

OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
of a Meeting of the County Forest
Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee of the
Marathon County Board of Supervisors

COUNTY OF MARATHON
Wausau, WI 54403

A meeting of the County Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee will be held at 212 River Drive, Rm. #5, Wausau, WI, 54403, at **6:00pm** on **December 13, 2023.**

Members: Mike Lane (chair), Marcell Wieloch (vice-chair), John Burke, Aaron Ruff, Gary Weiland, Susan Haug, Dale Heil, Paul Klocko, Greg Klos, Carmen Engelman, Taylor Dorsey

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 five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number: Phone Number: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 2494 1943767. Please Note: If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number" enter the # sign. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference. When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

A G E N D A

- I. Minutes
 - A. Approve Minutes of the September 20, 2023 Meeting

- II. New Business
 - A. 2024 County Forest and Wildlife Work Plans
 - B. 2021 – 2035 County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Amendments
 - C. 2023 Fall Timber Sale Results
 - D. 2024 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Budget Update
 - E. Wisconsin County Forests Association Special License Plates
 - F. Wisconsin County Forests Association Resolutions
 - G. Misconduct of the Governors Snowmobile Recreation Council
 - H. Winter Recreational Program Update
 - I. Member Items

- III. Old Business
 - A. Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan
 - B. 2023 Gun Deer Harvest and Activity on Marathon County Forest
 - C. 2023 Ragnar Trail Wisconsin Update
 - D. Update on Big Eau Pleine Archery Hunt and Any Impacts on Bike or Equestrian Users

- IV. 2024 Meeting Dates – March 6, June 5, September 18, and December 18, 2024

- V. Adjourn

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.

ATTN: News Department
Daily Herald and other news media

THIS NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE

Emailed/Faxed by:	Jodi Luebbe	Date:	
Date:	December 5, 2023	Time:	
Time:	11:15 a.m.	By:	

Members present: Taylor Dorsey, Carmen Engleman, Dale Heil, Paul Klocko-(via webex), Greg Klos, Mike Lane, Aaron Ruff-(via webex)

Members excused: John Burke, Susan Haug, Gary Weiland, Marcell Wieloch

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, and Forestry Dept. staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director

Others Present: Pat Peckham

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Lane.

I. Minutes

Motion by Klos to approve the June 7, 2023 minutes. Motion **carried** unanimously 7-0.

II. New Business

A. Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee Appointments

Lovlien welcomed Taylor Dorsey as the Forestry Industry representative. Dorsey gave information about herself and members introduced themselves.

B. Review Fall 2023 Timbersale Package

The fall timbersale package had been distributed to Committee for review. The county forest sale offers 257 acres of timber on three tracts with an estimated volume of 19,140 tons and 36.0 thousand board feet. Lovlien discussed all the sales. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is October 2, 2023. Questions were answered.

C. Results of the 2023 Forest Certification Audit

Lovlien explained that Marathon County is certified under the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and a subset of counties are audited every year. No Corrective Action Requests (CARS) were found in the counties that are certified SFI and FSC. One Opportunity for Improvement (OFI) was found in counties certified (SFI) and also one under (FSC). Marathon County is due for a field audit in 2025.

D. Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations Revisions

Lovlien said revisions to the regulations include an updated date for harvesting related to DNR species guidance, updated mountain biking and horseback riding dates, and clarifications for the fat tire bike and snowshoe trails and season. **Motion** by Engelman to accept the changes to the Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations and move them on to the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Motion **carried** unanimously, 7-0.

E. Nine Mile Septic System Replacement Project

Polley explained that last year staff submitted an ARPA funding request for the septic system at Nine Mile. It has technically failed for what it was built for. It was installed to accommodate 500 people and over the years it has been found out that it is undersized so the use has been limited. Also included in the project are improvements to enhance areas within the chalet. The project has a good chance of getting funded. The system is still functioning and can be used as long as it doesn't fail completely.

F. County Conservation Aids Project – Nine Mile Planting

Lovlien explained that this grant matches fifty percent of State funds with fifty percent of County levy for fish, game, and habitat related projects. His recommendation is to use the funds to help purchase red pine trees to plant next spring at Nine Mile County Forest Unit.

G. Big Eau Pleine Archery Hunt Approved

The Department has worked with the DNR and gone through the County process to change the ordinance to allow an archery hunt at the Big Eau Pleine. The benefits of controlling the deer population are to manage disease, reduce crop damage, and for forest regeneration. There is a lot of information about the hunt on the Department's website page. It will be in the entire park, is for crossbow and bow hunting only, will start November 15th and end on January 7th. Staff has already put a press release out and signage warning park users. Requirements include being in an elevated platform, 100 feet from a trail or center of a road and 100 yards from designated use area like campground, beach, and parking lots. Staff would like to know the effectiveness of the hunt and is asking hunters to fill out a short questionnaire. More information will be put out closer

to the start of the hunt. Lovlien said they aren't getting many trees regenerating and hopes the hunt will help with that for the future of the park. Questions were answered.

H. Member Items

Lane discussed how duck hunting is allowed at Big Eau Pleine Park in a blind that is placed below the ordinary high watermark. Polley mentioned that was also the case at Ashley Park which is undeveloped.

III. Old Business

A. Status on Voluntary Carbon Projects

Lovlien reached out to Anew Climate Solutions to see if the County's project was still feasible. They told him that they currently have a sufficient number of Wisconsin projects and were not taking on any new projects of our size at this time. Lovlien said Anew Climate Solutions may be the only company right now that would purchase county forest carbon credits at this time. The voluntary carbon market program is relatively new and over time more will become known about it. Lovlien will continue to monitor the program and will bring this back to the Subcommittee if the County becomes eligible.

B. Final Approved DNR Antlerless Harvest Quota for 2023 Season Including Gun Deer Seasons

Lane reported that the Marathon County Deer Advisory Council proposed decreasing permits on private lands and increasing permits on public lands. It was the only proposal from a Council in Wisconsin that was revised. The State increased the number of permits on the private lands only from 1800 to 2000. Lovlien said there are 2000 bonus private permits and 500 bonus public permits in Marathon County. He was glad to see 500 public permits because there's some areas in the forest units where they aren't getting tree regeneration. Lovlien noted the gun deer seasons are as follows: Youth Deer Hunt: October 7-8, 2023, Gun Deer Hunt November 18-26, 2023, Muzzleloader: November 27-December 6, 2023, Statewide Antlerless Hunt: December 7-10, 2023. Marathon County has never been included in the Antlerless Only Holiday Hunt which is December 24, 2023-January 1, 2024.

C. Nine Mile Forest Recreation Area Remaining Fall Events

The remaining fall events are the Ragnar Race from Sept. 18-25 with the event taking place on Friday and Saturday. The trails along the race will be closed Friday and Saturday only and will re-open on Sunday. Other events include Wausau West cross-country race on September 28, Mosinee cross-country race on October 14 and the IronBull Granite Grinder Bike Race on October 14, 2023.

D. Winter Fat Tire Biking Permanent Season Update

A permanent fat tire biking season has been approved by the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Staff has met with CWOCC and snowshoers. The Department has a summer and winter biking agreement with CWOCC. CWOCC will be responsible for signing trails and all the winter grooming at Nine Mile. Polley is working with an Eagle Scout to sign the snowshoe trail.

E. 2023 – 2025 Final State Budget Approved

Lovlien reported that the State Budget was approved. Included in the budget was an increase for the administration grant and sustainable forestry grant annually, an increase of \$550,000 annually for ATV/UTV enforcement aids to \$1.3M, double per mile reimbursement for UTV trail maintenance from \$200 to \$400, and no changes to Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program.

F. Oak Wilt Expanding at Nine Mile Forest

Lovlien said staff has used a girdle and herbicide process at Nine Mile to stop the spread of oak wilt. There are two or three pockets that will be treated this year. The main way the disease moves is through the interconnected root system and it can also be spread by insects as well. Questions were answered.

IV. 2023 Remaining Meeting Date – December 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Klos. Motion **carried** unanimously 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Thomas Lovlien - Secretary

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

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 ~~\$3,000~~ **\$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~~ 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~~
- 3.4. Eau Pleine Riders Inc.
4. 5. Elderon Sno-Angels
5. 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

MARATHON COUNTY FOREST Fall 2023 BID OPENING RESULTS

SPECIES	TONS	HIGH BID	LOW BID	Weighted Average of All Bids	Weighted Average of High Bids	Wt. Av. High Bids Spring 2023	Wt. Av. High Bids Fall 2022	Wt. Av. High Bids Spring 2022		
ASPEN	12200	\$6.70	\$6.55	\$6.60	\$ 6.63	\$6.92	\$11.87	\$16.35		
MIXED HWD	2000	\$7.25	\$7.15	\$7.20	\$ 7.20	\$10.49	\$10.36	\$17.01		
OAK	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	\$14.02	\$5.59	\$12.07		
BASSWOOD	70	\$4.10	\$4.10	\$4.10	\$ 4.10	\$8.22	\$2.69	\$10.52		
SPRUCE	70	\$6.70	\$6.70	\$6.70	\$ 6.70	\$13.72	\$8.10	xxxx		
RED PINE	xxxx	xxxx	xxx	xxxx	xxxx	\$38.51	xxxx	\$19.01		
WHITE PINE	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	\$31.57	xxxx	xxxx		
MBF										
RED OAK	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	\$384.90	\$309.75	\$473.68		
RED MAPLE	24	\$180.00	\$170.00	\$179.17	\$ 179.17	\$247.99	\$307.30	\$405.71		
ASH	4	\$145.00	\$140.00	\$142.50	\$ 142.50	\$197.67	\$167.11	\$397.83		
MIXED HWD	4	\$170.00	\$170.00	\$170.00	\$ 170.00	\$350.00	\$200.00	\$400.00		
BASSWOOD	3	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$ 110.00	\$139.72	\$150.00	\$316.67		
HARD MAPLE	1	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$ 180.00	\$190.00	\$198.00	\$604.00		
BIOMASS Tons										
All Species	4800	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	xxxx	xxxx	\$0.50	\$1.00		
Number of sales sold				3/3				4/4	4/4	5/5
Acres sold				257				330	326	301
Value of sales sold				\$101,793.50				\$ 355,409.70	\$ 242,605.00	\$ 382,264.40
Appraised value of sales				\$126,441.00				\$ 231,750.00	\$ 181,884.50	\$ 199,942.00
\$ / acre sold				\$396.08				\$1,077.00	\$744.19	\$1,269.98
Ton eq. sold				14500				16771	17926	18126
\$ / ton ave.				\$7.02				\$21.19	\$13.53	\$21.09
Cord eq. sold				6406				7066	7800	7481
\$ / cord ave.				\$15.89				\$50.30	\$31.10	\$51.10

This bid opening was for three county forest timber sales. All three sold but on the second bid opening. Received 4 bids from 2 separate bidders. One bid was rejected for not submitting a proper bid. **10% DEPOSIT.** All three sales were winter only. Historically poor pulp markets.

2024 Proposed Budget

Staff has submitted a budget request for 2024 that has a 1% increase in operational expenses over 2023 to the County Administrator for his consideration and use in preparing his executive budget. The County Administrator's budget has been accepted by the Human Resources and Finance Committee (HRFC) for consideration. Each committee is asked to review the budgets of the departments that they work with and provide comments to the HRFC by November 6, 2023. Staff wishes to make the committee aware of the primary components of the proposed budget. Attached is a levy summary sheet of all County PRF budgets reflecting an overall 1.1% increase from 2023 to 2024 which meets the directive the County Administrator put forth. Below is a summary of the budgets with levy changes:

Snowmobile Trails Coordinator Budget: The overall levy is down \$1,708. In 2022 this position was in the first year of being full time and costs for 2024 have been allocated more efficiently to the grant and city/county recreation programs.

Peoples Sports Complex Budget: The levy support was reduced by \$14,534 due mostly to the purchase of a robotic line striper. The striper allowed us to decrease our part-time staffing cost by \$10,000 and our paint cost by \$3,000. The goal of the sports complex is to be 70% cost recovery. The budget for 2024 has the complex at 72.8% cost recovery.

County Park Budget: Attached is a 2023-2024 budget comparison of the County Park budget. The overall levy is up \$35,517. Personnel costs attribute to the majority of the increase. Staff was directed by the County Administrator to increase wages by 3% and increase revenue and decrease expenses as much as possible with no more than a 1% increase to operational costs. Staff scrutinized each line item to ensure the funding requested was accurate and reflective of past year's activities.

Notable changes to expenditures include \$4,021 increase for a Sheriff's Department Recreation Deputy, \$20,690 increase for water, electric, sewer & gas, \$1,900 increase to refuse collection, \$2,475 (4%) increase in IT services, software and credit card fees, \$9,000 increase in gas & diesel fuel, \$5,850 increase registration and tuition for CDL training based on new requirements, \$3,000 increase in other raw materials for firewood, \$1,500 increase in concrete and \$15,240 (5%) increase in insurance and incremental increases/decreases in a handful of other expenditures.

Overall revenues increased by \$30,524. Notable changes include a \$26,776 decrease in balance fund transfer, \$11,400 in recreation fees, \$13,000 increase in shelter reservations, \$20,000 increase for ice rentals, and incremental increases/decreases in a handful of other revenues.

Also attached is a summary list of the 2024 PRF County Small Maintenance Projects.

The HRFC has recommended a 20% increase to rolling stock for 2024 as part of the budget process. This would increase the department's rolling stock allocation from \$173,460 to \$209,680. The County and the City split the rolling stock budget 50/50 so the requested amount from the City will be also \$209,680.

The Marathon Junction budget looks to have a substantial increase however in 2023 Marathon Junction was closed due to the water project within Marathon Park. This was a known activity and the revenue and expenditures were significantly reduced in 2023 to reflect this closure. The 2024 budget includes regular operation of the Marathon Junction.

Staff have met with the County Administrator and he accepted our 2024 budget as submitted and included it in the budget submitted to HRFC.

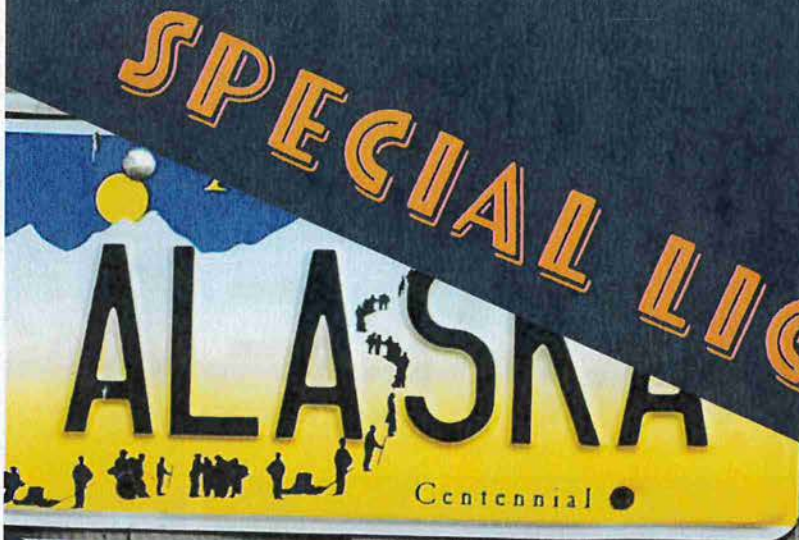
Marathon County 2024 Budget

Levy by Org.

<u>Budget Section</u>	<u>2023 Levy</u>	<u>2024 Levy</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>	
101-692 Snowmobile Trails Coordinator	30,301	28,593	(1,708)	-5.6%
101-710 County Park	2,053,787	2,089,304	35,517	1.7%
101-711 Playgrounds Summer Recreation	-	-	-	
101-712 Challenge Grant	-	-	-	
101-714 Mountain-Bay Trail	-	-	-	
142-726 Sports Complex	60,861	46,327	(14,534)	-23.9%
145-724 Marathon Park - Junction/Train	6,737	10,915	4,178	62.0%
147-716 Fairgrounds Maint	-	-	-	
150-722 Reclamation Rib Falls	-	-	-	
150-723 WI River Park	-	-	-	
151-725 Park Gifts	-	-	-	
152-727 Park Land & Products	-	-	-	
153-778 Segregated Land Purchase	-	-	-	
154-690 Nine Mile Trails	-	0	0	
174-759 Fema Cattail Removal 2011-2012	-	-	-	
254-751 County Conservation Program	4,314	4,314	-	0.0%
255-752 County Forest Road Aids	-	-	-	
257-755 Forestry State Aids	-	-	-	
258-756 Wildlife Habitat Management	-	-	-	
285-693 Snowmobile Trails 2016-2017	-	-	-	
297-718 Snowmobile Trails 2017-2018	-	-	-	
331-694 Snowmobile Trails 2007-2008	-	-	-	
355-696 Snowmobile Trails 2021-2022	-	-	-	
378-730 Special Projects RTA Grant	-	-	-	
404-760 Sustainable Forestry	-	-	-	
429-691 Snowmobile Grant 2018-2019	-	-	-	
431-697 Summer ATV/UTV 2022-2023	-	-	-	
433-699 Winter ATV 2022-2023	-	-	-	
434-700 Snowmobile Trails 2023-2024	-	-	-	
436-694 Snowmobile Trails 2020	-	-	-	
439-701 Snowmobile Trails 2022-2023	-	-	-	
440-702 Winter ATV 2020-2021 Snow	-	-	-	
441-731 Pittman-Robertson Grant	-	-	-	
454-703 Special Projects Snowmobile	-	-	-	
455-704 Summer ATV 2021-2022	-	-	-	
456-705 Winter ATV 2021-2022	-	-	-	
469-706 Special Projects ATV	-	-	-	
482-757 Co Forest Admin	-	-	-	
496-707 Snowmobile Trails 2020-2021	-	-	-	
497-708 Summer ATV/UTV 2023-2024	-	-	-	
498-709 Winter ATV/UTV 2023-2024	-	-	-	
000-000 GL DESCRIPTION	-	-	-	
000-000 GL DESCRIPTION	-	-	-	
000-000 GL DESCRIPTION	-	-	-	
TOTAL LEVY	<u>2,156,000</u>	<u>2,179,453</u>	<u>23,453</u>	1.1%

WISCONSIN
COUNTY
FORESTS
ASSOCIATION

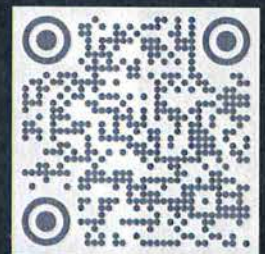
SPECIAL LICENSE PLATE



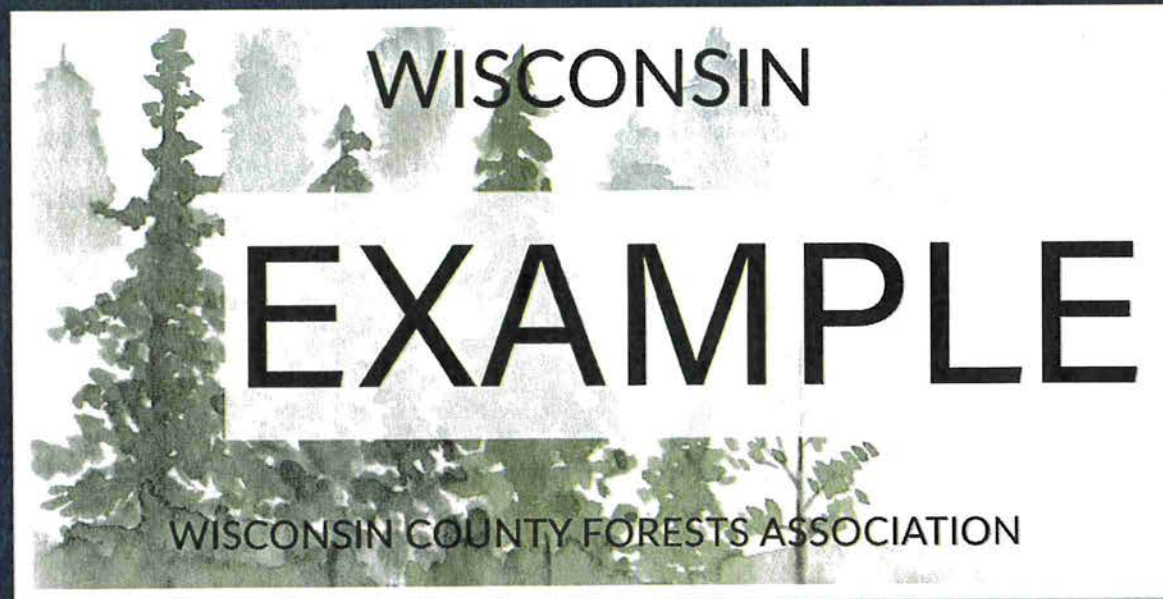
Are you passionate about Wisconsin's natural resources? Are you an avid user of our County Forests? Do you support healthy forests, robust wildlife habitat and clean water?

If yes, consider supporting the Wisconsin County Forests Association's campaign for a special license plate! With an annual \$25 tax deductible donation, you can support over 2.4 million acres of county forests in Wisconsin! Revenue from license plate sales will go to promote for and educate on sustainable forest management in Wisconsin by supporting the Association and County Forests.

Sign our petition today!
For more information,
visit www.wisconsincountyforests.com/plate



SUPPORT COUNTY FORESTS



WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL LICENSE PLATE PROJECT

September 26, 2023

OVERVIEW

The establishment of a special license plate, care of the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), will help promote and advocate for sustainable forest management in the State of Wisconsin. The forest products industry is vital to the State, annually contributing over \$24 billion into the economy. Funds raised through these license plates will be used for WCFA operations, grants, projects, scholarships, education, research and more.

GOALS

To promote sustainable forest management in the State of Wisconsin through education & outreach. To diversify funding sources for the Wisconsin County Forests Association. To increase revenue, allowing continued growth & development for Wisconsin County Forests Association staff, programs & services.

SPECIFICATIONS

Authorized special group license plates are available through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles. License plates allow for special recognition of a group, as well as the opportunity to receive charitable donations of \$25 per motorist annually. The purchase of special license plates is voluntary.

The project requires an application fee for development costs, as well as the collecting of 500 signatures to be submitted at the time of applying. If successful, a minimum of 500 plates must be purchased annually to keep the plate in circulation. To read more information on special license plates - [Authorized special group license plates](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of developing a WCFA license plate is to support, develop and promote sustainable forest management in Wisconsin by establishing new initiatives which would essentially put money back into the local economy, mainly through our member counties. Examples of revenue uses:

- Diversify revenue for WCFA operating budget. Cover operation costs without increasing dues.
- Expand WCFA staff
- Expand WCFA programs and services
- Increase education and outreach:
- Workshops & training
- TV, Videos, Social Media tangibles
- Support of other entities - Member Counties, Trees for Tomorrow, the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, etc.
- Collaboration with other entities
- Sponsorship of programs or events
- Educational scholarships

- Offer scholarships to students attending SAF accredited programs for forest or natural resource management, or a forester tech program.
- Provide grants to county forest programs for:
 - Projects
 - Land acquisition
 - Recreational amenities or services

ECONOMICS / PROJECTED REVENUE

(Based on critical habitat plate information in Minnesota)

For context and as an example, since 1996, more than 100,000 Minnesota motorists have purchased Critical Habitat license plates, generating more than \$19 million since then to support land conservation through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. That's an average of almost \$800,000 annually contributed to the DNR by a \$30 yearly donation from motorists. Such data is difficult to track down for Wisconsin.

If we follow the same logic: In Wisconsin, 957,470 license plates were issued in 2018. Assuming an annual \$25 dollar donation, the following income projections could be expected based on the percentage of overall WCFA license plates purchased:

- 10% of total license plates purchased for WCFA (95,747) x \$25 = \$2,393,675
- 5% (47,870) x \$25 = \$1,196,750
- 1% (9,575) x \$25 = \$239,375
- 0.5% (4,790) x \$25 = \$119,750
- Required minimum of 500 x \$25 = \$12,500

If successful, WCFA could potentially give money back to its members. While membership dues would likely still be required, membership costs could be net zero over a year.

There's likely to be some consequences, some unintended with developing a project such as this. It would most certainly require additional time & energy to manage the revenue and the subsequent uses for it. It's also not a guarantee this would be successful so it's not without any risk, however, the submittal fee is refundable if the plate would be denied by the DOT. Initially, time and energy would be the biggest expense. Minimal funds would be spent on the submission or marketing until the 500 signatures are collected, which would be a good gauge of interest in purchasing plates.

BUDGET

\$15,500 to the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation for application and set up.
\$30,000 for marketing and advertising of the plate (over 2-3 years).

MILESTONES

- Support Wisconsin County Forests Association Board of Directors approval of project timeline, including commitment of funds.
- Obtaining 500 signatures. Projected to take up 6 months to gather. WCFA will take the lead on gathering signatures.
- Application submission to WI Department of Transportation. Requires a 30-day public review. If passed, it can take up to a year to develop and get plates into circulation.
- 5,000 license plates purchased within 5 years of DOT approval.

TIMELINE

- September 2022: Board approval
- February 2023: Apply for Extension grant (did not receive)
- 2023: Implement marketing campaign (in progress)
- September 2023: Kick off project with membership (ready)
- Fall/Winter/Spring 2023/2024: Acquisition of 500 signatures & plate design completed
- June 2024: Review progress at summer Board meeting
- July 2024: Review and submittal of application to DOT
- Fall 2024: DOT approval and plates are in circulation
- 2024 – 2026: Implementation of plate marketing and outreach strategies.

Recognizing if support for the project, both internal and external, exists, it may take several years for WCFA to see substantial revenue increase, where progress could be made on adding additional staff and services.

MARKETING & OUTREACH

- Contest for license plate creation.
- Work with WAOW to market and promote the plate
- Social media
- Website content and contact form (no blind emails)
- Billboards
- Flyers
- TV ads
- Mailers
- Expos, conference, booths
- Lean on partners

EXAMPLE



ATTENTION ARTISTS:

The Special License Plate Design Contest, hosted by the Wisconsin County Forests Association, is now open and accepting entries. The winning design will appear on a Special License Plate made available through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Entries will be accepted starting immediately and must be delivered or postmarked by **January 15, 2024**. If wanting to deliver artwork to the WCFA office in person, artist **MUST** make arrangements with Rebekah Luedtke prior to dropping it off.

Please read the enclosed "Special License Plate Design Contest Entry Application" and the "Special License Plate Design Contest Rules." Be sure your submitted artwork conforms to all specifications and your paperwork is included during mailing. Please note that entries should not be protected by any covering (such as acetate or cellophane); however, you may use an acetate envelope for protection during mailing so long as this envelope can be easily removed.

All entries should be mailed to:

Wisconsin County Forests Association
ATTN: Rebekah Luedtke
801 N Sales Street, Ste 107, Merrill, WI 54452

OR emailed to info@wisconsincountyforests.com

Selection of the WCFA Special License Plate Design will take place in a private meeting of the selection panel in late January 2024.

If you have any questions, please contact Rebekah Luedtke, WCFA Executive Director, at (715) 539-1097 or email info@wisconsincountyforests.com.

Good luck and we look forward to seeing your entry!

WCFA SPECIAL LICENSE PLATE DESIGN CONTEST RULES

I. CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

Any person who is a United States citizen, or legal permanent resident, residing in the State of Wisconsin shall be eligible to submit an entry in the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) Special License Plate Design Contest. Two (2) entries may be submitted by each contestant.

II. CONTEST DATES

Entries for the contest to select the design for the WCFA Special License Plate will be accepted at any time following this announcement and must be received or postmarked no later than **January 15, 2024**. Entries shall be submitted following submission procedures listed below in Section VII.

III. RESTRICTIONS OF SUBJECT MATTER

The subject shall consist of some setting of the natural environment and the natural resources which are found in Wisconsin. Examples include, but not limited to: forests, trees, lakes, rivers, wildlife, native flora & fauna, outdoor recreation, forest products, etc. The WCFA "tree" logo may be used or included in the design. The logo is displayed in the top right of the application form for reference.

IV. ORIGINALITY OF ENTRY

The submitted design must be the artist's own creation and shall not be copied or duplicated in whole or in part from previously published art, including published photographs.

V. SUITABILITY OF ENTRY FOR REPRODUCTION

Artists shall not be limited in the choice of colors or medium. The medium selected must be of permanent quality, such as pen and ink, oil, watercolor, etching, or pencil and should be rendered with full attention to tone, detail, and accuracy. Photographs are not eligible. Metallic paints and fluorescent paints should not be used, as the printing process used to reproduce the actual plates is not capable of reproducing metallic or fluorescent properties.

The artist should keep in mind that Wisconsin Department of Transportation lettering will appear on the finished license plate. Do not try to fit in the words on your entry but DO keep some areas open or lighter in coloring to accommodate the lettering. The open areas can be light or dark in tone, but should be relatively free of any harsh contrasts from dark to light. WCFA may request the winning artist to adjust elements of their design if issues arise with the production of the plate.

VI. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY

The design shall be horizontal in the exact proportion of 6" high x 12" wide. No lettering or scroll work, including the artist's signature, is permitted on the design itself. The only visible identification mark on each entry at the time of judging will be the letter code assigned to the entry by the contest coordinator.

VII. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

It is recommended that every entry be mounted and affixed with white matting to the outside dimensions of 10" high by 16" wide. Masonite board of 1/8-inch thickness with 1/8-inch matting is strongly recommended. No entry will be accepted that is in a wooden, metal, or plastic frame or that is under glass. Entries should not be protected by a covering (such as acetate or cellophane); however, an acetate envelope may be used for protection during mailing so long as the envelope can be easily removed.

The entry form must be submitted with the original artwork, certifying the originality of the entry and acknowledging the artist's acceptance of the terms and conditions governing the exclusive rights of the Wisconsin County Forests Association to reproduce the winning artwork. All entries will be processed by WCFA based on the date of receipt.

VIII. PROPERTY INSURANCE FOR ENTRIES

The Wisconsin County Forests Association will not insure any entry it receives. All contestants are advised that it is their responsibility to obtain adequate property insurance for their respective entry, should they desire such protection.

IX. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CONTEST RULES

Any entry that fails to comply with any of the requirements of the contest shall be disqualified and will not be considered by the judging panel. Such entries will be mailed back to the submitter within two weeks of the completion of contest judging.

X. SELECTION PANEL

There will be a panel of up to nine (9) judges appointed and will be selected to provide a representative cross-section of the WCFA membership and Board of Directors. Judges selected will serve without compensation.

All qualifying entries will be displayed and shown in chronological order based on the date they were received. The only visible identification mark on each entry will be the letter assigned to the entry by the contest coordinator.

XI. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE DESIGN SELECTION

Selection of the contest winner will take place in a private meeting of the selection panel in late January 2024.

XII. DESIGN SELECTION PROCEDURE AND SCORING

All entries will be judged on artistic composition and perspective, originality and suitability for reproduction. They should lend themselves to reproduction with the fullest possible attention to tone and detail.

XIII. AWARDS

The winner will receive a check for \$1,000 and a certificate of recognition.

After awarding, the winning design will become the property of WCFA and WCFA will retain all ownership rights thereafter. All other submissions will be returned via mail to the artist if desired. NOTE: Please check the appropriate box on the entry form to indicate your desires.

TO ENTER:

- Read and understand all of the contest rules before creating a design. The rules are also available on the WCFA website at www.wisconsincountyforests.com/plate
- Design MUST be exactly 6" high x 12" wide.
- Do not use a signature.

Entries may be submitted in one of two ways:

Send in via regular mail. The completed contest entry form must be included.

Wisconsin County Forests Association
ATTN: Rebekah Luedtke
801 N Sales Street, Ste 107, Merrill, WI 54452

OR

Save the design file electronically (PDF, PNG or JPG) and electronically complete the contest entry form. Attach both the design file and the contest entry form to an email and send to: info@wisconsincountyforests.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2024

Wisconsin County Forests Association

Special License Plate Design Contest Entry Application

NOTICE: Use this form to submit artwork for the WCFA Special License Plate Design Contest. Your application will not be considered unless you complete and sign this form. Personally identifiable information on this form will be used for administering the contest and to publicize winning entries, but will not be sold or given out.



Entry Agreement:

I, the artist, hereby enter into this agreement with the Wisconsin County Forests Association, hereinafter referred to as WCFA, and submit an original design to the WCFA Special License Plate design contest subject to all the following conditions.

1. I have read, understand and agree to comply with the attached WCFA Special License Plate Design Contest Rules.
2. This entry is an original drawing of my own creation and is not copied, manipulated or duplicated from previously published photographs, artwork or electronic graphic images.
3. WCFA is not liable for any damage to or for the loss of any entry submitted by an artist. Insuring the entry, if desired, is the responsibility of the artist.
4. The winning artwork may be copied or reproduced, and the license plate will be made available for purchase by Wisconsin motorists through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Reproductions of the winning artwork may be published or otherwise reproduced by the WCFA for the distribution to others for copying and may be used for informational and educational purposes.
5. Any and all reproductions or copies of the design made or authorized by the WCFA may identify the artist at WCFA's discretion.
6. In this agreement, WCFA and the artist include their respective officers, employees, agents, directors, subcontractors' and contractors' assignees, partners, representatives, successors, heirs, or members.
7. I verify that no copyright infringements have been made by my design and acknowledge that I am liable for falsifying information.
8. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless WCFA from and against any liability or damages caused by my entry submission, which includes, but is not limited to, any copyright or trademark infringements.
9. I agree that the entry submission chosen as the contest winner entitles the winning artist to no more than a \$1,000 award and a certificate of recognition.
10. I understand that if my design is chosen as the winner, ownership rights of the design transfer in their entirety to WCFA.

To submit entry, complete this form, attach to the design and mail to the address below. You may also electronically complete the form and send it, along with the design file (accepted file types are PDF, PNG or JPG) as attachments, in an email to:

info@wisconsincountyforests.com

Artist's Name	
Artist's Home Address	
City, State	
Zip Code	
Email Address	
Phone Number with Area Code	
If design is NOT selected, do you wish for it to be returned to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

I verify that I have read and comply with all the contest rules, and that I meet all eligibility requirements.

Artist's Signature	Date
Parent or Guardian's Signature (if under 18)	Date

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2024

Authorized Special Group License Plate Signature Page

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
MV2090

Section 5 - Signatures

By signing below, I attest that I am a resident of Wisconsin and I intend to purchase specialty plates associated with [Wisconsin County Forests Association](#) if the group becomes an Authorized Special Group. I understand that by purchasing these specialty license plates, a \$25 annual donation may be required in addition to my vehicle registration fee. *MUST BE ORIGINAL INK SIGNATURES*

Signature	Home Street Address	City	State	ZIP Code
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WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

SUPPORTING RESTORATION OF DIVISION OF FORESTRY BUDGET CUTS

Resolution 01-23

1 WHEREAS, The Division of Forestry was required to cut 5 positions as part of the current state budget
2 as well as other budget reductions; and

3 WHEREAS, The current state budget also transferred \$25 million from surplus Forestry SEG funds to
4 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fish and wildlife programs; and

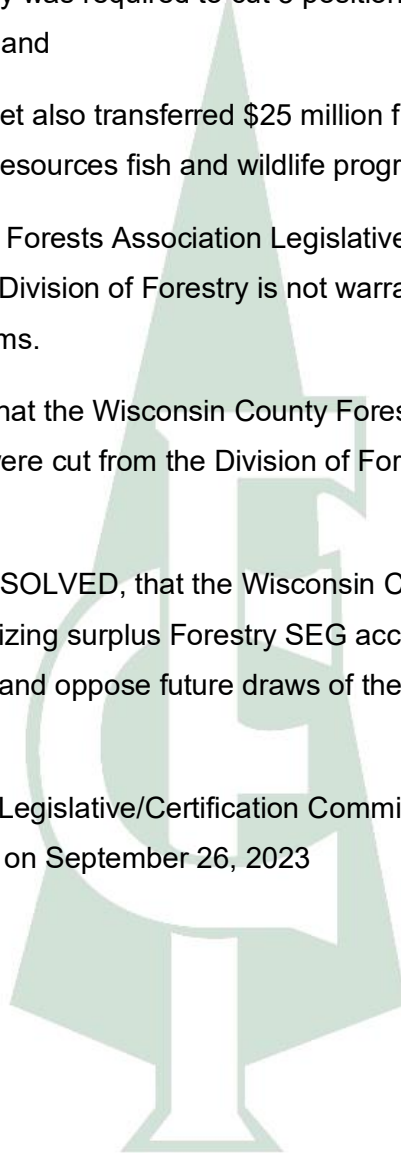
5 WHEREAS, The Wisconsin County Forests Association Legislative/Certification Committee has
6 determined that making cuts to the Division of Forestry is not warranted considering the surplus funds
7 and transfers made to other programs.

8 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin County Forests Association work towards
9 restoring funds and positions that were cut from the Division of Forestry during the 2023-2025
10 Wisconsin budget; and

11 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin County Forests Association work with
12 partners to develop priorities for utilizing surplus Forestry SEG account funds, to advocate for an audit
13 of the DNR Fish & Wildlife account and oppose future draws of the Forestry SEG account for non-
14 forestry purposes.

15 Recommended for adoption by the Legislative/Certification Committee on September 12, 2023 and
16 presented to the Board of Directors on September 26, 2023

17 Approved September 26, 2023



WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

EXCEPTIONS TO DNR COUNTY FOREST ADMINISTRATION GRANT STANDARDS

Resolution 02-23

1 WHEREAS, The Department of Natural Resources annually provides to counties a grant funding 50%
2 of a County Forest Administrators wage and fringe benefits provided they have a 4-year degree in
3 Forestry from an accredited institution; and

4 WHEREAS, There are currently several Wisconsin County Forest Administrators who do not have a 4-
5 year Forestry degree that are effectively managing county forest programs and are ineligible to receive
6 grant funds; and

7 WHEREAS, The Department of Natural Resources has made exceptions for prior County Forest
8 Administrators without 4-year degrees but not for those currently employed by counties; and

9 WHEREAS, it is increasingly difficult to recruit qualified candidates who have 4-year degrees in
10 Forestry.

11 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin County Forests Association supports creating an
12 exception to the grant eligibility to allow for County Forest Administrators to also be eligible for the grant
13 if they hold a 2-year Forestry degree or a 4-year degree in Natural Resources, Wildlife or Conservation
14 and have at least 3 years' service as a County Forest Administrator; and

15 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin County Forests Association supports
16 this same language as amendments to state statute if an exceptions cannot be developed.

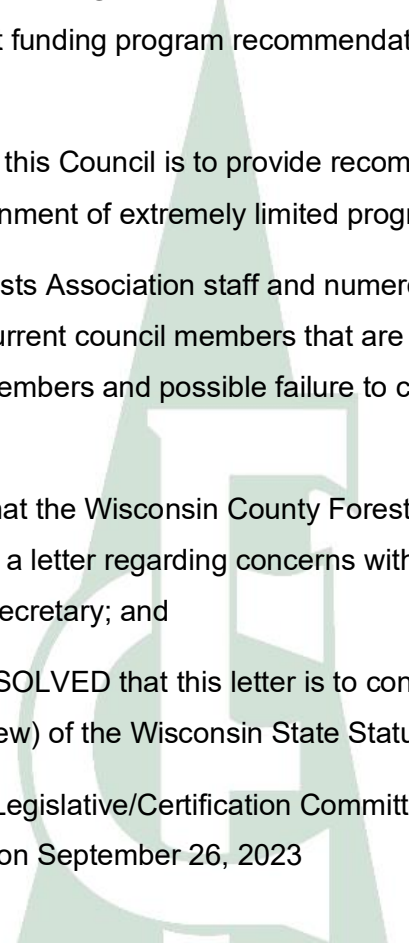
17 Recommended for adoption by the Legislative/Certification Committee on September 12, 2023 and
18 presented to the Board of Directors on September 26, 2023.

19 Approved September 26, 2023

WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

CONCERNS WITH STATE SNOWMOBILE RECREATION COUNCIL ACTIONS

Resolution 03-23

- 1 WHEREAS, The State of Wisconsin has a Governors Snowmobile Recreation Council, with citizen
2 members, making snowmobile grant funding program recommendations to the Department of Natural
3 Resources; and
- 4 WHEREAS, The primary function of this Council is to provide recommendations on County snowmobile
5 program grant requests in an environment of extremely limited program funds; and
- 6 WHEREAS, Wisconsin County Forests Association staff and numerous County Forest Administrators
7 have noted numerous issues with current council members that are concerning, in particular potential
8 conflict of interest among Council members and possible failure to comply with statute, code and
9 Council guidelines
- 10 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin County Forests Association directs their
11 Executive Director to draft and send a letter regarding concerns with the Snowmobile Recreation
12 Council to the Governor and DNR Secretary; and
- 13 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this letter is to contain references to Chapter 227
14 (Administrative Procedure and Review) of the Wisconsin State Statutes.
- 15 Recommended for adoption by the Legislative/Certification Committee on September 12, 2023 and
16 presented to the Board of Directors on September 26, 2023
- 17 Approved September 26, 2023
- 

WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

SUPPORT TO SERVE ON COUNCILS/COMMITTEES

Resolution 04-23

1 WHEREAS, It has been determined by the Legislative/Certification Committee that it would be
2 beneficial to have a County Forest Representative on the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, There has been a request from the Department of Natural Resources to provide a
5 representative to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) development team;

6 WHEREAS, individuals have volunteered to apply to serve on the Snowmobile Recreation Council and
7 SCORP team.

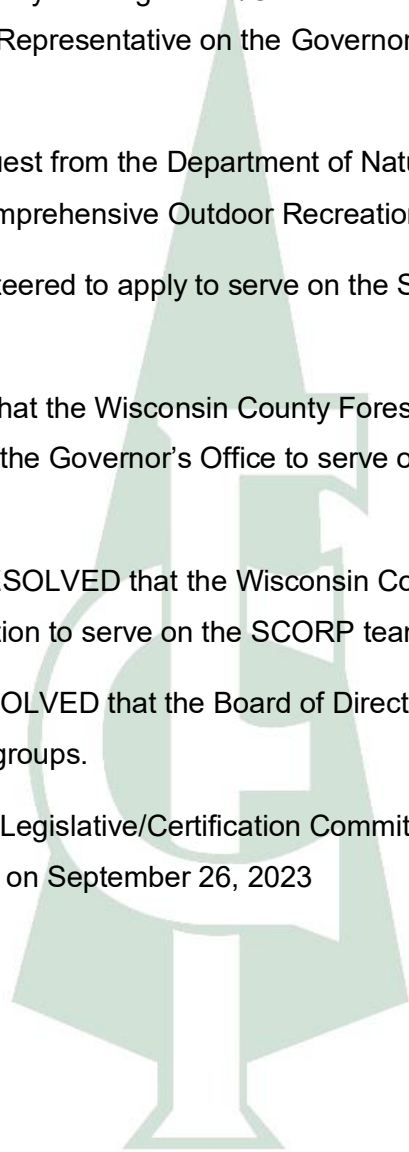
8 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin County Forests Association nominates and
9 supports Tara Krall's application to the Governor's Office to serve on the state Snowmobile Recreation
10 Council; and

11 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin County Forests Association nominates
12 and support Matt Hansen's application to serve on the SCORP team; and

13 THEREFORE BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors thanks both Tara and Matt for
14 their willingness to serve on these groups.

15 Recommended for adoption by the Legislative/Certification Committee on September 12, 2023 and
16 presented to the Board of Directors on September 26, 2023

17 Approved September 26, 2023



Wisconsin County Forests Association

Joe Waichulis
President
Clark County

Phil Schneider
Vice President
Rusk County

Bill Bialecki
Treasurer
Lincoln County

Norman Bickford
Director
Burnett County

Myron Brooks
Director
Taylor County

Ed Kelley
Director
Florence County

Bill Schradle
Director
Barron County

Rick Seefeldt
Director
Marathon County

Hank Novak
Director
Marinette County

Hank Graber
Director
Washburn County

Lolita Olson
Director
Washburn County

Michael Luedeke
Director-at-Large
Spooner, WI

Jeff Barkley
Director-at-Large
Madison, WI

Henry Schienebeck
Director-at-Large
Rhineland, WI

Rebekah Luedtke
Executive Director

801 N. Sales St,
Suite 107
Merrill, WI 54452
715-539-1097
rebekah@wisconsin
countyforests.com

October 24 2023

Honorable Tony Evers, Governor of Wisconsin
Adam Payne, Secretary-Designee, Department of Natural Resources

RE: Misconduct of the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council

Dear Governor Evers and DNR Secretary Payne;

The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) is respectfully requesting your attention and corrective action concerning the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council's ongoing lack of professional conduct and recent issues not following state statute when approving grant applications for state funding.

WCFA represents the forestry interests of the 30 counties in Wisconsin with lands enrolled under Wisconsin's County Forest Law (§28.10 & §28.11). Our member counties collectively manage over 2.4 million acres in Wisconsin, making them the largest public ownership in the State. The counties' partnership with the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council, along with numerous snowmobile clubs and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is critical to their success in providing the citizens and visitors of Wisconsin a quality experience when riding over 8,400 miles of snowmobile trails located on county forest lands, as well as those trails managed by the counties under cooperative agreements with other landowners including the State of Wisconsin and the United States Forest Service.

After the most recent Council meeting on August 30th, there are continued concerns in how the Council is proceeding with the review of grant applications and overall conduct and management of council business. It has become evident this Council has evolved into an entity with approval authority rather than being a body who recommends, as outlined in WI § 350.14 and their own bylaws. It's clear that certain members of the Council do not approach Council business with affected stakeholders and the consideration of grant applications with good intent but rather with animosity and ill will.

During the August 30th meeting, the following items were observed and should be cause for concern:

1. The Council violated state statute by not following the priority listing when considering grant applications for funding without giving sufficient reasoning. WI § 23.09(26)(c) states: *Distribution of snowmobile trail funds shall be made on the basis of a priority system according to the following priority-ranked purposes:*
 1. Maintenance of existing approved trails.
 2. Club signing program.
 3. Major bridge reconstruction or rehabilitation.
 4. Route signing program.
 5. Trail rehabilitation.
 6. Development of new trails.

Wisconsin County Forests Association

Given these priorities, bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation projects **shall** be funded prior to any new projects for trails or bridges. Several counties were asked on the spot to voluntarily prioritize bridge rehabilitation projects. The Council was not honest or forthcoming in why the request was being asked of those counties and this approach put the counties in an awkward spot and felt pressured to be accommodating. It later became clear several bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation projects were bypassed in an effort to save funding for one specific new bridge project which was put forward by Sauk County further in the applications and down in the priority list. We feel the reasoning given for not funding reconstruction and rehabilitation projects was extremely insufficient and the Council failed to follow state statute. Comments were made by both DNR staff and Council members that certain bridge projects did not meet the definition or criteria of “major” but no such definition or criteria exists.

2. Sam Landes, who is a current member of the Council, presented the new bridge application for Sauk County and advocated for it. As a Council member, this is a clear conflict of interest as per WI §19.46. Mr. Landes should have recused himself and gone on record as abstaining from voting on the project. It should be noted there were 2 individuals from Sauk County in the room that could have presented the project.
3. Furthermore, the Sauk County application was incomplete and should not been considered for funding in the first place, as it did not provide two cost estimates, which the Council has been extremely adamant about. The application included only one cost estimate from an engineer which, according to the DNR’s application checklist, does not qualify.
4. The Sauk County application was also listed in the “mandatory trail relocation” category, which is covered under #6 of the priority list. As mentioned above in #1, many bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation projects were skipped or bypassed in order to set aside funds for the “development of new trails” category.

It was evident the new bridge project in Sauk County was a pet project for at least one, if not multiple, Council members and that strategical discussions about said project had occurred outside the formal Council meeting. We feel the Snowmobile Recreation Council is acting outside their authority, which is set in WI § 350.14. Additionally, the question should be asked if a snowmobile bridge in Sauk County is the best use of state funding when they receive minimal snow each winter sufficient for snowmobiling. Many of the projects that were asked to be voluntarily withdrawn are in Counties who have open trails for the majority of the winter months and therefore would be utilized by significantly more trail users annually.

Furthermore, we feel the entire snowmobile grant program needs a complete overall and should be re-evaluated from top to bottom. We are requesting the DNR pull together an advisory committee of interested and affected stakeholders to reconsider how the program is constructed and operates, as well as to strongly consider these additional requests:

1. Adopt a formal council membership which provides a sufficient cross section of all stakeholders and interested parties from across the primary regions of Wisconsin. Examples of entities which could be represented include trail managers, club members, trail users, law enforcement, tourism, transportation, industry, non-profit associations, DNR legal services, etc. WCFA is ready to put forth an applicant to sit on the Council and represent the county forests and our Association.

Wisconsin County Forests Association

2. Empower DNR staff, liaisons and leadership to enforce State of Wisconsin statutes and correct councils if and when necessary.
3. Reinforce to the Councils that the Department of Natural Resources is the authority on all decisions and has final say.
4. Require State ethics training, including conflict of interest, for all councils. Ethics training is required of certain councils already.
5. Request DNR legal services review and clarify council authority, bylaws, procedures and the obligations of council members under WI §19, specifically §19.45 – Standards of conduct, state public officials and §19.46 – Conflict of interest prohibited. DNR legal services should also review and reinforce who has final say in grant funding and approvals.
6. Develop a better strategy and guidance on how to deal with requests for storm damage funding. Emergency or storm damage grants should be accepted and executed by the DNR only.
7. The Snowmobile Recreation and Off-Road Vehicle Councils should be consistent where they are equal. There are currently several inconsistencies in how the two councils deal with issues.
8. The DNR should publicly advertise when Council seats are expiring and applications are being accepted.
9. Adopt ground rules into operational guidelines or by-laws regarding how to act in an appropriate and professional manner.

In addition, previous disparaging comments made by some Council members against the Counties during other meetings are disappointing and unbecoming of a Governor's Council. The most recent actions and misconduct of the Council is undermining the credibility and validity of the Governor's councils. Given the current issues with the Snowmobile Recreation Council, the snowmobile program may be better served by direct administration under the DNR, rather than with citizen advisory council oversight.

Lastly, enclosed is a resolution from the Wisconsin County Forests Association Board of Directors, approved September 26th, which supports requesting corrective action be taken by the Governor and the DNR. We would greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and your consideration of our requests. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,



Rebekah Luedtke
Executive Director
Wisconsin County Forests Association

Enclosed: WCFA Board of Directors Resolution 03-23

cc: Ann Kipper, Administrator, External Services Division, Department of Natural Resources
Senator Romaine Quinn, Chair of Senate Committee on Housing, Rural Issues and Forestry
Representative Jeff Mursau, Chair of Assembly Committee Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Discussion and Possible Action to Review and Consider Entering into an Agreement with the DNR on the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan

The Northern Long Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), because of white nose syndrome, Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifungus*), and tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) became listed as federally endangered on March 31 and WCFA has been working with DNR on how to continue to manage (harvest) our forests. Attached is the summary provided by DNR that includes the Counties covered activities under the permit and responsibilities. Signing on to the Lake States Bat Conservation Plan, (HCP) is not a requirement, but it 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. The agreement that has been finalized is attached for your review.

The landowner agreement includes our forested areas of the county forests and the county parks, and this agreement was approved by the Park Commission and Forestry/Recreation Committee at their meetings on October 31, 2023. The Environmental Resource Committee is asked to approve the agreement and authorize the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Director to sign on behalf of Marathon County.

Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan Summary

January 2023

Background

- Populations of cave hibernating bats in precipitous decline due to a white-nose syndrome (WNS).
 - WNS discovered in WI in 2014 and is now widespread in all known hibernacula.
- When USFWS listed the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) as Threatened in 2015 they specifically identified forest management as a potential source of take for the species.
 - During the summer these species utilize trees for maternity colonies and day roosts and they forage in forested areas.
- NLEB, Tri-colored bat and possibly little brown bat (LBB) will be listed as endangered due the impacts of WNS, and any take of an endangered species is prohibited. WI will need an incidental take permit to continue forest management activities.
- WI, MI, MN have jointly developed the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan to obtain a federal Incidental Take Permit under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 10 requesting authorization for the incidental take of bats during forest management activities.
- Permit expected to be issued March 2023.

Covered Species:

- Northern Long-eared Bat
 - Federally endangered as of 3/31/2023
- Tri-colored Bat
 - Federal listing expected in 2023
- Little Brown Bat
 - Under review for federal listing by USFWS

Covered Activities and Required Conservation Actions:

- Timber harvest and related forest practices:
 - Implement state tree retention guidelines.
 - 150 ft year-round buffer around known maternity roost trees.
 - 0.25 mile buffer around known hibernacula entrances.
 - No harvest except where objective is improving habitat for bats.
- Prescribed fire:
 - Ensure wind will carry smoke away from the entrance(s) of hibernacula.
 - Prohibit prescribed burns within 150 feet of known occupied maternity roost trees during pup season (June 1–July 31).
 - Reduce fire intensity within 0.25 miles of hibernacula entrances during spring and fall.
- Maintenance of existing permanent forestry roads and recreational trails on public lands:
 - Refers to maintenance that requires tree cutting on permanent roads maintained by WI DNR or County Forests (not DOT roads).
 - Remove trees from October 1 to March 1 within 150 feet of a known maternity roost.
 - Remove trees from October 15 to March 31 or from May 15 to August 15 within 2.5 miles of a known hibernaculum.
 - Removal of hazard trees always allowed.

- Construction of new permanent forestry roads and recreational trails on public lands:
 - Refers to permanent roads maintained by WI DNR or County Forests for the purpose of supporting land management and public recreation (not DOT roads).
 - Temporary roads built to support a specific management project and then closed are covered as a forestry practice.
 - No removal of large-diameter trees (i.e., 9 inches dbh) during pup season (June 1 – July 31).
 - No new roads and trails within 150 feet of a known occupied maternity roost tree.
 - No new roads or trails within 0.25 miles of a known hibernaculum entrance year round.
 - Remove trees from October 15 to March 31 or from May 15 to August 15 within 2.5 miles of a known hibernaculum.

- Other conservation strategies:
 - Bat management zones on state lands:
 - Protected areas, no management June 1 to July 31
 - Already designated as protected wilderness areas, wild river areas, old growth areas, wild areas in WISFIRS
 - Maintain hibernacula entrances on DNR lands:
 - Gates, remove obstructions
 - Provide a way for other landowners to receive take authorization through the HCP.

Landowner Enrollment Program:

- Landowners who meet certain criteria can receive incidental take coverage by joining WDNR's permit.
- All County Forests are eligible.
- Acreage threshold for private landowners:
 - 10,000 acres for NLEB and TCB.
 - 500 acres for LBB (if LBB is listed as endangered).
 - Below these acreage thresholds risk of taking bats during management is extremely low/insignificant.
- Applicant owns lands (of any size) containing a known roost or known hibernaculum entrance.
- LEP application and agreement are in development.
- Goal to have eligible landowners enrolled by end of March 2023.
- WI DNR will hire a Bat HCP Coordinator to help guide folks through the process and handle annual reporting requirements.
- Annual Reporting Requirements:
 - Total acres of timber harvest - if possible, broken out by even-aged, uneven-aged, intermediate and salvage harvests
 - Acres of Rx Fire in forest or brushland
 - Possibly miles of newly constructed permanent roads or trails.



Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan

Reset

Save

Submit by Email

Template Landowner Agreement and Certificate of Inclusion

1.0 Landowner Information

Landowner Name: Marathon County

Authorized Representative (if applicable): Tom Lovlien

Address: 212 River Dr Suite 2 Wausau, WI 54403

Phone: 715-261-1550

Email: tom.lovlien@co.marathon.wi.us

2.0 Description of Enrolled Lands

This Landowner Agreement applies to forestlands located on tax parcel(s) See Attached (and) in Township, Range, and Section, in Marathon County(s), Wisconsin (hereinafter "enrolled lands"). The enrolled land total 26,383 acres and comprise approximately 95 % deciduous forest, 0 % mixed forest, and 5 % coniferous forests. The enrolled lands are delineated on Exhibit A, *Location of Enrolled Lands*, attached hereto. Any overlap between the enrolled lands and covered bat hibernacula or known roost trees are depicted in the selected exhibits below.

- Exhibit B, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost.*
- Exhibit C, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum.*
- Exhibit D, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 2.5-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum.*
- None of the above.

3.0 Covered Species

This Landowner Agreement, through the Certificate of Inclusion (Section 13), authorizes incidental take by the Landowner, subject to the terms and conditions expressed herein, of the following species (collectively, "covered species"): Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*).

This Landowner Agreement and Certificate of Inclusion does not apply to any other state or federally listed threatened or endangered species except the four bat species listed above. Incidental take authorization or impact avoidance for any other protected species will need to be pursued separately, in consultation with the appropriate state or federal wildlife agency.

4.0 Covered Activities

Upon full execution of this Landowner Agreement, the Landowner will receive incidental take authorization for covered species for the below-selected activities on enrolled lands so long as those activities are implemented consistent with the terms and conditions of this Landowner Agreement and the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan (Lake States Bat HCP). Incidental take authorized for covered species does not extend to any activity which is not explicitly identified in this Landowner Agreement as a covered activity.

- Conduct a maximum of 37,500 acres of timber harvest and forest management on enrolled lands over the duration of this Landowner Agreement with a maximum of 3,750 acres of timber harvest occurring in any 5-year period. Covered forest management activities include the regeneration and intermediate harvest, salvage/sanitation, and the construction of temporary roads associated with timber harvests.
- Conduct a maximum of 500 acres of prescribed fire and firebreak creation (e. g. tree cutting) over the duration of this Agreement with a maximum of 50 acres of prescribed fire and firebreak creation occurring in any 5-year period.
- Counties Only:** Construct and maintain **permanent** roads and trails for forest management access and public recreation on county land. This includes routine maintenance such as removing hazard trees, cutting or trimming trees to maintain or widen the road corridor, and removing trees to install or maintain culverts and bridges. Conduct a maximum of 20 miles of county forest road and trail construction and maintenance over the duration of this Landowner Agreement with a maximum of 2 miles of county forest road and trail construction and maintenance occurring in any 5-year period. Do not include an estimate of *temporary* road construction during timber harvest as that acreage is already included in the first activity above.

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5.0 Required Conservation Actions

Upon full execution of this Landowner Agreement, the landowner shall conduct the applicable conservation actions indicated below when conducting covered activities on the enrolled lands.

Implement Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (DNR) Retention Guidelines in Forest Habitat. Program participants must implement the applicable retention guidelines established in the *Wisconsin Silviculture Guide* (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2023, Pub. FR-805). The retention guidelines guide forest management activities. DNR is available to help applicants and enrollees understand how retention guidelines will apply to their anticipated forest management activities. A summary of Wisconsin's retention guidelines is provided below.

- **Snag Retention:** For *all harvests*, retain as many snags as possible, but ≥ 3 (if available) preferably large snags (>12 inches diameter at breast height [dbh]) per acre. Encourage snag diversity (species and size) to provide the greatest array of benefits. Consider retaining ≥ 3 trees per acre to develop into large, old trees and to complete their natural lifespan. These trees will often become large snags and course wood debris.
- **Percent of Harvest to Remain in Uncut Patches:** For *even-aged harvests*, encouraged in all stands, but recommended that in stands greater than 10 acres, retain 5%–15% of crown cover or stand area. For *uneven-aged harvests*, retain ≥ 3 (if available) preferably large, cavity trees per acre. Retain ≥ 3 (if available) preferably large, mast trees per acre. Consider retaining ≥ 3 trees per acre to develop into large, old trees and to complete their natural lifespan.
- **Retention Tree Patch Size:** For *all harvests*, trees retained can be scattered uniformly throughout a stand or irregularly dispersed, as single trees, groups, and patches. Groups and patches in even-aged harvests should be >0.1 acres and generally <2 acres, but they can be larger as well. Patches larger than 2 acres should be documented.
- **Retention Tree Patch Location:** For *all harvests*, retention tree patches should be located to complement management objectives or to respond to stand conditions, such as along Riparian Management Zones (RMZs), to increase connectivity between stands, or to protect sensitive sites or endangered resources.
- **Riparian Corridor Tree Retention:** For *all harvests*, retention tree patches can be placed near RMZs and to protect sensitive sites (e.g., vernal pools) or endangered resources. RMZ (i.e., 100 feet from lakes, designated trout streams, streams ≥ 3 feet wide; 35 feet from streams ≤ 3 feet wide) guidelines include retention of at least 60 square feet (ft^2) of basal area per acre in evenly distributed trees 5 inches dbh and larger along all lakes and streams ≥ 1 foot wide.
- **Other Preferred Retention Tree Characteristics:** For *all harvests*, retention of both vigorous and decadent trees will provide an array of benefits. Retain older trees with large size and rough bark. Species diversity is generally encouraged, including locally uncommon species and mast trees. Trees retained can be scattered uniformly throughout a stand or irregularly dispersed, as single trees, groups, and patches. The general recommended strategy is to retain irregularly distributed patches along with scattered groups and individuals. Retention in aggregated patches generally provides the most benefits to wildlife and biodiversity.

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Protect known occupied maternity roost trees. Program participants that own land with or within 150-feet of a known occupied maternity roost trees as indicated in Exhibits B are required to protect those features (check if applicable – see section 2.0 above).

- For the locations indicated in Exhibit B, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost*, avoid tree harvest year-round.

Protect known hibernacula entrances. Program participants that own land within 0.25 miles of a known hibernacula entrances as indicated in Exhibit C are required to protect those features (check if applicable – see section 2.0 above).

- For the locations indicated in Exhibit C, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, no timber harvests and disturbance from noise (85 decibels at a distance of 50 feet), such as pile-driving and blasting, year-round. If needed for improving habitat for covered bats, timber harvest may be allowed in conjunction with DNR with written approval and explicit expression of the habitat management need and objective.

Minimize impacts of prescribed fire on roosting and hibernating bats. Program participants planning to conduct prescribed burning on enrolled lands are required to follow all applicable measures, as indicated by a checked box below (check if applicable – see section 2.0 above).

- For the locations indicated in Exhibit B, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost*, no prescribed burns between June 1 and July 31.
- For the locations indicated in Exhibit C, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, fire intensity must be reduced between April 15 and May 14, and between August 16 and October 15 unless the fire prescription is needed to create high-quality habitat for bats.
- Ensure wind will carry smoke away from the entrance(s) of any known hibernacula.

Minimize impacts on roosting and hibernating bats from maintenance and construction of permanent county forest roads and trails. As part of the Landowner Enrollment Program, county program participants planning to maintain and construct permanent county forest roads and trails are required to follow all applicable measures, indicated by a checked box, listed below.

Maintenance of Existing County Forest Roads and Trails

- For the locations identified in Exhibit B, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost*, no tree removal between April 15 and October 15.
- For the locations indicated in Exhibit C, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, no tree removal may be conducted unless tree removal is necessary for hazard trees or road maintenance for public safety, in which case such removal should occur when impacts are lowest (i.e., between November 1

and March 15, or between May 15 and June 1) if feasible and appropriate in light of risks to public safety, unless immediate removal is necessary.

- For the locations indicated in Exhibit D, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 2.5-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, no tree removal may be conducted between August 16 and October 15, or between April 15 and May 14.
- For activities associated with existing culverts greater than 36 inches in diameter or bridges during the active season (March 1 – October 31), the structure must be inspected to determine the presence or absence of covered bat species. If covered species are absent from the structure, no additional conservation measures are required. If covered species are present, additional consultation with USFWS is required for the activity to proceed during the active season (March 1 - October 31). Work on existing culverts and bridges that will take place outside the active season (November 1 – February 28) have no additional conservation measures and do not require inspection for bat use.

Construction of New County Forest Roads and Trails

- For the locations identified in Exhibit B, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost*, no building new roads or trails.
- For the locations identified in Exhibit C, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, no building new roads or trails.
- For the locations indicated in Exhibit D, *Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 2.5-mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum*, no tree removal between August 16 and October 15, and between April 15 and May 14.
- No removal of trees that are 9 inches dbh or greater may be conducted between June 1 and July 31.

6.0 Annual Compliance Reporting

The Landowner shall annually fill out and submit to DNR Exhibit E, Landowner Enrollment Program Annual Compliance Report, summarizing covered activities performed and conservation actions implemented on the property over the previous year. The annual compliance reporting period is January 1 through December 31, and the Landowner Enrollment Program Annual Compliance Report shall be submitted to DNR by March 31, of the following year.

The information provided within the Landowner Enrollment Program Annual Compliance Report is included in DNR's annual report, which is submitted annually to the Service in compliance with the Lake States Bat HCP and incidental take permit.

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7.0 Compliance Verification

The Landowner shall allow DNR staff to inspect the enrolled lands to confirm that conservation measures have been implemented and maintained consistent with this Landowner Agreement, the Lake States Bat HCP, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) incidental take permit. DNR will strive to provide a 30-day notice prior to inspection but reserves the right to inspect at all reasonable times without advanced notice.

8.0 Landowner Agreement and Certificate Duration

This Landowner Agreement shall begin on the date of the last signature and shall automatically continue to be in effect for the permit term (from date of enrollment until January 30, 2073) as long as the terms of the Landowner Agreement are met, unless terminated by either party. The Certificate of Inclusion issued is included with this Landowner Agreement.

9.0 Noncompliance

Incidental take coverage provided under the Landowner Enrollment Program is available only to the extent that program participants are in full compliance with all relevant program requirements, the conservation actions identified in the Lake States Bat HCP, and all other applicable federal, state and local laws, including 50 CFR Section 13.48. s

In the event the DNR believes that the conservation actions described herein (and in HCP Appendix B, Section B.2.3, *Landowner Enrollment Program Conservation Actions*), are not being implemented as directed, or the Landowner is otherwise in noncompliance with this Landowner Agreement, DNR may, at its sole discretion, provide notice to the LEP participant regarding the noncompliance along with an opportunity to rectify its effects. In the event DNR so exercises its discretion, DNR shall provide written notice to the program participant within 30 days of discovering or otherwise becoming aware of the noncompliance and shall notify the Service of the noncompliance via email. The Landowner will have 60 days to reply to the noncompliance notice, including plans to rectify the noncompliance. If the program participant fails to rectify the noncompliance to the satisfaction of the DNR or is unable or unwilling to take appropriate corrective actions, DNR shall suspend or revoke the Landowner Agreement and Certificate of Inclusion (HCP incidental take authorization).

The DNR reserves the right to terminate the Landowner Agreement without offering the Landowner an opportunity to rectify the noncompliance.

10.0 Modifications, Termination and Transferability

10.1 Modifications

The Landowner Agreement and the Certificate of Inclusion may be modified or amended in accordance with all applicable legal requirements in force at the time of the amendment, including, but not limited

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to, the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Service permit regulations (50 CFR Parts 13 and 17) and the procedures described herein. Any party to this Landowner Agreement may propose modifications (e.g., changes to which covered activities are selected, property description) by providing written notice to the other parties explaining the proposed modification and the reasons for the modification. Approval of a modification will require the written consent of the DNR and the Landowner. Any proposed modification to the Landowner Agreement shall be considered effective as of the date that all affected parties have agreed in writing to the modification. Any amendment to this Landowner Agreement shall be in writing and will not be effective until it has been executed and approved by the authorized parties or their successors.

10.2 Termination

DNR or the Landowner may terminate the Landowner Agreement at any time prior to the expiration date through written notification. Reasons for termination may include (but are not limited to) Landowner noncompliance, property sale, or the Landowner no longer requiring incidental take authorization. The Landowner is responsible for implementing all applicable conservation measures up until the time the Landowner Agreement is terminated.

10.3 Transferability

The Landowner Agreement and Certificate of Inclusion are nontransferable.

11.0 Other Measures

11.1 Dispute Resolution

All Parties to this Landowner Agreement agree to work together in good faith to resolve any disputes, including through use of any dispute resolution procedures agreed upon by all parties.

11.2 No Third-Party Beneficiaries

This Landowner Agreement does not create any new right or interest in any member of the public as third-party beneficiary, nor does it authorize anyone not a party to this Landowner Agreement to maintain a suit for personal injuries or damages pursuant to the provisions of this Landowner Agreement. The duties, obligations, and responsibilities of the parties to this Landowner Agreement with respect to any third-party shall remain as imposed under existing law.

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12.0 Contact Information

Communication, reports, and correspondence required by this Landowner Agreement should be directed to the addresses below. Names and addresses may be changed upon written notice to all parties.

Landowner: Marathon County

Address: 212 River Dr Suite 2 Wausau, WI 54403

Phone Number: 715-261-1550

Email: tom.lovlien@co.marathon.wi.us

Select One: Legal Landowner
 Landowner's Representative

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – GEF2, 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53703
Contact: Wisconsin Bat HCP Coordinator

Phone: (608) 219-1511
Email: DNRNHCForestBatHCP@wisconsin.gov

13.0 Certificate of Inclusion

This certifies that the enrolled lands of the Landowner are included within the scope of the Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit [ESPER0846081] issued by the Service expiring on [01/30/2073] under the authority of Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. By entering into this Landowner Agreement with DNR and complying with the terms of the Lake States Bat HCP and incidental take permit, the undersigned Landowner is authorized to carry out the covered activities described in the Landowner Agreement as provided for in Lake States Bat HCP, Chapter 4, *Potential Effects of Covered Activities*. When performing covered activities, incidental take authorization for covered species is extended to the recipient as described in 50 CFR 13.25(d) and (e). This incidental take authorization is specifically conditioned upon the recipient's compliance with this Landowner Agreement and, by extension, compliance with the Lake States Bat HCP and incidental take permit.

These authorizations and assurances expire on [01/30/2073].

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each party hereto has caused this Landowner Agreement and Certificate of Inclusion to be executed by an authorized official on the day and year of the final signature as set forth below.

LANDOWNER

Jamie Polley, Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Director

Name and Title

Signature

Date

AUTHORIZING PARTY

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage Conservation Program Director

Date

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Designated Landowner Representative Agreement

Landowner Name (County): _____
Marathon County

Landowner Representative Name: _____
Jamie Polley

Landowner Representative Title: _____
Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Director

I certify that I am a duly authorized representative of the Landowner and have authority to sign this Landowner Agreement on the Landowner's behalf. On behalf of the Landowner, I certify that the enrolled lands described above are owned by the Landowner and that the Landowner has control of the enrolled lands for the purpose of satisfying the terms and conditions of this Landowner Agreement. I further certify that authorized employees of the Landowner will be made aware of the terms and conditions of this Landowner Agreement and may work with the DNR, conduct timber harvest and/or prescribed fire and perform obligations on the enrolled lands pursuant to the terms and conditions of this Landowner Agreement.

Landowner Representative Signature

Date

Attach the following documents to this form using the "Attach Files" button below. Please title exhibit attachments with document identification and agreement number: e.g. <Exhibit B Maternity Roost WIBatHCP0001>

- Exhibit A: Location of Enrolled Lands
- Exhibit B: Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 150-Foot Buffer of a Known, Occupied Maternity Roost
- Exhibit C: Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 0.25-Mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum
- Exhibit D: Locations within the Enrolled Property that Overlap with the 2.5-Mile Buffer of a Known Hibernaculum
- Exhibit E: Landowner Enrollment Program Annual Compliance Report (see attachments)
 - The Annual Compliance Report form for Exhibit E is attached but is also available online here: <https://widnr.widencollective.com/portals/bzunspo6/BatHabitatConservationPlan>
 - Contact the Bat HCP coordinator for a mailed hard copy of the compliance report form.

Instructions for Attaching Files:

Click the "Add Attachments" button (below) and browse for the file(s) to attach, then click "Open". You may select more than one file to attach at one time, or repeat this step to attach more files. The list of attached files can be viewed in the left navigation panel (expand by clicking the arrow).

Be sure to check that all of the necessary files have attached before signing and saving this form.

To delete an attached file, click to select the file and press "Delete" on your keyboard.

Click to Add Attachments