

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department

2018 County Forest Division Annual Report

January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018

Program Highlights:

- Net timber sale revenue to Marathon County of \$500,426.65
- Total net revenue for the Forestry Division program was \$558,494.65 and expenses were \$359,452.21. Returned \$199,042.44 to the general fund.
- Purchased 40 acres of land in the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit to add to the County Forest.
- Practiced sustainable forestry on 774 acres on the Marathon County Forest. This is based on closed out sales with DNR in 2018.
- Treated pockets of invasive species at several locations on County Forest land.
- Continued participation as a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association Forest Legislative/Certification Committee.
- Mowed 50 miles of hunter walking trails and associated wildlife openings.
- Continued participation in the County Forest Administrator grant program that funds one-half the salary and fringe benefits of the Forest Administrator position.
- Continued participation in third party forest certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard.
- Resurfaced 2.75 miles of roads and trails in Nine Mile and Kronenwetter Forest Units adding 3400 yards of granite.
- The first ever High School Mountain Bike Race was held at Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area with 541 participants resulting in \$3,319.00 in revenue. The same race will be held in 2019.
- Regulated uses at Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area to allow all user groups to have safe and quality recreation experiences.
- Two regular Mountain Bike Races were held at Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area with 636 participants resulting in \$6022.20 in revenue for Marathon County.
- Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area hosted the second annual Ragnar Trail relay running race with 2700 participants resulting in \$23,364.57 in revenue.
- Updated the Marathon County Snowmobile map for the Snowmobile Council.
- Utilized volunteers to complete work on both the ski and mountain bike trails.

Land Holdings:

Acreage in 2018:

County Forest - Regular County Forest Law	29,642.69
County Forest - Special County Forest Law	<u>552.10</u>
Total County Forest	30,194.79

Other Land Holdings:

Parking & road access	8.59
Farm Lease	80.00
McMillan Marsh Lease (DNR)	1,661.40
Under water, island & wetlands	192.74
Railroad ROW/Snowmobile Trail	<u>85.04</u>
Total Other Lands	2,027.77

Total Lands Managed: 32,222.56 Acres

Timber Management, Cultural Projects, and Reforestation:

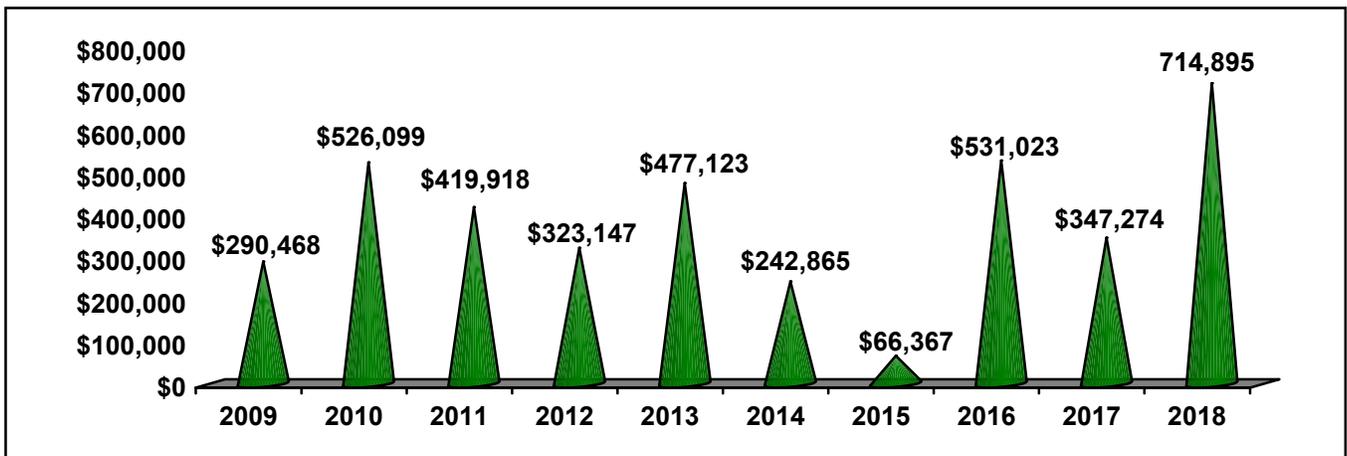
Timber Sales:

Timber sales generated 15,888 cords of pulpwood and 489,000 board feet of logs worth \$714,895.21(unaudited) in 2018. The following is a listing of the gross value of timber cut from the forest over the past 10 years:

2009	\$290,467.76	2014	\$242,865.33
2010	\$526,099.29	2015	\$66,366.74
2011	\$419,917.34	2016	\$531,022.66
2012	\$323,146.07	2017	\$347,274.04
2013	\$477,122.61	2018	\$714,895.21

Marathon County Forest

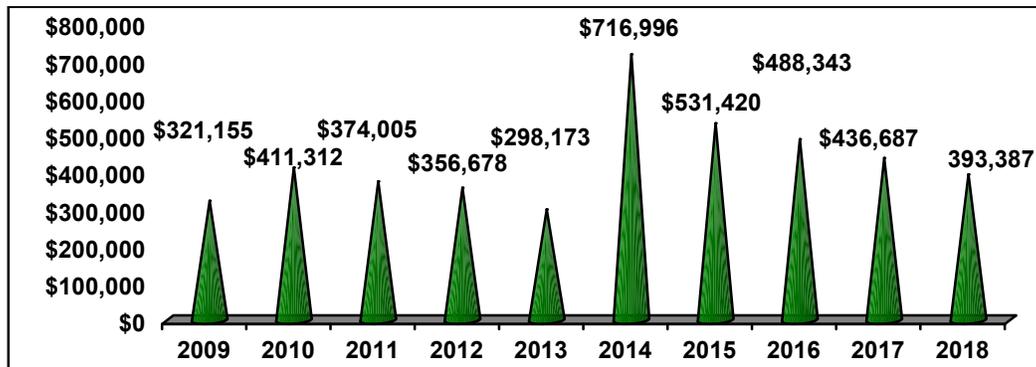
Timber Sales Annual Gross Revenue – Cut and Hauled



Other Timber Sale Data:

New sales – 12 were established on 709 acres with 13,757 cords appraised at \$441,973.65.

Marathon County Forest Timber Sales Annual Sold Value



1. Sold sales - 12 of 13 sales advertised were sold in 2018 for a value of \$393,386.90.
2. Uncompleted timber contracts – 25 with 26,443 cord equivalents worth \$1,179,992.00.
3. Cut volume reports filed with DNR (form 2460):
 - Final reports – 7 sales worth \$461,730.79.
 - Partial reports - 0 sales worth \$0.
4. Severance paid to DNR on interest free loans \$92,346.16.
5. Severance Tax Escrow for Town payments (10% of gross receipts) \$71,489.53.
6. Firewood permits – 18 permits were issued worth \$480.00.
7. New sale establishment – evaluated 861 acres for potential sale (established 709 acres).
8. Forest reconnaissance - updated 3198 acres.

Cultural Projects:

1. Classified forest habitat types on one acre for inclusion in our GIS database.
2. Monitored for additional oak wilt areas in Nine Mile and Kronenwetter Forest Units.
3. Identified two new pockets of oak trees in Nine Mile infected with the oak wilt fungus, treatment on one of the sites was completed in July with 34 trees treated. The other site will be monitored.
4. Applied and received a \$31,200 Sustainable Forestry grant to attempt to control invasive species and unwanted shrubs on several areas of the County Forest. Treatment will begin in 2019.
5. Scarified 57 acres of the forest floor to prepare the site for oak acorn seedling germination at Nine Mile Forest Unit using DNR heavy equipment.
6. A contractor used herbicide on 14 acres to reduce ironwood, witch hazel, muscledwood and red maple at Burma and Leather Camp Forest Units to promote hardwood and oak regeneration.
7. Treated areas of tansy, thistle and spotted knapweed on several wildlife flowage dikes and forest unit trails.
8. Completed deer browse surveys at Big Eau Pleine County Park. This will continue in 2019 and beyond.
9. Completed deer browse surveys on 211 acres of the Marathon County Forest.

Reforestation:

1. No reforestation took place in 2018 as all plantations were fully stocked and growing well.

Road, Trail, and Facility Construction and Maintenance:

1. APHIS trapped 16 beaver and removed 22 dams at problem locations in the county forest. One dam was blown using dynamite.
2. Replaced three culverts at the Burma Forest Unit and added granite in problem locations.
3. Brushed approximately 11 miles of roads and trails in the Burma Road Forest Unit.
4. Placed 3400 yards of granite on forest trails in the Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forest Units.
5. Completed repairs to dikes and water control structures from muskrat and beaver damage.
6. Reconstructed several segments of Nine Mile ski trails to improve drainage and level the surface.
7. Performed normal maintenance on 190 miles of forest roads and trails.
8. Repaired several sections of trail in Nine Mile Forest due to heavy use and erosion.
9. Graded several sections of the Burma Road ATV trails to prevent erosion.
10. Inspected County Forest boundaries to control encroaching land uses.
11. Removed blown over trees on mountain bike and ski trails in Nine Mile County Forest.
12. Repaired gates on roads and trails that access the County Forest.
13. Repaired deer exclusion fences at Big Eau Pleine Park. They were installed to collect data on deer browsing.

Administration:

1. Continued the utilization of the DNR forestry reconnaissance program (WisFIRS).
2. Evaluated three parcels for potential land acquisition as an addition to County Forest land.
3. Applied and received a \$31,368.00 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant to help in the purchase 40 acres of land to add to the Harrison-Hewitt forest Unit.
4. Drafted and adopted an Event and Use Regulations policy for Nine Mile County Forest to minimize user conflicts and balance all the competing uses.
5. Developed policy and implemented principals of Forest Certification - Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) on the Marathon County Forest.
6. Continued participation in Priority Based Budgeting for the PRF Department.
7. Drafted amendments to the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan to reflect forest certification, language and policy changes.
8. Located and assisted in the purchase of approximately 100 cords of firewood for campers for use at the County Park campgrounds.
9. Assisted in selecting a consultant to complete the 2019-2023 County Outdoor Recreation Plan for parks.
10. Assisted in the purchase of 3.99 acres of land to add to the Dells of the Eau Claire Park.
11. Park and forest rangers removed twelve illegal tree stands, two trail cameras and one game cart from County Forest lands.
12. The Chief Ranger issued five citations on County Forest lands. One for operating a bike without paying the established fee, two for cutting natural growth, one for using a tree stand in an unauthorized manner and one for defacing trees.
13. Issued five ATV/UTV disabled person access permits to people with disabilities for County Forest access.
14. Revisions were made to Chapter 16 of the County Forest Ordinances and are scheduled to be considered by the Forestry/Recreation Committee and County Board in 2019.
15. Held quarterly meetings with the Forest Citizen's Advisory Subcommittee to discuss forestry and recreation issues.
16. Participated in County strategic planning sessions to understand how to implement and measure outcomes.

Wildlife and Fisheries Management:

In cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:

1. Maintained 17 flowages.
2. Mowed forest openings, Nine Mile and Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit flowage dikes and the Bitzke Bird Walk trail.
3. Mowed most forest unit trails suitable for mowing.
4. Treated 21 out of 72 forest openings in the forest units by either mowing or applying herbicides. Several other openings were field checked and didn't need treatment.
5. Sheared 12 acres of tag alder in the Leather Camp Forest Unit to create habitat for grouse, woodcock and other early successional species.
6. Seeded roads and trails with a wildlife mixture in Kronenwetter, Nine Mile and Harrison-Hewitt Forest Units.
7. Removed cattails in front of the water control structure at Bern Forest Unit utilizing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding. Removal of additional cattail masses will continue in 2019 and beyond.
8. Seeded 100 lbs. of wild rice in flowages at Nine Mile Forest Units.
9. Completed a furbearer track survey in Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forest Units. Wolves, coyote, fisher and bobcat tracks were observed.
10. Chemically or manually treated tansy, spotted knapweed and thistle along flowage dikes.
11. Testified in favor of additional antlerless tags to the County Deer Advisory Council(CDAC) in an attempt to reduce the deer population in areas of County Forests with tree regeneration problems.

Recreation:**Nine Mile County Forest Cross Country Ski Trails:**

The ski season opened on January 16, 2018 and the chalet closed for the season on March 21, 2018.

The Wausau Nordic Ski Club offered free adult ski lessons on Tuesday evenings in January. The County assisted by allowing free ski rental and free ski passes for those taking lessons. This partnership was developed to help promote the ski area and increase the interest in cross country skiing.

The Snekkevik ski race was cancelled due to the lack of snow. Special Olympics was held and had 300 participants. Badger State Games had 400 participants. Stomp the Swamp Snowshoe race was again held in February with 68 participants. Total annual receipts associated with skiing and snowshoe activity was \$66,820.55.

Ski Trail Maintenance at Nine Mile Forest Unit:

1. Brushing of all trails is ongoing, and the efforts of the volunteers are greatly appreciated.
2. Volunteers from the Nordic Ski Club sponsored work days in October. They performed tasks such as rock picking, lifting trees and brushing trails.
3. Trail signs were inspected and damaged trail signs replaced, some new signage added, this work will continue in 2019 as the signage is evaluated and updated.
4. Numerous heavy rain events caused moderate to severe erosion on ski trails that was repaired by County operations staff in 2018.

Mountain Biking at Nine Mile Forest Unit:

The 2018 mountain bike season opened at noon on May 15 because the April snowstorms caused wet conditions. The bike trails closed as scheduled on October 15.

There were three Mountain Bike events held at Nine Mile in 2018; The Wisconsin Endurance Mountain Bike Series, NICA High School Race and the Wausau 24. A total of 1310 daily passes and 586 annual passes were sold in 2018. Total receipts associated with mountain biking in 2018 totaled \$31,247.06.

Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition, (CWOCC) continues to be a great partner in maintaining the trail system. The volunteers donate many hours of their time to maintain the single track trails.

Other Recreation:

1. Five cross country running races were held at Nine Mile in 2018.
2. Six ATV safety classes were held in the north parking lot at Nine Mile Forest Unit in 2018.
3. Issued thirteen undesignated camping permits for county forests in 2018.
4. Second annual Ragnar trail running relay race was held at Nine Mile with over 2700 participants.
5. The number of people using all County Forest Units continues to increase. Activities such as hiking, dog walking, berry picking and horseback riding are growing and the demand for more trails is increasing.

Recreational GIS Mapping:

1. Completed changes for the 2018-19 snowmobile map for Marathon County.
2. Completed new maps for the 6/10/20 kilometer ski trails at Nine Mile Forest.
3. Completed revisions to the Sylvan Park ski trail map.

Snowmobile Trails:

1. Trails were open 36 days during the 2017-18 season. Looking back 27 years, the seasonal average has been 45 days.
2. Six local snowmobile clubs contract with Marathon County to groom, sign, brush and perform other work related to maintaining the trail system on County Forest property.
3. Clubs are responsible for signing the trails to DNR specifications.
4. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department annually update the snowmobile trail map for the Snowmobile Council to print.
5. Printed trail maps are made available at numerous locations throughout Marathon County.
6. Marathon County snowmobile clubs continue to receive financial assistance for trail maintenance from the Snowmobile and ATV Aids Programs through grants administered by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department and disbursed by the DNR.
7. The Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau maintain the snow and trail conditions hotline which is updated by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department as snow conditions change.
8. Current trail conditions are also updated by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department on the Marathon County website.
9. The Snowmobile Automated Reporting System (SNARS) became mandatory for all snowmobile clubs statewide with the 2017-2018 season. SNARS is a computer program that was developed to improve the accurate and timely reporting of County trail maintenance expenses and other data to the DNR.

Burma Forest ATV/UTV Trails:

1. Summer trails were maintained using \$5,132.00 of State ATV/UTV trail maintenance funds.

2. The Mid-Wisconsin Trailblazers ATV Club, through a contract with Marathon County, was responsible for the routine maintenance of 11 miles of summer ATV/UTV trails.
3. Volunteers from the Mid-Wisconsin Trailblazers ATV Club continued their trail patrol to encourage safe and ethical riding. Patrol members talked to other riders about the importance of staying on the trail.

Public Outreach/Professional Development:

1. Forest Administrator served as a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association Legislative/Certification, Personnel, DNR Budget, Dues and Bylaws and Roads Committees.
2. Attended several Society of American Foresters, Wisconsin County Forests Association and Forest Certification training sessions.
3. A forestry grad participated in a forest management job shadow with the County Forester.
4. County Forester gave a presentation on forest management to members of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association at Nine Mile Forest.
5. County Forester gave a presentation to 125 K-8 grade students on tree identification at DC Everest middle school.
6. County Forester attended Best Management Practices for Water Quality training.
7. County Forester attended Forest Metrix training using I-Pads for use in field data collection.
8. County Forester attended First Aid/CPR training.
9. Forest Administrator continued the duties of the PRF Department Culture Champion until June 1 and mentored the new culture champion ease into this role.
10. Analyzed plant samples for insect and disease problems.
11. Interviewed by media on forestry related issues.
12. Created interpretive displays to educate the public about the benefits of sustainable forest management.
13. Continued participation in a research project on how seasonal timber harvesting restrictions affects sustainable forest management in Wisconsin.
14. Attended leadership development meetings for Marathon County managers.

Budget Summaries(available upon request)

Forest Resources:

County Forest Program
 County Forest Administrator
 County Forest Road Aids
 County Conservation Aids
 FEMA Cattail Removal
 Sustainable Forestry
 Segregated Land
 Wildlife Habitat
 Forestry State Aid
 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship

Debt Redemption:

General Debt - Aid to County Forest

Recreation:

Burma Trail ATV 18-19
 Cross-Country Ski Trails
 General Fund - Snowmobile Coordinator
 Snowmobile Grant 18-19