

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 300

DESCRIPTION OF FOREST AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

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300 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST

300.1 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP

The County Forest is composed of 137 management compartments ranging in size from 162 acres to nearly 2483 acres. Within the county forest boundaries approximately 97.9 percent of the land is county owned with most of the remaining 2.1 percent in small private holdings. A map of these compartments can be found in the Appendix.

300.2 NATURAL FEATURES

300.2.1 Topography

The Price County Forest, located in the north central part of the state, lies primarily within the northern highland physiographic region of Wisconsin. The topography of the forest and surrounding area has glacial origin. The glaciers eroded hilltops and filled valleys, thus reducing relief. Elevations generally range from 1450 to 1700 feet above sea level. The two highest known elevations in Wisconsin are located in Price County east of Ogema. Timm's Hill is the highest point, elevation 1951.8 and Pearson's Hill, just to the south and east of Timm's Hill has an elevation of 1950.4 (USGS).

300.2.2 Geography

Price County has a land area of approximately 806,040 acres, plus another 18,000 acres of water included in lakes and streams. Approximately 72 percent of the land in the county is classified as forest land. The County Forest, which contains approximately 92,341 acres.

Appendix 1000 contains maps showing the location of the County Forest.

300.2.3 Geology and Soils

The soils of Price County have been derived largely from the weathering of the glacial drift deposits and show a great variation within relatively short distances. Since the glacial period, the soils have been modified by water action, wind, and the accumulation and incorporation of organic material. Soil types on the County Forest range from peat in the wetter portions of the Forest to Iron River/Pence/Elderon in the well-drained areas. A

generalized soil map can be found in the Appendix. Detailed soils information is available from the USDA Web Soil Survey (websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov).

300.2.4 Ecological Landscapes

Ecological Landscapes are regions in Wisconsin containing similar ecology and management opportunities. Each landscape can present unique management opportunities and challenges. These landscapes are essentially based on the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU) (Cleland et al. 1997). More information on the 16 Ecological Landscapes defined within Wisconsin is available at:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/landscapes/index.asp?mode=Choose>

The Price County Forest lies within the North Central Forest – Found across northern Wisconsin. Soils generally sandy loams, sands and silts with forest types dominated by northern mesic forest types such as northern hardwood, aspen-birch and spruce-fir.

300.2.4.1 Land Type Associations

Land type associations are units of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU) classification system. They are much smaller than Ecological Landscapes and are generally based on glacial features. They can be useful for planning at finer scales within a landscape. More information is available at:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/landscapes/index.asp?mode=detail&Landscape=11>

(or links specific to other landscapes).

300.2.5 Vegetative Cover Types

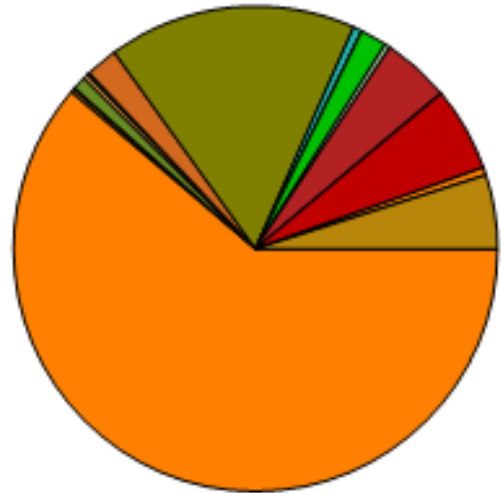
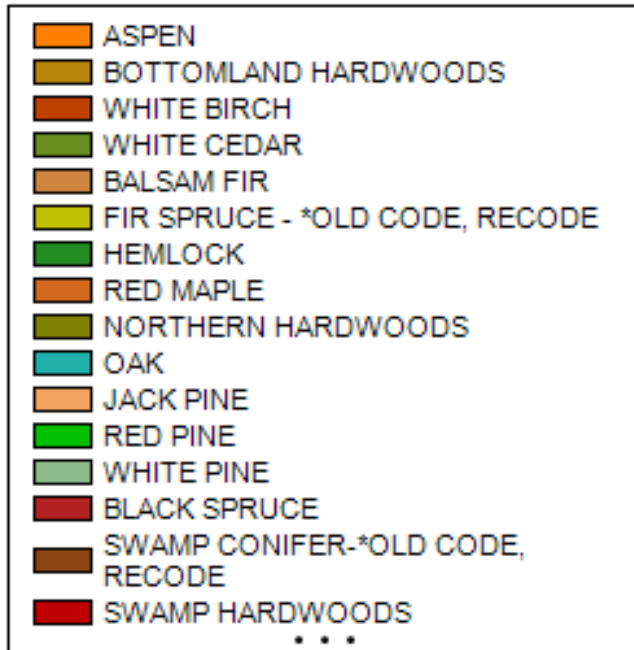
Approximately 78 percent of the Price County Forest land base is forested, and approximately 22 percent of the Price County Forest is non-forested. Forested uplands are comprised of primarily mixed hardwood and aspen while tamarack, swamp hardwood and black spruce occupy the forested lowlands. Non-forested includes types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, grass openings, shrubs and bogs.

300.2.5.1 Forested Communities

The forested cover types are made up of a variety of size classes (regeneration, sapling-pole, and saw timber) and structure (canopy, layers, ground vegetation, dead and downed material and inclusions).

Forest Cover Types Associated with Price County Forest

Forest Type Symbol	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	% of Recon Acres	% of Forested Acres
A	ASPEN	895	44,028	61 %	48 %
BH	BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	5	161	0 %	0 %
BW	WHITE BIRCH	8	78	0 %	0 %
C	WHITE CEDAR	22	631	1 %	1 %
FB	BALSAM FIR	2	247	0 %	0 %
FS	FIR SPRUCE - *OLD CODE, RECODE	3	58	0 %	0 %
H	HEMLOCK	5	57	0 %	0 %
MR	RED MAPLE	46	1,537	2 %	2 %
NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	255	11,918	17 %	13 %
O	OAK	6	427	1 %	0 %
PJ	JACK PINE	3	7	0 %	0 %
PR	RED PINE	51	1,265	2 %	1 %
PW	WHITE PINE	17	276	0 %	0 %
SB	BLACK SPRUCE	54	3,245	5 %	4 %
SC	SWAMP CONIFER-*OLD CODE, RECODE	2	29	0 %	0 %
SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	146	4,040	6 %	4 %
SW	WHITE SPRUCE	29	367	1 %	0 %
T	TAMARACK	129	3,548	5 %	4 %
	TOTAL	1,678	71,919		



See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.

300.1.5.2 Non-Forested Communities

Non-forested habitats are important components of management within the County Forest. Upland and wetland non-forest types provide important habitat for distinct groups of species.

Upland Non-Forest

Upland non-forest areas of the County Forest include:

Grass openings - Consist of upland grasses such as brome, quack, bluegrass, timothy, big and little bluestem, and Indian grass.

Herbaceous vegetation - Ground cover predominated by herbaceous species with bracken fern, sweet clover, giant ragweed, sting nettle, upland aster, goldenrod, and prairie dock being common.

Shrub opening - Primarily upland site less than 10% stocked with tree species but having 50% or more of the area stocked with taller growing, persistent shrubs. This includes hazel, dogwood, juneberry, sumac, alder, and willow.

Rock outcrops - Include rocky talus and bedrock.

See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.

Wetlands

Wisconsin State Statutes define a wetland as “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation, and which has soil indicative of wet conditions.” Wetland communities are recognized to be a complex association of plants and animals, soils and water levels having special natural values. They provide many functional values including shoreline and flood protection, water quality protection, groundwater recharge, and animal and plant habitat. Therefore, it is the policy of Price County to preserve, protect, and manage wetlands under its jurisdiction in manner that recognizes the natural values of wetland and their importance on the environment. Scientist distinguish dozens of wetland types, characterized by vegetation, soil type and degree of saturation or water cover. Some of the more prominent types found on the County Forest include:

Aquatic bed - Plants growing entirely on or in a water body no deeper than 6 feet. Plants may include pondweed, duckweed, lotus and water-lilies.

Marshes - Characterized by standing water and dominated by cattails, bulrushes, pickerelweed, lake sedges and/or giant bur-reed.

Sedge or “wet” meadows - These wetlands more often that not have saturated soils rather that standing water. Sedges, grasses and reeds dominant, but may also have blue flag iris, mash milkweed, sneezeweed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster.

Scrub/shrub - These areas, which include bogs and alder thickets, are characterized by woody shrubs and small trees such as tag alder, bog birch, willow and dogwood.

Forested - These areas, include bogs and forested floodplain complexes, are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, green ash and silver maple.

Forest management is conducted on many of the forested wetlands with activities occurring primarily during frozen conditions. See Chapter 830 for detailed discussion on Biological Community Types.

300.2.6 Fish and Wildlife

Wisconsin supports over 650 different types of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish as well as millions of invertebrates. Management of county forest lands and the biotic communities they support provide a mix of habitat types and ages for a wide range of wildlife species. Each species, or interacting group of species, do best under different conditions. County forest lands provide a full range of habitats from open grasslands/barrens to mature forests, from bogs to forested wetlands, from spring ponds to lake shorelines. County forest staffs work closely with WDNR fish and wildlife managers and conservation organizations to identify and manage critical habitat for breeding, migrating and wintering fish and wildlife.

While the Price County Forest provides for a wide range of fish and wildlife species, current management strategies or programs have emphasized the following species and/or communities: *Ruffed Grouse, woodcock, whitetail deer, elk and golden winged warbler.*

300.2.7 Rare and Endangered Resources

A review of the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) indicates the presence of a number of rare species, natural communities and unique natural features on the Price County Forest. All land disturbing projects will include an evaluation phase, to determine whether an NHI screening is required.

The Natural Heritage Inventory Database is the most comprehensive source of rare species data for Wisconsin. These data are used for a variety of purposes including research, land management, state land master planning, community planning, conservation planning and review of public and private activities across the state, The NHI Portal is currently available to DNR staff and County Forest staff who hold a data sharing license.

The Wisconsin Historical Preservation Database is the most comprehensive source of cultural resources for Wisconsin. These data are used for a variety of purposes including research, land management, state land master planning, community planning, conservation planning and review of public and private activities across the state, The Wisconsin Historical Preservation Database is currently available to DNR staff and County Forest staff.

300.2.8 Water

Price County has 18,000 acres involving 161 named lakes, 78 flowages and 687 miles of streams. Of this total, 239.3 miles are classified as trout streams.

Within the County Forest boundaries there is a variety of fishery resources. Approximately 7 named and 3 unnamed lakes have all or portions of their shoreline under county ownership. In addition, the county owns frontage on over 4 named trout streams totaling over 5 miles. A complete inventory of the surface water resources in Price County can be found in the Appendix.

Price County also has 31 streams totaling 114.95 miles which are classified as Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters including:

- South Fork of the Flambeau River
- North Fork of the Flambeau River

Note: An entire listing of the outstanding and exceptional resource waters can be found in Wisconsin Admin. Code NR102.10 and 102.11.

300.3 CULTURAL FACTORS

300.3.1 Economy

The importance of the County Forests to Wisconsin's economic health continues to rise. County Forests sustain over 60,000 full-time jobs derived from logging, trucking, paper production, manufactured building materials, and lumber. Many other jobs are created in such businesses as the expanding printing industry and are located far from the forested northland. County Forests contribute to the 24 billion dollar forest industry in Wisconsin.

In addition, the lands managed by these 29 counties provide an important recreation resource to complement our state's valuable tourism industry. Tourists spend valuable money at local businesses. By providing 2.4 million acres of public recreation land, we bring tourist to our state. As population increases and public access to privately owned forestland decreases, the need for accessible lands unquestionably will assume an ever more important role. More information on the economic impact of the County Forest program can be found at <https://www.wisconsincountyforests.com/>

Production of forest products and spin-off industries derived from the recreational opportunities on the Forest and the forest products it produces are vitally important to Price County's economic well-being. Forest industry is the #1 ranked employer in the County. Recreation is ranked #3. This information can be found at the following link: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestbusinesses/factsheets.html>.

300.3.2 Education and Research

Education and research continue to be critical components in making decisions that affect our natural resources. As public needs and demands of our forest and its products increase, we must be prepared to assure that sound decisions result. To this end, Price County encourages and supports research efforts that relate to the forest, and educational opportunities that will promote a better understanding of forest communities and management.

300.4 OTHER PUBLIC LANDS OWNERSHIP

Price County Forest shares a common boundary with the WI DNR, Rusk County and the National Forest. Some roads and trails are connected without interruption between the public lands providing for a more enjoyable experience for the user groups. Price County Forest will continue to form and build on these relationships with other adjacent public lands in the best interest of the public.