

MONTHLY STORIES | DIBAAJIMOWINAN

JANUARY 2018 | CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

EXCEL | AS A HIGH PERFORMING AGENCY

Chippewa National Forest Intern gains valuable skills and knowledge while contributing to completion of important road system inventory.

In 2018, Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) GIS intern Alex Engelson helped the Chippewa National Forest accomplish a milestone – an updated inventory of the entire Forest’s road system.

The Chippewa National Forest has over 2,300 miles of existing system roads spread out across intermixed ownerships within the Forest boundary. Over the last two summers, the Forest, along with CCMI interns and a private contractor, undertook a boots on the ground effort to verify the lengths, locations, and existence of these roads.

Alex was tasked with inspecting the remaining roads, cleaning up all of the collected field data, and updating the NRM database and GIS layers with current information.

Visiting over 1,000 roads across the northern part of the Forest to collect this important data was Alex’s favorite part of the assignment. “Field season let me explore all of the nooks and crannies of the Chippewa, and was a welcome reprieve from desk work,” said Alex.

This updated road inventory helps the Forest in numerous ways, including: transportation planning for large vegetation management environmental assessments for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); effectively planning how to best access timber stands for management/harvest; and accurate updates to the Forest’s motor vehicle use map.

Alex also assisted Forest engineering staff with a variety of jobs, such as surveying, clearing off roads after storms, cleaning culverts, delivering culverts, bridge inspections and fixing the bunkhouse. This gave Alex insights into the Forest’s day-to-day operations. Alex’s favorite additional activity was visiting with local kids as Smokey Bear to help teach them about forest fire prevention.

Alex gained valuable skills and insights into natural resource management by working alongside the Forest’s subject matter experts, the most valuable of which was learning to play cribbage! Though Alex isn’t certain what’s next in his career, he is certain that the experiences he gained on the Chippewa National Forest will play a part in all of his future endeavors.

APPLY | KNOWLEDGE GLOBALLY

Area agencies collaborate on ways to enhance recreation

Recently, Chippewa National Forest recreation program managers hosted a meeting with recreation providers from local agencies, including the State of Minnesota, Army Corp of Engineers, and Beltrami and Itasca Counties. This was the first time recreation providers from these agencies have met.

Public agencies shared information on recreation sites and opportunities they provide to visitors in and around the Chippewa National Forest. As a whole, the group shared management strategies, visitor demographics and requests, and ideas for future collaborations and partnerships. Agency representatives plan to meet in smaller focus groups over the next several months in addition to gathering annually as a large group. Working with recreation partners, the Forest Service is finding creative ways to deliver recreation experiences that better meet the needs of visitors and support local economies.



Alex Engelson and Anna Zust, 2018 summer Interns from the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa, add a new coat of stain to Star Island’s day camping area sign.

SUSTAIN | OUR NATION'S FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS

Stewardship project rocks the Forest

Beavers are fascinating animals to watch build dams; however, their projects can sometimes have unintended consequences.

On the Chippewa National Forest, near where Anderson Lake Road and Damon Lake Road intersect, beavers frequently dam

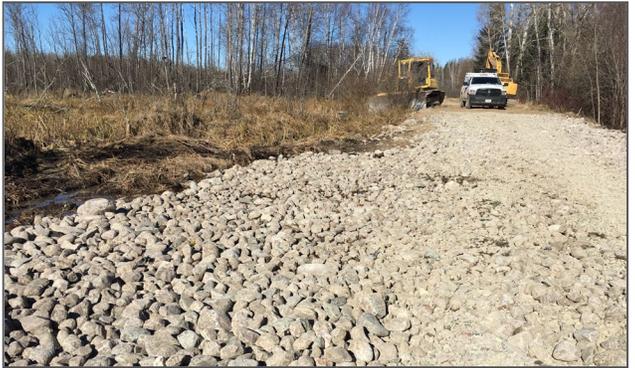
culverts near the middle of the road. Because of this, Engineering staff are unable to reach the dams without the use of a mini excavation to push it out with a log. Currently, there is a mechanical debris removal contract to help with cleaning out these culverts.

In order to lower maintenance efforts and cost at these beaver sites, the Chippewa National Forest Engineering Team worked with partners through a stewardship contract to complete one of three Damon Lake road rock crossings.

The plan involved excavating the roadbed so that the elevation matches the adjacent ground, then installing erosion prevention: armor the new roadbed elevation with riprap, geotextile fabric and crushed rock. The rock crossings are along a stretch of road that has six culverts that are routinely plugged. A rock crossing south of the Anderson Lake road and Damon Lake road intersection will be completed next spring. A third will be finished this fall if the weather cooperates.

Partners involved in the stewardship project were Mike Rieger Logging, All Seasons Contracting (ASC) Inc. who performed the excavation and rock placement; and the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (federal trappers), who trapped beavers and removed a dam that was impounding water.

Stewardship contracting projects include natural resource management practices seeking to promote a closer working relationship with local communities in a broad range of activities that improve land conditions. These projects shift the focus of federal forest management towards a desired future resource condition. They are also a means for federal agencies to contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities, restore and maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment.



Damon Lake road rock crossing project

DELIVER | BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC

Snow place like the Chippewa during the long winter months

As part of “**Snow place like the Chippewa**” the Chippewa National Forest has designed a fun winter scavenger hunt that promotes the Forest’s OnCell mobile app through Snow Points!

Ten historic sites were selected from across the Forest as Snow Points. Information about each site can be found via the Forest OnCell mobile app at chippewa.oncell.com. Visitors are invited to travel by car, snowmobile, ski, snowshoe or dog sled to each of the ten sites. Some sites may require travelling a short distance through deep snow. Those sites are noted as snowshoe or ski sites.



OnCell snow point sign at Stop 8

“We are encouraging employees and visitors to get outside and explore the Forest through snow points this winter,” said Mary Nordeen, Forest public affairs specialist.

At each snow point, visitors are encouraged to take a photo at the OnCell sign and post it on Facebook and/or twitter using the hashtag #SnowPoints. The challenge is to visit all ten sites between December 22, 2018 and March 31, 2019!



Forest Service

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