

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Governor Jim Doyle
Governor's Conference on Forestry
"Wisconsin's Forests: Ensuring a Sustainable Future"
Tuesday, November 9, 2004

It is a pleasure to join you today at the Governor's Conference on Forestry. I would like to thank the Wisconsin Council on Forestry for hosting this Conference and you, the participants, for agreeing to roll up your sleeves and develop actions to ensure a bright future for Wisconsin's forests.

Wisconsin has a great and proud tradition of forestry. Our rich and beautiful forests are among our most precious natural resources. The Northwoods are important not only to our economy, but to our identity as well.

I declared 2004 as the Year of Forestry to celebrate the success of professional forestry in Wisconsin over the last 100 years – and to focus attention on ensuring a bright future for our forests. This conference is an excellent tool to lay the groundwork for that desired future.

I am proud of what we have accomplished over the last two years – from obtaining sustainable forest certification for our state forests to protecting our working forests through the Stewardship Fund.

But this is no time for us to rest on our laurels.

Today, I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Wisconsin Center for Sustainable Forestry Businesses. Located at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory here in Madison, this new Center's purpose will be to identify, research, and address key public policy, resource management, workforce, technology development, and technology transfer issues that affect economic growth in Wisconsin's forest products industry.

I am also pleased to announce the establishment of the Governor's Biorefinery Consortium in Wisconsin. This effort, coordinated by the Center for Technology Transfer, will not only help retain high paying jobs in Wisconsin, but will also help create them. Currently, the federal government is allocating over \$250 million toward Biorefinery initiatives, giving us an opportunity to add more value to the wood harvested from our forests.

But we are not finished. I am announcing today my intent to sign an accord sponsored by the Great Lakes Forest Alliance that will commit Wisconsin – along with Minnesota, Michigan and Ontario – to a plan of action directed at maintaining and developing a vibrant forest products industry that will be recognized globally as a regional center for excellence in sustainable forest management. This accord will address three critical areas – Forest Certification, Bioenergy, and Transportation.

We recognize how important forests are to Wisconsin's future.

Environmentally, forests provide habitat for plants and animals, protect our water resources, and improve the air we breathe.

Economically, forests provide the raw material that has made Wisconsin the nation's top paper maker and generated allied businesses that created an economic cluster of valued-added jobs. There are more than 1,800 forest products companies in Wisconsin that employ nearly 100,000 people. And these jobs average nearly \$41,000 a year – well above the state average.

And socially and culturally, our forests help define who we are and what we hold important.

To ensure the long term health of forestry in Wisconsin, we must:

- First, understand business risks on a global scale and help our businesses beat our competition in managing them;
- Second, break down the traditional barriers that have had us arguing amongst ourselves, rather than addressing the common threats to our forests and the benefits they provide; and
- Finally, third, accelerate our efforts for broader, more inclusive and comprehensive forestry policies and practices.

One of Wisconsin's greatest attributes is our sustainability ethic. The origins of this ethic are in the lessons of the cut-over and fires more than 100 years ago. Vision, hard work, and innovation turned tragedy into opportunity and instilled an ethic that is the foundation for action today.

Other states and other countries do not share this ethic. In the long run, that presents a major competitive advantage for us as we build a sustainable economy with thriving, environmentally responsible businesses.

Opportunities for Wisconsin

The challenge of this conference is to act – not just talk. I believe that this is the time for great enthusiasm and devotion to the forest legacy of Wisconsin. And I am confident we collectively can meet these challenges.