

2022
ANNUAL REPORT
FORESTRY & PARKS DEPARTMENT





2022

CLARK COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE

Tom Wilcox, Chairperson

Al Bower, Joe Waichulis, Dean Zank, Allen Krause Jr.

Forestry & Parks Department Full Time Employees

Curtiss Lindner – Administrator	John Wendorski – Assistant Forest Administrator
Nathan Beaver – Parks & Programs Manager	Daryn Horn – Facilities Supervisor
Mary Olson-Back – Office Business Manager	Luke Nigon – Forester
Joe Harder – Maintenance Specialist	Sebastian Neisius – Forester
Kim Ziegler – Maintenance Technician	Jake Woodley – Forestry Technician
David Keller – Heavy Equipment Operator	David Harder – Carpenter
Jodi Krukowski – Office Assistant	Randy Stabnow – Parks Worker/Equipment Operator.

Part-Time Parks Maintenance – 6 employees

Seasonal & Temporary Personnel – 30 employees

Black River Correctional Inmate Crew – The inmate crew was available during most of 2022. There were a few occasions where they were kept at the facility due to exposure to Covid-19. We were able to complete projects such as Timber Stand Improvement, campground clean up, fair preparation, and Greenwood Park rehab with the assistance of the Inmate Crews.

DNR Personnel assigned to Clark County

Einar Fransen, Liaison Forester	Kevin Christorf, Conservation Warden
Matt Gross, Wildlife Biologist	Adam Hanna, Conservation Warden
Chris Schmitz, Forester	VACANT, Forester
Justin Kapusta, Forester	

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 decreased from 3,162 acres in 2021 to 3,108 acres in 2022. During 2022, timber sale efforts focused on establishing storm salvage sales in the beginning of the year and offering a variety of species and products to the market place throughout the remainder of the year.

Total gross wood product revenue received in 2022 was \$3,460,709.31 (\$207,055.00 salvage sales). This is an increase of \$69,374.61 from 2021. An additional \$980.00 was received from the sale of firewood. See the attached graph on the following page showing annual county forest timber revenues over the past 20 years.

The total volume harvested by 34 different logging contractors from 101 active timber sale contracts (14 salvage sales) in 2022 was 70,104 cord equivalents (8,281 cord equivalents from salvage sales). Based on the DNR's formula of 28.5 cord equivalents equals one job, 2,460 jobs were generated.

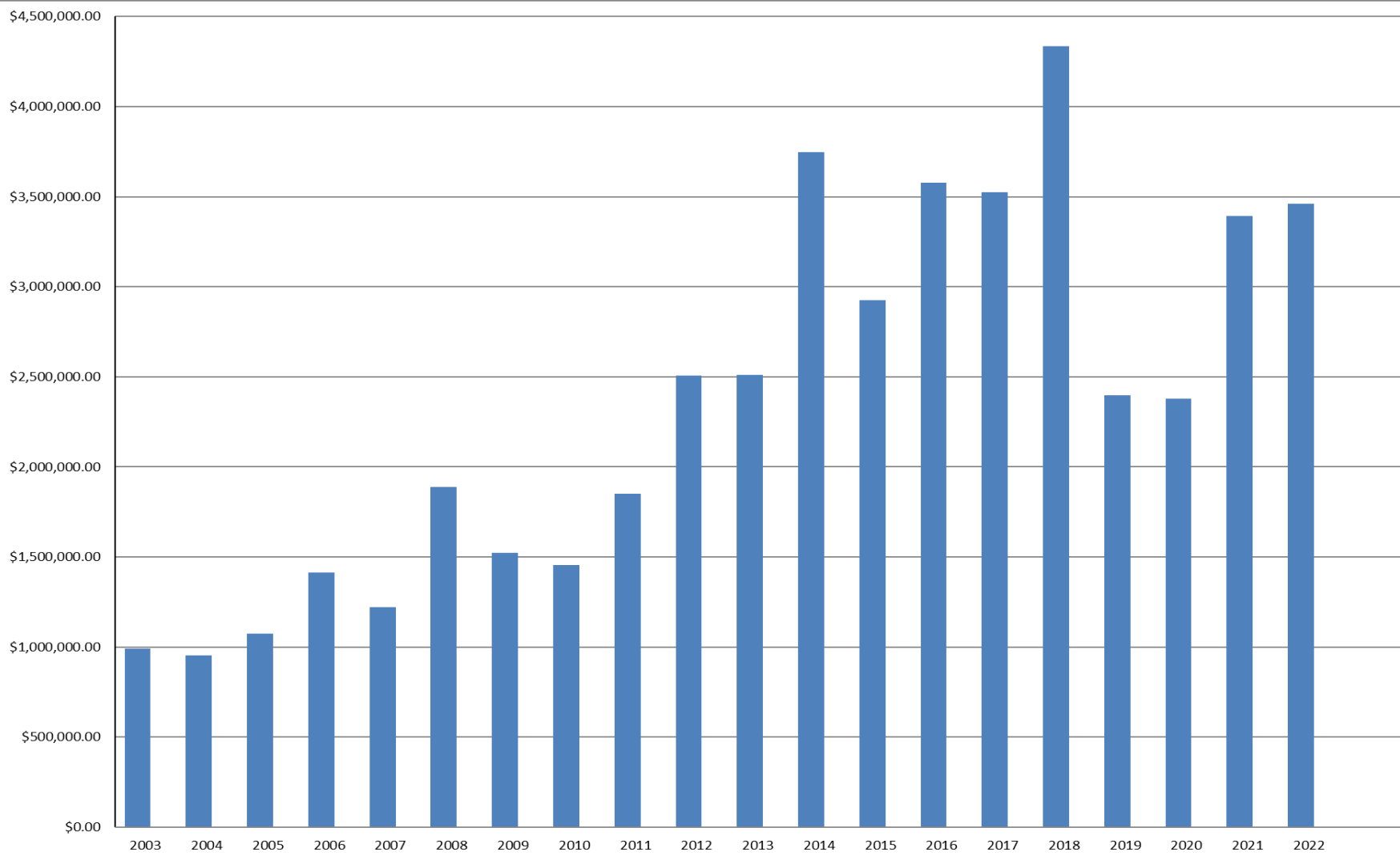
In July 2020, the Verso paper mill in Wisconsin Rapids was idled indefinitely. This closure put a severe strain on the pulpwood markets for Clark County and the entire State of Wisconsin. Verso consumed 25% of all pulpwood volume produced in the State of Wisconsin. In Clark County, 54% of all mixed hardwood pulp and 26% of aspen pulp harvested from county forest timber sales was delivered to the Verso paper mill. This volume accounted for 27% of all revenue generated from pulpwood sales on the Clark County Forest. The loss of this market forced producers to bid on and harvest sales that had limited mixed hardwood and aspen pulp volumes. Unless new pulpwood markets are developed or the Verso mill resumes operations, stumpage prices for pulpwood products are expected to remain low.

Hardwood log mill prices and markets started the year very strong as the economy continued to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. Hardwood log prices did fall significantly in the second half of the year. Red pine log markets remained above average with a focus on utility poles. Pulp prices remain lower than historical averages due to the increased trucking costs to deliver pulp to mills much further away from Clark County than Wisconsin Rapids.

Weather conditions were very good for most of the year with average rainfall throughout the summer and dry conditions through the fall months.

A total of 59 county forest timber sales (18 salvage sales) with an estimated 95,525 tons and 3,022,000 board feet on 2,864 acres (500 acres were salvage sales) were established 2022. Of the total acreage established, 1,410 acres are thinning and 1,454 acres regeneration harvests. The total contract value of these sales is \$1,895,956.00. (Not all sales established in 2022 were sold and not all sales sold in 2022 were established in the same calendar year.)

CLARK COUNTY FOREST 2003-2022 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 revenue was distributed to each township in 2022 based on calendar year 2021 timber revenues:

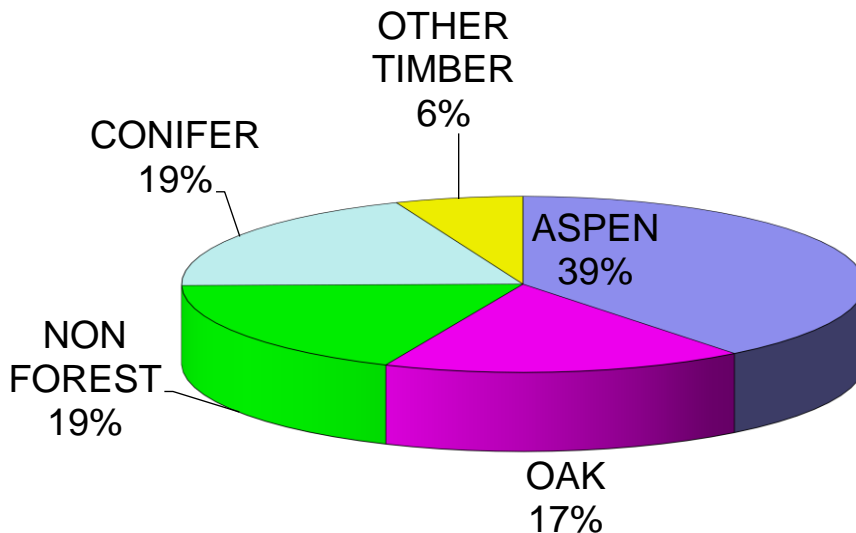
2022 Severance Payments to Townships w/County Forest Based on Calendar Year 2021 Gross Timber Revenue			
<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Foster	\$108,320.35	Sherwood	\$18,998.61
Hewett	\$42,129.23	Mead	\$12,029.41
Butler	\$35,135.96	Levis	\$11,609.23
Dewhurst	\$34,480.41	Hixon	\$669.79
Seif	\$29,487.00	Hoard	\$405.94
Washburn	\$23,039.73	Warner	\$49.17
Mentor	\$22,778.94		
Total Distributed to Townships: \$339,133.79			

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 statewide 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 2022, stand reconnaissance updates were completed on 18,693 acres or 17% of the forested cover types. The following graph shows current county forest cover types.

CLARK COUNTY FOREST TIMBER TYPES - 2022 134,742 acres



REFORESTATION

The vast majority of county forest harvested acres regenerates naturally through seed, root suckers, and stump sprouts. Tree planting occurs 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 2023 tree planting during the summer of 2022. Ten sites, covering 287 acres was treated with herbicide to control competing vegetation. Application of the herbicides was completed by forestry staff with county equipment (214 acres) and hired contractor (73 acres).

There was an average acorn crop across most of the county forest in 2022. Conditions were dry during the fall months compared to previous years. County equipment operators scarified 4 oak sites covering 116 acres.

Scarification sites were located in Mentor, Hewett, and Dewhurst Townships. Anchor chain scarification techniques were used. Additionally, DNR dozer operators root sprung 1 oak site covering 20 acres. Root sprung site was located in Mead Township. 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

The department was approached by the WI DNR Reforestation program about participating in a white oak progeny/genetics study led by the University of Kentucky as part of a nationwide project known as the White Oak Initiative. The Forestry & Parks Committee reviewed and approved the proposed project. The progeny study on Clark County property will include the development of a fenced in, 5-acre white oak orchard located in Section 3 of Mentor Township just north of HWY 10. In 2022, the footprint of the orchard area was cleared through a cooperative effort between the WI DNR

Reforestation program and the Clark County Forestry and Parks Department. The area will be fenced and planted by the WI DNR in 2023. Oak seedlings from all over the great lakes region and several states from the southern U.S. will be planted. The first 10-15 years of the study will be used to research regional genetic variations and compare growth characteristics. Following the progeny study, the WI DNR will maintain the site as a seed orchard for collecting acorns to be grown in their nurseries.

PRESCRIBED BURNS

Prescribed burns are used to rejuvenate native grass openings, prepare for natural tree regeneration and assist species, which struggle to naturally regenerate on their own, benefiting both wildlife and silviculture. When used in conjunction with other forest management strategies, forest managers can mimic conditions in the forest understory that allow shade intolerant species, such as oak, to outcompete shade tolerant tree species. Fire also helps control unwanted tree and shrub competition allowing seedlings to sprout back in their place and exposes bare mineral soil where acorns and other seeds are able to germinate successfully. Without fire, some ecosystems naturally succeed to closed canopy conditions and shade tolerant species, such as red maple, gain a competitive edge over those other important species. During the spring of 2022, two oak regeneration burns covering 80 acres were completed in South Foster and Mentor Townships.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Four timber stand improvement projects involving 81 acres were completed in 2022. Oak release was the primary focus in 2022. Private contractors, county employees, and inmate labor crews completed the following projects:

- Cutting undesirable competition to release oak seedlings and saplings on four sites covering 81 acres.

FOREST PROTECTION

Over the last few years, several threats to the overall forest health have emerged. Oak wilt, Emerald ash borer, spongy 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 and pathogens.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first found in Wisconsin in 2008. EAB was positively identified in Clark County at Snyder Park in the fall of 2018. Additional EAB sites were identified in North Foster, South Foster, and Seif Townships during the year. This department has been actively preparing for its arrival. When found, EAB devastates 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 Park in 2000. Since then, a total of 66 sites have been identified. Oak Wilt spreads through root grafts between infected and healthy trees and overland by sap-feeding beetles. Oak wilt is found throughout the county forest. To date approximately 26 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 has 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 23,475 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 Marathon, 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.

Spongy Moth (Formerly known as 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 Spongy Moth quarantine. Clark County became quarantined in 2012.

At this time, the leading edge of the spongy 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 2022 growing season, 258 occurrences had been documented. Four new sites were discovered in 2022. Nearly every documented invasive occurrence is associated with human vectors and are 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 2022. 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 has also been treated with herbicide beginning in 2015 and through 2022. Garlic mustard was identified on the county forest for the first time in 2014. In 2022, a total of 55 different patches were treated along various sections of the ATV trail and where yard waste was illegally dumped. 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, National Wild Turkey Federation, UW-Stevens Point, and the Department of Natural Resources has provided significant accomplishments for the benefit of wildlife on the Clark County Forest. Habitat reclamation and maintenance remain of primary concern.

Wildlife accomplishments for 2022 include:

- ◆ Vegetation control on the 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.
- ◆ Vegetation control on the earthen embankment for Spruce Lake Flowage located within the Iron Run State Habitat Area. This impoundment creates a 40 acre reservoir that provides a stopover for waterfowl during their annual migrations. The work was completed initiated and completed by the Clark County Wildlife Biologist.
- ◆ Construction of timber sale access roads to facilitate harvest of scheduled forest stands.
- ◆ Enhanced, maintained, and promoted oak regeneration on 297 acres.
- ◆ Wildlife opening and trail maintenance projects were completed by county staff, WI DNR forestry staff, and the Clark County Wildlife Biologist.
- ◆ Inventory of more than 7,147 acres for the benefit of endangered or threatened resources.
- ◆ Continued implementation of an Ecological Management Plan that will further integrate wildlife management into forest management.
- ◆ Waterfowl flowage maintenance.
- ◆ Invasive plant surveys and control.
- ◆ Prioritized, planned and established other wildlife management projects, such as, Compartment 170 ruffed grouse timber sale planning, Compartment 154 rolling barrens prescribed burn preparations, and annual wildlife biologist work plans.

FOREST ROADS

The department maintains 45.98 miles of roads in the county forest that meet minimum town road standards. The 2022 state maintenance funding received was \$16,138.98. State road aids decreased \$22.93 compared to 2021. This \$351.00/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. Beginning in 2022 the fund is capped at \$250,000. Forest road repairs were completed as needed 2022 using this money.

FAIRGROUNDS

A number of improvements to fairgrounds buildings and infrastructure were started or completed again in 2022. Significant improvement projects included: Laying tack layer of asphalt around multipurpose livestock building, and adding concrete to the junior dairy barn. We also completed work on the green space by adding concrete walk ways and mobility accessible picnic tables on concrete pads.

Public storage was offered again in 2022 with many individuals taking advantage of this opportunity to store 93 units during the winter months. Storage generated \$20,850 in revenue for the fairgrounds budget, an increase of \$5,350 from 2021. With the addition of the concrete in the Junior Dairy Barn, we were able to accommodate an additional 4 units with space for approximately 10 more.

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 years and many 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.

Implementation of the strategic plan began early in 2018 with the formation of a working group tasked with raising donations to construct a Multipurpose Livestock Building and Multipurpose Event Center. This group, referred to as the Clark County Fairgrounds Revitalization Project Fundraising Committee is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders. The fundraising committee members are:

- ◆ Curtiss Lindner, Forestry and Parks Administrator
- ◆ Natalie Erpenbach, Treasurer, Clark County Community Foundation
- ◆ Sheila Nyberg, Clark County Economic Development and Tourism
- ◆ Wayne Hendrickson, Chairperson, Clark County Board of Supervisors and Treasurer, Clark County Fairboard
- ◆ Tom Wilcox, Clark County Board of Supervisors and Chair of the Forestry and Parks Committee
- ◆ Brittney Lowry, 4-H Leader
- ◆ Cindy Kolzow, Treasurer, Clark County Livestock Committee and 4H Leader
- ◆ Wendel Attoe, Livestock Committee – Beef
- ◆ Dan Clough, Clark County Board of Supervisors and Alderman, City of Neillsville
- ◆ Diane Murphy, Mayor, City of Neillsville
- ◆ Richard Witte and Gary Weirauch, Community Leaders

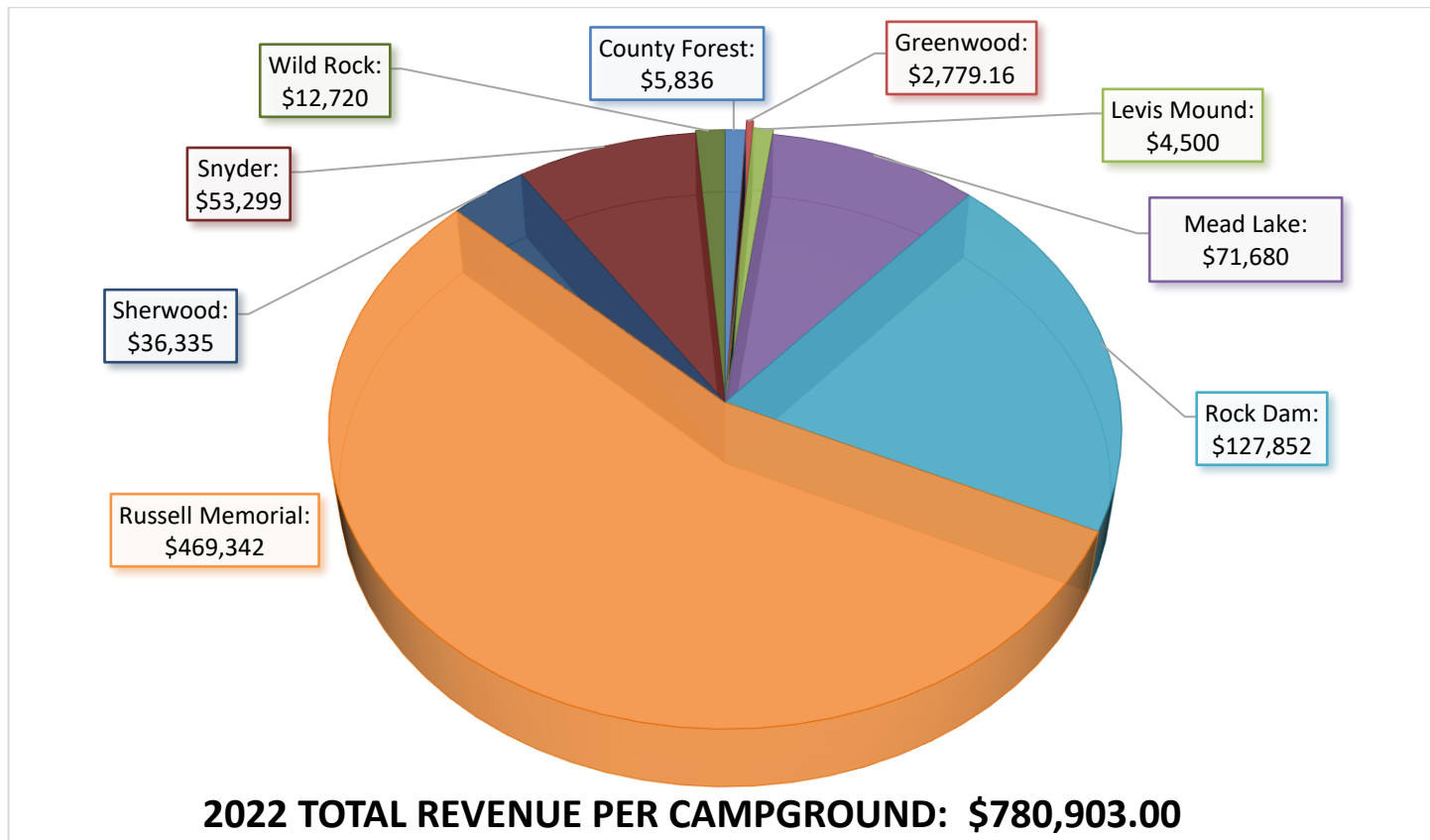
Fundraising efforts began during the 2018 county fair and nearly \$100,000.00 was received or pledged by year-end 2018. By year-end 2019, the fundraising Committee had nearly met the initial \$465,000.00 fundraising goal. The fundraising goal in 2020 was set to \$521,155.00 after the Multipurpose Livestock barn was bid out and came in higher than the estimated cost. With the Covid-19 Pandemic the fundraising was put on hold in early 2020 but pledges still trickled in through the year. By the end of 2021 \$516,731.24 was raised with only \$4,423.76 remaining to raise. The remaining \$4,423.76 was raised in 2022. The Clark County Community Foundation has been designated as the fiscal sponsor of the Fairgrounds Revitalization Project. Fundraising will continue into the foreseeable future.

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)
2018	\$228,577	\$35,633	(\$192,944)
2019	\$231,710	\$44,332	(\$187,378)
2020	\$823,662	\$579,934	(\$243,728)
2021	\$1,436,325	\$1,049,364	(\$368,961)
2022	\$382,826	\$264,208	(\$118,618)

CAMPGROUNDS AND PARKS

Revenue from camping fees totaled \$780,903 in 2022, an increase of \$46,214 from 2021. 4 out of 8 campgrounds again saw again record increased revenues in 2022 looking back through 2005. Other park related revenues totaled \$76,610 in 2022. Other revenues are generated from the sale of firewood, ice and convenience store items, along with laundromat, shower and boat launch parking fees, house and shelter rentals, and park leases. Many campground related revenues showed a decrease in 2022. The department will continue to look at the services we provide and analyze what amenities the public values at the campgrounds.



Maintenance of existing park grounds and facilities continues to be a priority. Maintenance items in 2022 included hazard tree removal, Oak Wilt mitigation at Russell Memorial, Sherwood, and Snyder Parks. Russell Memorial Park saw the majority of repairs and upgrades starting with repairing and updating electrical to a section of the campground, enhancing the beach, and adding a boat dock to Riviera Landing. Signage improvements continued throughout the campgrounds and parks along with kiosk maintenance and upgrades.

2022 started to emerge from the Covid-19 restrictions with the re-opening of campground stores and laundry. As the summer proceeded the department did see a significant increase in recreation activity including camping, hiking, biking, and ATV'ing. The department finished the year strong with record breaking revenues in most 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, 2 convenience stores, 1 laundromat, parking lots, dump stations, trail access points, fishing access points, and much more.

TRAILS

Rehabilitation and maintenance projects were conducted on an extensive system of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and associated support facilities in 2022.

ATV and snowmobile grant programs provided \$187,510 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) while constantly working to improve efficiency of reporting and data collection from local Snowmobile clubs.

Vital annual maintenance was conducted through the trail systems including ongoing culvert replacements, addition of gravel in troublesome areas, and continual shaping and grading of trails to insure user safety and enjoyment.

The Clark County ATV trail system consists of approximately 88.1 miles of funded summer trails and routes and 171.52 miles of winter trails. The Thorp, Greenwood, Loyal, Dorchester, Colby, Curtiss, Neillsville, Spencer and Riplinger snowmobile clubs assist on 94.72 miles of winter ATV trail maintenance.

Snowmobile trail funded maintenance mileage is approximately 369.9 miles. Of the total mileage, nine cooperating clubs maintain 309.3 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 primarily accomplished through the efforts of Mid-West Off-Road Trail Riders with assistance from this department. The department was approved for a federal grant for trail rehab. A requirement of the grant is that the department will not collect trail fees while utilizing the grant. Since no fees were collected in compliance with the federal grant, trail user fees totaled \$0.00 in 2022.

Rehabilitation work continued on the West Loop, west of Bachelor's Avenue in 2022. Maintenance efforts are focusing on making the West Loop sustainable and exploring reroute/expansion opportunities where higher ground exists.

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 40 miles of trail with seven interconnecting loops. Trail user fees in 2022 totaled \$1,527.97 which is a slight decrease over 2021.

The Circle T Horse Club continues to maintain trails and look for route improvements that include re-routing and improving signage and mapping. The Circle T Horse Club is the main sponsor of this 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 17 miles of cross-country ski trails and 24 miles of single-track mountain bike trails available.

The popularity of fat tire biking continues grow. Camping at Levis gains popularity every summer. Chalet improvements along with enhanced access for year-round fat-tire biking has increased the number of users at Levis/Trow Mound Recreation Area. The volunteer group Neillsville Area Trails Association (NATA) continues to maintain the trail system during all seasons of the year including grooming cross country ski trails and maintaining the fat-bike trail system. Trail user fees from this facility totaled \$21,553.01 in 2022.



Levis/Trow Mound Recreation Area

Recreational Patrol Officer / Enforcement: The Recreation Officer position started trail enforcement efforts in Clark County during the summer of 2001. The position is a valuable link within Clark County for the protection and enhancement of trail systems and natural resources.

The Recreation Officer contributes to the enforcement, education and safety of all trail systems in Clark County. The Recreation Officer helps protect township infrastructure and reduces conflict between residents and recreational enthusiasts. The Recreation Officer is also involved in enforcement of forest and park ordinances.

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

- Boomtown Sno Chasers
- GWR (Greenwood-Willard-Rock Dam) Riders
- Loyal Sno Angels
- Colby Trailblazers
- Thorp Sno Raiders
- Riplinger Rip Riders
- Spencer Swampstompers
- 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
- Circle T Horse Club
- Mid-West Off Road Trail Riders
- Clark County Sheriff's Department
- Volunteers for the Snowmobile Council

BRUCE MOUND WINTER SPORTS AREA

Bruce Mound serves as an affordably priced public facility that provides outdoor alpine opportunities to both residents of Clark County and neighboring counties. Bruce Mound may not be the largest or best-known facility in the state, but it does have a very passionate local and regional customer base that is growing. Bruce Mound provides significant benefit to Clark County's winter tourism industry.

The mission of Bruce Mound is: "To consistently provide enjoyable and affordable alpine recreational opportunities that will enrich and enhance quality of life for our guests and Clark County in a cost-effective manner."

2021-2022 Season:

In accordance with the 2021-2022 Bruce Mound Plan of Operation, Bruce mound opened at full capacity with tubing and skiing, along with multiple

school-group per day facility reservation on December 17th. The opening of Bruce Mound was delayed one week due to a power issue with Jackson Electric. Snow was made in early December and we were able to make enough snow to open the front hill and tubing on the 17th and were fully operational the following weekend. The department did gain back all of the regular nonprofit and school groups that historically reserved the facility pre-COVID.

The Mocha Mouse leased the Bruce Mound restaurant again for both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons. The restaurant operated during all open public hours and as requested for school groups and large events. Mocha Mouse continued with the expanded menu which included a Friday Fish Fry special on Friday nights. Restaurant sales were strong in comparison to the season prior.

People continued to enjoy the colored lights and music that were added to the tubing runs in 2019.

Calendar Year 2022: Net (after sales tax) revenues for the year totaled \$248,524 an increase of \$154,024 from 2021. This increase was directly related to COVID restrictions from the 2021-2022 season, not opening the ski hill, early season closure, and late start in December 2021 at Bruce Mound. Historic Bruce Mound revenues and operating costs are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Difference</u>
2022	\$249,395.50	*\$524,415.86	*(-\$275,020.36)
2021	\$97,500.98	\$161,788.36	(-\$64,287.38)
2020	\$182,333.31	\$231,675.30	(-\$49,341.99)
2019	\$249,008.62	\$269,678.99	(-\$20,670.37)
2018	\$201,139.00	\$235,067.00	(-\$33,928.00)
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)

* This number includes the purchase of the PistenBully at \$240,675.00 (-\$34,345.36 Difference without PB purchase)

Bruce Mound Future: The Forestry and Parks Department and Committee continue to analyze challenges and opportunities at Bruce Mound with a goal of no net annual operating cost to the county. Improved expenditure and

revenue reporting was implemented in 2011 and the addition of Munis in 2018 also improved transparency and supported the decision making process. The department completed an Operations Review and Analysis in 2019 to help develop a clear vision and sustainable future for this facility.

The Committee will continue to assess long term operating costs at Bruce Mound. Maintenance and upgrades to existing infrastructure and equipment remains a priority. Outdated and inefficient snow making equipment will need to be updated in coming years to take the next step in increasing revenues by increasing days open to the public.



Chair Lift Operation

COUNTY DAMS AND WILDLIFE FLOWAGES

This department is responsible for four large dams and numerous small wildlife flowages. In a county with no natural lakes, these dams provide significant water based recreational opportunities for local residents and provide considerable economic output. Large dams are located at Mead Lake, Rock Dam Lake, Sherwood Lake, and Snyder Lake. No significant repair projects were completed in 2022, only ongoing maintenance, monitoring and operation. Mead Lake Dam's inspection scheduled for 2020 was completed with no immediate needs for repair. Maintenance and repair recommendations were given for a 5 year plan to complete.

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.

Dam 2 was identified as a structure for repair in 2022. Collins Engineers, Inc was contracted with to assist with plans, bidding, and oversight of the repair project of Dam 2. Dam 2 was successfully repaired in 2022.

An emergency drawdown order was issued by the WI DNR for the Spruce Lake Flowage due to the deteriorating condition of the embankment structure. This dam has been identified as a priority structure for the department and grant funding opportunities are being explored for 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 increase transparency. This will help create a clearer financial picture moving forward and help inform future decisions.

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 Financial Summary

Fund 330 – Forestry and Parks General Account:

- Total revenues, including budgeted fund balance: \$5,892,169.00
 - Year-end revenues were over budget by: \$1,581,114.00
- Total expenditures, including fund transfers: \$3,829,234.00
 - Year-end expenditures were under budget by: \$ 481,821.00
- Fund transfers include:
 - \$900,000.00 from Forestry to the General Fund for levy reduction.
- Including transfers, revenues exceeded expenses by: \$2,062,935.00
- Excluding transfers, revenues exceeded expenses by: \$1,162,935.00

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 2018 Balance \$6,999,551.39
- Year-end 2019 Balance \$6,778,407.82
- Year-end 2020 Balance \$6,375,072.52
- Year-end 2021 Balance \$6,713,974.64
- Year-end 2022 Balance \$6,190,299.76

*Year-end 2022 unreserved/non-earmarked portion of the fund balance is estimated to be \$3,051,731.47. This estimate is based solely on 2022 budgeted revenues and expenses.

Year End 2022 Unrestricted/Assigned Fund Balances:

• Dam Improvement	\$ 676,925.00
• Capital Equipment	\$ 150,000.00
• Forest Road Maintenance	\$ 250,000.00
• Forest Regeneration	\$ 200,000.00
• Land Acquisition	\$ 48,586.20
• Capital Infrastructure	<u>\$1,726,220.27</u>
	\$3,051,731.47

Fairgrounds:

- 2022 Fairgrounds expenditures exceed revenues by \$131,962.00.
- Fairgrounds budget is a general fund budget and supported by levy dollars.
- In 2022 \$50,000 was transferred from 330 Fund to the Fairgrounds for the continuation of the Fairgrounds Revitalization Project. This dollar amount did not come from the levy.
- 2022 donations to the Fairgrounds was \$136,690.00, reducing the need for levy dollars.