

**Summary of the Governor's Conference on Forestry,  
November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Madison WI**



**Presented to the Wisconsin Council on Forestry**  
Forest Products Laboratory  
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### **Overview of the Conference**

On November 9-10, 2004, Wisconsin's forestry leaders set a precedent for sustainable forestry in the state by gathering for the Governor's Conference on Forestry in Madison WI. Numbering greater than 250, they represented forest-based industries, universities, environmental groups, landowners, conservation groups, professional associations and local, state and federal agencies. By their active participation in this working conference, they demonstrated their commitment to the conference's main goal of building collaborative partnerships to take action on forestry issues affecting our state.

The conference continued the work started in 2000 to prepare a comprehensive Statewide Forest Plan for Wisconsin's forests. A commitment to the sustainable management of all of Wisconsin's forests has guided the development of the Statewide Forest Plan.

The Plan is intended for all forestry partners, outlining the range of ecological, economic and social implications of trends and issues affecting Wisconsin's forests. The implementation of the plan is the responsibility of all stakeholders with active involvement and cooperation at the core of defining the success of accomplishing its ambitious goals.

The conference focused on seven themes that grew out of the 52 trends and issues identified in Wisconsin's 2004 Statewide Forest Plan.

They include Conserving Wisconsin's Biological Diversity, Minimizing the Threat of Invasive Exotic Species to Wisconsin's Forests, Enhancing Assistance to Wisconsin's Private Forest Landowners, Maintaining Wisconsin's Forest Based Economy, Enhancing Wisconsin's Urban Forests, Minimizing Recreational Use Conflicts in Wisconsin's Forests and Managing the Impacts of Changes in Wisconsin's Land Use and Forest Ownership.

The conference was designed from the onset to engage a diverse set of forestry partners, build ownership for the issues identified in the Statewide Forest Plan, and in turn develop an ongoing dialogue that will help partners better address and take action on important forestry issues. Therefore, 7 key leaders from 7 different organizations were identified to "champion" the effort of designing sessions for the 7 theme areas addressed at the conference. Their backgrounds represent a diverse set of perspectives. In addition Champions developed leadership teams to ensure an even wider commitment and deeper commitment to the issues being addressed.

Conference organizers did not expect that this gathering would produce instant results. Nor was it to be an end unto itself. This conference was, rather, an event on a continuum aiming to build collaborative partnerships that lead to action on critical forestry issues. The planning team hopes that the work started at

the conference will continue both within the leadership teams as well as in ongoing commitments by partners to engage in addressing these issues in the work they do everyday.

The conference planning team has received a lot of positive feedback on the conference's valuable role in building new partnerships and further solidifying existing partnerships. As a result, these alliances better understand the potential for working together toward action on forestry issues across the state.

The conference was specifically successful in:

- Focusing existing efforts on issues in a broader context, giving forestry partners a better understanding of the full range of forestry issues, and their ecological, economic and social implications
- Identifying where additional effort is needed, both on specific and overlapping issues.
- Creating links between forestry issues and forestry leaders, fostering better discussion between interested and affected partners. These discussions begin to articulate our common ground, and the work to be done, while embracing the possibility that we'll get more done together if our recognized disagreements don't distract us from our common goals.
- Creating the opportunity to work together in a way that accomplishes more than is possible working alone. The product will be the ongoing development of a road map for collective commitment, with action as the bottom line.

The work accomplished during the conference will serve as a basis for strategically developing and implementing action plans, building ownership for Wisconsin's Statewide Forest Plan and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Wisconsin's forests through broad partnerships.

The proceedings of the conference will be posted at 'wisconsinforestry.org.' This website will provide a tool to communicate within and among partner groups on the development and accomplishment of actions over time.

This conference is not an end, but rather just the beginning of what could be a new way to address forestry issues in Wisconsin. Governor Jim Doyle put it well when he concluded his speech at the conference by saying: "The challenge of this conference is to act – not just talk. I believe that this is the time for great enthusiasm and devotion to the forest legacy of Wisconsin. And I am confident we collectively can meet these challenges."

**NOTE:**

**This document is meant to be a summary of key outcomes from each theme at the conference. More information that supports the information in this document will be available in the proceedings that are being compiled at present.**

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# Conserving Wisconsin's Biological Diversity

## Overview

Prior to the Conference, a diverse team developed the approach to the session on biological diversity. We created four Desired States, broad goals that we felt were critical to conserve our state's biological diversity. Our goal for the session was to bring all participants to a common understanding of biological diversity. In addition, we intended to produce a list of action items for each of the four Desired States, prioritize these actions, and develop an implementation plan for the highest priority action items.

Approximately 60 people attended the session. The session began with brief presentations, including an overview of the session by Mary Jean Huston (state director, The Nature Conservancy); background on biological diversity and Wisconsin's diversity by David Mladenoff (ecologist – UW-Madison), and a industry perspective by Cheryl Adams (ecologist - UPM Blandin Paper Mill) on how one corporation manages using ecological concepts that directly relate to biological diversity.

The remainder of the session was devoted to group processes to develop and prioritize action items for each Desired State. Participants were asked to vote on those action items they felt were priorities. Finally, we broke into four small-group sessions (one for each Desired State) to develop a plan to implement the priority action items.

### **The four Desired States were:**

- 1) Reliable science-based information about biological diversity is available and includes components of inventory, monitoring, analysis, and assessment. This information drives conservation practices and decisions.
- 2) Public policies, plans, and actions support conservation of biological diversity as an integral part of long-term ecological and economic health.
- 3) Wisconsin's citizens value the conservation of biological diversity and recognize it as an essential part of sustainable forest management and productivity, as well as tourism and recreation.
- 4) The State of Wisconsin has a long-term vision (for timeframes of more than 50 years into the future) that anticipates challenges to biological diversity, even though these challenges may be beyond our direct control, and initiates actions that will minimize damage.

## Outcomes

The proceedings of the Governor's Conference on Forestry will contain the detailed ideas, comments and action plans that were generated by the session Conserving Wisconsin's Biological Diversity. When the top priority actions to achieve the four Desired States are reviewed, the following five recommendations emerge as high priorities overall for this conservation issue.

**1. Invest in and maintain an inventory and monitoring program that is the foundation for biological diversity conservation in Wisconsin.**

Discussion: There are currently good resources available for inventory and monitoring, such as through the DNR's Natural Heritage Inventory Program, US Forest Service efforts, and academia. Action steps include creating a group to develop the goals and strategy of a more extensive inventory and monitoring program; reviewing literature to see what is already available; filling inventory and monitoring gaps; and sharing data. It was stressed that this should be integrated with forest certification requirements, but not limited to certified lands. Inventory and monitoring efforts should include obscure but important groups of organisms, and consider genetic diversity. Strong and effective inventory and monitoring efforts underway should be supported.

**2. Base biological diversity conservation (including protection, management and policies) on landscape scale plans.**

Discussion: Build upon existing plans, such as TNC's Ecoregional Planning, DNR's Land Legacy, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans, and State Natural Areas, and develop conservation strategies for areas of conservation importance (moving from science to action). In using landscape scale planning methods, develop desired future conditions to address issues such as invasives and increased fragmentation. Integrate big picture planning for Wisconsin and/or the Midwest; consider linkages, and plan across political borders. Involve all stakeholders and economic, social, and ecological perspectives in creating the vision or desired state. Use adaptive management principles for implementing plans and for taking action on threats. Create more flexibility in management approaches, improving resiliency.

**3. Develop a representative system of reference areas to function as baselines for monitoring changes in biological diversity.**

Discussion: These areas should include but not limited to State Natural Areas that provide refuge for the most disturbance-sensitive elements of biological diversity. Actions include defining reference areas, making these areas part of the inventory and monitoring program for biological diversity, identifying gaps in our system of reference areas and filling those gaps using private and public lands. Private landowners can play a role. Managed lands may play a role. Include making "high conservation value forests" part of forest certification and part of reference areas. There should be greater funding allocated toward conserving these areas. Designation of areas on public lands plays a huge role in establishing this system.

**4. Provide incentives for managers and landowners to conserve biological diversity.**

Discussion: The first step to achieve this goal is to conduct a statewide landscape evaluation and assessment to identify restoration targets and priority areas for biodiversity conservation. The results of this evaluation will be used to establish and direct incentive programs. Actions to achieve this goal include more effective incentive programs for private landowners, as well as addressing methods to maintain large blocks of land that are often in industrial ownership. Increased technical assistance is a component, as is better alignment of government programs to focus on biodiversity across all levels.

**5. Use strategic marketing and outreach to make landowners and the general public stakeholders in conserving Wisconsin's biological diversity. Change the perception that biological diversity is antithetical to forest management and economic sustainability.**

Discussion: The first action is to create a communications and marketing plan to identify target audiences, develop key messages, and devise strategies to reach each audience. Research will identify messages that resonate, and incentives that motivate good land management. Economic benefits of biological diversity will be clearly identified in a way that can be easily communicated. The Council on Forestry was identified as a lead player to both help develop the marketing plan, and to commission a white paper about the economic benefits of biological diversity.

## Enhancing Wisconsin's Urban Forests

### *Importance and Impacts*

The majority (81%) of Wisconsin's population lives in urban areas. People and businesses living and working in Wisconsin's communities are affected by the status of our urban forests. Forests in urban settings strongly influence the local environment, quality of life and economy. As urban populations increase, the pressure and stress of use upon the urban forest intensifies.

### *Session Goals*

- Develop collaborative partnerships within urban forestry and across disciplines within the forestry community.
- Plan actions to move forward with the Statewide Forest Management Plan and identify individuals or groups that will take ownership of that action.

### *Key Issues*

- An increasingly urbanized environment across Wisconsin creates the need to understand the extent and status of urban forests in the state and provide active management of these forests to ensure their long-term health and viability.
- Pressures on local budgets are increasing, and urban forestry programs are often the first and most heavily cut programs.
- Invasive exotic species threaten the viability of our urban forests.

### *Summary of Recommended Actions*

Over 50 individual actions were identified by the four breakout sessions, but the sessions did not have time to prioritize the actions and produce a thoughtful and complete action plan. However, the urban forestry leadership team reviewed the products of the sessions and found two common action themes shared by sessions - assessment and awareness - as well as a more focused action from the Invasives breakout session. These three are reported here.

#### **Action #1: Develop a continuous statewide urban forestry assessment.**

##### **Justification:**

Wisconsin citizens living in urbanized areas benefit socially, ecologically and economically from the establishment and maintenance of our urban forests. Transformations in land use patterns, erosion of financial support, and the introduction of exotic pests are among a litany of agents that threaten the health of our urban forests and the extent to which their benefits are realized. Unlike the state's timberlands, which are monitored by the Forest Inventory and Assessment program, Wisconsin lacks critical information about the extent and health of its urban forest resource. This data and the information derived from it are critical to the development, implementation and evaluation of sustainable management strategies at the state, county and local levels.

**Individuals/Organizations:**

**Committed:** Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, State Urban Forestry Coordinator, University of Wisconsin,

**Targeted:** Wisconsin Council on Forestry, USDA Forest Service, WI DNR, Wisconsin Arborist Association, Wisconsin Landscape Federation, local officials, municipal foresters, local tree boards, consulting urban foresters, regional planning committees.

**Timeline:****Short-term:**

1. Communicate to the Governor that a continuous statewide assessment is essential to manage and maintain the health of our urban forests.
2. Utilize Wisconsin's Statewide Forest Plan and the State Urban Forest Strategic Plan to demonstrate the priority of this need.

**Mid-term:**

1. Allocate/secure funding and resources to develop a sampling and assessment protocol. 2004-2006
  - Review existing protocol and sampling procedures.
  - Identify the information needed from a statewide urban forest assessment.
  - Estimate a budget for the development of the assessment protocol and sampling procedure.
  - Create partnerships necessary to develop the protocol and sampling procedures.
  - Develop or tailor existing protocols and sampling procedures to meet Wisconsin's urban forest information needs.
  - Ground truth the assessment protocol and sampling intensities in various locations across WI.
  - Establish the location of permanent inventory plots across WI.
  - Estimate the costs associated with a statewide assessment.

**Long-term:**

1. Allocate/secure funding and resources to conduct a baseline statewide Urban Forest assessment. 2007
2. Disseminate assessment data and information for use at the state, county, and local levels. 2008
3. Continue the assessment cycle. 2008

**Indicators:**

- A statewide urban forest assessment is initiated.
- Monies are allocated for the development of the assessment protocol and sampling procedures.
- Partnerships are formed that will facilitate the development of the assessment protocol and sampling procedures.
- The assessment protocol and sampling procedures are developed.
- The assessment protocol and sampling procedures are evaluated.
- Money is allocated/secured to conduct the statewide assessment.
- Statewide urban forest assessment is completed.
- Increased urban forest management capacity at the local level.
- Increased urban forest management capacity at the regional level.



**Perceived obstacles/barriers:**

- Unknown resources and funding needs
- Continual funding
- Federal buy-in
- Data analysis

**Resources needed to achieve action:**

- Staff and equipment to coordinate assessment and collect field data (federal, state &/or contract)
- Staff, software to analyze data
- Annual funding - dependent on level of partnerships developed

**Action #2: Launch a statewide urban forest public awareness and education campaign****Justification:**

The national, state and local policy makers and staff, the public and even the traditional forestry community have a misperception that community trees are a “frill” instead of an essential service. This is resulting in the erosion of funding and support of urban forestry at the national and local levels. Recent research and ongoing ecological analysis have finally described what urban foresters knew all along, that urban trees provide qualitative and quantitative social, ecological and economic functions and benefits. Urban forests are, in fact, the “green infrastructure” of a sustainable community and if managed, they are the only part of a community’s infrastructure that appreciates in value, benefits and function over time.

**Individuals/Organizations:**

**Committed:** Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, WDNR urban forestry program, UWSP L.E.A.F. Program, UW Extension Basin Education Program, Urban Open Space Foundation, Wisconsin Arborist Association, Wisconsin Landscape Federation

**Targeted:** community foresters, national, state and local staff/officials, utilities, forestry and natural resource professionals

**Timeline:*****Short-term:***

1. Identify potential partners, officials and critical players
2. Green Industry “Day on the Hill” relationship building with state lawmakers
3. Key individuals or groups need to become organized and develop methods to carry out goals regarding awareness.

***Mid-term:***

1. Survey for awareness of urban tree benefits
2. Produce marketing program w/tag ID or brand (e.g. Smokey Bear)
3. Educate local decision makers on the values of urban forest ecosystems, green infrastructure and balanced development.
4. Complete the urban forestry LEAF component
5. Find a “champion”

6. Local and regional decision makers need to be targeted with educational campaigns. One possible arena for enhancing awareness may be the comprehensive planning process.

**Long-term:**

1. Update & review/revise program as needed
2. Education needs to continue as new decision makers are elected or appointed. Successful conservation of wooded areas and individual trees requires active participation of all people involved in the land development.
3. Consider introduction of legislation aimed at incentive-driven conservation of existing critical forest lands within a community watershed.

**Indicators:**

- When the public has awareness beyond amenity only perception
- When community dwellers and policy-makers know that urban trees are valuable and are important as components of the community infrastructure and quality of life.
- Urban forest management is included in a community's comprehensive or "Smart Growth" plan
- Local and regional partnerships (city, county, township, nonprofit) are developed which address land use issues, establish ordinances and tree protection plans, incorporate forested communities into land use planning, educate developers and form local committees to address these issues.

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:**

- Resistance to change.
- The belief that balanced development creates more work and may result in less development revenues and tax revenues.
- Institutional indifference
- Lack of campaign/program funding
- Lack of staff/personnel to perform work

**Resources needed to achieve action:**

- Need for dedicated, organized groups and individuals.
- Citizen support.
- Funds for research, publications and publicity.

**Action #3: Identify, contain, and minimize the biological and socio-economic impact of exotic pests and plants on Wisconsin's urban and rural forest land.**

**Justification:**

Urban areas are frequently the source of new introductions of invasive species particularly from infested shipping containers and imported goods. These exotic invasive pests and plants threaten the health, productivity and composition of our urban and rural forestlands which in turn threaten related social, ecological and economic benefits they provide.

**Individuals/Organizations:**

**Committed:** APHIS, DATCP, DNR, UW, Governor's Council on Invasives, IPAW

**Targeted:** Midwest Invasive Plant Network, local contractors, Wisconsin Landscape Federation, Wisconsin Arborist Association, other industry groups.

**Timeline:**

**Short-term:**

1. Develop Risk Assessment Protocol

**Mid-term:**

1. Develop laws and legislative authority
2. Integrate/coordinate efforts of different organizations/agencies
3. Exchange information on successes from other states
4. Provide scientifically accurate brochures

**Long-term:**

1. Many actions not yet prioritized

**Indicators:**

- Development of the protocols
- Harmony of the groups involved

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:**

- Socio-economic factors must be considered

**Resources needed to achieve action:**

Not yet identified

*Partnerships Forged*

The urban forestry theme identified several opportunities that require new partnerships to accomplish the two focus areas identified at the conference – assessment of the urban forest resource, and public education - including APHIS, DATCP, and IPAW among others. The long-term success of both traditional and urban forestry may ultimately rest in solidifying potential partnerships with professionals working on issues related to land use planning and forest fragmentation, exotic invasive species, private woodland ownership, and the forest products industry.

*Summary of Goals*

There was mixed success in our two objectives.

***Objective 1. Develop collaborative partnerships within urban forestry and across disciplines within the forestry community.***

The urban forestry session recognized good opportunities for expanding partnerships with the broader forestry community and for integrating the efforts of several agencies and organizations. However, the structure of the conference kept each issue largely in its own silo. Involvement in one other breakout session allowed participants an opportunity to bring their views to another issue, but for the remaining five issues the exposure was brief and superficial. It is imperative that the conference organizers sit down and review where common ground exists. Identifying partners, real or imagined, is simply a mental exercise if they/we are not brought together under a unified plan of action.

***Objective 2. Plan actions to move forward with the Statewide Forest Management Plan and identify individuals or groups that will take ownership of that action.***

The urban forestry session successfully set three prioritized and focused action agendas, however for the most part, possible individuals and groups to lead the actions were simply identified. In addition, many other actions were identified without any means of prioritizing or following through. The leadership teams and individual organizations should use this raw data to encourage further work.

Despite some of the structural and time constraints, the Governor's Conference provided a much-needed forum to bring together the many aspects of forestry. Urban forestry in particular benefited from this opportunity not only to share its message with the forestry community, but to consider traditional forestry issues and see the potential common ground. We hope that the other themes also saw these connections, as we believe that urban forestry can be a vital partner in addressing a wide array of forestry concerns. The result will likely be cooperation and collaboration that otherwise might not have taken place had it not been for this conference.

We strongly urge the conference leadership team to continue to meet on an ongoing basis to encourage and facilitate further partnership development within and between theme groups.

## Minimizing Recreational Use Conflicts in Wisconsin's Forests

### Objectives for session.

- A) To provide participants with a snapshot view of forest recreation in Wisconsin and the associated recreational use conflicts.
- B) To develop recommendations for addressing what the planning group identified as the “key forest recreation issues” listed or implied in the statewide forest plan.

### Key Issues:

- a. How can we ensure that the full-spectrum of forest-based recreational opportunities in Wisconsin is available to the public, while at the same time ensure that public forest lands are managed for their economic benefits and ecological integrity, according to their intended missions?
- b. How can we ensure that the collective “Wisconsin trail network” is an efficient and effective system that meets recreational demand, is properly maintained, and has minimal impacts on forest resources?
- c. How can the needs of the growing motorized (ATV) recreation sector be met in Wisconsin, while meeting the needs of the non-motorized recreation sector and maintaining the ecological integrity of Wisconsin’s forests?
- d. How can we ensure that Wisconsin forests meet the demands for equestrian trails and associated amenities, amidst demands from other user groups and while minimizing impacts on forest resources?
- e. Recent surveys show that Wisconsin citizens and visitors generally do not understand forest ecology, forest management, or human impacts on Wisconsin’s forests. How can we ensure that Wisconsin citizens and visitors have a basic understanding of Wisconsin’s forest communities, forestry practices and human impacts?
- f. Less forestland is available for public use and large blocks of forest are being fragmented. How can we ensure that Wisconsin will always have space for forest recreation activities that require large areas?

### Outcomes

- I. **Revitalize the State Trails Council:** There is great need for a statewide “umbrella” group that would serve as a clearinghouse for recreation information and a catalyst for the development and promotion of recreation BMP’s, and coordination and planning across agency and organization lines. The council in its current format is not effective and needs re-working. Potentially, it could be a powerful, beneficial force in the management of Wisconsin’s forest recreation resources.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** WDNR Bureau of Parks and Recreation, external partners?

**Timeline**

ASAP (within the next year?)

**Indicators of success:** Development of a group that provides guidance and assistance to recreation providers

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:** Who will take the lead in initiating this?

- II. **Support and Promote Recreation Research:** Wisconsin lacks published research on the positive and negative impacts of forest recreation uses and the associated recommendations and conclusions that could result from such research. There is no recipe book for recreation management due to the dynamics of the users and the variable features of each property; therefore research is needed in Wisconsin so that guidance based on science can be provided to planners, managers and property owners.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** UW-system, state and federal agencies?

**Timeline:** Within the next biennium

**Indicators of success:** Development of a Wisconsin-specific collection of studies, information and recommendations. Perhaps creation of recreation BMP's for Wisconsin.

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:** Funding currently is limited.

- III. **Support and Promote Education and Interpretation Services:** Due to society's increased separation from the land, there is an increasing lack of public understanding regarding Wisconsin's forest resources and human impacts on those resources. Further, it is recognized that education is an important and integral law enforcement tool in recreation settings. More funding and training needs to be available to agencies, organizations and landowners. Wisconsin's forested landscape, whether publicly or privately owned, is practically devoid of educational and interpretive services that clearly explain regulations, explain forest ecology and forest management practices, or promote behaviors that minimize user conflicts and impacts on the land.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** UW-system, state and federal agencies?

**Timeline:** Within the next biennium

**Indicators of success:** On-site education and interpretation services development is included in agency budgets.

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:** Funding is currently not focused on on-site education and interpretation, where the recreation occurs.

IV. **Increase funding for Recreation Management**: Current agency budgets are not adequate to meet increasing demands from a greater number of recreationists, a greater variety of recreational uses, and greater impacts on the land – such as those impacts associated with ATV use and the spread of invasive species via recreationists and their equipment/vehicles.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Recreation users, legislature, agencies?

**Timeline:** Within the next biennium

**Indicators of success:** Funding increases significantly for public lands recreation

**Perceived obstacles/barriers:** What will be the source of the additional funding?

### **Partnerships Forged:**

It is apparent that people of different interest groups do want to work together towards solutions. They all want to be heard and they want to get to real solutions – action rather than just talk. They all see their resources (land base) shrinking quickly. The big question is “Who will take the lead?” The audience that attended was a good mix of people, however, there were quite a few organizations and agencies that were not represented. There was little to no representation from agency field managers who experience and work on forest recreation use conflicts on a daily basis. USDA-Forest Service, WDNR – Northern State Forests, WDNR-State Parks, etc. This left a knowledge and experience gap in the small group discussion dynamics.

### **Summary:**

I feel that we were successful given the time limitations and the complexity of the issues. We were, as everyone was, limited by time. These are complex issues and so the solutions are also complex. It is difficult to develop a thorough strategy in a 4-hour period, especially when working with people from such broad backgrounds. For the time we had, I believe we were productive. This session went essentially as we had planned it

## **Enhancing Assistance to Wisconsin's Private Forest Landowners**

### *Importance and Impacts*

The theme is statewide and affects woodland owners as well as those who enjoy clean air and water, scenic beauty, hunting and fishing, hiking, birding, and motorized sports. It directly affects mills and associated businesses. Non-industrial private landowners need information and assistance to keep their woodlands as working forests and to manage them sustainably for future generations.

### *Session Goals*

The goal of our session was to develop a set of recommendations for action to the Council on Forestry for each of the priority issues identified in the statewide forest plan that related directly to Enhancing Assistance to Wisconsin's Private Forest Landowners.

### *Key Issues*

- 272,000 non-industrial private landowners own 57% of Wisconsin's forestland. It is increasingly difficult to provide professional forest management assistance to these landowners.
- Many of these landowners are from urban areas. They tend to be less knowledgeable about sustainable forest management practices and more likely to be absentee landowners.
- Fewer than 30% of private landowners have a management plan or receive professional management assistance.

### **Summary of Recommended Action:**

Recommended actions, timeframe, indicators of success, perceived obstacles/barriers and resources, are grouped by the four breakout session topics:

- I. Private Forestry Assistance
- II. Forest Certification
- III. Property Taxes
- IV. Changing Forest Land Owners Demographics

#### **I. Private Forestry Assistance**

**Action #1:** Create a centralized point of contact for forestry information. Create a position that would serve as a point of contact (1 – 800 – FORESTRY) where woodland owners can go for relevant, science – based information.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** WDNR, UW – System (Extension), Woodland Owner Organizations, Environmental Organization, Non-governmental Organizations

**Timeline:** 12 months

#### **Indicators of success**

- Point of contact is established



**Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Ownership / location of position
- Funding

**Resources needed to achieve action**

- Commitment by agencies and organization to support concept
- Funding

**Action #2** Use new approaches to market forestry. Develop a comprehensive strategy designed to appeal to woodland owners who do not participate in forest management activities or existing programs or organizations because of philosophical difference or stereotypic views of forest management.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** WDNR, UW – System (Extension), Woodland Owner Organizations, Environmental Organization, Non-governmental Organizations

**Timeline**

- Bring together planning group to develop strategy (6 months)
- Develop and implement market research (12 months)
- Gather results and produce report (18 months)
- Develop and implement trial (24 months)
- Evaluate success (36 months)

**Indicators of success**

- Recommendations implemented according to proposed timeline.

**Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Partnership
- Funding
- Ownership of results
- Responsibility for implementation

**Resources needed to achieve action**

- Commitment by agencies and organization to support and implement concept
- Funding

**There were several other ideas put forward by the group to reach out to woodland owners who are interested in woodland management but are not addressed by any of our traditional programs or organizations. They include:**

- 1) Work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to include forest stewardship planning as a part of “Whole Farm Plans.” It is recommended that the DNR work with NRCS to hire a State Forester to develop and implement this recommendation and coordinate with NRCS Service Centers throughout the state.
- 2) It is recommended that the University of Wisconsin System, Cooperative Development Services and others in cooperation with the DNR conduct research into success and failure of wood cooperatives in order to target education and funding into areas with greatest chance of

success. The goal would be to help promote trust in cooperatives as an alternative to traditional forest management.

- 3) There has been a lot of discussion around developing a system to pay woodland owners for ecologic services that their woodlands provide. Ideas like payments for carbon sequestration tied to the Kyoto Accords would be an example of this. However, the goal would be to expand it to payments for all ecologic services (clean air and water, aesthetic or scenic beauty, wildlife habitat), especially those where there are voluntary or required best management practices that landowners must follow.
- 4) Similarly, the group recommends that the DNR work with federal agencies that administer the Farm Bill to access funding available for woodland management. Although the Farm Bill provides money for forest management activities this money is not available to woodland owners due to structural impediments in the program.

## **II. Forest Certification**

Action #1: Develop a program for private landowners to participate in a forest certification program. The cornerstone of any program should create ways to lower the cost to woodland owners and provide market incentives for participation; market sustainable forest management; educate the public on consumer choices; provide financial and technical assistance for group certification by organizations and cooperatives.

Discussion: While the DNR is currently pursuing group certification for MFL participants there is a need to provide woodland owners with more than one option. Certification programs are at their heart a means to recognize sustainable forest management by woodland owners. However, there are real differences between existing forest certification programs. It is recommended that the DNR work with agencies, industry, organizations and cooperatives who are interested in offering group certification through one of these other systems to address the needs of woodland owners who are interested in certification of sustainable forest management but are distrustful of traditional forest management systems or hold a stereotypical view of traditional forest management systems or organizations.

### **Develop Partnerships between groups**

- 1) Encourage consulting foresters to work with landowners
  - a) Provide incentives to become proxy managers
- 2) Tie certified/master loggers into system
  - a) Provide short-term financial support until market catches up
- 3) Strengthen UW-extension systems
- 4) Forest industry and landowners association
- 5) Establish a database/index of certified lands and loggers
- 6) MFL and Stewardship certification cooperation
  - (1) Between landowners and certification program.

### **Timeline**

- Need to take advantage of “window of opportunity” by Warners, Inc. ?
- Set short-term time goal coordinating w/ the 2006 deadline by Warners
- Set deadlines to establish a sense of urgency

- Specific goals (acreage) needed to help guide actions

#### **Indicators of success**

- Governor's Council should develop some goals and establish periodic evaluations
- 80% by 2006

#### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Legislative problems / resistance from state governmental officials
- Reluctance to participate by landowners for fear of governmental control on lands
- No real market incentive yet
- Competing markets w/ cheaper wood from other states/countries
- Most landowners don't want to / need to manage land for timber – don't see benefits
- Costly for landowners in general
- Misconception of "sustainable" forestry in public
- No enforcement for tax breaks
  - Unbalanced between farmers, non-farmers, etc
    - Uneducated public as to the benefits of healthy forests
    - General public (non land owners) sees little benefit Partnership
- Funding
- Ownership of results
- Responsibility for implementation

#### **Resources and Legislation needed to achieve action**

##### Resources needed

- Money/Financial support
- Educational programs both for landowners, loggers, industry, and K-12 programs
- Technical advice / services offered for landowners participating in program
- Landowners themselves (within their community)
- Government (Federal, State, Local, S&PF, etc)
- Operational support for groups (staff, materials, etc)

##### Legislation needed

- Develop statutes recognizing/legitimizing concept of certifications & hierarchy
- Possibly tweak MFL to include sustainable forestry goals
- Review NR 1.21 to include priorities and certification procedure of sustainability
- State procurement / sustainable products plan
- Balance tax breaks for non-agricultural owners

**Summary:** If forest certification is to be successful in the long run then there must be an educational effort tied to it to help the public understand what certification and sustainable forest management actually mean. To date the primary motivator for certification has been business to business demand as opposed to market forces driven by consumption. It has been assumed that markets would encourage woodland owners to seek certification due to higher prices paid for certified wood. This has not been the case. Therefore, it is recommended that the University of Wisconsin system working with the DNR and in cooperation with other interested agencies, industry, organizations and cooperatives develop a program to educate and inform the public on these issues as well as develop a message on consumer choices.

### III. Property Taxes

**Action #1:** It is recommended that the Governor appoint a Task Force to conduct a comprehensive study of taxation of lands based on use value assessment to protect natural resources of the state. The goal would be to devise a property tax system that would remove social and structural impediments to participating in a forest tax law program, encourage conservation and stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources and encourage the maintenance of large blocks of contiguous forest.

Discussion: Wisconsin has a long history of encouraging the sustainable management of privately owned forestland through property tax relief programs that reduce annual payments and defer some of the tax burden until income is received from a harvest. During the 1920's it became apparent that forest landowners were being forced to liquidate the timber on their forestlands to pay their property taxes. Traditional property tax systems tax forestlands based on the value of standing timber. However, forestland owners only receive income when timber is harvested and must carry the cost of investments and property taxes until a harvest. This resulted in the premature and destructive harvest of timber by landowners who needed money to pay their property taxes.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that woodland owners face a similar situation today. It is common to hear stories from woodland owners who have been forced to parcelize their property to pay their property taxes. While the Managed Forest Law provides property tax relief to woodland owners there are economic, social and structural impediments that prevent woodland owners from participating in this program.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Agricultural commodity and interest groups, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Protection, Department of Revenue, Department of Natural Resources, Land trust community, Business community, Municipalities and local governments

**Timeline:** By January 1, 2007 for the 2008 fiscal biennium

#### **Indicators of success**

- Appointment of Task Force by Governor
- Task Force recommendations presented to the Governor by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007
- Recommendations address
  - Fairness
  - Resource protection
  - Sustainable management

#### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Legislative problems / resistance from state governmental officials

#### **Resources needed to achieve action**

- Operational support from agency staff (funding, staff, materials, etc)
- Operational support for industry, organizations, and affected groups (funding, staff, materials, etc)

**Action #2:** Given the value of working forest easement to maintain large blocks of contiguous forests in family forest ownership it is recommended that the DNR in cooperation with the Department of Revenue develop and implement some system of property tax assessment that reduces the tax on properties with conservation easements (based on the restrictiveness of the easement).

Discussion: There was real concern from the Land Trust community regarding property tax assessments on woodland properties with conservation easements. Although there are guidelines for assessors to follow on the valuation of properties with conservation easements it was the testimony of those attending that the great majority of woodland owners with working forest easements are still paying full property taxes.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Department of Revenue, Department of Natural Resources, Land trust community, Municipalities and local governments

**Timeline:** By January 1, 2007 for the 2008 fiscal biennium

**Indicators of success**

- Formation of working group to address this recommendation
- Development and implementation of work group recommendation

**Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Legislative problems / resistance from state and local governmental officials

**Resources needed to achieve action**

- Operational support from agency staff (funding, staff, materials, etc)
- Operational support for industry, organizations, and affected groups (funding, staff, materials, etc)

**Comments:**

- There is not a one size fits all approach to this problem.
- Additional partners need to be brought to the table on this issue.
- Any solutions must consider unintended consequences to other users and to land use.

**Action #3:** Related to the above issue it is also recommended that the DNR work with agency, industry, organizations and the Land Trust community create a forest landowner incentive fund to cost-share the transaction costs of setting up conservation easements.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Department of Natural Resources, Land trust community, Woodland owner organizations, Cooperatives

**Timeline:** By January 1, 2007 for the 2008 fiscal biennium

**Indicators of success**

- Formation of working group to address this recommendation
- Inclusion of cost-share items docket for Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program

### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Legislative problems
- Resistance from agency staff

### **Resources needed to achieve action**

- Operational support from agency staff (funding, staff, materials, etc) to develop program guidelines
- Operational support for industry, organizations, and affected groups (funding, staff, materials, etc) to implement program guidelines

### **Comments**

- Fund through mill tax dollars
- Similar to Lake Management and Lake Planning Grants
- Possible link to state Forest Legacy Program

## **IV. Changing Forest Land Owners Demographics**

**Action #1:** Traditional methods of education and outreach that have worked for us in the past are unlikely to continue to serve us well in the future. Therefore, it is our recommendation that a systematic survey (market research) be developed to better understand who these new family forest owners are. What kinds of education and outreach programs and materials will be most effective to meet their needs?

Discussion: Today, forested parcels are more likely to be purchased by people who have different values than the forest owner of the past. Based on research from around the Lake States region we know that these new owners, unlike agricultural or rural owners of the past owned forest and used it primarily to supplement his income, purchase woodland properties for primarily recreational use or aesthetic values. These new family forest owners tend to be more cautious about harvesting their timber, less knowledgeable about rural areas and the forest they've moved to, wealthier than past owners, and more likely to be absentee landowners.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Department of Natural Resources, Private Forest Lands Team, University of Wisconsin system, Woodland owner organizations, Cooperatives, Environmental / Wildlife habitat conservation organizations

### **Timeline**

- Move this item to the Private Forest Lands Team agenda (6 months)
- Work with contractor to develop and implement survey instrument (18 months)
- Quantify data and produce report (24 months)
- Implement report finding (36 months)

### **Indicators of success**

- Private Forest Team create work group to implement recommendation
- Contractor hired to develop and implement survey
- Final report produced
- Agency, institution, organizations implement education and outreach programs based on report finding.

### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Funding
- Partner cooperation
- Resistance from agency staff

### **Resources needed to achieve action**

- Operational support from agency staff (funding, staff, materials, etc) to develop recommendation
- Operational support for industry, organizations, and affected groups (funding, staff, materials, etc) to implement recommendation

### **Comments**

- Local efforts are best
- Need to form a consortium of interested parties.
- Fund through mill tax dollars
- The Division of Forestry's Private Forest Lands Team would be the natural fit to move this recommendation forward
- Funding for this research and education programs could come from the mill tax, a transaction cost on land sales, or leveraging existing Forest Service funds.

### **Facilitator's comments**

- Clearly the group was focused on the need to connect with new forest land owners, primarily those with limited experience and understanding of forest land management. Significant issues of interest related to this topic which the group spent time discussing included:
  - developing effective ways to locate new owners in a timely manner
  - preparing effective messages
  - determining how best to deliver educational materials and information
  - Who would have a role in outreach activities?
  - ensuring that there is some overall coordination for outreach activities
  - providing ongoing resources for private forest owners

**Action #2:** Based on the previous recommendation it is also recommended that the DNR working with the University of Wisconsin system and in cooperation with other interested agencies, industry, organizations, cooperatives and local government develop a system to identify new family forest owners through tracking land transactions.

New landowners tracked through such a system would receive selected material designed to be of interest to novice woodland owners. Therefore it is recommended that the DNR working with the University of Wisconsin system and in cooperation with other interested agencies, industry, organizations, and cooperatives develop a pilot project to target education and outreach to the new woodland owners identified through the tracking of land transactions.

**Committed or targeted Individuals/organizations:** Department of Natural Resources, Private Forest Lands Team, University of Wisconsin system, Woodland owner organizations, Cooperatives, Environmental / Wildlife habitat conservation organizations, County Land Conservation and Treasurer's Department

### **Timeline**

- Move this item to the Private Forest Lands Team agenda (6 months)
- Identify counties that have a system capable of tracking the sale of woodland properties (18 months)
- Develop a package of material designed to be of interest to novice woodland owners (18 months)
- Implement program (24 months)
- Evaluate program success via a survey recipients, quantify data and produce report (48 months)

### **Indicators of success**

- Private Forest Team create work group to implement recommendation
- Identify five counties to implement pilot project
- Implement program
- Evaluate
- Final report produced

### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Funding
- Partner cooperation
- Resistance from agency staff

### **Resources needed to achieve action**

- Operational support from agency staff (funding, staff, materials, etc) to develop recommendation
- Operational support for industry, organizations, and affected groups (funding, staff, materials, etc) to implement recommendation

### **General Comments**

- Fund through mill tax dollars
- The Division of Forestry's Private Forest Lands Team would be the natural fit to move this recommendation forward

### **Facilitator's comments**

- The group would like to see an outreach pilot program developed in several counties to test different approaches and measure what is effective in reaching new forest land owners. Although this wasn't stated, I suspect that measuring the success of this outreach in terms of land owner responses would also be important. The group would like to have adequate state resources for the pilot and include as an element of the effort up to date market research to support outreach development.
- There was agreement that more foresters are needed. Disagreement on whether emphasis should be on public or private assistance. However, there was consensus that we need more "dirt foresters".
- There are two parallel processes underway that are designed to directly address this issue. The Private Forestry Study Review Team will be submitting its report shortly and the DNR is



in the process of developing a Certified Plan Writer program to address inconsistencies in the development of Managed Forest Law plans across the state.

- Develop a parallel program to MFL for non-commodity forest values. This was an item that was taken up by several group with a recommendation made for a similar program.

### **Partnerships Forged**

There was a sense that this forum provided the basis for future partnerships and that participants were interested in continuing to work together. However, for those partnerships to emerge someone will need to take the lead in bringing the participants together again. One of the best examples is bring the need to property tax issues related to conservation easements. Land Trusts are a new partner that many had not thought of previously. Possibly new partnerships will form with UW-systems, DNR employees, industry executives, co-ops, private foresters, politicians/Council members, Real-Estate agencies, local municipalities / governments, citizens, loggers, etc.

### **Summary:**

The session was a fruitful beginning on what needs to be a continuing conversation. Many good ideas were generated but the limited time prohibited the development of comprehensive action plans. I thought that we accomplished much more than we thought we would and yet in some ways much less than we had hoped for. Enhancing assistance to Wisconsin's Private Woodland Owners is a large and somewhat nebulous task. As we discovered in our theme team meeting and later at the conference there are many people who have a stake in the issues related to this theme and each has a different perspective and sometimes language.

I thought that we accomplished much more than we hoped because participants left the session feeling that real work had been accomplished, issues had been aired and addressed and a plan was in place to move forward on these issue.

It has been a common theme as I have sought feedback from my leadership team and participants that they look forward to continuing dialogue to move these recommendations forward.

I thought that we accomplished much less because I had hoped that we would build coalitions and reach agreement on organizations that would be willing to participate and move these recommendations forward with a specific commitment of resources to achieve these goals.

At this point I am looking forward to seeing which of these recommendations have merit in the eyes' of the Council on Forestry. Depending on the outcome of the Council's deliberations I am hoping to pull my leadership team together to begin the process of putting these recommendations into action.

## **Maintaining Wisconsin's Forest-based Economy**

### *Importance and Impacts*

Forestry plays a significant role in the ecological and social benefits derived from the existence of a healthy and diverse forest-based economy. Wisconsin's forest-based economy is important in local, state and global economies, supporting employment, forest improvement and strong revenues for landowners. More than 100,000 people are employed in 1,850 wood-using companies in Wisconsin. This generates roughly \$20 billion in primary economic activity. More people than ever are using Wisconsin's forests for recreational and tourism activities. Wisconsin households spend over \$5.5 billion per year on goods and services associated with forest-based recreation. Of this total spending, roughly \$2.5 billion are spent in local areas. This represents a significant percentage of tourism spending in Wisconsin. Strategies to maintain Wisconsin's strong forest-based economy will be required as the globalization of the economy increases.

### **Session Goals**

- Quantify economic objectives
- Identify issues of importance
- Determine legislative interest
- Establish dialogue from within the industry associations to work together on short and long term goals.

### **Key issues**

- Global demand for forest products requires primary and secondary forest industries to make business decisions in the context of a worldwide market.
- Sustainable management certification is emerging, and the global market for sustainable forest products may give certified Wisconsin forests a competitive edge.
- Sustainable energy and environmental standards will need attention to maintain healthy forest and human communities.

### **Short Term Actions**

- ISSUE: Shortage of available timber.  
ACTION: Increase the present efforts to work with NIPF to manage their timber lands in a sustainable manner.
- ISSUE: Need to secure funding for the "Center for Sustainable Forestry Businesses" that the Governor announced.  
ACTION: Increase efforts to redirect forestry mill tax to its appropriate purpose--assisting forestry.
- ISSUE: Mill tax continues to be misappropriated  
ACTION: Increase efforts to redirect forestry mill tax to its appropriate purpose--assisting forestry

- ISSUE: Need broader implementation of Green Tier.  
ACTION: Continue support of the present pilot study in the application Green Tier.

### **Long Term Actions**

- ISSUE: There is a loss of loggers: “We don’t have loggers to move product from the stump to the mill.” – Gene Francisco  
ACTION: Work with the Professional Loggers Association to support the Master Loggers Certification Program.
- ISSUE: Wood based energy needs to overcome perceived environmental issues.  
ACTION: Continue support of the Wisconsin's Council of Forestry's Biomass Task Force.
- ISSUE: Electricity costs in have risen greatly, adversely affecting the competitiveness of Wisconsin paper mills.  
ACTION: Increase efforts to increase the use of instate alternative power production.
- ISSUE: Lack of re-investment in infrastructure – not just transportation, but more specifically capital equipment investment at the paper companies.  
ACTION: Continue to work with the industry, including the transportation industry, to remove barriers that reduce the re-investment in infrastructure.

### **Indicators of Success:**

- Increase in available and sustainable wood supply
- Improved Wisconsin’s business climate
- Increase compliance of existing MFL forest plans
- Reduce transportation costs
- Increase in reliable energy
- Increase in the number of certified master loggers
- .Reduction in the loss of forestry businesses
- Certification of NIPF

### **Perceived obstacles/barriers**

- Lack of funding due to the misappropriation of the Forestry mill tax.
- Lack of understanding by legislators and citizens of the importance of a forest products industry to the health of our Wisconsin forests and the states’ economy.
- Lack of funding for the new Center for Sustainable Forestry Businesses

### **Resource needed to achieve action**

- Support of MFL and certification programs
- Support of “Master Logger Certification” program
- Support of Woodlinks (high school tech ed program)
- Support of Center for Sustainable Forestry Businesses

## **Partnerships Forged**

Pat Schillinger (called by some “a breath of fresh air”) of the Wisconsin Paper Council brought up the subject of a combined group of state associations – a concept whereby all forestry related associations could join forces and work on common goals and issues. This was a very forward move on the part of the Paper Council and should be investigated further

## **Summary of Goals**

The objective of prioritizing major issues was accomplished, though much work remains to be done in addressing these issues. Securing funding and naming of a director for Center for Sustainable Forestry Businesses will be important first steps

# Managing the Impacts of Changes in Wisconsin's Land Use and Forest Ownership

## *Importance and Impacts*

Forest fragmentation and parcelization are affecting the ecological, economic and social/cultural values of forests statewide. Land use changes affect fire control in the wildland-urban interface, loss of habitat and biological diversity, the ability to manage forests for sustainability and productivity, and the health of local economies.

## **Session Goals**

- To get agreement from stakeholders on the goals relating to preventing and mitigating forest fragmentation and parcelization
- To identify, prioritize and establish general agreement on a list of actions to achieve implementation of the goals
- To create action plans for implementing the priority actions
- To get a commitment from stakeholders to work toward implementing the action plans and achieving the goals

## **Key Issues**

- Patterns of land use and forest ownership influence long term forest management. Suburban growth, second homes and other land uses convert contiguous forest into smaller patches.
- Forest fragmentation, the breaking up of large contiguous forest patches into smaller isolated patches, is widespread, as is forest parcelization, or the subdivision of relatively large forest ownerships into smaller parcels owned by more landowners.
- Related issues are providing incentives for landowners to prevent and mitigate impacts of parcelization and fragmentation, and public outreach on changing land uses and forest ownership.

## **Short Term Goals**

**GOAL:** Maintain and expand viable tracts of forest land for ecological, economic and social values.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Create a Governor's Task Force on industrial forest retention.
- Consider use value assessment for forest lands
- Provide adequate professional forestry assistance to landowners
- Develop and promote best practices for development in forested areas
- Promote the use of the Managed Forest Law
- Encourage sustainable forest management for clean water

**GOAL:** Promote public understanding & appreciation of forests & the need to prevent forest fragmentation and parcelization.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Conduct poll of public to determine the most effective messages about forest uses/ values
- Include forests in community planning
- Commission white paper study on impact of parcelization and loss of industrial lands

- Provide information at time of sale to new forest land owners about sustainable use
- Educate on how forest fragmentation affects forest ecosystems and multiple forest uses

**GOAL:** Identify economically, ecologically & socially important forest lands.

**ACTIONS:**

- Identify water recharge areas (groundwater)
- Identify lands where parcelization / fragmentation would mean lost opportunities for land protection
- Develop landscape level analysis to identify core areas and corridors

### **Long Term Goals**

**GOAL:** Maintain and expand viable tracts of forest land for ecological, economic and social values.

**ACTIONS:**

- Continue to educate policy makers about public benefits of forests and forestry.
- Promote use of conservation easements on working forest lands.
- Enact tax incentives for forested lands.
- Analyze effects of restrictions by local governments on forest management

**GOAL:** Identify economically, ecologically & socially important forest lands.

**ACTIONS:**

- Develop and disseminate “State of the forests” reports on a multi-county, regional basis
- Identify what drives parcelization and fragmentation in the state
- Develop a statewide GIS layer for land ownership
- Define important and unique forest lands

### **Indicators of Success**

There will be many indicators of both short and long term success.

*Short Term Indicators:*

- Establishment of a task force on industrial forest retention and reports produced with recommendations.
- Recommendations and report on use value assessment for forest lands.
- Development, promotion and adoption of comprehensive best practices for development in forested areas.
- Increased forest owner use of Managed Forest Law.
- Maintained and improved water quality.
- Completed comprehensive marketing campaign that leads to increased awareness and support for forest values and understanding of impacts of forest fragmentation and parcelization.
- Forests and forestry issues incorporated into local comprehensive plans.
- Study on impact of parcelization and loss of industrial lands commissioned, completed and communicated.

- Information consistently provided to new forest landowners across the state
- Decrease in the number of parcels sold off, increase in parcel size, minimized effect of fragmentation /parcelization of forest lands.
- All state water recharge areas identified, mapped and accessible to public.
- Identification of opportunities for filling in the fragmented gaps and a better understanding by local governments and state about forestry values.

*Long Term Indicators:*

- Increased understanding of public benefits of forests and forestry and policies that reflect that understanding.
- Increased use of conservation easements for working forests and/or development of program to assist forest land owners with creation of conservation easements for working forests.
- Tax incentives created that are directly attributable to increase in maintenance and expansion of forest lands.
- Increase in certified, professional forestry personnel in the field.
- Comprehensive reports made with a regional focus on a regular basis.
- Completed survey providing detailed information on factors that drive parcelization and fragmentation.
- Completed development of a statewide GIS layer that is updated on a consistent basis.
- Agreed upon criteria for “important” and “unique” forest lands and mapped inventory

**Perceived Obstacles/Barriers**

Each of the proposed actions has specific perceived obstacles and barriers, which are detailed in the online proceedings. Obstacles and barriers that are common to many proposed actions include a lack of funding and a lack of staff.

**Resources Needed to Achieve Action**

Each of the proposed actions has specific resource needs, which are detailed in the online proceedings. Resources needed by many of the proposed actions include support staff, time and funding.

**Partnerships Forged**

For our organization, this conference was an opportunity to meet and connect with a large variety of new groups and individuals. I think there are potential partnerships (or renewed partnerships) with industry, the forestry landowner groups, UW forest ecology and management and UWSP CLUE, and DNR forest planning.

**Summary of Goals**

We came out of the session with a fairly detailed set of action plans with which to move forward. We also have gotten quite a bit of positive feedback about our session from people who attended.

## **Minimizing the Threat of Invasive Exotic Species to Wisconsin's Forests**

### **Summary**

A leadership team was formed in August 2004 and met periodically to develop an outline for the conference session. We identified key issues for which the conference provided the best opportunity to engage a broad set of stakeholders and secure commitments to action. The leadership team included: Fred Clark, Clark Forestry, Inc.; John Exo, UW-Extension; Jane Cummings-Carlson, WDNR-DOF; Peter Murray, Wisconsin Lakes Assoc.; Miles Falck, GLIFWC; Dan Bohlin, woodland owner; Gene Roark, W.W.O.A., I.P.A.W.; and Nancy Berlin, USDA Forest Service Region 9. Staff support was also provided by Darrell Zastrow of D.O.F. and Kelly Kearns of WDNR-Bureau of Endangered Resources.

The leadership team reviewed the 9 issues and 22 strategies / recommendations developed by Council on Forestry's Invasive Species Task Group in their draft report to the Forestry Council in September 2004. The leadership team selected 4 issues from that report for focus during the conference. The issues were selected based on the team's consensus of their importance, and the suitability of the conference format for developing strategies for them.

Sixty-seven people participated in the 4-hour session. Participants included local, state and federal agency staff, Non-Governmental Organizations, academics and private landowners.

Introductory sessions included presentations detailing the current status and extent of invasive plant and forest pest issues in Wisconsin, emerging threats, efforts in place for monitoring and control, and resources needed.

Following the introductory sessions we broke into sub-theme sessions to discuss the 4 issues selected by the leadership team. The results of those sessions follow.



## **Governors Conference on Forestry - Invasive Species Session Summary of the 4 Issues, Conclusions and Key Strategies**

### ***I. Forestry Best Management Practices for Invasive Species***

The conference participants had a clear consensus on the need for voluntary forestry / invasive species BMP's and a commitment to a partnership-based process for creating them.

**Goal:** Create Partnerships and Process for Development of Forestry BMP's for Invasive Species.

### ***II. Forestry / Invasives Research, Survey and Monitoring Needs***

Conference participants felt that a lack of consistent and standardized data was one barrier to setting research agendas and effectively allocating resources toward invasives research and management.

**Goal:** Create a central repository for collecting and sharing standardized survey data on the presence and severity of invasive species.

### ***III. Landowner/Manager Partnerships and Co-operative Management***

Lack of co-ordination between agencies, neighboring landowners and managers of highway and utility rights-of-way were identified as a significant barrier to effective management of emerging invasives issues.

**Goal:** Provide incentives and facilitate development of local weed councils or Weed Management Areas (WMA's) throughout Wisconsin.

### ***IV. Information, Education and Outreach***

There is a consistent need to improve outreach and education efforts around invasives, particularly for private landowners. Participants identified the need for a clearinghouse for providing information and links to resources for invasives identification, detection and management. A related secondary need was to help modify behaviors of recreational users to limit spread of invasives.

**Goal:** Create an information clearinghouse pilot project to more effectively deliver information and resources about invasive species to private landowners.

## **Actions Requested from the Council on Forestry**

The Invasive Species Leadership Team met on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 to review the results of the conference and identify critical next steps. We also reviewed the key recommendations of the draft report from the Invasive Species Task Force that was delivered to the Forestry Council on 9/04. The Leadership Team recognizes a need for their own continued involvement in the issue to help represent the range of interests and skills needed to advance the strategies selected during the conference and in the Task Force Report.

At this time the Leadership Team requests action and specific approval of the Council on three key issues:

- Endorsement of the Department of Natural Resources budget request to fund an invasive species program. Resources for the Division of Forestry (D.O.F.) to develop an effective invasive plants program is embedded within the DNR's overall budget request, has been reviewed by the Forestry Council and approved by the Natural Resources Board. The Council's specific endorsement of this component of the budget will help raise awareness of the needs being met by the current request during review by DOA and the State Senate and Assembly.
- Recognition of the need for revision of state statutes and related administrative rules to develop comprehensive invasive species laws. Wisconsin's current laws regulating invasive species are outdated and the state needs a broad and robust regulatory framework for the protection of natural resources from invasive species. The Governor's Invasive Species Council (GISC) should be the advisory body to lead this effort. The Forestry Council should direct the D.O.F. to co-operate with GISC, other Divisions within DNR, and other state agencies to begin developing proposed rules and draft legislation for this effort. The Council on Forestry endorses the need for this legislation and the Invasive Species Council's role in leading the effort to find political support.
- Request for staff support from Division of Forestry to continue the co-ordination and leadership efforts needed to advance the strategies identified through the conference. An immediate focus of this effort would be to begin work on all of the four initiatives described above, including kicking-off the process of developing state-wide BMP's for invasive species, and to continue the work of the leadership team in engaging a broad array of stakeholders around forestry/invasive species issues.