COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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CHAPTER 300

DESCRIPTION OF FOREST AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Section	Subject	Page
300	**DESCRIPTION OF FOREST**	2
300.1	COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP	2
300.2	NATURAL FEATURES	2
300.2.1	Topography	2
300.2.2	Geography	2
300.2.3	Geology & Soils	2
300.2.4	Ecological Landscapes	3
300.2.4.1	Land Type Associations	3
300.2.5	Vegetative Cover Types	2
	Forested Communities	3
	Non- Forested Communities	5
300.2.6	Fish and Wildlife	6
300.2.7	Rare and Endangered Resources	7
300.2.8	Water	7
300.3	CULTURAL FACTORS	8
300.3.1	Economy	8
300.3.2	Education and Research	9
300.4	OTHER PUBLIC LANDS OWNERSHIP	9

300 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST

300.1 COUNTY FOREST OWNERSHIP

The County Forest is composed of 14 management compartments ranging in size from 981.04 acres to nearly 3980 acres. Within the county forest boundaries approximately 51 percent of the land is county owned with most of the remaining 49 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 Barron County Forest, located in the northwest part of the state, lies primarily within the Central Plain 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 range from 984 ft. in the south central part of the county forest to 1768 ft. in the east central. The terrain ranges from gently rolling in the west to hilly in the eastern part of the forest.

300.2.2 Geography

Barron County has a land area of approximately 863 sq. miles , plus another 27 sq. miles of water included in lakes and streams. Approximately 40 % percent of the land in the county is classified as forest land. The County Forest, contains approximately 16,187 acres. Appendix 1000 contains maps showing the location of the County Forest.

300.2.3 Geology and Soils

The soils of Barron 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 sandy loams in the southwestern portion of the forest to loams and silt loams in the north and eastern portion of the forest. 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 (NHFUE) (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 Barron County Forest lies within the Forest Transition and Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape(s)

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. The following Land Type Associations are present within the Ecological Landscapes of the Barron County Forest. Poskin Moraines, Chetek Plains, Blue Hills, Sumner Moraines, Barron-Dobie Plains, Late St. Croix Moraines and the Hay River Sandstone Hills. More information is available at: https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/landscapes/index.asp?mode=detail&Landscape=11

300.2.5 Vegetative Cover Types

Approximately 80 percent of the Barron County Forest land base is forested, and approximately 20 percent of the Barron County Forest is non-forested. Forested uplands are comprised of primarily oak, aspen and northern hardwoods, while swamp hardwoods tamarack occupy the forested lowlands. Non-forested includes types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, grass openings, shrubs and bogs.

FORESTED COMMUNITIES

The forested cover types are made up or a variety of size classes and structure. Forest cover types associated with the County Forest are:

Property Forest Type Acreage

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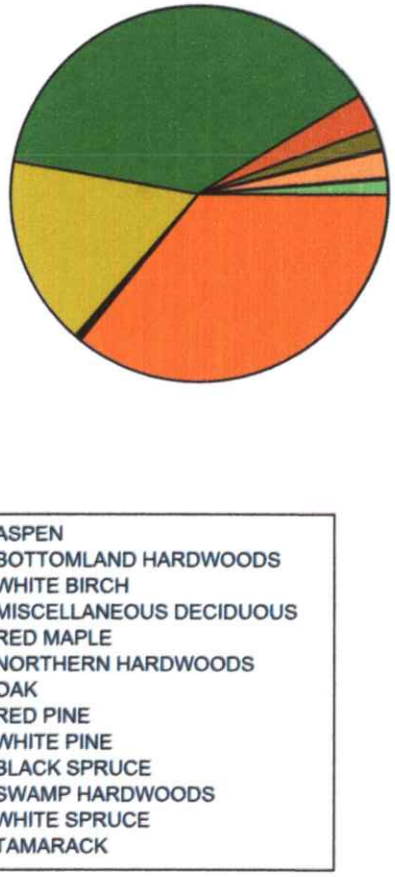
Report 102

300 - BARRON COUNTY FOREST

Forest Type	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
A	ASPEN	156	4,666	36 %	29 %
BH	BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	1	18	0 %	0 %
BW	WHITE BIRCH	2	18	0 %	0 %
MD	MISCELLANEOUS DECIDUOUS	1	27	0 %	0 %
MR	RED MAPLE	1	9	0 %	0 %
NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	44	2,147	16 %	13 %
O	OAK	118	5,000	38 %	31 %
PR	RED PINE	24	410	3 %	3 %
PW	WHITE PINE	19	233	2 %	1 %
SB	BLACK SPRUCE	1	24	0 %	0 %
SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	11	300	2 %	2 %
SW	WHITE SPRUCE	2	18	0 %	0 %
T	TAMARACK	11	171	1 %	1 %
	Total:	**391**	**13,041**	**98 %**	**80 %**



NON-FORESTED COMMUNITIES

Non-forested habitats are important components of management within the County Forest. Up-land 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, willow, and prickly ash.

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 Barron 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.

Barron County Forest provides for a wide range of fish and wildlife species.

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 Barron 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

Barron County has 18,289 acres of surface lake water involving 176 named lakes, 188 unnamed lakes. 6 flowages and 470 miles of streams. Of this total, 264 miles are classified as trout streams.

Within the County Forest boundaries there is a variety of fishery resources. Approximately 16 named and 30 unnamed lakes have all or portions of their shoreline under county

ownership. In addition, the county owns frontage on over 6 named trout streams totaling over 8 miles.

Barron County also has 1 river totaling 10 miles which are classified as Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters including:

- Yellow River

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/

300.3.1 Economy

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 Barron County's economic well-being. Forest industry is the # 11th ranked employer in the County.

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, Barron 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

Barron County Forest shares a common boundary with Rusk, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties. Roads and trails are connected without interruption between the public lands providing for a more enjoyable experience for the user groups. Barron County Forest will continue to form and build on these relationships with other adjacent public lands in the best interest of the public.