

JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

CHAPTER 100 -BACKGROUND

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100 MISSION STATEMENT

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

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 managing for environmental needs including watershed protection and conservation of biotic diversity, these same resources must also be managed to provide for socioeconomic needs. The County Forest under sustainable practices can provide a steady flow of raw materials for wood-using industries that provide a wide variety of products fulfilling consumer demands as well as provide for abundant outdoor recreational opportunities.

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

To administer the Juneau 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.”

110 JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN POLICY

This plan shall incorporate or reference all official County Forest policies, pertinent county regulations, planning documents and the needs and actions for the period 2021 through 2035.

This plan is the official authority for management on Juneau County Forest lands enrolled under Wisconsin County Forest Law s.28.11. This plan may be encompassed within required local planning efforts. No other local planning efforts will supersede the authority of this plan.

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 long-term and detailed short-term guidelines for actions.

110.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Section 28.11, Wis. Stats., places the responsibility for the plan development on the Land, Forestry and Parks Committee with technical assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other agencies. The County Forest Administrator will take the lead at the Committee's request. Public participation will be solicited and considered throughout 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 sideboards to which this plan must adhere.

Juneau County's public participation process includes the following:

The Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department will develop the first draft of

individual chapters and present them to the Land, Forestry, Parks and Zoning Committee for review. After approval of the draft by Committee, individual chapters will be posted on the Juneau County Forestry webpage for a 30 day review period by the public. The public may submit comments directly to the Land, Forestry and Parks Department for consideration.

The Juneau County Land, Forestry and Parks Department will also consider soliciting for public comment through online survey tools, notices in the County newspaper and announcements at Town halls.

110.3 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN

Comments received should be given consideration during plan development. The Committee will then present the plan to the County Board for their approval. Following County Board approval, the plan will then be forwarded to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for review and any approvals required by s. 28.11, Wis. Stats.

110.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN

Each member of the County Board will have access to a copy of the plan at the time of initial review and approval. Updated official copies will be maintained by the Forest Administrator and made available at the Juneau County Forestry Office or electronically.

Plan and future amendments will be distributed to the following, either as electronic versions of the Plan, Plan amendments, or as electronic links to the documents:

1. Department of Natural Resources - Liaison and County Forest 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 County Board and the Department of Natural Resources as stated in s. 28.11(5) (a), Wis. Stats. Changes to official County Forest Blocking map require County Board approval. The annual County Board approved Work Plan, budget, and annual accomplishment report are appended to the

plan and do not require official Department of Natural Resources approval. In addition, changes to Chapters 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 do not require a plan amendment or official Department of Natural Resources approval, with the exception of the official County Forest Blocking map.

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

The Land, Forestry, Parks and Zoning Committee will utilize procedure as set forth in the Department of Natural Resources Public Forest Lands Handbook no. 2460.5.

Updating and maintaining accurate forest compartment reconnaissance is the key to forest resource planning. The Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) will be utilized as the primary tool for maintaining this data. This database will be used to analyze existing resources, evaluate management alternatives and assist in the implementation of this plan. Silviculture Guidance, as supported by Wisconsin's forestry community and Silviculture Guidance Team may be reference in forest management activities. Additional resources such as forest habitat type classification, soil surveys, and DNR's Best Management Practices for Water Quality guidelines may be utilized in management decisions.

115.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION GROUP ADMINISTRATION

As the certification group manager, the Department of Natural Resources will be responsible for overall administration of third-party certification efforts. The DNR County Forest Specialist will work in close cooperation with the Wisconsin County Forests Association in coordinating this effort. The group manager's responsibilities will include:

- Record keeping of 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 the certification group administration is maintained in the Public Forest Lands Handbook.

115.2 FOREST CERTIFICATION

The County Forests provide a vital contribution to the State and the world by providing economic, environmental and social benefits important to our quality of life. Juneau County believes that accomplishing sustainable forestry requires a commitment and partnership from all the groups and individuals that benefit from these public lands.

Within the scope of the Wisconsin County Forest Law and the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Juneau County will implement forestry practices that promote forest sustainability and multiple use of the forest. Management of the Forest will include the sustainable harvest of forest products; and the protection of cultural and historic sites, wildlife, plants, water quality and aesthetics.

Juneau County will work in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources and other 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 Juneau 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 and ecosystem maintenance. In keeping with this responsibility Juneau County is committed to:

1. Sustainable Forestry Principles – Practicing forestry to meet the present needs of society without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their anticipated needs.
2. Responsible Practices – To employ practices that are economically,

environmentally and socially responsible in the management of the Forest and encourage other forest owners to do the same.

3. Forest Health & Protection – To work cooperatively with the DNR and other agencies in protecting our forests from pests, diseases, wildfire and other damaging agents, in order to improve long-term productivity and forest health.
4. Unique Sites – To manage areas of special biological, geographical, cultural or historical significance, in such a way as to preserve their unique qualities.
5. Legal Compliance – To comply with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations in the management of the Juneau County Forest.
6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement – To continually seek improvement in the management of the Juneau County Forest and to monitor and assess performance towards the objective of sustainable forestry.

These commitments allow the Juneau County Forest to be third party certified. This certification ensures that the management adheres to sustainable forestry and allows for increased marketability of the forest products produced.

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 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 1000. In addition, the following ordinances will be considered in the planning process when applicable.

- Zoning ordinance
- Floodplain - Shoreland Zoning ordinance
- Non-Metallic Mining ordinance

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 s28.11. 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 s28.11. 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, twenty-nine counties in Wisconsin owned approximately 2.4 million acres entered under the County Forest Law.

125.2 JUNEAU COUNTY HISTORY AND 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 petition 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 to the land 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). After the sale, 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. In March of 1982, The Forestry, Parks and Zoning Committee hired its first County Forest Administrator, Dale Dorow. Dale Dorow continued as County Forest Administrator until retiring after 26 years of dedicated service in 2008. In December of 2008, Juneau County hired Brian Loyd as Administrator of the Forestry Department. Brian Loyd

continues to oversee the Department to this day.

More recently in 2013, Juneau County completed a land purchase with the aid of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to acquire 876 acres of forest land in the Yellow River Bottomlands of Finley Township. The land purchase fit within the blocking boundary of the County Forest and advanced the County's goal to provide conservation, watershed protection, recreation and working forest benefits to its citizens. The land purchase increased the Juneau County Forest holdings to its present day total of 17,798 acres.

125.3 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 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 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.

- Wisconsin's forests are continually undergoing change due to forest succession, climate change, natural disturbances and forest management activities. Most of the County Forest acreage statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid-1900. A noticeable trend on the Juneau County Forest has been the decline of jack pine. This decline is understood to be associated with the development of effective wildfire suppression techniques and past management favoring conversion to red or white pine plantations. This trend is slowly being reversed by efforts to direct seed jack pine in areas affected by oak wilt. Emerald ash borer has also impacted ash trees throughout Juneau County and a significant decline in ash trees is expected.
- 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.
- Similar to other rural counties, 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.
- The further study of flora and fauna and their habitat needs are leading to a growing list of threatened and endangered species. This new knowledge is leading to more comprehensive land management and protection for species but can also impose limitations on forest management activities. Mitigating measures and restrictions can seasonally limit or impede both forestry and recreational goals. The cumulative effect of restrictions have the potential to impact timber markets, logging jobs and timber revenue.
- Invasive species, insects and disease pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Oak wilt, emerald ash borer, garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle, reed canarygrass and other threats have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests.

Increased travel and trade, along with global climate change may enable even more invasive species to enter Wisconsin forests and thrive.

- Demands for motorized recreational opportunities continue to grow. Not only are the number of motorized users growing but so are the impacts as ATV's and UTV's increase in size and horsepower. This has the potential to result in more severe and longer lasting damage to the forest resource if care is not taken to build a sustainable infrastructure. It will be increasingly important to balance public demand with recreational opportunities that are environmentally manageable.
- Non-motorized recreational demands also continue to grow. While non-motorized recreation is generally less impactful on county forest resources, there are fewer funding sources to support these trail systems and facilities.
- Global climate change has the potential to bring an increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Climate change may also influence forest composition in the future. Changing climates could benefit some species, while also being a detriment to others. This could affect management decisions, reforestation efforts and potential future revenue.

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.”