

## 2022 WORK PLAN FOR THE ONEIDA COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Forest and recreational management activities scheduled for the Oneida County Forest will be accomplished with the aid of funds described below and approved for use by the Oneida County Forestry Department in 2022.

Account	Revenue			Expenses			Net
	New	Appl. Cont. Approp.	Total	Personnel	Operating	Total	
51570 Land Purchase	\$70,000	\$16,000	\$86,000	\$0	\$61,000	\$61,000	\$25,000
55210 Parks	\$116,198	\$0	\$116,198	\$265,436	\$95,100	\$360,536	(\$244,338)
55212 Campground	\$8,250	\$0	\$8,250	\$0	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$5,950
55410 St. Aid Snowmobile	\$559,440	\$0	\$559,440	\$0	\$559,440	\$559,440	\$0
55412 St. Aid ATV	\$359,795	\$0	\$359,795	\$0	\$359,795	\$359,795	\$0
56110 County Forest	\$1,201,910	\$15,000	\$1,216,910	\$269,653	\$125,600	\$395,253	\$821,657
56111 St. Aid Roads	\$17,773	\$0	\$17,773	\$0	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$4,773
56116 Wildlife Habitat	\$3,876	\$0	\$3,876	\$0	\$3,876	\$3,876	\$0
56220 Maps	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	(\$2,000)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,337,242</b>	<b>\$31,000</b>	<b>\$2,368,242</b>	<b>\$535,089</b>	<b>\$1,222,111</b>	<b>\$1,757,200</b>	<b>\$611,042</b>

### Annual County Forest Integrated Planning Meeting

The Annual County Forest Integrated Planning Meeting between the Oneida County Forestry Department (OCFD) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was held on September 15, 2021. The planning meeting provides a forum for both departments to jointly establish and agree on County Forest Management Goals for the upcoming year.

Individuals present at the 2020-21 Oneida County Forest Integrated Planning Meeting were: Oneida County Director, Paul Fiene; Oneida County Ass't Director Eric Rady, Forester 2 Jake Truitt; DNR Area Forestry Staff Specialist, Hillary Keller; DNR Northern Region Team Supervisor, John Gillen; DNR Wildlife Biologist, Jeremy Holtz; DNR Wildlife Technician, Eric Kroening; DNR Area Forestry Leader Joe Schwantes and DNR County Forest Liaison, Manny Oradei. The main items discussed at the meeting included: 15 Year Plan updates and status, County Forest Time Standards, Wildlife Habitat funds, proposed timber sales and harvest acreage goals, reforestation, County Forest Roads, forest health and protection issues, forest reconnaissance, forest blocking, forest certification, and Park/Recreation matters.

### **FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

## **Timber Sale Establishment**

The Oneida County Forestry Department has established a target goal of approximately 1,500 acres of timber for sale in 2022. A total of 1,439 acres of timber are scheduled for harvest in Sec. 202 of WisFIRS. It is anticipated that not all of the 1,439 acres will be ready to harvest so we have identified several large aspen stands (200 acres and larger) that will be entered earlier than scheduled in order to start breaking up the stands. These early entries, along with those stands in the 1,439 acres scheduled ready to harvest, should approximately equal the target establishment goal of 1,500 acres. The sale areas will be distributed throughout the three County Forest Blocks (Enterprise, Cassian-Woodboro and Lynne-Little Rice). The established value of the 1,500 acres of timber sales is estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000.

The labor required to establish the aforementioned timber sale acreage will be provided by the OCFD with assistance from DNR Forestry personnel.

<b>Acres by Forest Cover Type Proposed for Harvest in 2022</b>			
<b>Forest Cover Type</b>	<b>Total Acres on County Forest</b>	<b>Acres Scheduled for Harvest in 2022</b>	<b>Non-Scheduled Acres Proposed For Harvest in 2022</b>
<b>Aspen</b>	<b>32,865</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Hemlock</b>	<b>1,351</b>	<b>73</b>	
<b>White Spruce/Fir-Spruce</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>30</b>	
<b>Red Maple</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>52</b>	
<b>Northern Hardwood</b>	<b>13,280</b>	<b>346</b>	
<b>Red Oak</b>	<b>2,495</b>	<b>158</b>	
<b>Red Pine</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>White Pine</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Black Spruce-Tamarack-Swamp Conifer</b>	<b>8,333</b>	<b>29</b>	
<b>Swamp Hardwood</b>	<b>1,542</b>	<b>46</b>	
<b>Total Acres Scheduled</b>		<b>1,439</b>	
<b>Total Non-Scheduled Acres</b>			<b>61</b>
<b>Total Acres proposed for harvest in 2022</b>		<b>1,500</b>	

Approximately 25 separate timber sales will be established to address the scheduled acres to be harvested.

Due to unforeseen factors such as wind storms, insect or disease outbreaks and other acts of nature, the above scheduled acres may change.

For more detailed information regarding the acres scheduled for harvest, such as which compartments/stands are scheduled, contact the Oneida County Forestry Office at (715) 369-6140.

### **Timber Sale Administration**

It is anticipated that between 20 and 30 timber sale contracts will be active during 2022. This contract activity will be spread throughout the year with fall and winter being the most active times. Department involvement will include contract administration, sale inspection, and fiscal record keeping. A harvest of 25,000 cord equivalents with a value of approximately \$1,150,000 is anticipated. The haul permit system will continue to be used for pulpwood, and wood scaling will be utilized for saw logs. Weekly timber sale inspections will be conducted by both County and DNR personnel when sales are active. Due to current market conditions including the closing of the Verso Mill in Wisconsin Rapids, it is anticipated that stumpage prices will remain depressed for at least the first quarter if not all of 2022. Logging activity may in turn, be less than normal.

### **Forest Reconnaissance**

Forest Reconnaissance (recon) work scheduled for 2022 includes updating recon information that is older than 15 years as time permits. A total of approximately 3,000 - 4,000 acres of recon update is anticipated. In addition, the acres recon'd during timber sale establishment will be counted toward recon updates.

### **Forest Protection**

Cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be utilized to protect the forest from insects, disease, and forest fires. Cooperation from the DNR will also be sought to assist in the eradication of Glossy Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard. These two non-native invasive plant species were found in the Enterprise Block of the County Forest in 2013. A combination of chemical and mechanical treatment was performed on these non-native invasive species in 2014-2021. An LTE was hired in 2016 to do a more intensive survey of the County Forest for invasive species and to begin eradication measures on populations. This survey located numerous populations of invasive species. The LTE and OCFD personnel developed a management plan to monitor and conduct control measures on those populations deemed most threatening. The LTE continued with established control measures on the Garlic Mustard population, along with initiating control on newly located populations of Garlic Mustard, Glossy Buckthorn, Canada Thistle and Wild Parsnip. This included application of herbicides and hand pulling of plants. These efforts, along with additional monitoring of invasive species populations, will continue in 2022.

With the recent discovery of Oak Wilt in the Woodruff, Lake Nokomis and Woodboro Wildlife Area, and the Town of Lake Tomahawk, the OCFD will continue to monitor oak stands for any signs of Oak Wilt. If found, all attempts will be made to isolate the infection and prevent additional spread. The OCFD will continue to apply restrictions to all timber sales that fall within the Oak Wilt guidelines (e.g. no harvesting until after July 15<sup>th</sup> in stands that fall within the guidelines).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), will be contracted to help control nuisance beaver damage. Isolated beaver colonies that have been identified as posing a threat to timber productivity, or causing damage to County Forest Roads, recreation trails and Trout Streams will be targeted for capture and removal.

Forest insects and diseases already in our area, and/or projected to emerge or migrate into our area were discussed. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was found in Oneida County in October of 2014. The result of this discovery is that Oneida County was quarantined against the movement of ash log/pulp products and all firewood out of the county without the proper documentation; however, in 2018 this quarantine was expanded to the entire state so the above mentioned forest products may be moved year round within the state. Numerous areas within the city of Rhinelander are now infested with EAB. Several White Ash trees on Oneida County Forest in the Town of Enterprise were found to be infested with EAB. These trees are being monitored and timber sales in the area will remove the majority if not all ash. This shows EAB is spreading. The OCFD will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the DNR to devise a strategy to minimize the environmental and economic impact this discovery may have on the County. The OCFD will focus more on harvesting White and Black Ash during normal timber sale establishment especially within a 15-mile radius of the EAB discoveries.

### **Reforestation and Plantation Release**

Several red pine plantations have reached economic maturity and will begin losing value as the trees exceed 20" diameter on the stump. As these stands show up on the harvest schedule, it will be determined which ones may be regenerated through overstory removal and re-planting and which ones may be carried beyond the economic maturity to serve other purposes such as aesthetics. In 2020, one pine stand had a final harvest done on it. This stand will be re-planted in 2023. Site prep (spraying and trenching) will be conducted in summer/fall of 2022 with planting taking place in spring of 2023.

Efforts to regenerate Red Oak will be undertaken in 2022. This will include application of herbicides and soil scarification in summer/fall 2022 and the planting of seedlings and/or acorns in 2023. Grant funding has been secured through the Wild Turkey Stamp Grant for this project.

### **Forest Certification**

The Oneida County Forest is certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) programs. These certifications require periodic random audits of certified forests.

Oneida County joined the FSC Certification Program in late 2016. In order to be compliant with this program, several amendments to the 15-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan (15-Year Plan) had to be made. These changes dealt with stating Oneida County's commitment to the FSC program along with numerous small changes dealing with High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) nomenclature, acreage of the HCVF's, along with the deletion of previously maintained day use areas that are no longer maintained. No significant change to the management of the forest is anticipated due to these 15-Year Plan amendments.

In 2021, four counties in the western part of the state were audited by both SFI and FSC. No Corrective Action Requests (CAR), Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) or Observations were identified by Wisconsin County Forest programs certified under SFI or FSC.

**SFI/FSC Corrective Action Requests (CARs): NONE**

SFI Opportunity for Improvement (OFI): DNR to approve and post the 5 Year BMP Monitoring results in a timely manner. This has nothing to do with County Forests so no action is required on the County's part.

FSC Minor CAR 1: Pertaining to having Environmental Safety Risk Assessments (ESRA's) for all herbicide applications. Oneida County will ensure ESRA's are drawn up for all future herbicide applications.

FSC Minor CAR 2: Annual Reporting of Pesticides. This is specific to the use of Cellutreat. Oneida County has not used Cellutreat so this does not apply to the County. However, if Cellutreat is used, it will be reported on the annual herbicide report.

FSC Observation 1: Same as SFI OFI: DNR to approve and post the 5 Year BMP Monitoring results in a timely manner.

FSC Observation 2: An observation regarding a future FSC standard dealing with High Conservation Value Forests. Seeing as this is a future standard and is not in the current FSC standards, nothing will need to be done at this time.

All CAR's, OFI's and Observations identified in previous audits were addressed and/or corrected by OCFD.

### **Wildlife Management**

In cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources, wildlife management activity on the County Forest will center on forest openings maintenance and rehabilitation, habitat trail mowing, control of terrestrial invasive species through chemical application, hand-pulling and burning, and designing timber sales that incorporate wildlife habitat needs for both game and non-game wildlife species.

In addition to those projects listed above, State Aid Wildlife funds have also been budgeted in 2022 for the following wildlife habitat projects:

- 1) Control encroachment of undesirable vegetation into wildlife openings and hunter hiking trails with a combination of prescribed burns and mowing.
- 2) Seed logging roads and landing with a mixture of grass/forbe seed.
- 3) Promote the establishment and growth of mast producing tree species with scarification techniques that optimize soil conditions for natural seed germination.
- 4) Purchase and install interpretive/educational signs describing various forest management techniques; where, when, and why different forest management techniques are used, and how the different techniques benefit a wide range of wildlife species.
- 5) Work with the DNR Wildlife Biologist and Technician to develop strategies for the harvesting of large blocks of aspen for Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock habitat.

## **County Forest Roads**

### **2022 County Forest Roads, Capital Improvement Schedule:**

Replace two small (12-24 inch diameter) culverts.

Spot gravel and grade ~5.0 miles of County Forest Road located in the Enterprise block of the Oneida County Forest (Bass Lake Road and Zimmer Road).

Explore the possibility of opening a gravel pit along Cruiser's Road in the Town of Nokomis. This pit would be used for maintenance of Cruiser's Road and potentially for supplying material for a new ATV/UTV trail running from Co. Hwy N to Oscar Jenny Rd. The towns of Nokomis and Woodboro, along with the Oneida County Hwy Department, have expressed interest in utilizing a pit in this location if ever developed. If it is determined that opening a gravel pit in this area is feasible and needed, the process of developing the pit would begin in 2022.

Crush approximately 10,000 cubic yards of gravel at the West Zimmer pit in the Enterprise block of the County Forest.

In addition to the specialized projects mentioned above, annual road maintenance projects, including, but not limited to: grading, signing, wash-out repair, spot graveling, brushing, mowing and beaver flood control, will take place through the County Forest Road system in 2022.

## **Equipment and Facilities**

Each year an amortized allotment of funds is budgeted in a non-lapsing automotive equipment line item. The funds within this line item are used to purchase and replace new and existing equipment. Due to Covid-19, in 2020 and 2021, no major equipment purchases were made. A replacement for a 2009 4x4 pickup truck which was planned for 2020 along with the replacement of a 2011 4x4 pickup truck will be purchased in 2022 assuming the vehicle manufacturers begin making fleet vehicles again in 2022.

## **Parks**

In addition to the timber and wildlife management programs mentioned above, the Oneida County Forestry Department will administer and maintain two day-use parks and one campground in 2022. Additionally, in 2018, the County acquired a new recreational area in the Town of Enterprise.

At 160 acres in size, Almon Park is the largest and most popular day use park maintained by the Forestry Department. Some of the more popular features offered at Almon Park include a large swimming beach, 18-hole disc golf course, picnic shelters and several miles of picturesque hiking trails.

Perch Lake Park is open year round and offers a heated shelter building, lakeshore picnic facilities, an ADA compliant fishing pier, and serves as the main trail head for the Washburn Silent Trail System.

The Enterprise Forest campground features 11 oversized campsites, two bathroom buildings, onsite firewood, potable water, and connects directly to the Oneida County ATV/UTV Trail System.

The recently acquired Gillette/Wickham property, consists of 230 acres surrounding Gillette and Wickham Lakes in the Town of Enterprise. In addition to the upgrading of the access road and creation of a parking lot, facilities currently planned for this property include: installing an ADA compliant fishing/boat launching pier and an ADA compliant access path from the parking lot to the pier.

### **2021 Park Capital Improvement Project Accomplishments:**

- The access road and parking lot for Gillette/Wickham were developed in 2021. The majority of park work activities were focused strictly on maintaining existing park facilities.

### **2022 Park Capital Improvement Project Schedule:**

- Replace two small shelters located adjacent to the Almon Park swimming Beach. ADA compliant access paths to both shelters are included with this project.
- Repair and lengthen an existing wetland boardwalk located at Almon Park.
- Develop an ADA compliant access trail from the parking area at the Gillette/Wickham property to an ADA compliant boat/fishing pier on Wickham Lake.

A Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) was awarded to the County for the replacement of the Almon Park shelters and the ADA path to the lake at Gillette/Wickham. The details of this grant are still being worked on by the County. It is anticipated the details will be worked out and the shelter replacement can commence in 2022.

### **Recreational Trails**

Miscellaneous recreational opportunities provided by the Oneida County Forestry Department in 2022 will include: 35+- miles of cross country ski trail, 25 miles of hiking trail, 12 miles of mountain bike trail, 10 miles of snowshoe trail, 6 miles of Fat tire bike trail, 428 miles of state funded snowmobile trail, 315 miles of club & state sponsored snowmobile trails that require some administrative duties and 46 miles of off road ATV/UTV trail and 39 miles of ATV/UTV road routes. In addition to those trail systems mentioned above, the Oneida County Forest offers hundreds of miles of unimproved woodland trails open and available to the public for recreational use. All county forest roads not previously opened to ATV/UTV use were opened for such uses in 2020.

### **2021 Capital Improvement Project Accomplishments:**

- Creation of an ATV trail (Cruiser's Road Connector) from Co Hwy N north to Oscar Jenny Rd. Trail is scheduled to be open for use in May of 2022.
- Re-surfaced and corrected erosion issues on ~4 miles of ATV/UTV trail in the Little Rice trail system.

- Completed Woodboro Wildlife Area Trail 8 culvert project in the Town of Woodboro. Project included installing several large diameter culverts and fill along the existing trail surface.

### **2022 Capital Improvement Project Plans:**

- Continue the process of developing the “Forest County Connector” ATV/UTV trail, which will run from Monico to the Forest County line adjacent to US Hwy 8.
- Re-surface ~ 6 miles of ATV/UTV trail in the Little Rice trail system.
- Continue process of replacing the Gilmore Creek snowmobile bridge in the town of Woodruff. Design specification to be drawn up and application for grant funding to be made. Construction to likely take place in 2022.

### **Land Acquisition**

It is a policy of Oneida County to consider the acquisition of parcels of land located within the formal boundaries of our existing county forest blocks, as said parcels become available for purchase. The rationale for this policy is largely rooted in the concept that land management becomes more efficient with the elimination or reduction of privately owned inholdings.

### **2021 Land Acquisition Accomplishments:**

- A 32 Acre parcel in the Town of Little Rice was purchase in 2021. 50% of the cost of this acquisition was obtained through a Knowles/Nelson Stewardship Grant. The balance of the cost was taken from the Land Acquisition account line item.

### **2022 Proposed Land Acquisitions:**

- A 40 acre parcel in the Town of Enterprise was offered for sale to the county. This parcel is completely surrounded by County Forest and has over ¼ mile of Class II trout stream running through it. The Forestry, Land and Recreation committee along with the County Board approved the application for a K/N grant to purchase this parcel. It is anticipated that the purchase of this parcel will be finalized in 2022.

### **Land Sales:**

It was deemed in 2021 that the County Forest contains several parcels that provide minimal public benefit and that the divestment of ownership of these parcels will be in the best interest of the County. The process to withdraw these parcels was commenced in 2021 and it is anticipated that the process of offering these parcels for sale will be completed in 2022. All proceeds from the sale of these parcels will be placed in the land purchase account for future purchase of lands to be entered in the County Forest Program. Any new parcels purchased will provide more benefits to the County and the general public. These parcels are located in the Town of Enterprise, Crescent and Lynne.