

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service



Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

2008 Year In Review



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How To Reach Us:

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On the web: www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf

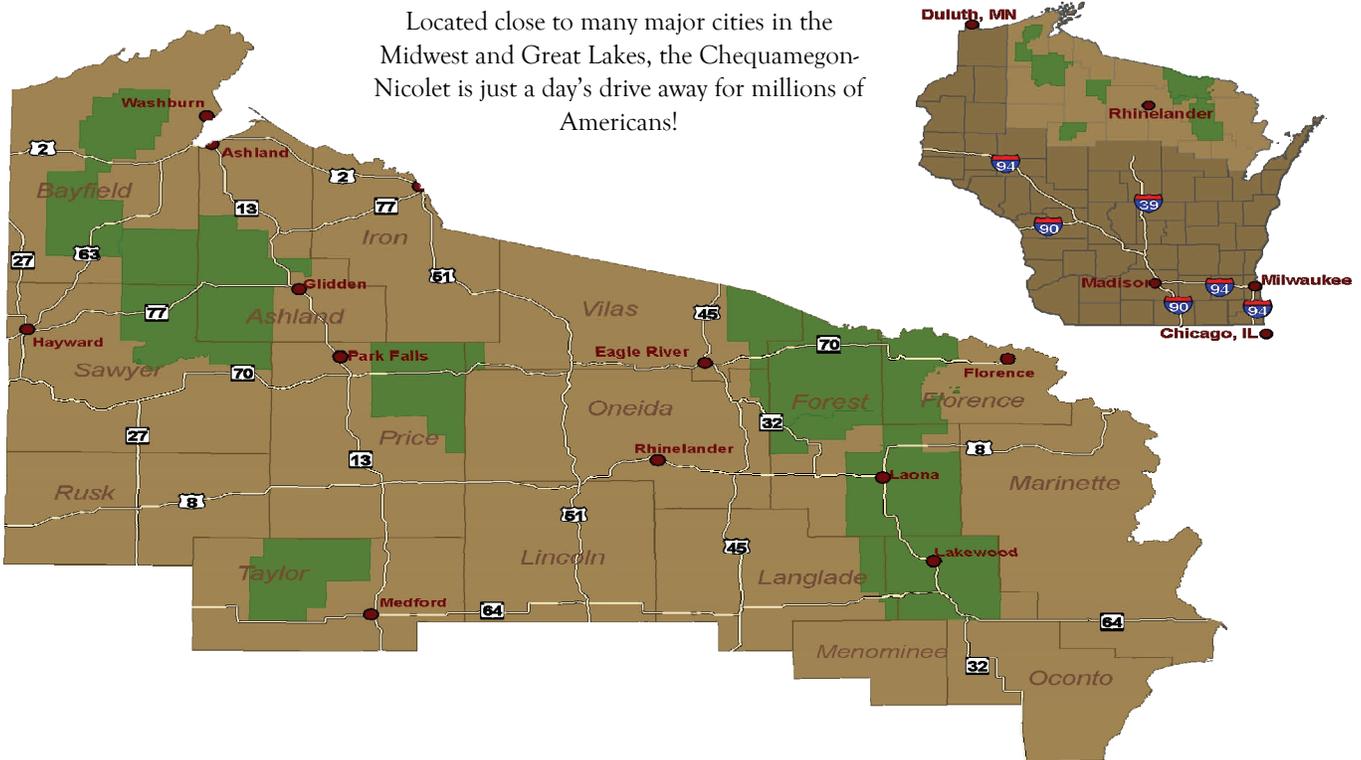
Forest Facts:

Acres: 1.5 Million, in 11 northern Wisconsin Counties and 65 Townships
Lakes: 2,020; 609 larger than 10 acres **Lake Access:** 119 boat ramps
Trout Streams: 1,255 miles (13 percent of the state total)
Recreation Opportunities: 51 campgrounds; 39 picnic areas, 24 beaches
Non-Motorized Recreation: 44,000 acres in 5 Wildernesses, 68,100 acres in 19 non-motorized areas; 493 miles of non-motorized trails; one National Scenic Trail and 4 national Recreation Trails
Motorized Recreation: 9,000 miles of road; 284 miles of developed ATV trails; over 800 miles of snowmobile trails
Annual Visitors to the Forest: over 2.1 million
Timber Sold/Value in 2008: 70.5 Million Board Feet/\$3.6 Million
Timber Harvested/Value in 2008: 86.7 Million Board Feet/\$5.9 Million
Payments to Local Governments: \$3.1 Million
Archaeological Sites: 2100, ranging from 10,000 year old prehistoric sites to 20th century homesteads
Our Workforce: 223 Full time employees, at 2 Supervisor’s Offices, 5 Ranger Districts, 2 Visitor Centers, and 50 employees at the Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center

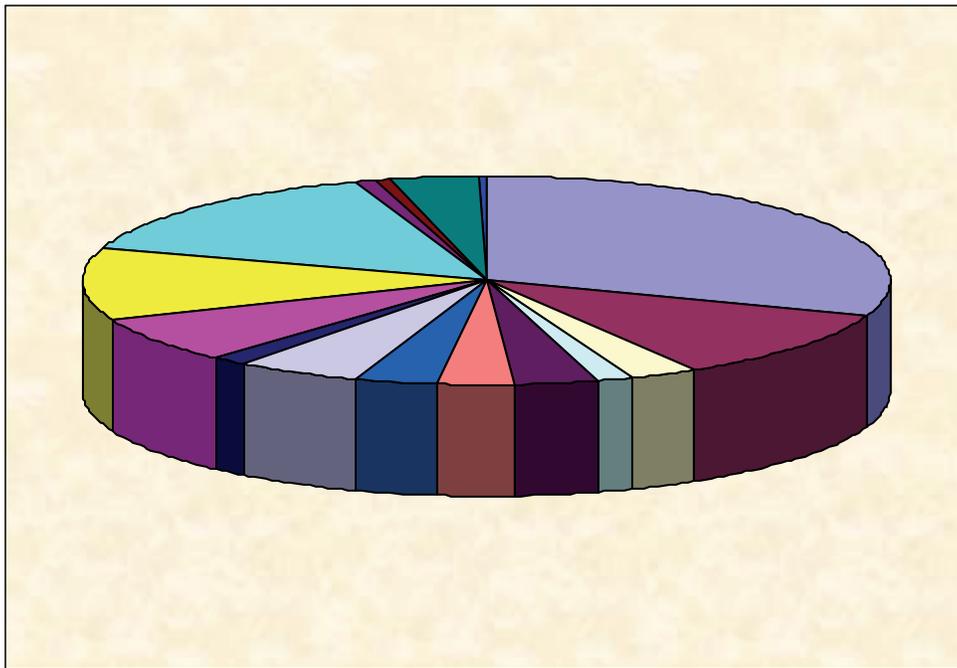
MISSION STATEMENT

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is managed to sustain the ongoing, dynamic relationship between people and the Forest. The landscape provides unique cultural and ecological features. As a result, the Forest is a source of living and renewing natural resources. The Forest helps to meet our needs for wild places and essential forest products, contributing to the social and economic well being of the people of Wisconsin and the Nation. Being good neighbors, working cooperatively, and inviting the involvement of others achieves this mission.

Located close to many major cities in the Midwest and Great Lakes, the Chequamegon-Nicolet is just a day’s drive away for millions of Americans!



2008 Budget Allocation—\$23,420,555



■ Timber Management . . .	7,165,225
■ Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage, Trails	2,516,874
■ Recreation Facility Construction	649,800
■ Facility Maintenance . . .	308,000
■ Inventory & Monitoring .	814,000
■ Reforestation, TSI, Soil, Water Air, Noxious Weeds	727,562
■ Wildlife, Fish, T&E	784,000
■ Reforestation, TSI, Trust Fund	1,156,762
■ Hazardous Fuels	300,481
■ Fire Preparedness	1,684,027
■ Road Construction	2,613,459
■ Land Acq. & Mgt.	3,485,000
■ Minerals Mgt.	196,000
■ Land Mgt. Planning	103,000
■ Legacy Roads	852,943
■ Kids in the Woods	53,422
■ Botanical Products	10,000

Greetings from the Chequamegon-Nicolet!

Front Row—Spring Rosales, Washburn District Ranger; Connie Chaney, Great Divide District Ranger; Joyce Barott, Executive Assistant; Linda Parker, Acting NR/Ecosystems Group Leader; Deb Kidd, Planning, Analysis, and Public Affairs; Jeanne Higgins, Forest Supervisor; Suzanne Flory, Public Affairs Officer. **Back Row**—Jeff Seefeldt, Lakewood-Laona District Ranger; Bob Hennes, Medford-Park Falls District Ranger; Don Hoppe, Administrative Officer; Mike Andersen, Union President; Bill Sullivan, Forest Engineer; Harv Skjerven, Eagle River-Florence District; Tony Erba, Deputy Forest Supervisor



From the Desk of the Forest Supervisor . . .

Hello, and welcome to the 2008 Year In Review. This report is shaped around the vision for the Forest Service’s Eastern Region - *Courageous Conservation*. Our vision is comprised of five principles that guide us to a sustainable future and a legacy of restoration in a cost effective manner. It is a pleasure for me to share some highlights of our work to implement the Forest’s Land and Resource Management Plan, which we accomplished using the Fiscal Year 2008 funding we received.

The Forest Service employees, partners and volunteers who completed this work take great pride in managing and improving the conditions of our National Forest in Wisconsin. I hope you will take pride in their work also, and I encourage you to thank them for their commitment to helping make these forests what they are today. The tending, studying, and the support actions are all undertaken so that this forest can provide us with the products and experiences many value.

Courageous Conservation Principles:

- Protect Ecosystems Across Boundaries
- Connect Citizens to the Land
- Walk the Talk for Sustainability
- Revolutionize Effectiveness and Efficiency
- Be an Employer of Choice

Within the confines of this report, there is only so much that we can share. So, I encourage you to visit our web site and our offices for more information. I hope the 2008 Year In Review inspires you to spend time on the Chequamegon-Nicolet; perhaps become a partner or volunteer, or get involved in one of our many public engagement processes. We want to hear from you!

Jeanne Higgins

Protect Ecosystems Across Boundaries

Wildlife, Fish, Threatened & Endangered Species



The Kirtland's Warbler is commonly referred to as the jack pine warbler

Rare Kirtland's Warbler observed on the Forest

In July 2008, the US Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed an observation of the Kirtland's Warbler on the Washburn Ranger District in Bayfield County.

The presence of the Warbler on the Forest was rewarding news, as goals in the Forest Plan and the need of the species fit well together.

The Kirtland's Warbler, a federally

endangered species since 1967, was observed by a bird surveyor working under contract for the Forest. It was found in a large block of jack pine, which is the Warbler's preferred habitat. The observation of the Kirtland's Warbler on the Forest is significant in that it is considered one of the rarest North American birds.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet will continue working cooperatively with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources, and other partners in recovery efforts that will continue to bring this bird back to Wisconsin. *Contact: Dan Eklund, Forest Wildlife Biologist, 715-762-5194*

Flowage drawdown improves important fishing habitat

Water levels in the Lower Wilson Flowage, located on the Medford-Park Falls District, were drawn down to improve the fishery and boating and angling access by controlling weed densities. A survey conducted in September 2008 by the Forest Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources determined that approximately 40 percent of the flowage had thick weed densities that would hinder fishing and boating activities and raised concerns for the trophy northern pike fishery given that the present water levels were below normal.

An earlier drawdown of the Flowage took place in 2006. The flowage was refilled in the spring of 2009. *Contact: Suzanne Adams, Wildlife Biologist, 715-748-4875*

Partnering with the Ruffed Grouse Society to improve wildlife habitat

Since 1986, the Forest has been working in partnership with the Ruffed Grouse Society to improve wildlife habitat throughout the forest. The venture has fostered 15 designated ruffed grouse and American woodcock habitat management areas on the Forest, totaling 26,000 acres. In 2008, a new agreement was initiated to continue this important habitat work. *Contact: Juliet Gifford, Wildlife Biologist, 715-362-1386*

In addition to the wildlife work listed on Page 5, 550 more acres were treated to improve or create habitat favorable to an array of wildlife on the Forest.

Legacy Roads & Trails Program

Restoring aquatic passages in the Brule River watershed

On two portions of State Highway 139 that cross Duck Creek, there was a need to replace existing culverts that were inhibiting passage for native fisheries, including the brook trout.

Duck Creek has a resident population of the native trout and also provides important spawning and rearing habitat for the Brule River.

To correct the situation, the Forest, along with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, replaced two existing culverts with shorter, wider ones. This opened 2.8 miles of habitat in the creek, which restored the passage for the native fisheries.

The native brook trout is a popular game fish found in cool and cold-water streams and spring ponds on the Forest. There are approximately 463 miles of Class I trout streams on

the Chequamegon-Nicolet, which have trout reproduction but sometimes require stocking to maintain populations. Projects of this nature continue to enhance the population of this species. *Contact: Dale Higgins, Forest Hydrologist, 715-762-5181*



Between 1998 and 2008, over 150 stream crossings have been replaced on the Forest

Reforestation, Timber Stand Improvement, Soil, Water, Air, Noxious Weeds & Trust Fund

The Knutson-Vandenberg (K-V) Act allows the Forest Service to use receipts generated by commercial timber sales to reestablish, protect and improve the production of natural resources within the immediate area of the timber sale. When allocating K-V funds, all required reforestation activities must be fully funded ahead of other resource projects. Once these activities are fully financed, the remaining funds can be used to conduct timber stand improvement, improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve watershed conditions, maintain roads and other resource improvement projects. On the Chequamegon-Nicolet, reforestation and timber stand improvement needs that are outside of timber sales areas are funded with appropriated funds and reforestation trust funds. *Contact: Mark Theisen, Forest Silviculturist, 715-362-1346*

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Activity	Amount
Trees Planted	931,000
Acres of Trees Planted	1,300
Acres of Natural Regeneration (hardwood and aspen)	4,330
Stocking and survival survey acres	9,300
Acres of seedlings receiving treatment to repel browsing animals	1,600
Acres of timber stands improved by releasing planted seedling	825
Acres of forest treated to improve wildlife habitat	225
Snags developed to provide wildlife habitat	1,000
Acres prepared for planting	1620
Acres of Non-Native Invasive Treatments	870
Acres of Watershed Improvement	19
Fish habitat structures placed	9



In 2008, \$30,000 was contributed by the American Forests Organization and matched with a cost share grant from the Forest Service Washington Office. This provided the funds to help plant more than 150 acres of jack pine, a preferred habitat of the Spruce Grouse, a Regional Forester Sensitive Species.

When given lemons, make lemonade!

A few years ago, many plantations of spruce trees were found to be victims of spruce decline, caused by a combination of drought, insect infestation and disease. Utilizing the Healthy Forest Restoration Act gave the forest a needed tool to expedite the salvage of these dead and dying trees.

In addition to the salvage of timber, the harvesting led to the reduction of hazardous fuels on 11,000 acres of forest land, as well as the restoration of 1,700 acres of spruce grouse habitat. The trees also have a special niche for wildlife species, as they provide excellent habitat for the black backed woodpeckers and other species dependent on dead and dying material. During the implementation of

this project, over 2,000 acres of dying spruce were left standing to benefit wildlife.

Contact: Mark Theisen, Forest Silviculturist, 715-362-1346



An area of Spruce Decline on the Forest

Hazardous Fuels & Fire Preparedness



Crews keep a watchful eye on a prescribed burn

Managing fires to prevent wildfires and restore ecosystems

The fire management program on the Forest consists of fire suppression, prescribed fire for ecosystem maintenance and restoration, and reducing the potential of property damaging wildfires.

The Forest had a relatively average fire season in 2008, with a total of 38 fires that occurred from April 4 through September 28. Most fires

were relatively small. The major cause of these fires was debris burning, followed by power line fire, campfire burning, equipment malfunction, lighting, and other unknown causes.

Prescribed fires took place in 14 areas for a total of 3,450 acres. One of the goals of the Forest's prescribed burning program is to continue to strengthen our relationships with cooperators and other agencies: Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service,

and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). During 2008, over 400 personnel and equipment provided from these agencies in Wisconsin emergency and wildfire suppression support across the United States. All personnel are dispatched through the Wisconsin Interagency Coordination Center located in Woodruff. *Contact: Jim Grant, Fire Staff Officer, 715362-1341.*

Land Acquisition & Management



The Moose Lake tract

Two Northern Wisconsin lakes entirely protected

As a result of a strong partnership between the Forest, The Trust For Public Land, and Plum Creek Timber Company, the Chequamegon-Nicolet was able to purchase 1,135 acres of natural land located within its boundaries. The Moose Lake tract, located in Sawyer County, contains two small lakes and 50 acres of wetland. Another 80 acres that includes frontage on Cranberry Lake, was also included in the purchase.

Large in-holdings, such as the Moose Lake tract are essential to maintaining quality recreation for the public, and providing watershed protection and viable habitat for a wide range of animals.

This successful partnership led to a conservation solution instead of subdividing the land. Subdividing of forest lands creates a kind of "Swiss cheese effect", with pockets of different types of ownership scattered throughout the forest. This type

of fragmented development raises the very real threats of less accessible land for hunting and public recreation, greater degradation of lakes, streams and forests, more loss of timber jobs, and a dramatic decline in wildlife habitat and wildlife.

In 2008, a total of 1,450 acres were purchased by the Forest at a cost of approximately \$3.1 million. *Contact: Catherine Pinegar, Recreation and Lands Program Manager, 715-362-1373*

Minerals Management



Gravel crushing operation on a Forest gravel pit

Chequamegon-Nicolet produces sand and gravel for maintaining Forest roads and trails

Sand and gravel are important commodities produced on the Forest. They are used to maintain Forest roads, recreation facilities, trails, and to provide rock rip-rap for fish spawning reefs or stream bank erosion control.

In 2008, the Forest produced

123, 193 tons of sand and gravel worth \$399,340. Most of the material was used by local township governments for cooperative road maintenance of Forest roads.

The raw sand and gravel is excavated from gravel pits managed by the National Forest. The Forest or the local township governments contract with

private gravel crushing contractors to produce the road gravel that is used for road maintenance projects. Nationwide, National Forests produce sand and gravel and quarry stone for maintaining Forest roads and trails. *Contact: Greg Knight, Minerals Program Manager, 715-748-4875.*

Connect Citizens to the Land

Recreation Facility Construction

Revenue from the Recreation Fee Program improves recreational experiences for visitors.

In 2008, monies returned to the Chequamegon-Nicolet from fees charged at campgrounds and many day use sites were used to make many improvements and enhancements to recreation sites. Some of these included:

- ▲ Construction of new accessible toilets
- ▲ New picnic tables, fee tubes, signs, accessible fire rings
- ▲ Repairs to caretaker cabin,
- shelter roofs, water pumps
- ▲ Providing recycling services at campgrounds
- ▲ Provided funding for snowplowing at ski trail parking areas
- ▲ Building new mountain bike trail sections
- ▲ Providing summer naturalist programs and interpretive programs for the general public
- ▲ Purchasing and installing 300 snowshoe trail markers
- ▲ Removal of hazard trees at campgrounds, boat landings, and a day use site

- ▲ Installed new boat landing, boat dock, and replaced boat ramp
- ▲ Grooming of 10 cross-country ski trails

Contact: Catherine Pinegar, 715-362-1373



*Did you know?
There are over 900
campsites in 51
campgrounds on the
Forest. Many can
be reserved in
advance.*

More Kids in the Woods

The *Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin- Sowing the Seeds of Environmental Literacy and Stewardship* project is enabling students to create native plant gardens on school grounds in the NW, SE, and NE parts of Wisconsin from 2008 through 2011. It started in 2006 as a two-year agreement between the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest's Lakewood-Laona Ranger District, the Nicolet Distance Education Network, and two elementary schools. The goal was to create native plant gardens at District offices while connecting students with the land around their communities. Now this program, one of 16 proposals receiving More Kids in the Woods funding, has blossomed into a multi-school-wide project involving two Districts, the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, the Eastern Region's Urban Connections Program, and 12 external partners across the state. All are united in their desire to return native landscapes to children's lives.

Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin brings together K-12 teachers and natural resource professionals to engage students in life-long learning activities that:

- Excite them about nature and the outdoors through hands-on experiences,
- Introduce them to the environmental sciences through habitat restoration in their schoolyards and communities, and
- Help them communicate about their discoveries by integrating science, arts, and the humanities.

Throughout summer 2008, four interns earned a stipend and science credit while assisting Lakewood-Laona District personnel with natural resource management (including monitoring nest boxes, restoring trout habitat, treating non-native invasive plants, and surveying for wolves, black terns, and the state endangered northern blue butterfly). In July 2008, educators from UW-Superior, Bayfield School District, and Washburn School District attended EPS' two-week RESTORE Institute for NW WI in Madison. Contact: Nicole Shutt, Biological Technician, 715-276-6333



Laona's fourth grade class poses by the native plant garden they helped establish at the Laona Ranger Station in June 2008



The 40-acre Glidden School Forest is one of 357 school forests in Wisconsin that were established in the late 70s and early 80s.

Kids reconnect with nature at school forest

The Great Divide Ranger District gave students the opportunity to learn about conservation, nature, and forests at a recent visit to the Glidden School Forest.

District employees set up different stations at the school forest so that elementary students could experience the great outdoors, and be educated about how the Forest Services cares for the land that surrounds them and how they too can care for the land. At a wildlife station, students learned about loons, which

included fitting them with “loony attire” that resembled the bird, while teaching them of the loons’ special and unique features.

A station set up about soils provided the hands-on experience of digging a small soil pit so they could see what soil looks like below the surface of the ground. Students also learned about how the formation and influence of different soil types guide some forest management practices. District timber staff led a presentation at another station on how to measure and age trees and identify different tree species. Each student received a tree

seedling to take home.

The fire station, hosted by special guest Smokey Bear and staff taught students the importance of fire safety at home and in the forest, and included demonstrations of tools used to prevent and combat wildfires.

Contact: Nancy Borman, Business Management Assistant, Great Divide District, 715-264-2511.



Students learn about water flow at the Stream Simulator

Forest partners with others at Youth Outdoor Expo

In today’s world of video games and the Internet, many children appear to be losing touch with the outdoor traditions that have entertained residents of northern Wisconsin for generations. To revive some interest and curiosity of outdoor recreation, a Taylor

County Youth Outdoor Expo was held in May 2008. Organized by the Taylor County Sportsman’s Club, the Expo provided experiences such as a casting competition, archery shooting and the opportunity to see a live red-tailed hawk. The forest provided their interactive Stream Simulator that allows students to visualize how human activities can alter natural stream flow.

The event brought together more

than 120 volunteers, including private organizations, outdoor clubs, wildlife groups, and government entities, all working together to explore many forms of outdoor activities. Contact: Ann Hoeffler, Medford-Park Falls Ranger District, 715-748-4875

Kids Fishing Day a popular learning experience for young and old

For the past several years, the Chequamegon-Nicolet has partnered with a variety of groups and organizations by sponsoring Kids Fishing Days. One example is an event that was held at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. Over 310 kids and 220 adults participated, and the event had over 20 sponsors. In addition to fishing, Center staff and volunteers provided many presentations. Kids learned about tackle, dragonflies, invertebrates and other critters fish eat, and had an opportunity to get up close and personal with a Great Horned Owl. Those with artistic inclinations learned about

“yotaku”, a fish painting technique. The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, located near Ashland, provides a variety of historical and wildlife displays, as well as interactive kiosks that teach people about the rich history of the northern Great Lakes. Partners at the Center include the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Historical Society, Friends of the Center, and the University of Wisconsin Extension in cooperation with the Northern Wisconsin History Center. Contact: Steve Hoecker, Center Director, 715-685-9983.



Smokey Bear visits young anglers

Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage, Trails

A celebration of recreation trails and historic preservation

The Butternut-Franklin Lakes area, located east of Eagle River, has drawn hikers to its Hidden Lakes trail since it was developed in 1990. The 13-mile trail encircles the lakes area and passes through numerous scenic vistas. Unknown to many trail users, it also crosses through or near 20 archaeological sites that represent a 4,000 year continuum of Native American settlement and history. With the established and well-

used trail, there was a need to bring the story of Native settlement to the attention of trail users. To accomplish this, the Forest turned to one of its many partners, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), for help with the development of a product to heighten awareness of trail users. Two graduate students in the UWSP Environmental Education Program, developed three interpretive panels with assistance from project consultant Ms. Giüwegiizhigookway Martin, Lac Vieux Desert Tribal Historic

Preservation Officer. They will be placed in a trailside kiosk, and give visitors information on the scenic beauty of the area along with helping them understand how Native peoples have called this area home for thousands of years. The Butternut-Franklin Lakes Foundation and the Eastern National Forest Interpretive Association provided funding for the panels. *Contact: Mark Bruhy, Forest Archaeologist, 715-362-1361*



A portion of the scenic Hidden Lakes trail

In the loop with ATV Connectors

The Lakewood-Laona Ranger District opened two All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) connectors in 2008—the Himley Lake and Crooked Lake ATV Connectors. Both serve as links between communities and extensive ATV route and trail systems allowing residents and vacationers alike the opportunity to ride from their front door. Local ATV groups have been integral in identifying potential routes as well as volunteering

their time and energy to install signs. Working collaboratively with the clubs, the Forest has been able to construct 3.25 miles of ATV trail and designated 1.6 miles of ATV route on existing travel corridors. These trail and route segments connect these communities to ATV riding opportunities that span hundreds of miles. In addition, The Forest designated a connector which links two previously unconnected portions of the Nicolet State Trail near the

Forest and Oconto County line. When complete, the Nicolet trail will be the ATV trail system’s “backbone” on the Nicolet side spanning from south of the Forest border to the Michigan state line, where it will connect with a vast network of Michigan state trails. The Nicolet State Trail will provide over 60 miles of riding opportunities within the national Forest boundary and serve as a link to other ATV trail networks. *Contact: Evan Miller, Lakewood-Laona Ranger District, 715-674-4481*



Did you know? The Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan, revised in 2004, allows for up to 85 miles of new ATV trail on the Nicolet side, and up to 100 miles of new trail on the Chequamegon side.

Portions of popular trail find a new home

In early 2008, 3.1 miles of new trail were added to the Dead Horse Run ATV and snowmobile trail located on the Great Divide Ranger District near Clam Lake. The new section of trail replaces one that was poorly constructed and located. There was a need to minimize such impacts while at the same time providing a safe riding experience for Forest

visitors on this very popular trail. Construction of the new section of trail includes new gravel, surfacing, and culverts, and was designed to resemble a mini high standard road. This project is part of a comprehensive look at the entire Dead Horse Run ATV and snowmobile trail. Additionally, new trails will be added in 3 to 4 mile increments over the next 4 years, for a total of 15 miles of new trail. The goals associated with these new

trails also align their location within proper management areas as defined by the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan, and reduce negative impacts to soil and water, while keeping in mind the desire to provide safe and enjoyable riding experiences. *Contact: Jim Mineau, Hydrologist, 715-762-5182.*



A portion of the new Dead Horse Run trail

Walk the talk for sustainability

Timber Management

2008 Payments to Counties based on timber sale receipts and/or payments authorized under the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act Reauthorization and Amendment of 2008:

Ashland	\$324,513
Bayfield	\$472,791
Florence	\$179,999
Florence	\$919,242
Langlade	\$72,090
Oconto	\$269,431
Oneida	\$14,151
Price	\$257,360
Sawyer	\$231,490
Taylor	\$245,053
Vilas	\$96,671
TOTAL	3,082,791

Timber management is an essential tool for restoring this once cut over and charred landscape. During 2008, the Chequamegon-Nicolet used timber harvesting to restore 9,828 acres. In doing so, the forest met its target of 76 million board feet. Volume from the Nicolet side of the forest involved a strong and dedicated effort to prepare salvage sales to harvest windthrown timber from the Quad County Tornado (see next page for more information). Other FY08 volume from the Nicolet side came from red pine and hardwood thinning. The red pine was mostly sawtimber from plantations planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s. Hardwood thinning sales involved smaller pulpwood trees used in making a variety of paper products.

Volume sold on the Chequamegon side of the forest involved mostly salvage sales to harvest dead and dying white spruce.

During 2008, the economic vitality of the United States continued to slow causing a significant reduction in new housing starts and a general reduction in manufacturing outputs. This resulted in a decreased demand for wood raw materials used in the housing and paper making industries. Because of the nationally decreased demand, timber harvesting on existing sales decreased to the point where the completion of some sales by the termination date was in jeopardy. Two important things happened in FY2008 to help with this problem. The Chief of the Forest Service determined there was a “Substantial Overriding Public Interest” in extending certain National Forest timber sales and Congress passed legislation that also allowed for additional contract termination adjustments as well as reduced payment rates for some sales. This has allowed purchasers to reduce outputs to better meet raw material demands over time.

The CNNF continues to work with Stewardship Contracting. In FY2008, two Stewardship Contracting Proposals were approved by the Regional Forester. The Day Lake Integrated Resource Timber Contract (IRTC) was awarded from the approved Day Lake Proposal and the Whiskey Oak IRTC was awarded from the previously approved Oak Wilt Control Proposal. IRTCs allow timber to be harvested as payment for service work the contractor is required to do under the contract. When the value of the timber is more than the value of the service work, the excess receipts can be retained by the Forest and used to do other resource restoration work. To date, the CNNF has retained over \$400,000 from IRTCs and has used the money for restoration projects such as culvert replacement to improve fish passage and water quality, control of invasive species, and hazardous fuel reduction. Contact: *Walt Ruckheim, Timber Staff Officer, 715-362-1329.*

Counties opt for payments under the Secure Rural Schools Act in 2008

Since 1980, 25 percent of Forest Service Revenues, such as those from timber sales, mineral resources and grazing fees, have been returned to states in which national forest lands are located. In Fiscal Year 2008, had the option of receiving a newly modified 25 percent seven-year rolling average payment based on receipts, or a share of the State payment as calculated using the

new formula in the Act. The new formula uses multiple factors, including acres of federal land within an eligible county, the average three highest 25 percent payments, and an income adjustment based on the per capita personal income for each county. All but one county opted to receive payments under the new formula in the Act. Three other counties had already been receiving payments under the previous version of the Act. By electing payment under the

new formula, counties that received more than \$100,000 must allocate 80 to 85 percent of the total funds towards roads and schools, and the remaining 15 to 20 percent may be set aside for Title II and/or Title III projects, or the money is returned to the U.S. Treasury. All eligible counties opted to set aside funds for Title II and/or Title III projects from FY08 payments. Contact: *Deb Kidd, Staff Officer, 715-362-1343.*

Quad County Tornado—After The Storm

On June 7, 2007, an F3 tornado with a half-mile swath marched through a 40 mile stretch of Forest, State, Tribal and private lands in Menominee, Langlade, Oconto, and Marinette counties. Fortunately, there were no fatalities and only minor injuries. Over 5,600 acres of Forest Service land on the Lakewood-Laona District were decimated by this event.

Immediately following the storm, initial response focused on public safety. Many Chequamegon-Nicolet employees, working hand in hand with state, local, and private citizens were on the scene to clear roads for private access, check campgrounds to make sure campers were safe, and remove any trees that posed a hazard to life or property.

Much of the area impacted was part of a huge red pine plantation that ran along State Highway 64. These trees were originally planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, and had been thinned over the years. The remaining downed and windthrown trees needed immediate attention as they posed a serious risk for serious wildland fires and massive insect damage.

After the cleanup of about 700 acres in existing timber sales, the Forest utilized the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 to expedite the necessary environmental analysis. A series of 11 large tornado salvage sales, along with 10 smaller ones, began to be sold the same day the analysis was approved. Since that time, over 40 million board feet of timber have been sold from the tornado area and 23 million board feet have been harvested. To date, close to 85 percent of the sale acreage has been salvaged logged, and additional salvage is scheduled for completion in the summer/fall of 2009, for a total of 3200 acres.

Tree planting in the area has begun, with 360 acres planted in 2009, and another 400 planned over the next two years. Areas not planted will be naturally regenerated and inspected over the next several years to insure new, healthy trees replace those lost by the storm. *Contact: John Lampereur, Lakewood-Laona District Silviculturist, 715-276-6333.*



Downed trees in the storm area



Many large decks of salvaged timber were a common site in the storm area.

Forest Planning and Inventory and Monitoring

The Chequamegon-Nicolet has completed its fourth year of work executing the Forest Plan to the fullest potential with the available resources. The focus of Forest Planning during 2008 was to:

1. Clarify topics and deal with emerging issues that were unforeseen, yet inevitably arise during implementation of a Forest Plan,
2. Monitor the accomplishments towards full Forest Plan implementation; and
3. Identify the objectives of the Forest Plan that require more attention.

A great deal of coordination among the various resource programs is needed to maximize efficiency of these efforts, track our progress, and our decision making as we progress towards our goal to fully implement the Plan. To ensure the health and habitat of many species of plants, animals, insects, and determine soil, water and air quality through survey work, in 2009 over 147,000 acres were inventoried on the Chequamegon-Nicolet. The annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report is a technical document that serves as the primary way to inform Forest leadership about progress towards the comprehensive vision outlined in the Forest Plan. Several annual monitoring reports resulting from the surveys were accomplished in the following areas: soil resource, butterfly/moth, eagle/osprey/heron, earthworms, goshawk, red-shouldered hawk, American marten, ruffed grouse, wolf, Kirtland warbler, bats, air analysis, lake and lake and fish surveys.

The activities and accomplishments described in this *Year In Review 2008* are examples of how the natural resource programs of the Chequamegon-Nicolet implement the plan. *Contact: BJ Johnson, Forest Planner, 715-362-1335, or Dave Hoppe, Soil Scientist, 715-362-1366.*



Soil Scientist Greg Knight checking frost tubes for winter logging study

Winter logging effects being studied

The Chequamegon-Nicolet is participating in a winter logging study to better quantify the combined depth of frost and/or packed snow conditions necessary to prevent detrimental soil rutting or compaction. Carolyn Naper, soil scientist with the San Dimas Technology and Development Center in San Dimas, California, is leading the study which also includes sites on the Okanagan-Wenatchee, Idaho Panhandle, and Hiawatha National Forests. The Forest study sites are located in two timber sale units with somewhat poor to poorly drained types of soils on the Medford-Park Falls Ranger District. Soil Scientist Greg Knight collected baseline data from frost tubes and buried temperature and moisture sensors during 2008 and early 2009. Timber harvesting

and additional data collecting will occur in the winter of 2009-2010. A Forest Service national soil disturbance monitoring protocol is also being test pre and post-harvest as part of this study. One objective of the study is to develop winter logging guidelines that incorporate the latest research on snowpack strength and frozen soil, and provide measurable criteria for determining when appropriate conditions exist. *Contact: Dave Hoppe, Forest Soil Scientist, 715-362-1366.*

Road Construction

Implementing the Travel Management Rule

During 2008, the Forest continued the process of implementing the Travel Management Rule. Issued in 2005, the Forest Service developed this nation-wide rule because of the increase in motorized vehicle use on National Forest lands. This rule's purpose is to properly manage and minimize resource damage and user conflicts.

The Travel Management Project Environmental Assessment was released in July 2008, with a public comment period through August 2008. During this formal comment period, the Forest received 486 letters totaling 967 comments from the public, and many of them listed specific roads. These comments were considered in the Travel Management Project Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, which was released in September 2008.

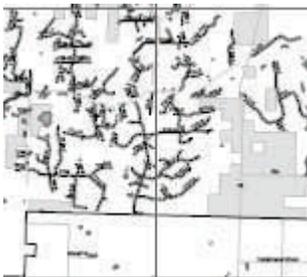
Throughout the process, Forest Engineers, working in an multidisciplinary fashion with many other specialists were verifying and correcting road data information. A Road Analysis Process (RAP) was conducted following the series of open houses in early 2008. This analysis included review of specific roads suggested by the public. A second RAP was performed following the public comment period to consider additional specific roads submitted by the public. The outcome was the development of alternative maps along with Geographic Information System specialists.

Since that time, the Forest has published the first Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), which is the official tool to be used by the public for knowing where they can travel on the Forest with motorized vehicles. These maps, broken down by specific geographic areas, are **free** to the public and available at any Chequamegon-Nicolet office. They are also posted on the Forest web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/MVUM/index.html>.

The MVUM will be updated yearly. The suggestions received about specific roads could result in adding or removing specific roads on the new map.

The Forest is continuing to hear from the public about roads they would like to see become available or unavailable. The next MVUM will be published in March 2010, and the public is encouraged to send any comments, preferably road-specific, by November 30, 2009. Comments can be sent to Joan Marburger, Travel Management Project Coordinator, 715-762-5178.

Sample cutout of the Motor Vehicle Use Map used to implement the Travel Management Rule



Revolutionize effectiveness and efficiency

“Green” features focus of the renovation at the new Forest Supervisor’s office in Rhinelander

In Fiscal Year 2007, the Chequamegon-Nicolet and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation agreed to the Forest Service’s purchase of a building that was previously a Department of Motor Vehicle Services Center in Rhinelander. This started the long process of renovating the building using the following project objectives:

- ◆ Create a facility that exhibits a conservation ethic
- ◆ Develop a utilitarian and educational mission with less materials and financial investment
- ◆ Optimize each dollar spent

During 2008, much of the work in the building was focused on demolition and renovation. Under the “reduce, reuse, recycle” theme, many of the existing materials removed from the building, such as doors, furniture, and wiring, were salvaged or collected for recycling. Students from the Blackwell Job Corps worked cooperatively with the Oneida County Solid Waste Landfill in repurposing project deconstruction materials.

Following the demolition, renovation work began, keeping the following design strategies in mind:

- ◆ Rethinking energy by optimizing energy use through natural ventilation, and an efficient heating and cooling system
- ◆ Rethinking land by optimizing the site potential through the use of existing landscaping, car pool parking, and bicycle parking. And using environmentally preferable and locally available materials
- ◆ Rethinking air by enhancing indoor environmental quality and optimizing operational and maintenance practices
- ◆ Rethinking water by protecting and conserving water through the use of native landscape plantings, water efficient fixtures and fittings, and the control and filter of storm water runoff

A move to the new facility is planned for fall 2009. *Contact: Bill Sullivan, Forest Engineer, 715-762-5171.*

Be an employer of choice

Student employment

In 2008, the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF recruited approximately 30 STEP students for a variety of positions on the Forest during the summer. These students gained valuable experience in the fields of forestry, recreation, wildlife and fisheries, botany, engineering and hydrology. In addition to the STEP students, 6 students returned under the SCEP program.

What are STEP and SCEP?

These are two components under the Student Educational Employment Program. STEP (Student Temporary Employment Component) offers temporary employment not necessarily related to a student’s academic field of study. SCEP (Student Career Experience Component) offers

students valuable work experience directly related to their academic field of study. A student may be eligible for permanent employment under this component after successfully completing their education and meeting work requirements. *Contact: Don Hoppe*

or Stephanie Dalka, Forest STEP and SCEP Coordinators, 715-362-1300



The Chequamegon-Nicolet was a recipient of the 2008 Eastern Region Honor Award under the “Employer of Choice” category.

The award recognized the Forest’s recruitment efforts for SCEP and STEP students.



Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center—2008 Highlights

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DIPLOMAS AND GRADUATIONS—From the period of July 2007 to July 2008, 98 High School Equivalency Diplomas were awarded and 143 students graduated from their respective training program.

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING TRAINING PROGRAM—In Fiscal Year 2008, over 50 Blackwell students fought fires across the United States. Through the cooperative efforts of the Chequamegon-Nicolet and Blackwell staffs, a Wildland Firefighting program is offered to students.

PASSING RIGOROUS REVIEWS—During Fiscal Year 2008, the US Department of Labor formed an advisory committee to help determine the future of the Job Corps Program across the country. For six weeks, Blackwell was inspected by several teams to determine the fitness of its campus. In addition, a Center hygiene inspection was conducted and the Forest Service reviewed the entire program of instruction. Blackwell did well on all of the inspections.

PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ◆ Remodeling the future site of the Chequamegon-Nicolet Supervisor's office
- ◆ Construction of new cabinets and replacement of storage building roof at the Lakewood Ranger District office
- ◆ Fence removal for Forest County Forestry Department
- ◆ Working with Oneida County Solid Waste Landfill in repurposing project deconstruction materials
- ◆ Landscape and trail creation at Wabeno Veteran's Memorial Park
- ◆ Certified Nursing Assistant activities at the Potawatomi Health and Wellness Center
- ◆ Volunteering at Armstrong Creek Assisted Living Program
- ◆ Hosting 3 blood drives to support the American Red Cross and donating over 160 units of blood
- ◆ Removal and replacement of concrete sidewalks at the Laona Ranger Station
- ◆ Renovation of historical Green Lake Shelter on the Lakewood Ranger District
- ◆ Addition to building at Langlade County fairgrounds
- ◆ Painting at Town of Wabeno fairgrounds
- ◆ Providing assistance to local organizations at the Trump Lake Fish-O-Ree
- ◆ Volunteering at Crandon Nursing Home
- ◆ Participating in Make A Difference Day at Wabeno Elementary School and Head Start Programs

*“ . . . A change is a change
 whether it's good or bad,
 but sometimes it's hard,
 sometimes it's sad.
 But even though I don't want to,
 I know that I should,
 because this time I know,
 that this change is for the good. . . ”*
*(excerpt of poem by Blackwell
 student Nichole Christopherson)*

About Blackwell

Blackwell Job Corps, located approximately 8 miles east of Laona, Wisconsin, is funded by the Department of Labor and operated by Forest Service employees. The Center offers hands-on technical training in the fields of bricklaying, business technologies, carpentry, construction crafts, electrical, health occupations, painting, and welding. The Center also gives students the opportunity to earn their High School Equivalency Diploma. Currently, 205 men and women are housed at the Center in separate dormitories.

Blackwell is one of 19 Job Corps Centers operated by the US Forest Service. For information on enrolling in the Job Corps Program, call 800-733-JOBS, or visit Blackwell on the web at <http://blackwell.jobcorps.gov/home.aspx>

Recognizing our partners and volunteers

Volunteers contributed the equivalent of 7 person years with an appraised value of \$245,056 of donated labor. The majority of this labor was related to recreation uses, with many volunteering to be campground hosts, or help with trail maintenance. This also included wildlife work done by many national and local wildlife clubs and organizations, and those who volunteered for Passport in Time projects.

Hosted Programs, such as the Experience Works or Senior Citizens Employment and Training, Inc., contributed an equivalent of over 14 person years for an appraised value of \$470,468. Many hosted workers performed campground maintenance and facility repairs, while others worked in Wildlife, Timber, and as office receptionists. A total of 29 individuals provided this valuable work to the Forest.

Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) members, consisting of individuals ages 15-18 doing work in recreation, wildlife, and timber, accounted for 1.22 person years at an appraised value of \$40,573. The YCC program, established in 1971, permits young men and women to enjoy working, earning, and learning by doing projects that further the development and conservation of the nation's natural resources. *Contact: Dawn Meier, Medford-Park Falls Ranger District, 715-748-4875.*



Volunteers and partners at a restoration project on the Forest

Developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 encourages the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). It is developed in the context of collaborative agreements and guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by local governments, local fire departments, and the state agency responsible for forest management, in consultation with interested parties and federal land management

agencies that manage land in the vicinity of an at-risk community. The Chequamegon-Nicolet completed two CWPPs in 2008.

One CWPP is the first of its kind in the country to cross boundaries in two states. The State Line CWPP is located in the northern part of the Eagle River-Florence Ranger District, and crosses into the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan.

The Riverview CWPP is located on the Lakewood-Laona Ranger District, which had been severely impacted by a tornado in 2007. The tornado impacted

most public and private landowners in the area, and the CWPP brought together many entities working together.

These CWPPs would never have been possible without the tireless teamwork of our partners: local volunteer fire departments, county officials, township officials, the general public, and the offices of the Department of Natural Resources in Wisconsin and Michigan. *Contact: Jim Grant, Fire Staff Officer, 715-362-1341*



At risk communities face a severe threat of wildfires

Teaming up with Cub Scouts to increase bluebird habitat

Cub Scouts from Park Falls Pack 551 improved bluebird habitat on the Forest in 2008. With the assistance of employees on the Chequamegon-Nicolet, the Scouts constructed and installed 12 bluebird houses. Forest employees and the young scouts

selected suitable locations for the houses at the Riley Lake Wildlife Area near Park Falls. They will be monitoring "their" houses to see how effectively they attract bluebirds. The Scouts learned construction techniques and developed an understanding of wildlife and the environment. This project taught the Scouts they can make a difference in the environment,

and that even little projects can have positive impacts. *Contact: Jim Mineau, Hydrologist, 715-762-5182.*



Scouts and friends pose in front of their bluebird boxes

Volunteers help maintain population of mussels in the South Fork Flambeau River

Turn of the century logging and log drives wreaked havoc on most of the rivers across the northwoods. On many rivers, this activity left them wide, shallow and lacking in large wood and deep pools. One of the rivers most severely impacted was the South Fork Flambeau River (SFFR), which has its headwaters at Round Lake in Price County and flows in a southwesterly direction until it meets the North Fork Flambeau River. To restore several thousand feet of this river, the Forest developed a project to improve habitat by narrowing and deepening the channel and adding large wood back into the system.

The SFFR is considered a warm water river so it has a diverse biological community that includes some very interesting aquatic species. The usual suspects are found like walleye, smallmouth bass, musky, suckers, and lake sturgeon, and more unique species are found there - freshwater mussels. Mussels, like clams, are organisms that have two shells and a tongue-shaped foot used to pull it along the bottom of rivers and lakes. It breathes through gills and relies on the river to bring it tiny microscopic plants and animals, which it filters out of the water. Mussels may look a lot like clams but differ in one important aspect. Mussels must have a host species, like a fish, to complete their life cycle. Mussels are also an important food source for a variety of wildlife including birds, raccoons, otters and turtles.

The technique employed to do the habitat restoration on the SFFR utilizes an excavator to dig within the existing channel. The excavated material is used to build new banks, which result in a narrower/deeper channel. Mussels live within that excavated material.

Even though there were no threatened or endangered mussels found in the stretches of river where the work was done, the Forest wanted to try relocating some of them away from where the heavy equipment would be operating. Unlike fish, mussels can not move far very fast. This was when the South Fork Flambeau River Watershed Association (SFFRWA) came to the rescue. The SFFRWA is an organization of interested citizens whose mission is "To protect, enhance, and restore the SFFR for its ecological, recreational, aesthetic and cultural values for future generations." The group was excited to see the restoration work being done in the watershed and volunteered their services for the project.

Over the last two summers the SFFRWA spent 2.5 days kneeling in the river digging up mussels and moving them to suitable areas directly upstream and downstream of the project areas. Over 6000 mussels, comprised of mostly six species, were relocated safely out of the way of the heavy equipment.

A walk through the area today will reveal many mussels enjoying their newly restored habitat. And thanks to the SFFRWA, a seed bank of mussels has been maintained so that mussel densities within the habitat areas will be restored to their former glory. *Contact: Sue Reinecke, Fisheries Biologist, 715-762-5185.*



The long-standing partnership with the South Fork Flambeau River Watershed Association (SFFRWA) was recognized in 2008. The group, represented in the photo by Rick Thorbjornsen, President of SFFRWA (left), recently received the Eastern Region Honor Award for Protecting Ecosystems Across Boundaries, which was presented by the Chequamegon-Nicolet's Deputy Forest Supervisor Tony Erba.

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