

CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST



ANNUAL REPORT 2004



***On the Cover:** Sulo Koski, Forest Service timber specialist, standing in front of the Forest Supervisor's Office in 1938. Koski worked with the Forest's Lydick Lake nursery, which supplied tree seedlings for the Civilian Conservation Corps planting program. The USDA Forest Service celebrates its Centennial in 2005, marking 100 years of "Caring for the Land and Serving the People".



NORMAN L. WAGONER

FROM THE FOREST SUPERVISOR

As 2004 turns into 2005, the USDA Forest Service will be celebrating our National Centennial, a century of service. There is much to be proud of, much to learn as we look back, and much to look forward to. After having been on the Chippewa National Forest for a little more than a year, I want to say what a joy it has been to work with such fine people; partners, neighbors, interested parties and employees.

In the past year, we placed continued emphasis on credibility, integrity, accountability, professionalism and above all, safety. We integrated the Healthy Forest Restoration Act into our programs. Our new Forest Plan, completed in August 2004, moves us into new territory

where we strive to manage the resources on a landscape scale. We ask "What will we leave on the land for future generations." It is an exciting time to be a National Forest Supervisor.

We accomplished our 2004 goals. Release of the final Forest Plan and Record of Decision marked the completion of years of work from our dedicated staff and the beginning of the implementation process. We supported other Forests' prescribed fire programs and wildfire suppression efforts, exceeded our hazardous fuels reduction targets and celebrated Smokey Bear's 60th Birthday. Our timber program tripled the amount of timber ready for sale, and the 2004 timber offer was also above target. Key partnerships with Scenic Byways and Cass Lake Visitor Center groups, community grant projects and the Woodtick Trail wetlands restoration continue to succeed.

The summer of 2004 brought new leadership to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and we are discussing ways to improve and expand our consultation efforts. This is a critical part of our 2005 work.

The coming year will undoubtedly be one of the most challenging yet. The recent release of the National Non-Native Invasive Species policy draft and the new national planning rule are good examples. We will face demands to work more effectively and efficiently. There will be necessary and even difficult decisions. There must be commitment. I believe we are up to the task.

A century from our beginnings, national forest management continues to challenge, and demand excellence and dedication. As we celebrate our national forests today, I reflect on those who have led the Chippewa before me. Because of their hard work and dedication, we are today able to see farther, and understand better what may come in 2005 and beyond. Celebrate with us our successes of 2004. Join us as we face the challenges in 2005. I look forward to working with you.

Norman L. Wagoner
*Chippewa National
Forest Supervisor*



EUGENE BRUCE 1902

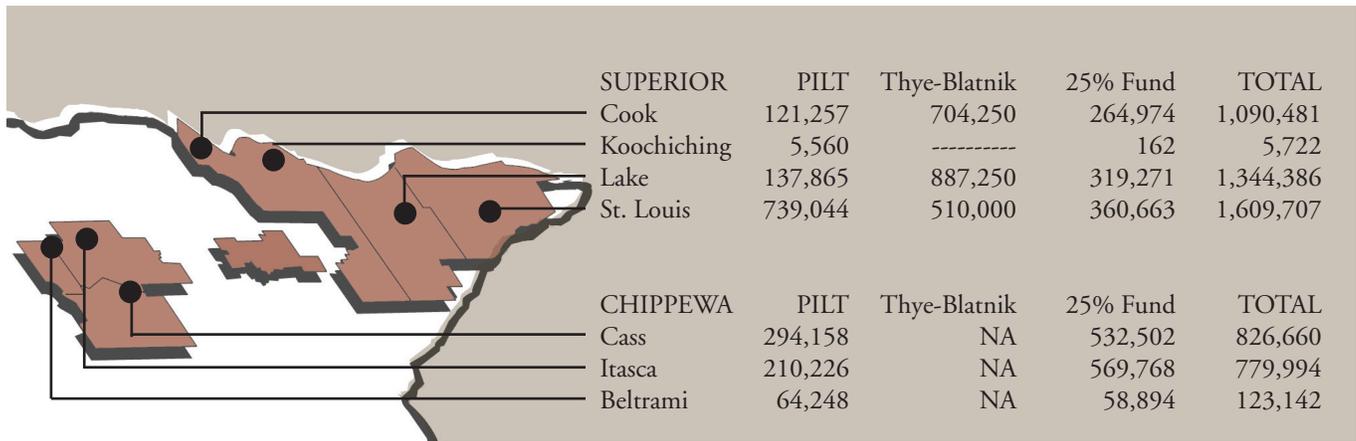
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PAYMENTS TO COUNTIES

Seven Minnesota counties received a total \$5,780,092 from the Forest Service in 2004. These payments, called the 25% Fund, Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Thye-Blatnik, are based on a formula of total Forest revenues, total acres of National Forest and population within the counties. These funds have provided revenues to counties to compensate for the lost tax base of federal lands since 1922.

Congress passed the Secure Rural School and Community Self-Determination Act in 2000, allowing counties a choice in receiving payments that were implemented in 2001. Itasca and Lake counties chose a stable payment until 2006. Cass and Beltrami counties (CNF) and Koochiching, St. Louis and Cook counties (SNF) decided to continue receiving 25% of Forest revenues. Thye-Blatnik payments relate to Wilderness Areas, and, in Minnesota, are paid on the Superior National Forest only.



2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TIMBER

Harvested (Million Board Feet).....	26,923
Reforestation (Acres).....	2,313
Timber Stand Improve (Acres).....	2,900
Fuelwood Permits.....	215
Christmas Tree Permits.....	300
Bough Permits.....	55

HUMAN RESOURCES

Senior Employment.....	51
Volunteers.....	45
Youth Conservation Corps.....	8
Full Time Employees.....	152
Campground Visitors.....	146,535
Visitors at Centers/Offices.....	21,000
Seasonal/Temp Employees.....	65

FIRE and FUELS

Prescribed Burns (Acres).....	1,625
Wildfires (Fires/Acres).....	89/115
Hazardous Fuel Reduced (Acres).....	2787
Boundary Management (Miles).....	9.25
Other Fire Treatments (Acres).....	3882

WILDLIFE/FISHERIES

Terrestrial Habitat Restored (Acres).....	1,643
TES Habitat Enhanced (Acres).....	174
Inland Streams Enhan/Restored (Miles).....	5
Inland Lakes Enhanced/Restored (Acres).....	27
Soil Water Resource Improved (Acres).....	6

LANDS

Right-Of-Way Cases.....	5
Special Use Permits (Total).....	638
Land Acquisition (Acres).....	20
Mineral Permits (Issued).....	72
Total Nat'l Forest Acres.....	666,542
Total Acres within Boundary.....	1,599,660

ENGINEERING

Road Construction (Miles).....	0
Road Reconstruction (Miles).....	5.5
Priority 1 Trails Maintained (Miles).....	167

CENTRALIZING THE FOREST

With increased emphasis on fiscal responsibility and tightening budgets, Federal agencies across the country are moving to a new way of doing business. On the National Forest, this has meant a (sometimes abrupt) shift in our everyday work lives. To the casual Forest visitor, the change may not be apparent, but to Forest employees, the following changes are influencing how we do our jobs.

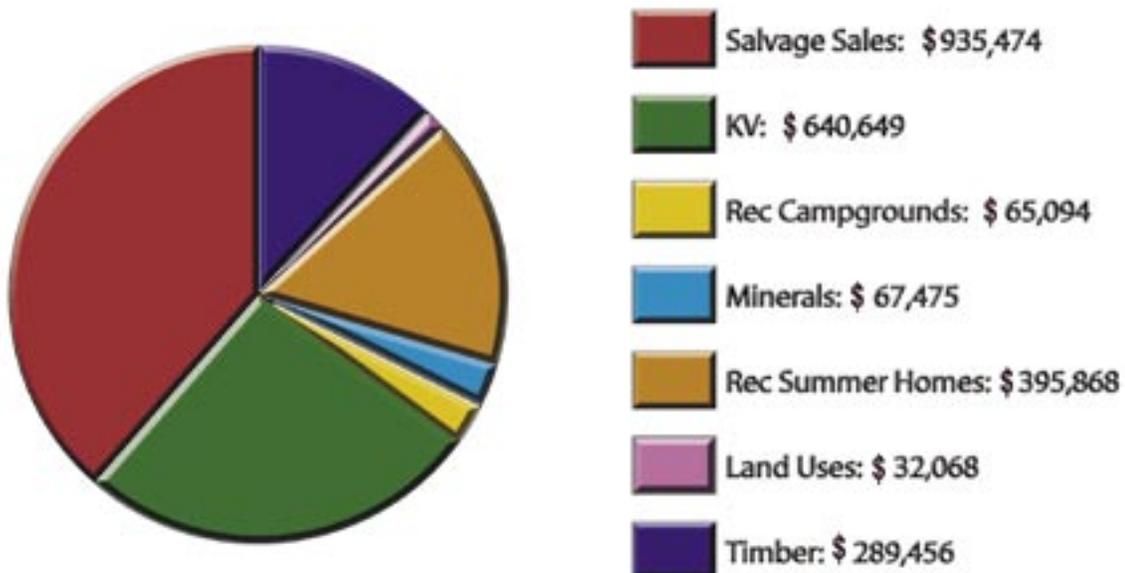
Information Solutions Organization: Now provides computer services to the Forest Service through a single, centrally-managed organization that provides Information Technology (IT) infrastructure. The Chippewa National Forest IT staff will now be working out of a Service Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Computer users on the Forest now contact an End User Support Center for computer assistance, and have increased their own computer trouble-shooting ability and knowledge.

ReEngineering Budget and Finance: Changes in Budget and Finance will ensure that business policies, processes, and organization create accurate and complete financial data. Full time staff in the budget and finance department will be reduced nationally from about 1100 people to about 450. Centralized, Budget and Finance staff will be located in New Mexico, though B&F leadership remains on site. Increased efficiency and financial accountability are goals of this program.

Centralizing Human Resources: Personnel will move to a single Center to provide consistency in standard processes and procedures. This should also create a manageable workload for Human Resource employees. Human resources staff will go from 800 full-time employees to 350 nationally. Over the past year, Chippewa National Forest employees have been introduced to a new personnel process, the North Central Human Resource Service Center, located out of St. Paul, MN. On the Forest, employees will now conduct all personnel activities through one data-entry source, including personnel issues, hiring, and individual employment actions.

As we enter into 2005, we will just begin to see how these changes play out on individual national forests. Just as communities track the Forest implementation of the new Forest plan, employees need to learn more about new ways to complete day-to-day business of operating a National Forest.

INCOME GENERATED



NEW FOREST PLAN

For Forest Planners and the unending list of biologists, recreation specialists, landscape planners, and soil scientists involved in Forest Plan Revision, the newly released Forest Plan does not seem... so new. They have spent months or even years preparing, researching and yes, arguing points. They have poured over every map... stomped the ground of each management area. As the Forest implements the new Plan, it does so over well-traveled territory.

The Revised plan guides the management of the Chippewa National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. It is strategic, emphasizing ecological, social and economic sustainability over the long-term. Implementation of the revised Forest Plan began September 14, 2004. Some of the most notable differences from the 1986 Plan are as follows:

- ▲ Ecosystem-based vs. Commodity-based. More emphasis on what is left on the land rather than what is produced on the land.
- ▲ ProActive Riparian Management. Discussion of riparian and fisheries issues was non-existent in the 1986 plan. Today, the Forest looks not just at mitigation but restoration and enhancement of riparian resources.
- ▲ Less clearcutting. Noticeable increase in structure, diversity and complexity of the forest. More red, white and jack pine rather than emphasis on aspen.
- ▲ Semi-primitive non-motorized areas: Limited in the 1986 plan, the revised plan provides more of this type of recreation for Forest visitors.



THIS FOREST PLAN IS DOG-EARED!

The new Forest Plan was issued on August 12, 2004, with a 90-day appeal process which began August 27. The completion of the Plan means the start of something new for the Chippewa National Forest, moving into the next 10 years. It also marks the completion of years of hard work to some very dedicated employees. Thanks to all for participating in this historic event!



RULES OF THE ROADS

Some of the most immediate questions that came up after the Forest Plan was finalized in August focused around use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV's). "Is the Forest closed to OHV's? Can I go cross-country to retrieve my deer during hunting season? Will I get ticketed for going down this Forest road on my OHV?"

Forest OHV regulations in the revised Forest Plan are consistent with the proposed National OHV Policy, which should be finalized in 2005. Full implementation of Chippewa's policy will also occur in 2005. Answering the questions is really the first step.

- ▲ Can I ride my OHV on the Forest? Yes. OHV's are an appropriate recreational use on the Forest. OHV travel will be permitted on roads and trails that are designated open for such use. Users will not be able to travel on high-standard roads beginning in 2005.
- ▲ Cross-country travel remains prohibited, and big game retrieval and other OHV use off roads and trails for purposes such as bear baiting or trapping continues to be prohibited.
- ▲ Will OHV users be ticketed for being on the wrong road? During the first year of the new policies, we expect a learning curve for both Forest visitors and Forest staff. Once designated roads are posted "OPEN", riders will clearly know if OHV's are allowed on a particular road.

STAR ISLAND HISTORIC SURVEYS - ENHANCING HISTORY

There are ghost stories here, a Chinese pagoda, tales of Camp Kawajiwin and even a newspaper dating back to 1937. It is in the Guinness Book of World Records. The lake is named for a tenacious Anishinabe spirit known as a Windigo, and there are stories, so many stories built into the century-old cabins on the Island.

It is the stories and cabins of those who have lived on Star Island (Cass Lake) that led to an evaluation of the Island for the National Register of Historic Places. In 2003, the Forest Service contracted to have historic surveys completed of the Star Island summer home groups. The study examined historical records and analyzed buildings and sites on the Island through fieldwork and photography. They concluded the three summer home groups on Star Island appear to meet the National Register criteria and have maintained their historic integrity. Those sites eligible are the East Beach Summer Home Group, the Sandy Beach Summer Home Group and the Norway Bluff Summer Home Group.



What are summer homes? The Summer Home program played an important role in promoting tourism and recreation in the newly designated national forests, both nationally and in Minnesota. Star Island was incorporated into the Minnesota National Forest (aka Chippewa National Forest) when it was established in 1908. Three areas of the Island—East Beach, Sandy Beach and Norway Bluff—were made available for summer homes beginning in 1909 under the permit program of the Forest Service. The three communities contain 49 lots—with 92 historic buildings, 2 campgrounds and a tennis court! It is the most concentrated group of recreation residences on the Forest.

For those who spend their summers out on Star Island, the evaluation means no real change in their daily lives, but perhaps a chance to *not* change history. Remember, the evaluation noted that the summer homes groups had maintained their historic integrity. From this point on, the cabin owners and the Forest Service can make the effort to continue that tradition and choose additions and remodeling projects that honor the Star Island of yesterday and let it live on.

(The Star Island evaluation is the first step in getting a site or historic district nominated for the National Register. The next step is sending a nomination into the National Register...this could be completed by either the Forest or the Star Island community.)

INVESTIGATING THE YEAR



Winter: Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers work not only their home Forest, but across their Zone, or geographic area. Here, officers teamed up to track illegal snowmobile use in the BWCAW on the Superior National Forest.



Spring: Field survey crews often find evidence of illegal activity in the woods and report back to law enforcement officers. Evidence of a timber trespass is revealed with the snow melt at this survey site.



Summer: Forest investigations often involve multi-agency effort, particularly with drug cases. In this particular marijuana growing case, Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers worked with a County Sheriff's Department, Minnesota Conservation Officers and Leech Lake Game Wardens.



Autumn: Enforcing the law goes hand-in-hand with education efforts. Officers on the Chippewa serve as firearms trainers for other Federal Officers and teach Hunter Safety classes to area youth. Contacts with hunters are also part of the education efforts on the Chippewa National Forest.



NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

Quick! Recite five unique uses of the North Country Trail.... If you are new to the area, you may guess the most obvious—a hiking trail—immediately. Track the trail through the year, though, and you may begin to see the multiple uses this trail serves for all seasons. The 68-mile link through the Chippewa National Forest ties in with 3,200 miles of existing National Scenic trail from New York to North Dakota. Eventually, the trail will become the longest continuous footpath in the United States

AS THE DUCK FLIES...

Tucked away in the Forest between Sucker Lake and Sucker Bay is a small 27-acre impoundment with a big history. The Brush Lake impoundment was built in 1971 for waterfowl habitat. The structure had a twenty-year life expectancy.

In the late 1990's, a partnership was developed between the Chippewa National Forest and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to maintain the 18 impoundments located across the Forest and Reservation, including Brush Lake. Through help with "Circle of Flight" dollars, work was completed to mow dikes, install beaver bafflers, and clean outlet pipes at all Forest impoundments.

In 2000, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe field crews found that the outlet pipe at Brush Lake had rotted and collapsed. The dike was washing out and something had to be done. Working together with the Forest Service and the Minnesota Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, the Leech Lake crew breeched the Brush Lake dike to avoid catastrophic failure. The impoundment stood empty until 2004 when Chippewa Forest biologists

designed a new structure for the impoundments. In 2005, when spring returns to the northwoods, biologists will once again find the Brush Lake Impoundment filled with water...and waterfowl.



Why so much interest in this small 27-acre site when it is surrounded by over 1 million acres? Brush Lake has become a very productive impoundment over the years, providing nesting, brood rearing and resting habitat for varieties of waterfowl and other wildlife. The lake, so small that we had a hard time finding it on the map, becomes a surprise piece of vital deep marsh habitat that warrants our notice and care. In the end, it's a great success story for winged and two-leggeds both.



CLASS OF 2004

They are not your typical graduating class..... This one is made up of a three seasoned Forest Service employees, with a combined total of 53 years silviculture experience. And yet, in 2002, each made the decision to enroll in the Program of Advanced Silvicultural Studies (PASS).

To explain PASS, it may be easiest to compare the program to a Master's project. To qualify for the program, you must have a minimum of three years field experience. Forest "students" must travel across the country, attending classes in all of the following categories: lake states and general silviculture, economics, communication, statistics, vegetative modeling, heritage resources, fire and hydrology.

At the end of the coursework, students must write a detailed silvicultural prescription for their Forest and proceed to "defend" work to a Board made up of Region and Forest Silviculturists, University Professors and a Forest line officer. Once certified, these graduates provide a valuable resource the Forest. Each Forest must have a certified silviculturist in order to complete any decision on a timber harvest. Prior to the PASS program, the Chippewa had just two certified silviculturists between four districts. Today, the Forest now has 5 graduates of the PASS program, which makes for a more efficient and effective process. The benefits continue, with Forest silviculturists trained to the highest standard of excellence and the Forest Service continuing as silvicultural leaders in the world.

FIREFIGHTERS FOR YELLOW RAILS

Since 1981, Chippewa National Forest fire crews have worked in the Boy River area each spring to conduct prescribed burns in a patch of wet meadow. The work was done mainly to reduce fuels and lessen the threat of wildfire due to arson. The prescribed burning was completed in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry and Fish and Wildlife Divisions and Cass County Land Department.

In 1997, Leech Lake Division of Resource Management (DRM) researchers found that the Boy River area was home to the highest population of Yellow Rails on the Leech Lake Reservation. Soon after, it was discovered that this rail population was also the highest on the National Forest and in the state! Yellow Rail habitat is fire dependent wet meadow, an uncommon habitat type on the Forest. Approximately 17,000 acres of the Forest fall into this category, and 8,000 of those acres are found at the Boy River site.

In 2002, a new partnership was created to restore the near natural fire regime to this unique land type. Core samples taken in the lake and meadow show a historic fire regime, with the site burning every 3-5 years on average. The benefits of the small burns over the previ-



ous 20 years became easy to see. The new prescribed burn plan separated the 8,000 acres Boy River area into 18 different units. Now, each year, a number of units will be selected (approx. 2000 acres per year) and burned. In 2004, 1800 acres were burned, and 3000 acres are planned for the spring of 2005. Some of the units in the expanded burn plan have not seen fire for over 70 years!

Overall goals are bringing the natural fire regime back on the landscape and providing habitat for Yellow Rail, LeConte's Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow and a variety of other critters. The work will also reduce thatch to benefit nesting birds and continue to provide fuel reduction and protection for many neighbors and local communities.

Partners in the Prescribed Burn/Yellow Rail project include the USDA Forest Service, Leech Lake DRM, Cass County Land Dept, DNR Wildlife, DNR Forestry, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Army Corps of Engineers.

FIRE AND THE HEALTHY FOREST INITIATIVE

In August 2002, at the height of one of the worst fire seasons in recent history, President Bush introduced his Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI). This Initiative includes categorical exclusion tools which allow for hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire and mechanical methods with less administrative effort. In passing the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, Congress committed to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to communities and restore our nation's forest and rangelands.

Following National direction, Blackduck District Ranger Tracy Beck made the decision in April 2004 to implement the Healthy Forest Fuels Treatment Project,

the Forest's first project using one of the categorical exclusion tools provided through the initiative. This project includes 865 acres of fuels treatment including: 624 acres of large-scale prescribed burning, 217 acres of mechanical treatment, and burning slash piles resulting from timber activities on 24 acres.

Twenty of the twenty-seven treatments under this HFI project were completed in 2004, with the remainder to be completed over the next 3 years. Watch for two additional HFI fuels documents (currently in the planning stage) tentatively to be released in 2005-2006.

PROWLIN' AND GROWLIN' AND SNIFFIN' THE AIR...

Congratulations to Smokey Bear on his 60th Birthday! Long-time friend of the Forest Service, Smokey and his firefighter friends had a busy year, participating in 20 parades this summer, two huge birthday parties at the Cut Foot Sioux and Norway Beach Visitor Centers and meeting with over 4000 school kids across Forest communities!

Smokey and fire crews taught about wildfires and healthy forests at local schools, and got a chance to talk about the National Forest fire program as well.

fires could also help win the war. In 1944, the Disney movie "Bambi" came out, and Walt Disney gave permission to use the fawn for their campaign for one year.



In August of 1944, the Advertising Council chose a bear to be their official "firefighter", and Smokey Bear was born. It wasn't until 1950 that the poster "Smokey" and a live cub rescued from a New Mexico wildfire came together.



The Smokey Bear campaign was born in August 1944, but the work with fire prevention really began in 1942, after a bombing attack in California started fires near the Los Padres National Forest. The War Advertising Council came up with slogans that fighting wild-

Smokey's message of "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" still rings true, but he has helped move into additional messages about Healthy Forests and Prescribed Fire. The connections he has bridged have moved us into a new view of fire. Happy Birthday, Smokey and thanks for all the bear hugs!

For additional information, complete and return the information request form

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NEPA Quarterly | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Biking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Plan Revision | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Maps - 1/2" (\$4)
or 3/8" scale (\$6 ea) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Eagle Viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake States Interpretive Catalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildflower/Weeds Brochure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome | <input type="checkbox"/> New OHV Regulations | |

Name: _____

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