

**2020**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FORESTRY & PARKS DEPARTMENT**





2020

**CLARK COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE**

Tom Wilcox, Chairperson

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

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**Forestry & Parks Department Full Time Employees**

Rick Dailey – Administrator	John Wendorski – Forestry Manager
Curtiss Lindner – Parks & Programs Manager	Daryn Horn – Facilities Supervisor
Mary Olson-Back – Office Business Manager	Luke Nigon – Forester
Matt Sladich – Maintenance Specialist	Sebastian Neisius – Forester
Kim Ziegler – Maintenance Technician	Jake Woodley – Forestry Technician
Kelly Kirn – Heavy Equipment Operator	Eric Flickinger – Carpenter
Jodi Krukowski – Office Assistant	Tim Hagen – Parks Worker/Equipment Op.

Part-Time Parks Maintenance – 6 employees

Seasonal & Temporary Personnel – 30 employees

Black River Correctional Inmate Crew – Crews not available in 2020 due to COVID

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**DNR Personnel assigned to Clark County**

Einar Fransen, Liaison Forester	Tim Mayer, Forestry Technician
Vacant, Wildlife Biologist	Justin Kapusta, Forester
Chris Schmitz, Forester	Adam Hanna, Conservation Warden
Kevin Christorf,	

## 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 3,628 acres in 2019 to 3,237 acres in 2020. During 2020, a variety of tree species and products were offered to the market place with no particular focus; however, the Covid-19 pandemic and idling of the Verso paper mill in Wisconsin Rapids had significant impacts on the timber industry.

Total gross wood product revenue received in 2020 was \$2,377,657.18. This is a decrease of \$19,288.60 from 2019. An additional \$1,170.00 was received from the sale of firewood. See the attached graph on the following page showing annual county forest timber revenues since 2000.

The total volume harvested by 31 different logging contractors from 81 active timber sale contracts in 2020 was 42,507 cord equivalents. Based on the DNR's formula of 28.5 cord equivalents equals one job, 1,491 jobs were generated. Markets during this period were very poor for pulpwood and average for pine and hardwood saw logs.

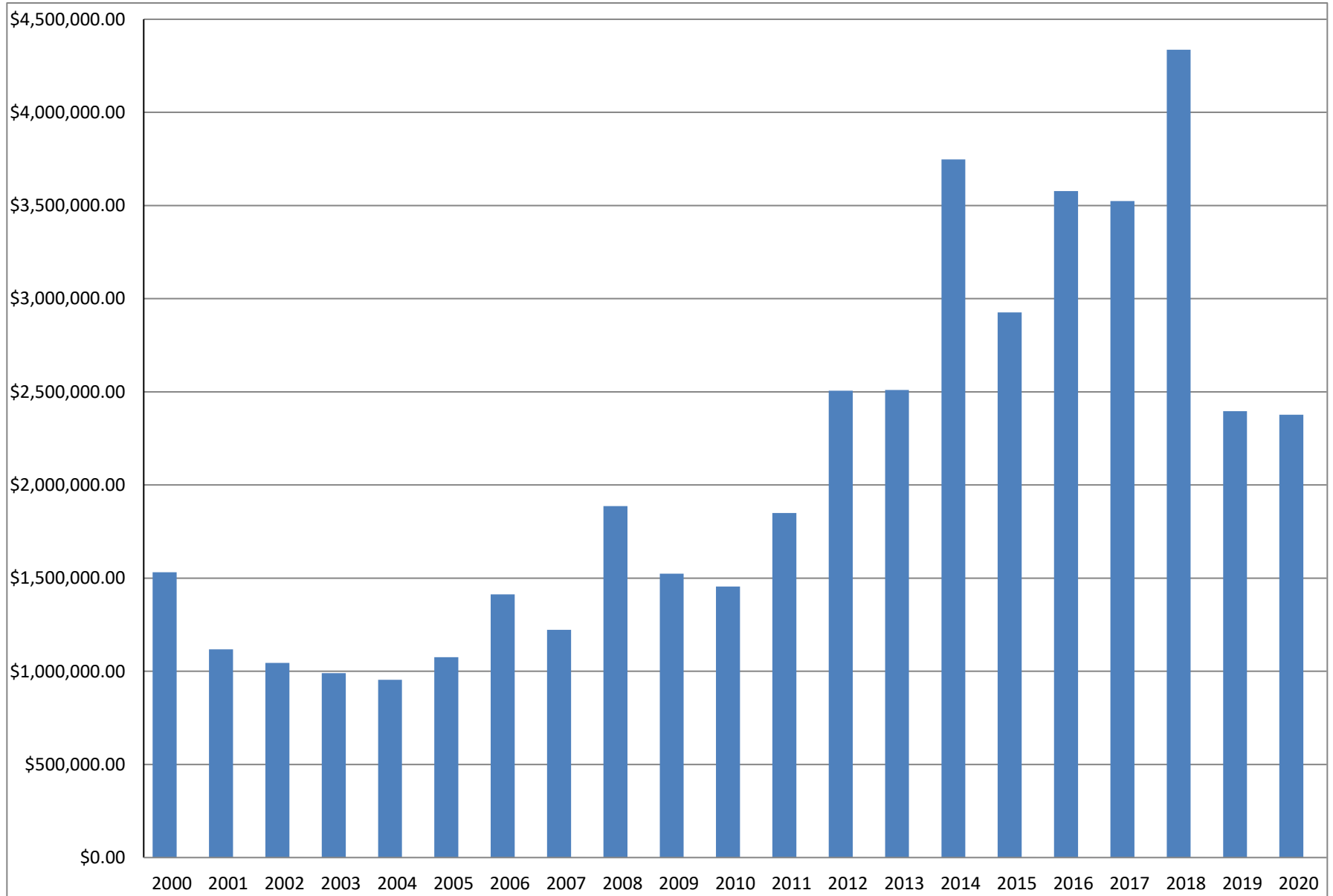
In July, the Verso paper mill in Wisconsin Rapids was idled indefinitely. This closure put a severe strain on the pulpwood markets for Clark County and the entire State of Wisconsin. Verso consumed 25% of all pulpwood volume produced in the State of Wisconsin. In Clark County, 54% of all mixed hardwood 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 very low and contractors will likely be reluctant to bid on sales with high pulpwood ratios for the foreseeable future.

Hardwood log mill prices and markets started the year poor and finished the year average as the economy slowly recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic. Red pine log markets remained stable throughout the year and saw an uptick in the last quarter as building supply inventories were at extremely low levels nationwide.

Weather conditions were decent for most of the year and were good during the fall months with below average rainfall. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and Verso closure were the driving factors related to timber sale harvesting in 2020.

A total of 49 county forest timber sales with an estimated 102,095 tons and 3,346,540 board feet on 3,017 acres were established 2020. Of the total acreage established, 1,524 acres are thinning and 1,493 acres regeneration harvests. The total contract value of these sales is \$2,126,420.00. (Not all sales established in 2020 were sold and not all sales sold in 2020 were established in the same calendar year.)

# CLARK COUNTY FOREST 2000-2020 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 2021 based on calendar year 2020 timber revenues:

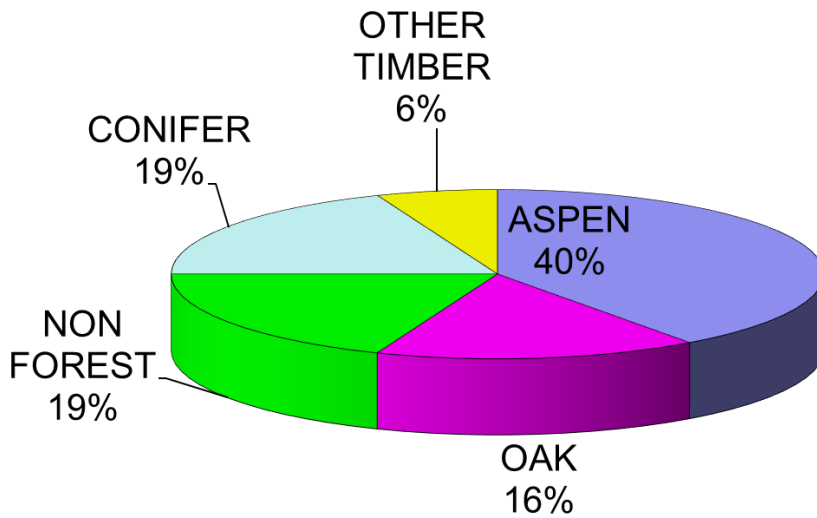
Severance Payments to Townships w/County Forest Land Based on Calendar Year 2020 Timber Revenue			
<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Foster	\$80,370.48	Sherwood	\$14,096.40
Hewett	\$31,258.64	Mead	\$8,925.47
Butler	\$26,069.83	Levis	\$8,613.70
Dewhurst	\$25,583.44	Hixon	\$496.96
Seif	\$21,878.48	Hoard	\$301.20
Washburn	\$17,094.80	Warner	\$36.49
Mentor	\$16,901.29		
<b>Total Distributed to Townships: \$251,627.18</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 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 2020, stand reconnaissance updates were completed on 8,326 acres or 8% of the forested cover types. The following graph shows current county forest cover types.

# CLARK COUNTY FOREST TIMBER TYPES - 2020 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.

Mechanical site preparation was completed for spring 2021 tree planting during the summer of 2020. One site, covering 24 acres was disk trenched by a contractor.

Chemical site preparation was completed for spring 2021 tree planting during the late summer of 2020. A total of 9 sites, covering 191 acres were treated with herbicide to control competing vegetation by a contractor.



There was a moderate red oak acorn crop from Foster Township north in the fall of 2020. Conditions were relatively dry during the fall months compared to previous years. County equipment operators scarified 6 oak sites covering 207 acres. Scarification sites were located in Butler, Mead, and North Foster Townships. Anchor chain scarification techniques were used. Additionally, DNR dozer operators root sprung 2 oak sites covering 38 acres. Root sprung sites were 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*

## **PRESCRIBED BURNS**

Prescribed fire is an important forest management tool. Controlled burns are used to rejuvenate native grass openings and prepare stands for natural oak

regeneration, benefiting both wildlife and silviculture. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and work place restrictions that limited employee contact with one another no prescribed burns were completed on the county forest in 2020.

## **TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT**

Seven timber stand improvement projects involving 105 acres were completed in 2020. Oak release was the primary focus of our 2020 efforts. Private contractors completed the following projects:

- Cutting undesirable competition to release oak saplings on 4 sites covering 105 acres.

## **FOREST PROTECTION**

Over the last few years, several threats to the overall forest health have emerged. Oak wilt, Emerald ash borer, 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. 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 61 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 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 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 22,050 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 2020 growing season, 246 occurrences had been documented. Eight new sites were discovered in 2020. 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 2020. 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 2020. Garlic mustard was identified on the county forest for the first time in 2014. In 2020, a total of 50 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, National Wild Turkey Federation 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 2020 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.
- ◆ Improved access to Spruce Lake wildlife flowage. A contractor was hired to improve/upgrade 0.3 miles of an existing walk-in access trail to a three

season trail capable of supporting licensed motor vehicle traffic. This trail now provides direct access to Spruce Lake wildlife flowage for bird watchers, canoeing, waterfowl hunters, and future maintenance needs. The Winx Club donated money to help offset the cost of this project.

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Enhanced, maintained, and promoted oak regeneration on 350 acres.
- ◆ Wildlife opening and trail maintenance.
- ◆ 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.

## **FOREST ROADS**

The department maintains 45.98 miles of roads in the county forest that meet minimum town road standards. The 2020 state maintenance funding received was \$16,138.98. State road aids increased \$1,865.00 compared to 2019. 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. Approximately 2 miles of Abbott Ranch Forest Road and 1.5 miles of Dam 2 Forest Road were resurfaced in 2020 using this money.

## **FAIRGROUNDS**

A number of improvements to fairgrounds buildings and infrastructure were started or completed again in 2020. Significant improvement projects included: Removal of the horse barns and the beef barn, remodeling of the

open class dairy barn to the new horse barn, and remodeling the old hog barn into the new open class dairy barn. We also started phase one of the Fairgrounds Revitalization Project by breaking ground on the new multipurpose livestock barn.

Public storage was offered again in 2020 with many individuals taking advantage of this opportunity to store 62 units during the winter months. Storage generated \$10,332 in revenue for the fairgrounds budget, an increase of \$932 from 2019. All available storage space was utilized in 2020.

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:

- ◆ Rick Daily, 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 2020 \$489,591.16 was raised with only \$31,203.84 remaining to raise. 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:

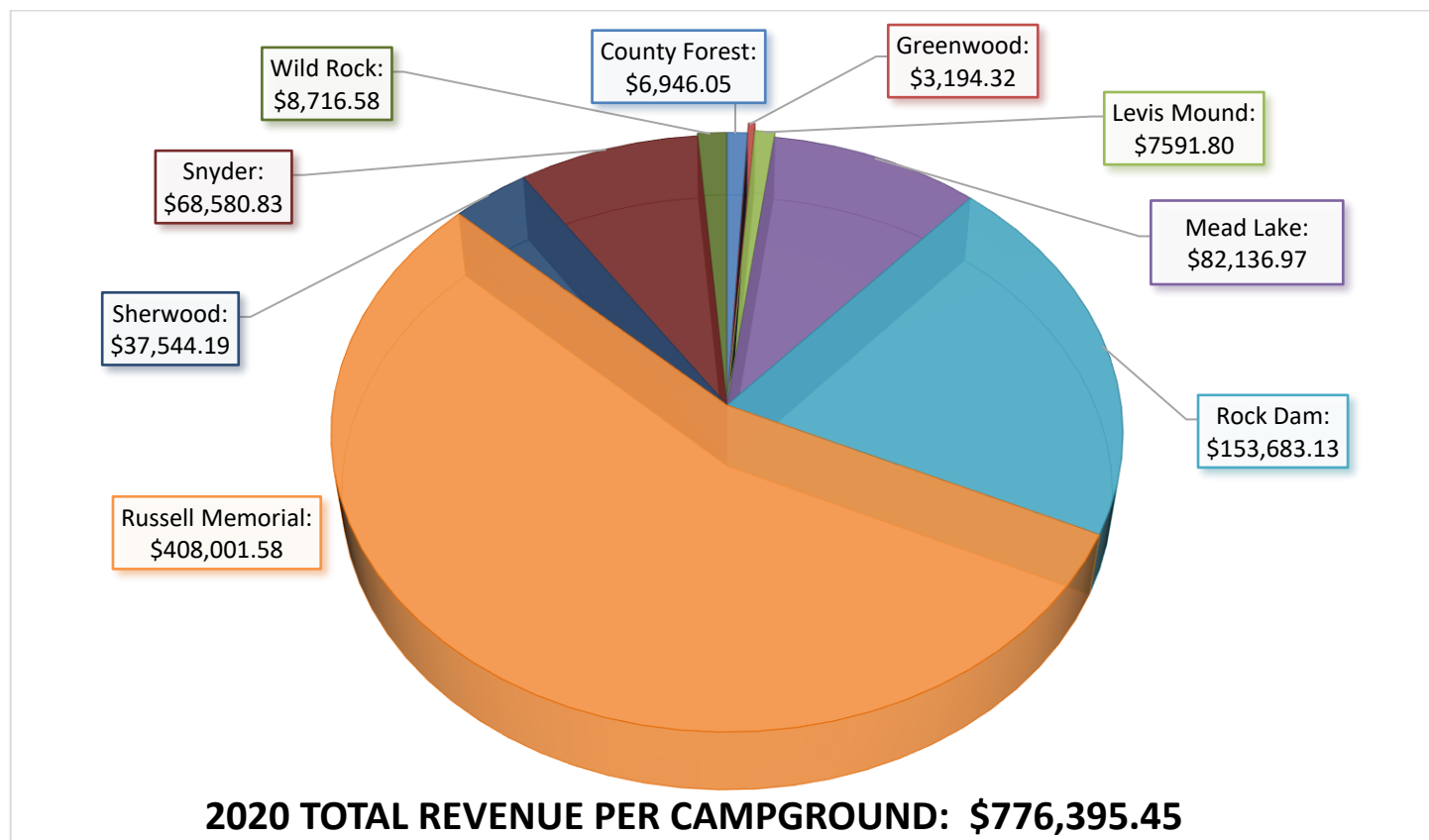
Year	Expenditures	Revenue	Net Cost of Fairgrounds
2010	\$152,390	\$23,672	(\$128,718)
2011	\$95,965	\$21,874	(\$74,091)
2012	\$98,668	\$24,796	(\$73,872)
2013	\$83,775	\$24,927	(\$58,848)
2014	\$98,044	\$25,136	(\$72,908)
2015	\$236,542	\$25,871	(\$210,671)
2016	\$202,281	\$28,553	(\$173,728)
2017	\$199,285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

### **CAMPGROUNDS AND PARKS**

Revenue from camping fees totaled \$702,898 in 2020, an increase of \$89,040 from 2019. Almost all campgrounds saw record revenues in 2020 looking back from 2005. Other park related revenues totaled \$75,858.68 in 2020. 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. All annual campground related revenues showed a decrease in 2020 due to the reduction of services such as campground stores and laundry which brought



in \$26,253.84 alone in 2019.



Maintenance of existing park grounds and facilities continues to be a priority. Maintenance items in 2020 included hazard tree removal, Oak Wilt mitigation at Russell Memorial, Sherwood, and Snyder Parks and ADA access to the beach at Rock Dam. Emerald Ash Borer infected trees were also removed from Rock Dam Park. Signage improvements continued throughout the campgrounds and parks along with kiosk maintenance and upgrades.

2020 presented itself with many challenges, most of which were related to the Covid 19 pandemic. The campgrounds did not open up to full reservation capacity until June leaving us with a slow revenue start to the season. We also did not provide convenience store sales or laundry at our Russell Memorial and Rock Dam Campgrounds which eliminated two revenue sources. 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, 2 laundromats, 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 2020.

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.

Repairs were completed on the GK and Corridor 25 snowmobile trails that were mandated to be rerouted in 2018. The Loyal Snow Angels were able to install two large culverts and rip rap an area that had washed out numerous times over the past 10 years. This project was completed with grant funds provided from WDNR.

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, 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 primary 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 2020.

Rehabilitation work continued on the West Loop, west of Bachelor's Avenue in 2020. 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 2020 totaled \$1564.93 which is a slight increase over 2019.

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. Chalet improvements along with enhanced access for year-round fat-tire biking has increased the number of users at Levis/Trow Mound Recreation Area. Trail user fees from this facility totaled \$36,552.78 in 2020.



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
- 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. 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."

### **2020 – 2021 Season:**

Bruce Mound opened on Saturday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, approximately two weeks later than scheduled. We were unable to make snow earlier due to the unseasonably warm temperatures along with many rain events. Due to the lack of snow and temperatures not cooperating we only opened up the Tubing hills and did not attempt to make snow on any of the ski runs, hoping for large amounts of natural snow late in the season.

In 2020 the department saw a reduction of many non-profit groups and school groups mainly due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The department saw record attendance at the tubing hill during the start of the 2020-2021 season. We were notified often that customers had been visiting Bruce Mound for the first time. We were able to offer a one day only ski day after we received enough natural snow to open the ski runs. Unfortunately the base did not hold up enough to offer multiple days for skiing.

The Mocha Mouse leased the Bruce Mound restaurant again for the 2020 – 2021 season. The restaurant operated during all open public hours and as requested for school groups and large events. Mocha Mouse was unfortunately unable to obtain a malt liquor license so they did not offer alcohol sales in 2020, but continued with the expanded menu and also introduced a Friday Fish Fry special on Friday nights. Restaurant sales were variable due to the ski hills not being opened up to capacity.

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

**Calendar Year 2020:** Net (after sales tax) revenues for the year totaled \$182,333.31 a decrease of \$66,675.31 from 2019. This decrease was directly related to the reduced options available at Bruce Mound this past season. We missed out on approximately \$53,957.46 in revenues from Merchandise, Equipment Rental, and Lessons and Programs that we did not offer in 2020. This missed revenue does not include the reduction of revenue seen from lift tickets alone. Historic Bruce Mound operating costs are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Difference</u>
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)

**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 also the addition of Munis in 2018 improve transparency and support 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. The Piston Bully, a key piece of snow grooming equipment will need to be replaced in coming years.



Tubing Runs at Bruce Mound

## 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 2020, 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 12 was identified as a structure for removal in 2020. Ayres Associates Inc. is contracted to assist with plans, bidding, and oversight of the removal process of Dam 12. This Dam will be removed in 2021.

## 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.

The implementation of Munis in 2018 and our new reservation system RecTrack in 2019 also improve our tracking, accuracy and transparency of our program.

**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 Forestry and Parks to Highway for winter road maintenance.

**Clark County Forest Fifteen Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan:**

The Forestry and Parks Department began the task of updating the Fifteen Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan in early 2020. Many local stakeholders along with cooperation with DNR were able to supply input and guidance to complete this all encompassing task. The Covid 19 pandemic again posed many challenges in this process keeping members of the planning committee from meeting in person and potentially delaying the process. However with help from the whole team and persistence from the Forestry and Parks Department the plan was completed and approved by County Board in December 2020.

## January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020 Financial Summary

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

- Total revenues, including budgeted fund balance: \$5,408,155.00
  - Year-end revenues were over budget by: \$ 429,150.00
- Total expenditures, including fund transfers: \$4,171,820.00
  - Year-end expenditures were under budget by: \$ 237,718.00
- Fund transfers include:
  - \$1,000,000.00 from Forestry to the General Fund for levy reduction.
  - \$253,500.00 from Forestry to Highway for road maintenance.
  - \$360,534.00 to the Fairgrounds budget for the construction of the new building.
- Including transfers, revenues exceeded expenses by: \$1,236,335.00
- Excluding transfers, revenues exceeded expenses by: \$1,210,718.00
- 2020 fund balance was budgeted at \$456,150.00. Actual fund balance applied was \$0.00. This resulted in a net positive of \$666,868.00 for the 2020 budget.

### **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 2020 unreserved/non-earmarked portion of the fund balance is estimated to be \$2,146,148.62. This estimate is based solely on 2020 budgeted revenues and expenses.

**Year End 2020 Unrestricted/Assigned Fund Balances:**

• Dam Improvement	\$ 598,050.00
• Capital Equipment	\$ 150,000.00
• Forest Road Maintenance	\$ 250,000.00
• Forest Regeneration	\$ 200,000.00
• Land Acquisition	\$ 48,586.20
• Capital Infrastructure	<u>\$2,356,220.00</u>
	\$3,602,856.20

**Fairgrounds:**

- 2020 Fairgrounds expenditures exceed revenues by \$243,718.91.
- Fairgrounds budget is a general fund budget and supported by levy dollars.
- In 2020 \$360,534.00 was transferred from 330 Fund to the Fairgrounds for the Construction of the Multipurpose Livestock Barn. This dollar amount did not come from the levy.
- 2020 donations to the Fairgrounds was \$177,976.38, reducing the need for levy dollars.