



Wisconsin sells 72 acres of Peninsula State Park's trees for \$15,000



By [Steve Schuster \(http://wbay.com/author/wbaysschuster/\)](http://wbay.com/author/wbaysschuster/)

Published: October 24, 2015, 1:18 pm | Updated: October 28, 2015, 8:22 am



Photo by Steve Schuster

Wisconsin has sold 72 acres of Peninsula State Park's trees for \$15,000, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The money will be not be returned to Peninsula State Park, but will be deposited into Wisconsin's conservation fund, which pays for general state parks program operations, according to Paul Holtan, a communications specialist at DNR.

Initially Action 2 News spoke to Bill Ruff, a forester with the Wisconsin DNR who said the money would be going into the state's general fund. Action 2 news learned Oct. 27, that Ruff misspoke and meant the state's general park fund.

According to Wisconsin Statute 28.08, all income from state forest lands shall be paid into the state

treasury to the credit of the conservation fund.

Although environmentalists aren't taking issue with the project itself, some are concerned with how much money the state is taking in for the deal.

"I don't even know what to say. It's just absurd," said Will Stahl, Conservation Chairperson at Wisconsin's Sierra Club.

University of Wisconsin Forestry and Wildlife Ecology Professor Mark Richenbach says there are pros and cons to the current system.

"If money was returned [to Peninsula State Park], would we be concerned they would want to harvest more?," Richenbach asked.

It's unknown as to what Wisconsin legislators think about the current law. Action 2 News reached out to several legislators including Rep. Gordon Hintz (D - Oshkosh) on Friday. Hintz's office declined to comment.

Back in May, Gov. Walker and state Republicans agreed to cut more than \$4.5 million annually from the state's parks funding.

Meanwhile back in Door County, the project calls for the removal of 788 cords of wood, which is slated to begin Tuesday, Oct. 27. The intermittent project is expected to be completed by March of 2017, according to Kelli Bruns, Superintendent of Peninsula State Park.

Winter activities at the park will be impacted including snow shoeing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling, Bruns said, who noted the impact is expected to be minimal.

However, there will be temporary road closures, as well as recreational trail corridor closures. Portions of Tension Bay Campground will also be closed, [according to documents obtained by Action 2 News \(https://www.scribd.com/doc/286837055/Peninsula-State-timber-sale-letter\)](https://www.scribd.com/doc/286837055/Peninsula-State-timber-sale-letter).

Bruns suggests that visitors check the park's website prior to visiting or look for posted signs at the park to see what areas of the park will be unavailable because of the logging.

"We will make sure that information is shared with the public," Bruns said.

The last time Peninsula State Park had a timber sale was back when Scott McCallum (R) was governor of Wisconsin around 2002, according to Ruff.

Contractors bid on the logging project, according to both Bruns and Ruff. The winning contract was awarded to Little Suamico based Hanstedt Wood and Recycling.

The 72 acres of logging is actually two separate projects.

The first project will consist of the removal of 50 acres of Pine trees. The state will receive \$10,000 for that project.

The second project calls for the removal of 22 acres of Scotch Pine trees. The state will take in \$5,000 for that project.

As for how much money the contractor would take in, state officials declined to comment and deferred questions to Hanstedt Wood and Recycling.

Action 2 News spoke to Jason Hanstedt on Friday and Saturday, the owner of Hanstedt Wood and Recycling. Hanstedt was unable to provide a dollar amount, but said his project is pretty small in comparison to other active Wisconsin logging projects. Other projects in Northeast Wisconsin include Oconto County, he said.

Meanwhile, state officials say the logging in Door County is necessary.

Ruff said there isn't sufficient room in the park for the number of trees currently growing and that a thinning of the trees was necessary.

Bruns and Ruff both said that the Scotch Pine trees are not native to Wisconsin and need to be removed for the health of the other trees. The Scotch Pines — a popular variety of Christmas Trees — originated in Eurasia and were originally planted back in the 1930's before the land became a park, Ruff said. But [according to the park's website \(http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/peninsula/history.html\)](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/peninsula/history.html) Wisconsin Legislators established the park in 1910.

Both Bruns and Ruff said the logging is routine and that the project only impacts 2 percent of the 3,776-acre park property.

"It is required to maintain the health of the park and is a part of the park's Master Plan," Ruff said.

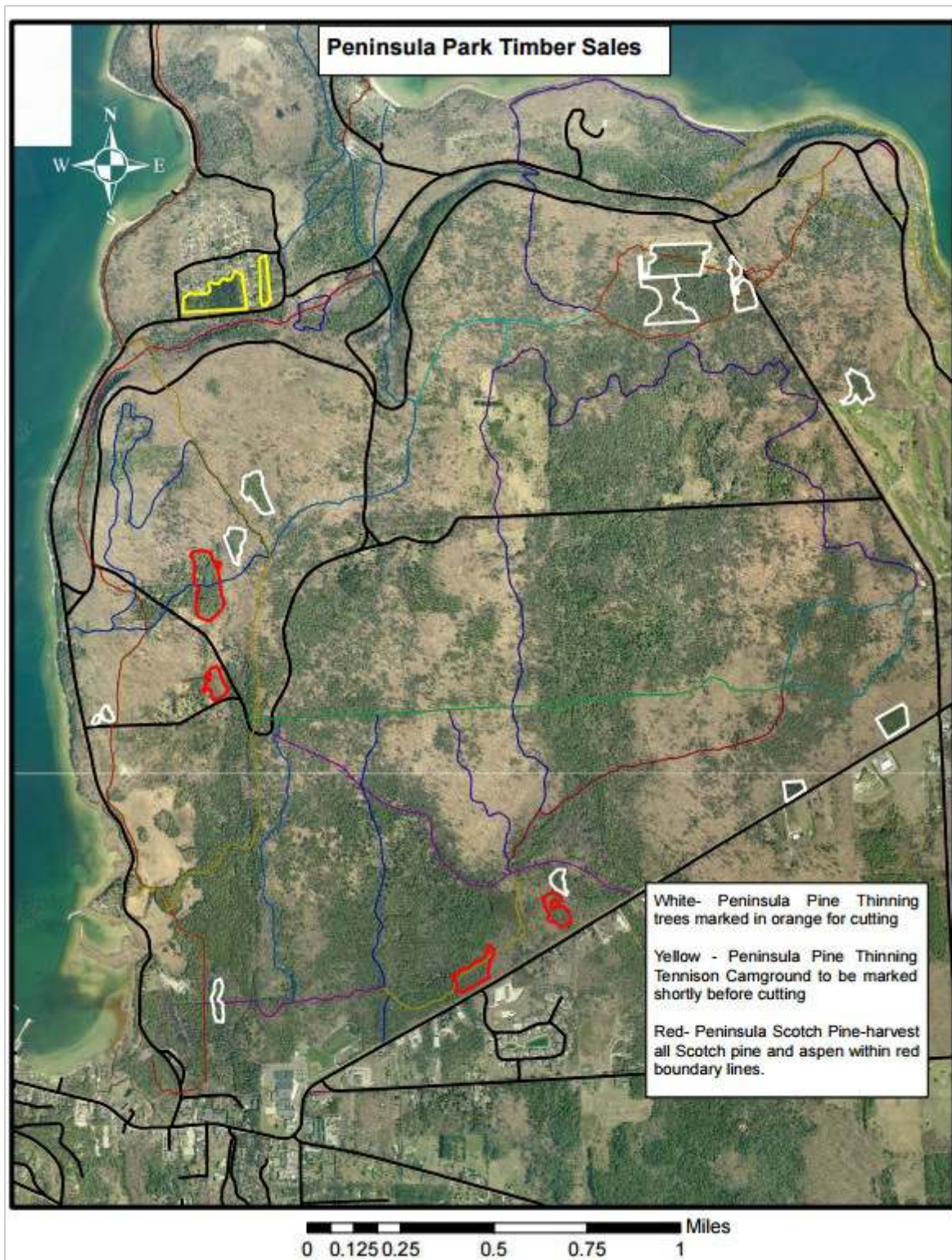
Bruns agreed.

"We are always trying to promote forest health and diversity," Bruns said.

The park's Master Plan which has not been updated since 1981, is scheduled for an update in December. The process can take up to 18 months, according to Bruns.

[Click HERE \(http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/masterplanning/documents/MP-PR-PeninsulaSP-1981.pdf\)](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/masterplanning/documents/MP-PR-PeninsulaSP-1981.pdf)to view the park's existing Master Plan.

Below is map provided by the Wisconsin DNR of the logging area.



This story has been updated.

(<https://mgtwbay.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/map.jpg>)

Courtesy of Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

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