

Parks & Forest Department

The Parks & Forest Department manages the timber sales, county forest roads, wildlife habitat improvement projects, and other operations on the county forest (52,737 acres), three county owned dams (Coon Fork, Lake Altoona, Lake Eau Claire), seven parks (Big Falls, Coon Fork, Harstad, L.L. Phillips, Lake Altoona, Lake Eau Claire, and Lowes Creek); three campgrounds (Coon Fork, Harstad, and Expo Center); Tower Ridge Recreation Area; Exposition Center, four cross-country ski trails, state funded countywide snowmobile trails, state funded ATV/UTV trails, hiking, mountain biking, horseback, disc golf, and hunter access trails; boat and canoe landings on three lakes and the Eau Claire River; and oversight of thirteen floodplain properties acquired by the federal Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Program on the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers.

Programs & Services

In priority order the four department programs are the County Forest Program (includes the county forest, state funded county forest roads, and wildlife habitat improvement projects); the Parks and Recreation Areas Program (includes each of the seven parks, Tower Ridge Recreation Area, and Guettinger Woods/Wildlife Area); the Expo Center and State Funded Snowmobile and ATV/UTV Trails Program.

2015 Program Financials

EAU CLAIRE CO PARKS & FOREST DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
<u>SERVICE / PROGRAMS</u> (In priority order)	2015 (Budget) Expenses	2015 (Actual) Expenses	2015 (Budget) Revenue	2015 (Actual) Revenue	2015 Tax Levy)
County Forest/Game Mgmt/State Aid Forest Roads/State Aid Forestry	\$375,086	\$467,496	\$834,407	\$1,367,014	\$0
Parks	\$763,441	\$731,218	\$299,741	\$345,805	\$0
Exposition Center	\$123,070	\$120,855	\$80,739	\$84,560	\$50,000
Snowmobile/ATV Trails	\$332,647	\$373,977	\$332,647	\$201,453	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,594,244	\$1,693,546	\$1,547,534	\$1,998,832	\$50,000

Parks & Forest Performance Management Summary – 2015

	Actual	Levy	FTE's
#1 COUNTY FOREST/FOREST ROAD AIDS/WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT/STATE AID FOREST ROADS	\$467,496	\$0	4.00

To provide county owned natural resources for public use including timber management, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities, and to manage under the County Forest 15 Year Management Plan and in accordance with Chapter 28.11 Wisconsin Statutes.

<u>Performance Goal</u>	<u>Outcome Measures</u>	<u>Bench mark</u>	<u>FY13</u>	<u>FY14</u>	<u>FY15</u>
Meet annual allowable cut goals as established by DNR standards	Goals will be met annually for sales establishment	100%	100%	100%	100%
Compliance checks on active timber sales	100% of all timber sales will have contract compliance checks annually	100%	100%	100%	100%
Utilization of available grant funding for wildlife habitat projects	Wildlife projects will utilize 100% of grant funds available annually	100%	100%	100%	100%
Complete wildlife projects within grant time allotments	100% of projects will be completed within time allotments	100%	100%	100%	100%
Utilize state aid for forest road maintenance and maintain roads within state standards	100% of all county forest roads will pass state inspection	100%	100%	100%	100%
Outputs	Sales Established		20	20	21
	Timber Revenue received		\$431,235	\$1,462,810	\$1,451,558
	Acres of Wildlife openings maintained		38	38	38
	Miles of forest road passing annual state standards		17.94	17.94	17.94
	Acres of newly established reproduction areas for various species (through oak scarification)		47.5	60	132

Parks & Forest Performance Management Summary – 2015

#2 COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS	Actual	Levy	FTE's
	\$731,218	\$0	5.00

To provide, develop, and maintain high quality park and recreation facilities to meet public recreation demand

<u>Performance Goal</u>	<u>Outcome Measures</u>	<u>Bench mark</u>	<u>FY13</u>	<u>FY14</u>	<u>FY15</u>	
Public satisfaction in use of park and recreation facilities	95% of customers will report being satisfied with park visit on surveys	95%	100%	100%	100%	
Continued level of public use	1. All campsites will be utilized on weekends-	64%	78%	72%	74%	
	2. Maintain number of shelter/clubhouse/chalet reservations	100%	100%	100%	94%	
Compliance of vendor contracts	100% of contractual services will meet contract specifications (garbage, septic, ice)	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Outputs	Total camping reservations - Coon Fork		1014	1002	1168	
	Total camping nights - regular season		5143	5173	5221	
	Total off-season camping nights		237	225	349	
	Camping revenue - Coon Fork		\$79,372	\$80,461	\$81,966	
	Camping revenue - Harstad		\$4,298	\$6,357	\$5,385	
	Reservation Totals for Shelter and Clubhouse		148	165	155	
	Lake Altoona Clubhouse/shelter		56/37	54/32	48/33	
	Lake Eau Claire Clubhouse/shelter		22/24	31/28	33/21	
	Coon Fork Picnic Shelter		4	4	1	
	Harstad Park Picnic Shelter		1	2	1	
	Tower Ridge Chalet		4	12	14	
	Lowes Creek Picnic Shelter		0	2	4	
	Total Net Revenue for Reservations			\$20,995	\$23,174	\$25,548
	Total Net Equipment Rental Revenue			\$6,705	\$6,478	\$7,126

Parks & Forest Performance Management Summary – 2015

#3 Exposition Center	Actual	Levy	FTE's
	\$120,855	\$50,000	1.0

The Exposition Center is a multi-purpose 28-acre site for public and private use that enhances local recreational, educational and commercial endeavors. The Exposition Center is one of the only sites in the area that can host large events. It is a cost competitive site for the benefit of businesses, constituent user groups and citizens throughout the region.

OUTPUTS

	2013	2014	2015
Revenue generated for buildings/grounds/equipment rentals:	\$36,311	\$31,099	\$51,397
Revenue generated for winter storage:	\$17,660	\$21,534	\$10,650
Community attendance at Expo Center paid events (estimated):	22,000	22,000	22,000

<u>Performance Goal</u>	<u>Outcome Measures</u>	<u>Bench mark</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Maximize occupancy of rental space in the barns for winter storage vehicles (Oct thru April)	Amount of space filled at the end of the winter storage let-in date	95%	85%	100%	100%
Maximize rental occupancy of the Expo Center during the rental season (April – Oct)	Number of weekday rentals Number of weekend day rentals	50%	41%	26%	25%
		90%	76%	68%	57%

#4 STATE FUNDED SNOWMOBILE & ATV/UTV TRAILS	Actual	Levy	FTE's
	\$373,977	\$0	0.35

Provide and maintain high quality state-funded snowmobile and ATV/UTV trails on county and private land.

Performance Goal

<u>Performance Goal</u>	<u>Outcome Measures</u>	<u>Bench mark</u>	<u>FY13</u>	<u>FY14</u>	<u>FY15</u>
Apply for both Snowmobile and ATV/UTV program to DNR (by April 15 deadline)	100% of applications will be submitted by deadline	100%	100%	100%	100%
Submit expenses annually for grant claim by December 31.	100% of claims will be in to DNR by deadline	100%	100%	100%	100%
All trails to meet state standards and pass inspections	100% of trail mileage will be maintained within state standards	100%	100%	100%	100%

Totals	Actual	Levy	FTE's
	\$1,149,840	\$50,000	10.35

Program Activities

Manage high quality recreation areas to satisfy public demand and raise revenues from user fees and timber sales. Utilize 100% state aid for operations of Snowmobile and All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trails.

Continue timely revenue collection in field and deposits to Treasurer's Office. Establish timber sales on the forest within DNR annual allowable cut standards and manage timber sale contracts and operations including applying interest penalty for overdue timber payments.

Improve wildlife habitat on the forest and maintain 17.94 miles of county forest road to town road standards utilizing state aid.

Utilization and recruitment of Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail agreements with organizations, and other volunteers to assist with litter pick up and minor maintenance in parks and forest areas.

Continue utilizing information technology to disseminate department information.

Highlights of Accomplishments

- Purchase of 77 acres of new county forest land (Meteor Timber), through utilization of Knowles-Nelson Motorized Stewardship grant program.
- Built grooming shed/waxing area/ disc golf storage building at Tower Ridge Recreation Area.
- Began work on the Lake Altoona Dam project, with funding assistance from the Municipal Dam grant program.
- Replacement of aging backhoe with a new to us model. Addressing one of several aging equipment needs.
- Secured Sustainable Forestry Grant and partnering with Beaver Creek Reserve to conduct a Bio-blitz on county forest.
- Timber sale revenues were again near record high numbers with markets remaining strong and plenty of logging activity on the county forest.
- Successful application, award, and implementation of several ATV and snowmobile trail rehab/bridge projects that will help maximize trail riding conditions for all trail users.
- Conducted disc trenching and spraying on 90 acres of replanting sites on the county forest.

Challenges

Dealing with decreased levels of DNR funding and assistance for forest management. Several DNR assisted programs are in danger of losing significant amounts of funding. These gaps will need to be made up by the county.

Minimize user conflicts while maintaining quality outdoor recreation facilities for all user groups. The public demand for usage of trails for special events has increased considerably over the past years, especially at Lowes Creek Park.

Department heavy equipment such as dozer and grader are aging and will need to be upgraded in the future. County board approval has been gained to replace our flatbed truck and we will need to replace another key piece of equipment again in 2017.

Maintaining the highest possible quality recreation areas in a cost effective manner within budget and staff limitations; being proactive and innovative in satisfying public demand for recreation opportunities within budget constraints; continued frequent illegal dumping of tires, appliances, building debris, and household garbage on the forest with cleanup and proper disposal at department time and expense.

Constant need to repair our high risk/high hazard dams at Lake Altoona and Lake Eau Claire.