



**THE YEAR  
IN REVIEW  
O T T A W A  
NATIONAL FOREST  
2002**



# FROM THE FOREST EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the 2002 Ottawa Year in Review. We're excited to share our past accomplishments and achievements with you. The projects highlighted in this report are aimed at implementing our Forest Plan, maintaining healthy ecosystems, and supplying valued products and services to the public. Each of the actions described are a testimony to our commitment to the land and the people that use it.

National Forests are one-of-a-kind national treasures and are an irreplaceable part of our natural heritage. To that end, the Ottawa is managed for today's needs without compromising the needs of the future.

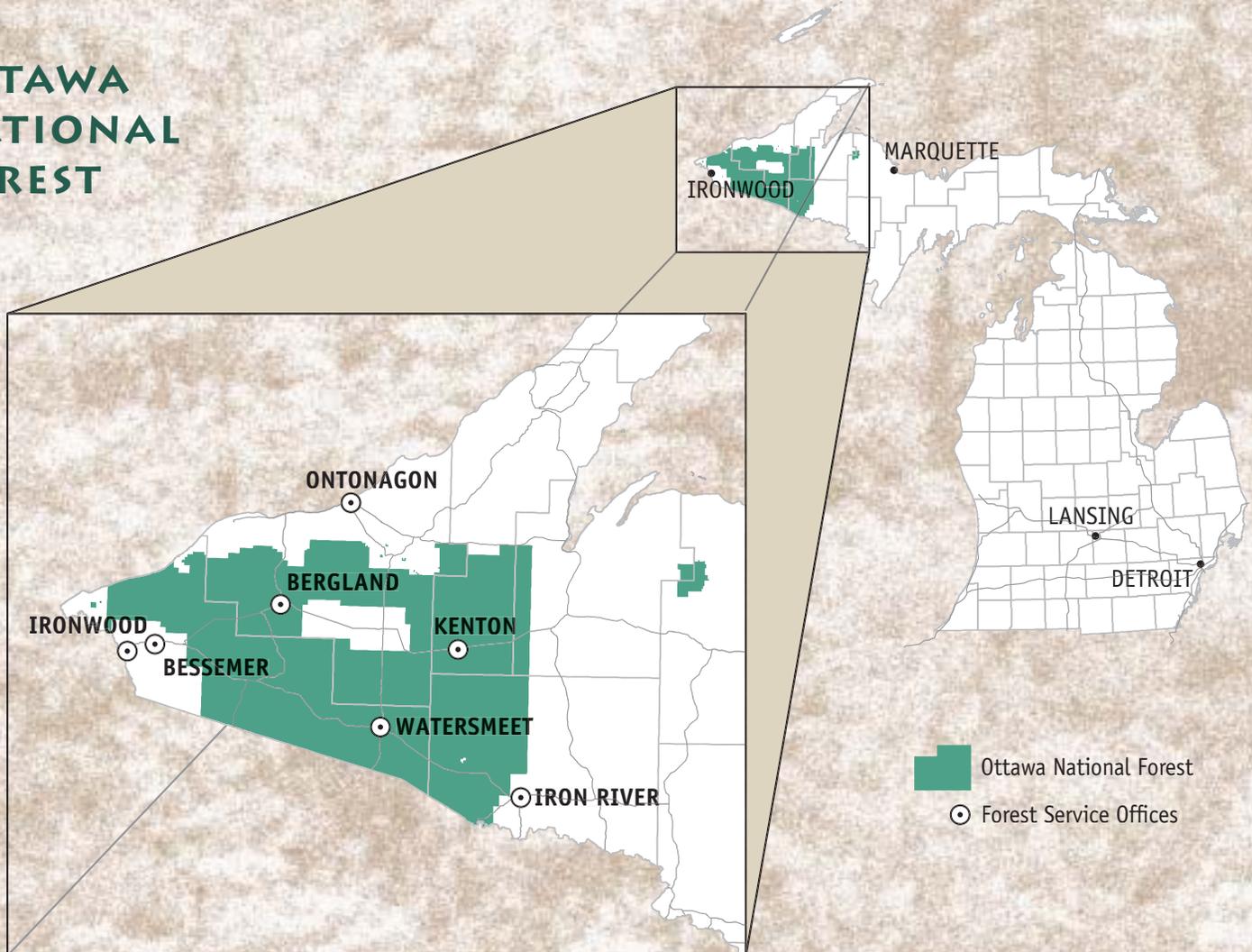
A tremendous amount of work is being performed by Forest Service

employees, partners and volunteers that continues the restoration work started in the 1930s by Forest employees and Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees when the Ottawa National Forest was established. The work completed helps provide for a variety of wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, scenic landscapes, clean air and water, jobs, wood products and healthy forests.

As you learn more about our Forest and the opportunities it provides, we hope you'll be inspired to see it for yourself. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you.

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## OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST



# PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES ENTRUSTED TO US.

**AS CARETAKERS OF THE** nearly one million acres of land that make up the Ottawa National Forest, we are committed to protecting the natural resources entrusted to us. Over the past year, we have completed significant work that improves our watersheds, provides for critical wildlife and fisheries habitat, and discourages the spread and introduction of invasive species.

Managing for today also means looking to our future. While we work to implement our current Forest Plan, we are also working to make necessary changes which will bring the Plan more in line with changing customer expectations and current technology. All of this important work helps ensure that our forests will be here for future generations to enjoy.

Our current management focus ensures that we maintain the integrity of the entire ecosystem and prompts the need for increased collaborative work with the public. Protecting our forests is, in fact, a joint effort. Partners and volunteers who work with our employees provide invaluable contributions to the Ottawa allowing us to accomplish critical resource work. Individuals, groups and organizations who participate in our planning and implementation processes help us focus on those issues which are important to you. Together, we are all responsible for the stewardship of our natural resources.



## FOREST PLANNING

In the years just ahead the Ottawa National Forest will be revising our Forest Plan. The current Forest Plan was signed in the mid-1980s and describes broad goals and priorities for the Forest. While we believe that the fundamentals of the existing Forest Plan are sound, there are some areas that may need review and possible revision. As we set the stage for this effort, we look forward to a new level of public interaction and are committed to working closely with individuals, groups and organizations interested in the management of their national forests.

## HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE

The President's Healthy Forests Initiative addresses the need to focus more attention on activities that repair forest health. The Ottawa National Forest places a high priority on identifying and acting on challenges which create an obstacle to restoring forest health, including non-native invasive plant species.

Purple loosestrife is a wetland perennial that grows in a wide range of habitats. One mature plant can produce more than two million seeds annually! Once this plant has invaded an area, it can jeopardize various threatened and endangered native wetland plants and wildlife by eliminating natural foods and cover. Ottawa employees and volunteers have worked hard over the last several years to inventory, map and remove this plant from the Forest.



**Purple loosestrife can invade an area and take over native vegetation.**

In 2002, the Forest was awarded a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to prepare a public service announcement about the invasive aquatic plant Eurasian water-milfoil. This plant is an aggressive, non-native plant that can be spread from one lake to another by boaters, personal watercraft users and fishermen. The public service announcement was designed to educate lake users about this plant and practices they should adopt to prevent the spread. A 30-second video was aired on local TV stations, shown at State Welcome Centers, resorts and other visitor contact points. Signage at popular boat ramps is another method that the Forest uses to educate people about this invasive plant.



**Eurasian water-milfoil is an aquatic invasive species.**



## ANNUAL BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

Each year the Ottawa National Forest hosts the Annual Breeding Bird Census. Intermediate and expert birders join Forest Service employees and beginning birders in conducting inventory surveys on approximately 100 permanent plots in a variety of habitats across the Forest. Volunteers record all birds heard and/or seen from a plot center for a 10-minute period. Inventories show that bird populations on the Ottawa are generally stable. Birds spotted during the 2002 census include ovenbird, red-eyed vireo, Nashville warbler, hermit thrush, white-throated sparrow, black-capped chickadees and others. Data collected on the Ottawa is shared with researchers for use in coordinating the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas, as well as others who request the data.

## THE HISTORIC BERGLAND SITE

The Bergland Administrative site was constructed in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was one of the first administrative offices built for the Forest. The site was an active Forest Service facility until the mid-1990s, when it was closed. Working with a group of local citizens, plans are now underway to turn this unique site into a Cultural and Heritage Center for the western Upper Peninsula.



Built in 1936, the Bergland Administrative site is getting a new lease on life.

## SNOW COUNTRY BYWAYS

Abundant snow, great trails and spectacular scenery make snowmobiling on the Ottawa a popular winter recreation sport, which contributes significantly to our local economies. Snowmobiling in Michigan is a multi-billion dollar industry. There are nearly 350,000 registered snowmobiles in Michigan, with literally hundreds of thousands of out-of-state snowmobile enthusiasts attracted to the area as well. Our famous winters and central location to large, urban populations makes the Upper Peninsula the number one snowmobile destination in the world!

There are over 1,500 miles of snowmobile trails in the U.P., with 450 miles of these trails crossing and intersecting the Ottawa. Other portions of the trail system are in State, County, private or corporate ownership. With the current trend of corporate disposal of industrial land, there is a very real threat that our snowmobile trails could be in jeopardy of being closed off. In an effort to preserve and protect these snowmobile trails, the Ottawa National Forest is partnering with the Michigan

Snowmobile Association, the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and other National Forests within Michigan to ensure that snowmobile corridors remain open for the long-term. In cooperation with these groups, the Ottawa is working to acquire key parcels of land which are being divested by corporations. The result will be viable snowmobile trail corridors that will be available now and into the future, benefiting our local communities and providing for winter recreation opportunities.



# RESTORE THE LAND TO CONSERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE.

**OTTAWA EMPLOYEES ARE** dedicated to maintaining and restoring the long-term health of the land. We are also committed to respecting the needs of local communities and developing ways to provide for a full range of uses. This mission and dedication has helped to shape the Forest that we enjoy today.



Once cut-over and scarred, the area that now makes up the Ottawa used to be “the lands nobody wanted.” From the 1920s to the 1950s, Congress designated many such wastelands across the east and midwest as national forests. That’s when the restoration of the Ottawa began. In the 1930s, Forest Service employees working with CCC enrollees planted thousands of hardwoods and pines, built roads, campgrounds, trails and other facilities. These efforts helped move us toward restoring the landscape and have served as building blocks for today’s work.

Today, for every project we initiate, whether it’s a commercial timber sale, campground maintenance, or trail construction, we ensure that it is designed and administered following our Forest Plan standards and guidelines. Environmental analysis on every project helps ensure that our actions today don’t compromise the Forest tomorrow.

## RESTORING RIPARIAN AREAS



Each project initiated by the Ottawa takes into consideration watershed protection and restoration. Improvements to current conditions are achieved through careful planning of projects and whenever possible, restoration efforts are also made to bring disturbed areas back into a healthy and properly functioning ecosystem. Where soil and/or watershed problems are recognized, but affect or involve multiple landowners, the Ottawa works with partners such as Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, or Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the road commissions of local counties and private land owners to correct or improve these situations. Working with other land managers, we enhance our collective knowledge of riparian areas and join our forces to make a difference.

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## THREATENED, ENDANGERED AND SENSITIVE SPECIES: WHAT WE’RE DOING TO HELP

FEDERAL SPECIES	OTTAWA NF ACTIVITIES
GRAY WOLF	Promote awareness through educational presentations, displays.
BALD EAGLE	Conduct surveys annually, improve habitat quality.
REGIONAL FORESTER’S SENSITIVE SPECIES	OTTAWA NF ACTIVITIES
NORTHERN GOSHAWK	Inventory, protect nest sites, use silvicultural techniques to improve habitat.
TRUMPETER SWAN	Re-introduction of the swan to historic nesting areas.
BLACK TERN	Protection of wetlands and habitat areas through state-wide partnerships (NAWCA Grant).
PORT-HOLE LICHEN	Continuing inventory, protecting known sites, protecting cedar swamps habitat through project design criteria.
GOBLIN FERN	Continued inventory and site protection; following regional conservation strategy, assessing earthworm threat.
PYGMY SNAKETAIL DRAGONFLY	Locating populations and applying riparian design criteria to protect them.
CREEK HEELSPLITTER MUSSEL	Monitoring known sites and protecting with riparian design criteria.
LAKE STURGEON	Active restoration partnerships on Forest.



## J.W. TOUMEY NURSERY

The Forest Service established the Watersmeet Tree Nursery in 1935 in response to a growing need for tree seedlings. The heavy logging and milling era near the turn of the century had all but exhausted the timber resources in the Lake States, and it was not until the formation of the eastern national forests in the early 1930s that any efforts were made toward reforesting cut-over lands. The James W. Toumey Nursery produces millions of seedlings throughout the year in an attempt to establish quality forests for the future.



The J.W. Toumey Nursery has been providing quality seedlings for nearly 70 years. This historic photo shows how far we've progressed.



The nursery raises bare root and containerized tree seedlings, along with miscellaneous native plants for planting on seven National Forests in the Lake States area. Approximately 3.8 million seedlings are raised and distributed annually by the nursery, which has a total inventory near 8 million. Principal species include red pine, jack pine, white pine, spruce, and red oak. In addition to timber reforestation, many seedlings are raised for research, wildlife plantings, and erosion control. Along with the bareroot stock the Nursery also has two 140'

greenhouses which produce approximately 250,000 containerized seedlings, and one grafting greenhouse used for superior trees and propagation of cuttings.



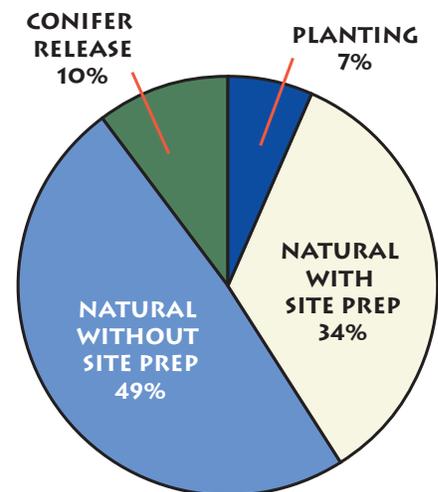
The Nursery includes 110 acres, with 55 acres currently available for planting. The number of trees grown in the Nursery is determined by each national forest's projected annual needs. At full capacity, it is capable of producing 7.2 million seedlings per year.



## REFORESTATION

Whenever timber harvests are planned and carried out on the Ottawa, managers ensure that sites are reforested and soils and watersheds protected. Results of reforestation efforts over the past few years across the Forest are encouraging. An increased emphasis on natural regeneration has been effective thanks to healthy forest conditions. All scheduled regeneration surveys and certifications are being completed to assure that all sites are adequately stocked with trees. In response to increased levels of damage to regeneration from deer browse, we are becoming more active to control the impacts of deer. Forest employees are continually looking at ways for efficiently and effectively reforesting identified areas.

### REFORESTATION METHOD % BY ACREAGE



# PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

## THE OTTAWA NATIONAL

Forest offers visitors many unique and varied opportunities to enjoy, learn about, and experience the great outdoors. From camping, hiking and boating to finding a secluded place to hunt or fish, the Ottawa has something for everyone.

Visitors to the Forest and local residents alike enjoy the many activities offered by the Forest. We're proud to offer nature programs at our Visitor Center and campgrounds during the summer months and enjoy presenting educational programs throughout the year to our local area schools. Forest Service-sponsored events such as our Kids Fishing Derbies and volunteer work days offer our visitors a chance to experience the Forest hands-on.

Partnerships help the Forest meet many of our objectives including restoring healthy watersheds, providing quality recreation experiences, and sustaining healthy ecosystems and communities. Partnerships range from small local projects to coordinated state-wide, interagency agreements—each one vital to helping us provide quality experiences to Forest visitors.

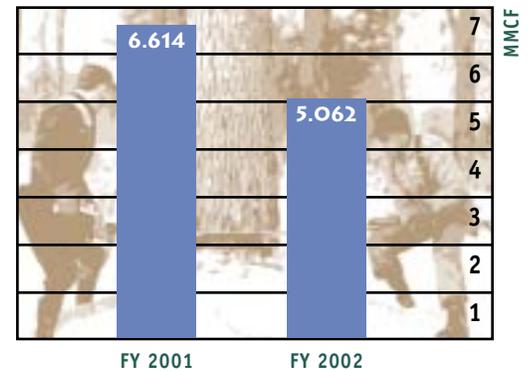
Balancing our resources with the needs of the public is one of the many challenges of managing the Ottawa.



## TIMBER MANAGEMENT

The Ottawa timber program serves multiple purposes. Besides providing raw timber products to a national market, timber sales are an important tool that help us meet a variety of resource objectives such as improving the diversity of wildlife habitat conditions and maintaining healthy, sustainable forest ecosystems. The timber sale program also helps maintain our road system and allows us to manage access to the land consistent with other resource objectives. Many timber sales on the Ottawa are investments in improving young stands for future timber and non-timber benefits.

MILLION CUBIC FEET SOLD  
2001-2002



## PAYMENTS TO COUNTIES

Each year the Forest Service makes two kinds of payments to the local units of government for schools and roads. The 25% Payment is equal to 25% of the revenue receipts of the Forest. On the Ottawa, timber represents approximately 97 percent of this revenue. The PILT payment (or Payment in Lieu of Taxes) is a federal payment to local governments based upon federal acres within a county to help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable federal lands within their boundaries.

FY 2001-2002 PAYMENTS TO COUNTIES



■ = 25% PAYMENT  
■ = PILT PAYMENT



The Black River Harbor is a popular Forest destination and is the only Forest Service harbor on a Great Lake.

## RECREATION

Recreation opportunities on the Ottawa National Forest are varied and visitors are often surprised at the multitude of activities available to them. From camping to hiking to boating there are facilities across the Forest to meet a growing demand for developed recreation opportunities. The Forest's trail system is extensive and provides for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. Snowmobile trails and ATV use are becoming more and more popular, as residents and visitors alike explore and experience the forest on OHVs. The U.P. of Michigan is the number one snowmobile destination in the country, due in part to our bountiful snows and beautiful scenery. High-quality wildlife and fishery habitats make the Ottawa a premier hunting and fishing destination. Managing the multiple demands on the Forest in a manner that protects the resources and provides for quality experiences is a job that we take seriously.

## WILDERNESS AREAS: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The Ottawa has nearly 50,000 acres of wilderness and is home to three congressionally-designated wilderness areas: Sylvania, McCormick and Sturgeon River Gorge. A wilderness is best described as a place where nature and its forces work undisturbed by human activities. For some, however, it is a concept, a state of mind, or an opportunity. Wilderness areas provide clean water and air, critical habitat for plants and animals, and scenic beauty. Wilderness areas are generally larger than 5000 acres and have retained their primeval character. Visitors to wilderness areas seek a remote solitude that is often hard to find in a hectic, modern world. Wilderness areas on the Ottawa continue to attract campers and hikers from near and far.

The Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness area provides spectacular scenery and a remoteness that is characteristic of the Ottawa.



## PARTNERSHIPS: SHARING THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE OTTAWA

Nearly all of the products, services, opportunities and changes produced on the Ottawa involve partners. Whether they're from local business communities, volunteer organizations, area Tribes, schools, logging operators, state and local governments, research agencies, environmental groups, hunter/angler associations or others, we couldn't get it done without them. In-kind and shared cash contributions continue to grow year after year as we strengthen our relationships with current partners and create new ties and connections with potential partners. We would like to extend a very big thank you to all of our partners who help us reach our goals and objectives in an efficient and successful manner.

Credits: Purple loosestrife photo on p. 3, Invasive Plant Atlas of new England. Eurasian water-milfoil photo on page 3, United States Geological Survey. Trumpeter swan photo on page 5, NPS photo.

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