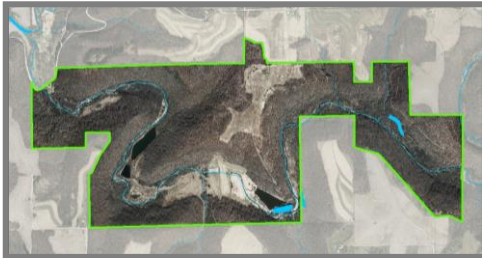


Vernon County Forest 2020 Annual Work Plan

Introduction:



Duck Egg (Compartment 1)

696 acre tract in Jefferson Township. It is located 10 miles west of Viroqua south of Irish Ridge Road. This compartment is used for timber management, horse-riding, hiking, hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Kooyumjian – Lost Creek (Compartment 2)

119 acre tract in Union Township. It is located off Pine Avenue, South of County Highway 82, between La Farge and Hillsboro. In the fall of 2002, Tom Kooyumjian Family donated 112 acres of their Certified Tree Farm to Vernon County for addition into the County Forest. This compartment is used for timber management, hiking, hunting, fishing and trapping.



Esofea – Rentz (Compartment 3)

199 acre tract in Jefferson Township, 9 miles northwest of Viroqua off of County Road B. This compartment is used for timber management, day-use recreation, camping, hiking, hunting and fishing.

Sidie Hollow (Compartment 4)

512 acre tract in Jefferson & Franklin Townships, 3 miles southwest of Viroqua off County Road XX. This compartment is used for timber management, day-use recreation, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting and mountain biking.



Jersey Valley (Compartment 5)

A 363 acre tract located in Christiana & Clinton Townships, 4 miles northeast of Westby on County Highway X. This compartment is used for timber management, day-use recreation, fishing, hiking, hunting and mountain biking.

References:

15-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan: Implement, amend, and update County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan to reflect ordinance, boundary, and policy changes as needed.

- Plan will need revising in 2019-2020 to submit to County Board by October of 2020.

Parks and Forest Ordinance: Continue to update and administer ordinance including illegal tree stands, unauthorized ATV use, illegal dumping, and other applicable regulations related to the Vernon County Parks & Forest Ordinance.

Timber Sale Administration:

Timber sale administration consists of visits to the active timber sale site to scale cut products and assess harvest progress, constraints and damage. We currently have two sold timber sales that will need site visits for log scaling, logger contacts, and other various activities in 2020. It is also important to note Vernon County's triennial audit of the county forest is set to occur in 2020.

Sold Timber Sales:

The sales listed below are sold timber sales. Timber sales usually have a two year contract period with revenue expected over the duration of the contract.

Comp.	Stand #	Tract #	Acres	Buyer	Contract Exp. Date
Duck Egg	25, 27, 8	3-18	37	Rockbridge Sawmill	4-1-20
Jersey Valley	3,1,14	1-18	20	Stan Niemyjski	4/1/21
Total			57		

Timber Sale Planning & Establishment:

Vernon County Forest has an allowed annual harvest of 40 acres. Our current situation allows us to exceed our goal and complete needed actions on many of our overdue stands. Page three contains a table which represents stands that have a potential for harvest in 2020.

Planned Timber Sales for Establishment in 2020:

Compartment Name	Stand(s) #:	Acres
Duck Egg	1,2,3	74
Sidie Hollow	1,2,3,5,7	122
Total		196

Other Revenue:

Firewood: Firewood permits are issued when requested. The cost in 2020 will be \$15/cord. There will be a maximum limit of 2 cords per family for personal use.

Forest Reconnaissance (Recon):

Data for each stand shall be updated every 20 years, accomplished by collecting data on a minimum of 95 acres (5% of total county forest acreage) per year. A goal has been set to conduct recon at least 10% of our total acreage every year in order to keep up with our 20 year minimum on individual stands.

We have also created a system to include stands not “due” for reconnaissance focusing on individual areas with aging oak with high volume. We have started this project in order to confirm, dismiss, or clean old data. Data received from these stands, set to be collected in 2020, will be our derivative for new timber sales and will be reflected in our harvest planning.

Stands for Recon Update in 2020 (20 year update requirement):

Compartment	Stand	Last Exam Year	Acres
Sidie Hollow	2	2006	108
Sidie Hollow	3	2006	4
Sidie Hollow	4	2006	3
Sidie Hollow	5	2006	11
Sidie Hollow	6	2006	2
Sidie Hollow	7	2006	15
Sidie Hollow	8	2006	38
Sidie Hollow	9	2006	49
Total			230
Percentage of Total			12.5%

Timber Stand Improvement (TSI):

Due to poor to lacking pulp markets and invasive species issues, timber stand improvement (TSI) is often necessary surrounding timber sales in Vernon County. TSI removes pre-commercial and less desirable trees & shrubs to create more growing space for desirable crop trees and regeneration. Develop plan for stands 28, 29, 30, 32 (39 acres) at Duck Egg.

Pruning: Pruning is needed in tree plantations to improve quality of future crop trees.

- 5 acres (stand 39) at Duck Egg will be pruned in late 2019-2020.

Prescribed Fire: Vernon County Forest is equipped with basic prescribed burning equipment, necessary for implementation of grassland and woodland burns. Prescribed burning in grassland situations will be used to maintain and periodically refresh grassland habitat. In prescribed woodland burns, fire will fulfill several objectives, including but not limited to: seedbed preparation, invasive species control and controlling stand composition.

- DNR staff may be available to assist in conducting prescribed burns.
- Post-harvest potential for Rx burn on stand 1 in Jersey Valley for site preparation prior to establishment of supplemental planting.
- Post-harvest Rx burn will occur in the eastern portion of stand 25 of our Duck Egg Compartment in spring of 2020

Reforestation / Afforestation:

- Will plant a minimum of 1 acre with left-over seedlings from the county tree sale program.
- Develop afforestation plan for Stand 1 (4 acres) at Jersey Valley Harvest set to occur 2019-2020.
- Biological control will continue to be a part of our efforts to control invasive species. This project is still in the trial phase, results will be monitored to verify validity of this system.

Forest Protection:

- Firebreaks will be maintained around all tree plantations and grasslands.
- Acquire signage for posting about firewood movement and the insect/disease spread risk.

Maintenance of Equipment & Facilities:

County Forest Roads: Roads within the “lookout” sale in our Duck Egg compartment will be rehabilitated after use in 2020. Maintain forest access roads as needed in 2020.

Timber Access Roads: Development of logging roads will occur as needed in conjunction with timber sale establishment. Focus will be on limiting the amount needed and finding low-cost means of installation.

Facilities: County forest equipment is stored within the metal shed at Esofea County Park. Possibility to add water access to exterior of Forestry shop in 2020. Maintain facility as needed throughout 2020.

Wildlife Management Activities:

Nickel-an-acre fund: This is a small fund in Vernon County, and use in 2019 will depend on needs surrounding other habitat projects. Funds must be utilized within three years of allocation.

Land Purchase/Sales/Exchanges:

As property within the established blocking boundaries or other areas possessing special and/or unique values are offered for donation or sale, the DNR Forest Liaison, County Forest Administrator and Land Conservation Committee will assess the merit of county ownership.

- New addition to Vernon County has been added in early 2019 (Mckibbin Acquisition, Hanson Acquisition). Finalize all payment requests by end of 2019.
- A 1.6 acre parcel of land adjacent to Sidie Hollow has been considered for donation which will improve access from Co. Hwy. X..

County Forest Boundaries: Complete re-survey of Sidie Hollow & Jersey Valley properties boundaries completed in 2017 showed many discrepancies with the assumed boundary line.

- Legal work to correct discrepancies began in 2018 but will be an ongoing process in 2020.

Withdrawal: No current withdrawals have been discussed at this time.

Entry: Applications for all land acquisitions occurring in 2019 have been sent and will be finalized by the start of 2020.

Miscellaneous County Forest Activities:

Professional Development: Attend necessary Wisconsin County Forest Association (WCFA) meetings to stay up to date with issues facing the County Forest Program. Attend DNR sponsored and other trainings where applicable.

Public Outreach: Participation and assistance with local landowner groups and provide forestry instruction to school groups when requested.

- Vernon County is in the process of creating a non-profit organization to benefit our parks, and forests. Volunteer members are finishing up paperwork to be a certified 501(c)(3). This group will help to maintain trails and other recreation based amenities within our five forested compartments.

Grants and Funding:

County Forest Project Loan: Vernon County received a \$730,000 Project Loan from DNR in 2014 to conduct land acquisitions. It has been discussed that \$182,500 remains in our open account and a portion of this will be utilized in our prospective acquisitions. The funds remaining after these acquisitions will have to be returned to the state by start of 2020.

County Forest Sustainable Forestry Grant:

- Vernon County received a \$20,000 grant in 2017 to conduct inventory/analysis and write a management plan for terrestrial invasive species. Due to unforeseen events involving our contractor, an extension has been awarded and work will be completed for this grant by May of 2020. All SFG grants over two years old are in question and funding for these projects may be limited.
- Vernon County received a \$9,382 grant in 2019 for supplemental regeneration for stand 25 in our Duck Egg compartment. Site preparation, and planting efforts will be completed in 2020.

Conservation Aid Grant: Vernon County was awarded a \$4,000 grant to construct a timber access road in stand 2 and stand 3 in our Duck Egg compartment. Grant contract period will last until June 30th of 2020. These efforts will allow for a timber sale to start in 2020.

County Forest Road Aids: Will investigate acquiring County Forest Road designation where appropriate to obtain County Forest Road Aids.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant: No prospective applications will occur in 2020. Vernon County was awarded a \$108,000 grant in 2019, all items should be completed by start of 2020.

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Grant: Vernon County Forest Administrator has applied for a \$12,000 grant in 2019 to convert crop fields in Esofea's new addition into a tree plantation and a native prairie site.

National Wild Turkey Federation – Superfund Grant: Will apply in 2020 to create/improve turkey habitat on the County Forest.

Ruffed Grouse Society – Drummer Fund: Will apply in 2020 to receive funding for creating/improve ruffed grouse habitat on the County Forest.

Vernon County Forest 2020 Annual Work Plan

Signatures for Approval

Nick Gilman, Vernon County Forest Administrator
Land & Water Conservation Department

Date

Christine Walroth, Vernon County Liaison Forester
Wisconsin DNR Forestry Division

Date

Mike Finlay, Richland Center Forestry Team Leader
Wisconsin DNR Forestry Division

Date

Aaron Young, Dodgeville Area Forestry Leader
Wisconsin DNR Forestry Division

Date

_____, Southwest District Forestry Leader
Wisconsin DNR Forestry Division

Date