

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
TABLE OF CONTENTS
CHAPTER 100

100	MISSION STATEMENT	1
105	GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN	1
110	CHAPTER 100 OBJECTIVE	1
115	STATUTORY AUTHORITY	1
120	COUNTY AUTHORITY	2
120.1	ORDINANCES.....	2
125	HISTORY	2
125.1	STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT.....	2
125.2	CHIPPEWA COUNTY FOREST HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT	2
125.3	WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION.....	3
130	DESCRIPTION OF FOREST	3
130.1	NATURAL FEATURES.....	3
130.1.1	Topography.....	3
130.1.2	Geology and Soils.....	4
130.1.3	Geography	4
130.1.4	Biological Communities	4
130.1.5	Vegetative Cover Types	5
130.1.6	Wildlife	5
130.1.7	Rare and Endangered Resources	5
130.1.8	Water	5
130.2	CULTURAL FACTORS	6
130.2.1	Recreation	6
130.2.2	Economy	6
130.2.3	Roads and Access	6
130.2.4	Education and Research	6
130.2.5	Trends.....	6
130.3	COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP.....	7

1 **100 MISSION STATEMENT**

2 Natural resources, such as those provided by the Chippewa County Forest, are the base for
3 addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society. The mission of the County Forest is to
4 manage, conserve, and protect these resources on a sustainable basis for present and future
5 generations. The Forest and Parks Department has adopted the following as its mission statement:
6 To skillfully manage public lands and facilities, to provide natural resources in a sustainable manner,
7 and to promote recreational, educational, and economic opportunities.

8
9 County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect, and
10 disease outbreaks, and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental
11 degradation, and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs including
12 watershed protection, protection of rare plant and animal communities, and maintenance of plant and
13 animal diversity, these same resources must also be managed and provide for sociological needs,
14 including provisions for recreational opportunities and the production of raw materials for wood-using
15 industries.

16
17 Management must balance local needs with broader state, national and global concerns through
18 integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and
19 recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the future
20 through the use of sustainable forest management practices.
21

22 **105 GOAL OF THE COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN**

23 *(Hereafter referred to as the "Plan")*

24 To administer the County Forest program consistent with the mission statement and the purpose and
25 direction of the County Forest Law as stated in s. 28.11, Wis. Stats., giving consideration to input from
26 citizens and groups. The purpose of the County Forest Law being:

27 " ... to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and
28 encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum
29 production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed
30 protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple
31 use to assure maximum public benefits; to protect the public rights, interests and
32 investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits
33 and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable
34 revenue to the towns in which such lands lie."
35

36 Each state agency, whenever it administers a law under which a local governmental unit prepares a
37 plan, is encouraged to design its planning requirements in a manner that makes it practical for local
38 governmental units to incorporate these plans into local comprehensive plans prepared under s.
39 66.1001 Wis. Stats (i.e. "Smart Growth" planning) s. 1.13(3) Wis. Stats. This County Forest plan will
40 complement, and should be a part of local comprehensive planning efforts (e.g. Smart Growth).
41 There are similarities in the considerations of both plans although the County Forest plan is of smaller
42 scale and focused by s. 28.11, Wis. Stats. In an effort to ensure the values of the Chippewa County
43 Forest are fully recognized, protected, and infused into local planning, the Forest and Parks
44 Administrator will provide a draft of this plan to the staff involved in drafting local comprehensive plans
45 prepared under s. 66.1001 Wis. Stats (i.e.)

46 **110 CHAPTER 100 OBJECTIVE**

- 47 A. To recognize the authority of the County and State in the administration and development of
- 48 operating policies on the Chippewa County Forest.
- 49 B. To provide the reader of the plan with background information regarding the County Forest.

50 **115 STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

51 The County Forest Law (s 28.11 Wis. Stats.) provides the authority to establish, develop, and manage
52 a permanent County Forest Program. (For the full text of the County Forest Law refer to Chapter
53 900).

54 **120 COUNTY AUTHORITY**

55 The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the official County Forest authority. The Forest
56 and Parks Committee of the County Board is the planning and policy body for the County Forest and
57 determines all applicable rules and regulations for use of the same. The County Administrator in
58 conjunction with the County Forest Administrator and DNR enforces the regulations governing the
59 use of the County Forest.

60
61 **120.1 ORDINANCES**

62 The current Forestry Ordinance originally adopted by the Chippewa County Board on the 21st
63 day of October, 1975 along with the County Park Ordinance (that was adopted on the same
64 date as the aforementioned), gives authorization to the Forest and Parks Committee and other
65 proper authorities of the Chippewa County Board, to enforce the regulations governing the
66 use of the Chippewa County Forest. On February 14, 2006 by Resolution 2-06, the Chippewa
67 County Board created the office of County Administrator with the duties as outlined in Wis.
68 Stats. 59.18 to include ensuring that all county ordinances, state or federal laws are observed
69 enforced and administered within the county.

70 The Chippewa County Forestry Ordinance can be found in Chapter 900.

71
72

73 **125 HISTORY**

74 **125.1 STATEWIDE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

75 In 1927, the State Legislature passed the Forest Crop Law, authorizing counties to create
76 county forests. An opinion of the Attorney General with reference to the Forest Crop Law
77 stated that the counties would be exempt from the owner's share of annual tax. The
78 Legislature of 1929 specifically provided that counties were exempt from paying the "acreage
79 share" required of private owners. The legislature of 1931 amended the County Forest
80 Reserve Law of 1929. It provided for the payment of acreage aids to Towns for County Forest
81 land and an additional annual State payment of \$.10 /acre to the Counties for all land within
82 county forests entered under the Forest Crop Law. Counties were required to spend this aid
83 money solely for the development of the county forest. In return for this aid, the state originally
84 collected a seventy-five percent severance tax on the products cut on county forests. This
85 was reduced to fifty percent in 1937 and then to twenty percent of gross sales in 1963.

86
87 In 1963, several major revisions were made to the County Forest Law. The most notable
88 change was the creation of a permanent program of forests that would be managed in
89 accordance with a 10-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan developed by the county, with the
90 assistance of the Department of Natural Resources. The severance tax on harvested forest
91 products still remains at 20% of the stumpage value, although no severance tax is collected if
92 counties do not have a loan balance. A number of grants, loans, and shared revenue
93 payments are currently available to counties to help offset any losses in taxes due to public
94 ownership. The acreage share payment to towns is currently \$.30/acre. In addition, towns
95 with county forestland receive a minimum of 10% of the stumpage revenue from their
96 respective County Forest each year. Stumpage revenues exceed \$18,000,000 annually.

97
98 Twenty-nine counties in Wisconsin now own approximately two and one-third million acres
99 entered under the County Forest Law.

100

101 **125.2 CHIPPEWA COUNTY FOREST HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

102 In the mid 1800's, Chippewa County was heavily forested with old growth timber. Magnificent
103 stands of pine, hemlock and northern hardwoods dominated much of the highlands while
104 white cedar, spruce, black ash, elm and balsam fir covered much of lowland areas. These
105 forests provided the raw materials for a growing lumber industry from about 1840 to the early
106 1920's. As a result of the clamor to tame the wilderness for settlement, supply an ever
107 increasing demand for lumber to build a growing nation and with the lack of sound forest
108 management, the forests were degraded to the point where they were nearly destroyed. The
109 logging slash left in the wake of this over harvest, were ideal conditions to fuel large wildfires.
110 The largest fires in the region were the Peshtigo, Hinkley and Cloquet fires.

111

112 Immigrants rushed to these newly cleared lands, hungry for a place to farm and build their
113 lives. But in just a few short years, the soils were depleted or proved to be unsuited for
114 agriculture. These early pioneers left to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The land was left
115 barren and tax delinquent. The Wisconsin County Forest program originated with the taking of
116 these tax delinquent lands.

117
118 In 1939, Chippewa County had acquired thousands of acres of tax delinquent lands into a
119 county forest reserve. In November of 1940, a county forest ordinance was adopted for the
120 establishment, management, protection, and extension of County Forests. The first state aid
121 payment to the county for lands entered under the County Forest Law (CFL) was received in
122 1943. Appropriations to the forestry account from the general tax fund were first received in
123 1958 when stumpage revenue from the previous year was placed in the forestry account. The
124 County Extension Agent acted as a part-time forest administrator from 1940 thru 1972. In
125 1972 a full-time County Forest administrator was hired to implement the policies of the Forest
126 and Parks Committee and the County Board. This full-time administrator was hired due to the
127 ever increasing amount of recreational development in the area, to provide wood fiber to
128 Wisconsin's forest industry and income to Chippewa County.

129
130 As of June 30, 2005, there are 33,106 acres in the Chippewa County Forest.

131
132 Early phases of development of the county forests consisted largely of planting abandoned
133 agricultural lands to trees. Much of these early plantings were done by hand in plow furrows. The
134 first county forest timber sale on record was in 1944 and consisted of 336 cords of aspen.

135
136 In 1963, several major revisions were made to County Forest Law. The most notable was to
137 create a permanent program of forests managed in accordance with a 10-Year Comprehensive
138 Land Use Plan developed by the County with the DNR assistance.

139 125.3 WISCONSIN COUNTY FORESTS ASSOCIATION

140 Chippewa County is a member of the Wisconsin County Forests Association, Inc. (WCFA).
141 This Association was incorporated on May 15, 1968 under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin
142 Statutes, without stock and not-for-profit. The WCFA Board of Directors is composed of ten
143 delegates elected from the County Forestry Committees who are members of the Association.

144
145 This corporation provides a forum for consideration of issues and policy that are common to all
146 of the county committees responsible for their respective County Forest programs, including
147 those programs encompassed under s.28.11 and Chapter 77, Wis. Stats. WCFA also
148 provides leadership and counsel to County Forest administrators and forestry committees
149 through regular meetings and active committees on legislative and recreational issues.

150

151 130 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST

152 130.1 NATURAL FEATURES

153 130.1.1 Topography

154 Chippewa County is located in west central Wisconsin along an area called the tension zone.
155 This is a transition area between the Northern Mixed Forests and the Southern Broadleaf
156 Forests of Wisconsin. Because of this, the county is a diverse area in biological, topographical
157 and geological features. The surface topography has been strongly influenced by past glacial
158 events. The last glacial event, known as the Wisconsin Glacial Ice Sheet, occurred 10,000 to
159 15,000 years ago and did not completely cover the county as earlier glacial periods did. As
160 this ice sheet receded northward, it left extensive deposits of glacial till called terminal or end
161 moraines. This line of ridges marks the furthest advance of the Wisconsin Glacial Ice Sheet
162 into Chippewa County. The line of terminal moraines extends from the northwest corner of
163 Chippewa County (Auburn Township), thru Jim Falls and then east to the Taylor County line.

164
165 The county forest west of State Highway 27 lies within the terminal moraine area. This area is
166 characterized by rolling or hilly topography, kettle holes, irregular shaped lakes, bogs and
167 numerous wetlands. Drainages are poorly defined and geologic erosion has leveled the
168 surface of the land very little.

169 The area of the county forest east of State highway 27 is mostly behind the terminal moraine.
170 The topography here is nearly flat to gently rolling ground moraine which extends to the
171 borders of Clark, Taylor and Rusk Counties.
172

173 174 130.1.2 Geology and Soils

175
176 The majority of the soils in the Chippewa County Forest have been derived from the
177 weathering of glacial till deposits and loess. These soils show great variation within relatively
178 short geographic distances. The soils here are typically very stony. Since the end of the last
179 glacial period, the edaphic conditions have been modified by water action, wind and the
180 incorporation of organic material. Specific soil types are generally not found in extensive,
181 continuous areas but are typically scattered in small groupings.
182

183 Two soil associations are characteristic within the county forest area. The Amery-Santiago soil
184 association is predominant in the western segment of the County Forest (west of State
185 Highway 27). Amery soils are the most common soil type and are described as well drained
186 sandy loams found on ridgetops, side slopes and knolls on moraines. The Spencer-Almena-
187 Magnor soil association dominates the eastern segment of the county forest (east of State
188 Highway 27). Magnor silt loams are the most common soil type and are somewhat poorly
189 drained silt loams found on nearly level to gently sloping ground moraines. Detailed soil
190 information is available in the soil survey for Chippewa County. A generalized soil map can be
191 found in Chapter 900.
192

193 130.1.3 Geography

194 Chippewa County is the 11th largest county in Wisconsin with a land area of approximately
195 646,000 acres. There are approximately 22,000 acres of the county covered by lakes, rivers
196 and streams. Approximately 40% of the land in Chippewa County is classified as forestland.
197 The Chippewa County Forest, which contains over 33,000 acres, is the 21st largest county
198 forest of the 29 county forests in the state. A map of the county forest is located in Chapter
199 900.
200

201 130.1.4 Biological Communities

202 Wisconsin's County Forests are part of a larger landscape and managed not as sole entities
203 but part of a larger ecoregion. The National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units
204 (NHFEU) categorizes Wisconsin into two provinces, the Laurentian Mixed Forest (212)
205 forming the northern half of the State and the Eastern Broadleaf Forest (222). Within each
206 province are sections, subsections, and landtype associations that further group land into
207 areas with similar geology, soil types, surface water features, wetlands and historic and
208 potential plant communities.
209

210 The Chippewa County Forest is part of the Laurentian Mixed Forest province, including parts
211 of subsections **212 Je** Central NW Wisconsin loess plain, **212 Jf** Perkinstown end moraine
212 and **212 Jg** Lincoln formation till plain, mixed hardwoods.
213

214 Broken down further, Landtype Associations (LTAs) within the county forest include: **212 Xe**
215 **04** Pikes Peak Moraines, **212 Xd 05** Jump River Ground Moraines, **212 Xe 03** Maple Hill
216 Moraines, **212 Xd 04** Chippewa-Flambeau Plains and **212 Qb 04** Chetek Plains.
217

218 Within Landtype Associations are biological communities. These communities are an
219 assemblage of different plant and animal species, living together in a particular area, at a
220 particular time in specific habitats. Communities are named for their dominant plant species.
221 The following communities are found on the Chippewa County Forest:
222

223 Northern Forest: mixed deciduous and coniferous forests found in a distinct climatic zone that
224 occurs north of the tension zone.
225

226 Wetland Forest: mixed deciduous and coniferous forest occurring on poorly drained soils.
227 These forests are found in a distinct climatic zone that occurs north of the tension zone.
228

229 Wetlands: characterized by soils or substrate that is periodically saturated or covered by
230 water. This community is common across all the LTAs throughout the forest.

231
232 Shrub Communities: characterized by lowland woody shrubs like tag alder, willow spp., etc.

233
234 Grassland Communities: characterized by absence of trees and large shrubs and dominated
235 by grass and forb species.

236
237 Aquatic Communities: including springs, ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers. These
238 communities are common to all LTAs.

239

240 130.1.5 Vegetative Cover Types

241 Approximately 80% of the Chippewa County Forest land base is forested. Forested uplands
242 are comprised of primarily mixed hardwood, aspen, oak, red pine, and white pine while
243 bottomland hardwoods occupy the forested lowlands. The remainder is classified as non-
244 forested; including types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, grass openings, shrubs
245 and bogs. The different cover types present on the Chippewa County Forest are detailed
246 under "Forested Communities" in Chapter 800.

247

248 130.1.6 Wildlife

249 The Chippewa County Forest is habitat for wildlife common to Wisconsin. Numerous species
250 of songbirds, waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and mammals frequent
251 the forest. Each species, or group of species, thrive under different conditions, ranging from
252 recently disturbed ground to old growth. Diversity of plant communities is key to providing a
253 niche for a variety of wildlife species. Deer, bear, fox, coyote, fisher, waterfowl, ruffed grouse,
254 woodcock, turkey, wolves, mustilids, rabbits, beaver, and other rodents are common in the
255 forest. Aspen and birch are maintained as early successional species while white pine, red
256 pine, better quality oak, northern hardwoods, and red maple create diversity and allow for a
257 mosaic of habitats across the county forest.

258

259 Permanently sodded, grassy openings within the forest, originating from log landings, camps,
260 burns, or frost pockets provide forest wildlife habitat. An effort is being made to maintain and
261 improve the quality and, in some cases, the quantity of openings.

262

263

264 130.1.7 Rare and Endangered Resources

265 A comprehensive Biotic Inventory and Analysis of the county forest was conducted between
266 2002 and 2005. The purpose of this study was to provide a baseline inventory and analysis of
267 natural communities, rare plants and animals, aquatic invertebrate and other selected
268 features. Refer to Chapter 900 for this study's findings and recommendations.

269

270 A review of the Biotic Inventory and the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) indicates the
271 presence of a number of rare species, natural communities, and unique natural features on
272 the Chippewa County Forest. See Chapter 900 for a listing of threatened and endangered
273 species.

274

275 130.1.8 Water

276 Chippewa County has 19,128 acres of its surface area covered by 191 named lakes, 9 major
277 flowages and 272 miles of streams. Of this total, 74 miles are classified as trout streams.

278

279 Within County Forest boundaries is a variety of fishery resources. Approximately 60 named
280 and 82 unnamed lakes have all or portions of shoreline in county ownership. The named
281 lakes total approximately 901 acres. Seven of the nine flowages were constructed and
282 maintained primarily as waterfowl habitat. Though there are a number of high quality lakes
283 within or abutting the county forest boundary, there are no lakes or streams designated as
284 outstanding or exceptional under Natural Resources Administrative Code NR102 Water
285 Quality Standards for Wisconsin Surface Waters. See Chapter 900 for inventory of the
286 Chippewa County surface water resources.

287

288 The primary fish species found in the County Forest lakes include northern pike, largemouth,
289 walleye, bass, bluegill, pumpkinseed, green sunfish, yellow perch, bullheads, white suckers
290 and various minnow species. Because of the small size and shallow nature of some lakes,
291 winterkill can occur when snowfall and winter duration is high.
292

293 130.2 CULTURAL FACTORS

294 130.2.1 Recreation

295 Forest recreation has expanded in recent years in Chippewa County. Facilities developed for
296 recreational opportunities include parks, beaches, campgrounds, boat/canoe landings with
297 snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, horseback, hunter/walking, nature, and cross country ski trails
298 on the forest. The forest provides opportunities for recreational pursuits not requiring
299 development (hunting, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, bird /wildlife observation, hiking,
300 and sightseeing). Motorized access to the forest for the physically disadvantaged is available
301 through a county disabled access permit issued by the Forest and Parks Department free of
302 charge.
303

304 130.2.2 Economy

305 Production of forest products and spin-off industries derived from those products and forest
306 recreational opportunities play an important role in Chippewa County's economy, particularly
307 in the northern one third of the county
308

309 130.2.3 Roads and Access

310 Chippewa County Forest lands are open for public use and foot travel. In addition to the town
311 and county roads that access the forest, the county maintains 21.44 miles of County Forest
312 roads. Gated or bermed special use trails, and woods trails open to public travel also exists.
313 Access management on the forest can be a controversial issue. Especially when a woods
314 trail is newly created for logging and then closed after completion of the logging contract, or if
315 an open woods trail is closed due to erosion, illegal dumping, or arson concerns. Both
316 motorized and non-motorized recreation is provided for within the Forest. Motorcycles are not
317 allowed off-road on the forest. See Chapter 700 for detailed discussion on Forest access.
318

319 130.2.4 Education and Research

320 Education and research continue to be critical components in making decisions that affect
321 natural resources. As public needs and demands of the forest and its products increase,
322 sound decisions should be made. Chippewa County encourages and supports research
323 efforts on the forest, and the educational opportunities available that will promote a better
324 understanding of forest communities and management.
325

326 130.2.5 Trends

327 The values and uses of the Chippewa County Forest contribute significantly to fulfilling many
328 of society's ecological and socioeconomic needs now and in the future. The following trends
329 will impact the values and uses of the Forest in coming years:
330

- 331 1. Greater public demand for recreational pursuits is predicted. The public may demand
332 more designated recreation trails such as horseback, mountain bike, and ATV.
333 Statewide, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of all terrain vehicles
334 (ATV's) being sold, which pressures County Forests into providing ATV trails.
335
- 336 2. Planning for and resolving trail use/access conflicts on the County Forest are
337 anticipated. Close proximity to the urban Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire area provides
338 challenges in managing the forest. The popularity of trails for various legal and illegal
339 uses has lead to user conflicts in the past. Conflicts between motorized and non-
340 motorized users are becoming more common, especially in the areas of the forest
341 closest to the urban population.
342
- 343 3. An additional conflict that is on the rise is private land next to public land being used
344 for private residences. Timber harvesting on county land is often in their back yard

345 and an effort needs to be made to communicate the purpose and need for the timber
346 sale as well as advance notice of a sale being established.

- 347
348 4. Demands for harvesting timber products from public forests are predicted to increase
349 as more private forestland is being lost to residential development, and as private
350 forest landowners become decreasingly interested in managing land primarily for
351 timber values.

352
353 Wisconsin's forests are changing due to forest succession. Much County Forest acreage
354 statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid 1900's. Mid- late
355 successional northern hardwood forests are replacing the early successional aspen-birch and
356 oak forests of the 1940's through the 1970's. Aspen cover type is key habitat for many of the
357 state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, and woodcock.
358 A declining harvest and a movement away from even-aged species management (through
359 clear-cutting) on Wisconsin's National and State forests may place the responsibility of
360 maintaining aspen, birch and oak types on the county forests.

361
362 Conflict over timber management practices may increase as more individuals/groups demand
363 greater involvement in forestry decisions. Practices such as clear-cutting/even-aged
364 management will continue to be controversial. With clear-cutting as most effective practice to
365 manage aspen and jack pine stands, efforts to educate the public on the merits of these
366 sound forest management techniques must continue.

367
368 With potential loss of revenue from decreased state-shared revenues and resistance to raising
369 taxes, county timber revenues will become increasingly important to the finances of county
370 governments. This revenue source is impacted whenever forest land is excluded from
371 harvesting and set aside in wilderness areas, buffer areas, etc.

372
373 Increasing knowledge about a wider variety of species and their habitat needs is leading to a
374 growing list of threatened and endangered species. This could lead to improvements in
375 managing the forest and mitigating impacts to these species. Mitigating measures have the
376 potential to impede recreational and timber management activities on the forest. Refer to
377 Chapter 800 for specifics on this subject.

378
379 Invasive exotic species pose an ever-increasing threat to the County Forest. Gypsy moth,
380 garlic mustard, buckthorn, and honeysuckle have all gained a foothold in Wisconsin's forests.
381 Refer to Chapter 800 for specifics on this subject.

382
383 Wildlife management practices have maintained good habitat on the forest, sustaining strong
384 wildlife populations. Public hunting demand is increasing as less private property is open to
385 hunting.

386
387 The Forest is considered to be an outdoor classroom serving all age groups and interests.
388 Diverse communities with a large variety of plant and animal life give ample opportunity for
389 study and observation. Educational opportunities on the forest will be promoted by forest
390 management and used by local educators at all education levels.

391 392 130.3 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP

393 The County Forest is composed of 46 management compartments ranging in size from 283
394 acres to nearly 2300 acres. Within the county forest boundaries approximately 75% of the land
395 is county owned with most of the remaining 25% in small private holdings. A map of these
396 compartments can be found in Chapter 900.