

BAYFIELD COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
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CHAPTER 100

BACKGROUND

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100 MISSION STATEMENT

A primary mission of the Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department is to sustainably manage, conserve and protect the natural resources of the Bayfield County Forest. Multiple-use management of these resources, with a primary emphasis on timber production, in conjunction with other core values like recreational opportunities, watershed and soil protection, biological and ecological diversity, and wildlife habitat, will be applied to ensure a wide variety of forest products and amenities are available to current and future generations.

Bayfield County Forest resources will also be managed to minimize impacts from potential natural catastrophes such as flooding, wildfire and insect and disease outbreaks, as well as from human threats, such as encroachment, fragmentation, over-utilization, environmental degradation, climate change and excessive development.

The sustainable production of timber products and multiple-use management of these renewable forest resources generate an important source of direct revenue to Bayfield County, as well as the Towns where county forests lie, while also providing a diversity of economic and social benefits to residents, local and regional businesses, and visitors that rely, at least in part, on the forest products, various recreational activities, tourism or other amenities derived from Bayfield County Forest lands.

105 GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN (Hereafter referred to as the “Plan”)

To administer the County Forest program consistent with the mission statement and the purpose and direction of County Forest Law as stated in s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., while giving consideration to input from citizens and groups. The purpose of the County Forest Law being:

“ ... to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple use to assure maximum public benefits; to

protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”

110 COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

The Bayfield County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (hereafter, the “Plan”) shall incorporate or reference all official County Forest policies, pertinent county regulations, and associated planning documents and reports for the period 2021 through 2035.

This Plan is the authority for management on county forest lands enrolled under Wisconsin County Forest Law s.28.11 Wis. Stats. This Plan may also be encompassed within required local planning efforts.

110.1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING

OBJECTIVES

Management planning shall be used to establish objectives, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and to promote an efficient and orderly program of development and management of the County Forest in the interest of:

1. Determining needs and priorities.
2. Achieving goals set forth in the mission statement of this Plan.
3. Satisfying the statutory requirements of s. 28.11, Wis. Stats.
4. Satisfying requirements for participation in various state and federal aid programs.
5. Providing broad short and long-term guidelines for actions.
 - a. The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department Annual Workplan (hereafter, the “Workplan”) will serve as the primary authority for detailed short-term goals, objectives and actions regarding the management of the County Forest or when describing and validating the need to deviate from the broader long term guidelines as outlined throughout this Plan. See the Appendix to review the Workplan.
 - b. The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department Annual Operating Budget and Narrative (hereafter, the “Budget”), will serve as the primary authority for

accounts management, including identifying and summarizing funding and revenue sources, as well as tracking and summarizing expenses, for all programs managed by, or otherwise the responsibility of, the Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Department (hereafter, the “Department”).

110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Section 28.11, Wis. Stats., places the responsibility for Plan development on the Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Committee (hereafter, the “Committee”) with technical assistance from the Department of Natural Resources (hereafter, the “DNR”) and other agencies. The Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Administrator (hereafter, the “Administrator”) will assume the lead role on Plan development.

During the development of the Plan, public comment and input will be solicited to ensure public participation is incorporated as part of the planning process. Public participation and inputs into the Plan should consider s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., which governs the County Forest program and provides the framework to which this Plan must adhere.

The Department’s public participation process, employed for the development of this Plan, included the following:

1. One primary goal of the public participation process was to take full advantage of current technologies and utilize the “notify me” function on Bayfield County’s website.
2. The Department created a Bayfield County Forest 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan update tab on the Department’s webpage that was dedicated to host all draft documents and associated materials.
3. A box ad was placed in the local paper notifying the public of the upcoming revision to the Plan, soliciting input from any interested party and directing them to the Department’s webpage to sign up for notifications. Similar notifications were sent via email to a comprehensive list of stakeholders and known interested parties. See Chapter 5000 for more details regarding the public participation process.

110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN

Comments received throughout the revision process will be given consideration during Plan development. Once a final draft of the Plan is completed, the Administrator, as directed by the Committee, will present it to the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors (hereafter, the “Board”) for their approval. Following Board approval, the Plan will then be forwarded to the DNR. Approval of the Plan, by the DNR, is required as per s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN

Each member of the Board will have access to a copy of the Plan at the time of initial review and approval. The Plan will also be available for public review from the Department’s webpage. Official copies of the Plan will be maintained by the Administrator via the webpage and available electronically, upon request. A hardcopy of the Plan will also be available in the Department’s office.

The Plan, and future amendments to the Plan, will be distributed as follows: electronic versions of the approved Plan, all future Plan amendments and/or electronic links to all associated Plan documents will be distributed to the following:

1. DNR - Liaison and County Forest & Public Lands Specialist.
2. Executive Director- Wisconsin County Forest Association.

110.5 UPDATING THE PLAN

Necessary changes in policy and procedure will be incorporated into the Plan by amendment, as required. Amendments to the plan will require approval by both the Committee and the DNR as stated in s. 28.11(5)(a), Wis. Stats. The Workplan, Budget, and modifications to the official County Forest Blocking map will require Board approval (see Chapter 400 for more information on County Forest Blocking).

The Workplan and Budget, both of which are approved by the Board, as mentioned above, as well as the annual accomplishment report, will be appended to the Plan but do not require official DNR approval. These documents will be updated and maintained on the Department’s webpage. Official copies of these documents will be maintained by the Administrator via the Department’s webpage and available electronically, upon request. A

hardcopy of these documents will also be available in the Department's office.

In addition, modifications to the Appendix, including Chapters 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 do not require a Plan amendment or official DNR approval, again, with the exception of the official County Forest Blocking map. However, modifications to the Appendix and Chapters 1000 through 5000 will require Committee review and approval prior to amending to the Plan.

110.6 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING

The development of this Plan and any future amendments to this Plan will include considerations, and if warranted, participation in other local and regional planning efforts.

115 FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING

Whenever practical and feasible, the Department will reference and utilize procedures as set forth in the DNR Public Forest Lands Handbook no. 2460.5.

Silviculture guidance, supported by Wisconsin's forestry community and the DNR Silvicultural Guidance Team may be referenced in various forest management activities. The Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS), as developed and maintained by the DNR, will be utilized as one of the primary tools to assist in the forest management planning process (more information on WisFIRS can be found in the DNR Public Forest Lands Handbook).

Department level database management and analysis, in addition to internal knowledge and experience, will also be a primary driver in the forest management planning process, both short and long term.

Additional resources, including, but not limited to, forest habitat type classification, soil surveys, DNR's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) and DNR's Best Management Practices for Water Quality guidelines may also be utilized in management decisions.

115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION GROUP ADMINISTRATION

As the forest certification group manager, the DNR will be responsible for overall administration of third-party forest certification efforts. The DNR County Forest & Public Lands Specialist will work in close cooperation with the Wisconsin County Forests Association (hereafter, the “WCFA”) in coordinating this effort. The DNR group manager’s responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- Record keeping of forest certification.
- Coordinating communication with the certification auditing firms.
- Reporting and payment of fees.
- Processing new entries and departures from the groups.
- Internal compliance monitoring.
- Dispute resolution.

Detail on forest certification group administration is maintained in the DNR Public Forest Lands Handbook (see the Appendix for a link to the Handbook).

115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION

Bayfield County’s Commitment to Sustainable Forestry

County forests provide a vital contribution to the State, nation and world by providing economic, environmental and social benefits important to our overall quality of life.

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

Bayfield County’s Commitment:

Within the scope of Wisconsin County Forest Law, as well as this Plan, Bayfield County will develop, apply and maintain forest management practices and principles that promote forest sustainability and multiple use of the County Forest. Bayfield County is committed to the following:

1. Sustainable Forest Management Practices and Principles: to develop, apply, maintain and promote sustainable forest management strategies that address the present demands of society without sacrificing the needs of future generations. In doing so, Bayfield County will integrate the primary emphasis of growing and harvesting trees for a variety of forest products together with: ensuring adequate and acceptable regeneration/reforestation of all managed stands (both natural and artificial); the creation and maintenance of diverse and rich wildlife habitat; the conservation and protection of water, soil and air quality; the development and maintenance of ecosystem and biological diversity; the development and maintenance of a variety of public recreational opportunities (both motorized and non-motorized); and aesthetics; all while recognizing the need to modify and adapt sustainable forest management strategies to address a progressively changing climate.
2. Responsible Approaches to Forest Management: to implement practices that are economically, environmentally and socially responsible in the management of the Bayfield County Forest. In addition, whenever possible and/or practical, working with other forest landowners, both public and private, to encourage and/or accomplish larger, landscape level, forest management objectives.
3. Forest Health and Productivity: to work cooperatively with the DNR and other agencies, in protecting our forests from pests, disease, wildfire and other similar damaging agents, to ensure and improve long-term productivity and forest health. Including the need to recognize, establish and implement short and/or long term forest management strategies that anticipate and/or directly address the potential impacts of a changing climate.
4. Special and Unique Sites: to recognize and manage sites that contain special and/or unique biological, ecological, geological, cultural and/or historical significance in a manner that will preserve, develop, enhance and/or promote their distinguishing qualities. This could include passive management (as in the Glacial Kettles Special Management Area, see Chapter 800) or active management (as in the Barnes Barrens Management Area, see Chapter 800).
5. Legal Compliance: to recognize and comply with all local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations as they apply towards the management of the Bayfield

County Forest.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: to continuously and routinely monitor and assess the growth, development and health of the Bayfield County Forest and develop sustainable management strategies that address the findings. This will be accomplished through compartment and stand level forest reconnaissance, as well as through the establishment and maintenance of permanent Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) plots. See Chapter 800 for more information on forest inventory and monitoring.
7. Economic Development: one of the primary objectives of County Forest lands, as defined in the Department's mission, as well as the purpose of County Forest Law, is sustainable timber production. Multiple-use management of these renewable forest resources also generates numerous additional economic and social benefits including, but not limited to, recreational opportunities, tourism, improved quality of life and other similar amenities. The raw forest products generated from the management of the County Forest provide a direct and important source of revenue to the County, as well as the Towns which contain these lands within their jurisdictions; while timber products, recreation and tourism related activities fosters local and regional economic development and supports job growth. Bayfield County will continue to incorporate the various Commitments listed in Items 1 through 6 above, as well as throughout this Plan, in the sustainable yield, multiple-use management of the County Forest, while also developing and implementing complementary ways to maximize the various revenue potentials contained therein.

Bayfield County will work in cooperation with the DNR and other natural resources groups/agencies in providing sustainable and responsible management of the Bayfield County Forest. Bayfield County will continue to support, both internally and cooperatively, research efforts to improve the health, productivity, and management of forestlands, both locally and regionally.

In keeping with this responsibility, Bayfield County is committed to two major, independent, third party forest certification agencies/organizations:

- a. Sustainable Forestry Initiative®.
- b. Forest Stewardship Council®.

120 COUNTY AUTHORITY

The Plan is the official Bayfield County Forest authority, which incorporates the various documents appended to the Plan, including, but not limited to, the annual Workplan and Budget, as described throughout the Plan. The Committee enforces the regulations governing the use of the County Forest.

120.1 ORDINANCES

The County ordinances that apply to the administration and management of the Bayfield County Forest can be found in the Appendix.

125 COUNTY FOREST 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 Wis. Stats. 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 Wis. Stats. To fulfill additional statutory obligations acreage share payments to towns are currently \$.30/acre, and towns with county forest land receive a minimum of 10% of the stumpage revenue from their respective County Forest each year.

In 2020, thirty (30) counties in Wisconsin owned approximately 2.4 million acres entered

under the County Forest Law (see the WCFA website for more information on county forests; a link to the website is provided in the Appendix).

125.2 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

Bayfield County is a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association (hereafter, the “WCFA”). The WCFA 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.

125.3 TRENDS

The values and uses of the Bayfield 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 originated after the big cutover period. As a result, most of the subsequent reforestation efforts were accomplished in the early to mid 1900’s and employed a combination of natural and artificial (i.e. planting) regeneration. Over time, mid to late successional timber types, like northern hardwood forests, have begun to replace the early successional aspen-birch, oak and

jack pine forests of the 1940's through the 1970's.

- The aspen cover type is a key habitat for many of the state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. The county forest system, collectively, currently has 15% of the State's public land base and 24% of the aspen resource.
- Potential conflict, or differing points of view, regarding timber management practices will likely continue to increase, as more individuals and groups demand greater involvement in forestry decisions. Management practices that utilize more intensive even-aged treatments, like clearcutting, will continue to evoke criticism. Developing and/or expanding efforts to educate the public on the merits of these, and other, sound and sustainable forest management practices will be extremely important.
- Bayfield County may experience funding problems as municipalities are being required to provide more services with less money. Potential losses of revenue from decreased shared funding sources and resistance to tax increases may make County Forest timber sale revenues increasingly important to the overall finances of county governments. This can potentially be further complicated by growing public pressures to reduce the level and/or amount of timber harvests on county forest lands.
- Increasing knowledge about a wider variety of species and their habitat needs is leading to a growing list of threatened and endangered species. This could lead to improvements in managing the forest and mitigating impacts to these species. Mitigating measures have the potential to impede recreational use and/or forest management activities.
- Invasive exotic species pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Gypsy moth, Asian long-horned beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests. Refer to Chapter 600 for more information on insects and disease.
- The County Forest is generally considered to be an outdoor observatory, serving and available to all age groups. It consists of diverse communities with a large variety of plant and animal life, providing a plethora of opportunities for study, observation and reflection.

125.4 PROTECTING THE PUBLIC RESOURCE

As stated in State Statute 28.11 (1), the county forest program enables and encourages “the planned development and management of the county forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple-use to assure maximum public benefits to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”