

Burnett County Forest & Parks

8150 State Road 70, Siren, WI 54872

2018 Annual Report

Burnett County, Wisconsin

111,144 Acres of County Forest Lands

237 Miles of Snowmobile Trail

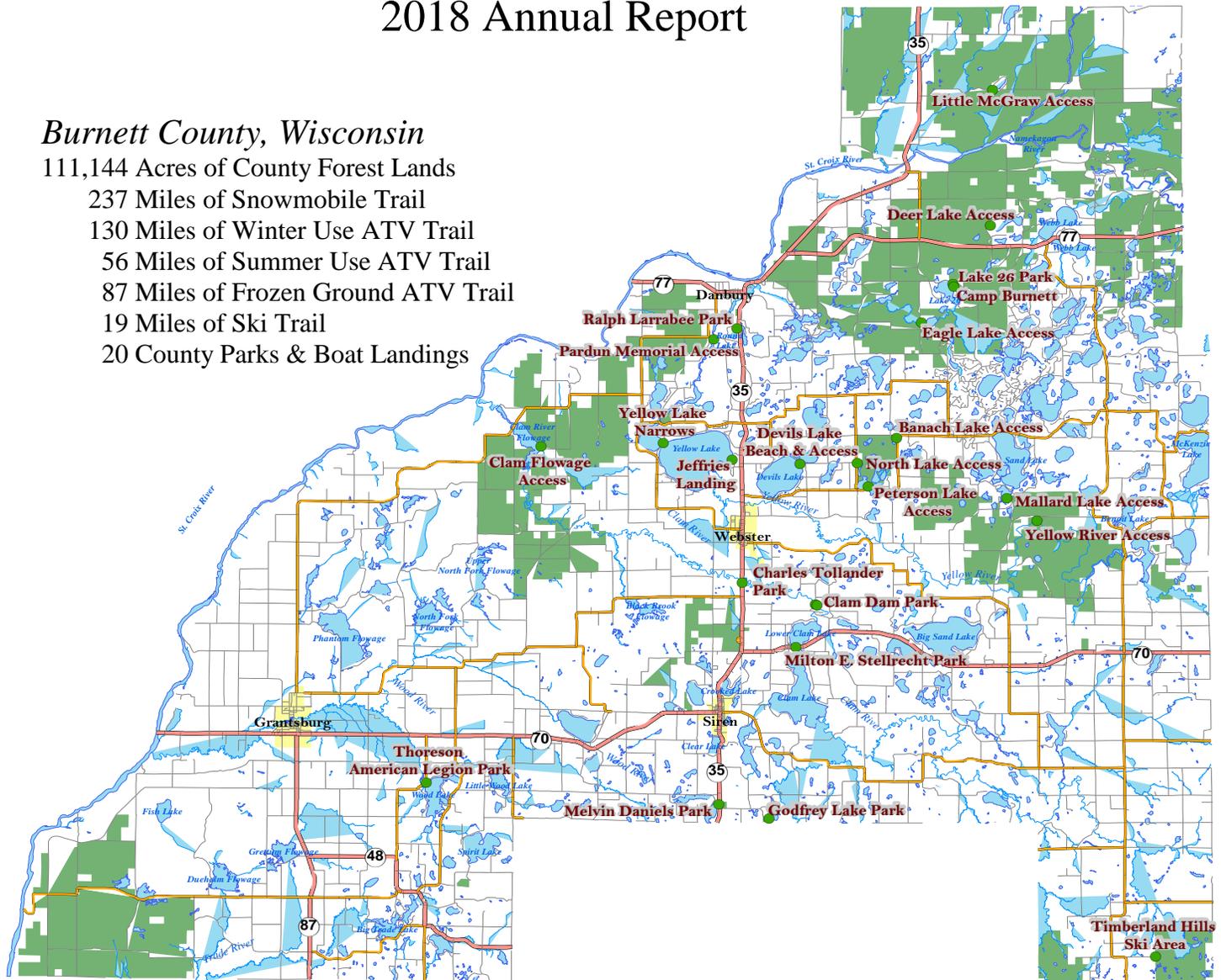
130 Miles of Winter Use ATV Trail

56 Miles of Summer Use ATV Trail

87 Miles of Frozen Ground ATV Trail

19 Miles of Ski Trail

20 County Parks & Boat Landings



Burnett County Natural Resources Committee

Edgar Peterson
Norman Bickford
Steve Austin
Gene Olson
Craig Conroy
Chuck Anderson
Gene McLain

County Forest & Parks Personnel

Jason Nichols, Administrator
Assistant Adm. - Vacant
Susan Tollander, Forest/Rec. Coordinator
Kari Letch, Bookkeeper
Tory Jeske, Technician

DNR Forester

Eric Peterson, Liaison

**BURNETT COUNTY FOREST & PARKS
2018
ANNUAL REPORT**

This report shows our goals and accomplishments for year 2018. The work accomplished in 2018 is based on the current needs of the 111,144 acres of county forest, the 20 day-use parks and boat landings, 3 swimming beaches, 52 miles of summer ATV trail, 126 miles of winter ATV trail, 237 miles of snowmobile trail, 20 miles of bike trail, and the 1 rustic youth camp that encompasses Burnett County.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Burnett County Forest and Parks Department is to provide part of the base for satisfying the ecological and socioeconomic needs of Burnett County. And to manage, conserve and protect our resources and facilities in a safe, sustainable condition for present and future generations. All while balancing sociological and economic needs, recreational opportunities, and plant and animal diversity.

2018 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal #1: To establish timber sales to meet or exceed our allowable cut acres.

**Narrative:
TIMBER HARVEST**

Timber harvests that are properly designed and completed are vital to maintaining a healthy and vigorous forest. Many social, environmental, and economic benefits are provided by a managed harvest program. Professional implementation of proper forest management and harvest techniques are essential. The timber harvest goal is to produce a sustained yield of forest products using harvest techniques that are suited to the regeneration and the growth needs of each forest type. The long-term goal is to develop a regulated harvest in which the same number of acres or same volume of wood could be harvested each year for perpetuity. This regulated harvest occurs when there is a proper balance in age class distribution and uniform growth rates for each forest type.

Burnett County Forest Harvest goals and established acres:

	<u>2018 goal</u>	2018 Acres	
		<u>Established</u>	<u>Sold</u> 2018 Ac
Acreage control:			
Jack Pine-Harvest	300	231	320
Red Pine-Thinning	1000	1011	1009
Aspen-Harvest	225	453	307
Scrub Oak-Harvest	250	316	142
Scrub Oak-Thinning	150	26	74
Northern Hardwoods-Thinning	100	0	202
Swamp Hardwoods	100	45	138
Swamp Conifer	50	0	0
<u>Misc. Other</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>85</u>
Total Acres:	2275	2082	2277

Note: 2018 Establishment acres are down due to 5 month vacancy of county forester position.

Goal #2: To offer and sell our allowable cut acres to buyers of raw forest products to the extent markets allow.

We conducted two timber sales during 2018. Twenty-eight different tracts were sold with an estimated 65876 tons and 140,000 board feet on 2277 acres totaling \$1,271,138.67 in estimated revenues. We issued contracts to 10 different successful bidders and collected performance bonds for each contract.

Goal #3: To ensure that active timber sales are being harvested and paid for in accordance to our rules, regulations, and goals.

During 2018, there were 29 active timber sales cut and closed out on the Burnett County Forest. Each sale was visited weekly when actively being cut. Visits were documented on sale maps by the forester, and necessary action was taken to ensure contracts were being followed.

Advanced payments for stumpage were received by contractors, and haul tickets were distributed accordingly. In 2018, Burnett County collected \$1,461,264.06 in stumpage payments from the county forest lands.

Ten percent of the timber sale revenues from the county forest lands (\$146,126.41) went back to the local townships that include county forest lands. Payments were prorated by the percentage of county forest in each township. Towns also received \$31,627.55 in acreage payments from the state for the county forest lands within their townships.

We continued to have inquiries for firewood cutting, Christmas tree harvesting, and camping on the County Forest from our local citizens and property owners. In 2018 firewood permits generated \$1,976.00, while Christmas trees totaled \$215.00, and camping permits totaled \$300.00, with miscellaneous revenue of \$250.00.

Goal #4: To regenerate our harvested areas back to fully stocked stands when needed.

Although Burnett County has strived to regenerate the majority of harvested stands by natural means, we are still considering some site's for planting. Forced regeneration is necessary to obtain a balance in timber species and to ensure that harvested areas are regenerating back to fully stocked stands of trees.

In 2018, Burnett County pre-sale scarified 317 acres for natural regeneration, 9 acres of furrowing and trenched and sprayed 41 acres for year 2019 spring tree planting.

In 2018, we planted 50,000 tree seedlings on 52 acres.

Goal #5: To provide for protection of the Burnett County Forest Lands.

Since 1990, 263 acres of Burnett County Forest Lands have been burned by wild land fires. Continued cooperation with the WI DNR in prevention and suppression efforts is needed.

We continue to see an increase of Oak Wilt not only within the county but within the state of Wisconsin. We continue to chemically treat new sites to try to stop the disease from spreading where it is feasible to do so. There continues to be the potential for new issues to surface such as the small Gypsy Moth hot spot on private land that was located in the county this last year or the emergence of the Emerald Ash Borer in new counties every year. We will continue to monitor for diseases, insects and invasive species when working on the county forest. (Examples: Oak Wilt, Gypsy Moth, Spotted Knapweed, Leafy Spurge, Buckthorn, Emerald Ash Borer, Red Pine Pocket Decline.)

We applied various management guidelines and techniques where applicable to prevent or slow the spread of these diseases and invasive species. Examples of these include: time restrictions for entering the woods; requiring wood to go to mills rather than private lands to prevent the spread; spraying small areas of invasives where we have the opportunity to kill certain plants; and stump treating pockets of oak to stop the spread of Oak Wilt. On numerous occasions, we requested help from the DNR to assist with identification of infected or suspicious areas.

Goal #6: To ensure that Burnett County is represented at the Wisconsin County Forest Association meetings.

It is imperative that Burnett County stays involved with the WCFA activities in order to stay up-to-date with legislative, certification, state budgeting, and rulemaking decisions that will affect Burnett County. As Forest Administrator, I continue to serve on the WCFA Legislative Committee and attend as many of the meetings as possible to make sure that the decisions being made are in the best interest of Burnett County and all Wisconsin County Forests. I also serve on the Personnel, Budget, and Motorized Recreation Committees as well as the 15-Year Plan review sub-committee. WCFA continues to work with our many partners to ensure our ability to continue with the management of the county forests.

Norm Bickford continues to hold the office of President for the WCFA Board of Directors.

Goal #7: To ensure that the County Forest Roads are maintained in a safe and useable condition.

Routine grading, mowing, and signing of our 35.16 miles of county forest roads was completed. The Highway Department was used to grade our high-use forest roads in the spring of the year. All of our county forest roads were checked for signing and safety issues. All safety issues were addressed immediately.

Year 2018 was without any major storms that caused damage to our County Forest Roads, so we were able to get by with more routine maintenance vs. having to address highly damaged areas due to rain events.

Goal #8: To ensure that the County's Parks, Boat Landings, and Youth Camp are maintained in a safe, clean, and useable condition.

Weekly inspections and cleaning of our parks, boat landings, and the youth camp were conducted by staff during the high-use season of late-April through September. Routine maintenance to our picnic tables, grills, and restrooms was conducted. As well, we issued a contract for the mowing of our high-use parks.

A part-time employee was hired for 2-3 days per week to assist with routine park checks, mowing, and maintenance projects. This individual was also in charge of checking our youth camp users in and out.

We continued to fix and level boat landings when needed, as well as provide docks at our major landings to aid in landing watercraft. While the majority of our boat landing received normal yearly maintenance, we were able to obtain a couple different grants that helped improve two different accesses.

First, we used a County Conservation Aids Grant to purchase a new dock for the Yellow Lake Narrows boat ramp. The old dock will be moved to another landing that does not see as much use.

Camp Burnett was used for 64 nights from late-April through mid-September 2018. We continue to see increased use of the camp during the summer months. Practically every weekend was rented and numerous weekdays were rented as well. Rental fees for Camp Burnett generated \$7,493.00 in 2018.

We had work done to the main lodge building. The contractor replaces numerous logs that were decaying. They also completed the removal of the old finish and the majority of the chinking. Due to wet cold weather they were not able to totally finish the chinking or the staining on the main lodge. They will be back in early 2019 to finish the project. This will be a big improvement to the main lodge building and will help preserve it for many years to come.

Goal #9: To ensure that Burnett County's portion of the Gandy Dancer Trail is managed and maintained in a safe, clean, and useable condition.

Routine checks of the trail signing, culverts, and surface were completed. New signs were added along the trail to inform users of no summer ATV use.

The trail was mowed twice in 2018 to maintain trail width and brush control. We also sprayed it with Buccanier (Glyphosate) to control weeds that destroy the limestone surface.

The Highway Department was used to put in a new culvert just north of the airport. This was done to assist with some of the flooding that was occurring on the private lands to the west of the trail.

The trail was once again opened as a winter-use frozen ground ATV trail in mid-December. Polk County is now also allowing ATV use in the winter, so the entire portion of the Gandy in Burnett County is now open to winter ATV use once the ground is frozen.

The state bike trail pass program for Burnett County was once again administered through the Forest and Parks Department. Passes were distributed to eight different vendors in Siren, Webster, and Danbury for the general public to purchase. Burnett County generated \$2,553.00 in revenue by retaining 60% of each pass sold in the county.

There were a few special use events held on the Gandy Dancer Trail in 2018. These were walk/run type of events that are compatible with the normal uses during this time of year. They included the Fat Fish Forty bike race, the Fly-in 5K run/walk and the Yellow Lake Food Distribution Run Down Hunger walk/run.

Goal #10: To see to that Burnett County's Snowmobile and ATV trails are managed in accordance to state guidelines, to ensure reimbursement of grants to the fullest extent, and provide safe recreational trail riding opportunities.

In 2018, 26 grants were submitted to the Snowmobile and ATV programs for the 2018-2019 season. Of the 26 grants, 17 were funded, with a total of \$306,466.74 going toward Burnett County's trail systems. Three grant applications were for the proposed campground project and were withdrawn. Projects included the regular snowmobile, ATV, UTV, and trout maintenance grants (\$125,061.74); a snowmobile/ATV land acquisition on Trail 45 (\$25,000.00); three ATV trail rehabilitation projects on Trails 8, 41, 6, and 7 (\$137,500.00); a trout rehabilitation project on Trout 41 (\$1,800.00), a snowmobile/ATV bridge rehabilitation project on Trail 925 (\$16,000.00); funding for 3.3 new miles of winter ATV trail (\$330.00), and storm damage funding (\$775.00).

Five new bridges were completed on our snowmobile/ATV trail systems in 2018. These included a 200' boardwalk bridge on Snowmobile Trail 140 in the Town of Sand Lake, three boardwalk bridges measuring 60', 85', and 690' on Snowmobile/ATV Trail 45 in the Towns of Union and Swiss, and a 150' steel-frame bridge on Trail 45 in the Town of Swiss.

Heavy rains on June 16th and 17th resulted in a number of washouts on our trail systems. Time was spent assessing trails and documenting damages, coordinating repairs, and working with Emergency Management and FEMA representatives to develop a claim for reimbursement of storm damage costs.

Routine trail maintenance was contracted with the local ATV club and the Burnett County Snowtrails Association. As trail work was completed by the clubs on our funded trails, they submitted maintenance and grooming forms to our office documenting all the work completed. These forms were reviewed by staff and the clubs were reimbursed for their work on the funded trail up to the grant amounts.

Trails were inspected by Burnett County Forest and Parks staff for signing, grooming, and other maintenance needs and issues. Contact was made with the clubs with issues that needed attention in a timely manner due to safety concerns. A representative from the Forest and Parks Department attended the Burnett County Snowtrails Association monthly meetings.

Goal #11: To maintain our facilities and equipment.

Routine maintenance of all equipment was conducted during 2018. Daily logbooks were used to track fuel, oil changes, mileage, and other normal maintenance work that was completed on our trucks. Non-routine maintenance work was conducted by the Burnett County Highway Department when we had sufficient time to get the work done. At times private businesses were used for reasons of convenience and productivity. All heavy machinery and vehicles received annual maintenance, which was documented, (ex. oil changes, greasing, tire rotations etc.), in maintenance logbooks for each piece of equipment.

Goal #12: To provide a financial contribution to Fort Folle Avoine Historical Park for operational and maintenance expenses to enhance and promote the educational and tourism based opportunities in Burnett County.

A financial contribution to Fort Folle Avoine Historical Park was budgeted for and made in 2018. The contribution totaled \$53,900.00. Plastic grates were installed in the deck to allow water to fall through the grates rather than splash up on the logs. This will also allow for better air movement in this area that will allow the logs to dry quicker after rain events. The total expenditures were \$53,900.00 at the Fort for year 2018.

Goal #13: Other

Two Separate Sustainable Forestry grants were received in 2018. The first one was for a spray/roller chop and direct seeding of Jack Pine project in the Town of Anderson. This grant covered the chemical spraying, roller chopping, seed purchase and seed spreading for 60 acres that has not regenerated very well due to Oak Wilt and the lack of seed trees. During the summer of 2019 we will work with a contractor to have this area sprayed and roller chopped. Once this work is completed we will work with the DNR to have the Jack Pine seed spread across the site.

The second grant was for an access improvement project to allow for better trucking access to parts of the County Forest. The woods trails that will receive this work are located in the Keizer block of the County Forest. These trails leads to different areas of the newly acquired portion of the county forest that was obtained during the land trade with the State of Wisconsin. In the summer of 2019 the Highway Department will do the work for us and apply 4-6" of gravel on these access trails. These are heavily used trails and this will be a great upgrade for forest management and the general public.