

2017
ANNUAL REPORT
FORESTRY & PARKS DEPARTMENT



2017

CLARK COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE

Tom Wilcox, Chairperson

Dale Mitte, Joe Waichulis, Al Bower, Dean Zank

Forestry & Parks Department Employees

Rick Dailey – Administrator	John Wendorksi – Forestry Manager
Marcus Aumann – Parks & Programs Manager	Daryn Horn – Facilities Supervisor
Mary Olson-Back – Office Business Manager	Luke Nigon – Forester
Don Friemoth – Maintenance Specialist	Ian Remus – Forester
Kim Ziegler – Maintenance Technician	Einar Fransen – Forester Technician
Kelly Kirn – Heavy Equipment Operator	Matthew Sladich – Carpenter
Tim Hagen – Parks Worker/Equipment Operator	

Part-Time Office Assistant – 1 employee
Part-Time Parks Maintenance – 5 employees
Mead Lake Dam Attendants – 2 employees
Seasonal & Temporary Personnel – 30 employees
Black River Correctional Inmate Crew – 6 to 10 employees

DNR Personnel assigned to Clark County

Bryan Peterson, Liaison Forester	Tim Mayer, Forestry Technician
Scott Roepke, Wildlife Biologist	Justin Kapusta, Forester
Chris Schmitz, Forester	Adam Hanna, Conservation Warden

TIMBER SALES

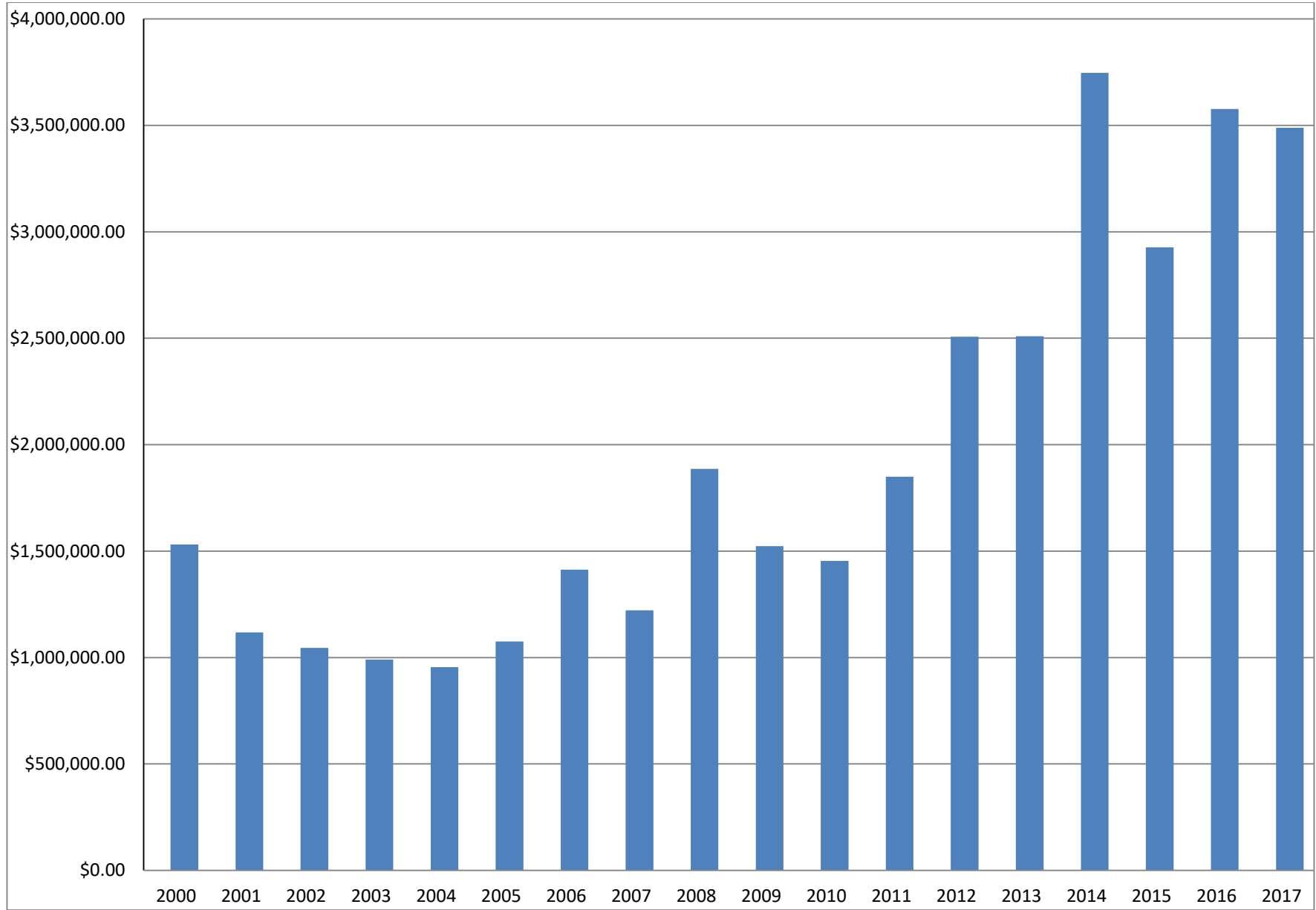
After many years of accelerated timber harvests to salvage over mature and dying aspen, Clark County Forest harvest levels became regulated (in 2005) by means of an annual allowable harvest. Annual allowable harvest levels remain relatively steady at 3,251 acres in 2017. During 2017, timber sale efforts focused on catch-up of overdue oak thinning harvests while still offering a variety of other species and products to the market place.

Total gross wood product revenue received in 2017 was \$3,488,705.00. This is a decrease of \$88,462.00 over 2016, with 2017 as the third highest gross timber revenue for Clark County all-time. An additional \$1,450.00 was received from the sale of firewood. See the attached graph showing annual county forest timber revenues since 2000.

The total volume harvested by 33 different logging contractors from 88 active timber sale contracts in 2017 was 51,908 cord equivalents. Based on the DNR's formula of 28.5 cord equivalents equals one job, 1,821 jobs were generated. Markets during this period were generally average. Pulpwood and firewood markets were fair to poor and fluctuated throughout the year. Hardwood log mill prices and markets remained slightly above average compared to historical averages. Red pine log markets remained strong. Weather conditions during the first half of the year were very wet and overall poor for logging. Conditions improved dramatically through the second half of the year leading to excellent logging production. Clark County was spared from the large rain events in the fall months that plagued the area in 2015 and 2016.

A total of 58 county forest timber sales with an estimated 102,447 tons and 3,137,000 board feet on 3,131 acres were established 2017. Of the total acreage established, 1,676 acres are thinning and 1,478 acres are regeneration harvests. The total contract value of these sales is \$2,799,240.22. (Not all sales established in 2017 were sold and not all sales sold in 2017 were established in the same calendar year.)

CLARK COUNTY FOREST 2000-2017 GROSS TIMBER REVENUES



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 2018 based on calendar year 2017 timber revenues:

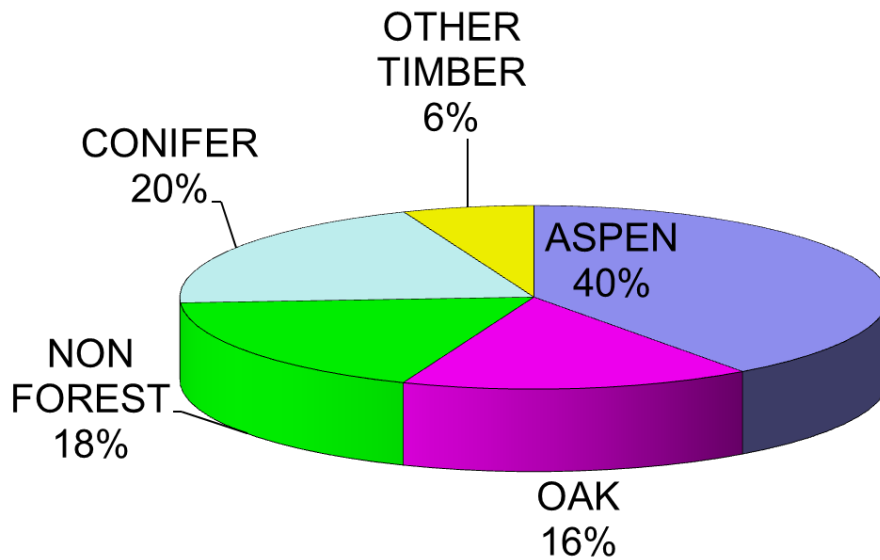
Severance Payments to Townships w/County Forest Land Based on Calendar Year 2016 Timber Revenue			
<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Foster	\$112,369.06	Sherwood	\$19,709.08
Hewett	\$43,704.14	Mead	\$12,573.76
Dewhurst	\$35,769.09	Levis	\$12,147.52
Butler	\$36,240.70	Hixon	\$694.58
Seif	\$30,589.13	Hoard	\$421.32
Washburn	\$23,901.16	Warner	\$50.99
Mentor	\$23,513.60		
Total Distributed to Townships: \$351,684.13			

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.

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 2017, stand reconnaissance updates were completed on 25,140 acres or 23% of the forested cover types. The following graph shows current county forest cover types.

CLARK COUNTY FOREST TIMBER TYPES - 2017 134,708 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.

Chemical site preparation was completed for spring 2018 planting during the summer 2017. A total of 7 sites, covering 222 acres were treated via aerial broadcast application by a contractor and ground broadcast application by county staff.

There was a poor red oak acorn crop throughout most of the county forest in the fall of 2017. County equipment operators scarified 3 oak stands covering

173 acres. Scarification sites were located in Butler and Hewett Townships. Anchor chain scarification techniques were used. DNR dozer operators root sprung 3 oak sites covering 92 acres. Root sprung sites were located in Butler, North Foster, and Sherwood Townships. 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 over story will be harvested.



Anchor Chains Used For Understory Oak Scarification

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. During the spring of 2017, one oak regeneration and one short grass prairie burn covering 11 acres were completed in Dewhurst Township.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Fourteen timber stand improvement projects involving 305 acres were completed in 2017. Oak release was the primary focus of our 2017 efforts. Private contractors, inmates, and county employees completed the following projects:

- Cutting undesirable competition to release oak saplings on 10 sites covering 235 acres. Hired contractors completed 129 acres, inmate labor crews completed 51 acres, and county staff completed 55 acres.
- Basal spraying of undesirable competition to release oak seedlings on 4 sites covering 70 acres. Hired contractors completed 54 acres and county staff completed 16 acres.

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 Clark County, in August of 2015 EAB was positively identified in neighboring Jackson 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 61 sites have been identified, including 6 new infections in 2017. 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 24 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 21,500 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.

Heterobasidion Root Disease (HRD) (Formerly known as Annosum Root Rot) prevention measures were implemented in 2011 for timber harvests occurring in red pine plantations. Similar to pocket mortality, HRD causes decay in the roots and butt of infected trees, ultimately leading to mortality. Unlike pocket mortality, HRD can survive in the soil for decades, prohibiting productive conifer growth on the site. HRD 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.

At this time, the leading edge of the gypsy moth wave is beyond Clark County. Large outbreaks are still possible and will likely continue within the county even as the wave pushes further west. The DNR no longer sprays property within the county as part of the “Slow the Spread” program and will shift its focus further 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 2017 growing season, 212 occurrences had been documented. Twenty-three new sites were discovered in 2017. 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 2017. These treatments have helped contain the spread of invasive species and reduced their intensity in the treated areas. Japanese Knotweed was identified on a site in Dewhurst Township in 2013 and was mowed and treated with herbicide in 2014. The site was treated with herbicide again in 2015 and 2016. Garlic mustard was identified on the county forest for the first time in 2014. In 2017, a total of 35 different patches were treated along various sections of the ATV trail. 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.



Garlic Mustard in Town of Mead

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 2017 include:

- ◆ Vegetation control on the recently rehabilitated earthen embankment at the Winx Flowage Migratory Bird Refuge. The Winx Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of local waterfowl, mowed the top and east side of the embankment. 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 scheduled forest stands.
- ◆ Enhance, maintain, and promote oak regeneration on 581 acres.
- ◆ Wildlife opening and trail maintenance.
- ◆ Inventoried more than 23,350 acres for the benefit of endangered or threatened resources.
- ◆ 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.

LAND ACQUISITION

In May 2017, the purchase of 80 acres of forest land in Butler Township was finalized. The land was purchased from the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Under DNR ownership the property was managed as a fisheries property and was open to the public. The property is bisected by Dickenson Creek which is only one of a handful of cold-water trout streams in Clark County. Clark County ownership will ensure continued protection of this exceptional resource for generations to come. This property will be enrolled into County Forest Law after the DNR completes a scheduled timber harvest that was set on the property prior to the County purchasing the land. Clark County purchased the land at a reduced rate by allowing the State to complete the timber harvest as it was set.

In June 2017, the purchase of 51.54 acres of forest land in Dewhurst Township was finalized. The land was purchased from Heinz Werner. Mr. Werner's property was landlocked and adjacent to Clark County owned land. Mr. Werner approached the department and offered to sell the property at a very reasonable price. The Clark County Forestry and Parks Committee used this opportunity to purchase the land and hold it for future entry into County Forest Law if and when a county forest withdrawal application requires replacement acreage to mitigate the loss of County Forest land.

The department budgeted for both land transactions in 2017. The total out of pocket cost to the county was about \$59,900.00 for all 131.54 acres.

FOREST ROADS

The department maintains 45.98 miles of roads in the county forest which meet minimum town road standards. The 2017 state maintenance funding received was \$14,475.04. State road aids remained steady compared to 2016. This \$314.81/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 established an unrestricted/assigned forest account for road maintenance fund. Five percent (5%) of annual gross county forest timber revenues are to be placed in this fund for future forest road maintenance. Approximately 2.2 miles of the Wildcat Forest Road and 2 miles of Abbott Ranch Forest Road were reconstructed in 2017 using this money.

FAIRGROUNDS

A considerable number of improvements to fairgrounds buildings and infrastructure occurred in 2017. Significant improvement projects include:

- New electronic message board installed along Hwy. 10.
- Installed new pavement from Hwy. 10 exit to grandstand area.
- Improved drainage for swine barn.
- Added 20 sites for camping.
- Sound system upgrades.
- Added water access upgrades near carnival food stands.
- Added flashing around rabbit barn windows.

The total number of events/reservations at the fairgrounds increased from 33 in 2016 to 38 in 2017. Of the total events/reservations, 17 were paid events and 21 unpaid.

Public storage was offered again in 2017 with 53 individuals taking advantage of this opportunity to store 58 vehicles during the winter months. Storage generated \$8,200.00 in revenue for the fairgrounds budget, an increase of \$1,200.00 from 2016.

Spurred by aging facilities and lack of barn space, a strategic planning process was initiated and completed in 2017. The strategic plan is a culmination of several planning sessions and was led by UW-Extension staff.

The process involved many fairgrounds stakeholders. The plan goals include revitalization of substandard fairgrounds facilities in order to meet the needs of the next generation of Clark County residents and beyond. The Forestry and Parks Committee has committed to implementing the strategic plan through a private/public partnership.

After declining for several years, revenues increased for the sixth year in a row. Revenues received a significant boost in 2017; 2017 was the first full year of the wireless communications facility lease payments. Recent financial history for fairgrounds operating costs are as follows:

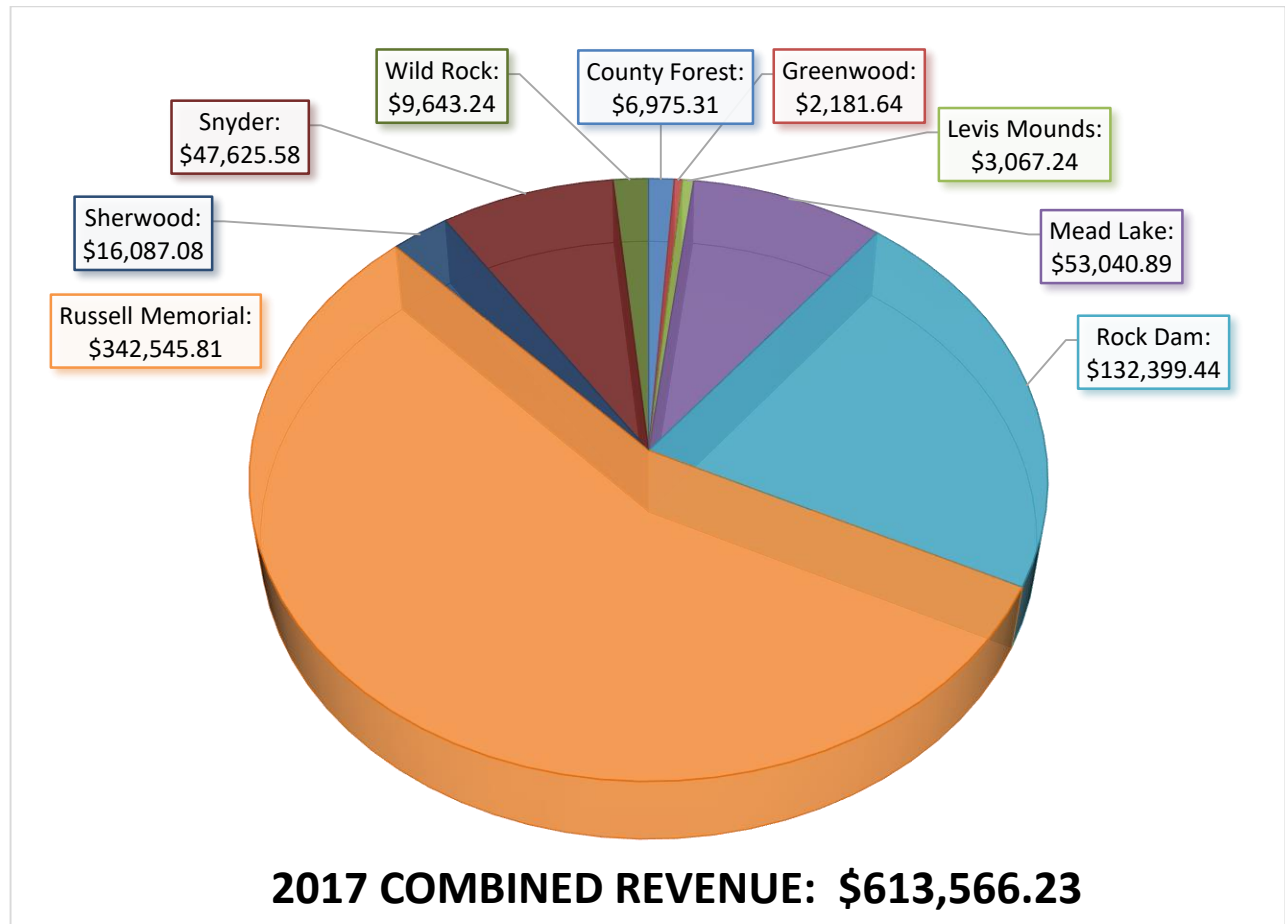
Year	Expenditures	Revenue	Net Cost of Fairgrounds
2010	\$152,390	\$23,672	(\$128,718)
2011	\$95,965	\$21,874	(\$74,091)
2012	\$98,668	\$24,796	(\$73,872)
2013	\$83,775	\$24,927	(\$58,848)
2014	\$98,044	\$25,136	(\$72,908)
2015	\$236,542	\$25,871	(\$210,671)
2016	\$202,281	\$28,553	(\$173,728)
2017	\$199,285	\$42,117	(\$157,168)



New Fairgrounds Digital Message Board

CAMPGROUNDS AND PARKS

Revenue from camping fees totaled \$533,900.00 in 2017, a decrease of \$16,373.00 or 3% from 2016. Sherwood County Park camping fees remain below historic levels prior to the 2013 Sherwood Lake Dam breach and subsequent loss of the lake. Other park related revenues totaled \$79,931.00 in 2017. These revenues were generated from the sale of firewood, ice and convenience store items, along with laundromat, shower and boat launch fees, house and shelter rentals, and parks leases. All annual campground related revenues have increased by slightly less than \$90,000.00 since 2014.



Maintenance of existing park grounds and facilities continues to be a priority. Maintenance items in 2017 included additional gravel for improved drainage during heavy precipitation events, added fall protection to the park's playground areas, hazard tree removal in all parks, Oak Wilt mitigation at various parks including Sherwood and Snyder, improved signage throughout the campgrounds and parks, and kiosk maintenance and upgrades.

The following projects were additional program focuses during 2017. Russell Park received some much need black top repair to the road and also the creation of 2 additional handicap accessible sites. Two new coolers were also purchased; one for the sale of ice cream and the other for merchandise sales in the store. Rock Dam received some much need electrical upgrades in an upper loop which provided 50 amp access to this area. Mead Lake saw the addition of 2 new structures. The first structure was a manager office with additional maintenance storage. The second structure was a new vault toilet to replace an older unit which was removed. Mead Lake also received an electrical upgrade which will allow the creation of 4 new sites to the park and provide electricity to some sites previously without. Significant tree planting occurred in Snyder Park. Sherwood Park saw the addition of a new well to provide required water access. The shelter at Wild Rock was upgraded. One third of the shelter was enclosed and insulated to provide a warming shelter space for trail users. Greenwood Park received a new well and water access. The largest project of the year occurred at Levis/Trow Mound with the reconstruction of the chalet which was lost to a fire in 2016. Showers, a vaulted ceiling, and an expanded office were additions to the newly rebuilt chalet.

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, 2 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 2017.

ATV and snowmobile grant programs provided \$231,823.81 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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources continued the use of the SNARS (Snowmobile automated reporting system) and it has continued to improve efficiency of reporting and collecting data from local Snowmobile clubs.

Vital annual maintenance was conducted through the systems including final repairs caused from the September flood. Along with these time consuming repairs we continued our ongoing project of culvert replacements, and continual shaping and grading of trails to insure user safety and enjoyment.

The Clark County ATV trail system consists of approximately 87.2 miles of funded summer trails and routes and 173.5 miles of winter trails. The Thorp, Greenwood, Loyal, Dorchester, Colby, Curtiss, and Riplinger snowmobile clubs assist on 93.4 miles of winter ATV trail maintenance.

Snowmobile trail funded maintenance mileage is approximately 376.4 miles. Of the total mileage, nine cooperating clubs maintain 312.52 miles of trail in Clark County.

Knobby Ridge Motorcycle Trail: Located in Hewett and Seif Townships, Knobby Ridge currently consists of 16 miles of off road motorcycle trail with four interconnecting loops and a youth loop.

Trail system maintenance is primary accomplished through the efforts of Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders with assistance from this department. Trail user fees totaled \$1,741.23 in 2017, a decline of 35% from 2016.

Work planning discussions related to ongoing maintenance concerns occurred with Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders in 2017. It was mutually agreed that rehabilitation work would begin next on the East Loop, east of Bachelor's Avenue, with the hopes of opening this section in the future.

Horse Trails: Wild Rock Campground and Park is the main trailhead for the Wild Rock Horse Trail system located in Seif and South Foster Townships. Wild Rock offers 39 miles of trail with seven interconnecting loops. Trail user fees in 2017 totaled \$2,050.49.

The Neillsville Saddle Tramps, a Wild Rock Horse Trail system sponsoring club, was consulted regarding future projects they would like to see on the trails moving forward to ensure rider enjoyment and safety. Two unsafe bridge crossing were removed from the trail system and replaced with ford

crossings. This project received \$900.00 in grant funding from the Wisconsin Horse Council.

The old warming shelter located at Wild Rock Park was previously removed from the trail head. A new warming shelter has been constructed by enclosing and remodeling 1/3 of the existing open air park shelter. An open fire pit with a vented hood was placed in the center of the building. This project was 50% funded by a Wisconsin DNR Grant.

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.

Levis Mound has provided increased access for year-round fat-tire biking. All trail use fees for 2017 totaled \$25,775.01.

The shelter located at Levis Mound Recreation Area was completely lost to fire in the spring of 2016. The shelter planning process was started in the summer of 2016 with construction of the new building completed in 2017. Neillsville Area Trail Association, a Levis Mound Trail system sponsoring club, raised funds to pay for additional enhancements to the building which included a vaulted ceiling and two showers.

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 and resource damage and mitigate township and resident complaints. The Recreation Officer is also involved in enforcement of forest and park related ordinances.

The Recreational Patrol Officer was reassigned for much of the year to help cover other vacancies within the Sheriff's Department. Reserve deputies continue to perform periodic patrol of the ATV and Snowmobile trail systems in the absence of the full time Recreational Officer.

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/Granton 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 2017: Net (after sales tax) revenues for the year totaled \$161,116.00. Total revenues were down \$50,817.00 or 24% over 2016. Recent financial history for Bruce Mound operating costs are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Difference</u>
2017	\$161,116.00	\$240,868.00	(\$79,751.00)
2016	\$211,933.00	\$255,135.00	(\$43,201.00)
2015	\$174,249.00	\$221,234.00	(\$46,984.00)
2014	\$204,140.00	\$263,304.00	(\$59,163.00)
2013	\$196,126.00	\$249,836.00	(\$53,710.00)

2017 – 2018 Season: After a slow start to the season due to bitterly cold temperatures experienced over the Christmas Break, Bruce Mound rebounded nicely with strong revenue numbers the remaining months of the season leaving Bruce Mound revenues for 2018 already totaling \$171,201.00.

Bruce Mound opened on Friday, December 22nd, one week later than scheduled but with snow coverage on all runs. Attendance through the holiday break was low as temperatures and wind chills were much lower than normal for this time of the year. Bruce Mound closed as scheduled on March 11th. 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 2017 - 2018 season, 30 school groups were booked at Bruce Mound serving 3,168 students, all up from the previous year. Numerous \$25 comeback discount cards were provided to each school group that visited the facility. The groups were then asked to distribute them to deserving students from their group that visited the hill on that day. These discount opportunities were taken advantage of by 15 families on return visits throughout the season. All school groups received free ski and snowboard instruction.

Promotional efforts continued to shift from a focus on radio and print media to more social media, billboards and direct school mailings. A large amount of our promotional efforts were directed to our Bruce Mound Facebook page

which has continued to display strong interaction between the department and Bruce Mound users. An Instagram account was also created to reach a further social media market. Both social media platforms were used to promote a photo contest in which guest submitted photos of themselves enjoying the hill using “#wearebrucemound” to enter.

The Friday night promotion featured a Fabulous Friday Nights Season Pass. 84 students, children and parents purchased a reduced price season pass good for all Friday nights, and Saturdays and Sundays in March, with 52 individuals also participating in a discounted Fabulous Friday Nights Ski and Snowboard rental package program. Free introductory ski lessons were provided.

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 2017 – 2018 season, 134 lessons were provided to paying customers, and an additional 52 memberships were purchased for a lessons-based Friday night ski and snowboard club. Hundreds of school group children received free instruction.

Bruce Mound Ski Patrol Program remains 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.

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 others 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 priority. The tube tow power unit was replaced in 2015. The 1960’s diesel engine that serviced the tube tow for over 30 years was replaced with

an electric motor. The Piston Bully, a key piece of snow grooming equipment will need to be replaced in coming years.

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.

Repairs to the dam and embankment were mostly completed in November 2016. Stop logs were installed and water levels were returned to normal levels before winter of 2016-17. Work was completed on the stop log removal system during the summer of 2017, fully completing the project. Fishery restoration work in cooperation with the Southern Clark County Sportsman Club began in 2017. Minnows were stocked to establish a forage base along with bluegills and bass.

Mead Lake Dam: The dam failure analysis for Mead Lake Dam was completed in 2017. This will likely allow the county to lower the hazard rating and reduce the cost and frequency of required inspections.

Wedges Creek Dam – Snyder Lake: The September 2016 flood event resulted in a breach of Wedges Creek Dam. Immediately following the breach the DNR ordered a drawdown of 20 acre Snyder Lake, the impoundment created by the dam.

Repairs to Wedges Creek Dam were completed in the fall of 2017 and water levels were returned to normal. Repairs included restoring the damaged earthen embankment and construction of a new 55 foot extension to the existing concrete cut-off wall to mitigate future damage.

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 help inform future decisions.

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 is reassigned from Bruce Mound to Highway for winter road maintenance. The Bruce Mound position is backfilled using skilled seasonal labor.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017

Fund 330 – Forestry and Parks General Account:

- Total revenues \$4,862,291.00
(Includes \$6,638.00 from General Fund)
- Total expenditures-includes fund transfers \$3,965,616.00
- Fund transfers include:
 - Forestry to general fund for levy reduction \$850,000.00
 - Forestry to general fund for Infrastructure Upgrades – Munis Software \$293,314.00
- Not including transfers from the forestry budget, year-end 2017 budget closed in the positive by \$2,033,351.00

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 \$3,672,389.03
- Year-end 2015 Balance \$4,544,341.89
- Year-end 2016 Balance \$4,209,302.66
- Year-end 2017 Balance \$5,105,976.99*

*Year-end 2017 unreserved/non-earmarked portion of the fund balance stands at \$3,328,408.20. Of this total, \$400,000.00 has been earmarked to be placed the unrestricted/assigned capital infrastructure account and \$200,000.00 in the u/a dam improvement account in 2018.

Fairgrounds:

- 2017 Fairgrounds expenditures exceed revenues by \$157,168.00.
- Fairgrounds budget is a general fund budget and is supported by levy dollars.

Financial Summary: 2017 year-end budget summary is attached.

2017 Year-End Budget Summary – Forestry and Parks 330 Budget

MAY 2018

<u>2017 EXPENDITURES</u>		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>
<u>Program 1</u>	Wages & Benefits	\$407,820.00	\$387,231.89
	General Budget	\$456,450.00	\$416,477.57
<u>Program 2</u>	Wages & Benefits	\$889,290.00	\$800,012.95
	General Budget	\$863,720.00	\$896,436.39
	<u>Equipment and Shop</u>	\$348,600.00	\$322,143.68
	<u>Capital Infrastructure Draw</u>	\$293,314.00	\$293,314.00
	<u>Levy Reduction</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>
	TOTAL	\$4,109,194.00	\$3,965,616.48

YEAR END 2017 EXPENDITURES WERE UNDER BUDGET BY \$143,577.52

<u>2017 REVENUE</u>		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
<u>Program 1</u>	Timber Revenue	\$1,950,000.00	\$3,140,532.97
	State Aid Forestry & Wildlife	\$125,351.00	\$146,254.23
	Other Revenue	\$37,260.00	\$40,038.56
	FEMA	\$0.00	\$46,606.57
<u>Program 2</u>	Campground Revenue	\$646,450.00	\$613,830.99
	Bruce Mound	\$193,750.00	\$161,116.71
	State Aid Trails	\$173,950.00	\$231,823.81
	Fairground Reimbursement	\$70,000.00	\$66,195.41
	Trail Fees	\$23,400.00	\$29,566.73
	Other Revenue	\$39,400.00	\$50,379.69
	FEMA	\$0.00	\$104,385.89
	State Aid Dams	\$0.00	\$224,921.26
	<u>Fund Balance Budgeted</u>	\$849,633.00	\$0.00
	<u>Contingency Fund</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$6,637.99</u>
	TOTAL	\$4,109,194.00	\$4,862,290.81

YEAR END 2017 REVENUES EXCEEDED BUDGET BY \$753,096.81

	<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>Total Expenditures</u>
Program 1	\$3,373,432.33	\$803,709.46
	(Forestry, Wildlife and Forest Roads)	
Program 2	\$1,482,220.49	\$1,696,449.34
	(Recreation – Parks, Trails, Dams, Bruce Mound)	

2017 budget highlights

- Net timber revenues exceeded budget by \$1,190,533.00 or 61%.
- Total wages and benefits came in under budget by \$109,865.16. Mostly due to vacancies during the year.
- Due to very unfavorable March and December weather, Bruce Mound revenues fell short of expectation.
- Levis Mound Trail fees exceeded budget by \$7,275.00. Much of the additional revenue is the result increased popularity of fat tire biking. Levis trail fees up over \$10,000.00 in last 3 years.
- FEMA grant in the amount of \$150,992 received in 2017 from fall 2016 damage.
- Grant related revenue exceeded budget by \$454,691.00. Sherwood Lake Dam, FEMA, Turkey Stamp and Snow Trail grants all significantly over budget. Many of these grant expenditures occurred in 2016.
- Improved budget tracking procedures have improved expenditure and revenue reporting within various budget lines and for individual programs.
- Received \$22,260.00 in donations for the Levis Mound Chalet project.

EXCLUDING FUND TRANSFERS, REVENUES EXCEEDED EXPENDITURES BY	\$1,834,893.00
FUND BALANCE DRAW WAS BUDGETED AT \$516,352.00, ACTUAL DRAW	\$0
YEAR END FUND BALANCE IS	\$5,105,977.00

UNRESTRICTED/ASSIGNED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Dam Improvement | \$0.00 |
| • Capital Equipment | \$150,000.00 |
| • Forest Road Maintenance | \$185,689.00 |
| • Forest Regeneration | \$200,000.00 |
| • Land Acquisition | \$5,126.00 |
| • Capital Infrastructure | <u>\$1,236,754.00</u> |
| | \$1,777,569.00 |

YEAR END UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE	\$3,328,408.00
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	less	
\$600,000.00*	Less	<u>\$516,599.00^</u>

PROJECTED YEAR END 2018 UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE	\$2,211,809.00
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*\$400,000.00 of the unreserved Fund has been committed to the Capital Infrastructure account and \$200,000.00 to the Dam Impr. account in 2018 by Forestry and Finance Committees.

^\$516,599.00 budgeted fund balance draw for 2018 includes Ho Chunk in the amount of \$20,000.00 and operations in the amount of \$496,599.00.

2018 BUDGETED TRANSFER TO GENERAL FUND	\$870,000.00
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