

Ashland County Forest Annual Work Plan – 2024

The Honorable Ashland County Board of Supervisors

Following is the proposed Ashland County Forest work plan for the year 2024. The plan gives direction and meaning to the proposed County Forest Budget. The plan further defines and supplements the Comprehensive Fifteen Year Plan and emphasizes the current needs of the County Forest and Recreation System.

Timber Harvest

Timber harvests are not only important for the economic well being of Ashland County, but for the health and vigor of the forest. This includes all aspects of the forest including wildlife, watershed protection, air quality, recreation and many other non-commercial values. Professional implementation of proper forest management and harvest techniques is essential. The timber management goal is to produce forest products through the use of sustainable forestry practices. Ashland County Forest plans to offer for sale approximately 1519 acres of timber in the following timber types in 2024:

Northern Hardwoods	1073 acres
Aspen	268 acres
Red Pine	2 acres
Fir-Spruce	19 acres
Swamp Hardwood	20 acres
Tamarack/Black Spruce	84 acres
Red Maple	0 acres
Cedar	53 acres
Hemlock	0 acres

We are also looking at the past, present and future conditions of the county forest. Attached is WISFIRS report #207. This gives a representation of the forest in 1977, the condition today and the projected condition of the forest in the future. We are then tailoring our management to maximize the most productive types and bring these stands to the most productive conditions possible. It is our intent to maximize revenue for the county while maintaining and supplying outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.

Information about what timber sale establishment activities are occurring at a specific time may be obtained by contacting the Ashland County Forestry Dept., PO Box 155, Butternut, WI 54514. Phone 715-769-3777.

2024 Work Plan

1. Continue updating the forest reconnaissance to identify tree planting sites and areas for natural species conversion based on habitat type.
 - A. Recon approximately 1519 acres as called for in schedule 12A.
 - B. Continue to update recon older than 20 years.
2. Locate and perpetuate survey monuments and maintain boundary lines.
 - A. Investigate and resolve conflicts with neighboring ownerships.
 - B. Continue long term project of locating section and private corners in the county forest, working with the county surveyor.
 - C. Work with county surveyor on timber sale boundaries.
3. Reforestation activities – Continue the sedge trials; identify and treat new sites and continue to document the progress at current sites. Continue to develop and share project documentation. Begin to develop stand level application guidance for appropriate sedge applications. Continue to address Garlic Mustard issues. The large outbreak located in 2017 continues to be a large work load for the department.
4. Continue access management program by berming and seeding roads on timber sales as sales are completed and as needed. Also, berm other roads that have a high potential to become problem areas. Continue development of list of roads that will not be seeded and will be placed on a list to maintain.
5. Annual maintenance on Ashland County Forest hunter walking trails. Additional signing is planned for trail heads. Plans for this year include disking and reseeding of existing trails and openings. This process is in jeopardy as the Ruffed Grouse Society has changed funding priorities.
6. Boat Landings – Continue routine maintenance of all boat landings. Continue to monitor use patterns at Second Landing and the dumpster there. We will also be closely monitoring the use of Tomczek Park, the boathouses and the dock. Finish black topping at Lake Galilee Boat landing.
7. Roads – Continue maintenance and monitoring of County Forest roads. Begin planning major reconstruction of the Mudline, with the Ashland County Highway Department. If the Highway Department is unable to complete these projects, then we will look for outside contractors. Continue to monitor county forest roads for damage and abuse.
8. Evaluate timber on county owned property not included in county forest boundaries.
9. Work with Ashland County Snowmobile Alliance to maintain and improve Ashland County snowmobile trails. Work with U.S. Forest Service on state funded projects within the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest.

10. Continue to develop the GIS system for the Ashland County Forest. Continue adding the forest roads layer. We will begin adding other data layers as priorities dictate.
11. Continue to maintain SFI and FSC Forest Certification on the Ashland County Forest. This includes participation on the Wisconsin County Forest Association Legislation/Certification Committee.
12. Continue to identify and attempt to purchase critical pieces of privately owned property within the forest boundaries. There are several potential projects on the horizon.
13. Continue to provide support and expertise to the Ashland County Sheriff's Office with Wilderness SAR. Attend locally available training as opportunities occur.
14. Continue to develop the Recreation Officer position with the Ashland County Sheriff's Office.
15. Continue to develop a Carbon Credit project on the forest. This includes beginning a carbon inventory using the plots provided by Anew.