

**2015**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FORESTRY & PARKS DEPARTMENT**



Snyder Lake Dam



2015

**CLARK COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE**

Jeff Kolzow, Chairperson

Al Bower, Dale Mitte, Joe Waichulis, Tom Wilcox

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**Forestry & Parks Department Employees**

Rick Dailey, Administrator	John Wendorski, Forestry Manager
Sean O'Donnell, Parks & Program Manager	James Smagacz, Facilities Supervisor
Mary Olson-Back, Admin. Assistant	Luke Nigon, Forester
Daryn Horn, Maintenance Specialist	Ian Remus, Forester
Todd Tessman, Maintenance Tech.	Einar Fransen, Forestry Tech.
Kelly Kirn, Heavy Equipment Operator	Don Friemoth, Carpenter Tim Hagen, Parks Worker

Part-Time Parks Maintenance – 5 employees

Part-Time Mead Lake Dam Attendants – 2 employees

Seasonal & Temporary Personnel – 30 employees

Black River Correctional Inmate Crew – 6 to 10 employees

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**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

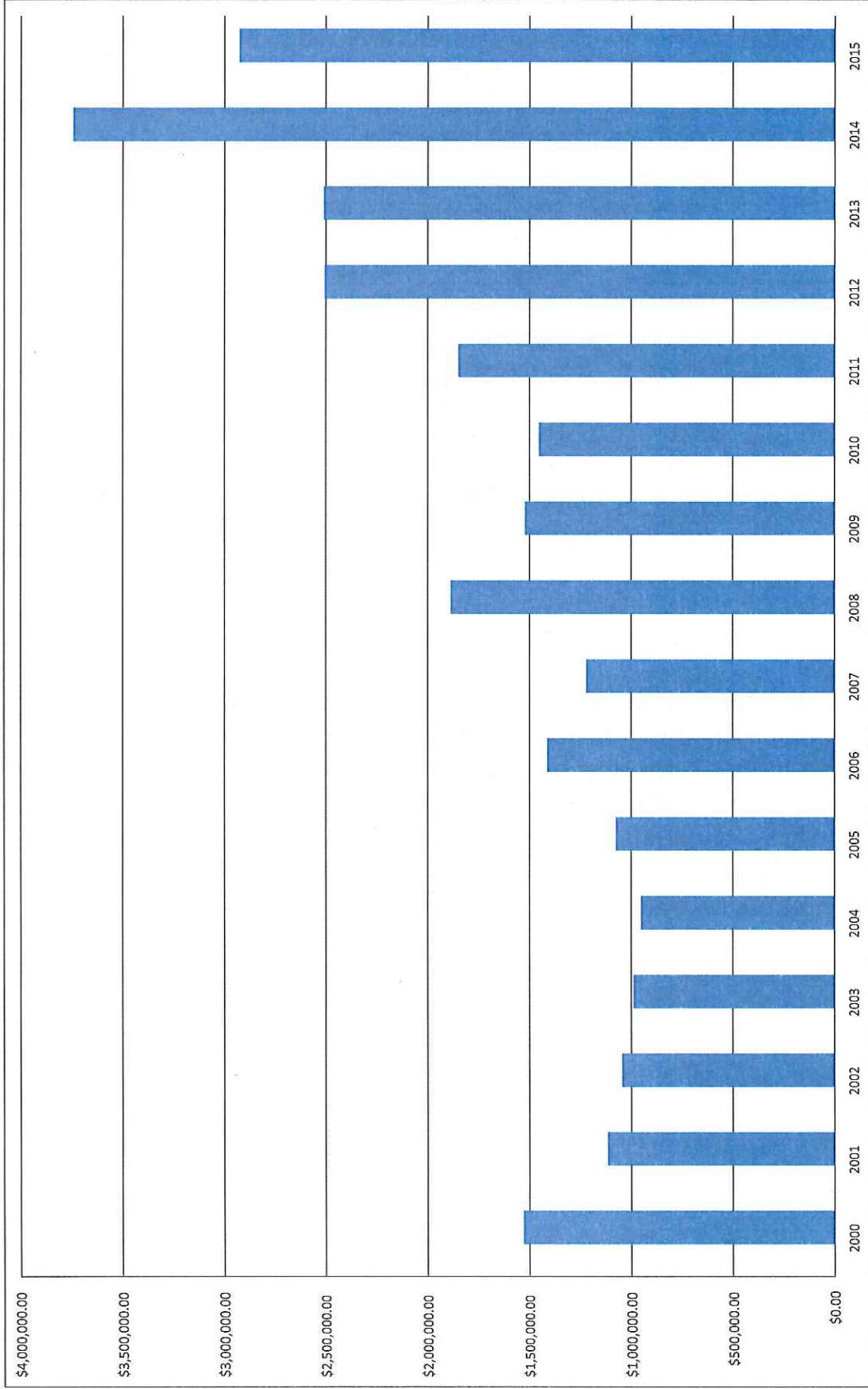
After many years of accelerated timber harvests to salvage over mature and dying aspen, Clark County Forest harvest levels became regulated (in 2005) by means of an annual allowable harvest. Annual allowable harvest levels have steadily increased to 3,070 acres in 2015. During 2015, timber sale efforts 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 2015 was \$2,926,686.00. This is a decrease of \$820,482.00 over 2014 but 2015 was the second highest gross timber revenue for Clark County all-time. An additional \$1,610.00 was received from the sale of 46 firewood permits. See the attached graph showing annual county forest timber revenues since 2000.

The total volume harvested by 24 different logging contractors from 76 active timber sale contracts in 2015 was 39,613 cord equivalents. Based on the DNR's formula of 28.5 cord equivalents equals' one job, 1,390 jobs were generated. Markets during this period were generally average. Pulpwood and firewood markets were fair but fluctuated significantly throughout the year. Hardwood log mill prices and markets softened early in the year but finished near historical averages. 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.

A total of 54 county forest timber sales with an estimated 89,645 tons and 3,741,600 board feet on 3,540 acres were established 2015. All sales established in 2015 were sold and are under contract. The total contract value of these sales is \$3,536,281.36. Of the total acreage established, 2,203 acres are thinning and 1,337 acres are regeneration harvests.

# CLARK COUNTY FOREST 2000-2015 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 2015:

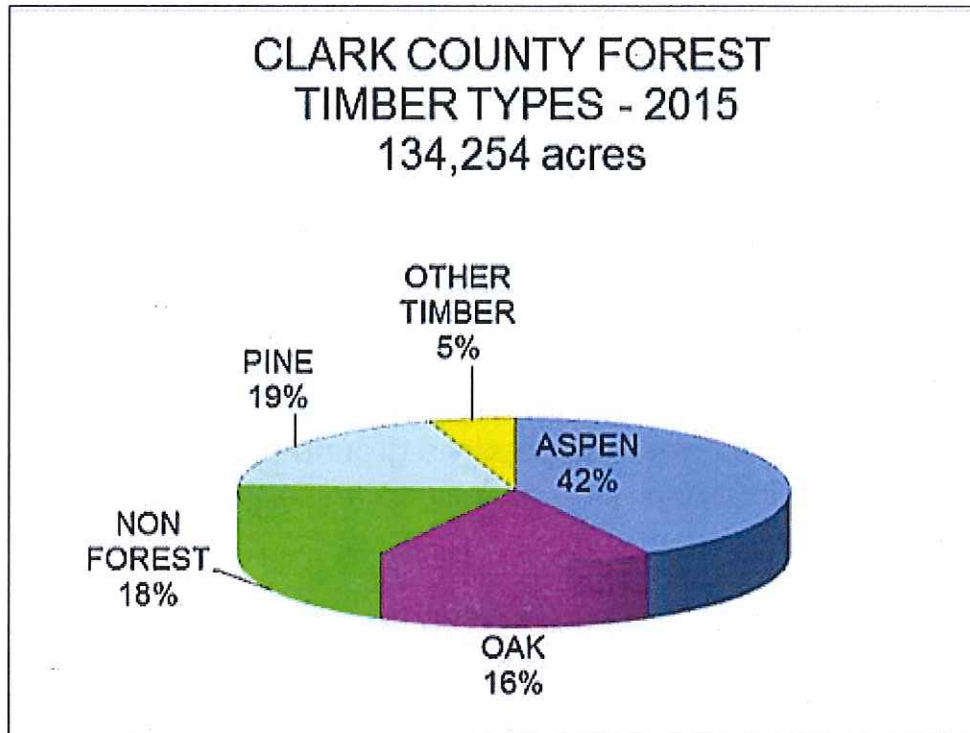
Severance Payments to Townships w/County Forest Land Based on Calendar Year 2015 Timber Revenue			
<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Foster	\$93,375.72	Sherwood	\$16,423.29
Hewett	\$36,418.37	Mead	\$10,477.61
Dewhurst	\$29,806.12	Levis	\$10,122.41
Butler	\$29,502.63	Hixon	\$578.94
Seif	\$25,490.35	Hoard	\$351.10
Washburn	\$19,916.51	Warner	\$42.35
Mentor	\$19,594.03		
<b>Total Distributed to Townships in 2015: \$292,099.43</b>			

## 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 2015, stand reconnaissance updates were completed on 26,703 acres or 20% of the forested cover types. The following graph shows current county forest cover types.





## 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 2015, 177,120 trees were planted on 217 acres. A total of 11 sites were planted in Foster, Dewhurst, Hewett, Sherwood, and Washburn Townships. Of the total number of trees planted, 81,000 were jack pine and 96,120 were red pine. 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 2015 indicate 96% survival for red pine and 56% survival for jack pine. 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. The lower than normal survival for the

jack pine was due an extreme frost event that occurred at the nursery prior to the trees being stored for winter. The company provided extra seedlings to Clark County at no cost so planting was completed at higher densities to offset mortality.

Mechanical site preparation was completed for spring 2017 tree planting during the summer 2015. A total of 3 sites, covering 113 acres were power disk trenched by a contractor.

Chemical release was completed on 3 red pine sites that were planted in 2012. A total of 45 acres were released via ground broadcast application by a forester using the department's skidder and a sprayer rented from the WI DNR.

There was an excellent red oak acorn crop throughout the county forest in the fall of 2015. County equipment operators scarified nine oak stands covering 199 acres. Scarification sites were located in Levis, Dewhurst, Foster, and Seif Townships. Anchor chain 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. 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. During the spring of 2015, 1 oak regeneration burn covering 30 acres and one oak savanna burn covering 10 acres were completed in Hewett and South Foster Townships.



## TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Twelve timber stand improvement projects involving 239 acres were completed in 2015. Oak release was the primary focus of our 2015 efforts. Private contractors, DNR equipment operators, inmates, and county employees completed the following projects:

- Cutting undesirable competition to release oak saplings on 6 sites covering 101 acres. Hired contractors completed 77 acres and inmate labor crews completed 24 acres.
- Basal spraying of undesirable competition to release oak seedlings on 1 site covering 16 acres (contracted).
- Root springing undesirable competition to release oak seedlings on 3 sites covering 101 acres. County staff and equipment completed 71 acres and the DNR was contracted to complete 30 acres to maximize efficiencies.
- Cutting undesirable competition to release jack pine saplings on 1 site covering 6 acres (inmate labor).
- Shearing damaged saplings to promote aspen regen on 1 site covering 15 acres (inmate labor).

## 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 Clark County; however, 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 54 sites have been identified, including 4 new infections in 2015. 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.

**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.

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 2015 growing season, 158 occurrences had been documented. Ten new sites were discovered in 2015. 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 2015. 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 treated with herbicide in 2014 and again in 2015. 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 in 2014. In 2015, a total of 16 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.

## **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.

## **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 2015 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. County staff and equipment treated the rip rap area with an aquatic herbicide. 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.
- ◆ Mechanical and chemical release to stimulate red pine and jack pine regeneration.
- ◆ Enhance, maintain, and promote oak regeneration on 468 acres.

- ◆ Wildlife opening and trail maintenance.
- ◆ Inventoried more than 19,950 acres for the benefit of endangered or threatened resources.
- ◆ Habitat maintenance including lupine seed planting on 59 acres 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 2015 state maintenance funding received was \$14,431.96. State road aids remained steady compared to 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 for future forest road maintenance. Approximately 5.2 miles of the Koehler's Ford Forest Road were reconstructed in 2015 using this money.

## **FAIRGROUNDS**

The Clark County Fairgrounds revenue budget saw a significant increase in 2015. As a result of this increase, a number of improvement projects were completed. These projects included:

- Removal of poor quality base material from a portion off the fairgrounds road system, replace this material with breaker rock and gravel and lay blacktop.
- Low speed/high flow fans donated by Norm-E-Lane Farms were installed in the show arena. The Clark County Holstein Breeders Association paid for installation.
- The open Class Dairy Barn Interior gates and exterior doors were reconfigured to allow for more winter storage space.



In 2015, a land lease for construction of a cellular communications tower was negotiated and approved by the County Board. It is expected that the tower will be constructed in early 2016.

After declining for several years, revenues increased for the fourth year in a row. 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)

## CAMPGROUNDS AND PARKS

Revenue from camping fees totaled \$539,351.00 in 2015, an increase of \$86,401.00 or 19% from 2014. The biggest increase occurred at Russell Memorial Park, our largest campground. Sherwood County Park camping fees remain well below historic levels prior to the 2013 Sherwood Lake Dam breach and subsequent loss of the lake. Other park related revenues totaled \$71,099.00 in 2015. These revenues were generated from the sale of firewood, ice and convenience store items, along with laundromat and shower fees and house and shelter rentals.

Maintenance of existing park grounds and facilities continues to be a priority. Maintenance items in 2015 included a new roof for the Levis shelter, gravel work within the campgrounds for improved drainage capabilities during heavy precipitation events, added fall protection to the park's playground areas, hazard tree removal in all parks, Oak Wilt mitigation at Sherwood, improved signage throughout the campgrounds and parks, kiosk maintenance and upgrades and installation of pay tubes for new boat launch parking fee on Lake Arbutus.

A \$3.00 camping fee increase for Friday and Saturday nights during the reservation season (May 1-Sept 30) was successfully implemented for all Clark County campgrounds.



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 2015.

**ATV and snowmobile** grant programs provided \$218,909.00 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.

Trail rehabilitation projects included the following:

- Hwy 10 to Bachelor Ave Trail Rehab. Repair trail surface drainage on 1.8 miles of ATV trail (total project cost: \$32,439.00).
- Hatfield Pines ATV Trail Rehab. Repair trail surface drainage on 0.8 miles of ATV trail (total project cost: \$13,008.00).
- Russell Memorial Park ATV Trail Rehab. Repair 0.5 miles of trail to allow two lane trail traffic to pass safely; remove hazard trees; install barriers to keep users on trail; repair surface drainage and install additional surface material (total project cost: \$18,763.00).

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. The trail system was closed in 2011 due to excessive erosion and rutting of the trail surface.

Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders, a Knobby Ridge Trail system sponsoring club with assistance from this department did complete trail rehabilitation projects in 2013 and 2014. The off- road motorcycle trail system west of Bachelor's Avenue reopened in 2015 and remained open throughout the season without any further maintenance issues. Trail user fees totaled \$2,405.00 in 2015.

**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 41 miles of trail with seven interconnecting loops. Trail user fees in 2015 totaled \$2,045.00.

Several beaver dams and lodges were removed to mitigate extensive flooding of the trail system.

**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. A new fee system has also been successfully implemented at Levis, increasing the price for mountain bike trail passes as well as introducing a new All-Trail Pass that includes mountain bike and cross-country skiing. All trail use fees for 2015 totaled \$21,592.00.

**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 2015, Scott Strzok was again assigned to the Recreational Patrol Officer position. 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 2015:** Net (after sales tax) revenues for the year totaled \$174,250.00 Total revenues are down 15% and total expenditures are down 16% from 2014. Recent financial history for Bruce Mound operating costs are as follows:

- 2015 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$47,187.00
- 2014 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$59,164.00
- 2013 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$53,710.00
- 2012 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$15,185.00
- 2011 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$83,449.00
- 2010 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$28,293.00



**2015 – 2016 Season:** Unseasonably warm weather created many challenges and resulted in an abbreviated ski season. Favorable snowmaking weather during the last week of the year allowed for the opening of Bruce Mound on December 30<sup>th</sup>, almost two weeks later than scheduled. It was another week until all slopes were open. Bruce Mound closed on March 6<sup>th</sup>, one week earlier than planned due to deteriorating snow conditions, again the result of 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 2015 - 2016 season, 35 school groups, including 8 new groups were booked at Bruce Mound serving over 2,900 students. 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 free ticket opportunity was taken advantage of by 43 families 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 14,500 after the 2015 – 2016 season; a more than 700% increase. New to our Facebook page this year was a “Trivia Challenge” about various Bruce Mound fun facts. 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. 109 students, children and parents purchased a reduced price season pass good for all Friday nights and Saturdays and Sundays in March, with 37 individuals also participating in a discounted Fabulous Friday Nights Ski and Snowboard rental package program. 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 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes from around the area, although many diverse populations were served. During the 2015 – 2016 season, 105 lessons were provided to paying customers, and an additional 59 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 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.

**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.



Efforts to secure a grant to help support repairs to the primary spillway and replace the auxiliary spillway in January 2014 were unsuccessful. The full cost to repair the dam was then included in the 2015 budget. The Forestry and Parks Committee agreed to delay repairing the dam until 2016 to provide a growing number of dedicated citizens the opportunity to raise money to dredge the lakebed. This also allowed this department to submit another Municipal Dam Repair Grant application in early 2016.

The Friends of Sherwood Lake (FOSL) spearheaded a true grassroots fundraising effort. FOSL began fundraising efforts for lake dredging with a goal to raise enough money to up remove 47,000 cubic yards from the lakebed. This effort has resulted in a unique partnership between this department and FOSL for the benefit of Sherwood Lake, a locally treasured Clark County recreational and ecological resource.

The dredging permit was issued by the WIDNR in early 2015. Bids were solicited for the project and a contract awarded to Opelt Sand and Gravel in November of 2015. Dredging began in January of 2016.

**Mead Lake Dam:** Repair of downstream rip rap at Mead Lake Dam was completed by Slobodnik Construction of Thorp in early 2015. 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 Dam.

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

New in 2015, both departments shared a full time Administrative Assistant for a portion of the year. This position was able to gain valuable exposure to alternative office and financial procedures and smooth the transition of replacing a long time Forestry and Parks employee. These mutually beneficial arrangements have proven to be cost effective for both departments while still providing high quality public service.

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

### Fund 330 – Forestry and Parks General Account:

- Total revenues \$3,998,038.55
- Total expenditures-includes general fund transfer \$3,134,357.14
- Transfer from forestry to general fund for levy reduction \$850,000.00
  
- Not including transfer from the forestry budget to general fund for levy reduction, year-end 2015 budget closed in the positive by \$1,713,681.41.

### 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 2015 unreserved/non-earmarked portion of the fund balance stands at \$2,105,821.09.

### Fairgrounds:

- 2015 Fairgrounds expenditures exceed revenues by \$210,671.00.
  
- Fairgrounds budget is a general fund budget and is supported by levy dollars.

### Financial Summary:

Forestry & Parks 2015 year-end budget summary is attached.

**2015 Year-End Budget Summary – Forestry and Parks 330 Budget**

**MAY 2016**

<u>2015 EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>
<u>Program 1</u> Wages & Benefits	\$369,189.00	\$376,657.86
General Budget	\$339,140.00	\$344,596.46
<u>Program 2</u> Wages & Benefits	\$899,700.00	\$765,480.28
General Budget	\$858,360.00	\$606,522.98
<u>Equipment and Shop</u>	\$203,658.00	\$191,069.56
<u>Levy Reduction</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$3,520,047.00	\$3,134,357.14

2015 YEAR END EXPENDITURES WERE UNDER BUDGET BY \$385,689.86

<u>2015 REVENUE</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
<u>Program 1</u> Timber Revenue	\$1,900,000.00	\$2,634,587.04
State Aid Forestry	\$133,571.00	\$151,485.90
Other Revenue	\$25,400.00	\$35,516.39
<u>Program 2</u> Campground Revenue	\$556,550.00	\$612,722.54
Bruce Mound	\$214,700.00	\$174,249.66
State Aid Trails	\$260,865.00	\$237,703.15
Fairground Reimbursement	\$66,270.00	\$72,221.83
Trail Fees	\$15,900.00	\$26,042.40
Other Revenue	\$79,600.00	\$53,509.64
<u>Fund Balance Budgeted</u>	<u>\$267,191.00</u>	<u>\$8,271.45(Gen fund)</u>
TOTAL	\$3,520,047.00	\$4,006,310.00

2015 YEAR END REVENUES EXCEED BUDGET BY \$486,263.00

	<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>Total Expenditures per Budget</u>
Program 1 (Forestry, Wildlife and Forest Roads)	\$2,821,589.33	\$721,254.32
Program 2 (Recreation – Parks, Trails, Dams, Bruce Mound)	\$1,176,449.22	\$1,608,575.74



2015 budget highlights

- Timber revenues exceeded budget by \$734,580.00 or 39%.
- Sherwood Dam repair project and related expenditures were delayed until 2016.
- Bruce Mound revenues fell short of budget by \$40,450.00.
- Trail fees (\$2,405.43) were collected from Knobby Ridge Motorcycle Trail for the first time in five years.
- Trail fees exceeded budget by \$10,000.00 or 64% and are up over \$8,600.00 from 2014.
- All campground revenues exceeded budget by over \$56,000.00 and are up over \$83,000.00 from 2014.
- Improved budget tracking procedures have improved expenditure and revenue reporting within various budget lines and for individual programs.

2015 YEAR END BUDGET CLOSED IN THE POSTITIVE BY	\$871,952.86
EXCLUDING FUND TRANSFERS, REVENUES EXCEEDED EXPENDITURES BY	\$1,713,681.41
FUND BALANCE DRAW WAS BUDGETED AT	\$267,191.00
ACTUAL FUND BALANCE DRAW	\$0
YEAR END FUND BALANCE IS	\$4,544,341.89

UNRESTRICTED/ASSIGNED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE

• Dam Improvement	\$0.00
• Capital Equipment	\$150,000.00
• Forest Road Maintenance	\$167,091.35
• Forest Regeneration	\$200,000.00
• Land Acquisition	\$171,429.45
• Capital Infrastructure	<u>\$1,750,000.00</u>
	\$2,438,520.80

YEAR END UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE	\$2,105,821.09
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BUDGETED FUND BALANCE DRAW AND CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITMENTS FOR 2016

• Emergency Communications Project	\$1,319,932.00
• Fund Balance Draw - Operations	<u>\$516,352.00</u>
	\$2,625,932.00

2016 BUDGETED TRANSFER TO GENERAL FUND	\$850,000.00
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PROJECTED YEAR END 2016 UNRESERVED PORTION OF FUND BALANCE	\$1,754,114.09
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