



Going Out on a Limb

A Look at the Future of Wisconsin Forestry



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The Future of Forestry in Wisconsin: The State Forester's Perspective

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Division of Forestry***

Where are we today and how did we get here?

During our centennial statewide, we focused on our history ...

- Forest recovery and restoration
- Forests increasing in value to society
- State played a key role in these accomplishments

Since our meeting in early 2004 we have continued to build on our record of accomplishment

- MFL entries – more than 5,000 over 400,000 acres in the last two years.
 - Thousands of mandatory practices too!
- Suppressed over 2,600 fires that burned over 8,000 acres.
- Countless fires prevented and acres saved through prevention, preparation, detection and quick action.
- Worked in partnership with the Counties on the state's largest public land base.

- Hosted millions of visitors on our State Forests and actively managed them for a range of values
 - Completed plan for the NHAL State Forest.
- Assisted approximately 400 towns, villages and cities with their urban forests.
- Battled a host of undesirable pathogens threatening Wisconsin's forests.
- Provided over 32 million seedlings from our nurseries for afforestation and reforestation.
- Acquired easements on over 20,000 acres of working forest land.

But it has not just been business as usual...we also:

- Held a Governor's Conference on Forestry and put in motion actions to address a range of issues that emerged from that effort.
- Certified our State Forests, County Forests and MFL programs – Nearly 5 million acres!
- Geared up for a potentially devastating insect that is looming ever closer to Wisconsin.
- Battled the largest wildfire in a quarter century.

- Built on our resume of coming to the aid of communities dealing with the aftermath of damaging storms.
- Became engaged in efforts to address forest biomass issues on a larger scale.
- Advocated for federal programs designed to advance our mission...a growing challenge in the face of growing federal budget deficits and questions about roles.

**We have accomplished all this in the
face of a large number of vacancies
– over 50 during the last year**

- Your dedication and commitment is evident not only in the accomplishments I have listed (as well as many others) but also in the response to personal challenges and trials.
- Both passion and compassion are clearly evident throughout the Division.

The Winds of Change are Blowing

Just since we last met:

- Changes to the Managed Forest Law...again.
- Directed change in the priority of State Lands management.
- Reduction in staff.
- Creation of the CPW program.
- Emergence of issues (such as biomass).
- Job reductions and mill closures/cutbacks.



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**The Winds of Change are
Constantly Blowing...**

It's not new, but it is different



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**So what's being carried in
on this wind?**

Changes in our Workforce

- Significant staff turnover anticipated in the next 5-10 years.
- Advocating to ensure we can attract and keep the best and brightest.
 - Working with WSP & WSEU

Emerging Issues

- Ecosystem Services – developing markets
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Drinking water supply
 - T&E species
 - Other?

Emerging Issues

- Globalization of the Industry
 - Markets
 - Ownership of land – REITs and TIMOs
 - Can get pulp and add value to hardwood cheaper abroad
 - Transporting invasives
 - Certification
 - ITO

Emerging Issues

- **Human Consumption**
 - Demands increase
 - Product substitution
 - Fragmentation
 - WUI
 - More forest landowners
 - Energy - biomass

Political Realities

- There is an appetite by the public for smaller government
 - We have taken hits, but less than many others.
 - Appears this will remain an issue for the foreseeable future.
 - Exploration about the role of government.

Political Realities

Forestry has enjoyed bipartisan support

- Budget increases
- Bills passed with overwhelming support & signed by Governor Doyle
 - Right-to-Practice Forestry
 - County Forest Planning
 - MFL changes

Political Realities

Forestry is a “win-win”

- Forests affect everyone, every day
...but this is not apparent to many.
- Creates opportunity for positive change.
- Keys to success
 - Raise awareness
 - Foster partnerships
 - Show accomplishments

So what does the future hold?

- People care deeply about forests and the benefits they provide.
- We need products from our forests:
 - Clean water
 - Clean air
 - Biological diversity
 - Wood
 - Settings for recreation
 - Wildlife
 - Energy
 - Beauty
 - Heat island amelioration
 - And so on...

So what does the future hold?

- The question is how and where we get these benefits...
- What is the role of government?
 - We have an essential role to play in meeting society's needs.
 - We can not and should not do it alone ...
 - » Partnerships are critical for us to be successful.
 - » Our role is to do that which can not be effectively addressed privately or by a more appropriate level of government.



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So what does the future hold?

- We must develop and apply new tools that respond to new realities.
- Our role evolves with changing circumstances
 - Reallocations in light of no new positions.

What are our priorities?

- Evolving with changing conditions and direction from the people – through their “representatives”.
- Adapt our role based on capability of partners.
- Workload balance – setting limits.
- Mission driven.



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Our mission is to...

Protect and Sustainably Manage Wisconsin's Forests

**Ecological, Economic & Social Benefits
Present & Future Generations**

Our Mission: Protect and Sustainably Manage Wisconsin's Forests

- All people benefit when we accomplish our mission.
- To maximize success, we must keep forest in forest!
- Where is success defined? On the ground.
 - What does it take to achieve success?
A lot of ground forces, great support and partners.
- The people will decide to what degree we can accomplish our mission
 - How does it compare to other societal needs and desires?

Our Mission: Protect and Sustainably Manage Wisconsin's Forests

- Our task: maximize our effectiveness with the resources we are given.
- I believe that we provide a great return on the public's investment in us.
- The future will certainly be different, but the needs of society will remain.

The Bottom Line

- The forest will continue to serve a range of human needs to a growing world population.
- What role Wisconsin's forests will play is uncertain, but they will play a role.
- Our services will be needed in both traditional and, I expect, new ways.



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The Bottom Line

**If you like a challenge, it's a
great time to be in forestry!**

A black and white illustration of a pine tree. The tree's trunk is on the left, and its branches extend across the top and right. A pair of glasses is hanging from one of the branches on the right. The background shows a forest landscape with a body of water in the distance. The text "Going Out on a Limb" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right, across the middle of the image.

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