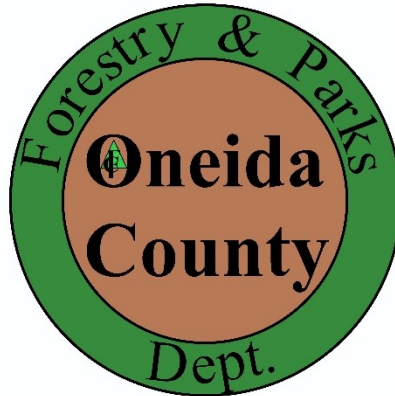


Oneida County Forestry, Land, and Recreation Department



2020 Annual Report

To

Oneida County Board of Supervisors

By

Forestry, Land, and Recreation Committee

Committee

Jack Sorensen, Chair
Alan Van Raalte
Robert Almekinder
Bob Mott
Greg Pence

Oneida County Board of Supervisors: We submit, for your approval and adoption, a report of activities of the Oneida County Forestry, Land, & Recreation Department for the year 2020.

2020 Department Highlights:

- The 2021-2035 Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan revision began in December of 2019 and continued throughout 2020. The final draft was approved by the WDNR in November of 2020.
- The pandemic resulted in a decrease of timber harvesting activities; however, the department continued work with minor furloughs.
- Oneida County saw an increase in recreational facility use (campground occupancy, trail passes, etc.) in part due to the pandemic.
- Jake Truitt was hired in February 2020 as a Forester II and ATV Coordinator, bringing the department to full staff.

FORESTRY

County Forest Account

Forest Management & Timber Sale Revenue: In 2020, the harvesting of timber on Oneida County Forest resulted in gross stumpage revenue to the County of \$1,157,781, which includes Non-County Forest (NCF) stumpage of \$28,683. The stumpage revenue achieved by the Oneida County Forestry Department in 2020 resulted from the harvest of approximately 25,200 cords of pulpwood and 265,000 board feet of saw logs. Approximately 1,000 acres were harvested. An additional \$11,357 in revenue from miscellaneous programs such as firewood and balsam bough permits and cell tower payments was deposited in the Forestry account in 2020. Stumpage revenues for 2020 came in under budget due to several factors including:

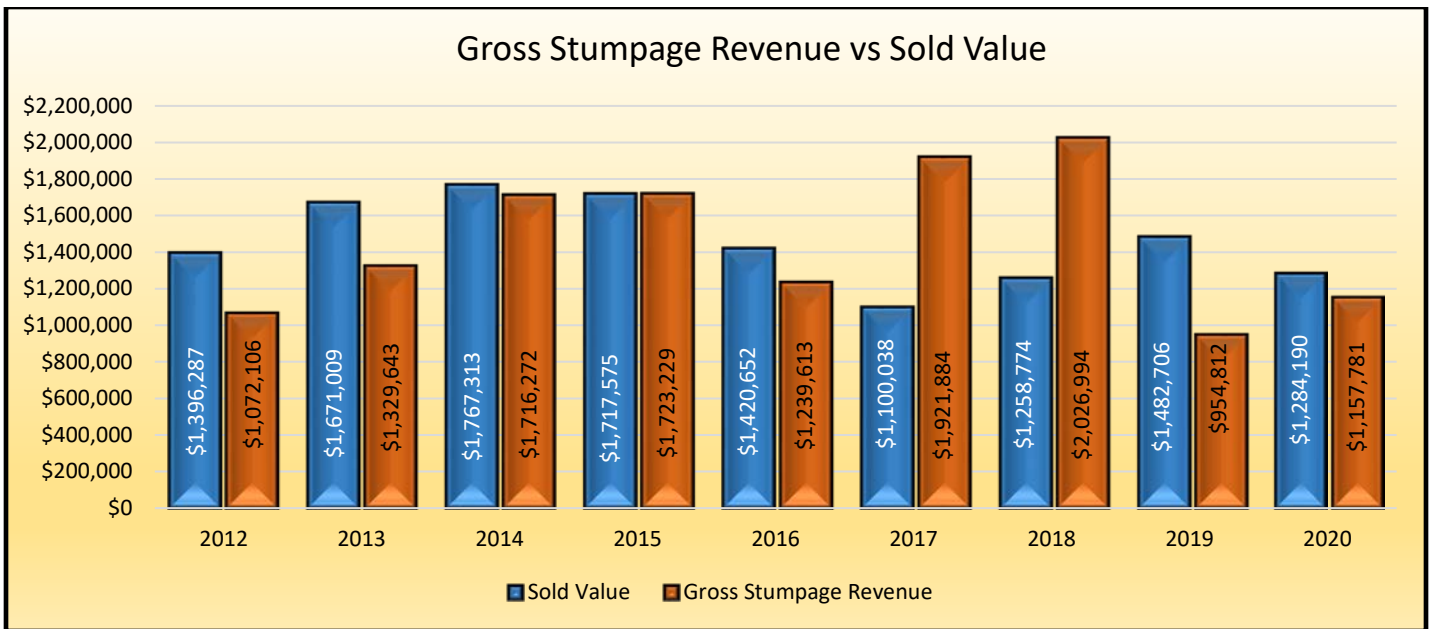
1. A very widespread wind event hit the state on July 19, 2019. This storm resulted in the wind damage of tens of thousands of acres of forestland throughout the state. One of the hardest hit areas was neighboring Langlade County where 40,000 acres or more were destroyed. This resulted in a glut of timber product being put on the market during the salvage of the damaged timber. These salvage efforts took precedence over the harvesting of standing timber on Oneida County sales as many loggers moved to neighboring counties to harvest blowdown. Salvage efforts continued throughout 2020 contributing to the lower than anticipated stumpage revenue.
2. The shutdown of the Verso Paper Mills in Wisconsin Rapids and Duluth, Minnesota resulted in additional decreases in timber harvesting. With approximately 25% of the pulpwood market in Wisconsin shut down, mill quotas and timber prices for logging contractors were significantly reduced.
3. Despite the decrease in timber harvesting, the Forestry Department managed to achieve stumpage revenue of \$1,157,781.

The following table summarizes the past three years of timber sale activity including a projection for activity in 2021.

Year	Acres Sold	Sold Value	Acres Cut	Cords Cut	Board Feet Cut	Gross Stumpage Income
2018	1,492	\$1,258,774	2,200	40,800	775,000	\$2,026,994
2019	1,476	\$1,482,706	1,300	20,700	302,000	\$954,812*
2020	1,300	\$1,284,190	1,000	25,200	265,000	\$1,157,781
2021**	1,500	\$1,000,000	1,100	25,000	250,000	\$1,150,000

*Includes forfeited performance bonds of \$47,704 & NCF stumpage of \$6,925

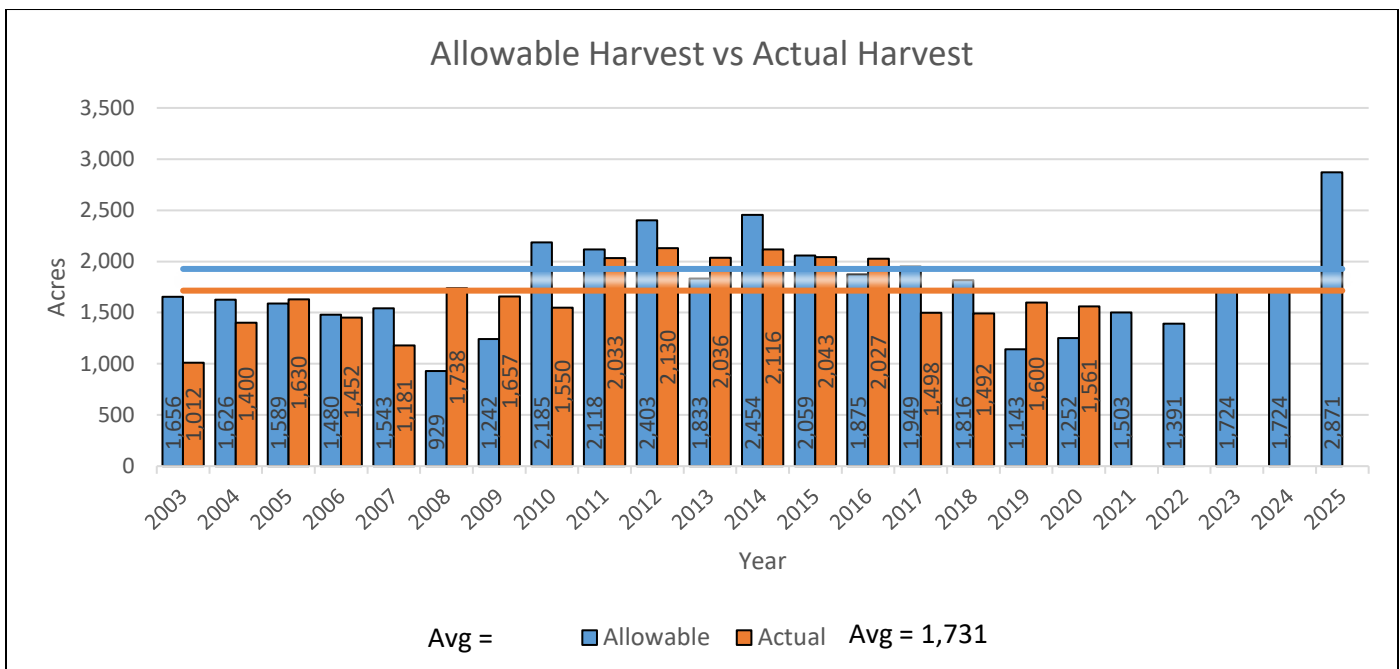
**The 2021 value is an estimate based on projected harvest activity and timber sale acreage to be sold. Estimates are low due to the continued economic situation and the closure of the Verso mill in WI Rapids.



Allowable Timber Harvest Projections:

Beginning in 2010, the allowable harvest for the Oneida County Forest increased by approximately 33%, and remained at such levels through 2016. The allowable harvest spike has now begun to come back down and in response, the projected actual acres established for 2021 will be set at approximately 1,500 acres.

It is anticipated that some timber sales may not sell due to the depressed wood market and mill closure; however, it is the intention of the Department to establish and offer for sale the allowable harvest acres.



Severance Payments:

Each year the County returns 10% of the gross stumpage revenue to the towns, as mandated by the state, in which the County Forest lies. These severance payments are calculated on the total stumpage revenue received in the calendar year. In 2015, the County Board approved an additional 2% of the gross stumpage revenue be distributed to Towns in which the County Forest lies to assist the Towns in maintaining roads that are vital to the transport of the timber products harvested from the Oneida County Forest.

2020 Total Stumpage Revenue	\$1,157,781*
Less 10% Town Severance Payments	\$ 112,910
Less 2% Road Severance	\$ 22,582
Stumpage Revenue Retained By OC	\$1,022,289

*Includes NCF stumpage of \$28,683

Forest Certification:

In 2004, the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) began to explore the possibility of entering into a third party certification system. The purpose of this certification is to ensure forests are managed in a sound, sustainable manner. In 2005, the WCFA entered third party certification through two certification programs: The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Oneida County elected to become certified under the SFI program at that time. The Oneida County Forest has since had two full, on-site audits completed by the SFI auditors. The results of these audits concluded the Oneida County Forest is managed on a sound, sustainable basis. In 2016, with the urging of the wood using industry and logging contractors, Oneida County opted to become certified under the FSC program as well as the SFI program.

The benefits of certification by a third party are many. A financial benefit is the wood products produced by the Oneida County Forest is able to be sold as “certified wood products”. Certified wood products command a higher price in the open market and provides logging contractors preference for selling wood products harvested from Oneida County timber sales to mills requiring a certain percentage of wood purchases be certified. Additional benefits include: reassuring the general public that Oneida County does take into consideration other forest values such as wildlife habitat, watershed protection, cultural resource protection and recreational pursuits during the management of the forest.

In 2020, four counties in the north central part of the state were audited by the two certifying agencies. These audits resulted in zero Corrective Action Requests (CAR’s) or Opportunities for Improvement (OFI’s). The Forestry Department addressed any prior CAR’s and OFI’s and Oneida County remains in good standing with both certifying agencies.

Future Desired Conditions of the Forest: The Oneida County Forest is made up of a diverse array of plant communities. It is the intention of the Forestry Department to maintain the acreages of the existing plant communities at or near their current acreage. Due to the recent discovery of Emerald Ash Borer (see Forest Health Issues), it is anticipated that in the future, the White Ash and Black Ash components of the forest will decline and possibly disappear. These species will be replaced naturally or through planting/seeding with other suitable native species.

Forest Reconnaissance (Recon.): Oneida County staff, including an LTE grant funded forester and DNR foresters, performed Forest Recon activities in 2020. A total of 7,838 acres of the Oneida County forest were examined and recon data updated.

Forest Health Issues: In 2020 there weren't any new significant insect or disease problems identified in Oneida County; however, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) continues to spread. There has been no detection of EAB within County Forest lands throughout 2020. The EAB quarantine that had been imposed on Oneida County when the first instance of EAB was found in the county has been expanded to the entire state. This allows Oneida County to ship hardwood from our timber sales to mills anywhere in the state year round. The Forestry Department is working with the DNR and WI Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection on this matter. Additionally, the Forestry Department will begin to target more ash stands for harvest (primarily Black Ash) in anticipation of the spread of EAB. As the infestation progresses and becomes more defined, an action plan will be developed. Garlic Mustard patches were again monitored and sprayed to control the spread. Late season checks of the areas showed no new plants.



Forestry Automotive Equipment:

Each year \$25,000 is budgeted into the County Forest Account within the automotive equipment line item. These funds are used to purchase new and replacement equipment. The size and specialized nature of some of the equipment and/or vehicles used by the Forestry Department can be rather expensive to purchase. Accordingly, the automotive equipment line item is non-lapsing. This allows the Forestry Department to build up sufficient funds within the line item over a period of years, so when an expensive piece of equipment requires replacing, the necessary funds are available. In 2020, \$25,000 was budgeted for forestry equipment purchases. The Forestry Department did not have any automotive equipment purchases or sell any equipment in 2020, leaving the non-lapsing equipment fund with \$27,514.19 available.

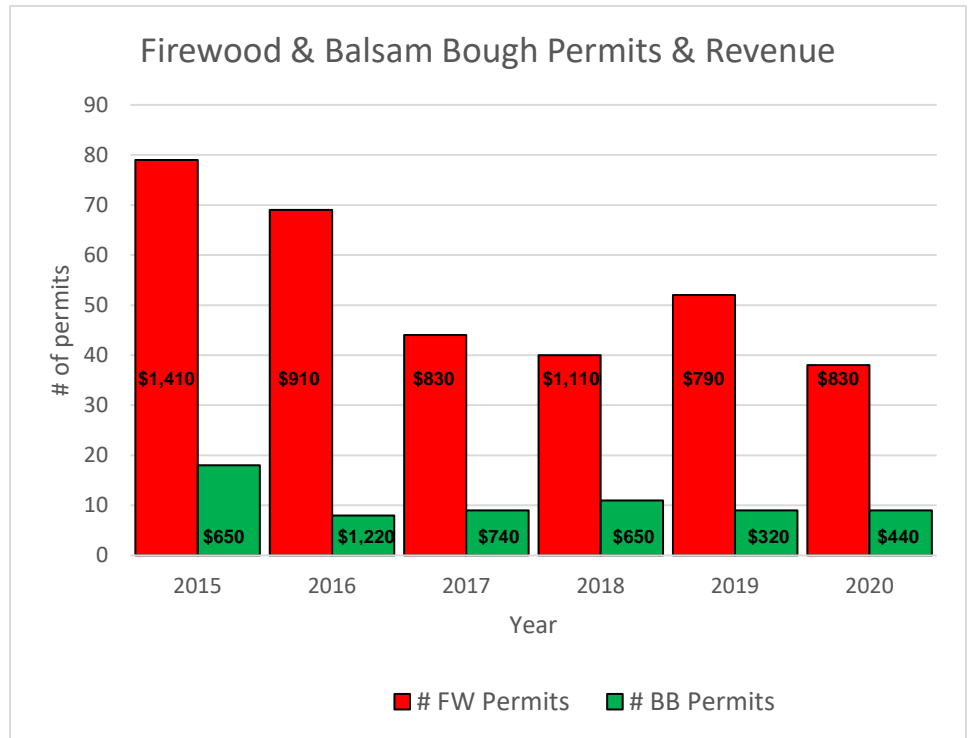
Miscellaneous Forest Products Permits:

Balsam Bough Permits:

The Balsam Bough Permit system is a fee-based program whereby private citizens can harvest balsam boughs from the County Forest. There are three categories of permits. In 2020, the Forestry Department issued four Home Use Permits, and two Non-Resident Commercial Permits. In total, the 2020 Balsam Bough Program generated \$440 of revenue for Oneida County.

Firewood Gathering Permits:

The Firewood Gathering Permit system allows private citizens to gather up to 10 cords of firewood for personal home use from designated areas on the County Forest. Firewood Gathering permits are generally issued on closed out timber sales so as to allow for the collection of any tops and limbs remaining after logging activities have been completed. The permit fee for Oneida County Residents and/or Oneida County landowners is \$20. The permit fee for non-resident individuals who do not own land in Oneida County is \$30. In 2020, the FLRD issued 39 Firewood Gathering Permits, which generated \$830 of revenue.



FOREST ACCESS

County Forest Roads Account: The Forestry Department maintains 37.46 miles of road located in isolated areas of the county forest. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) formally classifies these roads as "County Forest Roads". By definition County Forest Roads must be a minimum of 16-ft. wide, have an improved gravel surface, and must be seasonally maintained (i.e., the WDOT does not require this type of road to be plowed in winter). The primary purpose for maintaining these roads is to aid in the removal of timber products from the County Forest. Secondly, these roads provide the public with vehicular access routes into otherwise isolated areas of the County Forest.

The funds needed for maintaining the County Forest Road system are primarily obtained through the WDOT. Each year the WDOT pays County Forest Programs \$351 for each mile of County Forest Road maintained. In 2019, the Wisconsin County Forest Association lobbied to have road aids increased which resulted in a \$15 per mile increase from the prior \$336 per mile. As a result the Oneida County Forestry Department road aid payment was $(37.46 \text{ miles} \times \$351) = \$13,148.46$.

In addition to the County Forest Road Aids received from the WDOT in 2020, \$1,124.25 of Troute revenue was received from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The term TROUTE is defined by the WDNR as a hybrid between a (tr)ail and a road r(oute) that is opened for use by both off-road vehicles (i.e. registered ATV's and UTV's) and motor vehicles (i.e. registered cars and trucks and street legal motorcycles) for the purpose of connecting two trail segments. All of the above described road aid received by the Oneida County Forestry Department in 2020 was deposited into the County Forest Roads Account.

The County Forest Roads Account is non-lapsing, meaning the funds deposited into the account remain in place until they are spent. Accordingly, the non-lapsing account mechanism allows deposited revenues to accumulate over time, thus allowing large-scale expensive road projects to be addressed. With the exception of \$600 for gravel pit permit fees and a \$30 recording fee for the jurisdictional transfer of John's Memorial Drive from the Town of Enterprise to Oneida County, the revenue deposited into the County Forest Roads Account in 2020 was intended to remain in place and/or saved for a 2021 road gravel-crushing contract.

In 2020, the Forestry Department conducted general road maintenance work throughout the county forest road system. Some of the road maintenance activities routinely conducted include grading, signing, wash-out repair, spot graveling, brushing, shoulder mowing, small culvert installation, storm damage clean-up, vandalism repairs, and garbage collection. Due to numerous heavy rain events, more time was spent on washout and culvert repairs than normal. In 2020, application was completed to the DOT to add an additional 1.39 miles of road to the County Forest Road system. This application was approved for 2021 funding by the DOT.

LAND

Land Purchase Account: The vast majority of accounts used to make up the annual Oneida County budget must be fully reconciled and/or zeroed out at the end of each fiscal year. With that said, Oneida County also recognizes that under certain circumstances some accounts must be non-lapsing. This means any funds deposited into such an account remain in place and intact, year after year, until the funds are spent and/or utilized for their intended purpose. The Forestry Department's Land Purchase Account is designated as a non-lapsing account. As the account name infers, the funds within this account are intended to be used on expenses related to the acquisition of new or replacement County Forest land.

The land purchase account had a balance of \$31,200 available at the beginning of 2020. This revenue was received in 2019 for the withdrawal of 10 acres for the Oneida County Solid Waste demolition site 4 and was designated for land purchase to replace the withdrawn acres.

In June 2020, a private landowner in the Town of Little Rice approached the County regarding the possible sale of his land to the County. The parcel is surrounded by County Forest on two sides, State property on another side and requires a 1 ½ mile trip across county forest for access. This proposal was brought to the Forestry, Land and Recreation Committee and subsequently approved by the Committee and County Board. The approval to purchase was contingent on the County receiving 50% of the purchase price through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant. An appraisal for the property determined the value at \$32,000 and an application was completed for the Knowles-Nelson Grant. Approval of the grant and final purchase of the property is anticipated for mid-2021.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Wildlife Habitat Management Account: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides county forest programs with an annual allotment of funds that are to be used for wildlife habitat improvement projects on county forest land. The formula used to calculate payment for each eligible county is as follows: Number of County Forest Acres x \$0.05 = Payment. Oneida County received \$3,875.95 in 2020 for nickel an acre wildlife habitat funds.

All state funds received by Oneida County through the above-described program are deposited into a non-lapsing, State Aid Wildlife Habitat Management Improvement Account. The non-lapsing account provides the Forestry Department with the flexibility to build up state funding over a period of several years to pay for larger, more expensive projects, use the entire allotment of funds annually or a combination of the above-described methods.

In 2020, the Forestry Department used \$1,500 of the budgeted State Aid Wildlife Habitat funds received on the Cooperative Service Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), to provide technical and operational assistance in identifying and controlling nuisance beaver on the Oneida County Forest. At the end of 2020, the Wildlife Account had non-lapsing funds remaining of \$2,375.95.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Parks Account: In 2020 the Forestry Department maintained two day-use parks for picnicking, swimming, family gatherings, and general recreation.

Almon Park: Almon Park is the largest and most popular day use recreation area managed by the Oneida County Forestry Department. Located just five miles south of Rhinelander, Almon Park offers a combination of highly developed recreational facilities and undeveloped natural areas. This area is primarily utilized in the summer months for swimming, picnicking, family gatherings and general recreation. An 18-hole disc golf course is also located on the property. Historically high water levels at Buck Lake has caused issues at the park. The wetland boardwalk on the nature trail remains partially submerged during much of the summer and the water level at the beach continues to breach the top of the retaining wall.

In late 2020, a grant program was presented to the County allowing public entities to receive funding to upgrade facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications. This grant is known as the CDBG-CLOSE grant and presented an opportunity for the Forestry Department. The Department conferred with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation and was able to apply for \$85,200 to replace two picnic shelters by the beach area and create ADA compliant access paths to each shelter. Approval of the grant is expected in early 2021.



Buck Lake swimming beach located at Almon Park, in the Town of Pelican

Perch Lake Park: Perch Lake Park is located five miles west of Rhinelander on the north shore of Perch Lake. The diversity of recreational opportunities available in the Perch Lake area make this park a popular year-round destination. During winter months, the facility serves as a trail head for a large network of winter silent sport trails. During spring, summer, and fall, Perch Lake Park is popular for picnicking, fishing, hiking, and biking. Some noteworthy attributes of Perch Lake include its largely undeveloped scenic shoreline, and the depth, clarity, and temperature of the lake, which makes it one of the few lakes in Oneida County capable of supporting trout.



*Perch Lake high water shoreline and
ADA accessible fishing pier*

Park Shelter Rental Program: The Forestry Department allows residents to reserve the Rudolph Shelter at Almon Park and the Judy Swank Shelter at Perch Lake Park for private gatherings such as family reunions, graduation and birthday parties, weddings, and similar gatherings.



Rudolph Shelter located at Almon Park

Each shelter is reservable for a fee of \$125/day, which includes a refundable security deposit of \$50 if the facility remains clean and undamaged. In 2020, the Rudolph Shelter was rented 10 times resulting in \$750 of revenue, and the Judy Swank Shelter was rented four times resulting in \$300 of revenue. The total Park Shelter Rental Program generated \$1,050 of revenue in 2020. Reservation income was down about 50% from the prior year (primarily Perch Lake Shelter), presumably due to Covid-19 restrictions on indoor social gatherings. All revenue generated from the Park Shelter Rental Program is deposited into the Forestry Department Parks Account.



Judy Swank Shelter at Perch Lake Park

Gillette - Wickham Lakes Property:

In 2018, Oneida County purchased 231 acres of land containing two lakes: Gillette Lake and Wickham Lake. A small cabin was located on this property and, in 2019, the Department contracted with the Highway Department to remove the cabin. In addition to the removal of the cabin, approximately 1,200 red pine seedlings were planted in open areas on this property. Future plans for the property include improving the access road, creating a small parking lot, installing a small fishing/boat pier and placing picnic tables at the site.



View of Gillette Lake

In late 2020, a grant program was presented to the County allowing public entities to receive funding to upgrade facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications. This grant is known as the CDBG-CLOSE grant and presented an opportunity for the Forestry Department. The Department conferred with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation and was able to apply for \$20,300 to improve the parking lot and ADA accessible path leading to Wickham Lake. Approval of the grant is expected in early 2021.

Campground Account:

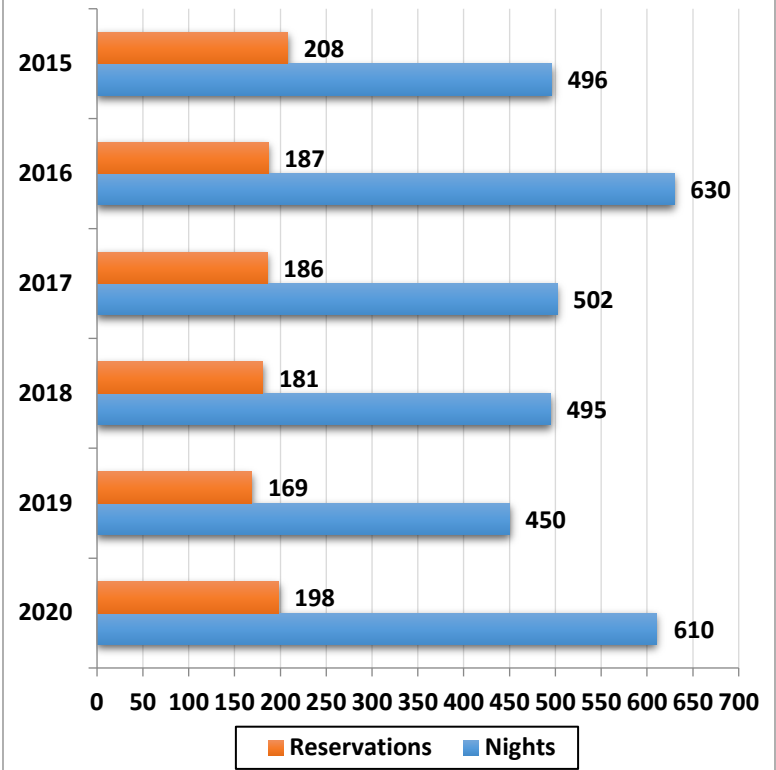
The Oneida County Forest Enterprise Campground opened for public use the summer of 2008. The Enterprise Forest Campground is officially open for camping from May 22nd to December 1st. Although the campground was designed to accommodate ATV's, the campground is open to all members of the general public, with or without an ATV. The campground contains 11 campsites, two toilet buildings and two hand pumps.

When comparing campground occupancy to 2019, the number of reservations and total number of nights that individual campsites were occupied, increased about 35%. This increase is presumably due to Covid shutdowns and people spending more time outdoors recreating. Not surprisingly, the campground's highest occupancy occurs on Friday and Saturday nights. The length of stay increased approximately 15% over the last few years (average 2.7 nights) with many campers spending an average of three nights and returning frequently.



Campsite #2

Campground Statistics by Year



In 2020, the fee to reserve a campsite at the Enterprise Campground increased to \$15/night (previously \$10/night). Camping registration fees and campground firewood donations resulted in \$8,936 of campground revenue. Conversely, the operating costs attributed to maintaining the campground in 2020 was \$1,631, which resulted in a net campground profit of \$7,305.18 in 2020.

Motorized Sport Trails:

ATV/UTV Account: The Forestry Department was responsible for the administration of 43.0 miles of ATV/UTV trails in 2020. Most of the trails are located on county forest land in the south-central and western portions of the county. The Forestry Department contracts out the maintenance of these trails to ATV/UTV clubs. In turn, these clubs receive reimbursement for their work based upon the actual accountable costs they incur, up to a maximum of \$700 per mile. All Oneida County off-road vehicle trails are open to both ATV's and UTV's. In 2020, Oneida County distributed \$30,100 to the four ATV/UTV clubs under contract for services rendered.

Also in 2020, 2.5 miles of new ATV trail was established on the Willow Flowage state property. The County worked with the DNR and the ATV Club to develop a variance to the Willow Flowage Master Plan to allow ATV's on a section of existing woods road. The variance was adopted in October and the trail was officially opened as a club trail in November. Maintenance funding will be applied for in 2021 to add this to the funded ATV trail system.



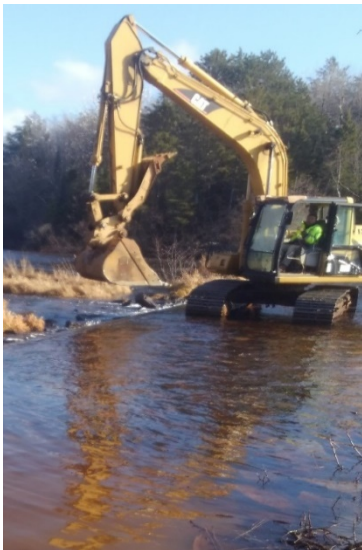
Portion of Trail in Little Rice Needing Rehabilitation

The Forestry Department opened all County Forest Roads to year round ATV/UTV use. Working in conjunction with the Hodag 4-wheelers and Pel-Cho Mudd Nutz the roads were signed as ATV Routes in the fall of 2020. The clubs agreed to help with maintenance as a condition of opening the roads.

In 2020, the Department was awarded approximately \$427,000 in ATV grants. This included \$173,000 to rehabilitate an existing section of trail in the Little Rice trail system, \$199,000 to construct a new trail along Highway 8 in Monico, which will eventually connect to the Forest County trail system, and \$55,000 to construct a new section of trail in the town of Nokomis. All of these projects are anticipated to be complete in 2021.

Snowmobile Account: The Oneida County Forestry Department is also responsible for the administration and supervision of the county's state-funded snowmobile trail network. Similar to the ATV/UTV program described above, the Forestry Department contracts out the maintenance of this trail system to snowmobile clubs throughout the County. In 2020, the Forestry Department distributed \$372,150 to the ten snowmobile clubs Oneida County contracts with for maintenance of the 413.5 mile state-funded snowmobile trail system located in Oneida County.

In 2020, Oneida County was approved for funding of ten additional miles of snowmobile trail. These new miles were split between the Three Lakes and Willow Region Snowmobile clubs. These newly funded miles act as major connectors for the snowmobile system.

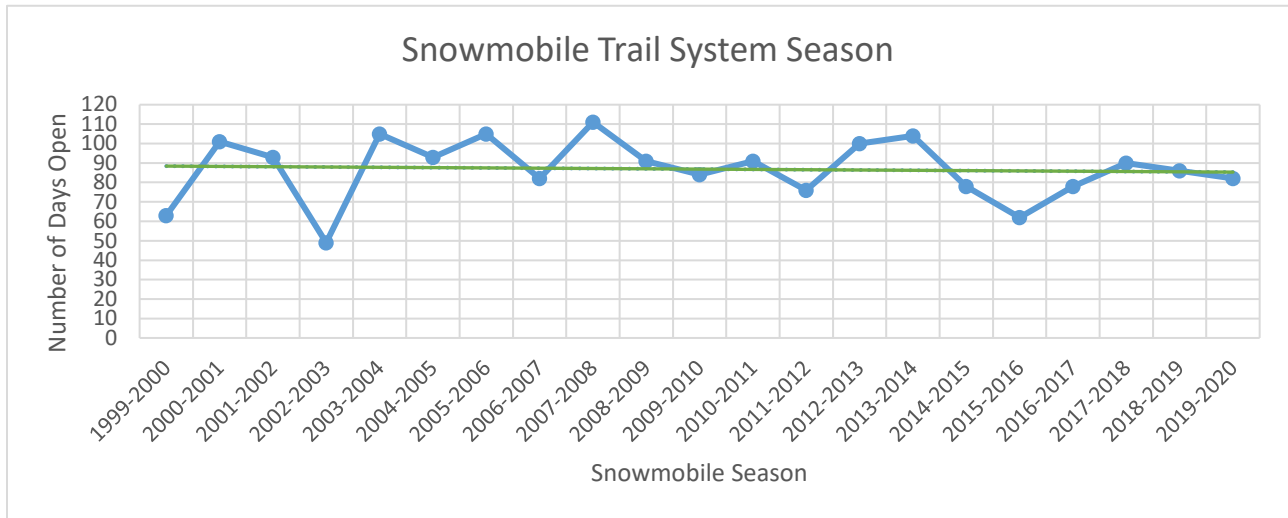


Two significant snowmobile grant projects were funded and completed in 2020. Rehabilitation of the Willow Spillway included installing 8" to 20" rock under the water level the entire length of the spillway, upstream from the weir and wide enough for a legal snowmobile trail to help get this section of trail to freeze prior to snowmobile season and allow for a safe trail all winter. The Department contracted with the Oneida County Highway Department and completed the project at a cost of \$10,991.62.



Another rehabilitation project by Jenny Lake in Nokomis within the Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Area on State Lands, involved the installation of two large culverts and significant fill in addition to appropriate erosion control measures on an important funded snowmobile trail. This project ensures a safe, usable trail all winter. This project was also contracted to the Oneida County Highway Department and cost \$22,837.98.

Snowmobile trails were able to open in early season condition just before the Christmas holiday and closed in early March. The snowmobile trails were open for 82 days for the 2019-2020 season - a slight increase from the prior 5-year average of 79 days.



Silent Sports Trails

Cross-Country Ski Trails: Starting in the mid-1970's the Forestry Department began a program where by cross-country ski trails were developed and maintained (signed, groomed, and brushed) by the department. Over the years these ski trails grew in popularity. Due to public demand, additional ski trail miles were developed and the Oneida County Forest ski trail network evolved into three signed and groomed ski trail systems that total 27.4 miles.



The Washburn Trail, which is the largest and most popular of the three ski trails, is located adjacent to Perch Lake Park in the Town of Woodboro. The Washburn Ski Trail is 12.0 miles long, offering 4.0 miles of trail groomed for tracked skiing, and 8.0 miles of trail groomed for ski skating. Due to the hilly topography found throughout the Washburn Lake Area, these trails are best suited for skiers possessing an intermediate to advanced skill set.

The Nose Lake Trail is also located in the Town of Woodboro and offers 7.9 miles of trail groomed for traditional tracked skiing. The gentle topography upon which the Nose Lake Trail is located makes this system very popular with skiers possessing either a beginner or intermediate skill set. Another popular feature of the Nose Lake Trail is that dogs are permitted.

The Cassian Two-Way Ski Trail measures 15 miles round trip. As its name implies, the trail is located in the Town of Cassian. The Cassian Trail is also located on gently rolling terrain and is designed to accommodate users with a wide range of skills. The Cassian Trail is groomed for traditional tracked skiing.

The increased popularity of these trails required the Forestry Department to groom the trail network more frequently. Unlike motorized recreational trails, which generate revenue to fund trail maintenance activities from the state’s gas tax formula and the registration of ATV’s, UTV’s, and snowmobiles, no such mechanism exists for ski and other silent sport trails. Consequently, all of the costs associated with the development and maintenance of the county’s silent sports trail network were supported with tax levy funds budgeted into the County Forest Parks Account.

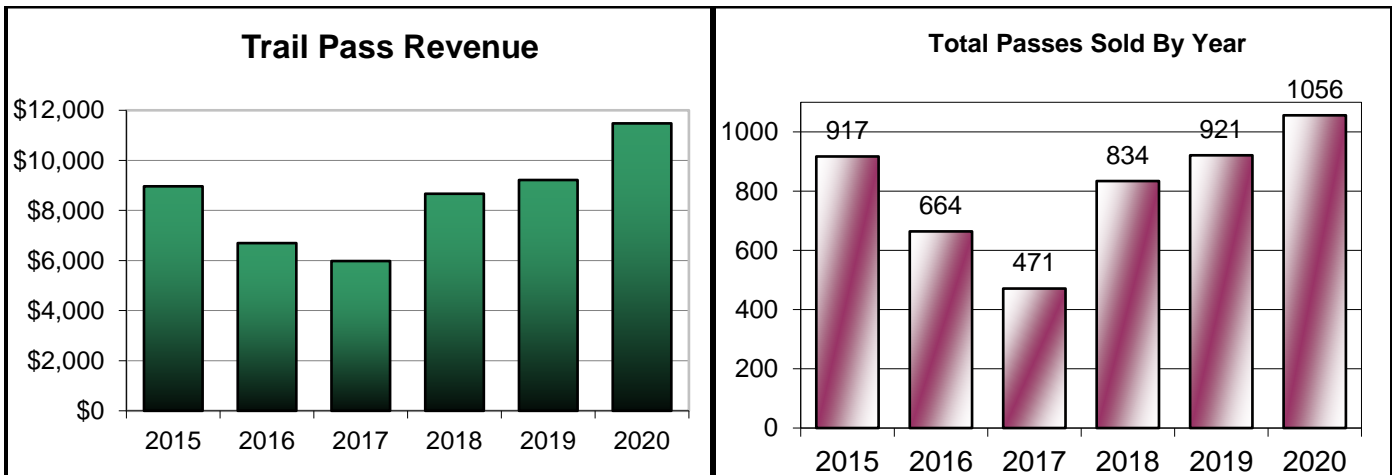


At its peak, the Forestry Department spent approximately \$50,000/year on the equipment, labor, and supplies needed to maintain the county forest network of cross-country ski trails. In an effort to reduce the expense attributed to maintaining the county’s ski trail network the Forestry Department re-evaluated the trail maintenance process.

Ski Trail Maintenance Agreement: Beginning in 2012, the Forestry Department entered into a ski trail maintenance agreement with the Rhinelander Area Silent Trails Association (RASTA). Under the terms of the trail maintenance agreement, RASTA is contracted by the County for brushing, signing, and grooming the county’s 37.2-mile ski trail network. By outsourcing these services, the Forestry Department was able to reduce the ski trail budget from \$50,000 annually to approximately \$30,000 annually.

Recreational Trail Aid Grants: To further reduce the expense attributed to providing the county’s ski trail network, the Forestry Department utilized the Recreational Trail Aid (RTA) program provided by the WDNR. The RTA program was designed to reimburse municipalities for up to 50% of the cost attributed to the development and/or maintenance of recreational trails. Each year RTA grants are awarded by the WDNR by applying a ranking formula to the applications received. For 2020, the Oneida County Forestry Department received RTA Grants for ski trail maintenance providing up to \$14,950 in reimbursement funds to the Forestry Department for expenses related to the county’s silent sport trail network.

Trail Pass Program: The final measure taken by the Forestry Department to reduce the expense attributed to the Forestry Departments ski trail program was the implementation of a trail pass system. The trail pass system requires individuals over the age of 18 to purchase either a daily or annual trail pass in order to use any designated and maintained silent sport trail located on the Oneida County Forest. In 2020, the annual trail pass fee was \$25. The sale of silent sport trail passes for 2020, together with user donations, generated \$11,477 of revenue.



Note: In 2016, the number of annual passes sold increased and daily passes sold decreased; therefore, the revenue reduction was not as significant.

Mountain Bike Trails: In 2020, the Oneida County Forestry Department worked in conjunction with the Rhinelander Area Silent Trails Association (RASTA) to maintain 13 miles of single track mountain bike trail located at the Washburn Lake Silent Sport Trail facility in addition to 25 miles of mountain bike trails lying on the ski trails at Washburn, Nose Lake and Cassian trail systems. The Cassian trail and the west loop of the Nose Lake trail were first opened for mountain biking during non-ski season in 2020.



Washburn Lake Silent Sports Trail, located in the town of Woodboro

Fat Tire Bike Trail: A formally designated and maintained fat tire bike trail was approved on the Oneida County Forest in December 2014. The trail is located within the Enterprise block of the Oneida County Forest and measures approximately 8 miles in length. In addition to fat tire biking, the Enterprise Forest Winter Recreational Trail is also open for cross-country skiing and snow shoeing.



Almon Park Wetland Boardwalk & Hiking /Snowshoe Trail

Hiking & Snowshoe Trails: In 2020, the Forestry Department maintained two hiking/snowshoe trails at Almon Park that total 2.25 miles in length. These trails travel through a variety of habitats, some of which require the use of wetland boardwalks to traverse. For those snowshoe enthusiasts looking for a more isolated experience, the County also provides 8.0 miles of trail located in the Enterprise Block of the Oneida County Forest. Finally, for individuals seeking a more challenging hiking and/or snowshoe experience, the County provides 15.0 miles of snowshoe trail at Washburn, Nose Lake and Enterprise trail systems in addition to 11.0 miles of hiking trail at the Washburn Lake Silent Sport Trails facility.

Disabled Access Trails: In 2020, the Forestry Department maintained three trail systems specifically developed to provide disabled residents reasonable access to the County Forest. These trails are distributed throughout the Oneida County Forest with one trail located in each of the three County Forest Blocks (i.e. Enterprise, Cassian/Woodboro and Lynne/Little Rice). Uses of these areas include, but are not limited to, hunting, berry picking, bird watching and sightseeing. In order to qualify for a Disabled Access Trail Permit, a person must hold a valid WDNR Class A or B disability identification card as defined by WI state statutes. County Forest Disabled Access Trail Permits are valid for one year and are free, with a \$50 refundable key deposit.

Miscellaneous Forest Access: In addition to the trail opportunities and County Forest Roads described in this report, the Oneida County Forest has hundreds of miles of woodland trails and old logging roads that have not formally been designated with recreational purpose, yet remain open year-round for general public use. The primary function of these woodland trails and old logging roads is to provide public access deep into the County Forest. Computerized forest-mapping projects have enabled the Forestry Department to determine that approximately 80% of Oneida County Forest Land is located within one-quarter mile of a woodland trail or old logging road providing access to the public.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Forestry Department had one Worker’s Compensation claims in 2020 which resulted in a payment of \$195.43.

In 2020, permanent field employees of the Forestry Department were provided the opportunity to participate in the County steel-toe work shoe program. In addition, the following personal protective gear was available to all Forestry field staff (i.e. temporary & permanent employees): hard hats, helmets, safety glasses, ear protection, chainsaw chaps, rubber gloves, and respirators.

2020 Expenses Related to Employee Safety		
Expense Item	Total Expenditure	# of Staff Benefiting from expense
Steel Toe Shoes	\$280.00	3
Tick Repellent	\$135.00	7
High Visibility Mesh Vest	\$ 65.00	1
Compass	\$ 40.00	1

Name of Training Class/Course	Forest Director	Asst. Forest Director	Forester/ ATV Coordinator	Forester/ Snowmobile Coordinator
Wildland Fire Safety	X	X	X	X

