

WOOD COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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500 LAND USE

500.1 OBJECTIVES

- (1) To identify policies and procedures employed to effectively manage, utilize and sustain the resources of the County Forest.
- (2) To identify regulated management activities, land uses and special resource areas.

505 SILVICULTURAL PRACTICES

Silviculture is the practice of controlling forest composition, structure, and growth to maintain and enhance the forest's utility for any purpose. These practices are based on research and general silviculture knowledge of the species being managed. The goal is to encourage vigor within all developmental stages of forest stands, managed in an even aged or uneven aged system. The application of silviculture to a diverse forest needs a unified, systematic approach. The DNR Public Forest Lands Handbook (2460.5) and DNR Silvicultural and Forest Aesthetics Handbook (2431.5) will be used as guidelines for management practices used on the County Forest.

505.1 EVEN-AGED MANAGEMENT

A forest stand composed of trees having relatively small differences in age. Typical cutting practices include: intermediate thinnings, clear cutting, shelterwood cutting and seed-tree cutting.

505.2 UNEVEN-AGED MANAGEMENT

A forest stand composed of trees that differ markedly in age. The typical cutting practice is selection cutting, where individual trees or groups of trees are removed from the stand. Regeneration is continually occurring after the stand is cut.

505.3 TIMBER SALES

Regulated cutting of timber is essential to the goals and objectives of this plan. Timber harvesting will be conducted on an annual basis in an effort to achieve a

sustainable harvest level. Harvest areas will be distributed in the forest to accommodate such needs as biodiversity, wildlife, aesthetics, watershed protection and other biological needs. The DNR forest reconnaissance printout will be used as the basis for planning and scheduling harvests. All sales will be established, administered and reported in accordance with the DNR Timber Sale Handbook (2461). All sales on the forest are to be advertised for public bidding, with the exception of small sales with an estimated value of \$3000 or less, or sales that would qualify under a salvage provision (s. 28.11(6)(c), Wis.Stats). These sales may be sold direct without advertising.

505.3.1 Field Preparation of Timber Sales

The County and the DNR will cooperate to locate, designate and prepare harvest areas for sale. The Forest administrator and DNR liaison forester shall jointly be responsible to see that the fieldwork on sales is accomplished.

505.3.2 Advertising For Bids

After fieldwork is completed and necessary reports prepared for DNR approval, the administrator shall prepare a sale prospectus and make it available to interested loggers. Timber sale advertisements, at a minimum, will be by classified ad in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune and the Marshfield News Herald (s. 28.11(6)(b), Wis. Stats). Ads shall be run once each week for two consecutive weeks, the last being at least one week prior to the bid opening. A longer advance time will be given when feasible. Sealed bid sales will generally be offered twice per year in spring and fall, or as needed.

505.3.3 Prospectus

The following information will be made available to prospective bidders:

- (1) Species to be harvested and estimated volume
- (2) Minimum acceptable bid
- (3) Maps of sale areas
- (4) Special contract provisions

- (5) Procedures for bidding
- (6) Bid forms
- (7) Timber sales bond and advance stumpage schedule

505.3.4 Method Of Bidding

Bids will be reviewed at a meeting of the committee. A sealed envelope showing tract number and marked "sealed bid" shall be submitted on County Forest bid forms by the bidder for each tract bid on, and shall contain:

- (1) The bid price per cord or per thousand board feet for each species offered and the total for each species bid. The total value of the timber sale bid shall be indicated on both scaled and lump sum bids. The total bid value must meet or exceed the advertised sale minimum.
- (2) A minimum of 20% of the bid value of each tract must accompany the bid as a bid bond, payable to Wood County.

505.3.5 Awarding Sales

- (1) The high bidder is normally awarded the sale contract; however, the committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and to accept the bid offer most advantageous to the county. Grounds for rejecting bids may include without limit:
 - (a) Non-compliance with County Forest contract requirements.
 - (b) Delinquent financial obligations.
 - (c) Unsatisfactory past performances.
 - (d) Inability to demonstrate financial or professional capability.Evaluation criteria on timber sales will be price and documented ability to satisfactorily complete the contract. Factors to be assessed may include proposed equipment and operation, references, proof of financial stability, past performance and documented training completed. Wood County requires appropriate training of logging contractors.
- (2) Tie bids may be settled by toss of a coin if both parties are agreeable; otherwise the bids on that tract will be rejected and the sale readvertised.

- (3) Sales remaining unsold after being advertised for two bid openings may be sold direct at not less than the appraised value even though their estimated value exceeds \$3,000. (See DNR Timber Sales Handbook No. 2461 - Chapter 52).

505.3.6 Sales Contracts

- (1) Contracts will be prepared with copies provided to the logger and the DNR with the original filed in the administrator's office.
- (2) Contracts are to be signed by the successful bidder within 30 days following the Park & Forestry Committee approval of the sale with payment being made according to the County Timber Sale Bond and Advance Stumpage Payment Schedule. Failure to sign the contract within 30 days may result in forfeiture of bid bond.

505.3.7 Timber Sale Performance Bond

- (1) Surety bonds or an irrevocable letter of credit issued by a bank which is a member of the Federal Reserve System or insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation may be used in lieu of cash as a performance bond on sales. The letter of credit or surety bond must be in effect for 6 months beyond the contract length or until released by the County Forest Administrator. If the contract is extended beyond this time, the contractor must provide an extension to the letter of credit or surety bond for a period of time equal to the term of the contract extension, plus 6 months.
- (2) The bid bond may be transferred to the performance bond.

505.3.8 Contract Provisions

All timber sale contracts will be on the form approved by the committee and all provisions therein shall apply. A copy of the timber sale map will be attached and become a part of the contract. A copy of the timber sale contract can be found in Chapter 900 (915.7).

505.3.8(a) Slash Disposal, Landings and Decking

The Forest Administrator shall approve all landing and decking sites and shall prescribe slash disposal requirements in accordance with contract specifications, state statutes, and management objective for the sale area. The objective is to control conditions that affect the following: fire, insects, disease, aesthetics, regeneration, wetlands, wildlife and public interest. Each timber sale contract will have specific slash disposal instructions and aesthetic safeguards and will include without limit the following:

- (a) All slash must be reduced to a maximum specified height: no trees, tops or limbs shall be leaning or hanging in standing timber.
- (b) No machinery may be operated in lakes or streams.
- (c) No slash may be deposited in lakes or streams pursuant to s. 26.12(6), Wis. Stats.
- (d) No slash, logging debris or machinery operation outside the sale boundary unless approved by the County.
- (e) Landings and decks are not allowed within public road rights-of-way except by proper authorization from the Township and County.
- (f) Any debris or material not natural to the land shall be properly disposed of as it is generated.
- (g) All slash disposal, road or landing areas, and other woods operations shall be conducted in compliance with state regulations and local shoreland and wetland zoning restrictions, as well as according to guidelines outlined in Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality (BMP's).

505.3.8(b) Duration and Extension Of Contracts

- (a) All contracts will be issued for not less than six months nor more than 2 years, unless otherwise stated on advertisement and/or contracts. Contracts will be dated to expire on the anniversary of the sale. Exceptions may be made in cases of extenuating circumstances.

- (b) Contract extensions may be granted by the Committee. See the contract extension policy that is found at the end of the timber sale contract in Section 915.7.
- (c) The maximum time duration of a timber sale contract, including extensions, shall be 4 years. Extension beyond this period of time shall be considered by the committee only in the event of special justification. Special stumpage rate adjustments may be made.
- (d) If purchasers do not wish to have contracts renewed or extended the county may charge double stumpage for any timber left, cut or uncut, within the sale area.
- (e) The contractor may request a contract release due to severe physical or financial disability. The committee shall determine whether or not a release shall be granted and may withhold all or a portion of the bond deposit for damages.

505.3.8(c) Contract Violations

Field enforcement of timber sale contracts will be the responsibility of the administrator employing the following procedure:

- (a) The administrator, or designee, will attempt to resolve inadvertent or minor violations by verbal contact with the contractor.
- (b) The administrator, or designee, may immediately suspend logging operations when a serious or emergency situation arises.
- (c) The suspension will be followed by written notice to the contractor, stating the nature of the violation and informing them of committee action taken or pending.
- (d) The Committee, in consultation with legal counsel, may consider, but is not limited to the following remedies:
 - (1) Charge double stumpage
 - (2) Charge for actual damages
 - (3) Suspend contract
 - (4) Retain all deposits

- (5) Foreclose on cut forest products on sale
 - (6) Refer to District Attorney for prosecution
 - (7) Seek civil damages in addition to the performance bond.
- (e) Suspension of operation will remain in effect until receipt of written notice from the county.
- (f) Failure of the contractor to comply with the committee decision may result in the contractor becoming a non-qualifying and ineligible bidder in the future. At the committee's discretion, the contractor may be banned from future purchase of county timber sales for a period of time to be determined by the Committee on a case by case basis. All deposits may be retained and forest products on sale areas may be seized and sold by the county.

505.3.9 Timber Sale Restrictions

- (1) To minimize resource damage, the county will restrict the types of logging equipment, methods, and times of operation used on sale areas.
- (2) Special restrictions may be required in accordance with the aesthetic policy set forth in Section 520.
- (3) Seasonal restrictions may be applied to protect roads, minimize recreation use conflicts, benefit wildlife management, avoid endangered resources concerns, minimize insect and disease problems, or to assist in fire protection.

505.3.10 Special Forest Product Contracts

Stumpage of fuelwood, Christmas trees, boughs, posts and poles and other special forest products for resale will be handled as a timber sale using procedures outlined in Chapter 50 of the DNR Timber Sale Handbook.

505.3.11 Timber Sale Roads

- 1) The contractor will be responsible for securing legal access to sale areas across private or other non-county ownership.

- (2) The contractor will be responsible for securing permission to conduct logging activities within town, county or state road rights-of-way (e.g. decking, skidding)
- (3) Forestry personnel will approve the layout of all roads and make other necessary special provisions within the sale contract.
- (4) Skidding, decking, or other logging activity is not allowed on County Forest roads or ditches unless approved by the County Forest Administrator. These areas will be kept free from logging debris. County forest access roads will be maintained by the logger and be left in good as original condition at the close of the sale. Roads will be inspected by county personnel to insure minimal resource damage.
- (5) A timber sale purchaser may request permission to gate a timber sale access road. The administrator may grant a gate permit to prohibit only motorized traffic.

505.3.12 Supervising Sales

Sale inspections will be performed periodically by county and / or state personnel with corresponding notations in the sales record.

505.3.13 Forest Products Accountability

505.3.13(a) Scaling Merchantability

- (1) Sawlogs will be scaled by the Scribner Decimal C. log rule. A log is defined as:
 - 9” diameter or larger inside bark (d.i.b.) at 8' in length (plus trim) for softwood
 - 10” diameter or larger inside bark (d.i.b.) small end at 8' in length for hardwood
 - Minimum net scale of 50% of the gross scale of the log
- (2) The standard unit of measure for cordwood is measuring 4' x 4' x 8' of unpeeled wood. Peeled wood will be converted to the standard cord by adding 12.5% for sap-peeled and adding 25% for machine-peeled wood

- to the gross volume measured. A pulpwood tree contains at least one (1) 8' stick, to a minimum top diameter as defined in the contract.
- (3) DNR Timber Sale handbook #2461 will be used as a guide in determining the conversion rates for posts, poles, bolts, chips, weight-scaled wood or other types of forest products.

505.3.13(b) Utilization Standards

Utilization standards will be specified on individual contracts to provide maximum utilization of all merchantable timber and will be based on the scaling standards in 505.3.13(a).

505.3.13(c) Methods of Accountability

Wood harvested from the sale area must be accounted for and payment made in accordance with existing policy and procedure. One or more of the following may be used on an individual sale:

- (1) The ticket system utilizes serialized three-part tickets that must be paid for in advance, based on the approximate stumpage value of the wood to be hauled. One ticket must accompany each load of wood to the mill. Mill scale will be accepted for volume determination.
- (2) Wood may also be scaled on the landing. This method is generally used for sawlogs and may be used for pulpwood. Payment for wood products scaled is normally due within 14 days of billing.
- (3) Lump sum sales may be utilized and divided into cutting units when practical. Payment for a cutting unit must be received in full before any cutting begins in that unit.

505.3.14 Special Forest Product Permits

- (1) A written permit for making fuelwood for personal use must be purchased for a specific area designated on the permit.

- (2) Written permits may be issued for special forest products for community or personal use, with fees established by the committee.
- (3) An annual summary report of cut products sold by permit will be filed with the DNR using Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report (Form 2460 – 1).

505.4 NATURAL REGENERATION

Where feasible, natural regeneration will be encouraged through the use of silvicultural methods or cultural activities including, but not limited to, clearcuts, shelterwood cuts, strip cuts, scarification, prescribed burning, select cuts and seed tree cuts. These practices can be enhanced by additional treatments, including the cutting of non-merchantable trees following harvest, by scarification before or after cutting for natural seeding, by prescribed burning, and by chemical treatment. These treatments can be used alone or in combination, depending on the needs of the site. The Silvicultural & Aesthetics Handbook. (DNR Handbook. #2431.5) shall be used as a reference in determining timing, techniques and adequacy of both natural and artificial regeneration.

505.4.1 Removal Of Non-Merchantable Residual Trees

To meet certain silvicultural objectives, the cutting of non-merchantable residual trees may be required as part of a timber sale contract. This requirement will normally be included in the contract when stand evaluation indicates that the density of non-merchantable trees following harvest is likely to inhibit the growth of desirable shade intolerant tree species. Non-merchantable residual tree removal may be also done post-sale if it cannot be done as part of the timber sale contract, and if funding and a labor source is available.

505.4.2 Prescribed Burning For Natural Regeneration

Fire is one of the most natural means available to stimulate the regrowth of early successional species. It should be employed as a management tool when possible

and practical. Prescribed burning for purposes such as site preparation, slash removal, or replacement of natural fire ecology will be conducted when conditions allow. DNR Fire Control will be the major source of guidance and direction. See DNR Fire Presuppression handbook (4320.5).

505.4.3 Other

Site preparation by other means may be considered where natural regeneration will be aided by treatment methods.

505.5 ARTIFICIAL REGENERATION

When natural tree regeneration fails, or when tree species present do not coincide with management objectives for the site, then artificial means shall be employed to establish a more appropriate stand of trees. The establishment of a forest stand through artificial means usually requires some sort of preparation of the site, followed by seeding or planting.

505.5.1 Mechanical Site Preparation

Mechanical site preparation includes the use of soil disturbance equipment such as a disc, roller chopper, patch scarifier, disk trencher and V-plow prior to tree planting or seeding. This type of equipment is used to reduce logging debris to a smaller size, to incorporate debris into the soil, to clear brush and debris from the site to facilitate planting or seeding, and to reduce competition from other vegetation.

505.5.2 Chemical Site Preparation

Herbicide application can be an effective means of controlling unwanted vegetation in order to establish seedlings or plantations. It should be used sparingly, in situations where mechanical treatment is not expected to provide the level of vegetative control needed. Chemicals will be selected and applied in strict accordance with label recommendations and requirements. The objective of herbicide use is not to kill all competing vegetation, but rather to kill or set back

competing vegetation only enough to establish a reasonable stocked stand of desirable trees. Proximity to private lands, residences, highways and other public use areas must be considered in selecting both the herbicide and the means of application. Herbicides can be applied with hand-held equipment, by motorized ground based equipment or aircraft. A written prescription for each herbicide application will be prepared, kept on file, and be made available to the primary applicator.

505.5.3 Prescribed Burning

Prescribed burning for site preparation can be used to reduce logging debris, clear the site, kill set back unwanted vegetation, and to release nutrients into the soil. DNR Fire Control staff will be the major source of guidance and direction for the use of fire as a tool. See DNR Fire Presuppression Handbook (4320.5).

505.5.4 Tree Planting / Seeding

Both machine and/or hand planting/seeding will be utilized to insure adequate regeneration. The selection of species will be determined according to the specific management objectives and capabilities of each site. The majority of planting/seeding will be in harvested areas where natural regeneration is inadequate. Planting/seeding may also be employed to maintain a desirable species distribution on the forest for purposes such as aesthetics, biodiversity, and wildlife.

505.6 TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT.

Timber stand improvement will involve release, thinning, and pruning as the primary practices during this plan period. Timber stand improvement includes any practices that increase the health, growth and quality of existing stands of trees. It can include activities such as release of desirable trees from vegetative competition, non-commercial thinnings of dense tree stands and pruning of lower tree branches. Some practices can be done either by hand, mechanically, or chemically. All practices and applications may be employed during this plan

period.

505.6.1 Release

Release work, if it cannot be done by commercial timber harvest, will be conducted by either mechanical or chemical means as site or environmental conditions warrant. Release is defined as the removal of competing vegetation from the desired tree species.

505.6.2 Non-Commercial Thinning

Non-commercial thinnings are used in young, overstocked stands to improve timber growth and quality. Forest types normally considered for non-commercial thinning include red pine, white pine and oak. Non-commercial thinning will be considered if the individual site requirements, funding and/or available labor make it desirable. Most thinning will be accomplished through commercial harvest operations where practical.

505.6.3 Pruning

Pruning will be considered mainly for conifer species and carried out when deemed economically feasible.

510

RECREATION

The County Forest Ordinance and s. 28.11, Wis.Stats. authorize the Park and Forestry Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the Wood County Forest (Chapter100) which specifically identifies outdoor recreation opportunities. The mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes the degradation of natural resources.

- (1) The Committee may establish and maintain recreation areas and facilities within the County Forest. The Committee has been empowered to establish and enforce rules and regulations for the

use of such developments and to establish fees for their use.

- (2) The Wood County Park, Recreation, and Open Spaces Plan, updated approximately every five years, will reflect the public use and interest in the county's recreation facilities and how the county plans to accommodate those uses and interests.
- (3) The Wood County codes and ordinances shall govern the lands designated by the county for park or recreational purposes.
- (4) The Wood County Park ordinance and County Recreation maps are appended in Chapter 900 (905.2.4 and 925).

510.1 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide recreational services for the public. An agreement with a local snowmobile club to assist in grooming and maintaining county snowmobile trail facilities is an example.

510.2 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS.

- (1) Permits or use agreements for use of the County Forest may be issued by the Committee for recreational purposes.
- (2) No permits for sale of malt or intoxicating beverages will be issued on the County Forest.
- (3) Other types of special use permits are found in Section 515.
- (4) Permits will not be issued for cabin sites on the forest.
- (5) Organized events or special uses, other than informal recreation (see Sec. 510.4) require specific permission from the Committee.

510.3 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES

- (1) Fees for camping shall be in accord with fees charged by similar private facilities so as not to provide undue competition. Fees shall be subject to change periodically at the discretion of the Committee.
- (2) Detailed information on park or recreation area use regulations can be

found in the Wood County Outdoor Recreation Ordinance.

510.4 EXTENSIVE RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

Extensive (informal) County Forest uses shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, hunting, fishing, picnicking, snowshoeing, biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, photography and nature study. Such uses do not require a permit but must be conducted according to the provisions of County Ordinances.

510.4.1 Hunting

The entire county forest is open for regulated hunting with the exception of designated areas that are developed for high public use, such as Dexter Park and the ATV Area.

The following restrictions apply to the use of blinds:

1. Elevated Blinds – No person shall construct, or use any elevated scaffold or other elevated device, except that portable stands may be used provided they are completely removed each day by the close of hunting hours, and provided such devices do no damage to trees, in/on which they are placed, or to other county property.
2. Ground Blinds – No person may construct, occupy, or use any ground blind unless the following conditions are met: (a) The blind shall be either prefabricated and easily portable by one person, or shall be constructed of natural materials found lying dead and down in the immediate area, and cause no damage to trees or other County property. (b) The total area enclosed shall be no more than 36 square feet. (c) The blind is to be constructed and placed in a manner that will not interfere with the movement of authorized vehicles or equipment, and will blend in with the surrounding area. (d) All objects that are not found naturally within the immediate area shall be removed from the blind each day at the close of hunting hours.
3. The use of nails, lag screws, screw steps, or other damaging devices is not permitted. No permanent type structures shall be permitted. No live

vegetation may be cut or removed to create shooting lanes or for other purposes. Refer to Chapter 900 (915.5) for the ordinance pertaining to tree stands.

510.4.2 Fishing

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for regulated fishing, unless otherwise listed in state and county regulations.

510.4.3 Picnicking

Picnicking is allowed throughout the County Forest; however, the user must remove any garbage or debris generated. Violators will be subject to fines for littering.

510.4.4 Camping

Primitive camping in non-designated areas of the County Forest is permitted as long as the following rules are observed.

- (1) No littering or site destruction will be tolerated.
- (2) Firewood must be cut in designated firewood areas only. A permit to cut firewood must be obtained from the Park and Forestry office.
- (3) Maximum camping period at a particular location is 10 consecutive days.
- (4) Natural vegetation and terrain may not be damaged or altered in any way, except for the construction of an adequate fire ring. Fasteners such as nails, screws or bolts may not be attached to trees.
- (5) Manufactured materials (lumber, concrete, plastics, etc.) may not be left on the site when it is vacated. No trees or other vegetation, either native or exotic, may be planted on the site.
- (6) Camping is not permitted in areas adjacent to existing County Park camping facilities, developed recreational areas, and in areas posted “no camping allowed”.

510.5 INTENSIVE RECREATION AREAS.

Parts of the Wood County Forest have been developed to accommodate a high degree of public use. The Park and Forestry Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

510.5.1 Campgrounds

The County provided designated camping areas in Dexter Park.

510.5.2 Picnic Areas

Picnic areas open to the public include:

1. Dexter Park
2. Seneca ATV Area shelter building

510.5.3 Swimming Areas

The County maintains a formal swimming area at Dexter Park. Lifeguards are not provided at this swimming area.

510.5.4 Boat Landings

At several locations in the county, on and off the County Forest, areas have been developed for water access. These generally include a parking lot, surfaced approach to the water (boat landing), and appropriate signing. There are two boat landings at Dexter Park for access to Dexter Lake. One is located within the Dexter Park campground and is for use by registered campers. The other landing is located on the east side of the lake and is available for public use. These are provided for public access to waters for recreational purposes and are shown on the recreation map in Chapter 900 (925.4). Water access is also addressed in Chapter 700. These landings are not to be considered boat-mooring sites.

510.5.5 Waysides

There is one wayside (day use area) on Highway 54 at Dexter Park.

510.5.6 Shooting Ranges

Ranges that allow for public use of rifle, bow, pistol, etc. are permitted on County Forest lands. If the range is operated by an organization other than the county, a written land use agreement, including proof of insurance, will be required. A provision for use by the public will be included in the agreement.

There are two developed ranges on the Wood County Forest. The “Wood County Rifle Range Area” is located approximately 3 miles west of Wisconsin Rapids in section 16, T.22N. – R.5E., Seneca Township. This property is not entered under the special use portion of the County Forest Law but is managed as a public shooting range. The “Wood County Rifle and Pistol Club Range” is also located approximately 3 miles west of Wisconsin Rapids in W1/2W1/2SW1/4 section 21, T.22N. – R.5E., Seneca Township. Wood County has entered into an agreement with the Wood County Rifle and Pistol Club allowing the club to construct and maintain a rifle and pistol range. This range has several shooting stations, and is somewhat unique in that it offers shooters the opportunity to shoot up to 600 yards. Per the agreement, the club agrees that the range is to be used for a public rifle and pistol range. The club is responsible for establishing reasonable rules and regulations for use of the range by members of the public.

510.6 MANAGED TRAIL AREAS

Whenever possible, multiple uses of the various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. Whenever possible, user conflicts are avoided. However, recreational users will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the Wood County Forest. The trail systems are identified in the recreation maps found in Chapter 900 (section 925) and referenced in Chapter 700.

510.6.1 Motorized Trail Opportunities

The Wood County Forest is a multiple use forest. Motorized travel on trails can

be a legitimate use of this forest provided that these trails are designed and maintained in a manner that minimizes damage to the environment and reduces user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It shall be the policy of the Park and Forestry Committee to consider opportunities for the following motorized trail use:

- 1) Snowmobiles
- 2) All terrain vehicles (ATV's)
- 3) Motorcycles

Refer to Chapter 700 for further discussion on motorized recreation opportunities on the Wood County Forest.

510.6.2 Non-Motorized Trail Opportunities

The Wood County Forest is a multiple-use forest. Non-motorized travel on trails is a legitimate use of this forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage to the environment and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It shall be the policy of the Committee to consider opportunities for the following non-motorized trail use:

- 1) Ski trails
- 2) Hiking trails
- 3) Horse trails
- 4) Biking trails

Refer to Chapter 700 for further discussion on non-motorized recreation opportunities on the Wood County Forest.

510.7 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Wood County will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations.

In addition, it is the policy of the Committee to provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

515 **SPECIAL USES**

(1) Recognizing the vast potential for a variety of special uses of the County Forest by governmental units, businesses, organizations or individuals, the committee may designate specified areas for special uses. Specific management methods are to be considered on these areas. Uses must be consistent with the intent of the County Forest Law.

(2) All requests for specialized uses of any County Forest lands will require a permit authorized by the Committee.

515.1 **SAND AND GRAVEL**

Sand and gravel pits located on the County Forest may be used only by units of government or contractors performing public works. Use of existing pits and the opening of new pits by other than the County Forestry Department will require Committee approval and be authorized by permit only. The condition of such permits may include but not be limited to:

- 1) requiring the pit and its access road to be screened from view from any public highway,
- 2) severing trees from the stump,
- 3) disposition of brush and dirt spoil by leveling or hauling away,
- 4) sloping to prevent steep banks, and
- 5) filing with the forestry office an annual written report of gravel and sand removed.

Other conditions may be set at the discretion of the Committee or County Forest Administrator. The Committee may set fees for materials removed. Other non-metalliferous materials will be dealt with on an individual basis.

All active, nonmetallic sites greater than one acre in size, including those on the County Forest, are also subject to the provisions of the Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Program, Chapter NR 135, Wis. Adm. Code. The County Forestry

Department shall work with the local permit coordinator (often county or local zoning office) in obtaining the necessary permits for nonmetallic mining operations.

Sand and gravel may, under some circumstances, be leased to private contractors for private use. In these situations the land must be withdrawn from the County Forest Law until sand/gravel removal and reclamation of the site is completed. Upon completion of reclamation to the satisfaction of the county and the state, the lands shall be reapplied for entry under the County Forest Law.

515.2 EXPLORATION, PROSPECTING AND MINING

(1) The committee may investigate all mineral exploration, prospecting and mining requests as they are received.

(2) The DNR shall be notified of all requests as they become known in accord with Manual Code 2712.1. (Mineral exploration on County Forests per s.s. 28.11

(3)(i) Wis. Stats.) or other codes which may be subsequently adopted.

Public Forest Lands Handbook should be referenced for more detailed procedure.

515.3 SANITARY LANDFILLS.

The use of County Forest lands for sanitary landfills will not be allowed unless the lands involved are withdrawn from the County Forest Law.

515.4 MILITARY MANEUVERS

Military maneuvers on County Forest lands will be considered under a lease or written land use agreement. Upon receipt of a written request from the military the Committee, other necessary County staff, Military, and D.N.R. representatives will discuss the issue at a public Committee meeting. After the needs have been outlined, the site shall be field checked, D.N.R. input and consistency with the County Forest Law sought, and town officials advised. Depending on the scope of the project, a public hearing may be appropriate. If all aspects and concerns are addressed and agreed to, a legal instrument will be drafted. The matter will then be brought back to a Committee meeting for final input and approval. The Public

Forest Lands Handbook #2460.5, Chapter 270 will be used for further direction in this matter.

515.5 PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Easements for public utilities will be considered by the Committee. Underground installations will be encouraged. The following main provisions shall be included in any County Board resolution granting permission for construction of any utility transmission line:

1. Utility may be billed for merchantable forest products and existing timber reproduction.
2. Utility may be billed for land removed from production due to right-of-way clearing for losses of future income and multiple use benefits.
3. Land removed for utility operations that is no longer suited “primarily for timber production or, that is no longer suitable for scenic, outdoor recreation, public hunting & fishing, water conservation or multiple use purposes” (s. 28.11(4)(c) WI.Stats) may need to be withdrawn from county forest law designation. The utility shall replace any lands requiring withdrawal from county forest with other lands suitable for county forest entry that are in the forest blocking of the County Forest.
4. Utility companies will be encouraged to use existing corridors and underground lines to minimize disturbance to the county forest and native plants and animals.
5. Merchantable timber will be removed in a manner approved by the Committee. Timber cut must be reported to the DNR on form 2460-1.
6. Utility must provide notice of proposed route, including a map of not less than 1 inch /mile scale, 90 days in advance of proposed construction.
7. Special maintenance, controlled access and signage concerns shall be addressed in any proposal.
8. An appropriate fee shall be charged for easements.

Section 196.491(3e), Wis. Stats. requires a County (including County Forests), City, Village, Town, Public Board, or Commission to convey lands to an electrical utility for the purpose of constructing electric transmission lines.

515.6 PRIVATE UTILITY SERVICE LINES

If a landowner cannot gain utility access across other lands, the committee may consider a land use agreement for access across County Forest. Requests will be handled according to the Land Transaction Policy and is considered on a case by case basis. These agreements should consider the inclusions mentioned in Section 515 for easements as well as:

1. The permit is non-transferrable
2. The County retains full ownership of the utility corridor, however it shall not be liable for maintenance, upkeep, or other damages associated with the utility service.
3. The permittee waives any rights to any declaration of ownership or interest in the utility corridor on County land for administrative costs as a result of this Land Use Agreement – Utility permit. This agreement is granted upon the signature and any fees being received by Wood County.
4. The fee for such a land use agreement shall be negotiable.
5. The standard land use agreement for utility access is included as an exhibit in Chapter 900 (915.3).

515.7 CELLULAR COMMUNICATION TOWERS

The siting of cellular communication towers on the Wood County Forest will be considered by the Committee on a limited basis. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis subject to the following conditions:

1. It must be demonstrated that the site is the most practical location for such a tower.
2. Land selected for such a tower is no longer suitable for continued entry in the County Forest program. In addition, any accompanying lands needed for tower support wires that inhibit the practice of forestry and are no

longer suitable for scenic, outdoor recreation, public hunting & fishing, water conservation or multiple use purposes (s. 28.11(4), Wis.Stats) may also need to be withdrawn from county forest law. Withdrawal is subject to approval by both County Board and DNR. The cellular communication company shall replace any lands requiring withdrawal from county forest with other lands suitable for county forest entry that are in the forest blocking.

3. Any agreement should also consider the inclusions listed under 515.5 (Items 1-8).

515.8 OTHER

The committee may consider other types of special uses of the county forest. These may include, but are not limited to: research, independent study and scientific areas. Regulations governing these uses will be developed on an individual basis.

520 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONES

Aesthetic forest management will be applied to the County Forest. The degree of application of special management will vary and will require the classification of the forest according to the degree and type of public use. The Wisconsin DNR Silvicultural and Forest Aesthetics Handbook No. 2431.5, and the Natural Resources Board Policy on management of State and County Forests contained in Chapter NR 1.24 of the Wis. Administrative Code (as adopted in June of 1989) will be used for management prescription guidelines. Subsequent versions of NR1.24 are subject to the approval of the County. Scenic Management Zones are shown on the land use map appended to in Chapter 900.10.

520.1 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONE A

Zone A includes areas where there is intensive public presence because of scenic attraction, or some use of the area that would be enhanced by special timber management practices.

520.1.1 Examples – Zone A

- (1) Park and recreation areas, including access routes.
- (2) Lakes and rivers that support significant water based recreational activity.
- (3) Roads with medium to heavy use where the majority of the traffic is unrelated to the forest or is for the specific purpose of enjoying scenery.

520.1.2 Boundaries – Zone A

1. Park or recreation areas. Zone boundaries may include the area within the reasonable visible horizon as determined from any location within the recreation area. It may also include adjacent areas that receive a considerable amount of use as a result of the recreation area.
2. Travel corridors. The boundaries will be a reasonable distance from the traveled part of the zone.

520.1.3 Management – Zone A

Zone A management is primarily for scenic values. This will mainly involve adaptations of normal timber cutting practices and may require additional expenditures.

520.1.4 Permitted Uses – Zone A

1. Timber harvesting and thinning operations may be prohibited during periods of peak public use. All slash may be lopped and/or removed from view.
2. Timber stands in this zone will be managed to afford the greatest scenic potential for public enjoyment.
3. Borrow pits may be permitted near a road during the time the road is under construction. When any borrow operation is completed the site will be restored pursuant to Chapter NR 135, Wis. Adm. Code and must aesthetically conform to general use of the area. Permanent pits should

be screened from view. Gravel / borrow pits located on the county forest may only be used by units of government or contractors performing public works.

4. County directional, informational and recreational signs conforming to approved standards are permitted.
5. All tree and shrub planting will be spaced at random to prevent an artificial appearance.
6. New access roads will be permitted if they join the main road at right angles. All such access roads will be, when possible, curved so that no cleared line of sight will be created from the main road to the exterior boundary of the zone.

520.2 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONE B

Zone B includes any area of the forest where the public use is such that no one value can at all times be considered as the most important, but where, because of the intensity and variety of use, scenic attractiveness is desirable.

520.2.1 Examples – Zone B

1. Roads with light to medium use where the majority of the traffic is a result of some other use of the forest other than for scenic beauty.
2. Lakes or streams that do not have significant value for water-based recreation.

520.2.2 Boundaries – Zone B

The zone boundaries will have a reasonable visual horizon determined at periods of heavy use, from the part of the zone where the use occurs.

520.2.3 Management – Zone B

Zone B Management is for normal multiple use, but applies strict slash disposal requirements for any management operations. With the use of informational signs, management practices may be interpreted to the public.

520.2.4 Permitted Uses – Zone B

All land management activities are permissible but should be exercised with sensitivity to aesthetics. Examples: Timber sales may employ lopping and scattering of slash, rehabilitation of roads and landings, erosion control and prevention, and irregular harvest lines to mitigate aesthetic impact.

520.3 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONE C

Zone C includes all parts of the forest not contained in Zones A, B or D. Any significant public presence in this zone is likely to occur only as result of a specific use of the forest.

520.3.1 Examples – Zone C

All areas not included in Zone A, B or D. The majority of the forest is normally classified as Zone C.

520.3.2 Boundaries – Zone C

All areas not included in Zone A, B or D.

520.3.3 Management – Zone C

Zone C management is to optimize timber production using sound resource management concepts. Natural opportunities to maintain or enhance diversity or scenic quality should be considered.

520.3.4 Permitted Uses – Zone C

All land management activities consistent with the goals of the forest.

520.4 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONE D

Areas designated as special resources.

520.4.1 Examples – Zone D

- (1) Red Oak Bottoms State Natural Area
- (2) Owl Creek Fen Savanna Natural Area
- (3) Hiles Wetlands and Skunk Creek Woods Natural Areas

520.4.2 Management – Zone D

Manage these areas as outlined in Chapter 800 or the individual management plan.

525 **TREATY RIGHTS: GATHERING MISCELLANEOUS FOREST PRODUCTS**

There are no known treaty rights on the Wood County Forest.

530 **HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS / AREAS (HCVF) and EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES**

High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) is a term that identifies those areas possessing unique qualities locally, regionally, or nationally. Wood County's focus in managing these areas will be to maintain or enhance the qualities that make these areas special. In some instances this may involve altering management practices to mitigate impacts and in others it may entail no active management. HCVF's on the Wood County Forest are described below in section 530.1. Management implications associated with these designations are included in section 850 of this Plan.

Exceptional Resources contain such things as high conservation value forests, wild rivers and lakes, significant geological features, natural areas, ruffed grouse management areas, historical and archeological sites. HCVF contain such communities as relict old-growth forest; habitat for endangered, threatened, and species of greatest conservation need; oak and pine barrens, natural origin pine stands; rare natural communities, such as central poor fen, forested seeps, white pine swamps, bedrock glades, large muskegs, shorelines of wild rivers and lakes, and animal concentration spots. It is the policy of Wood County to manage these

types of resources and protect their individual exceptional features.

530.1 AREAS HIGH IN LOCALLY, REGIONALLY OR NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT BIODIVERSITY VALUES

530.1.1 Wisconsin State Natural Areas

Wood County manages a variety of property designations including Wisconsin State Natural Areas (SNA). The SNA system represents the wealth and variety of Wisconsin's native landscape. They contain outstanding examples of native biotic communities and are often the last refuges in the state for rare and endangered plant and animal species. The Wisconsin SNA program works with counties to further recognize outstanding native biotic communities that Wood County is presently managing as exceptional areas. SNA's are unique in that they can exist as stand alone properties or be designated within the boundaries of another property type. Wood County maintains its land ownership, management and decision-making authority, but with cooperative recognition of these sites the county can enhance its ability to provide a broader range of opportunities for the citizens.

DNR State Natural Areas staff will work cooperatively with the County Forest by coordinating educational, monitoring, and research activities. Assistance on management projects can provide the county with more resources to accomplish necessary management. Management will protect the unique character of the area. The importance of Wisconsin State Natural Areas has been recognized on the County Forest by cooperating with Department staff in designating and managing 1,520 acres of the County Forest for four (4) SNA site(s). Maps and information for each natural area are found in Chapter 3000.

530.1.2 RED OAK BOTTOMS

This 20-acre site along Hemlock Creek is definitely a floodplain forest. However, when compared to the flora of other floodplain forests, it differs substantially by

having a significant northern species composition. From the standpoint of maintaining the full range of biological diversity, sites like this are extremely important. They exhibit attributes and combinations of species not found elsewhere in the state or even the Midwest. These unusual species combinations provide excellent research opportunities, which may lead to a better understanding of how a floodplain functions ecologically. The site will be managed as an ecological reference for the unique forest type found only in central Wisconsin. Cooperative recognition will benefit both programs.

530.1.3 OWL CREEK FEN SAVANNA:

This large peatland covering approximately 900 acres is best opportunity for recognizing a large block of central poor fen in the northern subsection of the Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape. The site may harbor the only opportunity to recognize the potentially unique aspen wet savanna. This peatland is an exceptional resource worthy of special recognition. Featured is an expansive central poor fen dominated by wire-leaved sedges. Scattered throughout are islands of upland (1 to 3 feet of higher elevation) vegetation. White pine, jack pine, black oak, aspen and red maple dominate these islands. Islands ground layer vegetation is combination of bog [cranberries], northern dry forest [wintergreen, blueberries] and barrens [oatgrass and pinweed] communities. The aspen wet savanna is found in the northeast portion of the site and contains a ground layer of wet meadow species [bluejoint grass, two muhly grass species, manna grass, several asters and goldenrods, swamp candles, and Kalm's St Johnswort]. Virtually no shrub layer exists, except for a few small spireas and towering above the meadow are scattered open-grown trembling aspen. Most of the trees are 25 to 40 feet high with spreading crowns giving the trees a mushroom-like shape. Around the edge and in patches near islands are areas of alder and bog birch domination. Breeding bird species of high conservation need include Golden-winged Warbler, American Bittern, Northern Harrier, and Bobolink. Central poor fen has received little recognition for their ecological reference attributes in the past. Management in the wetlands will be limited to occasional removal of a few

trees on the larger island in the southern portion. The remainder of the sites does not have productive timber stands. Cooperative recognition will benefit both programs.

530.1.4 HILES WETLANDS AND SKUNK CREEK WOODS NATURAL AREAS:

Three units covering approximately 600 acres have native communities, central poor fen, northern sedge meadow, tamarack poor fen, and wet meadow. These three blocks of county forest land are found in the headwaters area of Skunk Creek and the Lyman Marsh. These parts of larger wetlands are the least disturbed and in combination contain the full range of meadow plant species expected for this part of the state. Grasses and wet prairie flowers are dominant in portions of the wetlands. These wet meadows may be a new type of natural community limited to the fringes of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Skunk Creek Woods is a 30-acre site that contains a mature central pine-oak forest and is a good representative forest for this ecological landscape. Management to enhance the white pine/oak timber type will occur, but will be implemented in small patches. The site will be used a benchmark to assess other management techniques on similar timbers types throughout the county forest. The three wetland units do not have productive timber stands. Cooperative recognition will benefit both programs.

530.2 EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES:

530.2.1 RUFFED GROUSE MANAGEMENT AREA:

The County has designated a special management area to emphasize ruffed grouse and woodcock management. This area is located in the town of Hiles and encompasses approximately 1500 acres of aspen and hardwood forests in compartments 35, 38 and part of 42 (see compartment maps in chapter 900.4). The Ruffed Grouse Society donated monies towards the construction of access roads into this block to facilitate management of the aspen resource. They also supplied money that was used to update compartment reconnaissance in this area.

Management efforts will be geared towards maintaining the area in aspen dominated forests to provide for habitat needs of grouse, woodcock, and other wildlife dependent on aspen forest.

530.2.2 Additional sites are known that contain rare species habitat or native communities that the county may consider for special management.

SOUTH BLUFF: The site contains open cliffs and rare species habitat. The rare species are growing on the cliffs. Thinning of the oaks and prescribed fire may be considered. The South Bluff area contains approximately 325 acres of aspen and oak forests.

REMLINGTON PINES: The 60 acre site contains pine-oak forest and barrens species. Management of the pines and oaks could consider fire and extended rotation of the forest stands.

HEMLOCK CREEK: This floodplain forest along the Hemlock Creek contains the same unusual mix of species as does Red Oak Bottoms. The forest along the streams and the numerous oxbow ponds provide habitat for many rare birds, especially Red-Shouldered Hawk, Brown Creeper, Prothonotary Warbler, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Management is best approached on a landscape shifting mosaic perspective.

530.3 RARE, THREATENED, OR ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEMS

As a part of, and in addition to, the unique natural communities listed in Chapter 530.1 and 530.2, rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species exist in the Wood County Forest. As these resources are identified on the forest, the county will consider management alternatives to protect or enhance these resources. The county will continue to work with the local wildlife biologist and the Bureau of Endangered Resources (BER) in developing strategies towards this end. Examples of endangered species on or near the county forest include:

Karner blue butterfly, red-shouldered hawk, striped hairstreak (butterfly), redbfin shiner (fish), Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, and Blandings turtle. A complete species list and their Wisconsin status can be found in Section 900.8.

530.4 CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Examples of culturally significant sites present on the Wood County Forest include burial mounds/cemeteries, logging camps, Native American Sites, and Historical Sites. There are nine archeological sites and one historical site shown on the historic properties map set on the DNR intranet (see Ch. 200, Section 210.1.2) that fall on Wood County Forest lands. More specific information will be gathered during the implementation of individual projects.