

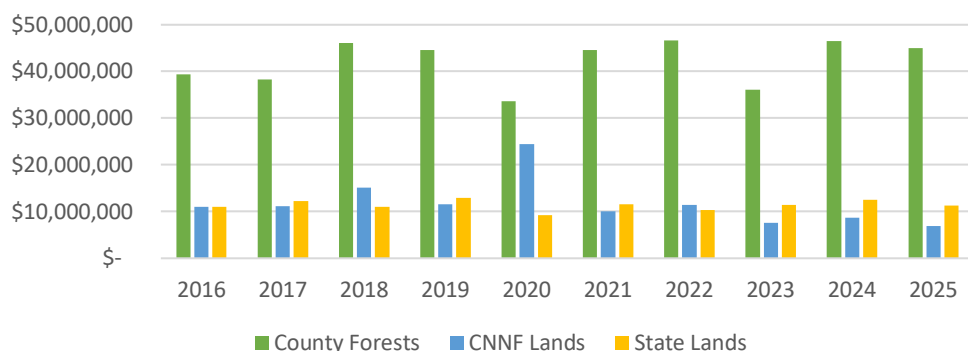
# Wisconsin County Forest System

The State legislature, in incredible foresight, created the Forest Crop Law in 1927 (precursor to the County Forest Law WI §28.11), allowing counties, and many others, to enroll acres left tax delinquent after massive logging operations and failed attempts of conversion to farmland swept through the northern ½ of Wisconsin in the early 1900's.

The number of forested acres has increased, on average, nearly 10% across all 30 member counties since 1983, contributing to the 2 million acre increase statewide over the last 50 years. Harvest levels on member county forests over the past decade have averaged over 18 million board feet and 770,000 cords per year. **Stumpage revenue in 2025 returned nearly \$45 million back to the counties and towns.**

In many counties, timber sale revenue significantly contributes to county coffers, not only funding their forestry programs, but to also supplement other departments, projects and budgets, as well as offset tax levies. Additionally, harvest revenue provides funding for the vast amount of outdoor recreational amenities enjoyed by the citizens and visitors of Wisconsin. In short, **County Forests are vital to the State's economic health**, as well as providing for healthy forests, robust wildlife habitat and clean water.

Value of Completed Timber Sales



## Wisconsin County Forest Law – WI §28.11:

*“The purpose of this section is to **provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests** and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the county forests for **optimum production of forest products** together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving **full recognition to the concept of multiple-use** to assure **maximum public benefits**; to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to **compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges** these lands provide; all in a manner which will **provide a reasonable revenue to the towns** in which such lands lie.” (§28.11 is the foundation for county forest existence & management)*

## FAST FACTS

- 1<sup>st</sup> County Forest established in 1928 in Langlade County.
- Currently there are 30 established County Forest Programs.
- Collectively the largest public landholder in WI.
- Collectively they manage over 2.41M acres, roughly 15% of WI's forested acres.
- Forestry is the top 3 employer in 12 member Counties
- Forestry is the top 3 in output in 17 member Counties

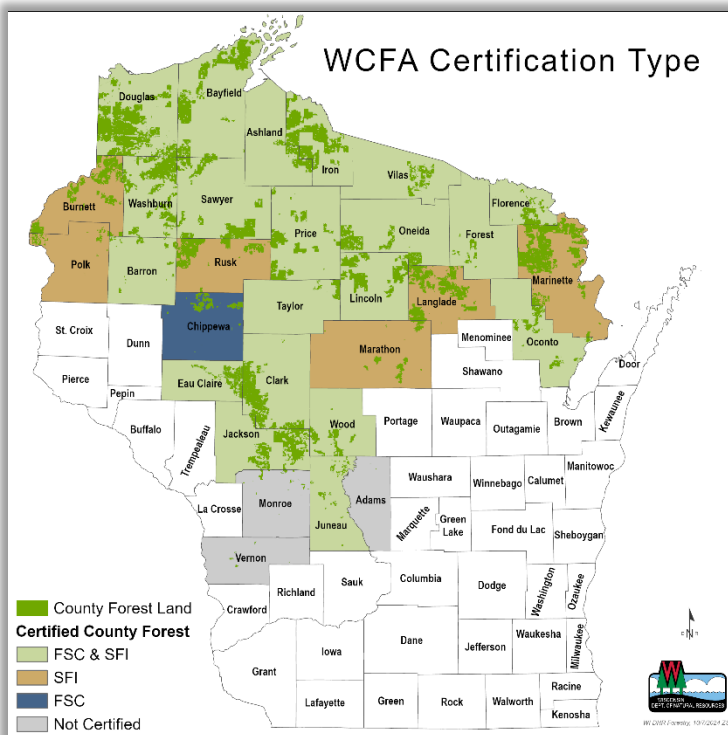
*The annual forest certification audits continually find that the Wisconsin County Forest system operates at the highest levels of forest management, regularly meeting national and global best management standards. The system has been previously described as “the model” for public land management in the United States.*

## Did you know?

Wisconsin is the #1 producer of paper and wood manufacturing in the US. Forest products is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest industry in the State, supporting more than 64,000 jobs and contributing over \$37 billion annually to the economy.

Below: County Forest acres along with which counties hold forest certification. There are currently 27 counties who are 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified through either the Forest Stewardship Council and/or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Forest certification stamps tell consumers they are buying wood products which are sustainability harvested.



Wisconsin's County Forest System also boasts a tremendous amount of outdoor recreational opportunities for the citizens and visitors of Wisconsin, no matter the type or skill level.



### Motorized

- Nearly 1,800 miles of ATV trails
- Over 9,000 miles of snowmobile trails
- Nearly 300 constructed boat landings

### Non-Motorized

- The Ice Age National Scenic Trail crosses 9 county forests
- Over 1,800 miles of hiking, snowshoe, cross-country skiing, horse and bicycle trails
- Over 3,300 campsites
- Nearly 200 day use areas with 54 public beaches

Tourism, largely due to outdoor recreation, is the #1 industry in 8 of the 30 member counties, and top 5 in 27 of the 30 member counties.



## Wisconsin County Forests Association

The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) was established in 1968 to provide a collaborative forum to discuss, consider and address matters, challenges and policies of the county forests. WCFA works with and represents interests of County Forestry Committees responsible for the forestry programs in each of its 30 member counties.

### Who is WCFA?

- 501(c)(3) / Member and grant funded
- Steered by a Board of Directors & several Committees
- Directed by a strategic plan and professional staff

### Our Mission:

*The Wisconsin County Forests Association provides leadership uniting the interests of the world's largest county forest program while ensuring long-term forest health and sustainability.*

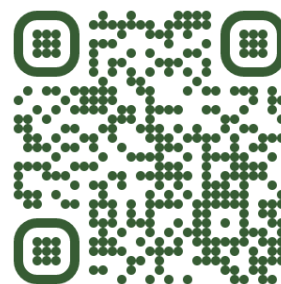


**For more information on County Forests or WCFA, please contact:**

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