

CONSERVING WISCONSIN'S BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9th, 1:00–5:30, HALL OF IDEAS H & I

KEY ISSUES

- Increasing demands placed on Wisconsin's forests and other land uses present a challenge to managing for biological diversity statewide.
- Sustainable ecosystems are needed to support forest-based economies over the long term.
- Information about the biological diversity of Wisconsin's forests is scarce. Better understanding of biological diversity will help us manage issues such as old growth and endangered and threatened species.

IMPORTANCE AND IMPACTS

Biological diversity is a fundamental requirement for forest health, sustainability, and productivity. In addition to forest productivity, there are human values related to the conservation of biological diversity. These include:

- Utilitarian values, including the needs of present and future human generations for food, chemicals, medicines, structural materials, and genetic sources for plant and animal breeding, as well as indirect needs for ecosystem functions like pollution mitigation, atmospheric balancing, water supply, maintenance of soil fertility, carbon storage, and flood control.
- Recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual values.
- Ethical values, for many people believe that other species have an intrinsic right to exist and that resource managers have a responsibility to ensure their survival.

SCOPE AND IMMEDIACY

Biological diversity refers to the full range of natural variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological and environmental complexes in which they occur. It encompasses multiple levels of organization, including genes, species, natural communities, landscapes and ecosystems.

The health of Wisconsin's natural systems as related to biological diversity impacts us all. Key stakeholders include elected leaders, the forest industry, public agencies, private conservation organizations, and private landowners.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS THEME AND THE STATEWIDE FOREST PLAN

More than half of the issues and objectives in the Statewide Forest Plan are related to biological diversity, including the scarcity of information about biological diversity (Issue 5), the need to make scientific information relevant to decisionmaking (Issue 6), the growing list of threatened and endangered species (Issue 7), the increasing threat of invasive exotic species (Issue 8), and the rarity of old forests (Issue 11).

CHAMPION

MARY JEAN HUSTON,
WISCONSIN DIRECTOR, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Mary Jean Huston is the State Director of The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin. Huston joined the organization in 1981 and has held a variety of positions of increasing responsibility in several state chapters and the Midwest Regional Office until becoming State Director in Wisconsin in March of 1999. Prior to her current position, she led The Nature Conservancy's work in the Baraboo Hills, a forested Wisconsin landscape, for six years. She currently serves on the Wisconsin Council on Forestry as Vice-chair. A native of Iowa, Huston received her undergraduate degree in biology from Grinnell College.

As State Director in Wisconsin, Huston oversees the organization's statewide land and water conservation efforts. She manages a staff of 37 located in five offices in Madison, Ashland, Baraboo, East Troy, and Sturgeon Bay. There are more than 20,000 Conservancy members in Wisconsin. Since its founding in 1960, the organization has worked with numerous individuals and partner organizations to conserve more than 85,300 acres of ecologically important habitat in the state, including thousands of acres of forest land.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization that works to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy has over 900,000 members and has been in existence for more than 50 years.

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John Bates, Author and Naturalist
Karen Danielsen, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
Karen Etter Hale, Madison Audubon Society
Todd Holschbach, The Nature Conservancy
Signe Holtz, WI DNR Endangered Resources
David Mladenoff, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Department of Forest Ecology and Management
Eunice Padley, WI DNR, Division of Forestry
Harry Parrott, Tetra Tech EM, Inc.
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