

2014 ANNUAL REPORT FORESTRY & PARKS DEPARTMENT



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2014

CLARK COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE

Jeff Kolzow, Chairperson

Al Bower, Dale Mitte, Joe Waichulis, Tom Wilcox

Forestry & Parks Department Employees

Rick Dailey, Administrator	John Wendorski, Forestry Manager
Sean O'Donnell, Parks & Programs Manager	James Smagacz, Facilities Supervisor
Debbie Tlusty, Admin. Secretary	Luke Nigon, Forester
Tom Behrens, Parks Worker III	Ian Remus, Forester
Kelly Kirn, Parks Worker II	Einar Fransen, Forestry Tech
Tim Hagen, Parks Worker II	Don Friemoth, Parks Worker II
Daryn Horn, Maintenance Tech.	

Seasonal & Temporary Personnel – 35 persons
Black River Correctional Inmate Crew – 6 to 10 persons

DNR Personnel assigned to Clark County

Andy Sorenson, Liaison Forester	Tim Mayer, Forester
Scott Roepke, Wildlife Biologist	Vacant Position, Conservation Warden
Chris Schmitz, Forester	Adam Hanna, Conservation Warden

TIMBER SALES

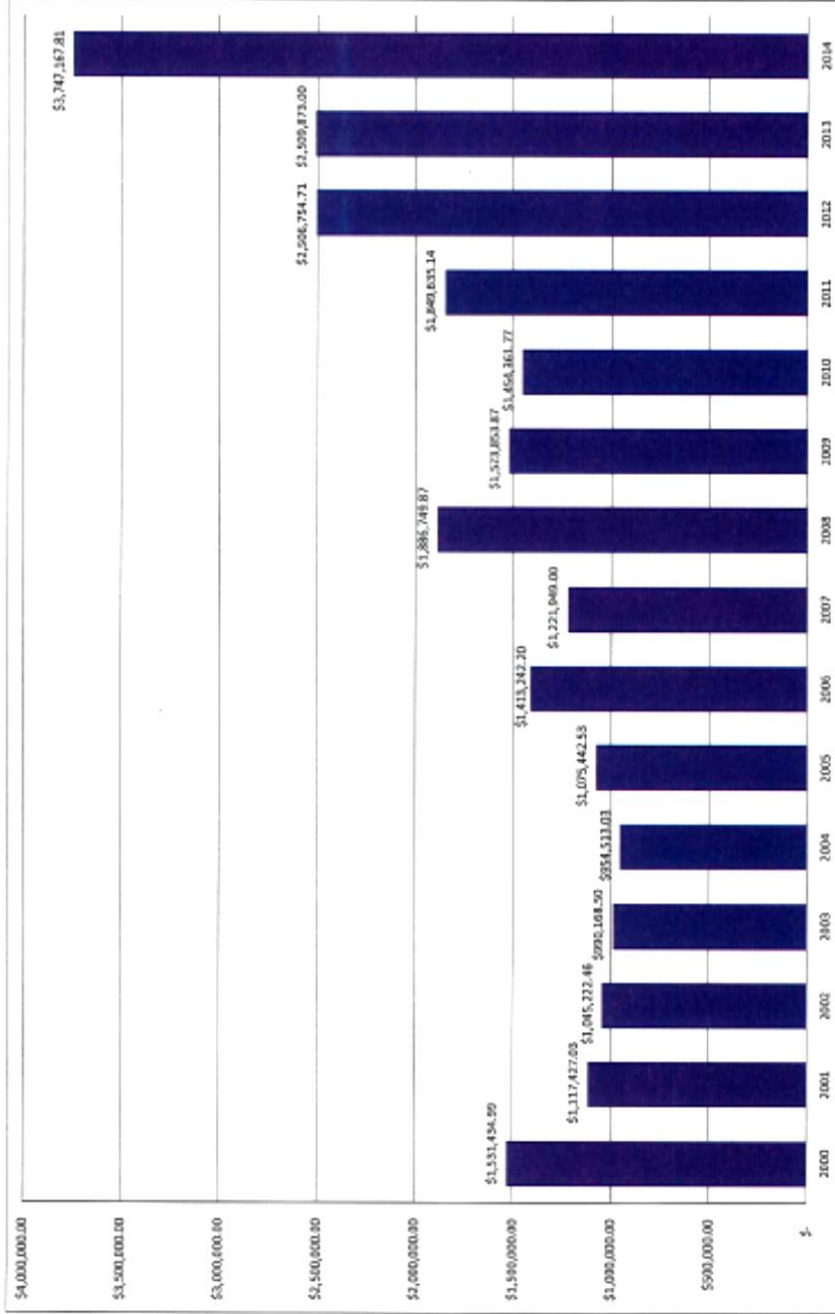
After many years of accelerated timber harvests to salvage over mature and dying aspen, Clark County Forest harvest levels became regulated (in 2005) by means of an annual allowable harvest. Annual allowable harvest levels have steadily increased to 2,940 acres in 2014. During 2014, timber sale efforts focused on catch-up of overdue oak thinning and regeneration harvests while still offering a variety of other species and products to the market place.

Total gross wood product revenue received in 2014 was \$3,747,168.00. This is an increase of \$1,238,385.00 over 2013 and is an all-time record high. An additional \$2,030.00 was received from the sale of 58 firewood permits. See the attached graph showing annual county forest timber revenues for the last 15 years.

The total volume harvested by 25 different logging contractors from 84 active timber sale contracts in 2014 was 54,288 cord equivalents. Based on the DNR's formula of 28.5 cord equivalents equals' one job, 1,905 jobs were generated. Markets during this period were generally above average. Pulpwood and firewood markets were good to excellent. Hardwood log mill prices and markets were similar to 2013 and significantly higher than 2012 levels. Red pine log markets remained strong. Weather conditions most of the year were unfavorably wet. Logging contractors had a very difficult time with the wet conditions and often had to halt operations or move to drier sales before completing a given contract. Rutting was a concern of the Department, but much of it was avoided by use of the timber mats that were purchased in 2013 via a sustainable forestry grant.

Having paid off all outstanding variable acreage loans in 1994, the county now retains 90% of timber revenue generated. The remaining 10% is distributed to townships with county forest land. The table below shows how much money was distributed to each township in 2014:

CLARK COUNTY FOREST 2000-2014 GROSS TIMBER REVENUES



Severance Payments to Townships w/County Forest Land
Based on Calendar Year 2014 Timber Revenue

<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Foster	\$119,782.62	Sherwood	\$21,068.13
Hewett	\$46,719.05	Mead	\$13,440.75
Dewhurst	\$38,235.82	Levis	\$12,985.09
Butler	\$37,846.49	Hixon	\$742.69
Seif	\$32,698.99	Hoard	\$450.41
Washburn	\$25,557.62	Warner	\$54.33
Mentor	\$25,135.69		

Total Distributed to Townships in 2014: \$374,717.68

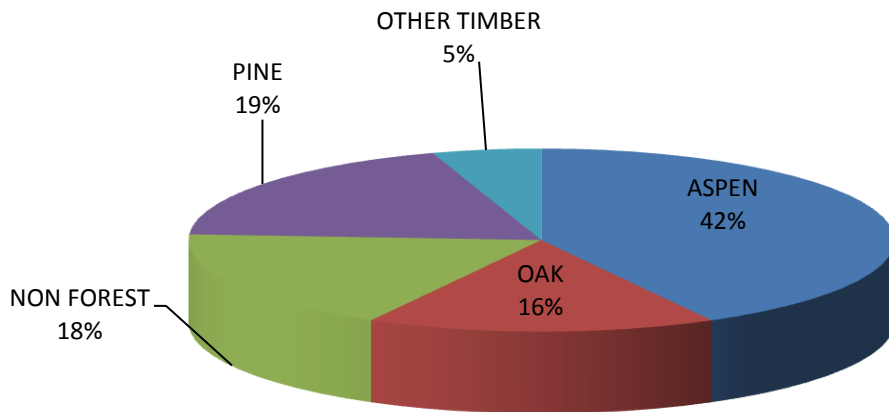
A total of 51 county forest timber sales with an estimated 83,189 tons and 3,862,720 board feet on 3,022 acres were established 2014. All sales established in 2014, except for one, were sold and are under contract. The total contract value of these sales is \$3,698,687.39. Of the total acreage established, 1,548 acres are thinnings and 1,474 acres regeneration harvests.

FOREST INVENTORY

The reconnaissance geodatabase was updated in mid-2011 to improve monitoring and reporting functionality. In addition to the stand information, the stand boundaries are now housed on a state-wide server and are viewable to anyone with internet access. Data security is in place to ensure only authorized individuals can edit this database. This system can instantaneously provide up-to-date annual allowable harvest figures and accomplishments as they occur; a process that previously took days. This latest upgrade now provides additional mapping and geospatial analysis tools available to all personnel working on the forest.

This geodatabase is the backbone of our land management program. It provides valuable planning information and will guide many future management decisions. Keeping data current is vital for making sound management decisions. In 2014, stand reconnaissance updates were completed on 13,590 acres or 10% of the forested cover types. Most of the updated acreage is timber sale related. Attached is a graph showing current county forest cover types.

**CLARK COUNTY FOREST
TIMBER TYPES - 2014
134,257 acres**



REFORESTATION

The vast majority of county forest harvested acres regenerates naturally through seed, root suckers, and stump sprouts. Tree planting does occur in areas where natural regeneration fails or is insufficient to fully stock the site and where conversion to an alternate species will yield substantial increases in productivity.

During the spring of 2014, 89,200 trees were planted on 107 acres. A total of 7 sites were planted in Butler, Foster, Dewhurst, Hewett, Levis, and Washburn Townships. Of the total number of trees planted, 29,880 were jack pine, 40,600 were red pine, and 18,720 were tamarack. All trees were hand planted by a professional tree planting crew from Arkansas.

Preliminary survival surveys conducted this fall for seedlings planted in the spring of 2014 indicate 95% survival for red pine, 99% survival for jack pine, and 99% survival for tamarack. The surviving seedlings appear healthy and vigorous despite the abnormally wet growing season. Some water stress was identified in areas that had evidence of standing water.

Site preparation to control competing vegetation for spring 2015 tree planting sites was completed during the summer 2014. A total of six sites, covering 154 acres were treated with herbicide by a contracted, aerial herbicide applicator. Additionally, two sites covering 29.2 acres were treated with herbicide via broadcast application using county equipment and a rented sprayer from the WI DNR.

There was an excellent red oak acorn crop throughout the county forest in the fall of 2014. County equipment operators scarified five oak stands covering 179 acres. DNR staff scarified one oak stand covering 19 acres. Scarification sites were located in Butler, Mead, Foster, and Seif Townships. Both anchor chain and dozer blade scarification techniques were used. The management objective for these stands is to regenerate oak by removing undesirable competition and preparing the seedbed for improved acorn germination. After advanced oak seedlings are established, the overstory will be harvested. Unseasonably wet conditions limited the site operability and overall scarification production for the equipment operators.

PRESCRIBED BURNS

Prescribed fire is an important forest management tool. Controlled burns are used to rejuvenate native grass openings and prepare stands for natural oak regeneration, benefiting both wildlife and silviculture. Due to the wet spring no prescribed burns were completed on the county forest in 2014.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Sixteen timber stand improvement projects involving 230 acres were completed in 2014. Oak release was the primary focus of our 2014 efforts. Private contractors, DNR equipment operators, and county employees completed the following projects:

- ❑ Cutting undesirable competition to release oak saplings on 7 sites covering 75 acres.
- ❑ Basal spraying of undesirable competition to release oak seedlings on 4 sites covering 92 acres.
- ❑ Root springing undesirable competition to release oak seedlings on 5 sites covering 63 acres. The county contracted with the DNR to complete this project to maximize scarification efforts during the excellent acorn crop.

FOREST PROTECTION

Over the last few years, several threats to the overall forest health have emerged. Oak Wilt, Red Pine Pocket Mortality, Gypsy Moth, and exotic invasive plants have all been identified on the county forest. The impact of these threats has so far been minor.

Damage to the forest resource is minimized through active forest management. Activities such as harvesting mature trees and thinning young stands help promote a vigorous and healthy forest. The trees within these healthy stands are better able to resist attacks from forest pests.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first found in Wisconsin in 2008. Although there are no known infestations in or adjacent to Clark County, this department has been actively preparing for its arrival. Where found, EAB does devastate the ash resource. Ash timber type is not abundant on the

county forest; therefore EAB impact on county forest resources will be minimal.

Oak Wilt is a lethal fungal disease affecting primarily the Red Oak family. Oak Wilt was first identified on the county forest and in Snyder County Park in 2000. Since then, a total of 50 sites have been identified, including 5 new infections in 2014. Oak Wilt spreads through root grafts between infected and healthy trees and overland by sap-feeding beetles. The majority of oak wilt is located in the south half of the county. To date approximately 23 acres of oak timber type have been lost to Oak Wilt.

Aerial surveys are conducted to detect new Oak Wilt infections and check previously treated sites. Active sites are treated by various methods during the fall and winter months. Our efforts to contain the spread of Oak Wilt appear to be working. The number of new infections has remained stable or declined each of the last several years.

The Forestry and Parks Department will continue Oak Wilt control efforts that were first initiated in 2000. With approximately 22,000 acres of oak timber type in the county forest, there is much at stake. If Oak Wilt becomes firmly established on the county forest, any hope for control will be lost.

Red Pine Pocket Mortality was first identified on the Clark County Forest in 2001. Since then more than 40 sites have been identified. Sites vary from a handful of trees to two acres in size. Pocket Mortality is caused by an interaction between a complex of insects and a root fungus, causing red pine deterioration then mortality. There is no known control although progression is slowed by harvesting infected trees. Little else is known about this syndrome. This department will continue to cooperate with DNR researchers by providing site data and research opportunities.

Annosum Root Rot prevention measures were implemented in 2011 for timber harvests occurring in red pine plantations. Similar to pocket mortality, Annosum Root Rot causes decay in the roots and butt of infected trees, ultimately leading to mortality. Unlike pocket mortality, annosum can survive in the soil for decades, prohibiting productive conifer growth on the site. Annosum Root Rot has been detected in surrounding Wood and Taylor Counties; however there currently are no known sites within Clark

County. The best method of control is prevention. A simple stump fungicide application during harvest will prevent infection from occurring.

Gypsy Moth has slowly and methodically spread west from the east coast of the United States since the early 1900's. Currently, the eastern 2/3 of Wisconsin, including neighboring Jackson, Marathon and Wood Counties, are considered generally infested and under a Gypsy Moth quarantine. Clark County became quarantined in 2012.

In July of 2013, a large infestation of gypsy moth caterpillars was observed in and around the Levis Mound Recreational Area in Dewhust Township. It appeared that a large percentage of the caterpillars died from natural causes; however, egg masses were still detected following the outbreak. Egg mass surveys were conducted in early December to determine if additional actions were needed. Results from the survey indicated there were not enough egg masses to justify implementing harvest restrictions or control methods. In July of 2014, caterpillars were again observed in significant numbers around the Levis Mound Recreation area. Much like in 2013 it appears that the majority of the caterpillars died before they could reproduce. Weather conditions in 2014 were very similar to 2013 and may be the primary factor leading to caterpillar mortality. The County, with help from the DNR will continue to survey areas in and around future outbreaks and plan timber harvests accordingly.

At this time, Clark County lies on the leading edge of the gypsy moth wave. Large outbreaks are expected to continue within the county until the wave pushes further west. The DNR will no longer be spraying property within the county as part of the "Slow the Spread" program and will shift its focus west into neighboring counties.

Exotic Invasive Plants native to Europe and Asia are beginning to show up within the County Forest. Following introduction, these aggressive perennial weeds become established quickly. Once established, they out compete and displace native flora using a variety of survival strategies. They often lack natural predators and diseases, which serve to control their populations in native environments. These plants can reduce forest productivity, damage wildlife habitat, degrade ecosystems, and impede natural and artificial regeneration.

Since 2003 Clark County has surveyed high-risk areas of the county forest for invasive plants. By the end of the 2014 growing season, 158 occurrences had been documented. Ten new sites were discovered in 2014. Nearly every documented invasive occurrence is associated with human vectors and is concentrated in high use recreational areas and along ATV trails.

Herbicide treatments to control Spotted Knapweed, Leafy Spurge, Japanese Honeysuckle, and Purple Loosestrife began in 2004 and continued through 2014. These treatments have helped contain the spread of invasives and reduced their intensity in the treated areas. Japanese Knotweed was identified on a site in Dewhurst Township in 2013 and was mowed and twice treated with herbicide in 2014. The mowing equipment was pressure washed before leaving the site to prevent further spread. Garlic mustard was identified on the county forest for the first time. Seven different patches were treated along various sections of the ATV trail in Seif Township. Garlic mustard is highly invasive and extremely difficult to control. Garlic mustard exudes antifungal chemicals into the soil that disrupt associations between mycorrhizal fungi and native plants, suppressing native plant growth. The Department will be monitoring these locations closely.

Swift, deliberate action is necessary to prevent the spread and further colonization of the County Forest by exotic invasive plants. By acting now we reduce the cost of treatment, reduce the size of the area impacted by herbicide, and increase the likelihood of success.

FOREST CERTIFICATION

On March 11, 2005, the Clark County Forest along with 27 of the 29 Wisconsin County Forests became certified by an independent, recognized authority. The Clark County Forest is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification system. While certification is primarily driven by consumer demand for environmentally friendly forest products, the certification process has confirmed that the Clark County Forest has been well managed and already adheres to sustainable and ecologically sound management practices.

In 2014, Clark County was one of several surrounding counties that hosted the annual FSC audit. This happened to be a full recertification audit. The

auditors spent an entire day looking at all aspects of Clark County's forest management and forest recreation programs. The audit was successful with only a few minor observations made by the audit team. Clark County was complemented numerous times on how well it balances recreation and social benefits with active forest management practices.

WILDLIFE HABITAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Continued support by the WINX Club, and the Department of Natural Resources has provided significant accomplishment for the benefit of wildlife on the Clark County Forest. Habitat reclamation and maintenance remain of primary concern.

Wildlife accomplishments for 2014 include:

- ◆ Rehabilitation of the remaining 1,100' of earthen embankment at the Winx Flowage Migratory Bird Refuge. Project was conducted with assistance from the Winx Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of local waterfowl. This impoundment creates a 42 acre reservoir, and is critical habitat to over 4,000 waterfowl during their annual migration.
- ◆ Maintenance of aspen timber type through the harvest of mature and over mature aspen timber.
- ◆ Construction of timber sale access roads to facilitate harvest of mature and over mature aspen timber.
- ◆ Mechanical and chemical release to stimulate aspen and jack pine regeneration.
- ◆ Enhance, maintain, and promote oak regeneration on 425 acres.
- ◆ Wildlife opening and trail maintenance.
- ◆ Inventoried more than 9,800 acres for the benefit of endangered or threatened resources.
- ◆ Habitat maintenance to benefit the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly.
- ◆ Continue to implement an Ecological Management Plan that will further integrate wildlife management into forest management.
- ◆ Waterfowl flowage maintenance.
- ◆ Invasive plant surveys and control.
- ◆ Prioritize, plan and establish other wildlife management projects.

FOREST ROADS

The department maintains 45.98 miles of roads in the county forest which meet minimum town road standards. The 2014 state maintenance funding received was \$14,431.16. State road aids decreased slightly in 2014. This \$313.86/mile annual payment does not provide sufficient funding to maintain the long-term integrity of the County Forest Road system.

Action by the Forestry & Parks and Finance Committees in 2009 has established a reserved forest road maintenance fund. Five percent (5%) of annual gross county forest timber revenues are to be placed in this fund. Approximately 5.6 miles of the Butler Lanes forest road were reconstructed in 2014 using this money.

LAND ACQUISITION

In December 2013, the purchase of 924 acres of forest land in Mead Township was finalized. This acquisition was the first significant addition to the county forest since the 1940's. The land was purchased from Plum Creek Timberlands LP, a private, industrial land owner. When purchased, this property was enrolled in the open Managed Forest Law program.

Additional Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant funds for the purchase were secured by enrolling 427 acres of county land into the county forest program. These lands were located at Sportsman Lake Recreational Area in Hixon and Hoard Townships and 163 acres of Highway lands in Levis Township. The county received 50% of the appraised value of these acres as a match toward the purchase price.

Altogether, over 1,514 acres were enrolled into the Clark County Forest in June of 2014. Enrollment into the county forest program ensures that these lands will be sustainably managed for timber production and open for public enjoyment for the foreseeable future. Townships will also benefit from additional severance payments.

FAIRGROUNDS

The Clark County Fairgrounds budget continues to be minimal, leaving little money for grounds and facility upgrades. Expenditures for 2014 increased by \$14,269.00 (17 %) versus 2013. After declining for several years,

revenues increased slightly for the second year in a row. Consistent with the Clark County parks system, very few improvement projects are being considered for the fairgrounds. Recent financial history for fairgrounds operating costs are as follows:

Year	Expenditures	Revenue	Net Cost of Fairgrounds
2010	\$152,390	\$23,672	(\$128,718)
2011	\$95,965	\$21,874	(\$74,091)
2012	\$98,668	\$24,796	(\$73,872)
2013	\$83,775	\$24,927	(\$58,848)
2014	\$98,044	\$25,136	(\$72,908)

In 2014, unplanned and unbudgeted work was completed by the Clark County Highway Department to temporarily repair damaged blacktop near the Hwy 10 entrance. Planning has begun and money is included in the 2015 budget to improve the road base and install new blacktop where temporary repairs have occurred.

Concerns about pedestrian and vehicle safety at the main gate have been discussed for years. In 2014, the main entrance to the fairgrounds was changed from Hwy 10 to Rock Road to address these safety concerns. Additionally, interior traffic flow was rerouted during the fair to improve traffic efficiency and reduce congestion. These changes have been well received by the public.

Renovations to the north pleasure horse barn were completed in 2014 by a dedicated group of capable volunteers. These volunteers gutted the interior of the building, straightened the roof and prepared the floor. Lumber salvaged from the building along with materials purchased by the fairgrounds budget were used to reconstruct the building. Used horse stalls were purchased by the fair board then refurnished and installed by the volunteers. Gravel was installed and the building was painted.

CAMPGROUNDS AND PARKS

Revenue from camping fees totaled \$440,014.92 in 2014, a decrease of \$17,230.47 or 4% from 2013. Most individual campground camping fees remained relatively constant while Sherwood County Park camping fees decreased by \$18,385.68 or 73% from 2013. The reduction at Sherwood County Park is a result of the breach of Sherwood Lake Dam and

subsequent loss of the lake. Other park related revenues totaled \$70,349.04 in 2014. These revenues were generated from the sale of firewood, ice and convenience store items, along with laundromat and shower fees and shelter rentals.

Maintenance of existing park grounds and facilities continues to be a priority. Maintenance items in 2014 included improving campground drainage and electrical upgrades at Russell Park, removal of Greenwood Park Pavilion #3 (North Lower), hazard tree removal in all parks, and closing of the warming shelter at Wild Rock Campground. A new camper was purchased at Russell County Park to house the campground manager.

This department currently maintains 11 county parks, including 8 campgrounds. There are currently 570 campsites available for public use. Fifteen park day-use locations are provided, together with 9 designated boat landings. Other park amenities include 17 shelter buildings, 27 vault toilet buildings, 7 shower/flush toilet buildings, 5 flush toilet buildings, 3 beaches, 3 convenience stores, 2 laundromats, parking lots, dump stations, trail access points, fishing access points, and much more.

TRAILS

Rehabilitation and maintenance projects were carried out on an extensive system of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and associated support facilities in 2014.

ATV and snowmobile grant programs provided \$223,527.35 for rehabilitation and maintenance of trails and support facilities. The primary source of this grant funding is ATV/snowmobile registration fees and gas tax on ATV/snowmobile fuel consumption.

The Clark County ATV trail system consists of approximately 100.7 miles of funded summer trails and routes and 189.8 miles of winter trails. The Thorp, Greenwood, Loyal, Dorchester, Curtiss, and Riplinger snowmobile clubs assist on 79.8 miles of winter ATV trail maintenance.

Snowmobile trail funded maintenance mileage is approximately 381 miles. Of the total mileage, nine cooperating clubs maintain 315 miles of trail in Clark County.

Knobby Ridge Motorcycle Trail: Located in Hewett and Seif Townships, Knobby Ridge consists of 16 miles of off road motorcycle trail with four interconnecting loops and a youth loop. No revenues were received in 2014 for Knobby Ridge. The trail system was closed in 2011 and has remained closed due to excessive erosion and rutting of the trail surface.

Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders, a Knobby Ridge Trail system sponsoring club, did complete trail rehabilitation projects in 2013 and 2014. Forestry and Parks Department staff worked closely with the club in 2014 to complete trail repairs. By action of the Forestry and Parks Committee in the fall of 2014, the trail section west of Bachelor's Ave will re-open starting May 15th, 2015.

Horse Trails: Located in Seif and South Foster Township, Wild Rock Campground and Park is the main trailhead for this trail system. Wild Rock offers 41 miles of trail with seven interconnecting loops. Trail user fees in 2014 totaled \$2,134.61.

Levis/Trow Mound Recreation Area: Located in the Town of Dewhurst, this trail system offers hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. There are 15 miles of cross-country ski trails and 22.5 miles of single-track mountain bike trails available.

Year 2014 projects included trail rehabilitation, pruning, brushing, and bridge work. Neillsville Area Trail Association (NATA) completed the work. Levis trail user fees for 2014 totaled \$15,236.47.

Recreational Patrol Officer / Enforcement: The Recreation Officer position started trail enforcement efforts in Clark County during the summer of 2001. The position is an important link within Clark County for the protection and enhancement of the trail systems, natural resources, townships, residents and recreational enthusiasts.

The Recreation Officer contributes to the enforcement, education and safety of all trail systems in Clark County. The goal is to reduce off trail riding, resource damage and township and resident complaints. The Recreation Officer is also involved in enforcement of forest and park related ordinances.

In 2014, Scott Strzok was assigned to the Recreational Patrol Officer position. Reserve deputies continued to perform periodic patrol of the ATV trail system.

Trail Partners: The Clark County Forestry and Parks Department recognizes and appreciates the concerted efforts of our partners for success of Clark County trail systems:

- GWR (Greenwood-Willard-Rock Dam) Riders
- Loyal Sno Angels
- Colby Trailblazers
- Thorp Sno Raiders
- Riplinger Rip Riders
- Hatfield Road Runners
- Spencer Swampstompers
- Boomtown Sno Chasers
- Dorchester Midnight Riders
- Neillsville/Grantton Trail Busters
- Hatfield ATV Riders
- Quad County ATV Club
- Rock Dam ATV Riders
- Northern Clark County ATV Riders
- Neillsville Area Trail Association
- Neillsville Saddle Tramps
- Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders
- Clark County Sheriff's Department
- Volunteers for the Snowmobile Council

BRUCE MOUND

Calendar Year 2014: Net (after sales tax) revenues for the year totaled \$204,140.88. Revenues are up 4% from 2013. Recent financial history for Bruce Mound operating costs are as follows:

- 2014 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$63,184.91
- 2013 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$53,710.22
- 2012 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$15,184.93
- 2011 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$83,448.69
- 2010 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$28,293.35

2014 – 2015 Season: Snowmaking efforts resulted in the opening of Bruce Mound as scheduled on December 13th. It was two weeks into the season before all slopes were open. Bruce Mound closed March 14th, one day earlier than scheduled due to deteriorating snow conditions resulting from unseasonably warm weather. Excellent snow conditions occurred between opening and closing dates.

Many non-profit groups and organizations scheduled weekend visits to Bruce Mound during the season. Area organizations such as 4-H, FFA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and numerous church and school groups were provided with reduced fee opportunities for wholesome outdoor winter recreation.

During the 2014 - 2015 season, 26 school groups were served at Bruce Mound. New in 2012 and continued into this season, a buy-one-get-one free ticket was given to each school group child that visited the facility. This opportunity was taken advantage of by hundreds of kids throughout the season.

Promotional efforts continued to shift from a focus on radio and print media, to more online and social media again this year. A large amount of our promotional efforts were directed to our Bruce Mound Facebook page. We grew from just over 100 “likes” prior to the 2012 - 2013 season to more than 2,500 after the 2014 - 2015. We continue to promote using radio and print marketing as well, while focusing mainly on the Eau Claire market.

The Friday night promotion featured a Fabulous Friday Nights Season Pass. Fifty-two students, children and parents purchased a reduced price season pass good for all Friday nights and Saturdays and Sundays in March. Free introductory ski lessons were provided. Friday Nights were also heavily promoted with discounted tubing, lift tickets and/or rentals.

Ski and snowboard instruction was again offered at Bruce Mound. The target group is 6th grade classes from around the area, although many diverse populations were served. During the 2014 – 2015 season, 86 lessons were provided to 138 paying customers. Hundreds of school group children received free instruction.

Bruce Mound Ski Patrol Program remains as an effective way of providing and administering first aid and improving on the overall mission at Bruce

Mound. Special event and season pass opportunities have further complimented this mission of providing dependable winter recreation for the many families of Clark County.

The 1961 diesel engine used to power the tube tow for many years began to show its age during the 2013-14 season. Prior to the 2014-15 season, the power unit was replaced with an electric motor.

Bruce Mound Future: The Forestry and Parks Committee continues to analyze challenges and opportunities at Bruce Mound with a goal of no net annual operating cost to the county. Improved expenditure reporting procedures have been implemented to improve transparency and support the decision making process. The implementation of a “flex” schedule for employees has allowed management to significantly reduce Bruce Mound overtime costs and has freed up staff members for other projects, who previously were fully dedicated to working at Bruce Mound. The ability to use skilled seasonal employees and possibly volunteers for snow making will help continue to narrow the financial gap at Bruce Mound.

The Committee has been assessing long term operating costs at Bruce Mound. Maintenance and upgrades to existing infrastructure and equipment remains a concern and priority. The T-bar and rope tows are antiquated, maintenance intensive and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. The Piston Bully groomer, a key piece of equipment for grooming the slopes continues to require considerable resources to maintain.

COUNTY DAMS

Sherwood Lake Dam: On February 23, 2014 the auxiliary spillway at Sherwood Lake Dam failed, causing a significant drawdown of the lake. A few days later, Department of Natural Resources Dam Safety Engineers ordered a complete drawdown of the lake. Efforts to secure a grant in January 2014 to help support repairs to the primary spillway and replace the auxiliary spillway were unsuccessful. Money to repair the dam is included in the 2015 budget. This department continues to research grant and funding opportunities to help offset dam repair costs estimated at more than \$200,000.00.

In July 2014, discussions began with the Southern Clark County Sportsman’s Club to dredge Sherwood Lake before restoring the lake level.

These efforts resulted in the formation of the Friends of Sherwood Lake (FOSL). FOSL began fundraising efforts for lake dredging with a goal to raise up to \$300,000.00. This effort has resulted in a unique partnership between this department and FOSL for the benefit of Sherwood Lake, a treasured Clark County recreational and ecological resource.

On November 15th, 2014 the pre-application plan for the dredging permit was submitted to WIDNR. On December 9th, 2014, by action of the Forestry and Parks Committee, the County agreed to pay for the core-sampling for the Sherwood Lake dredging project to ensure the permitting process was not delayed. After a public notification process and a possible public hearing, the permit to dredge is expected to be issued in early 2015.

Mead Lake Dam: Repair of downstream rip rap at Mead Lake Dam was substantially completed by Slobodnik Construction of Thorp in 2014. The project involved removal of existing grouted rip rap and placement of geotextile, drainfill, rip rap and sod. Significant progress was also made toward the completion of a dam failure analysis for Mead and Sherwood lakes.

Wildlife Flowages: Repair directives have been issued on several county forest flowage dams. Per DNR Dam Safety orders, these dams will need to be repaired or abandoned in the near future. The Forestry and Parks Department continues to prioritize needs and associated costs, in an effort to determine which dams will be abandoned and which will receive functional repairs.

OTHER DEPARTMENT NEWS/ACTIVITIES

Revenue/Expense Alternatives: The Forestry and Parks Committee continues to study ways and means of increasing departmental revenues and reducing long range expenses. A comprehensive expenditure and revenue tracking structure was implemented beginning January 1, 2011. Additional revenue and expenditure accounts and subaccounts have been added and continue to be added to the department financial statement to improve functionality and transparency. Much has been learned about program costs and revenues. This will help create a clearer financial picture moving forward and improve the accuracy of future budget preparations.

Employee sharing with Highway Department: The Forestry and Parks and Highway Departments began employee sharing in January 2014. During the winter months, one full time Forestry and Parks employee at Bruce Mound is reassigned to Highway for winter road maintenance. The Bruce Mound position is backfilled using seasonal labor. This mutually beneficial arrangement has proven to be cost effective for both departments while still providing high quality public service.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014

Fund 330 – Forestry and Parks General Account:

- Total revenues \$4,599,456.14
- Total expenditures-includes general fund transfer \$3,271,319.47
- Transfer from forestry to general fund for levy reduction \$1,000,000.00

- Including transfer from forestry budget to general fund for levy reduction, year-end 2014 budget closed in the positive by \$1,328,136.67.

Fund 330 Fund Balance Summary:

- Year-end 2006 Balance \$1,598,547.84
- Year-end 2007 Balance \$1,071,661.32
- Year-end 2008 Balance \$1,306,043.75
- Year-end 2009 Balance \$1,098,524.44
- Year-end 2010 Balance \$ 856,948.38
- Year-end 2011 Balance \$ 794,160.52
- Year-end 2012 Balance \$1,616,267.86
- Year-end 2013 Balance \$2,331,387.36
- Year-end 2014 Balance \$3,659,524.03

- Year-end 2014 fund balance includes reserved funds of \$28,911.29 for dam improvements, \$150,000 for capital equipment, \$200,000.00 for forest regeneration, \$193,299.60 for forest roads, \$164,129.45 for land acquisition and \$600,000.00 for capital infrastructure.
- Year-end 2014 unreserved/non-earmarked fund balance stands at \$2,323,183.69.

Fairgrounds:

- 2014 Fairgrounds expenditures exceed revenues by \$72,908.00
- Fairgrounds budget is a general fund budget and is supported by levy dollars

Financial Summary:

Forestry & Parks 2014 year-end budget summary is attached.

2014 Year-End Budget Summary – Forestry and Parks 330 Budget

APRIL 2015

<u>2014 EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>
<u>Program 1</u> Wages & Benefits	\$375,339.00	\$338,727.09
General Budget	\$330,250.00	\$312,821.59
<u>Program 2</u> Wages & Benefits	\$776,490.00	\$755,879.42
General Budget	\$651,800.00	\$601,309.41
<u>Shop</u>	\$225,670.00	\$262,581.96
<u>Levy Reduction</u>	<u>\$1,00,000.00</u>	<u>\$1,00,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$3,359,549.00	\$3,271,319.47

2014 YEAR END EXPENDITURES WERE UNDER BUDGET BY \$88,229.53

<u>2014 REVENUE</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
<u>Program 1</u> Timber Revenue	\$1,700,000.00	\$3,372,450.13
State Aid Forestry	\$106,011.00	\$107,086.97
Other Revenue	\$22,900.00	\$35,485.86
<u>Program 2</u> Campground Revenue	\$580,275.00	\$528,943.54
Bruce Mound	\$214,200.00	\$204,140.88
State Aid Trails	\$185,076.00	\$256,922.30
Fairground Reimbursement	\$55,850.00	\$54,606.64
Trail Fees	\$16,000.00	\$17,371.08
Other Revenue	\$55,100.00	\$25,297.48
<u>Fund Balance Budgeted</u>	<u>\$424,137.00</u>	<u>\$10,016.26(Gen fund)</u>
TOTAL	\$3,359,549.00	\$4,612,321.14

2014 YEAR END REVENUES EXCEED BUDGET BY \$1,252,772.14

- Timber revenues exceeded budget by \$1,672,450.13 or 98%.
- Bruce Mound revenues fell short of budget by \$10,059.12 but were up 4% from 2013.
- No revenues were collected for Knobby Ridge in 2014 for the fourth consecutive year.
- State aid trail revenue exceeded budget by \$71,846.30 or 39%.
- Sherwood Park revenues are down \$20,671.69 from 2013.
- Improved budget tracking procedures and additional accounts have improved expenditure and revenue reporting within various budget lines and for individual programs.

	<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>Total Expenditures</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Program 1 (Forestry, Wildlife and Forest Roads)	\$3,515,022.96	\$651,548.68	\$2,863,474.28
Program 2 (Recreation – Parks, Trails, Dams, Bruce Mound)	\$1,087,281.92	\$1,357,188.83	\$-269,906.91
2014 YEAR END BUDGET CLOSED IN THE POSTITIVE BY			\$1,341,001.67
EXCLUDING FUND TRANSFERS, REVENUES EXCEEDED EXPENDITURES BY			\$2,330,985.41
FUND BALANCE DRAW WAS BUDGETED AT			\$424,137.00
ACTUAL FUND BALANCE DRAW			\$0
YEAR END FUND BALANCE IS			\$3,672,389.03
UNRESTRICTED/ASSIGNED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE			
• Dam Improvement		\$28,911.29	
• Capital Equipment		\$150,00.00	
• Forest Road Maintenance		\$193,299.60	
• Forest Regeneration		\$200,000.00	
• Land Acquisition		\$164,129.45	
• Capital Infrastructure		<u>\$600,000.00</u>	
		\$1,336,340.34	
YEAR END UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE			\$2,336,048.69
BUDGETED FUND BALANCE DRAW AND CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITMENTS FOR 2015			\$417,191.00
PROJECTED YEAR END 2015 UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE			\$1,918,857.69