



MARATHON COUNTY FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE AGENDA

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 1:00pm

Meeting Location: Conference Room #5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

MEMBERS: Rick Seefeldt (Chairman), Tom Rosenberg (Vice-Chairman), Jean Maszk

Marathon County Mission Statement: *Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business.*

Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Mission Statement: *Adaptively manage our park and forest lands for natural resource sustainability while providing healthy recreational opportunities and unique experiences making Marathon County the preferred place to live, work, and play.*

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning ten (10) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number: Phone Number: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 2482 438 4121. When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

Agenda Items:

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment (15 minute limit)** *(Any person who wishes to address the County Board, or one of its committees, during the "Public Comment" portion of meetings, must provide his or her name, address, and the topic he or she wishes to present to the Marathon County Clerk or chair of the committee, no later than five minutes before the start of the meeting.)*
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the Tuesday, October 31, 2023 Committee Meeting**
4. **Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination**
 - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee - None
5. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**
 - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee - None
 - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration
 1. Review and Consider Approving the 2024 Wildlife Work Plan – Brandon Stefanski, DNR Wildlife Biologist
 2. Review and Consider Approving the 2024 County Forest Work Plan
 3. Resolution: Application for County Forest Acreage Share Payment
 4. Resolution: County Fish and Game Projects
6. **Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee**
 - A. 2021 – 2035 County Forest Comprehensive Plan Amendments

7. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – Jeff Sorenson

8. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 1:00pm at 212 River Dr., Wausau, WI 54403, Room 5 or via Webex

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence

B. Future Agenda Items:

9. Adjournment

**SIGNED /s/ Thomas Lovlien
PRESIDING OFFICER OR DESIGNEE**

ANY PERSON PLANNING TO ATTEND THIS MEETING WHO NEEDS SOME TYPE OF SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE SHOULD CALL THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 261-1500 OR E-MAIL COUNTYCLERK@CO.MARATHON.WI.US ONE BUSINESS DAY BEFORE THE MEETING.

EMAILED/FAXED TO: Daily Herald and other News Media Groups
EMAILED/FAXED BY: Jodi Luebbe
EMAIL/FAX DATE/TIME: November 29, 2023 9:45 a.m.

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:
By: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____ a.m/p.m.

Members present: Rick Seefeldt (chair), Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair), Jean Maszk

Staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley – Director, Jeff Sorenson-DNR Forest Liaison

1. Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Seefeldt at 1:00pm, Rm. 5, 212 River Dr., Wausau. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with State statutes.
2. Public Comment – none brought forward.
3. Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2023 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination
 - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
 1. 2024 Forestry/Recreation Committee Meeting Dates – January 4 Meeting – Lovlien said the Environmental Resources Committee may meet Jan. 5th, 2024 so this meeting will tentatively be set for Thursday, January 4th at 1:00pm. The rest of the 2024 meeting dates will be held the Tuesday before the first Thursday of the month to coincide with the Environmental Resource Committee Thursday meeting dates. This will be subject to approval of Committee after the April elections. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to approve the tentative dates for 2024. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution
 - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
 1. Consider Timber Sale Extensions for Contracts Expiring December 31, 2023 – Lovlien explained that last winter was not good for cutting timber and current timber markets are poor. He discussed staff’s reasoning for the following extensions and stumpage increases. Country Forest Products Contract #697-20, Wilson Forestry Contract #698-20 and Koerner Forest Products Contract #699-20 are all requesting first extensions. Lovlien’s recommendation is to grant the extensions with a 5% increase on stumpage for Country Forest Products and Wilson Forestry and no increase on stumpage for Koerner Forest Products. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to grant the extensions for Contract #697-20 and #698-20 with a 5% increase on stumpage and to grant the extension for Contract #699-20 with a zero percent increase on stumpage. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0. Tigerton Lumber Company Contract #688-19 is requesting a 2nd extension. Lovlien discussed the sale and his recommendation is to grant the extension with a 10% increase on stumpage following the contract. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to grant the extension for Contract #688-19 with a 10% increase in stumpage. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0. Lovlien’s recommendation for Briarton Logging Contract #694-20 is to modify the May 2023 10% increase on stumpage to a 5% increase on stumpage due to consistency with the other extensions. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to modify the 10% increase on stumpage to a 5% increase for Contract #694-20. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
 2. Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts – The second timber sale bid opening was held on October 25th. Lovlien said four bids from two bidders on the three tracts were received. Lovlien’s recommendation is to award all the sales to Flannel Fleet Logging and reject Futurewood Corporation’s bid because they did not submit a 10% bid security. Sorenson discussed a summary of the Fall 2023 bid opening results. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to award the three sales to Flannel Fleet Logging and reject Futurewood Corporation’s bid because they did not submit a 10% bid security. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
 3. Consider Entering Into a Partition Fence Line Agreement with Wayne and Scott Hoffman – Lovlien explained the County is required by State Statute in sharing fence costs requested by an adjoining landowner if farming or grazing is being done. Many years ago, Counties suggested an agreement whereby if the landowner is agreeable, the County would buy all the fence materials and the farmer would install, maintain and pay for fence repairs as long as they owned the property. Lovlien recommends entering into a partition fence line agreement with Wayne and Scott Hoffman with the County purchasing all the materials for the fence and the landowner responsible for installing, maintaining and repairs. Questions were answered. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Maszk to enter into a partition fence line agreement with Wayne and Scott Hoffman. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration – None

6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee

A. Review and Consider Entering Into an Agreement with DNR on the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan - Various bat species because of white nose syndrome disease became listed as federally endangered on March 31 and WCFA has been working with DNR on how to continue to manage (harvest) the forests. Signing on to the Lake States Bat Conservation Plan, is not a requirement, but is an easy way to receive incidental take coverage and be sure Marathon County forests and parks are in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act with respect to federally listed bat species. Staff have been working with the DNR on the landowner agreement which includes forested areas of the county forests and parks. Lovlien recommends the Committee approve the agreement and forward the recommendation to the Environmental Resources Committee to sign on to the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to approve the agreement with DNR on the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan and forward this on to the Environmental Resources Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

7. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Wisconsin County Forests Association Special License Plate Project – Lovlien explained WCFA is working on an initiative to put forth a proposal to have a special license plate. It will help promote and advocate for sustainable forest management in the State. Funds raised will be used for WCFA operations, grants, projects, scholarships, education, research and more. Five hundred signatures are needed to move the proposal forward with the Department of Transportation. A contest will be held for artists to design the plate and the winner will receive \$1000.00.

B. Wisconsin County Forests Association Board of Directors Resolutions – Lovlien discussed the resolutions that the Legislative/Certification Committee and WCFA Board of Directors have endorsed which include support of 1) restoration of Division of Forestry budget cuts, 2) exceptions to DNR County Forest Administration Grant standards, 3) concerns with the State Snowmobile Recreation Council actions, and 4) support to serve on councils/committees. Discussion followed.

C. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – Jeff Sorenson reported that the DNR is on track with their time standard hours of assisting the County. He assisted the County Forester in establishing 2024 Fall sales. Helped finish up the last of the scarification at the Kronenwetter Oak shelterwood. Will be doing recon on potential 2025 sales and work on musclewood and ironwood control in some of the upcoming sales.

D. Misconduct of the Governor’s Snowmobile Recreation Council – WCFA sent a letter to Governor Evers and the Secretary-Designee of the Department of Natural Resources noting in detail numerous issues that are causing concern. In particular, potential conflict of interest among Council members and possible failure to comply with statute, code and Council guidelines.

8. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 1:00 pm, Rm. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence - Lovlien announced that the County Forester, Joe Tucker and his wife had a healthy baby boy on October 22, 2023.

B. Future Agenda Items: Review and Consider Approving the 2024 Wildlife Work Plan, Review and Consider Approving the 2024 County Forest Work Plan, Application for County Forest Acreage Payment, County Fish and Game Projects Resolution, Comprehensive Land Use Plan Amendments

9. Adjourn – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department Forestry Division 2024 Work Plan

Personnel:	Forest Administrator	1.00 FTE
	County Forester	0.80 FTE
	Director	0.06 FTE
	Department Clerical Support	0.50 FTE
	Maintenance Specialist (labor)	0.26 FTE
	Maintenance Technician (labor)	0.26 FTE
	Recreational Officer (Sheriff)	0.04 FTE
	DNR Cooperative Assistance (State Funded)	0.35 FTE
	 Total	 3.27 FTE

A. Timber Management:

1. Evaluate a minimum of 5% of the forest (1550 acres) and update compartment reconnaissance.
2. Establish and advertise 600-625 acres of timber for sale. Timber sale acreage and locations are determined using the Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) and proposed long-term harvest goals chapter 2000 of the County Fifteen Year Comprehensive Plan. Specific locations and details about timber harvests scheduled for the coming year can be obtained by contacting the County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.
3. Administer the cutting and scaling of 21 timber sales on 1615 acres established on County Forest Land with an estimated stumpage value of \$1,073,119.98.
4. Establish one timber sale of approximately 80 acres at Big Eau Pleine Park.
5. Contract with a tree company to plant 60,000 red pine seedlings on approximately 60 acres at Nine Mile Forest Unit.
6. Complete deer browse surveys at Big Eau Pleine Park and on County Forest lands to determine to what extent tree regeneration is being affected.
7. Classify habitat types on a minimum of 1200 acres.
8. Calculate allowable harvest levels out 20 and 30 years to ensure sustainability.
9. Evaluate 35–40-year-old aspen stands to determine feasibility of harvesting stands early to improve age class distribution and stabilize harvest levels.
10. Issue approximately 20 firewood permits.
11. Evaluate and complete oak scarification on sites that are identified.
12. Evaluate release needs for all acres of red pine planted since 2012. Release plantations by mechanical or herbicides as needed.

13. Continue to assist the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with an oak wilt study to confirm the frill-girdle-herbicide method is effective to stop the disease from spreading through interconnected root systems.
14. Assist Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Plant, Pest and Disease Specialists in identifying possible insect and disease problems with trees.
15. Continue implementing the policy on heterobasidian root rot disease requiring contractors to spray conifer stumps with fungicide to prevent infection according to DNR recommendations.
16. Monitor timber sales for unauthorized timber removal using the video detection system.
17. Monitor, evaluate, and treat oak wilt pockets in Nine Mile and other Forest Units.
18. Monitor, evaluate, and treat invasive species on the forest.
19. Apply techniques that reduce the ash component in forest stands on County Forest and Park lands according to DNR recommendations due to Emerald Ash borer being found in the County.
20. Follow the protocol established in the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan.

B. Road, Trail, and Facility Construction and Maintenance:

1. Continue the contract with APHIS for beaver control.
2. Inspect county forest and park boundaries as needed to control encroaching uses from neighboring private landowners.
3. Contract with professional land surveyors to complete surveys where needed to facilitate administration between County Forest and private lands.
4. Mow 50 miles of hunter walking trails and associated wildlife openings.
5. Mow all forest road ditches in the County Forest.
6. Maintain pit toilets at Bitzke Nature Trail, Burma Road and Nine Mile Forest Units.
7. Continue to assist law enforcement for illegal tree stands, unauthorized motorized use, and dumping on County Forest property.
8. Continue to assist law enforcement to enforce seasonal closures and ordinance violations at Nine Mile and other Forest Units.
9. Resurface trails where needed on County forests.
10. Maintain 6.48 miles of certified County Forest Roads.
11. Fabricate and install gates where needed.
12. Place granite on roads and trails in Forest Units to patch holes as needed.
13. Check the National Heritage Inventory Database (NHI) and the Wildlife Action Plan for endangered resources on any project that occurs on the County Forest.
14. Complete a County Conservation Aids project that adds 60,000 red pine seedlings at Nine Mile Forest Unit.
15. Complete a County Conservation Aids Project at Big Eau Pleine Park that replaces concrete planks at boat landings.

16. Replace culverts in Leathercamp, Kronenwetter, Nine Mile and Burma Forest Units as needed.
17. Continue mitigation of the 2010 flood using a FEMA grant at the Bern Forest Unit.
18. Complete an Archeological search on any proposed project on County Forest lands.
19. Assist with a project to replace the septic system and additional facility improvements to Nine Mile chalet utilizing American Rescue Plan funding approved by the County Board.

C. Land and Equipment:

1. Negotiate the purchase of additional lands to enter as County Forest that will improve blocking, facilitate management, and aligns with the Marathon County Strategic and County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans.
2. Maintain all vehicles and equipment.

D. Developed Recreation (Non-Motorized):

1. Participate in the planning, administration and approval of all trail construction, expansions, relocations, and maintenance on County Forest Lands.
2. Monitor reconstruction of 2 km of the Nine Mile ski trail to improve trail profile and surface characteristics.
3. Assist Park facilities division in administering intensive recreation at Nine Mile.
4. Utilize volunteers to brush up to 20 km of ski trail.
5. Monitor the non-motorized recreation on County Forest Land.
6. Continue to assist law enforcement to enforce recreation pass requirements and violations at Nine Mile and other Forest Units.
7. Monitor the Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition winter fat biking permanent season at Nine Mile Forest to determine if biking, skiing, and snowshoeing continues to be compatible.
8. Evaluate the trail signage is adequate for safe skiing, biking and snowshoeing and make adjustments where necessary.

E. Developed Recreation (Motorized):

1. Participate in the planning, administration, and approval of all trail construction, expansions, relocations, and maintenance on County Forest Lands.
2. Monitor and approve reconstruction of the Burma Road Forest ATV/UTV trails.
3. The Central Wisconsin Trailblazers ATV/UTV club will maintain 11 miles of ATV/UTV trail in the Burma Road Forest to include brushing, grading, signing, and mowing.
4. Assess all trails and land in the Burma Road Forest to protect the resource from excessive soil erosion and to prevent illegal off-trail use.
5. Volunteers will brush up to 42 miles of snowmobile trail on County Forest Land.
6. Monitor the snowmobile program on County Forest Land.

7. Monitor and enforce ordinances pertaining to the unauthorized motorized use (ATV/UTV) on all County Forest Units.
8. Assist the Recreation Coordinator on the update of the Countywide snowmobile map.

F. Wildlife Management (Partially Grant funded):

1. Complete work identified in the DNR annual wildlife work plan. (See attached plan).
2. Mow flowage dikes, forest trails and select openings for brush control.
3. Seed select forest trails following timber sales to enhance wildlife habitat.
4. Improve forest opening condition through mechanical and chemical applications.
5. Cooperate with the DNR on identifying tag alder to shear in the Harrison-Hewitt and Leathercamp Forest Units.
6. Cooperate with DNR, the Ruffed Grouse Society and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service on tag alder shearing in Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit.

G. Administration and GIS:

1. Implement the 2021-2035 County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
2. Develop and improve the Forestry Division portion on the Department's web page.
3. Continue to work with the Forest Citizen's Advisory Subcommittee for county forests to address issues of concern including use conflicts at Nine Mile during the fall season, the sustainability of mountain biking, equestrian user needs, and the impact of forest management on hunting.
4. Amend the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan to reflect ordinance, boundary, and policy changes.
5. Continue implementing marking guidelines, Best Management Practices for Invasive Species and Biomass Harvesting guidelines on the County Forest.
6. Attend the Annual DNR integrated planning meeting to evaluate, maintain, and improve the County/DNR partnership.
7. Develop interpretive displays explaining the benefits of sustainable forest management for display at recreation areas.
8. Monitor and administer all road use, land use, and other agreements/leases currently on County Forest Lands. Develop new agreements or leases when appropriate.
9. Implement and monitor third party Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) forest certification on the Marathon County Forest.
10. Coordinate integration of the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the Marathon County Comprehensive and Strategic Plans.
11. Continue to implement the DNR Wisconsin Forest Inventory Reporting System (WisFIRS).
12. Follow the Bern Flowage emergency action plan, if required, due to flooding.

13. Review county zoning to ensure alignment with the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
14. Apply for grants and permits that accomplish County Forest and Park land improvements.
15. Supervise the County Forester and other seasonal employees.
16. Continue to be part of the senior administration team working on strategic planning and other initiatives to meet Department and County goals.
17. Continue research and studying the possibility of entering into carbon market project on County Forest lands including education with County Board leadership and possible presentations with Committee's and County Board.
18. Assist in the annual Marathon County single audit of Forestry budgets.
19. Participate in bi-weekly Parks, Recreation and Forestry Staff meetings.
20. Participate in quarterly Wisconsin County Forests Association conference calls.
21. Continue education with members of the Forestry/Recreation and Environmental Resources Committees on County Forest management.
22. Submit testimony to the County Deer Advisory Council (CDAC) and other Committee's that may affect County Forest management.

H. Public Outreach/Professional Development

1. Participate in school career programs and attempt to make two classroom presentations on forestry and natural resource management.
2. Attend County sponsored training and other management meetings as required.
3. Participate in job shadows introducing students into the forestry profession.
4. Continue to assist the public with insect, disease, and timber management information.
5. Tour the Marathon County Forest that includes members of the Marathon County Board and others as time allows.
6. Attend appropriate professional development training.
7. Maintain membership in the Society of American Foresters.
8. Attend Forest Certification training as required.
9. Continue to work with the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) by serving as a member of the Legislative/Forest Certification Committee on issues affecting County Forests.
10. Continue involvement on numerous WCFA committee's advancing the practice of forestry.
11. Continue updating maps to be included in new Forest Unit brochures and website for the public.
12. Revise and develop recreational maps for the public including cross country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, equestrian, winter fat tire and single-track mountain biking for County Park and Forest lands.

2024 MARATHON COUNTY FOREST WILDLIFE WORK PLAN

This represents the 2024 Annual Wildlife Work Plan, pursuant to the fifteen-year Comprehensive Plan for the Marathon County Forest.

Personnel

Assistance to the County Forest Administrator and DNR Forester Liaison will be provided in all wildlife matters concerning the County Forest. The DNR Wildlife Biologist position assigned to Marathon County is planned to be filled through 2024. However, the DNR is currently short on Wildlife Technician positions in the area. Much of the work done during 2023 was accomplished by the Biologist, DNR Limited Term Employee (LTE) crew or County Forestry staff.

Flowage Management

Most flowages were below desired water levels during the summer of 2023 due to lack of precipitation. Fortunately, heavy rains in the fall helped fill them providing great habitat for migrating waterfowl. Waterfowl production and sightings were above average on Marathon County flowages in 2023 despite the low water. Beaver issues and damage were occasionally addressed, but not a major issue throughout the year.

Dike Maintenance:

Muskrat and beaver holes on flowage dikes are often patched to maintain their integrity. There was a large emphasis on dike repair in 2022, which resulted in the lack of need to patch dikes in 2023. The lower water levels in the flowages also helped to minimize rodent damage.

A USDA-Wildlife Services Certified Service Agreement (CSA) was signed by DNR Wildlife Management to trap and remove problem beaver in 2023 on flowages in the Harrison-Hewitt and Nine Mile Forest blocks as part of a statewide agreement. There was beaver damage early in the summer and eight beaver were removed in three flowages. In 2024, DNR once again plans to contract with USDA-Wildlife Services to trap beaver on these flowages due to anticipated nuisance and damage.

Bern Flowage:

Bern flowage is chronically affected by floating cattail masses that occasionally plug the dam. Contractors have removed cattails for several years along the dike and weir with an excavator. This technique has proven to be effective at keeping the water flowing freely through the dam. There are still cattails that need to be removed from the flowage as they move closer to the dam. A contractor removed the cattails along the dike and in front of the dam in June of 2023. Water levels for the remainder of the summer were in drawdown, which kept the cattails rooted and prevented them from plugging the dam.

A contractor will remove cattails in the summer/fall of 2024 as needed. Additional options of removing cattails are being explored by DNR wildlife management and County Forestry staff.

The Black Creek Dam (Bern) was inspected by Becher-Hoppe Associates, Inc. during the summer of 2023 per DNR requirements. The dike was mowed and brushed by wildlife staff prior to the inspection (Picture 1). There were a few minor maintenance items flagged, but there were no major improvements recommended. An updated Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Inspection, Operation and Maintenance (IOM) Plan have also been completed.



Picture 1. Bern dike after mowing and brush cutting.

Wild Rice:

Wild rice production was terrific on Lower Nienow, Swamp and Lower Leo flowages (Picture 2) in 2023. Patches of rice were also seen at Nienow and Lower Leo flowages in the Harrison-Hewitt unit. In September of 2023, managers purchased 80 lbs. of wild rice and seeded the Birch Flowage in Nine Mile.



Picture 2. Wild Rice production in 2023 on Lower Leo Flowage.

Flowage Management:

Planned flowage management for 2024 includes a continuation of the flowage drawdown rotation. Drawdowns reduce undesirable plant species, allow desirable plant species to germinate and return nutrients to the soil. The drawdown plan for 2023 called for drawdowns on Lower Leo, Nienow, and Nine Mile East #2 flowages. Lower Leo was kept in draw down due to the tremendous rice production

created by previous drawdowns. Nine Mile East #2 and Nienow were not drawn down in 2023 due to beaver and other debris issues. Bern flowage was in a partial drawdown through late summer, providing mudflats for shorebirds (Picture 3). In 2024, managers plan to draw down Nienow flowage and Nine Mile East #2.



Picture 3. Drawdown at Bern flowage in July of 2023.

Forest Management

Openings Management:

Maintaining early successional habitat, such as grass openings, is an important part of Central Wisconsin forest management. In 2023, forest opening work was put on hold due to staffing limitations. The County staff mowed some of the openings as part of their trail mowing program.

In 2024, more nickel-an-acre funds will be available to the County to pay for or expand some of their trail/openings mowing program.

Trails:

DNR wildlife staff seeded 0.75 miles of forest trails in the Kronenwetter Forest Unit with a clover/grass mix in the summer of 2023. Seeding trails post-logging prevents erosion and provides a valuable food source for ruffed grouse and other game and non-game species. Trails and log landings will be seeded in Marathon County in 2024 as requested by Marathon County Forestry staff.

In 2024, funds will be set aside out of nickel-an-acre to cover some Marathon County Forestry equipment costs related to trail maintenance.

Alder Management:

Wet conditions, lack of frost and limited staff availability postponed any potential for alder management during the winter of 2022-23. Due to a change in priorities, there will be no allocated budget out of nickel-an-acre assigned to alder management work.

Oak Regeneration:

Maintaining and regenerating oak trees in Marathon County is a priority not only from a forestry standpoint, but as a wildlife resource as well. Acorns provide a valuable food source during the fall for many species of Wisconsin's wildlife. In 2024, new funds from nickel-an-acre will be distributed for oak regeneration projects (ex. scarification) that will help sustain our oak resource into the future.

Grasslands/ Hoffman Farm

The large burn unit south of County Road G is recommended to be burned during the fall of 2024. It is listed as low priority when compared to other burn units in the district. We will explore other options for managing this grassland complex to control brush if burning is not possible.

2023/2024 Nickel-an-Acre Budget

The following table lists the 2023 Nickel-an-Acre project budgets and expenses. It also includes proposed 2024 projects and the associated spending plan.

Project Activity	2023 Budgeted	2023 Expended	2024 Budgeted
Flowage Maintenance (dikes, spillways, structures)	\$300	\$285.45	\$200
Flowage Maintenance (brush/cattail removal-dikes)	\$300	\$398.21	\$200
Wildlife Opening Maintenance	\$900	\$700	\$0
Trail Seeding/Maintenance	\$100	\$0	\$750
Wild Rice Seeding	\$500	\$400	\$500
Alder Management	\$500	\$0	\$0
Site prep – Oak Regeneration	\$0	\$0	\$750
Totals	\$2,600	\$1783.66	\$2,400

After all expenses are subtracted, the Nickel-an-Acre account balance at the end of 2023 should be \$2,924.34. This will increase to \$4,374.34 after deposit of the 2024 allotment.

Submitted by:

Brandon Stefanski, DNR Wildlife Biologist, Marathon County

Approved by:

Tom Lovlien, Marathon County Forest Administrator

Rick Seefeldt, Chairperson, Marathon County Forestry/Recreation Committee

Jeff Sorenson, Forestry Liaison, Wausau

RESOLUTION #R - _____ - 23

TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL COUNTY FOREST WORK PLAN

WHEREAS, Marathon County has lands enrolled in the Wisconsin County Forest Land Program commonly referred to as the Marathon County Forest; and

WHEREAS, the Marathon County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan requires an annual work plan to be approved by the Marathon County Board of Supervisors to be eligible for certain grant funding per §28.11(5)(b), Wis. Stats.; and

WHEREAS, the Forestry/Recreation Committee and Environmental Resources Committees approved the 2023 Forestry Division Work Plan at their regular meeting held December 5, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Marathon County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2024 Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Budget at its budget meeting November 9, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the County Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon does hereby ordain and resolve as follows: To approve and adopt the attached 2023 Forestry Division Work Plan.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is directed to issue checks pursuant to this resolution and the Treasurer to honor said checks.

Dated this 14th day of December, 2023.

FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE

Rick Seefeldt, Chair

Tom Rosenberg, Vice-Chair

Jean Maszk

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Jacob Langenhahn, Chair

Mike Ritter

Allen Drabek, Vice-Chair

Andrew Venzke

Rick Seefeldt

Tony Sherfinski

David Oberbeck

Kim Ungerer

Fiscal Impact Estimate: No Budgetary Tax Levy Impact. If the Resolution is not approved, the County would lose approximately \$68,941.00 State Grant Funds.

APPLICATION FOR COUNTY FOREST ACREAGE SHARE LOAN PAYMENT

WHEREAS, Counties having lands entered as “County Forest Lands”, under the provisions of Sec. 28.11(4)(b), Wis. Stats., annually receive from the state a non-interest bearing loan to be used for the purchase, development, preservation and maintenance of such lands; and

WHEREAS, said loan monies are repaid through a 20% severance tax on timber revenue coming from County Forest Lands unless a higher rate is mutually agreed to by the County and the department; and

WHEREAS, the current provisions of Sec. 28.11 (8)(b)1 make it possible for the County, at its option to receive not more than 50 cents per acre to meet the needs identified in its County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon, in consideration of meeting the needs identified in its County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan hereby request the Department of Natural Resources to provide the 2024 payment to the County on the basis of 50 cents for each acre of Marathon County Forest Lands; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND RESOLVED that the Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to file this request with the Department of Natural Resources prior to December 31st preceding the year in which said payment is being requested to be made.

Dated this 14th day of December, 2023.

FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE

Rick Seefeldt, Chair

Tom Rosenberg, Vice-Chair

Jean Maszk

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Jacob Langenhahn, Chair

Mike Ritter

Allen Drabek, Vice-Chair

Andrew Venzke

Rick Seefeldt

Tony Sherfinski

David Oberbeck

Kim Ungerer

Fiscal Impact: Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department will receive \$15,031.16 as an interest free loan to be used for forest maintenance, development, and land acquisition.

RESOLUTION NO. #R - ____ - 23

COUNTY FISH AND GAME PROJECTS

WHEREAS, the legislature of the State of Wisconsin enacted legislation providing for allocation to the respective counties in that state on an acreage basis for the county fish and game projects on the condition that the counties match the state allocation; and

WHEREAS, Marathon County desires to participate in county fish and game projects pursuant to provisions of s. 23.09(12) of the Wisconsin statutes; and

WHEREAS, this resolution updates and replaces a previous resolution #51-15 dated September 15, 2015;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon does hereby ordain and resolve as follows:

1. That the Forestry/Recreation Committee of the County Board of Supervisors is authorized to expend the funds hereby appropriated and the funds received from the State of Wisconsin be used for the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, and to operate and maintain or cause to be operated and maintained the project for its intended purpose.
2. That the County Forest Administrator, as an agent of Marathon County and the Forestry/Recreation Committee, is authorized to execute agreements for projects approved by said committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is directed to issue checks pursuant to this resolution and the Treasurer to honor said checks.

Dated this 14th day of December, 2023.

FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE

Rick Seefeldt, Chair

Tom Rosenberg, Vice-Chair

Jean Maszk

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Jacob Langenhahn, Chair

Mike Ritter

Allen Drabek, Vice Chair

Andrew Venzke

Rick Seefeldt

Tony Sherfinski

David Oberbeck

Kim Ungerer

Fiscal Impact Estimate: Marathon County will continue its eligibility for an annual grant of \$4,314.00 which will be matched with an equal county appropriation.

AMENDING THE MARATHON COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

WHEREAS, Marathon County has lands enrolled as County Forest pursuant to §28.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and;

WHEREAS, the County Board of Supervisors on November 10, 2020, adopted resolution R-66-20 approving the Marathon County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to amend said plan to incorporate revisions, requirements of forest certification and additional language changes, and;

WHEREAS, subsection (5)(a) of the above referenced state statute requires said plan amendments be approved by the County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Natural Resources, and

WHEREAS, the plan amendments for the fifteen year period encompassing 2021-2035 has been prepared by the Forestry/Recreation and Environmental Resources Committees is hereby submitted for approval of the Marathon County Board of Supervisors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon does ordain as follows: The Marathon County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan be amended as attached (deleting the ~~stricken~~ portions and adding the highlighted portions).

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND RESOLVED that the Forestry/Recreation Committee is directed to forward these amendments to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for their approval.

Dated this 14th day of December, 2023.

FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE

Rick Seefeldt, Chair

Tom Rosenberg, Vice-Chair

Jean Maszk

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Jacob Langenhahn, Chair

Mike Ritter

Allen Drabek, Vice Chair

Andrew Venzke

Rick Seefeldt

Tony Sherfinski

David Oberbeck

Kim Ungerer

Fiscal Impact Estimate: None

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 Marathon 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, aesthetics and ecosystem maintenance. In keeping with this responsibility Marathon County is committed to conforming to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative @.SFI-01617-SFI-100%.

120 COUNTY AUTHORITY

The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Forestry/Recreation Committee of the County Board 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 Marathon County Forest can be found in Chapter 1005.2. In addition, the following will be considered in planning process.

- County Forestry ordinance (General Code Chapter 16)
- Park and Recreation ordinance (General Code Chapter 19)
- Shoreland, Shoreland wetland and floodplain (General Code Chapter 22)
- All Terrain Vehicles (General Code Chapter 7)
- Non-Metallic Mining ordinance (General Code, Chapter 21)
- Snowmobile ordinance (General Code Chapter 7)
- Marathon County Comprehensive Plan (General Code Chapter 26)
- Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee (General Code Chapter 16)

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 s. 28.11. 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 s. 28.11. To fulfill additional statutory obligations acreage share payments to towns are currently ~~\$.30~~ ~~.63~~/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, thirty counties in Wisconsin owned approximately 2.4 million acres entered under the County Forest Law.

125.2 MARATHON COUNTY FOREST PROGRAM HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

At one time, Marathon County was covered with magnificent stands of pine, hemlock, and hardwoods on the highlands, and cedar, spruce, and balsam on its lowlands. These forests provided raw material for a thriving lumbering industry from 1860 to about 1910. As a result of the clamor to conquer the wilderness, supply lumber for housing and factories, and without proper forest management, the forests were nearly completely destroyed. The logging slash was ideal for wildfires which essentially culminated with the Peshtigo fire in 1871, but fires continued into the 1930's. Immigrants rushed to these newly cleared lands hungry for a place to farm and build their lives. But in just a few years, the soils gave out and these people left to seek their fortunes elsewhere, leaving the land increasingly barren and tax delinquent. The Marathon County Forest originated with the taking of these tax delinquent lands.

Marathon County hired a Forest Ranger, Ralph Gunzel, to begin a management program with 160 acres of County Forest Land and nearly 20,000 acres of tax delinquent lands in 1946. Ranger Gunzel established a tree nursery, planted trees on County lands, gave conservation programs in the schools and communities countywide, organized fire crews and fought wild fires, expanded the amount of County Forest Lands, appraised and sold tax delinquent land, developed food patches for game animals, developed forest trails, encouraged responsible public use, checked hunting and fishing licenses, established commercial timber sales, and advocated sound management on County Forest Lands for sustainable production of forest crops including recreation, game, and timber.

By 1956, there were 24,477 acres of County Forests under management. During the first 10 years, 800,000 trees were planted on County lands, and 17 miles of fire lanes were built to protect these plantings from fire.

In 1956 alone, 280 acres were added to the County's forest program. Also in 1956, 2,100 acres of tax delinquent land were sold leaving 6,329 acres of delinquent lands on the tax rolls. By 1961, the last spruce and pine from the County nursery were planted on County Forest Land.

The Marathon County Board approved entry of County Forest Lands under the Forest Crop Law in 1967 and made an initial entry of 21,840 acres. As of ~~June 30, 2020~~ **December 1, 2023** there are ~~30,474~~ **30,714** acres in the County Forest. Marathon County's Forest was the twenty-eighth County Forest to be entered under the County Forest Crop Law. Today there are 30 County Forests. Previous to entry, County Forest Lands had no comprehensive forest plan.

125.3 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

Marathon 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 policy 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.

125.4 TRENDS

The values and uses of the Marathon 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

10. Direct the monitoring and protection of the County forests from fire, insects, disease, trespass, invasive species, or from damage by animals or persons, or from other causes, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources.
11. Support the creation and maintenance of valuable habitat types to sustain a variety of wildlife species.
12. Cooperate with the Department of Natural Resources on all matters pertaining to natural resource management of the County forests.
13. Direct the preparation and present an annual report of activities to the Environmental Resources Standing committee and the County Board.
14. Additional duties as assigned by the Environmental Resources Committee.

205.1.3 Marathon County Park Commission

The Board of Supervisors assigns the administration of developed recreation (snowmobiling, ATVing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, fat tire biking, snowshoeing, and horseback riding, Shooting Range, and other developed recreation facilities and activities) within the County Forests to the Marathon County Park Commission, hereinafter referred to as Commission, subject to review and approval by the Committee in meeting overall forest management goals and objectives.

205.1.4 Forest Citizens Advisory Subcommittee

The purpose of the subcommittee is to assist the Committee in formulating long-range plans for the County Forest and advising the Committee regarding conflicting recreational use issues, the budget for Forestry and the annual work plans. The subcommittee will also advise the Park Commission on developed recreation in County Forests. Duties of the subcommittee include:

1. To give advice and counsel the Committee regarding long-range forest and outdoor recreation plans for the County Forest.
2. To provide recommendations to the Committee on priorities for development of the Forestry Division annual budget and work plan.
3. To operate as a focus group on specific problems or questions posed by the Committee or Commission.
4. To attend tours of County Forest recreation, forestry, and wildlife projects.
5. To prepare an annual report for the Committee of activities and issues the subcommittee addressed the prior year and goals and activities anticipated in the current year.

7. The Forest Administrator will be responsible for maintaining and protecting the integrity of the County Forest.

205.2 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The role of the Department in the County Forest program is to:

1. Encourage technically sound management of the County Forest resources.
2. Protect the public rights, benefits and investments in County Forest lands.
3. Administer state compensation to the county for the public rights, benefits and privileges the county forest lands provide as required by s. 28.11(8) Wis. Stats.
4. Provide County Forest assistance consistent with those identified per the Public Forest Lands Handbook.

205.2.1 Division of Forestry

It is the function of this Division to:

1. Certify and make forest aid payments (variable acreage and project loans) to the county and audit county expenditures of the forestry fund account pursuant to s. 28.11(8)(b), Wis. Stats.
2. Certify and make acreage payments to towns pursuant to s. 28.11(8)(a), Wis. Stats.
3. Maintain and certify County Forest acreage by township, and audit distribution of severance share payments (s. 28.11(9) Wis. Stats.) made annually by the counties.
4. Collect severance share payments of not less than twenty percent of actual stumpage sales value on timber cut from the County Forest pursuant to s. 28.11(9)(a), Wis. Stats.
5. Administer various aids and grants pertaining, but not limited to, the County Forest program.
6. Assist with development and implementation of the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
7. Interpret and administer the laws and regulations set forth by the Legislature and the Natural Resources Board.
8. Review and approve or deny applications for withdrawal and entry of lands into the County Forest Law program.
9. Approve Annual Work Plan
10. ~~3~~ 5-year Audit Programmatic and Financials.

The County Board approves an annual appropriation for salaries, supplies, maintenance, and capital expenditures for the implementation of the Forestry Division's annual plan of work. Budgeted funds unexpended on December 31 lapse to the general fund. Revenues from the sale of forest products and use other than recreation trails are credited to this account.

220.2.2 ~~Motorized~~ Recreational Coordinator

This annual appropriation supports the coordinator position and pays for snowmobile and ATV/UTV trail program administration. Eligible expenses are reimbursed through the State snowmobile or ATV/UTV trail grant program.

220.3 ACCOUNTS, GRANT FUNDS – NON-LAPSING

220.3.1 County Forest Road Aids

An annual appropriation of projected State aid payments for the maintenance of certified County Forest roads. Revenues and interest from annual aid payments by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and reimbursement for other road related expenses such as flood damage aid are credited to this account.

220.3.2 County Conservation Program

The County Board approves an annual appropriation to match available grant monies 1:1 on a project basis. Reimbursement by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is made for 50 percent of approved project expenditures. Project advances, reimbursements, and interest are credited to this account.

220.3.3 Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program

An annual appropriation of "nickel an acre" from the Department of Natural Resources to implement wildlife related projects identified in the County's Annual Plan of Work. The primary emphasis is on forest wildlife habitat improvement, inventories, and wildlife education. Additional revenue to this account may come from organizations such as Wisconsin Waterfowlers Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, or other wildlife habitat funding sources.

220.3.4 Snowmobile and All-Terrain-Vehicle (ATV) and Utility Vehicle (UTV) Trail Aids

An annual appropriation for the projected aid available to maintain funded snowmobile, ATV, and UTV trails in Marathon County. Advances, reimbursements, supplemental funding, and interest are

credited to this account.

220.3.5 National Recreation Trails Act

An annual appropriation for approved projects to develop and maintain motorized and non-motorized trails in Marathon County. Reimbursement (up to 100 percent) for approved project expenditures and interest is credited to this account.

220.3.6 Sustainable Forestry Grant

An annual appropriation for approved projects that promote sustainable forestry on the County Forest that is consistent with the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Reimbursement (up to 100 percent) for approved project expenditures and interest are credited to this account (NR 47.75 Wis. Admin. Code).

220.3.7 County Forest Administrator Grant Program

An annual appropriation that funds 50 percent of the actual salary and up to 50 percent of the fringe benefit costs of County employed professional forester in the position of County Forest Administrator or Assistant County Forest Administrator. Fringe benefit costs shall not exceed 40 percent of the annual salary. To be eligible, the County must submit an annual Committee, County Board and Division of Forestry approved County Forest Work Plan. Advance and reimbursements must be deposited in the State Aid Forestry Account (s. 28.11(5)(m), Wis. Stats).

220.4 ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Fund	Name	Expenditures	Revenues
101-692	Snowmobile/ATV Coordinator	91110-95140	82463-88110
	General Fund		
101-710	County Forest General Fund	91110-98290	85192-89900
153-778	Segregated Land	92190-98210	86212-89900
154-690	Nine Mile Trails	91110-95930	85862-88420
171-758	Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant	98210	82466
174-759	FEMA Cattail Removal	92190	82457-89900
254-751	County Conservation Aids	92990	81110-89900
255-752	County Forest Road Aids	92360	82433-89900
257-755	Forestry State Aid	92190-98210	88110-89900
258-756	Wildlife Habitat Management	92190	82473-89900

404 760	Sustainable Forestry Grant	92190	82462
441 731	Pittman Robertson Grant	92190	82474
482 757	County Forest Administrator Grant	91110	82467

<u>Fund Cost Center Program or Grant)</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Revenues</u>
210 CC_55300	Snowmobile Trails Coordinator	51111-52250	43571-49220
210 CC_55200	Parks General Fund		
210 CC_55302	County Forest General Fund	51111-60000	43510-49220
210 CC_55302 CNT_0238	Segregated Land	52192-60000	46810-49220
210 CC_55211	Nine Mile Trails	51111-55930	46720-46754
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	FEMA Cattail Removal	52192	48110-49220
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	County Conservation Aids	52192	43586-49220
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	County Forest Road Aids	52990	43586-49220
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	Forestry State Aid	52192-60000	48110-49220
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	Wildlife Habitat Management	52192	43586-49220
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	County Forest Administrator Grant	51111	43510-43571
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant	60000	43586
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	Pittman-Robertson Grant	52192	43586
291 CC_55302 GR-XXXXXX	Sustainable Forestry Grant	52192	43586

220.5 TIMBER SALES

220.5.1 Active Files

Active timber sale files (hardcopy or e-copy), at a minimum, should contain or reference the following items:

1. Timber sale cutting notice and report (Form 2460-1)
2. Timber sale narrative (Form 2460-1A)
3. Contract and all addendums
4. Timber sale map
5. Ledger account of scale
6. Timber sale inspection journal / notes
7. Pertinent correspondence
8. Liability insurance
9. FISTA training
10. Financial assurance (performance bonds, ILC, etc...)

11. Field scale sheets
12. Lock box tickets (if applicable)

220.5.2 Closed Files

Once sales have been completed and audited by DNR only the following items need to be maintained in the file as a permanent record:

1. Timber sale notice and cutting report
2. Contract and addendums
3. Timber sale map
4. Pertinent correspondence
5. Financial ledger/summary

225 PERSONNEL

Under direction of the Committee, the Director shall have authorization to organize the workload of the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department employees and arrange for additional services as needed. Personnel of the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department will be governed by the work policies of Marathon County.

225.1 PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY STAFF

The budgeted positions of the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department at this time are: Director, Senior Park and Recreation Manager (2), County Forest Administrator, Administrative Manager, Assistant Park and Recreation Manager (4), Park Forester, County Forester, Administrative Coordinator, Accounting Specialist, Administrative Specialist, Purchasing Specialist, Urban Forestry Specialist (6), Senior Maintenance Specialist (2), Maintenance Specialist (7), Maintenance Technician (13), Motorized Recreation Coordinator (~~6~~). Total ~~43.6~~ 44 FTE.

There are numerous seasonal employees utilized by the department. Other labor is hired on a part-time basis or for training positions as needed.

225.2 HIRING PERSONNEL

All hiring of permanent personnel will be approved by the Committee and Commission, having been accounted for in the annual work plan and budget. The actual hiring of permanent personnel will follow County personnel policy. Seasonal and short-term labor for special projects will be recruited

Bern Wetland Management

Marathon County purchased the 269-acre Bern Wetland to develop a waterfowl flowage (impoundment). The DNR is responsible for managing the flowage and maintaining the dam. Forest stands next to the flowage will be managed for a natural appearance. Forest stands will also be managed to develop old trees and especially maintain trees with cavities for birds and mammals.

Bitzke Waterfowl Refuge Management

The Bitzke ~~Refuge~~ is an area of about 300 acres with flowages (impoundments) developed for waterfowl production and protection as a cooperative project between Marathon County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with funding from Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Marathon County, and DNR. The Wisconsin Conservation Corps assisted with nature trail development.

The ~~refuge~~ ~~Bitzke~~ will be maintained in a condition which will promote the development of a complete wetland ecosystem featuring waterfowl. Interpretive signs, boardwalks, benches, an observation tower, and flowage structures were developed to enhance the use of the area by the public.

The visual horizon (from the top of the observation tower) will be maintained in as naturally appearing condition as possible. The DNR may use artificial nesting platforms and boxes or other wildlife management techniques within the ~~refuge~~ ~~Bitzke~~.

Ruffed Grouse Area Management

Marathon County in cooperation with the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Department of Natural Resources has developed a special ruffed grouse management area in the Leather Camp Forest Unit north of the Little Eau Claire River (approximately 3,163 acres). The primary intent of this project is to maintain intolerant forest types, primarily aspen, in stand sizes less than 20 acres when feasible, with a variety of size and age classes to promote ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and other species associated with the aspen forest.

500.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To identify policies and procedures employed to effectively manage, utilize and sustain the resources of the County Forest.
2. To identify regulated management activities, land uses and special resource areas.
3. To layout proper permits needed for certain activities on the County Forest.

505 TIMBER SALES

Regulated cutting of timber is essential to the goals and objectives of this plan. Timber harvesting will be conducted to achieve a sustainable harvest level. Harvest areas will be distributed in the forest to accommodate such needs as biodiversity, wildlife, aesthetics, watershed protection and other biological needs. WisFIRS will be used for planning all timber harvests activities on the County Forest. All sales will be established, administered and reported in accordance with the DNR Timber Sale Handbook (2461). All sales on the forest are to be advertised for public bidding, with the exception of ~~small~~ sales with an estimated **volume of 500 cord equivalents or less or an estimated** value of ~~\$3000~~ **\$10,000** or less or sales that would qualify under a salvage provision (s. 28.11(6)(c), Wis. Stats.). These sales may be sold direct without advertising.

505.1 FIELD PREPARATION OF TIMBER SALES

The County and the DNR will cooperate to locate, designate and prepare harvest areas for sale. The Forest administrator and DNR liaison forester shall jointly be responsible to see that the field work on sales is accomplished. Administrator and Liaison will also jointly be responsible for ensuring that all proper documentation for each timber sale is properly filled out and routed for signatures.

505.2 ADVERTISING FOR BIDS

After field work is completed and necessary reports receive DNR approval, the administrator shall prepare a sale prospectus and make it available to interested loggers. Under s. 28.11(6)(b) Wis. Stats, timber sale advertisements will be by classified ad in a newspaper having general circulation in the county (i.e. Wausau Daily Herald) and will appear a minimum of 14 calendar days before opening bids. A longer advance time will be given when feasible. Sealed bid sales will generally be offered in early spring and fall, or as needed.

the contract. Factors to be assessed may include proposed equipment and operation, references, proof of financial stability, past performance and documented training completed. The award of contract to the successful bidder shall be based upon the bid determined most advantageous to the County.

2. Tie bids may be settled by toss of a coin if both parties are agreeable; otherwise the bids on that tract will be rejected and the sale re-advertised.
3. Sales remaining unsold after being advertised for one bid opening may be sold direct at not less than the advertised value even though their estimated value exceeds ~~\$3,000~~ **\$10,000**. (See DNR Timber Sale Handbook).

505.6 SALE CONTRACTS

1. Contracts will be prepared with copies provided to the Purchaser and the DNR and the original filed in the Forest Administrator's office.
2. Contracts are to be signed by the successful bidder within 15 working days' of the contract award, with payment being made according to the County timber sale bond and advance stumpage payment schedule. Failure to sign the contract within 15 working days will be cause for the forfeiture of the bid bond.

505.7 TIMBER SALE PERFORMANCE BOND

1. Performance bonds will be not less than 25 percent of the total bid value for each contract.
2. Surety bonds or an irrevocable letter of credit issued by a bank which is a member of the Federal Reserve System or insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation may be used in lieu of cash as a performance bond on sales. The letter of credit or surety bond must be in effect for a period of time equal to the term of the contract, plus at least 60 days to allow for possible extension(s) and for closeout of the contract after cutting is completed.
3. The bid bond may be transferred to the performance bond.

505.8 CONTRACT PROVISIONS

All timber sale contracts will be on the form approved by the committee and all provisions therein shall apply. A copy of the timber sale prospectus will be attached and become a part of the contract. The following items are essential contract provisions that should be covered in each contract.

Timber sales are certified to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®. ~~SFI-01617-SFI 100%~~. Certification language will appear on all haul tickets, invoices, and scale sheets.

505.8.14 Other Contract Conditions for Consideration

1. Cleanup and use of sale area
 - a. The Purchaser shall remove, to the satisfaction of the seller, all equipment, tools, solid waste, oil filters, grease cartridges, trash and debris remaining on the sale area or Seller's property upon completion of performance under this Contract, termination of this Contract due to breach by the Purchaser or when requested by the County.
 - b. No residence, dwelling, permanent structure, or improvement may be established or constructed on the sale area or other property of the County.
 - c. The Purchaser agrees to properly use and dispose of all petroleum products, including but not limited to oil, hydraulic fuel and diesel fuel. Any on-site spillage must be properly removed and cleaned up by the Purchaser to the satisfaction of the County.
2. Stump heights/tops – The maximum stump height may not exceed the stump diameter; except for stumps of a diameter of less than 10 inches, the height of the stump may not exceed 10 inches. Additionally, clumps of stumps shall be treated as individual stumps and maximum height may not exceed each individual stump diameter. Title to tops shall remain the owner's and may not be utilized by the Purchaser, or at the Purchaser's discretion, unless otherwise specified in this contract.
3. Zone/Unit completion – The Purchaser agrees to complete all operations on each portion of the sale area or each zone as designated on the sale area map, or other attachments or in the cutting requirements before beginning cutting in the next portion or zone, unless agreed to otherwise by the County.
4. Slash requirements – Slash as defined in s. 26.12, Wis. Stats., shall be disposed of as follows:
 - a. Slash falling in any lake or stream, in a right-of-way or on land of an adjoining landowner shall be immediately removed from the waters, right-of-way or adjoining land. Tops from felled trees may not be left hanging in

610.3 SPECIFIC PESTS AND PATHOGENS OF CONCERN

Integrated pest management for the purpose of this Plan, is defined as follows:

“The maintenance of destructive agents, including insects, at tolerable levels, by the planned use of a variety of preventive, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable.”

The integrated pest management control and methodology shall be determined jointly by the County Forest Administrator, and DNR liaison forester in consultation with the DNR District Forest Health Specialist. Suppression of forest pests may include the following:

1. Silvicultural prescriptions, including timber sales.
2. Biological control.
3. Chemical control.

610.3.1 Specific Pests of Interest

610.3.1.1 ~~Gypsy~~ Spongy Moth

This introduced pest has moved westward from the northeastern United States since the early 1900's. Currently, moths have been found in every county; the eastern 2/3 of the State is considered infested. Marathon County Forest's strategy to combat this defoliating insect will focus on using silvicultural techniques to maintain and improve forest vigor, so as to decrease the likelihood and severity of defoliation. In addition, suppression spraying with approved insecticides may be considered in high use recreation areas and stands containing a high percentage of susceptible, high valued timber. Biological controls may also be available for introduction to help reduce outbreak frequency.

The presence or discovery of threatened or endangered species in these areas may impact both the type of treatment and the decision to apply suppression tactics. Current insecticides for ~~gypsy~~ spongy moth control include a bacterial insecticide (Btk) and a commercial formulation of a naturally occurring virus (Gypchek) The Gypchek virus, specific to gypsy moth larvae, is only available through the federal suppression program administered by the DNR. The intent in combating this insect is not to eradicate, but rather to reduce populations so that tree mortality is maintained at tolerable levels. The DNR's District Forest Health Specialist will be available for consultation on control tactics and possible quarantine procedures. DATCP is the agency responsible for quarantine procedures for wood products from infested

also be managed to develop old trees and especially maintain trees with cavities for birds and mammals.

825.7.3 Bitzke Waterfowl Management

The Bitzke Refuge is an area of about 300 acres with flowages (impoundments) developed for waterfowl production and protection as a cooperative project between Marathon County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with funding from Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Marathon County, and DNR. The Wisconsin Conservation Corps assisted with nature trail development.

The refuge Bitzke will be maintained in a condition which will promote the development of a complete wetland ecosystem featuring waterfowl. Interpretive signs, boardwalks, benches, an observation tower, and flowage structures were developed to enhance the use of the area by the public. ~~The DNR will determine refuge status and closed dates.~~

The visual horizon (from the top of the observation tower) will be maintained in as naturally appearing conditions as possible. The DNR may use artificial nesting platforms and boxes or other wildlife management techniques. ~~within the refuge.~~

825.7.4 Ruffed Grouse Area Management

Marathon County in cooperation with the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Department of Natural Resources has developed a special ruffed grouse management area in the Leather Camp Forest Unit north of the Little Eau Claire River (approximately 3,163 acres). The primary intent of this project is to maintain intolerant forest types primarily aspen, in stand sizes less than 20 acres when feasible, with a variety of size and age classes to promote ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and other species associated with the aspen forest.

Marathon County has developed and will maintain a trail system to allow the harvest of small areas. These trails will remain closed to motorized use except for approved snowmobile or ATV trails in winter and by permit for persons with disabilities, or other contract or permit (timber management, beaver control, etc.).

Although aspen management will dominate this area, appropriate aesthetic management practices will be used to reduce negative visual impacts from aspen regeneration harvests if possible.

825.8.6 COUNTY FOREST STREAMS

MARATHON COUNTY FOREST STREAMS				
FOREST UNIT	STREAM NAME	LEGAL	LENGTH *	DESCRIPTION
Bern Wetland	Trib. To Black Creek	Sec. 29,30 T30N-R3E	.94 mi.	Warm - flowage
Harrison-Hewitt	Skulen Pond Creek	Sec.7,17,20,30,T30N-R9E	3.60 mi.	Warm - flowages
Harrison-Hewitt	Trappe River	Sec. 3, T30N-R9E	.77 mi.	Warm
Kronenwetter	Johnson Creek	Sec. 24, T27N-R8E	2.66 mi.	Warm
Kronenwetter	Johnson Creek	Sec. 18, 19, T27N-R9E		
Kronenwetter	Sampson Creek	Sec. 11, 12, T27N-R8E	2.06 mi.	Warm
Leather Camp	LittleEauClaire River	Sec. 12, T26N-R8E	1.00 mi.	Warm
Miller	Big Sandy Creek	Sec. 18, T29N-R9E	.28 mi.	Warm
Nine Mile	Four Mile Creek	Sec. 36, T28N-R6E	.39 mi.	Cold, Class 2 Trout Stream
Nine Mile	Four Mile Creek	Sec. 1, T27N-R6E	.18 mi.	Cold, Class 2 Trout Stream
Nine Mile	Four Mile Creek	Sec. 5,6, T27N-R7E	1.24 mi.	Cold, Class 2 Trout Stream
Nine Mile	Black Creek	Sec. 28,33, T28N-R7E	2.17 mi.	Cold, Class 2 Trout Stream
WI River Unit	WI River	Sec. 13,14,24, T30N-R7E	1.16 mi.	Warm
TOTAL			16.45 mi.	
*Length estimated from Marathon County GIS Basemap				

830 EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES, UNIQUE AREAS

Exceptional resources include such things as wild rivers and lakes, natural areas, ruffed grouse management areas, Karner blue butterfly recovery areas, areas of unique geological features, historical, and archeological sites. It is the policy of Marathon County to manage these type resources to enhance and protect their individual exceptional features.

See 300.2.6 Fish and Wildlife on descriptions of the ruffed grouse management area in Leather Camp and the Bern Wetland and Bitzke. ~~Waterfowl Refuge.~~

830.1 AREAS RECOGNIZED BY STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The areas that have been recognized by State or Federal Government are listed below with management prescriptions if applicable.

830.1.1 Wisconsin State Natural Areas

The County Forest manages a variety of property designations. The State Natural Area (SNA) system represents the wealth and variety of Wisconsin's biological diversity. SNA's are unique in that they can exist as stand-alone properties or be designated within the boundaries of another property type. DNR Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation staff will work cooperatively with the County Forest by coordinating educational, monitoring, and research activities. Management will protect the unique character of the area. Presently, there are no State Natural Areas on the County Forest. However, the importance of State Natural Areas has been recognized on County Park property by cooperating with department staff in designating and managing 105 acres at Big Eau Pleine Park and 40 acres at Eau Claire Dells Park for SNA sites.

830.1.2 Species Concentration Areas

In cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources a series of flowages were developed primarily to benefit waterfowl. In 1985 the DNR designated the Bitzke Flowages as a waterfowl refuge to provide resting areas for migrating birds. **In 2022, DNR determined that the Bitzke Flowages no longer required refuge status and this designation was lifted.**

830.1.3 Endangered Species Habitats

Marathon County will take steps necessary to protect habitat for species that are identified as rare, threatened, endangered or greatest conservation need.

830.1.4 Rare communities

Nine Mile Forest contains a large wetland and shrub carr complex. Characteristics include an A rank reach of fast, soft, cold water stream and large areas of B ranked northern sedge meadow and shrub carr. It is unlikely that any active forest management will occur in this area and Best Management Practices for water quality will be applied when conducting management around the wetland.

830.2 AREAS RECOGNIZED BY COUNTY OR LOCALLY

Marathon County may contain areas that are locally considered exceptional or unique. Some are recognized by other agencies, while others are designated only within this Plan. These resources may include wild rivers, lakes, natural areas, geological features or historical/archeological sites.

920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of the Plan, the County contracts **or have agreements in place** for the following services:

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance.
2. ATV/UTV trail grading and maintenance.
3. Mountain bike trail grooming and maintenance.
4. Nordic ski trail grooming and maintenance.

925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance is required.

930 EXTENSIVE RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

Extensive recreation includes those informal activities for which the County generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, picnicking, horseback riding, photography, nature study, hiking and others. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with ordinance. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

930.1 HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The entire County Forest is open to hunting and trapping with the exception of areas which are developed for high public use, such as Shooting Range Park, within 300 feet of the Nine Mile trailhead, chalet and maintenance garage or other areas designated by the Committee. In addition, Bitzke ~~Waterfowl Refuge~~ **Birdwalk Nature Trail Area** is closed to hunting ~~and trapping~~ from September 1 through November 15. From November 16 through August 31 the ~~refuge area~~ **refuge area** is open to all hunting and trapping seasons designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with the exception of waterfowl hunting which is closed year round.

960 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trail systems that accommodate a high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. The Committee will consider the primary purpose for which trails were developed and regulate use for the safety and enjoyment of the public and maintenance and protection of the Forest, including temporary or permanent trail closures. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Management activities adjacent to designated recreation trails will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations may be made to accommodate the recreational use. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

960.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Marathon County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It is the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

960.1.1 Hiking Trails

960.1.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs closing an area.

960.1.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

Bitzke Bird Walk

This 1.9-mile walking trail in the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit meanders through a series of wetlands and flowages created for wetland animals. ~~Designated as a waterfowl refuge by the Department of Natural Resources in 1985,~~ The area has a history which includes logging, fire,

draining, and agriculture. As farming failed, nature began to reclaim the wetland. Aspen trees grew up on surrounding uplands which provided food for beaver. This trail is open to the public year round, ~~but because of the refuge status, the public is required to stay on the marked trail from September 1 through November 15~~ and to abide by posted regulations. Maintenance of the walking trail is shared between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the County.

Boy Scout Hiking Trail

This 10.2-mile trail, of which 7.5 miles are designated, in the Nine Mile Forest Unit primarily follows an existing snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. The nature trail was built by the Boy Scouts to fulfill a need for a sanctioned metered course in the North Central Wisconsin area. Merit badge requirements make it compulsory that a scout travel a pretabulated course in compiling part of the mileage necessary for the award. A map of the Boy Scout hiking trail can be found in Chapter 1000.

960.1.2 Mountain Bike Trails

960.1.2.1 Undesignated Mountain Bike Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use is prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion or other environmental damages.

960.1.2.2 Designated Mountain Bike Trails

Summer Nine Mile Forest Bike Trail

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated mountain biking opportunities at Nine Mile County Forest. There are approximately 33.45 miles of designated trails, including over 13.45 miles of single track and 20 miles of cross-country ski trails designated open for bicycling. The trails open May 1 – May 15 to October 15 each year depending on trail conditions. ~~During the first three weeks of May,~~ trails open at Noon to allow safe and quality spring turkey hunting opportunities. Biking at Nine Mile requires the user to purchase a trail pass. A map of the designated bike trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Maintenance of the single track trails is primarily completed by volunteers of the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Additionally, other opportunities for mountain biking in Marathon

County include trails at Big Eau Pleine Park, Sylvan Hill Park and at the Marathon County Ringle landfill.

Winter Nine Mile Forest Fat Tire Bike Trails

There are about 7.6 miles of designated winter fat tire bike trails open for biking. The trails open when there is enough snow as determined by the Department but no earlier than the ski trails open which is typically mid-December depending on trail conditions. Winter biking at Nine Mile requires the user to purchase a trail pass. A map of the designated trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Maintenance and grooming of the winter bike trails is primarily completed by volunteers of the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Additionally, other opportunities for winter fat tire biking include trails at Big Eau Pleine Park, and at the Marathon County Ringle Landfill.

960.1.3 Equestrian Trails

960.1.3.1 Undesignated Equestrian Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational horseback trail riding except in the Harrison-Hewitt, Bern Forest along with the Nine Mile cross-country and bike trails where horseback riding is prohibited. Off-trail horseback riding is also prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion, introduction of exotic species, and other environmental damage.

960.1.3.2 Designated Equestrian Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated horseback riding trails at Nine Mile, Kronenwetter, and Leather Camp Forest Units. The snowmobile trail, approximately 10 miles at Nine Mile Forest, is signed and designated as a horseback riding trail. Additionally, both the Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forest Units have approximately 18 miles designated for horseback riding although these trails are not signed. Maintenance of the equestrian trails is completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated equestrian trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Additionally, equestrian trails are developed for use at Big Eau Pleine Park.

960.1.4 Ski Trails

960.1.4.1 Undesignated Cross Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Undesignated cross-country ski trails are not signed or maintained. Off trail cross-country skiing is permitted on the County Forest.

960.1.4.2 Designated Cross Country Ski Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide designated cross-country skiing opportunities in the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers 19.5 miles of regularly groomed ski trails that offer both skate skiing and diagonal skiing and facilities which provide a variety of terrain and scenery. ~~Additionally, Marathon County also maintains ski trails at Sylvan Hill.~~ Cross-country skiing on Nine Mile designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Donations are accepted at Sylvan Hill. Dog use on groomed cross-country ski trails is prohibited when such trails are open for skiing except while hunting in accordance with Department of Natural Resources regulations.

Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Volunteers from the Wausau Nordic Ski Club also provide assistance preparing the trails for the cross country ski season with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated cross country ski trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

960.1.5 Snowshoe Trails

960.1.5.1 Undesignated Snowshoe Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for snowshoeing except on the Nine Mile cross-country ski trails. Undesignated snowshoe trails are not signed or maintained. Off-trail snowshoeing is also permitted on the County Forest.

960.1.5.2 Designated Snowshoe Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated snowshoeing opportunities on the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers approximately 6.7 miles of signed snowshoe trails which include a variety of terrain and scenery. Snowshoeing on designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Generally, no maintenance is required on snowshoe trails. If required, it would be completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated snowshoe trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

960.1.6 Other Non-Motorized Use

All County Forest trails are designated for non-motorized use except by permit, posted as closed, or as otherwise designated by the Committee. Gates and/or barriers will be constructed and

strategically located to allow optimum maintenance while restricting motorized vehicular travel. Trail maintenance may be conducted in cooperation with the DNR Wildlife Manager.

960.1.7 Future Non-Motorized Trail Systems

The development of additional non-motorized trail systems will include careful consideration of public demand, analysis of user conflicts and potential damage to the natural resource. New trail proposals will be evaluated as indicated in Section 945.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. The County will require proof of an organized club, or user group, with the ability to assist with maintenance and support of the trail and associated facilities. Appropriate trail passes, or other user fees, may be implemented as indicated in Section 915.

960.2 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

Motorized travel on trails can be legitimate use of the forest if these trails are designed and maintained in a manner to minimize damage to the environment and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It shall be the policy of the Committee to consider opportunities for the following motorized trail use:

1. Snowmobiles.
2. All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's).
3. Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV's)

960.2.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Designated snowmobile trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Marathon County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

1. A & H Sno-Mobilers
2. Athens Sno-Pak
- ~~3. Birnamwood Trail Riders~~
- ~~4. Eau Pleine Riders Inc.~~
- ~~5. Elderon Sno-Angels~~
- ~~6. Emmet Sno-Drifters~~

- ~~6.7.~~ Frankfort Freedom Riders
- ~~7.8.~~ Glandon Snow Barons
- ~~8.9.~~ Green Valley Stump Jumpers
- ~~9.10.~~ Hamburg Rainbow Riders
- ~~10.11.~~ Hatley Snowmobile Club
- ~~11.12.~~ KK Riders
- ~~12.13.~~ Kelly Snowshoes
- ~~13.14.~~ Krecji City Cruisers
- ~~14.15.~~ Little Rose Riders
- ~~15.16.~~ Midnight Riders
- ~~16.17.~~ Nutterville Sno-Nuts
- ~~17.18.~~ Peplin Unlimited
- ~~18.19.~~ Pike Lake Wilderness Unlimited
- ~~19.20.~~ Poniatoski Dare Devils
- ~~20.21.~~ Rib Knights
- ~~21.22.~~ Rib Riders
- ~~22.23.~~ Rothschild Urbanaires
- ~~23.24.~~ Rozellville Wilderness Riders
- ~~24.25.~~ Shantytown Snowmobile Club
- ~~25.26.~~ Spencer Swamp Stompers
- ~~26.27.~~ Stratford Sno-Runners
- ~~27.28.~~ Trailmates Snowmobile Club
- ~~28.29.~~ WI Valley Sno-Jets

The Marathon County Code 7.09 regulates snowmobile trails. A summary of rules and regulations relating to snowmobile trails is as follows:

1. All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks unless vehicle use is approved by Marathon County.
2. The ~~Motorized~~ Recreation Coordinator will make determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow, trail maintenance conditions, and information provided by the clubs.
3. Snowmobile trails used for logging access during snowmobile season will be posted with signs warning users of activity and every attempt will be made to leave at least 3 inches of

The County recognizes several different classifications of ATV trail. Maps are appended in Chapter 1000 for reference.

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – State funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. There are approximately 699.5 miles of winter funded ATV trail managed by Marathon County, with 42.28 miles on County Forest lands.

Designated snowmobile trails are open for winter ATV use during the snowmobile season if the air temperature is 28°F or colder. ATV's are permitted on designated snowmobile trails on County Forest 10 days following the opening of the trails. The trails remain open until the snowmobile trails are closed or if the trail base can no longer support ATV use.

2. Funded Summer ATV Trails – these are trail systems funded for only summer use. These trails are open from May 1 – September 30. There are approximately 20.75 miles of summer use ATV trails managed by the County with 11 miles on the County Forest.
3. Funded Year Round ATV Trails - these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are approximately ~~699.5~~ 11 miles of year round funded ATV trails managed by Marathon County with 11 miles on the County Forest.
 - a. The Burma Road Forest Unit trails are designated for year-round use. Summer trails are open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. May 1 through September 30 and winter trails are open from December 1 through March 15. Burma Forest ATV/UTV trails are open Dec. 1 – March 15 regardless of air temperature.
4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV's, or side by sides, are not allowed on snowmobile/winter ATV trail systems. Marathon County allows for UTV's on 20.75 miles of the trail system within the County with 11 miles on the County Forest. (Burma County Forest Unit and Edgar to Fenwood Trail.)
5. Funded Trout/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after

Funding for recreation areas is generally fee based. Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of competition for these funds.

965.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

965.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At this time, there is very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance. The County relies on user fees and/or funds maintenance out of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry operating budgets.

965.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs. Marathon County utilizes the following funding sources. As of ~~October 2020~~ **December 2023** the rates are:

1. Snowmobile Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile
4. UTV Maintenance - ~~\$200~~ **\$400**/mile
5. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
6. ATV Development - 100% grants