

Wisconsin Forest Practices Study - Request for Proposals 1.0

February 2014

1. Background

Forest policies in Wisconsin have been evolving rapidly in recent decades. There has been much discussion and debate regarding effects that changing policies have on current forest-based operations and potential future growth in Wisconsin's forest products industry. Information gaps exist regarding the costs and benefits of forest policies, regulations and guidelines in Wisconsin. Addressing these information gaps through a well-focused forest practices study will serve to establish a credible research information data base for addressing identified issues and concerns.

Pursuant to s. 26.105(1), Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has awarded a grant to conduct the Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) to the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) and Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA). The WFPS Plan is posted at <http://study.wisconsinforestry.org>.

Consistent with the WFPS Plan, GLTPA and WCFA are requesting proposals for research on priority topics selected in consultation with the Wisconsin Council on Forestry. This solicitation describes priority research topics; procedures and guidelines for submitting proposals; and the criteria to be used in evaluating and selecting proposals for funding. Questions about this solicitation should be directed to Fred Souba, WFPS Project Manager, at 715/213-4833; email fred@provisionforestry.com.

2. Priority Research Topics for This Solicitation

Topic #1. What is the availability of wood fiber in the state – by broad product categories, region, and ownership – now and in the future? How have changes in land ownership and management objectives, experienced over the last 15 years, affected the supply of wood fiber?

We are seeking a comprehensive, spatially-explicit analysis that (i) identifies and delineates reserved and non-reserved parcels of forest land in Wisconsin; (ii) classifies reserve and non-reserved parcels by variables known to influence timber productivity (e.g., tract size, ownership, management restrictions, site classification, cover type); and (iii) provides estimates of past (circa 1998), current, and expected future average rates of timber harvest per acre (by timber product class) for each class of non-reserved forest land. It is expected that authors of a successful proposal will already have substantial experience and capabilities relevant to this topic; and will demonstrate the feasibility of repeating their analysis periodically (e.g., by complete documentation of assumptions and methods). For purposes of this RFP, "availability of wood fiber" is not simply a measure of timber inventory or growth, but rather a measure of potential wood supply after accounting for constraints such as environmental regulations and guidelines; economic constraints (e.g., related to tract size); logger capacity; and the willingness of landowners to sell timber. "Reserved forest land" has been withdrawn from timber utilization through statute or administrative designation. "Non-reserved forest land" has not been withdrawn from timber utilization. Estimates of average timber harvest rates per acre should be provided in several units (cords, MBF and green tons) to facilitate interpretations for broad product classes (e.g., pulpwood vs. sawtimber). Estimates of future harvest rates should be for a period starting at least 10 years in the future (and additional periods up to 50 years in the future if feasible).

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Topic #2. What are the economic and ecological consequences (cost/benefits) of selected aspects of forestry policies, regulations and guidelines in Wisconsin?

Forest management and timber harvest in Wisconsin are conducted in context of a complex array of policies, regulations and guidelines. We are seeking proposals for research on selected and explicitly-defined aspects of this array of policies, regulations and guidelines that have been identified by loggers and / or forest managers as economically burdensome. Such aspects include, but are not limited to, (i) extending rotations beyond economic maturity in aspen and red pine stands; (ii) retention of large trees past economic maturity in natural hardwood stands; and (iii) seasonal and weather-related restrictions on timber harvest operations. Elements of successful proposals may include (i) case studies focused on selected parcels where forest managers and loggers are willing to share information that researchers need to estimate economic and ecological consequences attributable to an explicitly-defined set of forest policies, regulations, and / or guidelines; (ii) stand-level modeling that supports quantitative estimates of economic and ecological consequences attributable to an explicitly-defined set of policies, regulations, and / or guidelines; and (iii) a procedure for assessing the relevance of case studies and / or models to a well-defined population of forest stands and / or timber sales in Wisconsin. Economic consequences of interest include, but are not limited to (i) effects on the economics of individual timber sales, and (ii) longer-term effects on the economics of forest management as measured, for example, by the net present value of forest stands. Economic consequences should be allocated as explicitly as possible among landowners, loggers, wood buyers, regulators, and Wisconsin citizens. Ecological consequences of interest include, but are not limited to, near-term (e.g. few years) and long-term (e.g. decades) effects on (i) forest carbon stocks, (ii) aspects of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, (iii) soil / site productivity, and (iv) water resources.

Topic #3. What forestry-related factors are expected to enhance or reduce the competitiveness of forest-based manufacturing in Wisconsin?

Primary manufacturing of forest products is a globally competitive industry. Affordable, high quality supplies of wood raw material are a prerequisite for long-term success. We are seeking proposals for rapid assessments (< 6 months) of forestry-related factors that are likely to enhance or impede Wisconsin's ability to attract investment in primary forest-based manufacturing facilities. Assessment topics of interest include, but are not limited to: (i) comparative analysis of delivered wood prices and wood production costs in Wisconsin and other forestry regions in North America and around the world; (ii) implications of trends in forest ownership, stand age class / tree size class distributions, and tree species mix in Wisconsin's forests; and (iii) intended and unintended consequences to landowners managing forests participating in either Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (or selected aspects of the MFL program) or those actually paying ad valorem taxes. Assessments should identify options for enhancing Wisconsin's competitiveness in forest-based manufacturing through policy changes and / or investments in infrastructure, workforce development, forest management, and / or research & development.

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3. Proposal Submittal and Selection Process

Any research organization, consultant, or individual is eligible to compete for funding under this solicitation.

Research proposals must be received on or before March 31, 2014. Proposals should be submitted as printed paper documents or electronically as a PDF files to Mr. Fred Souba, WFPS Project Manager, 4321 Ridgeview Lane, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494-6751 or fred@provisionforestry.com

Proposals must include the following main headings:

1. Project Title
2. Primary Investigator - name, affiliation, title, address, phone number, e-mail address
3. Collaborators - name, affiliation, title, address, phone number, e-mail address
4. Research Topic addressed by the proposal (i.e., Topic #1, #2, or #3 above)
5. Literature Review
6. Statement of Objectives
7. Detailed Description of Methods
8. Description of Deliverables
9. Value of Information to be Produced
10. Schedule, Milestones, and Measures of Success
11. Budget - show resources required in the following categories: salary, benefits, travel, equipment and supplies, indirect costs (i.e., overhead charges) and other.
12. Proposed Funding Sources - show amount of funding requested from WFPS and amounts to be obtained from other sources. In-kind contributions (e.g., donations of material and labor) are acceptable sources of cost share provided realistic dollar values are assigned to such contributions. Sunk costs (e.g., value of previous research) cannot be used for cost share.

Proposals must not exceed ten pages (single-sided). Investigators' and collaborators' qualifications should be described in an attachment to the proposal that includes citations of investigators' and collaborators' publications and reports that are most directly related to the proposed work. The description of qualifications should not exceed two pages in length. Please do not attach resumes, publications, or publication lists. Letters of support from potential co-funders and collaborators may be attached to proposals. No other attachments or supporting materials are permitted.

It is expected that several proposals will be selected for negotiation and potential funding by May 1, 2014. In evaluating proposals and making selections, review panels will use the following technical criteria: (1) relevance of proposal to the priority research topics identified in section 2 of this solicitation, (2) clarity of objectives, (3) general scientific and technical quality, (4) probability of achieving objectives within the proposed schedule and budget, and (5) expected value of information to be produced relative to cost. Review panels will give favorable consideration to match or cost share or co-funding when evaluating proposals with respect to criterion (5).

Authors of proposals selected for negotiation and potential funding will be contacted by the WFPS Project Manager in mid to late April 2014. The Project Manager may request changes or clarifications in a proposal based on review comments or budget considerations. Negotiations leading to funding

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decisions and research agreements will be completed as quickly as possible. Final payment will be withheld until the final report has been received and reviewed.

Guidelines for Proposal Authors

- All proposals: Indirect costs (i.e., overhead charges) should not exceed 10% of direct costs funded by WFPS.
- A single proposal should address one and only one of the priority research topics described in this solicitation. Organizations and individuals interested in more than one priority research topic may submit more than one proposal.
- Proposals addressing Topic #1: Total funding requested from WFPS should not exceed \$100,000. Project duration should not exceed 12-15 months. Deliverables must include detailed quarterly progress reports and a final report that includes the process and/or modelling tools developed for the analysis. It is expected that only one project addressing Topic #1 will be funded.
- Proposals addressing Topic #2. Total funding requested from WFPS should not exceed \$50,000. Project duration should not exceed one year. Deliverables must include detailed quarterly progress reports and a final report. More than one proposal may be selected for funding.
- Proposals addressing Topic #3. Total funding requested from WFPS should not exceed \$10,000. Project duration should not exceed six months. In addition to a final report, deliverables must include a detailed interim progress report within three months of project initiation date. More than one proposal may be selected for funding.