MANAGED FOREST LAW (MFL) EFFICIENCIES PROJECT

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESULTS

DOVETAIL PARTNERS, INC.

OVERVIEW

- Key Findings

- Goals & Recommendations

- Principles for Enhancing MFL Efficiency

- Assessment Process Results

- Additional Considerations

- Conclusions

KEY FINDINGS

- *WisFIRS*
  - **WisFIRS is eagerly anticipated** and addresses a number of issues

- *Task Efficiencies*
  - **DNR staff is asked to wear a lot of hats** – a number of things can be done

- *Roles & Responsibilities*
  - There is **an increasing percentage of staff time needed** for computer data entry and data review

- *Communications*
  - A number of responses indicated that the **level of communication between stakeholders is inconsistent** and in some situations appears uncoordinated

- *System Stability*
  - Individuals view **greater stability in the MFL law** to be a significantly valuable goal

KEY FINDINGS – GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

□ *WisFIRS*

  ❑ GOAL: **Save 15-25% of MFL time**

  ❑ RECOMMENDATIONS:
    ■ *Expedite implementation of WisFIRS with all due possible speed!*
    ■ *In general, it is recommended as good practice to have all external data entered directly by providers thus reducing the need for data entry activities, and errors, by staff.*

KEY FINDINGS – GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

□ *Task Efficiencies*

  ❑ GOAL: **Save 10-15% of MFL time**

  ❑ RECOMMENDATIONS:
    ◼ *Implement detailed time study*
    ◼ *Identify large time consuming activities*
    ◼ *Don't start a process until all data is collected*
    ◼ *Set clear and agreed upon goals and objectives for timelines*
    ◼ *Stimulate collaboration*

KEY FINDINGS – GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

□ *Roles & Responsibilities*

◻ GOAL: **Save 10-15% of MFL time for 80% of staff**

◻ RECOMMENDATION:

■ *Where possible, separate activities by skillset/position*

KEY FINDINGS – GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Communications*

  - GOAL: **Make operations run more smoothly, make other time savings more achievable, save duplication of efforts**

  - RECOMMENDATION:
    - *Create and implement formal Communication Plan to address all categories of information to all participants*

KEY FINDINGS – GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ *System Stability*

▪ GOAL: **Eliminate time spent explaining changes and increase effectiveness of training and communication**

▪ RECOMMENDATION:

- *Many of the changes to MFL are due to Legislative action and beyond the direct control of the DNR*

- *We recommend that major program changes to the MFL program be limited to every 3, or ideally 5, years to allow time for system stability and full absorption of any changes into the system*

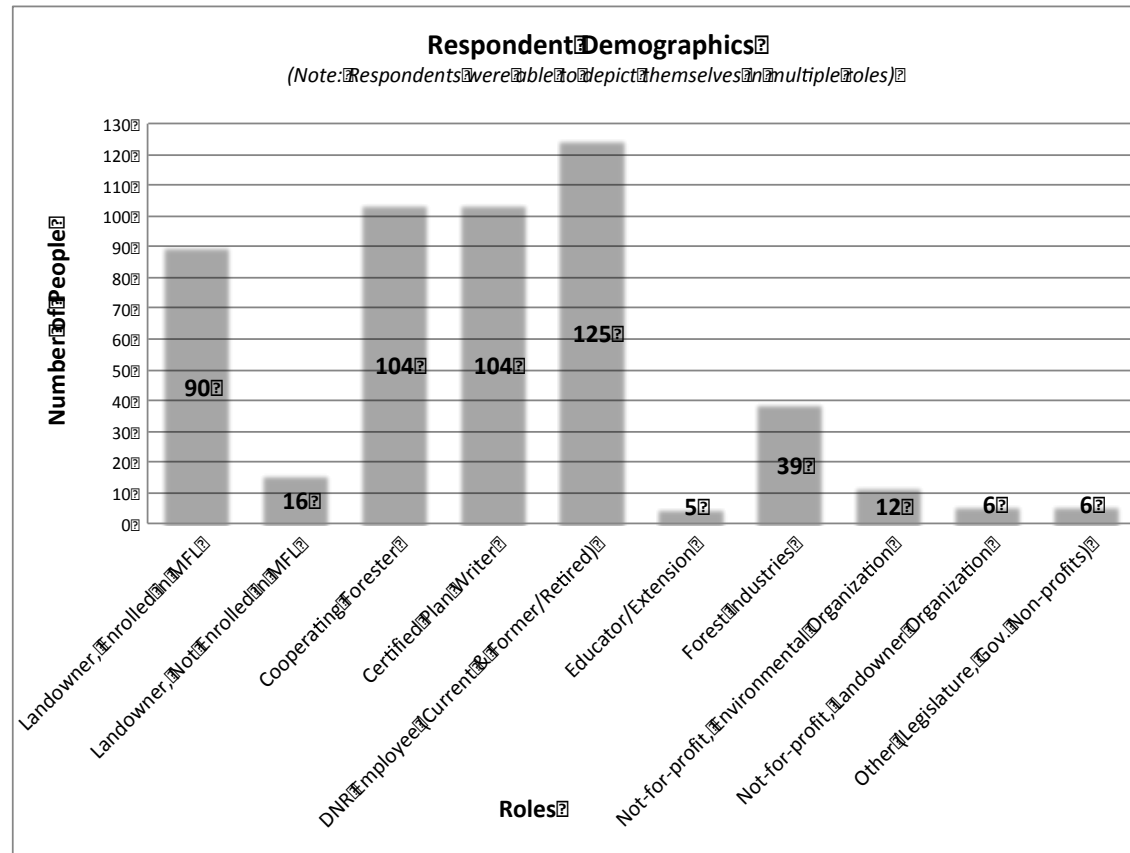# PRINCIPLES FOR ENHANCING MFL EFFICIENCY

1. Automate what can be automated

2. Set goals and reduce time in process

3. Match activities to skills

4. Coordinate individuals to address "big rocks/small rocks" where possible

5. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!

6. Stabilize the system where possible (including through advocacy)

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Survey Results

- Input received from **256 stakeholders**
  - 42 phone interviews
  - 214 online survey

- Individuals were asked a total of 28 questions including background info

- Individuals selected to participate based on their direct involvement with the MFL program

Respondent Demographics
(Note: Respondents were able to depict themselves in multiple roles)

Bar chart — Number of People by Roles:
- Landowner, Enrolled in MFL: 90
- Landowner, Not Enrolled in MFL: 16
- Cooperating Forester: 104
- Certified Plan Writer: 104
- DNR Employee (Current & Former/Retired): 125
- Educator/Extension: 5
- Forest Industries: 39
- Not-for-profit, Environmental Organization: 12
- Not-for-profit, Landowner Organization: 6
- Other (Legislature, Gov. Non-profits): 6

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Top five attributes of the MFL Program that respondents wanted to see protected:

1. **Commitment to sustainable forestry**/promotes strong forest management practices (over the long run)

1. Provides **a steady, well-managed source of raw materials** for Wisconsin's forest products industry

2. **Program as a whole/keeping program alive**

3. **Tax breaks/deferrals/incentives**

4. **Creates abundance of economic value/creates and maintains jobs**

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Nothing in particular stood out in response to the question about what was "missing" in the MFL program

Response Theme

☐ The need to **increase the formality of communication activities** due to the size of the system being managed

A number of items were mentioned multiple times ranging from:

Broad Issues

❑ Actions of the legislature

❑ Opinions on leasing

❑ Concerns about the overall increasing complexity of the MFL system

Specific Issues

❑ Incorrect or inadequate tree markings

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Vision, Mission, Mandate

*Is the **vision/overarching purpose** of the MFL Program clear?*

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

1%
19%
80%
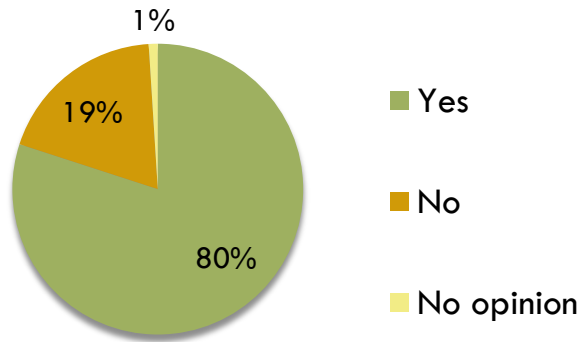
*Is the **legislative mandate** clear?*
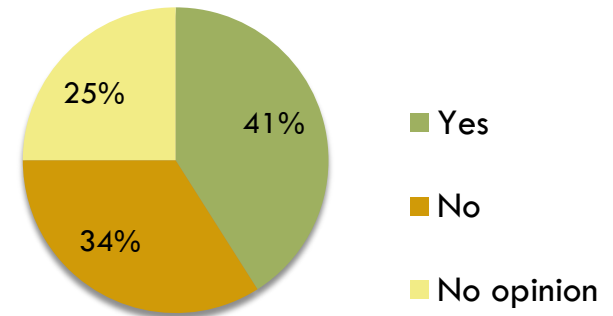

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

13%
46%
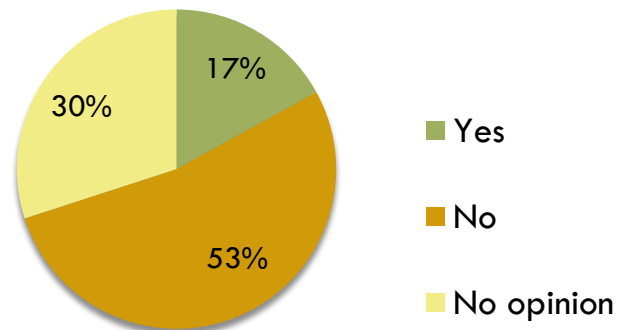41%
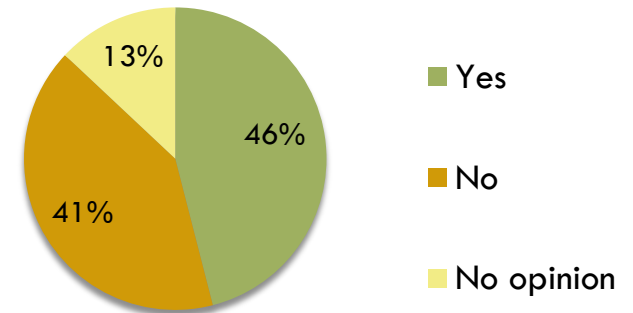
ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Strategies

*Are the **priorities** for the MFL program clear?*
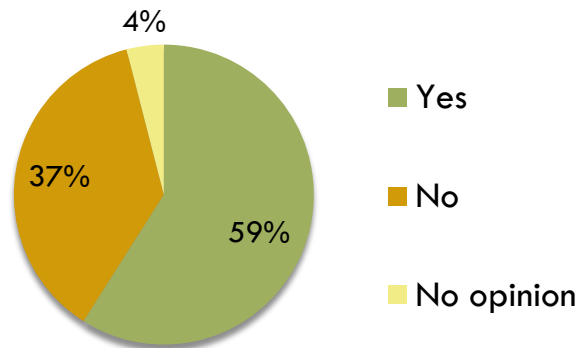
*Is the **MFL structure** clear and is it the most effective way to administrate the program?*

*Is there an **accessible plan** in place for the improvement of the MFL program?*

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Operations: MFL Processes

Five questions attempted to evaluate the length of time it took to do various activities related to the MFL program; **responses varied greatly depending on familiarity**

Major Recommendations for Various MFL Processes

- *Don't start a process until all the data is collected*
- *Set clear and agreed upon goals and objectives for timelines*

MFL Program Enforcement Recommendations

- General consensus that DNR is doing a good job at enforcement
- Enforcement was stated to have improved over the past few years
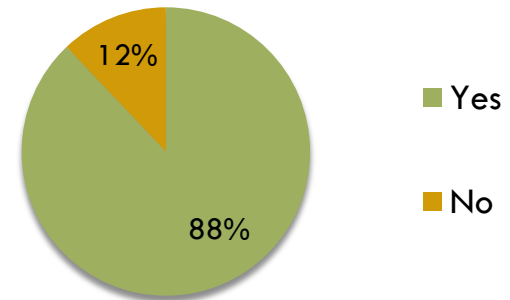- Majority of respondents feel WisFIRS will aid in MFL enforcement
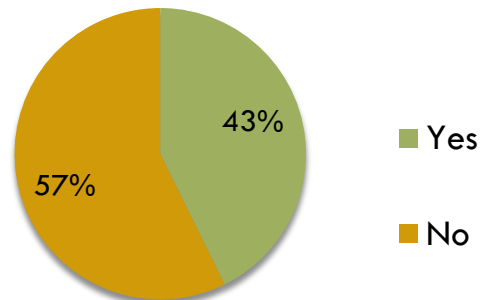
ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Financial Issues

*Is the current financial system fair for **landowners**?*

17%

83%

- Yes
- No
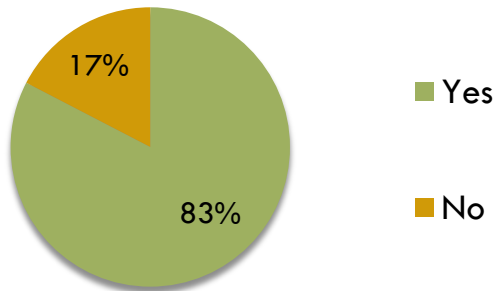
*Is the current financial system fair to **service providers**?*

12%

88%

- Yes
- No

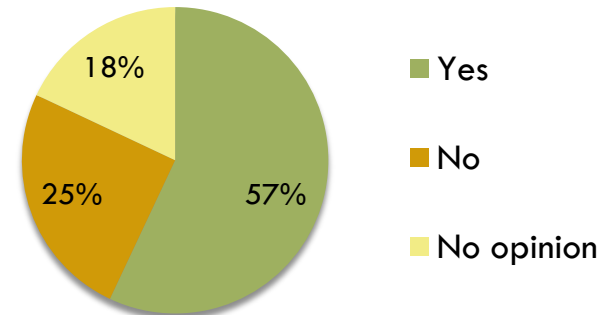*Are their **sufficient funds** for the DNR staff to their jobs well?*

43%

57%

- Yes
- No

ASSESSMENT PROCESS RESULTS

Organizational Issues (Human Resources)

*Is the **communication system** for the program effective?*

10%
43%
47%

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
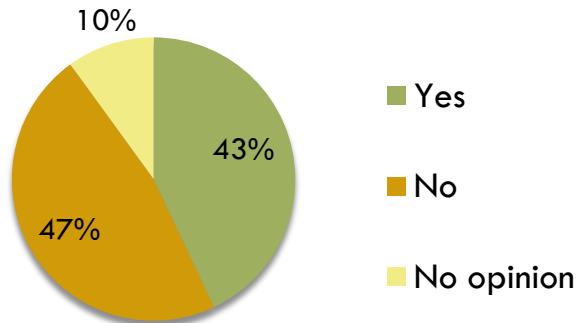
*Are the current **training programs** effective?*

18%
25%
57%

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

*Are the **roles and responsibilities** for the various involved parties clear and agreed upon?*

3%
32%
65%

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
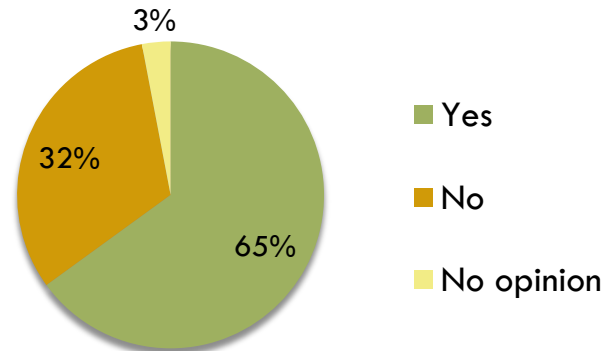
ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In discussions with stakeholders, there were opportunities for efficiency improvements that were raised and that may warrant further investigation:

☐ Review existing **conflict resolution process** to determine potential for a more formal/structured process

☐ Evaluate impacts of the current **distribution of liability** between landowners, service providers and the DNR, and situations that arise when landowners choose not to utilize the services of a Cooperating Forester

☐ Clarify the level of **silviculture flexibility** under the MFL program and the application of the silviculture guidelines to ensure sound forestry practices on enrolled lands

CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings

1. Expedite implementation of WisFIRS

2. Implement detailed time study of major tasks

3. Define activities by skillset/position and increase collaboration

4. Create and implement a formal Communication Plan

5. Limit major program changes to MFL program to every 3, or ideally 5, years to allow for system stability

By implementing these efficiency improvement recommendations __it is possible to save 35-55% of MFL time__.