

BURNETT COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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100 MISSION STATEMENT

Natural resources, such as those provided by the Burnett County Forest, provide part of the base for satisfying the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society. The mission of the County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect these resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations.

County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect, disease, Invasive species outbreaks, and from unregulated human uses such as encroachment, environmental degradation and excessive development. While managing for environmental needs including watershed, protection of rare plant and animal communities, and maintenance of plant and animal diversity, these same resources must also be managed and provide for sociological needs, including provisions for recreational opportunities and the production of raw materials for wood-using industries.

Management must balance local needs with broader state, national and global concerns through integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the future through the use of sustainable resource management practices.

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

110 BURNETT COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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 other required local planning efforts.

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

Burnett County's public participation process includes the following:

2021-2036 Burnett County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan
Updating Schedule and Public Participation Approval

The following will be the process used to update the next Burnett County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (15-Year Plan). This process has been reviewed and approved by the Burnett County Natural Resources Committee on August 9, 2019.

Below meets the minimum requirement for updating the next Burnett County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

1. Bring 1-2 updated draft chapters to committee for approval. (Hope to start before January 2020, with hopes of having draft plan completed by June 2020)
2. Hold one listening session after the draft plan is approved to kick off the public comment period. Public comment needs to be at least a 30- day comment period. Kick off meeting can be accomplished by using the following methods.
 - a. Open House or done during a regularly held Committee meeting.
 - b. Public notice of comment period is required, newspaper, TV, website, e-mails etc. are available sources.
 - c. Comments can be obtained by written or verbal communication.
(Comment period to be completed by August 15th 2020)
3. After 30-day comment period, comments are to be addressed and any necessary plan amendments made with Committee approval of draft plan. (September meeting)
4. Once the draft plan has been approved by the Natural Resources Committee, it should be sent on to the DNR for draft plan review, in case changes are needed prior to approval of the Final Plan. (Send to DNR by October)
5. After review by the DNR if changes are needed, it will require a final Draft Plan Approval by the Natural Resources Committee. (November Meeting)
6. Final County Board Approval of 15-Year Plan. (November Board Meeting)
7. Send to the DNR for Final Draft Approval by **December 2020.**

This is the tentative schedule that is required in order to have the plan updated within the required period. If possible, completion dates will be moved up in the process in order to complete the plan ahead of schedule.

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 as 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 to attach to the 15-Year Plan. 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.

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.

115 FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING

The Committee will utilize procedures 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, WI Bio-Mass Harvesting Guidelines, and DNR's Best Management Practices for Water Quality guidelines may be utilized in management 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

Burnett 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. Burnett County believes that accomplishing such sustainable forestry requires a commitment and partnership from all the groups and individuals that benefit from these public lands.

Burnett County's Commitment

Within the scope of the Wisconsin County Forest Law and the Burnett County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Burnett County will implement forestry practices that promote forest sustainability and multiple use of the forest. Management of the Forest 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. Burnett 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 Burnett 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, and ecosystem maintenance. In keeping with this responsibility Burnett County is committed to third party certification through the SFI Standards.

120 COUNTY AUTHORITY

The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Burnett County Natural Resources Committee of the County Board (hereafter referred to as the "committee") 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 Burnett County Forest can be found in Chapter 1000, section 1005.2.1. In addition, the following will be considered in planning process.

- Zoning ordinance
- Floodplain - Shoreland Zoning ordinance
- Motorized recreation ordinance
- Non-Metallic Mining ordinance

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.

On December 1, 1931 Burnett County petitioned the Wisconsin Conservation Commission to enter 745 land descriptions in the Townships of Rusk, Sand Lake, Scott, Jackson, Union, Webb Lake, Swiss and Blaine totaling 29,800 acres as Forest Crop Lands. These land descriptions were formally entered into the Forest Crop Program on March 19, 1932 forming the Burnett County Forest. The first Burnett County Forestry Ordinance was passed in 1934. As of October 1, 2019 there were 111,145.92 acres in Burnett County enrolled in the County Forest Program.

Early phases of development of the County Forest consisted largely of road construction, fire protection, and investment in the planting of open areas. Much of the early planting was done by hand using labor from the nearby Riverside CCC Camp. The first timber sale on the Burnett County Forest was sold on May 16, 1938 to the WPA; 71.32 cords of jack pine was sold for \$1.00 per cord with the wood being used for building houses at the Danbury Indian Village.

125.2 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

Burnett 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 policies 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.*

125.3 TRENDS

The values and uses of the Burnett 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 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.

- Burnett County will 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, section 825 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 600, section 610 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.

125.4 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.”