term goal is to develop a regulated harvest in which the same number of acres or same volume of wood could be harvested each year for perpetuity. This regulated harvest occurs when there is a proper balance in age class distribution and uniform growth rates for each forest type. Unfortunately on July 1, 2011 many acres of county forest land received severe wind damage from a storm. Due to this damage, our normal allowable cut acres were put on hold while we worked on storm damaged salvage sales.

Burnett County Forest Harvest goals and established acres:

	<u>2013 goal</u>	Sold	
		2013 Acres <u>Established</u>	2013 Ac <u>Regular</u>
Acreage control:			
Jack Pine-Harvest	300	310	337
Jack Pine-Thinning	75	0	114
Red Pine-Thinning	900	1375	901
Aspen-Harvest	175	208	253
Scrub Oak-Harvest	200	305	226
Scrub Oak-Thinning	300	165	316
Northern Hardwoods-Thinning	100	190	66
Swamp Hardwoods	100	5	35
Swamp Conifer	50	52	67
Misc. Other	50	106	73
Total Acres:	2250	2716	2388

Goal #2: To offer and sell our allowable cut acres to buyers of raw forest products to the extent markets allow.

We conducted two timber sales during 2013. Thirty-three different tracts were sold with an estimated 30,112 cords and 46,500 board feet on 2388 acres totaling \$1,002,619.86 in estimated revenues. We issued contracts to 13 individual successful bidders and collected performance bonds for each contract. We continued to sell storm damaged timber and were able to sell 3 different salvage sales.

Goal #3: To ensure that active timber sales are being harvested and paid for in accordance to our rules, regulations, and goals.

During 2013, there were 32 active timber sales cut and closed out on the Burnett County Forest. Each sale was visited weekly when actively being cut. Visits were documented on sale maps by the forester, and necessary action was taken to ensure contracts were followed.

Advanced payments for stumpage were received by contractors and haul tickets distributed accordingly. In 2013, Burnett County collected \$926,217.84 in stumpage payments from the county forest lands.

Ten percent of the timber sale revenues from the county forest lands (\$92,621.78) went back to the local townships that include county forest lands. Payments were prorated by the percentage of county forest in each township. Towns also received \$31,928.82 in acreage payments from the state for the county forest lands within their townships.

We continued to have inquiries for firewood cutting from our local citizens and property owners. However; after the July storm the inquiries slowed down. In 2013 firewood permits generated \$2,008.00, while Christmas trees totaled \$235.00 and camping permits totaled \$885.00.

Goal #4: To regenerate our harvested areas back to fully stocked stands when needed.

Although in recent years Burnett County has strived to regenerate the majority of harvested stands by natural means, we are still considering some site's for planting. Forced regeneration is necessary to obtain a balance in timber species and to ensure that harvested areas are regenerating back to trees.

In 2013, Burnett County pre-sale scarified 146 acres of Jack Pine for natural regeneration. We completed 21 acres of furrowing and 180 acres of disk trenching for year 2014 spring tree planting. In 2013 we planted 131,000 trees on 150 acres.

Goal #5: To provide for protection of the Burnett County Forest Lands.

During 2013, no wild land fires burned on the Burnett County Forest. Since 1990, 255.8 acres of Burnett County Forest Lands have been burned by wild land fires. Continued cooperation with the WI DNR in prevention and suppression efforts is needed.

As expected with the damage from the 2011 July storm, we continue to see an increase of Oak Wilt within the County. New sites were confirmed in Swiss, Blaine and West Marshland townships, and the disease expanded in areas where it was already present. We treated new sites with chemical to try to stop the disease from spreading. However, the potential for new issues to surface continues to be a concern. We will continue to monitor for diseases, insects and invasive species when working on the County Forest. (Examples: Oak Wilt, Gypsy Moth, Spotted Knapweed, Leafy Spurge, Buckthorn, Emerald Ash Borer, Red Pine Pocket Decline.)

We applied various management guidelines and techniques where applicable to prevent or slow the spread of these diseases and invasive species. Examples of these include: time restrictions for entering the woods; requiring wood to go to mills rather than private lands to prevent the spread; spraying small areas of invasive's where we have the opportunity to kill certain plants; and stump treating pockets of oak to stop the spread of Oak Wilt. On numerous occasions we requested help from the DNR to assist with identification of infected or suspicious areas.

Goal #6: To ensure that Burnett County is represented at the Wisconsin County Forest Association meetings.

It is imperative that Burnett County stays involved with the WCFA activities in order to stay up-to-date with legislative, certification, and rulemaking decisions that will affect Burnett County. As Forest Administrator, I continue to serve as one of the WCFA Legislative Committee Members and attend as many of the meetings as possible to make sure that the decisions being made are in the best interest of Burnett County and all Wisconsin County Forests. Many of the issues at hand today are dealing with 3rd Party Forest Certification, the WI DNR Strategic Plan and new policies that impact our management. Many of the new guidelines being developed are for Certification, and have a direct impact on our forest and recreation management. Examples of current issues pertaining to our management are BMP's for Water Quality, new water permitting processes, as well as road and trail maintenance issues.

For the past two years I have served as the president of the Administrators for the WCFA, and will continue to do so until May of 2014.

Goal #7: To ensure that the County Forest Roads are maintained in a safe and useable condition.

Routine grading, mowing, and signing of our 35.16 miles of county forest roads was completed. The highway department was used to grade our high use forest roads in the spring of the year. All of our county forest roads were checked for signing and safety issues. All safety issues were addressed immediately. No major issues were discovered.

Goal #8: To ensure that the County's Parks, Boat Landings and Youth Camp are maintained in a safe, clean, and useable condition.

Weekly inspections and cleaning of our parks, boat landings, and the youth camp were conducted by staff during the high-use season of May 15th to September 15th. Routine maintenance to our picnic tables, grills and restrooms was conducted. Numerous stumps were ground and trees trimmed throughout our parks to ensure safety.

We issued a contract for the mowing of our high use parks.

The boat launch at Devils Lake was dredged once again to allow for easier launching. We also worked with the Devils Lake Association to install a new light at the landing.

We did some minor excavation work to the Big Wood Lake landing at Thoreson Park. A large hole was formed off the end of the ramp that boat ramp users were getting stuck in. We had an excavator pull the washed out material back into the ramp.

There were two small pavilions built within our parks in 2013. The Siren Lions built one in Milton Stellrecht County Park and our department built one at the Yellow Lake Narrows. Both are very nice additions to our parks and will serve the public for years to come.

We continued to fix and level boat landings when needed, as well as provide docks at our major landings to aid in landing watercraft.

There was a monument installed at the CCC Camp Site off of Lakes Drive in Swiss township. We had a formal dedication of the site and monument.

Goal #9: To ensure that Burnett County's portion of the Gandy Dancer Trail is managed and maintained in a safe, clean, and useable condition.

Routine checks of the trail signing, culverts, and surface were completed. Many informational signs were taken down, repainted and boards replaced. Numerous down trees were cleaned up throughout the summer.

The trail was mowed twice in 2013 to maintain trail width and brush control. We also sprayed it with Round-Up to control weeds that destroy the limestone surface.

Starting December 15th, the trail was once again opened as a winter use frozen ground ATV trail. This was the first time that it has been open for such use since 2003 when it was closed due to stipulations in the federal grant that was used to initially construct the trail in the 1990's.

The state bike trail pass program for Burnett County was once again administered through the Forest and Parks Department. Passes were distributed to nine different vendors in Siren, Webster, and Danbury for the general public to purchase. Burnett County generated \$1,334.00 in revenue by retaining 60% of each pass sold in the county.

Goal #10: To see to that Burnett County's Snowmobile and ATV trails are managed in accordance to state guidelines, to ensure reimbursement of grants to the fullest extent, and provide safe recreational trail riding opportunities.

In 2013, 13 grants were submitted to the Snowmobile and ATV programs for the 2013-2014 season. Of the 13 grants, 4 were funded, with a total of \$104,229.02 going toward Burnett County's trail systems. Projects included the regular snowmobile and ATV maintenance grants (\$99,350.00); plus a new grant in the amount of \$4,879.02 for summer UTV maintenance. Due to deficits in the state snowmobile and ATV programs, grants were only given out for maintenance funding in 2013.

We also received a Recreational Trails grant in the amount of \$34,570.00 in 2013 to cover the increased cost estimate for the Gandy Dancer Bridge project. The revised cost estimate for the entire project is \$819,240.00, and will be split 50/50 with the Minnesota DNR.

One trail rehabilitation project and one bridge rehabilitation project were completed in 2013. The trail rehabilitation project consisted of dozer work and graveling on a 6-mile stretch of summer ATV trails 925, 151, and 18 in the Town of Blaine. Hopkins Sand &

Gravel performed the work on the western 2 miles of trail, and the Highway Department completed the other 4 miles of the project. The grant amount was \$127,220.00, and we had \$23,377.12 remaining after the work was done. The DNR has given us approval to use the remainder of the funds to finish graveling 1 mile of Trail 41 in the Town of Blaine.

Phase 1 of the Gandy Dancer Bridge rehabilitation project was completed in 2013. This phase consisted of substructure work to stabilize the bridge and repair concrete on the piers. Our share of the cost for the substructure work was \$121,750.00. Phase 2 of the project will include replacement of the bridge deck and railings, and is planned for 2014.

Routine trail maintenance was contracted for with local ATV clubs and the Burnett County Snowtrails Association. As trail work was completed by the clubs on our funded trails, they submitted maintenance and grooming forms to our office documenting all the work completed. These forms were reviewed by staff and the clubs were reimbursed for their work on the funded trail up to the grant amounts.

Trails were inspected by Burnett County Forest and Parks staff for signing, grooming, and other maintenance needs and issues. Contact was made with clubs with issues that needed attention in a timely manner due to safety concerns. A representative from the Forest and Parks Department attended the Burnett County Snowtrails Association monthly meetings.

Goal #11: To maintain our facilities and equipment.

Routine maintenance of all equipment was conducted during 2013. Daily logbooks were used to track fuel, oil changes, mileage, and other normal maintenance work that was completed on our trucks. Non-routine maintenance work was conducted by the Burnett County Highway Department when we had sufficient time to get the work done. At times private businesses were used for reasons of convenience and productivity. All heavy machinery and vehicles received annual maintenance which was documented, (ex. oil changes, greasing, tire rotations etc.). This was documented on maintenance logbooks for each piece of equipment.

Routine mowing, graveling, and maintenance of the shop building and surrounding area were completed during 2013.

Goal #13: To provide a financial contribution to Fort Folle Avoine Historical Park for operational and maintenance expenses to enhance and promote the educational and tourism based opportunities in Burnett County.

A financial contribution to Fort Folle Avoine Historical Park was budgeted for and made in 2013. This contribution totaled \$53,960.00. Fort Folle Avoine is seen as an excellent education tool as well as a tourist attraction for Burnett County.