

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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Rev. 10/12/20

CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

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900 RECREATION

Recreation is an integral part of the management of the Price County Forest and recreation uses are referenced in most of the previous chapters. Due to the tremendous growth in recreational demands over the duration of the last planning period, this Plan recognizes the importance of more intensive recreational planning and emphasizes its importance with a separate chapter.

905 PLANNING

In addition to this Plan, the Price County Outdoor Recreation Plan also guides the recreation program. This plan is revised every five years and is made part of this Plan. The Price County Outdoor Recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It incorporates snowmobile and ATV plans, campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan, Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), public input, and other local or regional planning documents will be used as resources in recreational planning and development efforts. The responsibility for recreational planning, development and maintenance on the County Forest will rest with the Committee.

910 AUTHORITY

The Price *County Code of Ordinances* and s.28.11 Wis. Stats, authorize the Price *County Forestry, Parks and Recreation Committee* to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the County Forest Plan (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. This mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes environmental damage.

Maps of the recreational facilities managed through the Price County Forest program are appended or referenced in Chapter 1000.

915 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES

The Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for establishing entrance, camping and other user fees on recreational facilities maintained by the County Forest. Camping, entrance or other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by (*similar private facilities, other adjacent counties*) and are subject to periodic change by the Committee. Fees, where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities. Detailed information on park or recreation area use regulations can be found in the Price County Parks and Forests Ordinance.

920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of the Plan, the County contracts for the following services

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance
2. ATV trail grading and maintenance
3. Park and Campground Caretaking
4. Others as appropriate

925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance are required. No permits for sale of malt or intoxicating beverages will be issued on the County Forest. Permits will not be issued for cabin sites on the forest

930 UNDESIGNATED RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

Undesignated recreation includes those informal activities for which the County Generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, biking, hiking and others. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with ordinance. The Forest Administrator and the

Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

930.1 HUNTING

The entire County Forest is open for regulated hunting, except for areas developed for high public use, such as all county parks and campgrounds. The Price County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance. In general, the following activities are regulated: Temporary hunting stands and elevated stands are permissible from one week prior to the first big game season of the year until one week after the last deer season. The use of nails, lag screws, screw steps, or other damaging devices is not permitted. No permanent type structures shall be permitted.

930.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for fishing unless otherwise listed in state and county regulations.

930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities is allowed. The Price County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. All litter, trash or rubbish must be removed
2. Cutting or harvesting vegetation is not permitted
3. Fires may not be left unattended unless the ground is 100% snow covered

930.4 DISPERSED CAMPING

A permit is required to camp outside of developed campgrounds on the Price County Forest.

1. No littering or site destruction will be tolerated.
2. The Forestry and Parks Committee will set the permit fee.
3. Maximum permit period is 14 days.

4. Natural vegetation and terrain may not be damaged or altered in any way, except for the construction of an adequate fire ring. Fasteners such as nails, screws or bolts may not be attached to trees.
5. Manufactured materials (lumber, concrete, plastics, etc.) may not be left on the site when it is vacated. No trees or other vegetation, either native or exotic, may be planted on the site.

930.5 MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The Price County Code of Ordinances (and road and access plan if applicable) regulates motorized uses on the County Forest. The full text of these regulations is included in Chapter 700.

930.6 OTHER USES

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed with the County Code of Ordinances. The County Board may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the forest should damage begin to occur from other uses.

935 DESIGNATED RECREATION AREAS/USES

Designated recreation includes those uses for which the County provides a trail or facility. The Price County Forest has developed sites and areas to accommodate a high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Committee and Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for recreation facilities. Price County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities.

935.1 CAMPGROUNDS

1. Solberg Lake County Park & Campgrounds

This park is a 35-acre peninsula extending into Solberg Lake and is located just north of Phillips. It is one of the premier day-use areas and campgrounds in northern Wisconsin.

There is a beach on the southernmost point surrounded by red pine. This park can accommodate RVs, trailers, tent trailers, and tents. The campground typically fills up early on weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and on the week of July 4th.

Facilities include: 60 camp sites w/electrical hookups, 2 flush toilet/shower buildings, open air shelter with electricity, sanitary dump station, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, caretaker on site (Memorial Day through Labor Day), sites have picnic table and a fire ring, sand beach, playground equipment, firewood provided, paved road & parking area, picnic area, tables & grills, paved boat ramp, boat dock, fishing pier, pressure water (mid-May through mid-September) and nature/hiking, snowmobile and ATV trails.

2. Smith Lake County Park & Campground

This 300-acre park is located southwest of Park Falls. It consists of the forest and lakefront property surrounding Smith Lake, part of the Flambeau River, plus 2 canoe-in campsites. There is ATV trail access to the Tuscobia State Trail via the county ATV trail and Omaha road and also access to the Park Falls Tuscobia Trailhead County Park. This campground can accommodate RVs, trailers, tent trailers, and tents.

Facilities include: 30-unit campground (all with electrical hookups year round), sanitary dump station, open air shelter with electricity, provided firewood, picnic area, tables & grills, ATV trail access, vaulted toilets, paved road & parking area, boat landing, boat dock, shower/flush toilet building, pressure water (mid-May through mid-September), fishing, hiking trail, and a sand beach.

3. Big Falls County Park & Campground

This 88-acre (15 acres of scenic river-edge) park is located in the southwest corner of Price County along the South Fork of the Jump River. Flanked by tall white and red pine, the Jump River cascades around huge granite rocks and provides viewers with a “wild river” environment. This park can accommodate trailers, tent trailers, and tents.

Facilities include: 6-unit campground (no electricity, open year-round), picnic tables, grills, fire pit (with firewood provided), well-hand pump, open air shelter (no electricity), vaulted toilets, surfaced road & parking area, swing sets, horseshoe pits, volleyball area, hiking trail along the falls area, and fishing.

935.2 PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS

Picnic areas open to the public include:

1. Solberg Lake County Park
2. Big Falls County Park
3. Smith Lake County Park
4. Tuscobia Trailhead County Park
5. Timm's Hill County Park
6. Wisconsin Concrete Park

935.3 SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES

Designated swimming areas include:

1. Solberg Lake County Park
2. Timm's Hill County Park
3. Smith Lake County Park

Lifeguards are not provided at these areas.

935.4 BOAT LANDINGS

Several boat landings, canoe landings, and adjacent roads currently provide water access on the Forest primarily for recreational activities.

The existing water access points will be maintained to provide a place to launch a small fishing boat or canoe. Not all watercraft will be able to use these access points. These landings are built for public use and not for private boat mooring sites. Mooring or storing boats for longer than 24 hours is prohibited.

935.4.1 Public Boat Access Sites Maintained by Price County Forest

The following public boat access sites have been developed on the Price County Forest and are open to public use:

1. East Solberg Lake Boat Landing
2. Squaw Creek Boat Landing
3. Disappearing Creek Boat Landing

4. Solberg Lake Park Boat Landing
5. Timms Hill – Bass Lake Boat Landing
6. Smith Lake Boat Landing

935.5.1 RIFLE RANGE

- Cranberry Creek Rifle Range - Includes a 25-, 50- and 100-yard target.

940 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trail systems that accommodate a fair degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

940.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Price County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape.

It is the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

940.1.1 Hiking Trails

940.1.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs closing an area.

940.1.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

1. Solberg Nature Trail
2. Timm's Hill Hiking Trails
3. Big Falls Trails
4. Fork's Trail
5. Smith Lake Trails
6. Tuscobia Trailhead Trails
7. Pine Line (summer only)
8. Timm's Hill National Trail

One National Scenic Hiking and Backpacking Trail is present on the Price County Forest. The Timm's Hill National Trail crosses the Forest in section 11 of the Town of Hill. The trail is both a national and state scenic trail and connects to the Ice Age Trail. It is intended to provide a high quality rustic walking experience across Wisconsin.

940.1.2 Mountain Bike/Fat Tire/Bicycle Trails

- Undesignated Bicycle Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use may be restricted in specific areas if use causes erosion or other environmental damages.

- Designated Bicycle Trails - Pine Line (summer only)

940.1.3 Equestrian Trails

- Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for horseback trail riding. Off-trail riding within 50 feet of rivers, streams, or lakes is not permitted except when

watering horses. Use may be restricted in specific areas if use causes erosion or other environmental damages.

- Designated Horseback Riding Trails
 1. Holy Cross Trail System
 2. Timm's Hill National Trail
 3. Solberg Lake Trail
 4. Pine Line Trail

940.1.4 Ski Trails

- Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing on groomed snowmobile trails is not permitted due to serious safety concerns.

- Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails
 1. Holy Cross
 2. Squaw Creek
 3. Timm's Hill

Three regularly groomed ski trails are available for public use on the Forest and are maintained for public skiing. Flambeau Nordic Ski Club has agreed to maintain the Holy Cross and the Squaw Ski Trails. The High Point Ski Club has agreed to maintain the Timm's Hill Ski Trail. Motorized vehicle use is not permitted on these two trail systems without authorization.

940.1.5 Other Non-motorized Use

Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including, but not limited to, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and hunting on foot are permitted on all trails except where otherwise posted as closed.

940.2 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

940.2.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Designated snowmobile trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Zoning Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Price County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs.

940.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

Designated ATV Trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. These may lie on County, private, or other agency lands. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance: Southern Price County, Northwoods Range Rovers, Prentice Bushbenders and the Price County Snowmobile Association.

There are numerous types of designated ATV trail managed by Price County. These trails are further identified in the appendix.

940.2.2.1 Trail Types

The County recognizes several different classifications of ATV trail. Maps are appended for reference.

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – Some of the state funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. There are approximately 135.4 miles of winter funded ATV trail managed by Price County, with 25.4 miles on County Forest lands.

2. Funded Summer ATV Trails – these are trail systems funded for only summer use. There are approximately 1.3 miles of summer use ATV trails managed by the County with 0 miles on the County Forest.
3. Funded Year-Round Trails – these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are approximately 15.8 miles of year-round funded ATV trails managed by Price County with 15.8 miles on the County Forest.
4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV's, or side by sides, can be allowed on ATV trail systems. Price County allows for UTV's on all of the funded trails within the County.
5. Funded Troute/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after August 1, 2012 allow for partial funding under the following categories:
 - a. County Forest Gas Tax Roads – These are gas tax roads used as a connector to trails or services and are funded at a rate determined by the full per mile funding rate, less gas tax funding rate, not to exceed 50% of the full maintenance funding rate. Price County maintains 2.78 miles of County Forest Road Routes.

940.2.2.2 ATV Trail Maintenance

Price County signs maintenance agreements with the clubs listed above to maintain the ATV trail system. The County shall inspect and monitor trails, bridges and other infrastructure and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace improvements or rehabilitate trail surfaces or bridges as needed.

940.2.2.3 Future ATV Trails

The use and popularity of ATV's and UTV's increased dramatically over the period of the 2006-2020 County Forest Plan. Increased usage of trail systems proved a tremendous need for much higher levels of trail maintenance in order to manage environmental damages.

Adding ATV trails should be done as part of larger planning effort that incorporates considerations for impact on other users and user groups; how future trail systems will be maintained; and impact on the natural resources. New ATV trail systems will only be considered with the following framework:

- Trails should be designed and planned to connect communities
- Loop trails will be discouraged unless part of a larger trail system that connects communities
- Dead end trails will not be sanctioned as part of the County ATV trail system
- Intensive use areas will not be permitted

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in such a way as to prevent erosion and soil loss. Trails must be developed to sustainably. For the purpose of this plan, sustainability is defined as follows:

Sustainability – For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails should be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal.

To this end, the construction and development of new ATV trails are to comply with the WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards, which is appended to this Plan.

940.2.3 Designated Motorcycle Trails

ATV Trails located on the County Forest are open to motorcycle use.

940.2.4 Other Designated Motor Vehicle Trails

Other motorized recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited on those trails designated for other recreational uses or where trails are rocked, bermed, gated or otherwise blocked. Cross-country use of the forest for motorized use is also prohibited.

940.3 RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS

940.3.1 Storm Water Discharge

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre or more of land will require a Storm Water Discharge Permit. There have been instances of inconsistent application of permit requirements statewide. In order to further define the County's understanding and implementation of permit requirements, the following current acceptable process will be used for determining when a permit is needed.

- The 1-acre threshold will be determined by measuring/estimating new disturbance or disturbance of previously grassed surfaces.
- Periodic grading of impervious or non-grassed trail surfaces is not considered disturbance.
- Restoration of water filtration/diversion devices, such as sediment traps or catch basins is considered maintenance and not disturbance
- Reconstruction of previously grassed ditch lines as part of trail rehabilitation is considered disturbance.

940.3.2 Chapter 30

Permits are required for bridges or culvert crossings of navigable waterways. These permits will either be classified as general or individual depending on specific site conditions. These permits are not required for culvert or bridge crossings of non-navigable or intermittent streams, nor are they required to install a clear span bridge over wetlands.

940.3.3 Wetland Fill

Permits are required at any time that fill is placed in a wetland. Permits are available to fill small wetlands for recreation trail purposes. Wetland fill must be less than 10,000 square feet and the permit does not require wetland mitigation. Clear span bridge and boardwalks placed on pilings generally do not require a wetland fill permit. Puncheon style bridges do require a permit.

945 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS

945.1 RECREATION AREA FUNDING

The County relies on outside funding for most recreation improvements. Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of competition for these funds.

945.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

945.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At this time, there is very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance. The County mainly relies on volunteers and grants for funding these activities.

945.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs. Price County utilizes the following funding sources (rates as of 10/12/20):

1. Snowmobile Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile
4. UTV Maintenance - \$200/mile
5. UTV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile
6. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
7. ATV Development - 100% grants