



Peshigo River State Forest 2007 Annual Report



PRSF Annual

Meeting

• March 19th, 2008,
Stephenson Town
Hall, 6:30 pm - 8:30

2007 in Review

2005 was our first annual report, and we called 2005 a “historic year, one of many to come.” Well, we are also calling 2007 a historic year, as our Master Plan was completed and approved by the Natural Resources

Board in September 2007. This was a major accomplishment for the master planning team, and you can read more about the plan in the article on the back page.

The state forest staff stays busy year round dealing with a variety of issues, such as forest management, maintenance, law enforcement, and visitor services. You can read further about these

issues throughout this report. Please join us for our Annual Meeting on March 19th, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at the Stephenson Town Hall where you can hear our recap of 2007 and plans for 2008 in person.

The state forest would not be able to function without it’s seasonal staff. Paul Craney, Jim Lentz, and Joni Norris returned to work with us on property maintenance. We welcomed Ryan Bieganski as a state forest ranger who did law enforcement patrols as well as property maintenance. Nick Jensen, Bruce Henderson, and Shane Staudenmaier worked on forest management. Jack Blohm and Nikki

Hoyer were new faces that worked in the office as visitor services associates. Dan Mertz is the forest manager and Sara Pearson is the ranger / assistant property manager. In addition, we work side by side with the Gov. Thompson State Park (GTSP) staff and thank them for help: Maggie Kailhofer, park manager; Nate Starch, park ranger, and Mindy Gruszynski, visitor services associate.

The following pages will share what we accomplished during 2007. Comments on property operations are always welcome. We value your input concerning the management of the state forest.



Canoeing on Caldron Falls Flowage

Real Estate Issues

71 acres was purchased for the state forest in 2007 in Section 1, Township 33N, Range 18 E. Current acreage to the state forest is now 12,492 acres of land and water. Land is only purchased from willing sellers. If you are interested in selling your land, or have more questions on this topic, please contact Dan Mertz at the forest office.

Each year, the DNR makes a payment to all municipalities where

there is DNR land. This program is called the “Payment in lieu of taxes” and the payments are equal to the property taxes that would have been paid had the land remained in private ownership. To find out how much your local municipality received in taxes, or for more information on this program, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/realestate/pilt.html> Here are 2007 payments, and they include PRSF and GTSP land:

Town of Stephenson

\$668,820.81

Town of Silver Cliff

\$39,058.90

Town of Porterfield

\$50,148.01

Town of Lakewood

\$35,619.98

Forest Management Update

Now that the master plan for the forest has been completed, forest management activities will become more evident.

Areas are continuously being evaluated and prepared for harvest. The stumpage will be sold primarily to loggers who live and work in Marinette County, thereby supporting the local economy. About 79 acres of stumpage was sold in 2007 and approximately 780 acres is planned to be sold in 2008. To help accomplish this work, foresters are hired, usually for 6 month periods. In 2007 and 2008, foresters Shane Staudenmaier, Nick Jensen, and Bruce Henderson worked on the forest.

The areas where timber harvesting will be conducted in the next few years are: Duch Lane, Boat Landings 1 and 2, the area between Boat Landing 1 and the High Falls Dam, the area south of Johnson Falls Dam, the west side of the Seymour Rapids, the Kirby Hills, the northeast portion of the Fly Fishing Area, Potato Rapids Road, and River Drive (at Potato Rapids Flowage). These harvest areas are usually a mixture of red pine plantations which

will be thinned to promote larger, healthier trees, and areas which contain



A stand of cedars near Johnson Falls

overmature, unhealthy trees which should have been clearcut at least 20 years ago. These old scrub oak and aspen trees are losing their ability to regenerate,

therefore these stands are clearcut in fall and winter when the trees are dormant, so that they have the best chance of sprouting from the roots and stumps in spring. In this manner, stands of young, scrub oak and aspen will be created for wildlife habitat and future forest production.

Some areas which are brushy and growing only sparse scrub oak trees, will receive special treatment so that they can be planted to red or jack pine trees. The loggers will harvest these

areas removing all trees, including the tree tops, so that the area is clean for tree planting. A herbicide may be applied to kill brush and then pine trees will be planted. A master plan goal is to convert about 10% of the forest acreage to red and jack pines.

All timber sales are carefully evaluated in the establishment phase to be sure that the preferred prescription is being applied, water quality and aesthetics are being considered, endangered resources are being protected, and wildlife habitat is being provided. Timber harvested from state forests is "certified" which means that we are growing recurring crops of timber and making all of the above mentioned ecological considerations in addition to meeting the needs of society. Forest certification helps Wisconsin remain competitive in global markets that increasingly demand certified raw materials.

For more specific information regarding timber harvesting on the state forest, contact the forest manager, Dan Mertz.

Gypsy Moth Update

The Gypsy Moth population made a surprise comeback in the spring of 2007, and the 2008 population is expected to be high. The reason that this is surprising is that it has been only 5 years since the last severe outbreak, and it was predicted that there would be about 10 years between high population levels. The explanation may be that the Town of Stephenson is particularly good Gypsy Moth habitat, with its abundant acreage of scrub oak forests.

In response to this outbreak, three areas of the Peshtigo River State Forest will be aerially sprayed in May 2008. This spraying will occur as part of the overall spray program that is sponsored by Marinette County. The spraying is most effective in spring when the scrub oak leaves first begin to develop and the gypsy moth caterpillars are immature and

most vulnerable to the bacteria which is sprayed on the trees for the caterpillars to eat.

The three areas on the forest to be sprayed are the Stephenson Town Park (37 acres), the Boat Landing 3 area (37 acres), and a timber harvest area in the northeast part of the Fly Fishing Area (124 acres). The town park is a high recreational use area with lots of scrub oak trees, therefore it is considered to be worthy of protection from defoliation. Likewise, the Boat Landing 3 area will become a high recreation use area in the future when it becomes a day use area according to the state forest master plan. The timber harvest area mentioned above,



Gypsy moths defoliated this burr oak

will be sprayed, not because of its recreational use, but because the area is scheduled to be harvested next winter, and it is desired to keep the oak trees healthy so they can regenerate. For these special reasons, these three areas will be sprayed. Many other areas of the forest are being defoliated by Gypsy Moths, but due to the high cost of spraying, they will not be sprayed.

Because 2008 is the second year of high Gypsy Moth populations, it is expected that the population will crash due to the build up of a virus and a fungus that kill the caterpillars. The cold temperatures this winter may also have some effect on decreasing the number of eggs that hatch this spring.

Gov. Thompson State Park Update

By Maggie Kailhofer, Park Manager

2007 was a changing year for the Gov. Thompson State Park. Thousands of visitors hiked, fished, skied, snowshoed, kayaked, canoed and power boated in the park.

The park hosted several well attended events in 2007. In June the park held its annual Open House, in September the park participated in the National Public



The new redesign of Boat Landing #13

Lands Day, and in October the park held a Fall Color Hike & Geocache Hunt. The park was heavily used for the annual 9-day deer hunt.

Visitors in 2007 welcomed the new entrance road from Ranch Road

to Woods Lake. Work began on the next section of roadway, from Woods Lake to Caldron Falls will be completed and opened to visitors in 2008. In the fall of 2007, the park's boat landing (#13) was closed for remodeling. The area was reopened in November and now has 2 new concrete boat ramps on Caldron Falls Flowage, restrooms and a paved parking area. In 2008 the boarding dock and fishing pier will be installed. Visitors can expect to see a new shelter/pavilion built at the Woods Lake picnic area also in the summer of 2008.

Currently, the park is open 6am-8pm daily. There is no overnight camping permitted at this time. Use of motorized vehicles, horses, and pedal bikes on the trails is prohibited. Visitors to the park will need to purchase either a daily or annual admission sticker at the park entrance. For more information check out our website at www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/specific/govthompson/ or call the park at 715-757-3979.

Recreation, Property Maintenance and Law Enforcement

From spring - fall, the maintenance crew keeps busy with the daily operation of the state forest. These activities include: mowing, picking up litter, and maintaining the state forest's 15 boat landings; trail maintenance such as hazardous tree removal, stump removal and brush trimming on our 8 miles of designated trails; litter pick up on the islands; and various other projects like making signs and bulletin boards, replacing and repairing gates, and repairing vandalism.

In addition, one of the biggest projects the maintenance crew worked on in 2007 was the operation of Old Veteran's Lake Campground. Regular maintenance includes cleaning bathrooms and fire rings, and picking up litter. Some noticeable changes we did were the widening of some sites, creating 2 new parking areas, and some sign changes. In 2008, many of the fire rings will be replaced in the campground.

In the fall of 2007, Jim's Trucking from Pound was contracted to perform road repairs to Medicine Brook Road and Seymour Rapids Road. These roads had become increasingly difficult to traverse due to erosion problems. The roads were repaired just in time for the peak hunting season, and are a much smoother ride than before.

Overall visitation to the state forest appeared to be down from previous years according to staff. However, the state forest does not have an accurate system of counting it's visitors. The only place we can monitor our visitation is at Old Veteran's Lake Campground, which in 2007 recorded 370 camping permits sold, and a revenue of \$5,378.50.

During 2007, we held 1 event which was our candlelight ski on February 10, 2007. Turnout was low due to low snow cover, but a great time was had by all who attended. The state forest holds this event typically the 2nd Saturday in February each year at the Spring Rapids Trailhead.

Law Enforcement activities on the PRSF were slower than in years past, but the law enforcement team kept busy throughout the year. In 2007, had over 1,313 visitor contacts, 168 warnings were issued and 22 citations were issued. This year's citation breakdown is as follows: 3 Fishing Citations, 4 Boating Citations, 3 Snowmobile / ATV Citations, 6 Vehicle Related Citations, 1 Alcohol Citation, 5 Miscellaneous Citations.

The 3rd weekend in July (Hog Wrestling Weekend) is one of our busier weekends. This year we had additional staff from other state forests throughout the state come and assist. That weekend alone we had 10 citations and hundreds of warnings.

WI DNR

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[Peshtigo/](#)

Master Plan is Approved

After two years of hard work by a team of natural resource professionals, and with considerable public input at every phase of the process, the Master Plan for the Peshtigo River State Forest was approved by the Natural Resources Board on September 26, 2007.

The Master Plan spells out how the property will be managed, used and developed, how it will look, and the benefits it will provide. It defines the recreational uses, forestry and other land management practices in addition to other aspects of the property's future use and development. The Master Plan emphasizes the management of the forest for the next 15 years, but has implications that reach much farther into the future. It can be viewed online at http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/ttsp_pesh/pesh-alternative.htm or a copy may be viewed at the state forest office. Some highlights of the master plan are:

- The 9000+ acre forest is divided into eight land management areas. Some areas will have extensive timber harvesting, while other areas will not be harvested at all. Some sites will be planted with trees.
- The acquisition boundary of the forest has been expanded to include many thousands of acres that could potentially become part of the state forest ownership in the future.
- All existing boat landings will receive various types of improvements such as docks and vault toilets. Two landings (#3 and #9) will be renovated into day use areas.
- More camping opportunities will be offered, including an indoor group camp, island camping, and an equestrian campground.
- More hiking and cross country skiing opportunities. New mountain biking trails and 25 miles of equestrian trails.

The master plan does not include the Peshtigo River ATV Connector Trail which was proposed by many ATV enthusiasts. However, the master plan does commit the DNR to cooperating with federal and local governments, private landowners and other interested parties in a public planning process to evaluate potential future trail connectors that support a regional trail network.

Implementation of the master plan has already begun. Soon after the master plan was approved, we prioritized and selected several new recreation proposals from the master plan and began the involved process of writing projects and making cost estimates. After a project is written it must be approved and funded. Only then can the work begin on the ground. So, we ask the public to be patient. It will be several years before any new facilities proposed in the master plan are up and running. It is hoped that over the next 10 years, most of the new facilities will be built.