



University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

College of Natural Resources
Forestry Outreach Programs

Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897
Phone: 715.346.4128
Fax: 715.346.4038
E-mail: john.duplissis@uwsp.edu

July 20, 2005

Patricia Leavenworth
8030 Excelsior Drive
Suite 200
Madison, WI 53717-2906

Dear Ms. Leavenworth:

During the recent Governor's Conference on Forestry the Team charged with finding new partnerships to enhance assistance to Wisconsin's non-industrial private forest landowners identified a number of opportunities that are directly related to the Farm Bill. These include working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to include restoring the NRCS Forester as a statewide specialist to promote forestry and agroforestry with NRCS, LCD, and DNR staff, promoting forest stewardship planning as a part of "Whole Farm Plans," and providing greater access to funds available through the Farm Bill to private forest landowners.

As I am sure you are aware the service that NRCS employees provide to agricultural forest landowners as well as conservation provisions of the Farm Bill that forest landowners can access are important tools in the conservation and management of Wisconsin's forest resources. To insure that forest landowners have access to the Conservation Provisions within the Farm Bill the Team would like to recommend to you in the strongest terms possible that the position of the NRCS Forester be maintained and filled as soon as possible. The importance of having an advocate on behalf of agricultural forest and forest landowners within the NRCS and its partner agencies cannot be understated. While we recognize that the Farm Bill is primarily directed towards agricultural producers it is important to note that approximately one-third of Wisconsin's nupf lands are owned by agricultural producers and therefore NRCS play the paramount role in working with these landowners to conserve and enhance their forest resources.

To that same end the Team would like to recommend that agricultural forests and forest lands owned by agricultural producers be included as part of the whole farm planning process. These forest lands are an integral part of agricultural communities and the enhancement and conservation of these lands can greatly insure that local communities enjoy clean air and water. NRCS and LCD employees are often the best promoters of sustainable forest management and have the greatest opportunity for contact with agricultural producers.

DRAFT

Confidential

Not for distribution

Finally, the Team would like to recommend in the strongest terms possible that a forest landowners be appointed as a permanent member of the EQIP committee in each county. Each year forest landowners apply to EQIP only to find that forestry practices are not included in the county's docket. One possible solution would be to appoint a forest landowner to the committee to insure that their voice is heard. It is not uncommon for commodity or conservation groups to have a member invited to serve on these committees. Therefore, the Team would like to recommend that forest landowners be formally included on the list of partners that counties can invite to participate on their EQIP committees.

The Farm Bill provides many opportunities for the enhancement and conservation of forest lands. The Team feels strongly that building stronger ties and developing new partnerships with NRCS is one way to guarantee sustainable forest management on agricultural forestlands and forest lands owned by agricultural producers.

Sincerely,

John G. DuPlissis
Forestry Outreach Specialist
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point