

BAYFIELD COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN  
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**CHAPTER 5000**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS OF 15 YEAR PLAN**

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## **5000 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

The following box ad was placed in the local newspaper (the Ashland Daily Press) on December 14, 2019 and December 18, 2019.

1. The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department is about to begin revising the Bayfield County Forest 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The next plan will establish the framework for the management and administration of Bayfield County Forest lands from CY 2021 through 2035. Public input is welcomed and encouraged. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the revision process or would like to provide comments on future drafts, please visit the Bayfield County website at <https://www.bayfieldcounty.org/1164/County-Forest-Land-Use-Plan-2021-2035-Up> and sign up to receive notifications. When a draft chapter or portion of the plan is ready for public review/input, a notification will be sent via email and/or text to anyone signed up to receive them. More information regarding the plan revision process can be obtained from the Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department, Courthouse, 117 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St., PO Box 445, Washburn, Wisconsin or by calling the office at (715) 373-6114.
2. A similar email was sent to a comprehensive list of stakeholders including, but not limited to: all Bayfield County Board Supervisors; Town, City and Village officials (the Chairperson and Clerk for each municipality); the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; local school districts; representatives of the DNR, USFS and Parks Service; all local Chambers of Commerce; organized local friends groups; established non-motorized recreation organizations (i.e. CAMBA, Mt. Ashwabay, American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, North Country Scenic Trail Association, etc.); established motorized groups and clubs (i.e. Bayfield County Snowmobile Alliance, Trails North ATV Club, etc); hunting and fishing groups, clubs and associations; logging contractors; and members of the general public that were known to have interest in the administration of the Bayfield County Forest. Each recipient was also asked to distribute the email to anyone they felt would have interest. The following email

was sent to each identified stakeholder:

- a. The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department will soon begin the process of updating the county forest land use plan. The plan establishes the framework for the management and administration of the Bayfield County Forest. The current plan is effective through 2020. The new plan would be valid from 2021 through 2035. The Forestry and Parks Committee will be addressing revisions to the plan throughout most of CY 2020.

You have been identified as a potential stakeholder or person who might be interested in the process. If you are interested in reviewing future drafts of the new plan, have general comments for staff and the Forestry and Parks Committee to consider when updating the plan, or would otherwise like to stay informed, please visit our website and sign up to receive notifications.

Once available for public review, all drafts of the plan, and associated documents, will be uploaded to the website. If signed up for notifications, you would receive an email and/or text message the moment a draft chapter is ready for review/comment.

Here is a link to the webpage where the draft documents will be posted, as well as information on how to sign up to receive notifications: <https://www.bayfieldcounty.org/1164/County-Forest-Land-Use-Plan-2021-2035-Up>

All revisions to the plan will be reviewed by the Forestry and Parks Committee. In addition to the online comment forms, public input will also be accepted during a Committee meeting. When on the webpage to sign up for notifications (for the plan), you can also sign up to receive notifications of future Forestry and Parks Committee meetings. All draft chapters will be presented to and

reviewed by the Committee during future meetings. By also signing up to receive agenda notifications, you would be able to see which chapters will be reviewed during each meeting.

Please send a copy of this email to anyone you think may also be interested.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns, or would like to be removed from this list.

Thanks for your time.

3. Once on the Department's webpage, each interested party was asked to sign up to receive notifications of future Plan updates, as well as notifications of agendas (for the date and time of future Forestry and Parks Committee meetings where the Plan would be addressed). Once a chapter/section of the Plan was ready for public review and comment, it was be uploaded to the Department's webpage. Once uploaded, an email and/or text message was sent to each person signed up to receive notifications, informing them that new information was available for review. The following information was posted on the Department's webpage:
  - a. Instructions to Sign Up for Notifications

The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department is in the process of updating the Bayfield County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The plan establishes the framework for the management and administration of the roughly 176,000 acre county forest. The current plan is valid through CY 2020. The new plan would be effective from CY 2021 through 2035.

The plan will be revised throughout most of 2020, generally one chapter at a time. The Forestry and Parks Committee will review

all drafts during their regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Once the Committee has preliminarily approved a draft chapter, it will be uploaded to the county website. Once on the website, each draft chapter will be available for public review and input. All public input, per draft chapter, will be shared with the Committee during their next regularly scheduled monthly meeting. After a review of all public comments, additional modifications to each draft chapter may be required.

Anyone interested in receiving notification of when a draft chapter is ready for public review and comment can sign up through the county website. Notifications can be received via email and/or text messages. To sign up, visit Bayfield County's "Notify Me" page at: <https://www.bayfieldcounty.org/list.aspx>

Enter your email address and click sign in. Check how you wish to be notified, via email and/or text message (if you choose text messages you will also be asked to provide your cell phone number).

Under the Notify me section, click the envelope and/or the cell phone next to the County Forest Land Use Plan 2021-2035 Updates. You will be sent a confirmation email and/or text verifying that you want to receive notifications, click the link to verify.

You are now signed up to receive notifications whenever there is new content to review.

You can also sign up to receive notification of when the plan will be addressed during a Forestry and Parks Committee meeting. While on the Notify Me webpage, sign up to receive Forestry and

Parks Committee meeting agenda information by scrolling down to the Agenda Center.

To submit general comments on the current management and/or administration of the Bayfield County Forest, for the staff and Committee members to consider when updating the Plan, please follow this link: [Input Form](#). Public input can also be presented directly to the Forestry and Parks Committee during a Committee meeting.

4. Each chapter of the Plan was reviewed, individually, during Forestry and Parks Committee meetings throughout most of CY 2020. During the review of each draft chapter, public comment was solicited (either actively as part of each meeting or via written input submitted through the process outlined above). Some Committee meetings addressed multiple chapters at a time, while others reviewed only a portion of one chapter.
5. During the Committee review process, each new draft chapter was addressed during the meeting. When a draft chapter was approved by the Committee, it was uploaded to the Department's webpage during the next business day and made available for public comment. The public was given approximately 30 days to provide comment/input on each previously approved chapter (the amount of time between each regularly scheduled monthly Committee meeting). Comments could be submitted via the online form (as described above) or the public also had the option of providing comment, in person, during the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.
6. During the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting, all comments received, per chapter, were shared with the Committee. Afterwards, once all comments and/or public comment were reviewed, if necessary, the Committee had the option to openly engage with members of the public who were present during the meeting. Effectively, each regularly scheduled Committee meeting was treated as a potential "open house", where the Committee could engage directly with interested members of

the public, one draft chapter at a time.

7. Once all comments, per chapter, had been reviewed by the Committee, the draft chapter was either formally approved or the Administrator was directed to perform additional edits. If additional edits were directed by the Committee, that draft chapter was still considered open for review and was addressed again during the next scheduled Committee meeting. Once the Committee formally approved each chapter, including all additional edits, that chapter was considered finished. Once finished, that chapter would no longer be addressed during future Committee meetings, unless directed by the Committee.
8. In summary, below was the general step by step process employed by the Committee to review each chapter of the Plan:
  - a. The Administrator prepared each draft chapter of the Plan.
  - b. Each chapter was presented by the Administrator to the Committee, during a monthly Committee meeting, for review.
  - c. After Committee review, when a draft chapter was approved by the Committee, it was uploaded to the Department's webpage.
  - d. On the next business day, an email and/or text message was sent to each member of the public, signed up to received notifications, indicating that a draft chapter of the Plan was ready for public review and comment.
  - e. The public had approximately 30 days to provide comments to the Department, for each previously approved draft chapter, either in writing or in person during a future Committee meeting.
  - f. All public comments were shared by the Administrator with the Committee and addressed during the next regularly scheduled meeting.
  - g. Once the Committee evaluated all public comments and additional edits to the draft were completed, if necessary, to the satisfaction of the Committee, the chapter was considered finished.
  - h. Once a chapter was considered finished, it was uploaded to the Department's website as complete and no longer addressed during

- future meetings (unless otherwise directed by the Committee).
- i. When all chapters of the Plan were finished, the final completed Plan was reviewed one last time by the Committee during a regularly scheduled meeting. The general public also had an opportunity to provide comments on the final completed plan.
  - j. The final completed draft Plan was then submitted to the DNR for review.
  - k. Comments received by the DNR were presented by the Administrator to the Committee for final review. If necessary, as directed by the Committee, the Administrator performed final edits to the Plan.
  - l. The final completed Plan was approved by the Committee on March 8, 2021 and forwarded to the Board for review and action.
  - m. The Board approved the Plan on March 30, 2021.

The above review process was considered a more effective way to solicit for and accommodate public review and input. This setting allowed each chapter/section to be addressed individually, during numerous regularly scheduled Committee meetings, thus providing interested members of the public with multiple opportunities and methods to contribute. As a result, the public could focus review and comments on a portion of the Plan per month, rather than the entire draft document all at once. This process was considered as an easier way for the public to review the Plan, provide a greater level of transparency and afford interested members of the public more time and methods to generate and share comments.

#### **5100 PUBLIC COMMENT**

All public comments submitted to the Department were reviewed by the Administrator and shared with the Committee as part of a normal monthly Committee meeting. See the Appendix for all public comments received as part of the Plan revision process.