

2026 WORK PLAN ONEIDA COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Forest and recreational management activities scheduled in 2026 for the Oneida County Forest are planned with the aid of funds described below and approved for use by the Oneida County Board.

Account	Revenue			Expenses			Net
	New	Appl. Cont. Appropriations	Total	Personnel	Operating	Total	
51570 Land Purchase	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0
55210 Parks	\$55,700	\$30,000	\$85,700	\$319,775	\$72,550	\$392,325	(\$306,625)
55212 Campground	\$13,075	\$0	\$13,075	\$0	\$9,450	\$9,450	\$3,625
55410 St. Aid Snowmobile	\$515,024	\$236,924	\$751,947	\$0	\$751,947	\$751,947	\$0
55412 St. Aid ATV	\$125,414	\$11,036	\$136,450	\$0	\$136,450	\$136,450	\$0
56110 County Forest	\$1,044,738	\$20,000	\$1,064,738	\$427,355	\$100,075	\$527,430	\$537,308
56111 St. Aid Roads	\$27,521	\$25,000	\$52,521	\$0	\$52,521	\$52,521	\$0
56116 Wildlife Habitat	\$8,300	\$1,900	\$10,200	\$0	\$10,200	\$10,200	\$0
56210 Mining	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,789,772	\$325,860	\$2,115,632	\$747,130	\$1,134,194	\$1,881,324	\$234,308

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 8, 2025. 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 2025-26 Oneida County Forest Integrated Planning Meeting included: Oneida County staff: Jill Nemec, Eric Rady, and Jason Fischer; DNR staff: John Gillen, Kristina Wells, Curt Rollman, Eric Kroening, Michelle Woodford, Emma Belling, Linda Williams and Joe Schwantes. The main topics discussed at the meeting included: County forest time standards, Timber sale and harvest acreage goals, Forest reconnaissance, Reforestation, Dozer projects, Wildlife Habitat program and available funds, Forest health and protection issues, Forest certification, and Parks and Recreation matters.

Forestry Department Staffing

OCFD is currently at full staff with six fulltime employees – Director, Assistant Director/Snowmobile Coordinator, Forester 2/ATV Coordinator, Forester 1, Office Coordinator and Maintenance Technician/Equipment Operator. Additionally, the department employs three Limited Term Employees for parks maintenance, trail/road mowing and recreation area patrol. Staffing levels for the department are expected to remain the same for 2026.

FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Timber Sale Establishment

The annual allowable harvest on the Oneida County Forest has historically been about 1,500 acres; however, for the next 15-year period, it is slightly higher at approximately 1,800 acres annually. In 2026, a total of 2,566 acres of timber are scheduled for harvest, with the majority scheduled in Aspen or Northern Hardwood cover types.

For a variety of reasons, not all of the 2,566 acres will be established for harvest. Numerous large Aspen stands may be split into smaller harvests to break up the Aspen age class distribution. Lowland timber sales (e.g. Swamp Hardwoods, White Cedar, Black Spruce, Tamarack) will likely be deferred or removed from the harvest schedule due to poor markets, inaccessibility, or in the case of White Cedar, difficulty in reliably regenerating them. Deferrals and omission of lowland stands from the schedule should result in an established acreage of closer to 1,500 to 1,800 acres. Unforeseen factors such as windstorms, insect or disease outbreaks, and other acts of nature may also influence the harvest acres scheduled above.

Approximately 20-25 separate timber sale tracts will be established throughout the three County Forest Blocks (Enterprise, Cassian-Woodboro and Lynne-Little Rice). Timber sale tracts are offered for sale twice a year – in May and November – with additional offerings as needed for unsold tracts. The established value of these timber sales is expected to be \$1,100,000.

To establish the aforementioned timber sale acreage, the necessary labor hours will be provided by OCFD with assistance from DNR Forestry personnel.

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.

Acres by Forest Cover Type Proposed for Harvest in 2026			
Forest Cover Type	Total Acres on County Forest	Acres Scheduled for Harvest in 2026	Non-Scheduled Acres Proposed for Harvest in 2026
Aspen	32,873	645	
Hemlock	1,228	153	
White Cedar	2,828	233	
Red Maple	853	6	
Northern Hardwood	13,282	910	
Red Oak	2,555	201	
Red Pine	2,132	200	
White Pine	519	3	
Black Spruce-Tamarack-Swamp Conifer	8,576	105	
Swamp Hardwood	1,557	83	
Total Acres Scheduled		2,539	
Total Non-Scheduled Acres			
Total Acres proposed for harvest in 2026		1,500	

Timber Sale Administration

Between 20 and 30 timber sale contracts are expected to be active during 2026. This contract activity will be distributed throughout the year with fall and winter typically the most active times. OCFD involvement includes contract administration, sale inspections and fiscal record keeping.

A harvest of 21,000 cord equivalents with a value of approximately \$1,100,000 is expected. Wood will continue to be scaled using a combination of the haul permit system and stick-scaling on the landing. Weekly timber sale inspections will be conducted by OCFD and DNR personnel when sales are active. Due to volatile market conditions, it is anticipated stumpage prices will remain depressed for much of 2026.

Forest Reconnaissance

Forest Reconnaissance (recon) work scheduled for 2026 includes updating recon information that is older than 15 years as time permits. Approximately 5,000 – 6,000 acres of recon updates are anticipated. Acres reconned during timber sale establishment will count toward recon updates. Recon updates are conducted by OCFD and DNR personnel.

Forest Protection

Cooperation with the DNR will be utilized to protect the forest from insects, disease, and forest fires. Of particular concern on the Oneida County Forest are Oak Wilt, Red Pine Pocket Mortality and Emerald Ash Borer.

With Oak Wilt present in Woodruff, Lake Nokomis, Woodboro Wildlife Area, Lake Tomahawk and Langlade County just south of the Town of Enterprise, the OCFD will continue to monitor oak stands for any signs of Oak Wilt. In 2025, one actively wilting tree was discovered in the Town of Lake Tomahawk in a town right-of-way adjacent to County Forest property. OCFD, DNR and the

Town of Lake Tomahawk personnel worked together to treat the infected tree and surrounding trees to limit the spread of Oak Wilt in that location. If additional locations are found, 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 from April 15th to July 15th).

Red Pine Pocket Mortality (often with Leptographium and Armillaria associates) has become a disease concern in recent years in red pine plantations, and additional pockets were discovered in 2025. OCFD has been managing these on a case-by-case basis by salvaging individual pockets, or in some cases, salvaging the entire plantation if the Pocket Mortality is more widespread. Pockets or dieback areas discovered in 2025 will likely be salvaged in 2026-2027.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was found in Oneida County in October of 2014. Several White Ash trees on Oneida County Forest in the Town of Enterprise were found to be infested with EAB. In 2023, additional White Ash trees with symptoms of EASB infestation were located in the Enterprise block, demonstrating that 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.

In addition to the concerns above, cooperation with the DNR will be sought to assist in the monitoring and eradication of non-native, invasive plant species. Glossy Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard plants were found in the Enterprise Block of the County Forest in 2013, and Japanese Knotweed was discovered in the Lynne/Little Rice Block in 2022. A combination of chemical and mechanical treatments to eradicate or control the spread of these invasive species have occurred every year since 2014 and are expected to continue in 2026.

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.

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, the OFD will determine which ones may be regenerated through over-story removal and re-planting and which ones may be carried beyond the economic maturity to serve other purposes such as aesthetics. One pine stand had a final harvest completed in 2020 with an additional 45 acres harvested in 2021. These two stands had site prep done in the summer of 2023 and were planted with 2-0 red pine and a small area of 2-0 white pine in 2024. These plantations are currently being monitored and may require follow-up treatment in 2026-2027 to ensure survival.

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 2016. To be compliant with this program, several amendments to the 15-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan (15-Year Plan) were necessary. These changes referenced Oneida County's commitment to the FSC program along with numerous minor changes regarding High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) nomenclature, acreage of the HCVF's, and the removal of previously maintained day use areas that were no longer maintained.

Oneida County has been audited several times, with the most recent SFI and FSC audits occurring in 2024. No Corrective Action Requests (CARs) or Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) were cited.

All county forestry personnel participated in the audit and worked closely with the DNR Public Lands Specialist, DNR Certification Specialist, DNR Liaison and the WCFA in preparation for this audit.

Wildlife Management

In cooperation with the DNR, wildlife management activity on the County Forest will focus 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 2026 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 landings 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) 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.
- 5) Assess refurbishment and development needs for the ADA accessible hunter/hiking trail in the Town of Enterprise.

County Forest Roads

2026 County Forest Roads, Capital Improvement Schedule:

The Forestry Department received a capital improvement project (CIP) of \$210,000 to rehabilitate approximately six miles of Shinglemill Road in the Town of Enterprise. Shinglemill Road is the primary road utilized to access the Enterprise block and the Enterprise Campground.

Spot gravel and grade County Forest Roads located in the Enterprise block of the Oneida County Forest. If it is determined to be fiscally advantageous, either the Highway Department or a private company may be contracted to perform grading activities on the County Forest Roads.

Continue to replace culverts throughout the County Forest Road system as funding and time allows.

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 2026. 6.

Equipment and Facilities

For 2026, the capital funding committee approved the replacement of a 2016 Chevrolet work/plow truck and a John Deere tractor/loader.

Additionally each year an amortized allotment of funds is budgeted in a non-lapsing forestry account to purchase/replace non-capital departmental equipment. The department plans to replace an ATV, a snowmobile trailer and a woods disc mower in 2026.

The Forestry Department may trade-in and/or utilize the Wisconsin Surplus auction to sell replaced equipment and miscellaneous items.

Parks

In addition to the timber and wildlife management programs mentioned above, the OCFD will administer and maintain two day-use parks and one campground in 2026.

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.

Townline Lake Park and beach area are primarily maintained by volunteers of the Friends of Townline Lake Park (FTLLP) which includes routine maintenance (mowing, raking, trash receptacles and portable toilets). The park offers a swimming beach, two picnic areas and a disabled access kayak/canoe/fishing pier that was purchase and installed by FTLLP. Additionally a walking trail from the park to the beach area, two benches and two fishing piers have been provided/installed.

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 Gillette/Wickham property, consisting of 230 acres, surrounds Gillette and Wickham Lakes in the Town of Enterprise and remains a pristine area for Oneida County. The property provides minimal amenities including a parking lot and picnic table to enjoy the scenic beauty around the lakes.

2025 Park Project Accomplishments:

- Removal of the failing retaining wall and remediation of the beach area at Almon Park (Buck Lake).

2026 Park Project Schedule:

- Final removal of the failing retaining wall and remediation of the beach area at Almon Park.
- Repair/Replace roof/skylights on bathroom/changing room building (by beach) at Almon Park.
- Installation of donated picnic table at Townline Lake Park.

Recreational Trails:

Miscellaneous recreational opportunities provided by the OCFD in 2026 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, 431 miles of state funded snowmobile trail, 315 miles of club & state sponsored snowmobile trails that require some administrative duties and 60 miles of off road ATV/UTV trail and 39 miles of ATV/UTV road routes. In addition to the 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.

2025 Capital Improvement Project Accomplishments:

- Redecking of the Tomahawk River snowmobile bridge.
- Continue work on the replacement of the Gilmore Creek snowmobile bridge.
- Continue work on the trail re-route and bridge construction for snowmobile trail (Pelican River Bridge – Hwy 8).
- Completed rehabilitation of five miles of ATV trail in Towns of Lynne and Little Rice
- Started development of new ATV trail in Towns of Minocqua and Lynne known as Trail 5.
- Completed development of one mile of new ATV trail in the Town of Schoepke
- Completed development of ½ mile of new ATV trail in the Town of Schoepke

2026 Capital Improvement Project Plans:

- Complete replacement of the Gilmore Creek snowmobile bridge.
- Complete the Pelican River snowmobile bridge and trail re-route.
- Complete rehabilitation of one mile of ATV trail in the Town of Lynne
- Complete rehabilitation of multiple hillsides on the East Loop of the Enterprise ATV trail system.

Land Acquisition:

It is policy for 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.

2025 Land Acquisition Accomplishments:

- No land acquisitions were made in 2025.

2026 Proposed Land Acquisitions:

- There aren't any land acquisitions planned for 2026, however if lands that meets acquisition requirements become available, the Forestry Department will bring proposals to the Committee and County Board for their consideration.

Land Sales:

- No land sales were made in 2025.
- A potential encroachment on County property in the Town of Enterprise could create a land sale of minimal acreage in 2026.