

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER 100**

**BACKGROUND**

**100 MISSION STATEMENT ..... 2**

**105 GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN ..... 2**

**110 CHAPTER 100 OBJECTIVE..... 3**

**115 STATUTORY AUTHORITY..... 3**

**120 COUNTY AUTHORITY..... 3**

    120.1 ORDINANCES..... 4

**125 HISTORY**

    125.1 STATEWIDE ..... 4

    125.2 COUNTY FOREST PROGRAM..... 5

    125.3 JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST ..... 5

    125.4 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION ..... 6

**130 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST**

    130.1 NATURAL FEATURES ..... 7

        130.1.1 Topography..... 7

        130.1.2 Geology & Soils ..... 7

        130.1.3 Geography..... 8

        130.1.4 Biological Communities..... 8

        130.1.5 Vegetative Cover Types..... 9

        130.1.6 Wildlife ..... 10

        130.1.7 Rare and Endangered Resources..... 10

        130.1.8 Water..... 10

    130.2 CULTURAL FACTORS

        130.2.1 Recreation ..... 11

        130.2.2 Economy ..... 11

        130.2.3 Roads and Access..... 11

        130.2.4 Education and Research ..... 11

        130.2.5 Trends ..... 12

    130.3 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP ..... 13

100 **MISSION STATEMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

“... to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple use to assure maximum public benefits; to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a

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

Each state agency, whenever it administers a law under which a local governmental unit prepares a plan, is encouraged to design its planning requirements in a manner that makes it practical for local governmental units to incorporate these plans into local comprehensive plans prepared under s. 66.1001 Wis. Stats (i.e. “Smart Growth” planning) s. 1.13(3) Wis. Stats. This County Forest plan will complement, and should be a part of local comprehensive planning efforts (e.g. Smart growth). There are similarities in the considerations of both plans although the County Forest plan is of smaller scale and focused by s. 28.11, Wis. Stats. In an effort to ensure that the values of the Juneau County Forest are fully recognized, protected and infused into local planning, the County Forest Administrator will work with local units of government to assure that the County Forest goals and values are recognized in their planning effort.

#### **110 CHAPTER 100 OBJECTIVE**

1. To recognize the authority of the County and State in the administration and development of operating policies on the Juneau County Forest.
2. To provide the reader of the plan with background information regarding the County Forest.

#### **115 STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The County Forest Law (s. 28.10 and 28.11 Wis. Stats.) provides the authority to establish, develop, and manage a permanent County Forest Program. (For the full text of the County Forest Law refer to Chapter 900).

#### **120 COUNTY AUTHORITY**

The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Land, Forestry, Parks and Zoning Committee of the County Board (*hereafter referred to as the “committee”*) enforces the regulations governing the use of the County Forest.

## 120.1 ORDINANCES

The county ordinances that apply to the administration and management of the Juneau County Forest can be found in Chapter 900.

## 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. The Legislature of 1929 specifically provided that counties were exempt from paying the "acreage share" required of private owners. The legislature of 1931 amended the County Forest Reserve Law of 1929. It provided for the payment of acreage aids to Towns for County Forest land and an additional annual State payment of \$.10 /acre to the Counties for all land within county forests entered under the Forest Crop Law. Counties were required to spend this aid money solely for the development of the county forest. In return for this aid, the state originally collected a seventy-five percent severance tax on the products cut on county forests. This was reduced to fifty percent in 1937 and then to twenty percent of gross sales in 1963.

In 1963, several major revisions were made to the County Forest Law. 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. The severance tax on harvested forest products still remains at 20% of the stumpage value, although no severance tax is collected if counties do not have a loan balance. A number of grants, loans and shared revenue payments are currently available to counties to help offset any losses in taxes due to public ownership. The acreage share payment to towns is currently \$.30/acre. In addition, towns with county forest land receive a minimum of 10% of the stumpage revenue from their respective County Forest each year. Stumpage revenues exceed \$18,000,000 annually.

Twenty-nine counties in Wisconsin now own approximately two and one third million acres

entered under the County Forest Law.

## 125.2 COUNTY FOREST PROGRAM HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

At one time, much of Wisconsin was covered with magnificent stands of pine, hemlock, and hardwoods on the highlands, and cedar, spruce, and balsam on its lowlands. From 1860 to about 1910, these forests provided raw material for a thriving lumber industry. The need to supply lumber for a growing nation, and the lack of sound forest management, resulted in overharvest of the forests and degradation of the landscape. 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, catastrophic fires occurred, and many people were forced to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The land was left exhausted and tax delinquent. The Wisconsin County Forest program originated with the taking of these tax delinquent lands.

## 125.3 JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

The first record of public forest land resources appears in the 1858 Juneau County Board proceedings. Tax certificates from lands abandoned by early farmers and lumbermen created a problem of “excess tax delinquency” between the towns and county. In 1924, the County Board passed a resolution petitioning its state representatives to introduce legislation that would fund forestry improvements on county held land.

As noted above, the State Legislature authorized the creation of County Forests under the Forest Crop Law in 1927. On February 13, 1933, a resolution for establishment of the Juneau County Forest was approved. The following acreage was originally enrolled:

<u>Township</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Armenia	1,918.71
Cutler	11,139.00
Finley	8,025.73
Kingston	23,296.28
Necedah	<u>9,922.00</u>
	54,301.73

In November 1934, the State Conservation Department began negotiations with the county for acquisition or lease for a “Nesting Area” for the conservation of wildlife. A lease was approved, but in 1935 the Federal Government indicated a desire to acquire title at a price of \$1.75 per acre. The County Board agreed to sell 48,835 acres in

Kingston, Finley and Cutler Townships in 1936. The land was withdrawn from the County Forest Crop Law to establish the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge and the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area (Central Wisconsin Conservation Area). Only about 7,374.95 acres remained under the County Forest at that time.

Since then, the Juneau County Forest has increased in size through the addition of other tax delinquent land. A significant part of the growth occurred in Armenia Township. In 1938, the County Board received a petition signed by 100% of the landowners in Armenia Township and approved by the Town Board. It asked the county to request that the U.S. Government resettle the residents of Armenia Township to more productive lands and establish a Forest Reservation and Wild Game Refuge. As a result, the County Board resolved in May 1939 to zone the Township of Armenia as a Forest and Recreation District and to retain tax delinquent land in public ownership. The zoning ordinance was repealed in 1959 to allow for the development of a new county-wide zoning ordinance. Neither private landowner relocation nor a federal refuge materialized, but Juneau County now owns about 6,000 acres of County Forest and 1,000 acres of Community Forest in Armenia Township.

The Juneau County Forest was operated from 1936 until 1964 with the County Clerk as part-time administrator. That position served as bookkeeper and secretary for the Land and Forestry Committee. Continued expansion of the forestry program and a parks program caused the County Board to combine the forestry and parks programs under one department in 1981. A new managerial position to administer forest and park land was also created at that time. In March of 1982, the Forestry; Parks and Zoning Committee hired its first County Forest Administrator, Dale Dorow, who continues to serve in that position. Additional workload and job responsibilities required the county to fill an additional administrative position. In June of 2001, Keith Lane, was hired as the Assistant County Forest Administrator.

#### 125.4 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

Juneau 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 ten delegates elected from the County Forestry Committees who are members of the Association.

This corporation 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.

## **130 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST**

### **130.1 NATURAL FEATURES**

#### **130.1.1 Topography**

The Juneau County Forest, located in the south-central part of the state, lies primarily within two physiographic regions of Wisconsin, the Central Sand Plains and the Western Coulee and Ridges. The topography of the forest and surrounding area was affected by the last glaciations although the area was not glaciated. The northern portion of the County Forest was part of the bed of glacial lake Wisconsin at the time of the last glaciations. In the southern portion of the County Forest the area was part of the unglaciated area of Wisconsin. The terrain ranges from gently rolling in the Town of Armenia to steep and hilly in the Seven Mile Creek portion of the forest.

#### **130.1.2 Geology and Soils**

The soils of Juneau County have been derived largely from glacial lake and outwash deposits. Since the glacial period, the soils have been modified by water action, wind, and the accumulation and incorporation of organic material. Soil types on the Central Sands Plains of the County Forest range from poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained sandy soils and mucky organic soils in the Yellow River and Cutler portions of the Forest to excessively drained upland sands in the New Miner and Clearfield portions of the County Forest.

In the Western Coulee and Ridges, the soils are formed from weathered sandstone. The soils

are silt and sandy loams in the Bass Hollow portion of the County Forest. A generalized soil map can be found in Chapter 900. Detailed soils information is available in the soil survey for Juneau County.

### 130.1.3 Geography

Juneau County has a land area of approximately 514,752 acres, plus another 18,900 acres of water included in lakes and streams. Approximately 51 percent of the land in the county is classified as forest land. The County Forest, which contains approximately 15,146.44 acres, is the 26<sup>th</sup> largest County Forest in the state.

### 130.1.4 Biological Communities

Wisconsin's County Forests are part of a larger landscape and are managed not as sole entities but part of a larger ecoregion. The National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU) categorizes Wisconsin into two provinces, the Laurentian Mixed Forest (212) forming the northern half of the State and the Eastern Broadleaf Forest (222). Within each province are sections, subsections and landtype associations that further group land into areas with similar geology, soil types, surface water features, wetlands and historic and potential plant communities. The Juneau County Forest is encompassed within the Eastern Broadleaf Forest province including subsections Central Sand Plains and the Western Coulees and Ridges Landtype Associations (LTA's) within the subsections include: the Wisconsin River Outwash Terraces, Tomah-Mauston Terraces, Yellow River Floodplain and Terraces, Yellow River Siliceous Terrace and Trempealeau Sandstone Hills. LTA's, having common ecological characteristics, allow land managers to better plan for future vegetative communities, wildlife species to feature, and compatible recreation uses.

A biological community is an assemblage of different plant and animal species, living together in a particular area, at a particular time in specific habitats. Communities are named for their dominant plant species. The following biological communities are found on the Juneau County Forest:

Northern Forest: contains mixed deciduous and coniferous forests found in a distinct climatic

zone that occurs north of the tension zone. The Northern Forest is commonly found in the Wisconsin River Outwash Terraces LTA in the New Miner portion of the County Forest.

Southern Forest: contain a predominance of oaks and a general absence of conifers and lie south of the tension zone. This community type is commonly found in the Trempealeau Sandstone Hills LTA in the Bass Hollow portion of the County Forest.

Oak and Pine Barrens: typically occur on sandy soils and are dominated by grasses, low shrubs, small trees, and scattered large trees. Most commonly these are pine barrens in northern and southern Wisconsin and oak barrens in the southern and west central parts of the state. The Wisconsin River Outwash Terraces, the Yellow River Siliceous Terrace and the Glacial Lake Wisconsin Siliceous Sand Plain in the New Miner, Clearfield and Cutler portions of the forest contain the barrens communities on the Juneau County Forest.

Wetlands: characterized by soils or substrate that is periodically saturated or covered by water. This community is common across the Yellow River Floodplain and Terraces and the Lemonweir Floodplain and Terraces LTAs throughout the forest.

Aquatic Communities: including springs, ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. The Yellow River Floodplain and Terraces and the Lemonweir Floodplain and Terraces consisting of the Yellow River and the Lemonweir Rivers are with the boundaries of the Juneau County Forest.

#### 130.1.5 Vegetative Cover Types

Approximately 92.2 percent of the Juneau County Forest land base is forested. Forested uplands are comprised of primarily aspen, fir-spruce, red maple, oak scrub oak, jack pine, red pine and white pine while off-site aspen, bottomland hardwood and swamp hardwood occupy the forested lowlands. The remainder, 7.8%, is classified as non-forested, including types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, grass openings, shrubs and bogs. The different cover types present on the Juneau County Forest are detailed under “Forested Communities” in Chapter 800 (820.1).

The great majority of the forest is located in the northern portion of the county. The remaining portions are scattered in the southern part of the county with the two largest blocks located Towns of Armenia and Cutler.

Chapter 900 contains maps showing the location of the County Forest.

#### 130.1.6 Wildlife

The Juneau County Forest is habitat for wildlife common to Wisconsin. No formal survey has been conducted to identify or inventory the fauna occurring on the Forest.

Numerous species of songbirds, waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and mammals frequent the forest. Each species, or interacting group of species, do best under different conditions, ranging from recently disturbed ground to old growth. A diversity of plant communities is key to providing a niche for a variety of wildlife species. For example, two very popular wildlife species in the county are the white-tailed deer and turkey. The aspen forest type is recognized as key habitat for these species and is important in maintaining biological diversity across North America. Longer rotation forest communities, such as red and white pine, similarly provide important habitat for other, less well-known species, such as pileated woodpeckers or northern goshawk.

Permanently sodded, grassy openings within the forest, many originating from old log landings are vital components of forest wildlife habitat. An effort is being made to maintain and improve the quality and, in some cases, the quantity of openings.

#### 130.1.7 Rare and Endangered Resources

A review of the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) indicates the presence of a number of rare species, natural communities and unique natural features on the Juneau County Forest. See Chapter 900 for a listing of threatened and endangered species in the Forest.

#### 130.1.8 Water

Juneau County has 12 acres involving unnamed lakes and 15 miles of streams. Within this area, the bulk of the fishery resource is limited. A complete inventory of the surface water resources on the Juneau County Forest can be found in Chapter 900.

## 130.2 CULTURAL FACTORS

### 130.2.1 Recreation

Forest-based recreation has expanded rapidly in recent years in Juneau County. Recreational opportunities with developed facilities include Castle Rock County Park, Wilderness County Park, Kennedy Park, Bass Hollow Recreational Area and Riverview Recreation Area. The county forest also provides tremendous opportunities for informal recreational pursuits not requiring developments. These include hunting, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking, and sight-seeing.

### 130.2.2 Economy

Production of forest products and spin-off industries derived from the recreational opportunities on the Forest and the forest products it produces are vitally important to Juneau County's economic well being. Forest industry is the #6 ranked employer in the County. Recreation is ranked #5. The quality of life in many counties is heavily dependent on the traditional resources the County Forest provides.

### 130.2.3 Roads & Access

All Juneau County Forest lands are open for public use and for foot travel. In addition to the town and county roads that access the forest, the county also maintains 5.59 miles of County Forest roads. A number of gated or bermed special use trails and roads are also available. Access management remains a controversial issue on the Forest. Both motorized and non-motorized recreation are provided for within the Forest. See Chapter 700 for detailed discussion on Forest access.

### 130.2.4 Education and Research

Education and research continue to be critical components in making decisions that affect our natural resources. As public needs and demands of our forest and its products increase, we must be prepared to assure that sound decisions result. To this end, Juneau County encourages and supports research efforts that relate to the forest, and educational opportunities that will promote a better understanding of forest communities and management.

### 130.2.5 Trends

The values and uses of the Juneau 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.

a. Greater demands are being placed on the Forest by people using it to fulfill their recreational pursuits. The popularity of trails for various uses has led to user conflicts. In particular, dramatic increases in the number of all terrain vehicles (ATV's) has pressured County forests into providing trails for their use and resolving access conflicts on the County Forest. Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users are commonplace.

b. Demands for timber products are predicted to increase. At the same time, more private forest land is being lost to residential development, and forest landowners are decreasingly interested in managing land primarily for timber values.

c. Wisconsin's forests are naturally changing due to forest succession. Most of the County Forest acreage statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid 1900's. Mid to late successional northern hardwood forests are replacing the early successional aspen-birch, oak and jack pine forests of the 1940's through the 1970's. The aspen cover type is key habitat for many of the state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. A declining harvest and a movement away from even-aged species on Wisconsin's National and State forests may place the responsibility of maintaining aspen, birch and jack pine types on the county forests. The county forest system currently has 15% of the State's public land base and 24% of the aspen resource.

d. Conflict over timber management practices will likely continue to increase as more individuals and groups demand greater involvement in forestry decisions. Practices such as clearcutting and even-aged management will continue to be controversial. Efforts to educate the public on the merits of these sound forest management techniques will continue.

e. Juneau County may experience funding problems as municipalities are being required to provide more services with less money. Potential losses of revenue from decreased shared revenues and resistance to tax increases may make county timber revenues increasingly important to the finances of county governments. This

is complicated by increasing public pressure to reduce timber harvests on county forests.

f. Increasing knowledge about a wider variety of species and their habitat needs is leading to a growing list of threatened and endangered species. This could lead to improvements in managing the forest and mitigating impacts to these species. Mitigating measures have the potential to impede recreational and forest management activities. Refer to Chapter 800 (840) for specifics on this subject.

g. Invasive exotic species pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Gypsy moth, Asian long-horned beetle, garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests. Refer to Chapter 800 (830.4) for specifics on this subject.

h. The Forest is considered to be an outdoor classroom serving all age groups. It consists of diverse communities with a large variety of plant and animal life giving ample opportunity for study and observation.

### 130.3 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP

The County Forest is composed of 33 management compartments ranging in size from 40 acres to nearly 900 acres. A map of these compartments can be found in Chapter 900.