2018 Work Plan for the
Coulee Experimental State Forest

As a condition of forest certification state forests are required to annually provide an opportunity for the public to provide input on property activities. The Coulee Experimental State Forest (CESF) uses an online format including a synopsis of the property’s major work plan goals. Annual work goals are directly tied to the property’s master plan, which can be found online at http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/FR/FR0445.pdf

Forestry and Timber Management

The Coulee Experimental State Forest meets the highest standards for environmental quality in forestry, being certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council.

State forest timber sales are a combination of thinning and regeneration harvests. A thinning is an intermediate harvest where poorer quality trees are removed to favor higher quality future crop trees. Thinning’s on the CESF are primarily in conifer plantations, which may be thinned several times. A regeneration harvest removes the majority of overstory trees in stages or at one time. These harvests occur mostly in hardwood stands that regenerate naturally because of the harvest rather than by re-planting. These sites are thoroughly assessed by foresters in order to prescribe harvest strategies with successful regeneration results.

The following forest management activities are planned for 2018:

1. Timber sales
   - Prepare 62 acres for harvest.
   - Update forest stand data on acreage examined but not marked for harvest.
   - Administer and close-out any active timber sale and sold sales that began harvest operations in 2015, 2016 or 2017.

2. Forest reconnaissance
   - On a 20 year cycle the state forest collects information such as forest type, tree density, age, and site quality from every stand on the property. This information is used to schedule forestry practices such as timber stand improvement, thinning and regeneration harvests. In 2018 stand information will be updated on at least 5% of the entire property.

3. Site preparation
   - Use prescribed fire to control competition and establish oak regeneration on 231 acres located in the northwest corner of the property.

Recreation Management

The state forest supports a variety of day-use recreational opportunities including hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, horseback riding and nature or wildlife study. The designated cross-country ski trail is available during non-snow conditions for other uses, primarily hiking, but during snow conditions only skiing is allowed on the trail.

The following recreation management activities are planned for 2018:

- Mow the ski trail as well as undesignated primitive roads and trails
- Complete trail inspections to clear obstacles, remove hazard trees, maintain clearance and monitor invasive plant populations.
- Continue the Volunteer Agreement for grooming of XC Ski trail.
- Maintain and update trail and property signs.
Wildlife & Endangered Resources Management

Wildlife management on the state forest is integrated with most other activities to develop forest structure and suitable habitat to maintain and enhance diverse wildlife populations.

In 2018 the following wildlife and endangered resources management activities are planned:
- Administer current Farming Agreements, evaluate new crop rotations, and evaluate fields for afforestation.
- Balance early successional forest regeneration acreage within timber harvest goals.

Invasive Species Management

Invasive species pose a serious threat to the integrity of forest ecosystems by displacing native species and negatively impacting forest regeneration. The state forest completed an invasive species plan in 2007 that outlines management strategies; including mechanical, chemical and biological control.

The 2018 state forest goals for invasive species management include:
- Practice best management practices to prevent the spread of invasive species [https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Pages/InvasiveSpecies/Forestry.aspx](https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Pages/InvasiveSpecies/Forestry.aspx)
- Control Pampas Grass infestation along County II (1/2 mile south of Antony Road and County Hwy. II intersection) and adjacent to Berg Prairie SNA.
- Control invasive plants such as autumn olive, buckthorn and Japanese barberry in sensitive ecological areas, including the treatment of open-grown plants that produce large amounts of seed.
- Control any invasive plants found in stands slated for harvesting or that have been recently harvested.
- Control invasive plants along areas of high public use, with an emphasis on trails and parking lots.

Research

The CESF was originally established to provide a Driftless Area land base for forestry and watershed research conducted by the US Forest Service. Partnerships with the Forest Service, universities, forest products industry, government agencies and others have fostered a rich tradition of applied learning on the property.

In 2018 the state forest will continue to maintain research opportunities with:
- Diverse cover types representative of the Driftless Area to facilitate meaningful research to the region's landowners.
- Relationships with universities, agencies, local schools and others who wish to conduct forest land based research or educational field sessions.
- The US Forest Service 15-year lease to conduct research or related studies.
- Continue implementation and monitoring of oak wilt herbicide control study.

Comments:
Comments on the 2018 Coulee Experimental State Forest work plan should be directed to:

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Comments must be received by April 1, 2018