

SUBJECT: Division of Forestry's Strategic Direction

FOR: MAY 25 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY / TITLE: Paul DeLong - Chief State Forester & Rebecca Gass - Section Chief

SUMMARY:

The Division of Forestry (DOF) has completed a Strategic Direction to guide our work for the next five years and beyond. The genesis of the Strategic Direction began in 2008, when DOF initiated an assessment process that analyzed the current condition of forests (both public and private), looked for trends, and identified issues and threats to Wisconsin's forests for the next 10 years.

From that assessment grew the Statewide Forest Strategy (Strategy), which is a collection of multiple ideas on how the forestry community as a whole can address major issues and priority topics over the next five to ten years. In 2010, the DOF reviewed the Strategy to determine what roles the DOF is best positioned to fill, and engaged partners in assessing the same.

DOF's Strategic Direction describes the difficult choices we are making about how best to invest limited personnel and funding to maximize the value delivered towards protecting and sustainably managing Wisconsin's forests for the next five years and beyond. The DOF requested input on a draft from partners, customers and staff in January 2011. Following a review and evaluation of all comments received, the Department made revisions and finalized the Strategic Direction.

RECOMMENDATION: Information item

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

Paul DeLong
Bureau Director

4.25.2011
Date

Paul DeLong
Administrator

4/25/11
Date

Cathy Stepp
Secretary, Cathy Stepp

5/4/11
Date

cc: NRB Liaison
DNR Rules Coordinator

DATE: April 25, 2011

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Cathy Stepp, Secretary

SUBJECT: Division of Forestry's Strategic Direction

At the May Board meeting, we will present the Division of Forestry's Strategic Direction. This is the culmination of three years worth of work we have undertaken with our partners to assess and plan how to address major issues, threats and opportunities involving the forests of Wisconsin. We completed the first two parts of this work -- our Statewide Forest Assessment and our Statewide Forest Strategy in 2010, and presented these documents to the Board last May.

The third and final piece is our Division of Forestry's Strategic Direction. This document outlines what the Division of Forestry's niche and role will be to address major issues and priority topics over the next 5 years and beyond. The document is organized by nine main Forestry program areas and provides intention statements that describe the difficult choices we have made on how to invest our limited personnel and funding to maximize the value the Division delivers towards protecting and sustainably managing Wisconsin's forests.

Making decisions on how to invest limited resources required us to think critically about our role and niche within the larger forestry community. We are committed to demonstrating that taxpayer dollars are being spent on the highest priority work within a well-defined niche for state government. Therefore, our strategies focus on outcomes and how we provide a good return on the investment made in us by the citizens of the state. Recognizing that DNR neither can nor should do it all, our Strategic Direction strives to enhance partnerships.

Much of what is presented here continues work we now do and, in many cases, have done for many years. This reflects our belief that these functions have been, and remain, an appropriate and valued role for the Division. There are several significant changes described in the Strategic Direction to address the changing needs of the forestry community and citizens of Wisconsin. As a result we believe the Strategic Direction identifies both those challenges that we have worked to address in the past and that continue to need our attention, as well as new challenges and opportunities that demand our attention.

The first draft of the Strategic Direction was released on December 17, 2010 and partners, the public, and staff were requested to provide their comments. We received feedback from those who believe the goals and strategies they value most would be better served by this Strategic Direction, as well as those who expressed concern about the path we were proposing to follow. We will post on the Division's website a document with all of the comments that were submitted by partners, the public and DNR staff. In the attached document ("Response Document") we respond to comments, including those that resulted in changes to the Strategic Direction, definitions and clarification of terms or concepts readers did not understand, and intent

statements and decisions that received a lot of comments but were not changed for reasons explained.

As we move forward we will assess how best to align our resources to meet the identified priorities and develop an implementation plan. Some actions we will be able to initiate quickly and others may take several years to realize. We will continue to communicate with partners as we determine how to implement actions. The gap analysis of current and needed resources, reconciliation of the gaps identified and development of an action plan for implementation will involve several phases, but it is anticipated the entire process will be completed by early winter 2011.

We look forward to sharing our Strategic Direction with you on May 25th. In the interim, please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional background prior to the presentation.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Strategic Direction



Department of Natural Resources
May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the Division of Forestry, I wish to thank the many individuals and organizations that provided input and feedback throughout our planning process over the last two years. We heard from many organizations, tribes, private individuals, businesses, governments, and advisory boards. Their comments were insightful and helped identify the greatest priorities the Division should work on and what the Division's role should be.

The following DNR staff contributed in a significant way to the development of this document. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Team leaders are identified with an asterisk.

Jeff Barkley*	Ron Gropp	Dick Rideout*
Heather Berklund	Maggie Haas	Jeff Roe
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Mike Finley	Amy Morales	Joe Vandehey
Rebecca Gass	Pat Murphy	Craig Williams
Ellen Gundrum	Chris Plzak	Pete Wisdom
Steve Grant	Teague Prichard*	

I also want to acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the Forestry Leadership Team – Tom Duke, Julie Graziano, Arvid Haugen, Allison Hellman, Trent Marty, Bob Mather, Wendy McCown, John Nielsen, Curt Wilson and Darrell Zastrow – who, with the invaluable support of Margie Sprecher, spent countless hours wrestling with the difficult task of setting a course for the future in a resource-limited environment.

Finally, this project was under the excellent leadership of Rebecca Gass, ably assisted by Kristen Tomaszewski and guided by Wendy McCown. Their leadership throughout this process was outstanding.

Paul DeLong
Forestry Division Administrator
Chief State Forester
May 2011

The mission of the Division of Forestry is to work in partnership to protect and sustainably manage Wisconsin's forest ecosystems to supply a wide range of ecological, economic and social benefits for present and future generations.

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DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

WHY WISCONSIN'S FORESTS ARE IMPORTANT

Wisconsin's forests are ecological, economic and social treasures. They provide the raw materials for the forest products industry which directly contributes over \$18 billion and more than 60,000 jobs to our state's economy. They are also the setting for our recreation and tourism industry which contributes over \$5 billion to our state's economy. Our forests purify and maintain the quality of our plentiful water resources and provide habitat for a wide array of plant and animal species. Our abundant forests also mitigate climate change and air pollution through carbon storage and oxygen production, are a source of renewable energy, and provide settings within which many of Wisconsin's citizens and visitors choose to live, work and recreate.

The ability of Wisconsin's forests to continue to support existing and emerging industries, as well as produce environmental services that benefit people including clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and soil conservation, is contingent on forests being protected and sustainably managed. The following are a few examples of the returns the citizens of Wisconsin receive for their investment in protecting and sustainably managing our forests:

- assuring a continuous supply of wood to our traditional forest industries as well as emerging bioenergy ventures, helping maintain a vital part of Wisconsin's economy;
- preventing loss of life, property and natural resources to wildfire;
- providing a diverse array of recreational opportunities for Wisconsin citizens and visitors;
- minimizing the loss of, or damage to, our rural and urban trees and the benefits they provide due to invasive plants and destructive pests; and
- providing habitat for a diverse array of wildlife, both common and rare.

Given the importance of Wisconsin's forests to the state's economy and environment, and increasing state budget challenges, it is essential that the Division of Forestry has a clear understanding of:

- the goals in the Statewide Forestry Strategy approved in June 2010;
- our role, relative to others within the diverse forestry community, in working towards those goals; and
- how we intend to maintain or reshape the work of the Division to most effectively achieve those goals.

THE CHALLENGE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The major issues and threats affecting the forests of Wisconsin can not be tackled by one group, organization or agency. Nor are there enough resources to implement all of the value-added strategies that have been identified. Furthermore, different groups will have different perspectives on whether or not a particular strategy should be implemented. Recognizing the current economic constraints at all levels of government and in the private sector, it is

necessary to implement strategies and actions that are most important for the state to focus on in light of our goal to maximize the public benefits produced by Wisconsin's forests.

We, in the DNR's Division of Forestry, are responsible for developing and implementing programs to protect and sustainably manage the state's forest resources. Although this seems a fairly straightforward purpose, there is a wide array of interests that can benefit from our work such as:

- A city resident enjoying the shade of their boulevard trees and a community that gets its drinking water purified by nearby forestland
- A vacationer enjoying a snowmobile trail across one of our state forests and a young hunter hoping to harvest his or her first whitetail deer
- A private landowner with 10 acres of forest and an industrial forestland owner with tens of thousands of acres
- A volunteer fire department receiving a grant to purchase equipment and an individual receiving a burning permit
- A large pulp and paper mill and a small, family-owned, sawmill
- A landowner interested in enhancing habitat for an endangered, threatened or rare species and a landowner interested in growing quality oak and enhancing habitat for grouse
- A community with many family-supporting jobs in wood-using industries and a landowner planting trees that he or she knows will be enjoyed by their grandchildren

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

In 2008 we initiated a Statewide Forest Assessment process that analyzed the current condition of forests (both public and private), looked for trends, and identified issues and threats to our forests for the next 10 years. From that assessment grew the Statewide Forest Strategy which is a collection of many strategies and actions. It includes multiple ideas on how the forestry community as a whole can address major issues and priority topics over the next five to ten years. The assessment and strategy were both completed in June of 2010.

We reviewed each strategy and possible action in the Statewide Forest Strategy and assessed which actions we could play a role in and what our niche should be, recognizing the work of others within the forestry community and drawing upon Department assessments such as the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, Land Legacy Report, and Impaired Waters List. The Strategy provided a base from which we could assess where we have a role based on the conditions today, which may or may not be where we have traditionally had a role. We have also strived to develop a Strategic Direction which enables us to be flexible so that we may be better able to adapt to the rapidly changing economic and ecological conditions. Lastly, in developing the Strategic Direction, we asked partners to identify actions offered in the Statewide Strategy in which they believe we have a role and the relative priority of that role.

Much of what is presented here continues work we now do and, in many cases, have done for many years. This reflects our belief that these functions have been, and remain, an appropriate and valued role for the Division. There are several significant changes described in the Strategic

Direction to address the changing needs of the forestry community and citizens of Wisconsin. As a result we believe the Strategic Direction identifies both those challenges that we have worked to address in the past and that continue to need our attention, as well as new challenges and opportunities that demand our attention.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- I. **Maximize the Value Delivered to the People of Wisconsin**
In the Strategic Direction, we explain how we believe we can most effectively and efficiently achieve the desired outcomes expressed in the 2010 Statewide Forest Strategy. The Strategic Direction explains areas in which we will increase, maintain or decrease the varied investments in DNR forestry programs over the next five years, as well as implement shifts to the longer-term focus of our work in some areas. Our Strategic Direction provides intention statements that describe the difficult choices we have made about how to invest our limited personnel and funding to maximize the value we deliver towards protecting and sustainably managing Wisconsin's forests for the next five years and beyond.
- II. **Respecting Existing Rights**
We recognize Native Americans' off-reservation treaty rights, sovereignty over tribal land and access to public lands. We have consulted with tribes as we've evaluated issues and threats to forests and our role in managing state lands and asked for their input throughout this planning process. As well, other landowners enjoy property rights that enable them to manage for their objectives. These are important rights and our niche is to assist landowner's to achieve their management objectives and promote sustainable forestry in doing so.
- III. **Leverage Limited Resources & Increase Our Collective Capacity**
The major issues and threats affecting the forests of Wisconsin can not be tackled by one group, organization or agency. It is evident the resources we and our partners have will continue to be limited. However the need to sustainably manage the State's forests will continue, if not increase. This demands efficient and effective use of the resources provided to us by the people of Wisconsin in order to maximize the value we and our partners collectively deliver. The Division is in a position to facilitate partnerships with the goal of increasing the collective capacity and impact of the forestry community as a whole. Through collaboration we share resources and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals.
- IV. **Adapt to Differences Across the State**
Just as the forests of Wisconsin differ across the state, so do the opportunities and challenges. As a result the Strategic Direction can not be a "one size fits all". It must be flexible and adaptable in order to ensure that we are most effectively and efficiently maximizing the value we deliver. In recognizing the need to leverage our limited resources, we may spend more resources in a geographic area where there is a greater need or better opportunity to achieve success. Adapting to differences

across the state also means that although the end result is achieving the intent of the Strategic Direction, how it is accomplished operationally may vary across the Division.

IV. Integrated & Skilled Organization

Although the Strategic Direction is organized by program, the reality is that DNR's Forestry Division is integrated. The majority of our workforce produces accomplishments affecting more than one program, reflecting the fact that this increases the effectiveness and efficiency of program implementation throughout the state. Many employees not only work on multiple programs, such as a forester working on private forests, county forests and fire protection, many also work together to address common issues (e.g., urban forestry specialists working with utilization & marketing specialists to improve utilization of urban wood). In order to achieve this varied and diverse work, the Division is committed to maintaining the technical competence of our employees to ensure we are successful in implementing the Strategic Direction.

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

The first draft of the Strategic Direction was released on December 17, 2010 and partners, the public, and staff were requested to provide their comments. We heard from 40 individuals and organizations and over 100 DNR employees including many outside the Forestry Division. We received feedback from those who believe the goals and strategies they value most would be better served by this Strategic Direction as well as those who expressed concern about the path the Division proposed to follow.

The Forestry Leadership Team reviewed this input and made modifications to the draft. On the DNR website you can view two versions of the final Strategic Direction: one that shows the edits that were made and one that incorporates the edits. All of the comments are posted on the DNR website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/assessment/strategy/strategicDir.htm>.

There were a range of opinions on many topics. In a separate document posted at the same website as above, called the Response to Comments, we discuss a) comments that resulted in changes to the Strategic Direction, b) definitions and clarification of terms or concepts readers did not understand, and c) intent statements and decisions that received a lot of comments but were not changed for reasons explained.

NEXT STEPS

As we move forward we will assess how best to align our resources to meet the identified priorities and develop an implementation plan. The gap analysis of current and needed resources, reconciliation of the gaps identified and development of an action plan for implementation will involve several phases, but it is anticipated our plan for implementation will be completed by the close of 2011. We expect implementation will be phased, in an effort to minimize impacts on staff and in recognition of additional work that needs to be completed before implementation can proceed.

Strategic Direction – Final

We recognize that change does not come easily. Everything we do today produces outcomes valued by someone. Whether reducing a function, changing its scope or shifting strategies for accomplishing a goal, changing how we conduct our business and serve the people of Wisconsin generates concern.

Implementing the changes presented in the Strategic Direction will be challenging. However, we are confident in the capabilities of both Division staff and our partners to succeed in this endeavor. We have a history here in Wisconsin of working together to accomplish important work involving our forests. We anticipate this collaboration will continue as we work to implement the Division of Forestry's Strategic Direction.

COUNTY FORESTS (CO)

Wisconsin's county forest program is unique in the nation; a state/county partnership defined in statute, designed to promote sustainable management of forests for the purpose of providing an array of public benefits. Currently, there are county forests in 29 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, totaling more than 2.36 million acres. Collectively, the county forests represent the state's largest public forest landholding. County forests are extremely important to Wisconsin's forest products industry and economy. Each year, these lands generate anywhere from \$25 to \$30 million in timber revenues for the counties and towns. Approximately 16,000 jobs and \$4.6 billion in forest products production result from the timber volumes harvested from county forests*. Recreation and tourism also depend on this land base. County forests afford a variety of recreation opportunities due to their large blocks of forest, extensive lakes and rivers, and remote nature. The demand for nature based recreation is increasing and county forests have the ability to sustainably provide a range of recreational activities with more than 6,000 miles of roads and trails, the county forests are the key to connectivity of the state's renowned hiking, biking, equestrian and motorized vehicle trail networks.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Twenty seven of Wisconsin's 29 county forests are currently certified under the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and/or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Independent, third-party certification means management of the county forests meets strict standards for ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Each county forest is different; in size they range from 1,000 to 273,000 acres. Some are in counties with sizable cities whereas others are not. Each is managed by a different local government, and each has their own fiscal and political constraints to deal with. In difficult economic times it becomes tempting for county boards to look at selling county forest land for short-term income, overlooking the significant long term economic, social, and environmental benefits these forests produce. Protections afforded in the county forest law make it difficult to withdraw land from this program, greatly restricting the potential for fragmenting the valuable large blocks of public forest lands and ensuring long term sustainable services and taxpayer investments are protected.

Due to the amount of county forest land and the distribution across the state, county forests have the opportunity to manage at a landscape scale, which provides a variety of important public benefits unique to large blocks of forested land. State-approved forest plans for counties consider regional economic, ecological, and social conditions in a manner that serves the needs of each individual county.

* Data from IMPLAN model.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division works in partnership with the 29 counties with land entered under the county forest program to ensure these forests provide the full array of public benefits. In exchange for county commitments to manage their land sustainably and consistent with the state law, the state invests resources in each county to facilitate that county's ability to contribute to the local and statewide economies, provide an array of ecological services, and provide a land base on which the public can recreate. The Division will shift the manner in which the state provides assistance to the counties under this program, providing a greater degree of flexibility for individual counties to select among an array of resources that best meet their needs.

The needs of individual county forests vary widely, based on size, location, county capacity and other factors. As a result, we will engage the counties in developing a framework of options that enables individual counties to select, within budgetary constraints, among an array of resources that best meet the needs of their particular county. Currently, we provide staff for planning, reforestation, inventory and timber sale assistance, fiscal support for counties to hire professional expertise, grants for forest and wildlife management practices, coordination and management of third party forest certification (i.e. FSC, SFI), loans for land acquisition and management needs, and annual acreage payments for land within the program. We will continue to provide a base level of support through our county liaisons, while modifying the mix of assistance in investments listed above by allowing each county to choose, within limits, the services that best meet their needs. The Division will be reducing the direct investment in county forests. However, we anticipate that this increased flexibility in assistance will ultimately result in a more efficient use of resources.

In 2010 the counties gained access to the state's portion of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship land acquisition program. This recognized the counties' unique relationship with the state and the role they can play in acquiring forest land to reduce fragmentation and increase the sustainable management of forest land for an array of public values.

We are pursuing programs and services that will directly contribute to the ability of counties to more efficiently implement their programs. These include information technology (IT), utilization and marketing, and support for land acquisition. A number of additional investments in consultative services and tools, as well as the availability of expertise in several sciences (see page 29) likewise will enhance the ability of counties to achieve their goals within this partnership.

Program Change: The Division will continue to provide a suite of services and support to counties in order to maintain the excellent partnership that has been developed. The Division will shift the manner in which the state provides assistance to the counties under this program, providing a greater degree of flexibility for individual counties to select among an array of resources that best meet their needs. This will result in a reduction in the direct investment to counties. The Division will increase the assistance provided to counties in support services (e.g. IT, utilization and marketing, and support for land acquisition). (CO-1)[†]

[†] This is the reference code for this intention statement. CO stands for County and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

FIRE PROTECTION (FP)

Wisconsin's forests are, to varying degrees, at risk for destructive wildland fires. The number of wildland fires in Wisconsin varies annually depending on weather, fuel conditions and human activity. Based on a 35 year average, approximately 1,700 fires burn 6,000 acres each year within the areas of the state under DNR's organized protection. Periodic drought cycles drastically affect the number of fires and acres burned.

Fire can be extremely dangerous or beneficial to the health of forests, depending on the circumstances. The choice to aggressively fight wildland fire has direct effects on fire dependent ecosystems. A counter-balance to the aggressive suppression of fires is use of prescribed burning, a management tool used to manage and restore fire dependent ecosystems that otherwise would be difficult to sustain.

Not only are forests at risk from wildland fire, people, their homes and other structures are also threatened. Between 2000 and 2008, an average of 58 structures were lost to wildland fire each year; during that same time, an average of 400 additional structures were threatened, yet ultimately saved. Many more acres were threatened by small fires, but suppression activities stopped their spread. Furthermore, prevention efforts have certainly reduced human-caused fires.

Local fire departments are critical partners in detecting, managing and suppressing wildland fires within the state, which is accomplished through an interagency approach in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner. Wisconsin is party to several agreements such as the Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact, National Wildfire Coordinating Group and commitments with several other agencies to share resources such as direct air suppression, fire fighters and equipment.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fire suppression affects the composition, structure, and function of forests. Increasingly, housing development continues to move deeper into rural areas; creating a condition called the wildland-urban interface (WUI) where people, homes, and property are intermingled with wildland vegetation and are at greater risk of wildfire. In Wisconsin, people cause over 98% of all wildland fires. Counties with high fire occurrence have a large residential or seasonal recreation population base. Because fighting wildland fire is resource intensive, it is essential that the entities with fire suppression capabilities all play defined roles that maximize their capabilities and reduce risk.

Opportunities exist to reduce human caused fires and, by extension, the losses that result. Targeted fire prevention efforts can reduce ignitions, saving structures and forests. Furthermore, advancing work to mitigate hazards and protect homes can reduce the damage caused by fires that do start.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY ROLE

The Division's role in forest fire protection is to prevent, detect and rapidly suppress wildland fires in areas of the state that have the greatest potential for significant loss of property, natural resources and even lives due to wildland fire. The Division complements the capacity of local fire departments by filling roles (e.g., Incident Management Teams, heavy equipment) not efficiently covered on a community by community basis. The Division will allocate resources based on an updated assessment of risk as defined by fire landscapes in Wisconsin, and enhance efforts in fire prevention and risk mitigation.

With our broad reach throughout the state and help from our partners, we are well positioned to protect the public and respond to catastrophic wildland fires. The most effective way to identify and express the concept of fire suppression risk in Wisconsin is through the identification of distinct fire landscapes. The fire landscape map was developed as part of the Fire Program Assessment (2010) and analyzes data instrumental in predicting fire hazard such as vegetation, ecological landscapes, soil, forest patch size, and parcel improvements. Efficiencies will be gained by focusing investments in the highest risk areas.

Program Change: The Division will utilize fire landscapes to allocate resources based on level of hazard. This change reflects an update to the way the program focuses investments with new tools and updated data. (FP-1)[‡]

Enhancing the public's understanding of the causes of wildland fires, the conditions that increase likelihood of wildland fires igniting and the extent of the damage that can result, will contribute to a reduction in activities by the public that historically result in damaging wildland fires. Specific investments will target the statewide Wildland-Urban Interface Program (WUI) in high priority fire landscapes. The new on-line burning permits system is a cost effective and responsive tool to manage burning activity on a day-to-day basis. As a result, the investment in the emergency fire warden program will be significantly reduced. Ultimately, a highly effective fire prevention effort will likely result in reduced fire activity and potentially decrease the public investment in fire suppression.

Program Change: The Division will strengthen existing prevention and mitigation programs such as the Wildland-Urban Interface program. Prevention programs will be integrated into a Division-wide strategic plan for education and outreach and will be evaluated to understand the cost savings they provide by reducing the numbers of fires. (FP-2)

Using the previously mentioned fire landscapes, we will allocate detection and suppression resources in a manner that reflects level of risk and hazard. Continually being prepared for fire

[‡] This is the reference code for this intention statement. FP stands for Forest Protection and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

response includes developing and maintaining fire suppression infrastructure and equipment, identifying values at risk, predicting fire activity, pre-positioning, and dispatching firefighters and equipment. We will be assessing where best to allocate resources when we determine how to implement the Strategic Direction, including consideration of cooperative protection areas that are now at high risk of wildland fire. We will also explore several options for cost savings such as alternative scheduling (e.g. 7-day scheduling), and establishing local short incident management teams (IMT) for rapid response and regional expanded IMT for extended attack fires.

Program Change: The Division's investment will be reduced and resources will be placed within the state to more efficiently prepare for, detect, and suppress wildland fires with emphasis on high risk areas. (FP-3)

We will continue to be the leader in providing wildland fire protection services through early detection and rapid initial attack with ground-based resources (e.g. engines and tractor plows). Aircraft will remain an essential tool for detection and ensure firefighter and public safety, and enabling ground resources to more aggressively attack on-going fires. Exclusive use contracts for single engine air tankers (SEATs) will be eliminated. To allow more flexibility to respond to rapidly changing fire conditions and make more efficient use of fire suppression funds, we will instead rely on our strong partnerships with the Great Lakes Fire Compact and federal agencies to obtain aerial suppression aircraft when needed.

Program Change: The Division will eliminate exclusive use contracts for the SEAT program. (FP-4)

A key partnership in wildland fire management is the fire departments in the state. A cost effective approach to support general suppression capabilities in areas of lower wildland fire risk and exposure, as well as to provide critical structural protection in areas of high fire risk, is to enhance the capabilities of local fire departments. Division Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grants help local fire departments to purchase equipment and supplies that improve their capability and safety on wildland fires.

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain its current investment in providing FFP grants to local fire departments to assist in suppressing and preventing wildland fires. (FP-5)

It is essential to provide a trained and qualified workforce to be effective in emergency response and maintain safe operations. Our commitment to meet established national and state training standards for wildland and prescribed fire will be maintained. Interagency drills and scenarios are an efficient way to train and maintain skills and will be continued.

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to fund training as a basic function of the fire protection program at current levels. (FP-6)

Safety of firefighters and the public is the top priority in our fire protection program. Investments in safety will be maintained. Law enforcement is also an important component of an effective fire control program. Enforcing laws regarding burning and investigating arson are two critical functions that will be maintained.

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain current investment in fire safety and law enforcement efforts. Working together with partners to improve firefighter and citizen safety is and will continue to be the Division's highest priority. (FP-7)

FOREST HEALTH (FH)

The health of Wisconsin's forests is critical for providing high-quality wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and a reliable supply of raw material for Wisconsin's forest products industries while also reducing erosion and improving our quality of life in urban and rural areas. When forests are healthy, they are able to respond to changing conditions and be more resilient to insect and disease infestations. There are many systems in Wisconsin to detect and monitor changes in forest health such as satellite imagery, ground surveys, and even private landowners sharing information about what's happening on their property. Agencies and communities in Wisconsin are forming partnerships to work together to respond to forest health issues.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Insects and diseases (both native and non-native) can increase tree mortality to a level that negatively affects the sustainability of the forests and the suite of benefits they provide. Threats from non-native invasive plants, insects and diseases have increased significantly since 2002. If successfully established, invasive insects and diseases can kill native tree species more quickly than native pests due to the lack of host resistance and biological controls. The emerald ash borer has the potential to eliminate ash – of which there are over 700 million in Wisconsin including nearly 1 in 5 street trees -- from the forest environment. Options for reducing the impact of invasive species are often limited. Quarantines affecting movement of material can be cumbersome for the forest industry and others, including recreational users. A focused effort on management activities that reduce the forest's susceptibility to mortality will continue to be a priority to ensure forest health. Government agencies can not identify all infested areas; partnerships are an important way to detect infestations and to prevent the spread.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division's role in forest health is to provide technical expertise in the prevention, detection, assessment, management and monitoring of invasive plants, insects and diseases that damage trees and forests, and the benefits they provide. The Division will maintain its existing capacity to assist public and private forest landowners in their efforts to minimize the establishment and adverse impacts from destructive forest insects and diseases, particularly non-native invasive species and invasive plants.

Invasive species management will continue to be a key focus; however, over the next five years we will reduce involvement in gypsy moth suppression in order to more effectively manage higher priority invasive species. Other species, such as the Emerald Ash Borer, have been identified as posing a more significant threat to Wisconsin's forests. We are best positioned to accomplish early detection of invasive species because of our breadth of expertise and broad geographical coverage. The public and partners have expressed great concern over invasive species issues and have identified DNR as playing a critical role in responding to them. We work collaboratively with our partners to address these issues and are developing new partnerships to design and implement strategies to manage invasive plants, insects and pathogens.

Program Change: The Division will continue the recent shift in investment toward increased emphasis on invasive species work. There will be a continuing focus on emerging priority needs with a reduction in gypsy moth suppression efforts. (FH-1)[§]

Monitoring the incidence, severity, impact and location of forest insect and disease populations provides the information needed to focus mitigation strategies, evaluate disease prevention protocols, and broadens our knowledge on the influence these organisms have on forest ecosystems. We have been a leader in risk model and map development for the last five years. Risk analysis has been an important part of survey planning and can be developed both for a larger number of high-risk organisms and at both a landscape-scale and local property (e.g. state forest) level. Risk analysis can also be used at the property-level to prioritize where mitigation strategies should be used. Continued development of partnerships will be pursued to further this possibility.

We will continue to make strategic on-site field investigations of forest sickness and decline and to provide insect identification and disease diagnostic services.

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to provide detection, delimitation, monitoring, and impact assessments of invasive plants and highly damaging insects and disease-causing organisms and expand risk model and map development. The technical assistance the forest health program provides to partners and land managers is critical for them to make appropriate management decisions. (FH-2)

Currently, administrative rule NR40 provides the framework for controlling non-native damaging pests in Wisconsin. We will continue to take a lead role in developing rule guidelines (e.g. firewood regulations) and promoting partnerships so that efficient and effective action can be taken upon the arrival of a regulated NR40 invasive species. Additionally, through outreach and education, we will improve the protection of Wisconsin's forests from invasive insects, diseases, and plants. Our continued leadership in this area allows the forest health program to actively control prohibited invasive species in forests by working directly with DNR law enforcement staff and other partners such as DATCP and APHIS.

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to work in partnership with other DNR divisions, state agencies, and local municipalities to minimize the damage to Wisconsin's forests from harmful invasives. (FH-3)

[§] This is the reference code for this intention statement. FH stands for Forest Health and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

Forest managers and Wisconsin citizens work, recreate, and live in Wisconsin's forests, but if they are not aware of threatening invasive problems, they will not be able to report or recognize them. Key program objectives include creating awareness of invasives and improving understanding of Best Management Practices (BMP's), encouraging higher efficiency of invasive species' detection, and informing forest managers and citizens on invasive species identification and management.

In the next two years, we will be conducting a specific assessment and strategic plan for our roles in education and outreach. Forest health focused education and outreach will be evaluated as part of this process.

Maintain Program: The Division will provide education and outreach materials for, and implementation of, training related to BMP's, detection, monitoring and management of a broad number of invasive species. New partnerships will be sought to share information about landscape-level management for invasive species. Expanded use of the web as an outreach and education tool will be explored – particularly as it relates to sharing survey and management data. (FH-4)

NURSERIES (N)

The amount of forest land in Wisconsin has steadily increased since the cutover that ended early in the last century. Today over 47% of the state, 16.4 million acres, is covered by forests. Reforestation of resilient forests plays an essential role in protecting and enhancing the suite of diverse benefits forest provide. The vast majority of Wisconsin's forests regenerate naturally. That said, Wisconsin's reforestation efforts, including efforts to re-establish forest (afforestation) on lands that had previously been cleared of trees for other land uses, have benefited from the availability of high quality seedlings, economical seedling prices, known seed sources, and a genetically superior nursery stock.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The growth in forests has not been consistent across the state – forests in eight counties have not increased. A decline in industrial forest ownership, more highly fragmented forest lands, economic decline, new landowner objectives, new tax structures and shrinking federal cost share programs have led to fewer tree planting projects across the state. The current economic decline has resulted in landowners deferring tree planting operations in order to save money.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY ROLE

The Division's role in forest nurseries is to encourage afforestation and reforestation in Wisconsin by facilitating the availability of an adequate supply of high quality seedlings of native species at an economical price from public and private sources. The Division will maintain a capacity to produce stock at a level that, when combined with private sector capacity, meets projected demand for tree seedlings.

When public and private landowners have access to economically priced seedlings, their plantings contribute to a variety of important statewide goals such as increasing the amount of forestland in the state, connecting fragmented forest parcels, economically producing forest products and increasing the diversity of species across the state. The DNR's Ecological Landscapes Handbook helps define where afforestation or reforestation is most desirable ecologically, recognizing that individual landowners ultimately decide whether and where to establish and maintain forest cover. Tree planting offers private landowners the opportunity to earn income from not only traditional forest products, but from new markets for carbon and other ecosystem services.

The Department is in the process of adjusting its capacity due to declines in demand for nursery stock. On a regular basis, we will be analyzing the nursery market in order to better understand what the best role and optimal capacity is for the state nursery program. In order to make future adjustments in state production, it is also important to know the capacity of private nurseries serving Wisconsin with native stock to meet the overall demand.

Program Change: State nursery facilities will scale production in relation to private sector capacity and changing seedling demand. Facility numbers will be based on the need to balance flexibility with cost of production. (N-1)**

Over time trees must be able to adapt to stressors like insects and diseases, animal herbivory, and shifts in climate. It is important to monitor the success of regeneration, both natural and artificial, in order to have the best information and data to adjust what type of seedlings are produced, their genetic qualities, and geographically where they are best suited to grow. Gathering and assessing information on the success or failure of certain tree species and seeds will benefit private nursery production as well as state nurseries and should be in collaboration with our partners in the private sector. (Note: Genetics research is discussed in the Cross-Program Activities section, intention statement CP-1.)

Maintain Program: The Division will increase the investment in a monitoring program that will monitor forest regeneration, identify problems, field test potential solutions, and disseminate lessons learned to internal and external customers to ensure high-quality stock and successful planting survival in the future. (N-2)

** This is the reference code for this intention statement. N stands for Nurseries and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

Privately Owned Forest Lands (PF)

The majority of Wisconsin's 16 million acres of forest land are held by private non-industrial landowners -- 10.4 million acres of woodland are cared for by about 362,000 individuals and families. In addition, nearly two-thirds of the wood needs of Wisconsin's forest products industry are supplied from family-owned private land. Private lands provide abundant recreational opportunities and a range of ecosystem services, much of which benefit the public at large.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Private land ownership patterns are changing and forest land values are increasing, which makes it difficult to keep forests in forest. Large forest landholdings in amenity rich areas are particularly at risk of being split as landowners can sell smaller parcels at a higher price. Industrial land holders selling large forest blocks off in small parcels are one of the largest factors influencing this change. The portion of land owned by forest products companies fell from 62% in 2002 to 24% in 2008, the majority of these lands having been transferred to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). The use of conservation easements by private individuals, organizations, and governments is a valuable tool to maintain working forests and protect them from development and other non-forest uses.

The average non-industrial private forest parcel shrank from 37 acres in 1997 to 28 acres in 2006. The number of small parcels of 1-9 acre category nearly doubled. Owners of small non-industrial private forest parcels are challenged, due to operational inefficiencies, to implement management to meet their objectives in a manner that produces an economic return. The ability to manage for some ecosystem services, including those associated with broader landscapes, is compromised as parcel sizes decrease.

DNR foresters provide service to private landowners, as do other agencies, organizations, and private businesses. The number of cooperating forester firms grew from 73 in 1999 to 127 in 2009, nearly a 75% increase. The number of foresters available in those firms rose about 84% over the same ten-year period. As the number of forest landowners grow and objectives for management shift, the need for professional forestry assistance increases.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division's role in private forestry is to facilitate the ability of private landowners to manage their forest land sustainably to provide an array of public benefits. The Division seeks to complement the work accomplished by private sector professionals by filling roles not conducive to private sector involvement. The Division will reduce emphasis on administering the state's forest tax program while increasing emphasis on reaching landowners who currently do not receive any professional assistance in managing their forest land.

The Managed Forest Law (MFL) is a major tool the state uses to keep forests as forests, providing sustainable management that produces an array of public benefits. We will continue to make a significant investment in this program and will continue to invest in efforts to make the program more efficient (e.g. GIS based databases). The opportunity for additional efficiencies will be evaluated over the next five years. Savings from these efficiencies will be shifted toward reaching out to private landowners who are not currently engaged in managing their land sustainably.

Areas of the program to evaluate will include: increased capacity of cooperating foresters, setting standards that allows for the full range of sustainable practices, clear accountability and protocols for landowners and cooperators to be able to reduce the level of compliance checks, and other efficiencies identified by DNR staff, partners and landowners.

Program Change: The Division will develop and implement additional efficiencies in the administration of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. (PF-1)^{††}

We are committed to supporting the cooperating forester program and increasing their capacity because of the significant contribution they make towards accomplishing our mission.

Program Change: The Division will increase efforts to make full use of cooperating foresters for activities such as industrial transfers, in an effort to build the capacity of private sector partners and focus DNR staff time on other activities. (PF-2)

Of the 10.4 million acres of privately owned non-industrial forest land in the state, less than a third is enrolled in the Managed Forest Law. We recognize that many forest owners not in the MFL are sustainably managing their land but there are others who are not aware of professional forestry services available to them. A 2006 survey indicated that 85% of the landowners who had a harvest on their property within the last five years did not have a plan. Whether or not a landowner wants a plan to direct the management of their forest, professional assistance can help them achieve objectives they have for their land and do so in a manner that sustains the forest and the many benefits it provides.

There are many ways in which the Division can reach landowners not enrolled in any assistance program and we will work with partners to pilot different techniques and then evaluate the level of success achieved with each investment. One approach will be to increase the use of voluntary landscape scale management programs to efficiently reach and assist willing and interested private forest landowners who have land within a specific geographic area and who, by collaborating, choose to cost-effectively implement management to accomplish their objectives. The Division recognizes there are differences across the state and, with limited resources, possible landscape scale management programs will not occur everywhere. Another

^{††} This is the reference code for this intention statement. PF stands for Private Forestry and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

approach to work with private landowners will be to use various education and outreach techniques. Within the next two years, we will invest resources to assess our role in outreach and education on the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests (see Cross-program Activities page 29). One key component of this work will be to clearly define our role in reaching and informing private forest landowners.

Program Change: The Division will increase investment in efforts to reach the large percentage of private forest landowners who receive no professional assistance in caring for their land. Different techniques to reach these landowners will be tried and certain areas or groups will be focused on. (PF-3)

Easements are a powerful tool to keep forests as forests ensuring they continue to provide all of their services and benefits. We will continue to use easements to increase the acreage of large block lands open to public recreation and managed sustainably for forest products, preventing development and maintaining unique landscapes and rare species. Easements generally cost less than half what fee acquisition costs and have the further benefit of keeping the land under private management, with appropriate state oversight.

Program Change: The Division will increase investment in programs that utilize conservation easements to secure private forested lands. (PF-4)

At some point, many landowners find themselves faced with financial challenges, which sometimes lead to selling off small parcels, foregoing management activities that can improve the health of the land, or harvesting forests in a manner that foregoes long-term productivity and health. Incentives can help landowners hold on to the property and manage for their diverse objectives. We will utilize federal incentives (e.g., EQIP) and available private sources (e.g., Hardwood Forestry Fund) to supplement available state sources of cost-share dollars.

We believe the primary focus of financial incentives should be those landowners who are not already receiving significant public incentives through the forest tax programs. With limited resources, the funding can best be used to encourage landowners to make an investment in managing their forest to achieve their objectives and, by extension, provide public benefits.

Program Change: The Division will maintain the level of investment in financial incentives to landowners but focus these more on landowners requesting assistance with management practices and those who currently do not receive professional assistance, in lieu of those already enrolled in MFL. (PF-5)

STATE LANDS (S)

Currently, 1.5 million acres of land are in state ownership, of which approximately 930,000 acres are forested. Approximately half of the forested acreage is designated as State Forests and half is in other state land ownership – wildlife areas, fisheries areas, state parks, and many others. Collectively, these forests provide a variety of important benefits for the citizens of Wisconsin, specifically large blocks of forests and natural communities that represent unique ecological landscapes, high quality habitat for many rare species, a diversity of recreation amenities, and a stable resource base for Wisconsin's wood products industry. Each state property is required to have a master plan. The plan reiterates tribal rights and is critical for defining public property management and is facilitated by public input. It involves diverse stakeholders, analyzing alternative actions and incorporating ecosystem management principles to provide public benefits.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Forest ecosystems are always in a state of change. More than a century ago the vast forest resource that covered Wisconsin was cutover to supply raw materials for the state and regional economy and its burgeoning population. This was a drastic period of change that resulted in more ecologically simplified forests (i.e. loss of species and structural diversity, and increased dominance of fewer species) and loss of several under-represented forest communities. Since then, public and private sector forest managers have been instrumental in facilitating the recovery of Wisconsin's forests though challenges regarding simplification and under-represented forest types remain. Through the master planning process, we consider these issues and work to improve forested ecosystems with a landscape management approach. As well, master plans provide guidance for timber management and recreation opportunities on state lands.

Over the last few years, we have made a concerted effort to reach the allowable harvests on state lands as stated in the master plans. This has involved shifting resources from other program areas and using a limited amount of contracting. As well, the need for reforestation on state lands is increasing and yet there is no stable source of funding to meet this need.

Large expanses of working forests free of development pressure are decreasing. Human activities such as housing and road development alter habitat, fragment landscapes, threaten biodiversity, and impact the efficiencies of forest operations. All of our state forests contain some private in-holdings, which are developed to varying degrees. Large forest blocks (especially with either early or late successional stages, the latter including old forest) are prized resources in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is expecting a 6.3% increase in the state's adult population between 2010 and 2020 (DOA, 2004). This population growth is expected to increase demands for recreation opportunities and pressures on competing land uses. The state's diverse public ownership offers opportunities to geographically prioritize recreation uses to occur on the most sustainable locations. State forests offer large areas that often connect to other public recreation systems.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division's role in managing state lands is to ensure that state-owned forested lands are balancing the economic, ecological and social benefits derived from forests as set out in property master plans. The Division will maintain its capacity to sustainably manage state-owned forested lands, and enhance our ability to improve recreational opportunities and visitor safety on designated State Forests.

Through the master planning process, state forests are managed based on a landscape management approach which takes into consideration each property's history and addresses issues of ecological simplification, under-represented forest communities, spread of invasive species between properties and habitat for large mammals. Landscape scale management provides opportunities to work with neighboring landowners (private and public) who choose to manage at larger scales and oftentimes allows for greater economies of scale for harvesting. Up to date reconnaissance of the forest is necessary to be able to adaptively manage based on the conditions. Forest management practices are the tool most often used to meet plan objectives.

We are striving to meet allowable harvest goals on state lands. Two ways that can increase our ability to accomplish those goals are through the use of lump-sum timber sales (which reduce administrative costs) and utilizing the private sector to supplement what can be accomplished by state staff. We are currently conducting a study to evaluate whether, and under what circumstances, using private cooperating consulting foresters to establish timber sales is cost effective. The results of that study will inform how we proceed in the future given our limited resources. Where cost-effective, the Division will increase the number of lump-sum timber sales and work collaboratively with private consulting foresters to maximize DNR's ability to accomplish workload priorities across the Division. The majority of this work will continue to be done by DNR staff.

Maintain Program: The Division will remain committed to current levels of sustainable forest management on all state lands as identified in property master plans. The Division will continue to meet allowable harvest goals as determined through the master planning process on all state lands. The Division will also continue to work to eliminate the current backlog of forest management practices. (S-1)^{##}

More stable funding is needed to implement reforestation on state lands, which includes site preparation and release of both natural and artificial regeneration of planted stands. In the past, funds that have been available for regeneration activities have largely come through a number of nearly depleted gift accounts, special funding opportunities, or internal and external grant sources. A statute change will be pursued to allow the use of timber sale revenues for

^{##} This is the reference code for this intention statement. S stands for State Lands and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

reforestation associated with timber sales. The desired result would be a reliable funding source to provide regeneration activities on DNR managed state-owned lands to a point that the post harvest sale area meets department guidelines.

Program Change: The Division will increase the amount of funds for reforestation on all state lands, ensuring adequate resources to meet identified reforestation needs. (S-2)

State forests provide unique recreation opportunities due to their large forest blocks, extensive lakes and rivers, and remote nature. The demand for nature based recreation is increasing and the state forests will prioritize locations that can sustainably provide opportunities.

Program Change: The Division will implement recreation priorities on state forests as articulated in property master plans and increase the level of investment in the state forest recreation program to enhance unique niche recreation activities such as remote camping and trails, and serve high demand recreation facilities while continuing to provide for visitor safety. (S-3)

By continuing to purchase land from willing sellers, the amount of sustainably managed lands under certification standards will increase and forest blocks will be less parcelized within property boundaries. This will, in turn, increase recreation opportunity areas for the public and advance the protection of ecologically unique landscapes.

Program Change: The Division will increase the investment in land survey and workload associated with property boundary issues such as trespasses and newly acquired land. Acquisition efforts will continue and use criteria aligned with the recently approved Stewardship Land Acquisition Strategy. (S-4)

We provide assistance to all DNR programs in the sustainable management and development of master plans on other forested state lands. We have worked aggressively to update property master plans for state forest properties in the last five years and are now able to shift resources to assist other state lands over the next several years.

Program Change: The Division will decrease overall investment in planning from current levels due to the pending completion of state forest master plan revisions. Focus will be shifted to assisting other DNR programs with the planning needs for other state lands. (S-5)

URBAN FORESTS (UF)

Wisconsin's urban forests provide a wide range of ecological, economic and social benefits for the 80% of Wisconsin's population that lives in an urban area as well as for visitors to these communities. Urban areas contain nearly 27 million trees with an estimated total replacement value of almost \$11 billion. Many don't realize all the services urban forests provide. They reduce air pollution, retain and mitigate storm water runoff, provide wildlife habitat, conserve energy, improve public health and well being, increase property values, and attract business, tourists and residents.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Urban forests face two main challenges. First, our current tree canopy cover is only 14%, well below the recommended 40%, and second, it lacks species diversity. An estimated 43% of all trees are either maple or ash. This leads to a high level of instability (e.g. high susceptibility to catastrophic loss from a pest such as Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)). Effective urban forest management includes up-to-date inventories and resulting operational plans. While there has been a steady increase in communities that have urban forest inventories and associated plans, two-thirds of Wisconsin communities still lack an inventory of their resource.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division's role in urban forestry is that of a facilitator to bring interests together and build partnerships to advance urban forestry as practiced by local communities, private sector specialists, and community organizations. The Division will shift emphasis from a public "street tree" model to an integrated "community canopy" model that better reflects how it can maximize the public benefits from all trees and forests in our communities. The Division helps establish and advocate for best management practices in coordination with partners.

The Division is best positioned to help maximize the public benefits of urban forests by focusing on large landscapes like multiple communities which, depending on the issue or program, could involve communities across several counties, a group of small communities, metropolitan areas, or statewide initiatives. By shifting our emphasis from managing at the street tree level to managing urban forests at the community canopy level (i.e. considering all trees within a community – street, yard, park, and so on), we are able to provide more assistance to more communities than the limited direct assistance we are able to provide individual communities currently. The community canopy model is better aligned with the goal of maximizing public benefits because it features the entire urban forest, both publicly and privately held, managed for the full suite of associated benefits. By using geographically based inventories and assessments, assistance will be focused on multiple communities' relevant needs, opportunities, and resources which may be distinct compared to other areas. Direct assistance to individual communities will be reduced in favor of developing partners, such as non-profit organizations, private arborists, and urban forestry consultants, to provide service at that level instead of the Department.

Program Change: The Division will focus assistance at a multi-community scale and will do less individualized local program delivery. (UF-1)^{§§}

We will work to enhance public/private partnerships to provide assistance to municipalities to invest in their urban forest canopy. We will significantly increase the current investment in partnerships to support building local capacity and finding creative ways, such as private/public foundations, to fund initiatives. Increased support is intended for partners to reach the public and increase market demand for quality urban forestry practitioners. This is reflective of our role at the canopy level to enable others to do the work at the ground level.

Program Change: The Division will increase the focus on developing broad scale partnerships and funding methods to enable communities, regional planning commissions, tribes, foundations, non-profits and professional organizations to add value to urban forests. (UF-2)

Urban forestry grant funding is maintained at the current level. We will seek to revise grant rules to enable larger grants at a multiple community scale to achieve broad canopy objectives and benefit from economies of scale. Individual communities will not be excluded from the grant program; however, we will work to engage more communities in a more efficient manner, reducing administration and increasing outcomes.

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain the urban forestry grant program at current levels and encourage multi-community partnerships, to leverage local resources. (UF-3)

A continuous urban forest inventory and canopy analysis better equips urban forest managers to set resource goals, identify new threats, measure initiative results and quantify benefits to the public. We will work to develop tools and databases to aggregate community level inventories, evaluate data to help prioritize multi-community efforts and inventory urban wood resources for utilization. These services help build the capacity of communities and increase their ability to manage efficiently.

Program Change: The Division will increase investment to help create and support a statewide inventory and assessment of the urban forests of Wisconsin to provide best available data for program planning and prioritization of efforts. (UF-4)

General public awareness will be supported primarily through our participation in the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA and related programs. In the next two years, we will be

^{§§} This is the reference code for this intention statement. UF stands for Urban Forestry and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

conducting a specific assessment and strategic plan for the Division's roles in education and outreach for all programs, including urban forestry. At this point it is uncertain what specific urban forestry outreach and education we will be involved with but there will be a decreased investment by program staff and partnerships will play a critical role.

Program Change: The Division will decrease investment in outreach and education initiatives. The Division will focus on partnerships that can provide services and tools to local governments and organizations working in small communities and those without active urban forest management. (UF-5)

UTILIZATION & MARKETING (UM)

Commercial markets for forest products provide over 60,000 jobs throughout the state and allow Wisconsin's landowners to realize economic benefits as part of managing forests. Wisconsin remains the number one paper producer in the nation, a position it has held for over 50 years. Growing domestic and international demand for certified wood products from sustainably managed forests has helped stabilize the paper and solid wood sectors in the Great Lakes region due to a concentrated supply relative to the rest of the country.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The forest products industry is expected to recover from the decline experienced in the recession, but not necessarily with the same mix of commercial products as before. The industry is in transition and new markets for certified wood, biomass and bio-fuels are likely to influence growth opportunities. Diverse markets are emerging such as urban wood waste and expanded international opportunities. Many small businesses will be challenged because they do not have the expertise to effortlessly transition into new markets and have limited technological capacity and minimal funds to invest in capital development. The stable supply of certified wood products in the state will continue to reinforce the state's competitive advantage. The state's forest products industries benefit from research and education regarding new markets, regulatory procedures, and ideas for forest-based economic development.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S ROLE

The Division's role in marketing & utilization of forest products is to facilitate the ability of the private sector to use the state's wood resource in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, maximizing wood's contribution to Wisconsin's economy. The Division will increase its capacity to provide assistance to wood-producing and wood-using companies around the state and maintain its capacity to assess the condition of the state's forest resources.

In order to maintain a strong, competitive and diverse forest industry in the state, we will increase the investment in efforts that provide industry analysis, information and guidance regarding forest resource availability and demand, market trends and opportunities (both local and international), harvesting and transportation efficiencies, and manufacturing process improvements. All of these efforts help industry retain markets and develop and enter new markets. Emphasis will shift to providing direct assistance that is better tailored to region-specific industries. All elements in the chain from woods to final product will be incorporated in this work from logging to hauling to manufacturing and value-added processing. A strong and diverse industry drives the markets for forest products which then provide the economic incentive for sustainable forest management, helping to keep forests in forest.

Program Change: The Division will increase investment in utilization and marketing expertise to assist existing and new forest industries to retain markets and develop new markets. (UM-1)**

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) is a program that provides geographically based information regarding forest composition, change, production and ownership and tracks that data over extended periods of time. This information helps many agencies, organizations and companies identify market opportunities and prioritize their efforts. Continuing to invest in the FIA program will encourage sound planning and decision-making by public and private landowners in Wisconsin. Most importantly, the historical data allows for comparisons to present conditions which enhance our ability to analyze whether forest management practices and policies are sustainable.

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to invest in the forest inventory and analysis (FIA) at the double intensity level, ensuring its continued ability to use the information at a sub-state scale. (UM-2)

*** This is the reference code for this intention statement. U&M stands for Utilization & Marketing and this is the first (1) statement within this program.

CROSS-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES (CP)

There are many important activities that critically support our programs but do not fit into just one of the program areas. These activities either help make possible the accomplishment of multiple programs, or are issues that several programs work collectively to address.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We work in partnership to evaluate and develop policy on cross-program issues such as deer management, climate and energy. The impact of these issues on forest sustainability is an important consideration in the process of developing policy and communicating with our partners and publics.

The importance of programs that provide service to the entire Division can not be undervalued. Investments are needed in several functions (e.g., training, information technology) to effectively manage the work within all programs. Furthermore, opportunities exist to capitalize on the growing capabilities of information technology to both improve service delivery to the public and increase the efficiency of doing our work. A related challenge is the cost of investing in these tools to help fully realize their potential to generate savings in time spent serving our customers.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY ROLE

Following is a series of intent statements pertaining to several key areas of cross-program work. Although most of these program areas are small, the investment we make in them is very important to ensuring we can achieve the goals outlined in this Strategic Direction.

Forest Sciences

Science is the foundation for much of our work. Although incorporated throughout, the focus of this function is specialized expertise that serves our program work and our internal and external partners. It should be noted that one of the programs detailed earlier, forest health, was discussed separately due to its size. Like entomology and pathology (forest health), silviculture/forest ecology and hydrology are important components of our work across all land ownerships.

We will expand our existing genetics program to adapt the quality and quantity of tree species to changing environmental conditions. The program will emphasize genetic research on a wider variety of species as well as expand into testing seedlings for adaptation and gene conservation.

We are increasing our investment in forest economics in light of the critical role forests play in the state's economy and the impact economic drivers have on forests themselves.

As the Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (an endangered species support partnership) has matured, the demands on the department have lessened, creating an opportunity to continue realizing efficiencies in that program, shifting resources from that effort over time to address other priority needs.

Program Change: The Division will maintain current investments in silviculture/forest ecology and forest hydrology. An increased investment will be made in genetics and forest economics, whereas a reduction will occur by streamlining the Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan implementation, reflecting its maturation. (CP-1)^{†††}

Research

Research informs our work to address specific issues. Research is a partner-based effort with the universities and other organizations. We invest in both internal DNR research capacity and other research institutions, most notably the University of Wisconsin. This work is varied and on multiple topics ranging from adaptation of forests to changing conditions to regeneration challenges for economically important tree species to the impacts on forests caused by changing land ownership dynamics. One area of emphasis will be to contribute information to the debate over deer management. Our role in this complex issue is to invest in the growing research that analyzes the ecological, economic, and social effects deer have on forests.

Program Change: The Division will modestly increase funding for research to support informed decision-making. The Division will continue to work with internal and external partners to assess priorities for research on ecological, economic and social aspects of forestry. (CP-2)

IT & GIS

Information technology (IT) and geographic information systems (GIS) increasingly play a role in effective program implementation. Opportunities exist to more effectively deliver service to our customers and more efficiently accomplish our work through the implementation of new technology and applications. We are in the midst of a major IT/GIS initiative (WisFIRS) that will improve our systems for managing public and private forest lands. Once complete, this application will create efficiencies in the work the DNR and partner organizations do on the land. Furthermore, increased use of the web will reach our customers and the general public in a more effective manner.

Program Change: The Division will significantly increase its investment in IT and GIS to support all Division programs. (CP-3)

Outreach & Education

Effective public outreach and education is an important tool to implement our programs effectively. An assessment of our existing outreach and education programs is needed to evaluate how to make a more efficient investment that addresses all aspects of forestry, rural

^{†††} This is the reference code for this intention statement. CP stands for Cross-Program Activities and this is the first (I) statement within this program.

and urban. One key component of this work will be to clearly define our role in reaching and educating private forest landowners.

Assess Program: Within the next two years, the Division will invest resources to assess the Division's role in outreach and education on the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests. A specific strategic direction, planned with the input of staff and partners, will guide the Division's future outreach and education work and investments. (CP-4)

Hiring & Training

We will assess our training needs and develop a professional training standard for new and current employees. We will work with the many other organizations that help deliver and receive training with the DNR to develop the most effective and efficient ways to provide training opportunities.

Maintain Program: The Division will continue our commitment to hiring quality employees, ensuring we have a trained and professional workforce, and supporting leadership development and succession planning. (CP-5)

Cross Program Policy Analysis

Issues we are likely to be involved in addressing over the next five years include biomass production, renewable energy sustainability, transportation, deer management, carbon markets, and climate adaptation and mitigation. In this work, we will work closely with partners to gather input and assess how policy alternatives might affect Wisconsin's forests and the benefits they provide.

Program Change: The Division will increase investment in policy analysis to address the acceleration of forestry issues that have a significant impact across program areas and at both the state and federal level. (CP-6)

Forest Certification

Independent third-party forest certification has created a competitive advantage for Wisconsin forest products companies to gain and/or maintain access to markets. This has been particularly important in the increasingly globally competitive marketplace. Certification has also provided a mechanism to receive feedback from outside experts that we will continue to use to improve our management of both programs and forests.

Maintain Program: The Division remains committed to its investment in third-party certification of state lands, county forests and the Managed Forest Law. (CP-7)

Energy Efficiency

We manage many facilities such as ranger stations, nurseries, recreation sites, and offices. We recognize the economic and environmental importance of increasing our efficient use of energy and prioritizing project implementation accordingly.

Program Change: The Division will invest in energy audits of our facilities and pursue energy efficiency in the design of new facilities. (CP-8)

Assistance to other Divisions

We receive valuable assistance from other DNR programs to implement an array of priority activities. This assistance comes in the form of expertise (e.g., wildlife biologist, water resource specialist) and functional assistance (e.g., filling positions on our Incident Management Teams used in emergency response). We also provide a variety of services to the whole department such as radio communication support, aerial surveys by our pilots, and assistance with prescribed burning on state lands. We will maintain our investment in assisting other programs. We will work with them to identify how we maximize the value we provide. Similarly, we will work with those programs to identify priority activities for which they assist the Forestry Division.

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain our current level of assistance to other DNR programs and continue to work on collaborative projects. (CP-9)

APPENDIX – DIVISION PROGRAMS & STRATEGIES ADDRESSED

The following table shows which strategies and goals from the Statewide Forest Strategy are addressed by Division of Forestry programs. The 'X' in each cell reflects that the program in some way will implement aspects of a goal or strategy. For example, Strategy A.1 states: "Encourage planting to enhance, protect, and connect larger tracts of forested land in appropriate locations consistent with ecological landscapes." The county, state lands, and private forests programs (marked with an 'X') plant trees that are appropriate for the ecological landscape and the public lands in particular work to keep large tracts of forest. The nurseries program (marked with an 'X') supplies counties and state lands with planting stock for reforestation. Some of the programs will influence strategies more dramatically than others. After the Division implements the Strategic Direction, work will be done to evaluate the Division's performance on achieving the strategies.

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		Division of Forestry Programs								
		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
(A) FOREST LAND - The amount of forest land increases and is focused in desired landscapes.		X			X	X	X			X
1	Encourage planting to enhance, protect, and connect larger tracts of forested land in appropriate locations consistent with ecological landscapes.	X			X	X	X			
2	Reduce the rate of conversion of forestland to alternative uses.	X				X	X			X
(B) PARCEL SIZE - The rate of forest land parcelized is reduced.		X				X	X			X
3	Reduce the rate of ownership parcelization of large forest blocks (i.e. greater than 500 acres).	X				X	X			X
4	Reduce the rate of ownership parcelization of small forest blocks (i.e. less than 500 acres).	X				X	X			X
(C) LARGE BLOCKS of FORESTS - Large blocks of forest are maintained/increase.		X				X	X			X

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
5	Pursue the conservation and protection of large, unfragmented blocks of forest lands.	X				X	X			X
(D) LANDSCAPE SCALE MANAGEMENT - An increasing amount of land management at small scales is in alignment with landscape scale plans.		X				X	X			X
7	Increase the functional size of forest blocks by encouraging coordination of management of clusters of forest ownerships.	X				X	X			X
(E) SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FOREST - The percentage of sustainably managed forest land will steadily increase.		X				X	X			X
8	Encourage a tax structure that favors well managed forests.					X				X
9	Increase acreage of privately owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.					X				
10	Increase acreage of publicly owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.	X					X			
(F) IMPROVING FORESTED COMMUNITIES - Improve all forest communities and increase in quality and extent forest communities that are under-represented.		X		X	X	X	X			X
11	Encourage the management of under-represented forest communities.	X				X	X			X
12	Improve all forested communities with a landscape management approach that considers the representation of all successional stages.	X				X	X			X
13	Increase forest structure and diversity.	X				X	X			X
14	Encourage the use of disturbance mechanisms to maintain diverse forest communities.	X	X			X	X			X

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
(G) LANDSCAPE SCALE PLANNING - More forest land is being managed and protected under landscape scale plans, or consistent with landscape scale considerations. Management on the ground is increasingly being made within the landscape scale context.		X		X	X	X	X			X
15	Maintain the appropriate forest types for the ecological landscape while protecting forest health and function.	X		X	X	X	X			X
16	Encourage multi-state landscape scale planning.									X
(H) DEER - Deer populations are managed to protect and enhance forest ecosystem functions while considering the full balance of impacts.		X		X		X	X			X
17	Increase scientific knowledge needed to understand the economic, ecological and social impacts of various deer populations (and associated deer herbivory) on forests.			X						X
18	Encourage the forestry community to be engaged in deer management issues with an understanding of the long term significance of deer impacts on sustainable forestry.			X						X
19	Adapt forest management practices to sustainably manage forests with locally high deer populations.	X				X	X			
(I) URBAN - Urban forests are more species diverse with greater tree canopy.								X		X
20	Characterize and assess urban and community forests.							X		X
21	Expand and manage a diverse urban tree canopy cover to provide multiple public benefits.							X		X
(J) INVASIVES - The spectrum of native and exotic invasive species is being addressed to minimize loss of forested ecosystem functions.		X		X		X	X	X		X

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
22	Strive to prevent infestations of invasive species before they arrive.	X		X		X	X	X		X
23	Work to detect new infestations early and respond rapidly to minimize impacts to forests.	X		X		X	X	X		X
24	Control and management of existing infestations.	X		X		X	X	X		X
25	Rehabilitate, restore, or adapt native forest habitats and ecosystems.	X		X		X	X	X		X
(K) BIOMASS - Forests provide raw materials for energy and traditional forest products at a level that sustains forest ecosystems and the productive capacity of the land. Use of woody biomass for energy is done in a way that produces a high energy return on biomass input.		X				X	X		X	X
26	Collect information and develop policy to ensure efficient and sustainable use of our forest resources in regards to energy production								X	X
27	Encourage establishment of sustainable renewable energy industries (or use of renewable energy by industries) which use woody biomass while improving or maintaining the health of the existing forest products industry								X	
(L) ADAPTATION - Forests are established and managed in a manner that increases their resilience and ability to facilitate adaptation of associated species and communities to changing climatic conditions.		X		X	X	X	X			X
28	Seek to understand the probability and severity of future climate change impacts			X						X
29	Attempt to improve the defenses of the forest and increase the resilience of natural systems to future climate change impacts	X		X		X	X	X		X
30	Intentionally accommodate change and enable forest ecosystems to adaptively respond.	X				X	X	X		

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
31	Realign forest ecosystems to new conditions caused by climate change.	X				X	X	X		
(M) MITIGATION - Forests will increasingly be used as a tool to mitigate climate change.		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
32	Manage the forest ecosystems (rural and urban) to sequester additional carbon while retaining the abundance of other benefits forests provide.	X				X	X	X		X
33	Reduce green house gas emissions by substituting wood for products that have a more energy intensive carbon footprint (i.e. non-wood building materials such as steel and concrete).								X	X
34	Utilize best management practices to minimize emissions from forest-based activities and production.	X	X			X	X	X		
35	Increase the awareness of carbon markets by private forest landowners and facilitate their participation in established carbon markets.					X				X
36	Ensure that climate policy reflects the potential positive contributions that forest conservation and sustainable management can make to achieving substantial net reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.									X
(N) FOREST VALUE - Forest ecosystem services have economic values that are realized and managed to maximize the benefits to society and improve quality of life. (Ecosystem services are functions performed by natural ecosystems that benefit human society, such as hydrological services, protection of the soil, biomass, carbon sequestration, habitat for wild species, and recreation opportunities.)		X				X	X	X	X	X
37	Invest in forest conservation to contribute to a strong economy and provide clean water and air, wildlife, and other ecosystem services.	X				X	X	X		

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
38	Encourage communities to invest in their urban forest canopy as part of a long-term plan for a community's quality of life.							X		X
39	Build public understanding about the benefits provided from investing in forest conservation.					X				X
(O) MARKETS - Wisconsin is a hub of green forest product markets, producing a diversity of value added solid wood, fiber, energy and ecosystem services.									X	X
40	Support existing forest products companies so that they are competitive domestically and internationally.								X	
41	Encourage the development of new markets and companies that leverage sustainable (e.g. third-party certified) supply and ecosystem services in emerging markets.								X	
(P) CAPACITY - Forest management/protection providers, business, and other organizations in the forestry community have increased capacity to protect and sustainably manage forests.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
42	Develop collaborations and partnerships to engage all forestry stakeholders	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
43	Increase the number of students who enter forestry related studies or a forestry profession in order to recruit and hire high quality and diverse individuals									X
44	Increase the number of private businesses (loggers, cooperating forester firms, tree planters, arborists, timber stand improvement contractors, etc.) that provide high quality goods and services to effectively and efficiently reach more forest landowners and sustainably manage more forest.								X	X

Statewide Forest Goals (letters) & Strategies (#'s)		County Forests (CF)	Fire Protection (FP)	Forest Health (FH)	Nurseries (N)	Private Forests (PF)	State Lands (SL)	Urban Forests (U)	Utilization & Marketing (UM)	Cross-Program Activities (CP)
(Q) RECREATION - Diverse recreational opportunities are available and have minimal impacts on forest ecosystems.		X				X	X			X
45	Plan for a range of recreation opportunities at a statewide level suitable to the capability of the land and with minimal long term impacts.	X					X			X
46	Provide sustainable recreation opportunities on forested public lands.	X					X			X
47	Increase the acreage of lands open to public recreation in areas where public land is not abundant.					X				X
(R) FIRE, SAFETY, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT - Human life, property, and forest resources are at reduced risk of harm or loss.		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
48	Improve safety for the forest-based workforce and forest users.	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
49	Provide for early detection and rapid initial attack for all forest fires within the state.		X							
50	Reduce wildland fire ignitions and minimize loss from fire.		X							
51	Protect the public and natural resource from unlawful practices.		X				X			X

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

RECEIVED ON THE DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S

DRAFT STRATEGIC DIRECTION

EXPLANATION OF REVISIONS

The DRAFT Strategic Direction was sent to partners, the public and staff to review on December 17, 2010. Comments were reviewed by the Forestry Leadership Team and considered when revising the document. This document explains a) why changes were made, b) defines terms and clarifies concepts that reviewers found confusing, and c) discusses intent statements and decisions that received a lot of comments but were not changed. Two versions of the final Strategic Direction are posted on line. One copy shows the edits that were made and the other shows a “clean” copy with all changes made.

Revision to introduction:

The Forestry Leadership Team (FLT) used a set of guiding principles when developing the Strategic Direction. The guiding principles are now listed and explained in the introductory section of the document. Some of the content in the ‘Why Wisconsin Forests are Important’ section in the draft was incorporated into the guiding principles.

The ‘Public Comment Process’ section was changed to explain how the Division gathered input on the Strategic Direction and how FLT used and responded to reviewers’ comments. Also added was a ‘Next Steps’ section.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

OVERALL

- O.1.** **Comment:** The Division should ensure that the technical competence of its staff is maintained.
- Response:** FLT agrees and believes maintaining technical competence of our employees is critical in achieving the strategic direction. Skills are acquired through technical training sessions via in-services, workshops, conferences etc. These skills are then applied and honed through experience and practical application in the varying forestry program duties and responsibilities.
- O.2.** **Comment:** The Division should utilize partnerships in a manner that honors a true partnership in that investments, decision making and work are all shared and not solely administrative or regulatory.
- Response:** Collaboration is important to successful implementation of partnerships throughout the entire Division. However, given the breadth and

diversity of the partnerships we are involved with, our role varies. In some cases we are in an oversight or regulatory role whereas in others we are one of many at the table. No matter what our official role, we recognize we will be more successful if we view partnerships as collaborative efforts.

O.3. Comment: The Division must be more integrated. Personnel and resources must be expected to work all aspects of forestry. The use of fire program personnel in regards to their contribution to forestry management activities and vice versa remains inconsistent across the state.

Response: In the operational phase we will be assessing the relative workload needs and will allocate resources based on that need. The Division will need to staff the highest priority activities to successfully implement the Strategic Direction. In order to do this effectively and efficiently, most staff will have to work across divisional programs. Single program specialists will be used only when it is more efficient to do so. The operations phase will help us identify the instances where this will happen. We also anticipate that as the Division's work continues to evolve, work priorities will shift and as a result the amount and type of cross program work staff does will also change.

COUNTY

Text was added to the introduction and 'Challenges and Opportunities' section to better describe the benefits that County Forests provide.

Draft Role Statement:

The Division works in partnership with the 29 counties with land entered under the county forest program to ensure these forests provide the full array of public benefits. In exchange for county commitments to manage their land sustainably and consistent with the state law, the state invests resources in each county to facilitate that county's ability to contribute to the local and statewide economies, provide an array of ecological services, and provide a land base on which the public can recreate. The Division is proposing to shift the manner in which the state provides assistance to the counties under this program, providing a greater degree of flexibility for individual counties to select among an array of resources that best meet their needs.

Revised Role Statement:

No significant changes.

Draft Intent Statement:

Text was added (first paragraph of the section leading into the intent statement) to better explain the intent of FLT that the reduction of investment by the Division will be partially offset by the anticipated increase in flexibility in the use of funding enabling the counties to more efficiently use the resources received from the state.

Proposed Change: The Division will continue to provide a suite of services and support to counties in order to maintain the excellent partnership that has been developed. The Division is proposing to shift the manner in which the state provides assistance to the counties under this program, providing a greater degree of flexibility for individual counties to select among an array of resources that best meet their needs. The Division is also proposing to modestly reduce the investment in time and/or grants and increase the assistance provided to counties in support services (e.g. IT, GIS, consultative services, and land acquisition). (CO-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will continue to provide a suite of services and support to counties in order to maintain the excellent partnership that has been developed. The Division will shift the manner in which the state provides assistance to the counties under this program, providing a greater degree of flexibility for individual counties to select among an array of resources that best meet their needs. This will result in a reduction in the direct investment to counties. The Division will increase the assistance provided to counties in support services (e.g. IT, utilization and marketing, and support for land acquisition). (CO-1)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

The intent statement was changed to more clearly indicate the Division would be reducing its direct investment to the counties.

Comments and Responses:

CO.1. Comment: The Division should continue to provide field time to the county forests because it is essential to the overall health of the county-state partnership. The Division should not just have an administrative or regulator relationship with county forests.

Response: FLT believes that the county forest liaison position is critical to maintaining the county-state partnership. The amount of field time provided by DNR staff will be discussed with each county as part of the assessment of priority services desired by each county.

CO.2. Comment: There is skepticism that increasing investment in Information Technology services (IT) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will directly benefit the Counties.

Response: Not every aspect of IT/GIS investment will directly enhance the counties, though some clearly will (e.g., WisFIRS). Other investments will indirectly benefit the counties as part of the larger forestry community.

CO.3. Comment: Reviewers supported providing a 'suite of services' and support to counties, but many questioned how this will be done or the level of flexibility.

Response: FLT understands this change in the manner in which we provide services to the counties will require significant effort to implement. Many of these questions will be answered in the operations plan which will determine how the Strategic Direction will be implemented. Additionally, FLT will work with the Wisconsin County Forest Association and member counties to formulate the best approach to implement this change. It is anticipated that implementation of the change will be phased, allowing for evaluation and readjustment.

CO.4. Comment: Reviewers expressed concern that providing a 'suite of services' is in actuality a way for DNR to do less county work.

Response: The Division's increased investment in services will directly benefit counties by supporting the continued development and ongoing maintenance of products and tools that save the counties time and increase their efficiency and effectiveness. We define services broadly and include things such as forest health monitoring, market and industry evaluation, as well as information technology. Not every county is at the same level, but all benefit by some of the following examples.

- The WisFIRS application meets a large percentage of the counties' database needs, (We recognize that some counties have developed their own system to meet their needs.)
- The WisFIRS application has allowed users to more easily find errors in the data and correct them – a process that previously would often take days. Also a

secure backup mechanism for their data – if county computers crash, this system operates as a backup.

- Maintenance, support, and training for GIS and application systems (e.g. WisFIRS). For some of the counties who can't maintain an ESRI license, WisFIRS will allow them to manage their GIS data without a GIS site license, saving them money each year.
- Access to GIS layers (fire occurrence, MFL lands, etc), to NHI checks, and in the future maybe cultural resources.
- Time savings with timber sales automation (severance tax/invoicing).
- DNR air photos offered at no cost. (We recognize that some counties fly their own photography.)

The Strategic Direction does reduce the amount of direct investment to the county forest program. Since the framework for this change has not yet been implemented, it is not yet known how the investment will be reduced in respect to funding versus DNR staff time.

CO.5. Comment: Reviewers expressed concern that managing at a landscape scale¹ should not come at the expense of the counties autonomy to manage resources (e.g. annual allowable cut) as they deem appropriate.

Response: The Strategic Direction identifies the opportunity for counties to manage at a landscape scale due to their significant size of ownership and distribution across the state. The direction each county takes will be based on what they determine is the most appropriate for their county. There is no intent to mandate the counties manage at a landscape scale or require specific management prescriptions at the property level, rather landscape considerations are naturally part of the county forest management opportunities since they own much of those landscape.

¹ The counties managing at a landscape scale is referenced in the Strategic Direction on page 5 in the third paragraph under Challenges and Opportunities.

FIRE PROTECTION

In response to comments, the introductory text was revised to reflect the importance of fire in the management of fire dependent ecosystems. See comment FP.2.

Draft Role Statement:

The Division's role in forest fire protection is to prevent, detect and rapidly suppress wildland fires in areas of the state that have the greatest potential for significant loss of property, natural resources and even lives due to wildfire. The Division complements the capacity of local fire departments by filling roles (e.g., Incident Management Teams, heavy equipment) not efficiently covered on a community by community basis. The Division is proposing to allocate resources based on an updated assessment of risk as defined by fire landscapes in Wisconsin, and enhance efforts in fire prevention and risk mitigation.

Revised Role Statement:

No significant changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.1. Comment: The Division provides important fire protection support to local communities by filling roles (e.g. wildland fire experts, Incident Management Teams (IMT), specialized heavy equipment, etc) that are not efficiently covered by fire departments. On the other hand, fire departments complement the capacity of the Division by filling roles (e.g. trained firefighters, suppression equipment, structural protection branch staffing and services) to maintain an effective and efficient partnership in wildland fire protection. This shared endeavor with fire departments is truly based on person to person relationships. Forest rangers and technicians interacting with fire department personnel at meetings, trainings and fires are where respect is built in each other. Expecting performance and effectiveness on wildland fires without such relationships is unrealistic.

Response: FLT recognizes the critical aspect of this relationship between the department and fire departments in the successful implementation of the Division's Strategic Direction. The Division is maintaining its contribution to fire departments through training, Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grants, participation in county association meetings, etc.

FP.2. Comment: Fire ecology should be addressed in the Strategic Direction specifically prescribed fire, a Let Burn Policy and modified suppression strategies.

Response: FLT agrees that fire ecology should be referenced in the Strategic Direction and modified the introductory text of the Fire Protection program to reflect this. Prescribed fire is an important tool for land management. The Division's role is to suppress wildland fires while providing regulation and encouragement for the use of controlled fire to achieve ecological outcomes.

FP.3. Comment: There needs to be clarity on when the Division's fire protection staff are going to respond when fire risk is low/moderate.

Response: FLT agrees that our partners need to have a clear understanding of our staffing procedures and response to actual fire incidents. Staffing guidelines have been developed, implemented and are being refined this year. FLT's intent is to more clearly articulate the fire response expectations for department personnel based on staffing guidelines, actual staffing situations, time of year, fire danger, etc. and communicate these expectations with our partners, including fire departments.

Draft Intent Statement:

FP-1 Proposed Change: The Division will utilize fire landscapes to allocate resources based on level of hazard. This change reflects an update to the way the program focuses investments with new tools and updated data. (FP-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

No significant changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.4. Comment (1): Resources should not be reduced in lower priority organized protection areas in order to increase investments in the Cooperative Protection Fire areas.

Comment (2): The Division should not increase investments in areas of Wisconsin where DNR suppression resources are not currently stationed by reducing resources in intensive and extensive areas. This reduction shifts the burden onto local municipalities, especially rural volunteer fire departments, which are already struggling to maintain firefighters and adequate funding.

Response: Overall comments supported the concept of the fire landscape map and allocation of resources based on values at risk. FLT affirms our intent to allocate resources based on values at risk as articulated by the fire landscapes within the Fire Assessment. Additionally, FLT is committed to updating the fire landscape analysis used to determine the fire landscapes as data become available.

Since it has not yet been determined how the Strategic Direction will be implemented, it is unknown how resources will change in the fire protection areas. However, to be clear, the Division will not walk away from its responsibilities in lower priority fire landscapes within organized protection, rather the amount of resources it devotes or the level of suppression response may be reduced.

FP.5. Comment: The Fire Department Advisory Council supports expansion of the cooperative fire program to more effectively address wildland fire problems and improve wildland fire protection capacity outside the DNR protection areas.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will strengthen highly-effective prevention and mitigation programs such as the Wildland-Urban Interface program. Prevention programs will be integrated into a Division-wide strategic plan for education and outreach and will be evaluated to understand the cost savings they provide by reducing the numbers of fires. (FP-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

No significant changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.6. Comment: The Division should consider eliminating the Emergency Fire Warden (EFW) program

Response: The Division is transitioning to a new electronic burning permit distribution system. Businesses will continue to be used as EFW's in high priority landscapes. These EFW's will be aimed at servicing high concentration areas of users.

FP.7. Comments: The Division should be stricter on allowing burning during spring fire season; use electronic burning permit program to limit burning to the safest days (i.e. when its raining); enact a black-out period from the time that things 'get dry' until green-up, regardless of the weather; legislation to ban debris burning—burning barrels.

Response: The Fire Program Assessment Team and FLT have discussed the pros and cons of these potential options for burning restrictions, along with many others. FLT feels that the electronic burning permit system allows the greatest customer service, yet provides a mechanism to immediately address changing fire conditions by eliminating burning as conditions warrant.

FP.8. Comment: Overall participants supported strengthening the fire prevention program.

Response: N/A

FP.9. Comment (1): The Division should maintain some type of prevention program geared toward our youth audience.

Comment (2): Support the expansion of forest fire prevention themes into fire department school program efforts. The necessary support through prevention themes, scripts, ideas and supplies from the Division are all that is needed to share this efficient effort.

Response: As stated in the Strategic Direction, the prevention program will be integrated into a Division-wide strategic plan for education and outreach. This effort will help the Division determine where and how it will focus its education efforts.

Draft Intent Statement:

The text explaining intent statement FP-3 was modified to more accurately explain the intent of FLT in regards to how resources will be allocated.

Proposed Change: The Division will shift resources within the state in order to more efficiently prepare for, detect, and suppress forest fires. The Division's investment will be reduced in lower risk areas. (FP-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division's investment will be reduced and resources will be placed within the state to more efficiently prepare for, detect, and suppress forest fires with emphasis on high risk areas. (FP-3)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

Comments received by FLT thought that "shifting" resources reflected a temporary situation. The change was made to clearly articulate that there will be an overall fire program investment reduction and the allocation of the remaining resources will be based on the values at risk within the fire landscapes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.10. Comment: What is 7 day scheduling?

Response: Currently, seven day scheduling is widely used within the Department and the Division to schedule personnel to serve each day of the week, not just Monday through Friday. Within the Division it is used extensively with the state forest recreational and law enforcement programs. FLT feels the emergency nature of forest fire control lends itself well to seven day scheduling during the spring forest fire season.

FP.11. Comment: If the cooperative areas are a high risk, why are they not in an extensive or intensive area to begin with? Seems to make more sense to incorporate these areas into the protection areas.

Response: FLT and the Fire Assessment agree that high risk landscapes not currently in organized protection should be considered for inclusion within organized protection if the local units of government are interested and it makes sense for the Department's administration of the fire program.

FP.12. Comment: Some reviewers disagreed with "Investment will be increased in cooperative protection areas" and suggested rewording this sentence to include having a dialogue with local units of government, along with a study of fire history in these areas, to see if DNR staff investment is actually justified

Response: Allocation of resources will be based on the level of risk and hazard which, to the extent possible with available data, will use fire history as one of the factors. The Division will engage local units of government when making adjustments to protection resources.

FP.13. Comment: The Division should consider eliminating fire towers in all but the most critical fire landscapes.

Response: The Division has continually evaluated our investment in fire towers and significantly reduced the forest lookout towers staffed. Towers currently staffed are in high priority landscapes or in remote areas where citizen reporting is deemed unreliable due to low number of persons in the area. The staffing of existing fire towers is relatively inexpensive (\$1200 annually). When a tower needs replacing, we will evaluate the replacement cost (\$150,000) against the benefit received.

FP.14. Comment: Overall support for establishing local short Incident Management Teams (IMT) for rapid response and regional expanded IMT for extended attack fires. This is seen as an immensely important service provided to communities struggling with natural disasters. Division IMTs are the experts recognized statewide to assist in the management of large scale or complex incidents outside the capabilities of local governments.

Response: The reason Division IMTs are the experts is the training and the preparedness the Division has invested in these teams. In order to continue to provide this important service to communities, the Strategic Direction affirms the importance of IMT team training and individual position training. Preparedness is the key to success.

Draft Intent Statement:

The text explaining FP-4 was revised to provide better clarity.

Proposed Change: The Division will eliminate exclusive use contracts for the SEAT program. (FP-4)

Revised Intent Statement:

No changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.15. Comment: Overall comments supported the proposed change to eliminate exclusive use contracts for the Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) program.

Response: N/A

FP.16. Comment: In the past, the Division used “call when needed (CWN)” aircraft. It was very expensive and aircraft are not available when they were needed. It was cheaper to go to exclusive use contracts. Why shift back to CWN contracts?

Response: FLT feels that despite SEATs being an effective tool for fire suppression, the investment required to make them available is not justified by the overall program benefit provided in these times of constrained resources. This same sentiment was articulated in the Fire Program Assessment. The prior CWN contracts utilized by the state were based on the federal SEAT contract. Currently, the Wisconsin DNR has developed a CWN SEAT contract that is exactly the same daily and hourly flight cost as the current exclusive use contract. The only difference is that in the CWN contract the department is required to pay for the ferrying cost of the aircraft to Wisconsin. Utilizing the CWN contract will allow the Division to be more flexible and responsive to changing fire conditions and therefore save resources during times of lower fire danger levels.

FP.17. Comment: Overall comments supported the Division aircraft and pilots providing air resources as platforms for fire detection, intelligence gathering and as a safety lookout for all firefighters.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain its current investment in providing FFP grants to local fire departments to assist in suppressing and preventing wildland fires. (FP-5)

Revised Intent Statement:

No changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.18. Comment: Many rural fire departments have maintained cooperation with the DNR under outdated Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), but are rapidly realizing that the reimbursement rates do not reflect current costs. Some are beginning to perceive this as a shift of DNR responsibilities and costs indirectly onto local fire departments and municipalities.

Response: The responsibility for wildland fires is a shared responsibility between the Department and fire departments. The MOU reimbursement rates were never intended to reflect the costs of operations for fire departments. The Department intends to maintain the overall investment in fire departments (fire suppression, Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grants, training, etc.) in the Strategic Direction, and work with the Fire Department Advisory Council to determine the specific areas and levels of this investment.

FP.19. Comment: Better collaboration and a good working relationship with other fire agencies within the state are essential and needed for effective fire management. It is essential to have good working relationships with these agencies.

Response: FLT recognizes the importance to everyone's success of maintaining and strengthening the relationship with other agencies with fire suppression responsibilities in Wisconsin. This not only includes fire suppression capabilities, but joint training, utilization of closest resources concept, IMTs, etc.

FP.20. Comment: Overall comments agreed that the mutually beneficial relationship between the Department and the fire departments is a critical component of the Wisconsin wildland fire program

Response: N/A

FP.21. Comment: There were two conflicting opinions expressed regarding FFP grants:

(1) FFP grant priority should be shifted away from Volunteer Fire Departments that charge for all initial attack wildfires towards those who provide assistance at no cost.

(2) Portion of the grant program should be reallocated to increasing the reimbursement rate for fire departments that accept a new, updated MOU. A portion of the grant should still be allocated for vital forest fire safety items.

Response: In the Strategic Direction FLT intends to maintain the overall investment in fire departments (fire suppression, FFP grants, training, etc.), but work with the Fire Department Advisory Council to address how best to allocate this investment.

FP.22. Comment: The Fire Department Advisory Council (FDAC) would like to strengthen the investment in the FFP grant program. The FDAC would like the Division to support the past state funding level (\$448,000) of the FFP grant program. These grant monies directly affect the capabilities of local fire departments in the initial attack of forest fires. Those FFP dollars are matched dollar for dollar by fire departments again reflecting the nature of this valuable wildland fire protection partnership.

Response: FLT affirms its commitment to maintain the current investment in the fire department partnership. The Division, in consultation with the FDAC, will determine how best to distribute these resources when the strategic plan is implemented.

FP.23. Comment: Continuing grant programs and training opportunities are great ways to better equip fire departments to meet their needs for involvement in wildfire suppression efforts.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to fund training as a basic function of the fire protection program at current levels. (FP-6)

Revised Intent Statement:

No Changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.24. Comment: Overall reviewers support the maintenance of training of fire department members to be effective in emergency response and maintain safe operations on wildland fires.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain current investment in fire safety and law enforcement efforts. Working together with partners to improve firefighter and citizen safety is and will continue to be the Division's highest priority. (FP-7)

Revised Intent Statement:

No changes.

Comments and Responses:

FP.25. Comment: Overall reviewers support maintaining safety and enforcement at current levels.

Response: N/A

FP.26. Comment: Overall reviewers agree that safety of firefighters and the public is the top priority in the fire protection program.

Response: N/A

FP.27. Comment: The Division should consider increasing its investment in safety. The hazards of fire suppression appear to be increasing, or at least our understanding of some of the hazards is becoming better understood. Smoke exposure and physical fitness are important items that directly impact firefighter as well as public safety

Response: FLT affirms our commitment to safety as a priority. Resource investment to address hazards in the fire environment is an operations issue and will be addressed in that process.

FOREST HEALTH

Draft Role Statement:

The Division's role in forest health is to provide technical expertise in the prevention, detection, assessment, management and monitoring of invasive plants, insects and diseases that damage trees and forests, and the benefits they provide. The Division is proposing to maintain its capacity to assist public and private forest landowners in their efforts to minimize the establishment and adverse impacts from destructive forest insects and diseases, particularly non-native invasive species and invasive plants.

Revised Role Statement:

No significant changes.

Comments and Responses:

FH.1 Comments: The overall investment in the Forest Health Program should be increased.

Response: FLT affirms our intent to maintain current investment levels. Given the range of responsibilities the Division has, FLT believes the current investment is appropriate given the full range of work that needs to be done by the Division as a whole. However, although the Division will maintain our overall investment in forest health, we will continue to increase our emphasis on more damaging invasive species and transition staff to be more forest health generalists rather than specializing in a particular species.

FH.2 Comments: Overall there was strong support for a robust forest health program.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will continue the recent shift in investment toward increased emphasis on invasive species work. There will be a continuing focus on emerging priority needs with a reduction in gypsy moth suppression efforts. (FH-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

FH.3 Comment: There was overall support for the increased emphasis on invasive species; specifically detection and control work.

Response: N/A

FH.4 Comment: Many reviewers expressed agreement with the shift of investment away from Gypsy Moth control to other emerging priorities.

Response: Also see F.5

FH.5 Comment: The Gypsy Moth program should not be reduced.

Response: FLT affirms the reduction in the Gypsy Moth program. However, this will be done by transitioning from a state run cost-share program and state contracting for aerial spraying to one where the state provides administrative services (tracking cost share activities and performing other associated paper work) for anyone receiving funds. Recent work with Department of Agriculture to develop guidance and printed materials for local communities to assist them in suppression efforts will help this transition. We have already limited suppression efforts by prioritizing suppression spray areas and setting maximum workload levels that staff can accommodate. The reduction in Gypsy Moth suppression efforts will be phased in over time as infestations spread across the state. This will enable shifting the work to more critical and damaging invasive species.

FH.6 Comment: A possible outcome of diminished effort on Gypsy Moth control may be public reaction to defoliation of aspen and oak and other detrimental impacts from the caterpillars. There will be a strong need to address this issue in public messages about forest management trade-offs and approaches.

Response: An intent expressed in the Strategic Direction is to develop a specific assessment and strategic direction plan for our roles in education and outreach across the entire Division. Forest health focused education and outreach will be evaluated as part of this process.

FH.7 Comment: Support for downsizing efforts such as jack pine budworm surveys or efforts by forest health staff dealing with garden insect problems or ornamentals that pose little risks to Wisconsin's forests. Shift efforts towards other higher concern invasive species that will cause large scale problems in the forest.

Response: FLT agrees and it is reflected in the intent expressed in the Strategic Direction.

FH.8 Comment: There was overall support for the increased emphasis on invasive species.

Response: N/A

FH.9 Comment: There should be more of a push to compel landowners to take action on invasive plants even though stronger government control and regulation is not likely these days.

Response: Recently enacted Administrative Code NR 40 is an example of a more proactive approach being taken to compel action on the most harmful invasive species. The Division is working with partners to first emphasize awareness and education to gain voluntary compliance. Several training and outreach efforts have already occurred with special emphasis on “best management practices for invasive species”. NR 40 focuses on the most critical and damaging invasive species.

FH.10 Comment: Could the time the Forest Health staff spends on native insects and diseases be covered by the private sector (e.g. diagnosing pest problems for individual landowners)?

Response: By shifting emphasis to invasive species there will be considerably less time spent on non-invasive native insects and diseases by DNR forest health staff. Also, the recent forest health study identified a few consultants interested in doing surveys, but little interest in diagnosis work.

Draft Intent Statement:

<p>Maintain Program: The Division will continue to provide detection, delimitation, monitoring, and impact assessments of invasive plants and highly damaging insects and disease-causing organisms and expand risk model and map development. The technical assistance the forest health program provides to partners and land managers is critical for them to make appropriate management decisions. (FH-2)</p>

Revised Intent Statement:

No Change.

Comments and Responses:

FH.11 Comment: Investment in monitoring should be further increased.

Response: FLT affirms its intent to maintain its investment in monitoring mainly due to the recent increase in investment in our invasive species work which includes monitoring and tracking. An example of this is the increased work in risk model and map development for the last five years. The intent of FLT is to maintain this shift.

FH.12 Comment: Forestry should increase investment in eradication efforts.

Response: FLT believes increasing our investment in eradications will not be the best use of our limited resources since it is rarely successful (e.g. white pine blister rust). There are very few species that can be eradicated. “Management” of invasive species is often the best investment. Any efforts towards eradication may occur when an initial satellite occurrence of a species is identified. DATCP has the lead role for eradication when dealing with quarantined species.

FH.13 Comment: Does the term ‘invasive’ include both native and non native plants/animals and diseases?

Response: Although NR 40 defines invasive to mean those species that are non-native, non indigenous to Wisconsin, in the Strategic Direction the term invasive was intended to include both native and non-native species of insect or plant that is non-desirable or that competes with those species that are desired.

FH.14 Comment: Concern that the broad umbrella term of “Invasive Species” work might imply expanding the level of resources spent on some species where the war isn’t winnable.

Response: The intent of FLT is not for the Division’s goal to be “win the war” in regards to invasive species. Rather, the Division’s approach is to recognize and emphasize landowner objectives and invest resources toward “management” to reduce the negative impacts of invasive species – a more realistic goal. NR 40 stresses the need to invest more in the critical and more damaging invasive species. Efforts to implement and emphasize NR 40 are an important component of the Division’s Strategic Direction. Also see response to comment FH.12.

FH.15 Comment: Some reviewers expressed a lack of support for increasing investment in risk model development since they prefer to shift this investment toward more forest health field time. Also reviewers expressed the opinion that the Gypsy Moth risk map was not very accurate and was limited for field application. They prefer to instead invest in rapid development of control strategies for invasive plants.

Response: Risk mapping has not reduced available forest health staff field time. Risk modeling includes resource mapping efforts that help identify areas where mitigation should be targeted. It promotes a prioritization of where to spend limited resources. Development of control strategies is better suited for the research community. The Division can and does enter into partnerships with the federal government and academia on some of these efforts.

FH.16 Comment: What is the Division’s on-going commitment for monitoring invasive plants on state lands, especially State Forests?

Response: Collecting information regarding the presence of invasive species is now part of the forest reconnaissance done by field foresters on all public lands. The Forest Health program assists public lands managers with detection, monitoring and consultation.

FH.17 Comment: “Forest health” can be an ambiguous term – does it include broader biodiversity perspective of all organisms?

Response: Yes, it includes the entire functioning ecosystem.

FH.18 Comment: Perhaps the Division should invest more in research or partnering with external research experts to address knowledge of impacts of disturbances on biodiversity including invertebrates, soil organisms etc.

Response: The Forest Health program has and will continue to invest and partner with others in practical research aimed at answering questions where we need information rather quickly for management considerations. Studying impacts of biomass harvesting on invertebrates would be a recent example. The Division’s direct role in research will remain limited, but working with partners and research professionals to help focus their efforts on outcomes that will help inform our land management decisions and recommendations will continue.

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to work in partnership with other DNR divisions, state agencies, and local municipalities to efficiently control damaging invasives. (FH-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to work in partnership with other DNR divisions, state agencies, and local municipalities to minimize the damage to Wisconsin’s forests from harmful invasives. (FH-3)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

FLT decided to make a slight change to better reflect the nature of invasive species management.

Comments and Responses:

FH.19 Comment: Overall there was strong agreement with the Division’s commitment to partner with other Divisions and external stakeholders.

Response: N/A

FH.20 Comment: The Division needs to manage the funds used to control invasive species. It needs to carefully prioritize and invest where the investment can be successful

Response: FLT agrees. Also see responses in FH.1 and FH.14.

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will provide education and outreach materials for, and implementation of, training related to BMP's, detection, monitoring and management of a broad number of invasive species. New partnerships will be sought to share information about landscape-level management for invasive species. Expanded use of the web as an outreach and education tool will be explored – particularly as it relates to sharing survey and management data. (FH-4)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

FH.21 Comment: Overall reviewers agreed with Best Management Practices (BMP's) for invasives effort.

Response: N/A

FH.22 Comment: The Division should increase its investment in order to have a strong education and outreach effort.

Response: See response to FH.6.

FH.23 Comment: Is there a specific assessment and strategic plan for education and outreach?

Response: No, the intent expressed in the Strategic Direction is for the Division to develop a specific assessment and strategic plan for our overall role in education and outreach. Forest health focused education and outreach will be evaluated as part of this process.

FH.24 Comment: Social media isn't mentioned and this is a good tool to work into future direction.

Response: It is anticipated that the use of social media will be evaluated during the Division's assessment and strategic plan for education and outreach.

FH.25 Comment: Overall reviewers agreed with using risk assessments.

Response: N/A

NURSERIES

Draft Role Statement:

The Division's role in forest nurseries is to encourage afforestation and reforestation in Wisconsin by ensuring an adequate supply of high quality seedlings, of native species, is available at an economical price from public and private sources. The Division is proposing to maintain a capacity to produce stock at a level that, when combined with private sector capacity, meets projected demand for tree seedlings.

Revised Role Statement:

No significant change.

Comments and Responses:

N.1. Comment: A genetics program should not be separated from the nursery program.

Response: FLT believes that although genetics will continue to have an important connection to nurseries, it also plays an important role across the whole Division such as informing adaptation strategies or understanding the implications of varying silvicultural practices.

N.2. Comment: What will the future nursery program look like (i.e. size of program, containerized stock)?

Response: Issues involved with how the nursery program operates (level of production, number of nurseries, etc.) is being evaluated in the current work being done to develop the State Nursery Business Plan.

N.3. Comment: Monitoring and genetics language should be incorporated into the role statement, including tree improvement.

Response: There are many components of the State Nursery Program, including monitoring and genetics, as well as outreach, education and seed extraction for other agencies (U.S. Forest Service) to name a few. The intent was that by referring to the State Nursery in broad terms in the role statement, all components of the program were included. However, monitoring is discussed in intent statement N-2 and genetics in CP-1 of the Cross Program Section.

Draft Role Statement:

The paragraph explaining the current process to adjust the capacity of the nurseries to meet current demand was revised. Since it is directly related to intent statement N-1, it was moved to before the intent statement.

Proposed Change: State nursery facilities will scale production to meet seedling demand with an estimated production of 5 - 8 million seedlings annually.
(N-1)

Revised Role Statement:

Program Change: State nursery facilities will scale production in relation to private sector capacity and changing seedling demand. (N-1)

Reason for Change of Role Statement:

The intent statement was changed to reflect that the level of production of state nurseries should take into consideration the amount of demand able to be met by private nurseries. The reference to a specific production number was deleted because distribution has varied over the last several years due to changing demand. The State Nursery Program has experienced demand ranging from 7 to 25 million seedlings in a given year.

Comments and Responses:

N.4. Comment (1): The Division should add containerized stock to its production.

Comment (2): The Division should add seed (for direct seeding) to its production

Comment (3): The Division should address natural regeneration techniques to our statement of intents for the nursery program.

Response: The State Nursery Business Plan, which was developed with input from internal and external stakeholders, is currently (April 2011) being developed and will inform a Department decision about what services the State Nursery Program should provide and where.

Draft Role Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will increase the investment in a monitoring program that will monitor tree planting projects, identify problems, field test potential solutions, and disseminate lessons learned to internal and external customers to ensure high-quality stock in the future. (N-2)

Revised Role Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will increase the investment in a monitoring program that will monitor forest regeneration, identify problems, field test potential solutions, and disseminate lessons learned to internal and external customers to ensure high-quality stock and successful planting survival in the future. (N-2)

Reason for Change of Role Statement:

FLT slightly changed the text to better reflect the intent that monitoring will be done on both artificial and natural regeneration.

Comments and Responses:

N.5. Comment: Why is the Division increasing investment in monitoring efforts since fewer trees are being planted? This seems to indicate there would be less to monitor.

Response: Monitoring has been done on a very limited basis – planting efforts are sampled in only one county per year. The need to monitor and assure adequate regeneration is just as important with 5 million trees planted as 20 million trees. The results and information gained by monitoring is beneficial to private entities as well. The intention of this role statement is to increase the monitoring program, meaning better statistical understanding of success overall.

N.6. Comment: Some reviewers doubted our reasons for decline in numbers of seedlings being planted statewide. One in particular stated that “enough past reforestation has taken place”; thus surmising that enough is planted already.

Response: Although significant planting has taken place in the last half century, the fact remains that there are still reforestation needs. The Statewide Forest Strategy identified the need for continued reforestation in order to address challenges our forests face in biological diversity, productive capacity and health and vitality. Additionally, there will continue to be reforestation needs due to regeneration after harvests, insect infestation, wildfire or storm event, as well as changes in land use and landowner objectives. As a result, FLT believes the Division has an important role in encouraging afforestation and reforestation by facilitating the availability of an adequate supply of high quality seedlings of native species.

PRIVATE FORESTRY

Draft Intent Statement:

The Division's role in private forestry is to facilitate the ability of private landowners to manage their forest land sustainably to provide an array of public benefits. The Division seeks to complement the work accomplished by private sector professionals by filling roles not conducive to private sector involvement. The Division is proposing to reduce emphasis on administering the state's forest tax program while increasing emphasis on reaching landowners who currently do not receive any professional assistance in managing their forest land.

Revised Role Statement:

No change.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will develop and implement additional efficiencies in the administration of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. (PF-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

PF.1. Comment: There was concern that increased efficiencies and streamlining within the MFL program will lower the standard for forest management required.

Response: FLT is not looking to reduce the quality of forest management; rather our intent is to increase the consistency and efficiency of the administration of the MFL program. We do believe there are opportunities within the MFL administration tools to improve efficiencies without impacting the quality of forest management (e.g., simplifying and streamlining the management plan by utilizing a standardized template for MFL plans). FLT is committed to clearly defining the range of acceptable sustainable management and determining how we will assure consistent application of the MFL program by DNR foresters and Certified Plan Writers with the associated accountability.

PF.2. Comment: What are specific examples of MFL efficiencies and streamlining that FLT believes could be realized or that are desired?

Response: FLT believes that MFL streamlining opportunities exist and will be integrated into how we implement the Strategic Direction. In order for that to occur, work is being done now to frame potential efficiencies within the policies and procedures of the MFL program. Some of these changes may require changes in statute or administrative rule, while others may be implemented through policy change and handbooks. Some of the MFL efficiencies and streamlining opportunities that are being evaluated for FLT consideration include:

- Changes in the MFL application referral process.
- Modification of the closed acreage allowances.
- Amending signature requirements.
- Amending the MFL program to eliminate lands with improvements except improvements as needed for land management.
- Revision of language to clarify the intent and procedure used by landowners, DNR, municipalities and partners.
- Increase the acreage share tax of MFL lands and eliminate the requirement of a yield tax.
- Allow for MFL withdrawal/transfer in any configuration as long as remaining lands meet the eligibility requirements.
- And others.

In addition to program and policy changes such as those listed above, the Division will be assessing how to increase efficiency in our oversight role with respect to landowners, cooperators and others working to implement MFL plans. The goal will be to reduce the time department staff spend reviewing the work of cooperators and assuring compliance with the program.

FLT feels that there is not one single efficiency that will streamline the administration of the MFL program; rather it will be a combination of policy, procedure and administrative changes that in total will improve overall efficiency.

PF.3. Comment: Developing quality and trust in our partners is a key need in order to find efficiencies in the MFL administration and compliance checking

Response: Developing efficiencies with our partners is a very practical approach toward program efficiencies. Simply stated, time is money. We want to spend quality time with our partners and develop that quality relationship to better understand real expectations of ourselves and those who also serve private landowners.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase efforts to make full use of cooperating foresters for activities such as industrial transfers, in an effort to build the capacity of private sector partners. (PF-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will increase efforts to make full use of cooperating foresters for activities such as industrial transfers, in an effort to build the capacity of private sector partners and focus DNR staff time on other activities. (PF-2)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

The intent statement was enhanced to better explain one of the benefits to building capacity in the private sector, namely to allow DNR the opportunity to work on other high priority work.

Comments and Responses:

PF.4. Comment: The Division should explore giving an incentive to those cooperators who prepare non-tax law stewardship plans or establish a sale for a landowner.

Response: The state Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP) provides cost sharing for stewardship plan development through cooperators. WFLGP can also be used for a variety of non-commercial land management practices.

PF.5. Comment: The comments offered seemed to indicate there was not a clear understanding of what is meant by landscape scale and there was concern that there would be infringement of private property rights.

Response: FLT responded to the concern regarding property rights by changing the text to, "use of voluntary landscape scale management programs". The vision is that a geographic area may be targeted for landscape scale management because it is a high priority for a certain type of management such as for a specific forest cover, wildlife, or it is at threat from issues like fragmentation. An example of this is occurring in the Driftless Area, which has unique ecological properties and increasing population pressures. Landowners can benefit from landscape scale management by sharing information on land management opportunities as well as joining together to benefit from the economies of scale in implementing desired management activities. Affected landowners would voluntarily decide whether or not they wanted to participate in a landscape level planning and/or management initiative.

PF.6. Comment: What is an industrial transfer, how is it done now and what is the change?

Response: Industrial transfers are generally defined as when a large MFL account (property greater than 1000 acres located in more than one county with the services of a professional forester and no site specific management plan) sells only a portion of their ownership to a new landowner. The new landowner, who no longer meets the criteria of a large MFL account, must develop a site specific management plan for those lands. Under this change, new landowners will utilize a private cooperating forester to develop the management plan ensuring that the new entry meets the eligibility requirements of the law (for example, at least 80% of the entry is "productive" and can produce wood fiber > 20 cubic feet per acre per year).

Draft Intent Statement:

The text introducing and explaining intent statement PF-3 was modified to better reflect the use, or the lack thereof, of professional assistance. Also, text was added to better communicate that landscape scale management is voluntary and that due to limited resources it is not the intent of FLT to establish landscape scale management programs in all areas of the state during the next five years.

Proposed Change: The Division will increase investment in efforts to reach the large percentage of private forest landowners who receive no professional assistance in caring for their land. (PF-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase investment in efforts to reach the large percentage of private forest landowners who receive no professional assistance in caring for their land. Different techniques to reach these landowners will be tried and certain areas or groups will be focused on. (PF-3)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

The intent statement was changed to reflect that it is not FLT's intent that a "one size fits all" effort be implemented statewide, rather that different techniques will be tried in focused areas or towards specific groups.

Comments and Responses:

PF.7. Comment: There was a mixture of support and opposition to the proposal to increase efforts to reach private landowners who receive no professional assistance or are not in the MFL program. Whereas some expressed the importance of reaching these landowners, others expressed concerns that the large turnover of ownership and increased parcelization makes this a poor investment.

Response: FLT affirms its intent to increase investment in efforts to reach private landowners who receive no professional assistance. FLT understands the difficulty in reaching new landowners. There is no magic bullet and it needs to be done in cooperation with others in the forest community. Therefore, one key component of this work will be to clearly define our role in reaching and informing private forest landowners. FLT recognizes that monitoring the effectiveness of these initiatives is important and within the next two years we are committed to investing resources to assess our role in outreach and education.

PF.8. Comment: DNR foresters should not provide service to properties that are less than 10 acres in size.

Response: The focus of DNR forestry is on properties greater than 10 acres and FLT is not proposing this change.

Draft Intent Statement:

<p>Proposed Change: The Division is proposing an increased investment in programs that utilize conservation easements to increase and secure private forested lands. (PF-4)</p>
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Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

PF.9. Comment: Generally easements are considered as a good tool to reduce forest parcelization, conversion and development and effectively use limited funds.

Response: Forest easements typically include that sustainable forestry is a requirement of the easements and that lands be open for public recreation. For the most part, these easements require that the private land remains in MFL or be managed in an equivalent manner. DNR's role is to then ensure that the requirements of MFL are maintained just like all other private lands entered in the program. These easements are in perpetuity.

PF.10. Comment: A few respondents suggest that easements are the role of land trusts and the Division of Forestry ought to focus on MFL or on state properties.

Response: See response in PF.9.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will maintain the level of investment in financial incentives to landowners but focus these more on landowners who currently do not receive professional assistance, in lieu of those already under the MFL. (PF-5)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will maintain the level of investment in financial incentives to landowners but focus these more on landowners requesting assistance with management practices and those who currently do not receive professional assistance, in lieu of those already enrolled in MFL. (PF-5)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

FLT modified the intent to clarify that the emphasis of cost sharing should be for practices over plans and for non MFL over MFL.

Comments and Responses:

PF.11. Comment: The comments regarding cost sharing were wide ranging including that:

- MFL landowners should not get cost sharing including non mandatory practices.
- MFL landowners should get cost sharing only for non mandatory practices.
- Cost sharing should be used to pay for management plans for entry into MFL.
- Cost sharing should be used to pay for practices on non MFL lands.

Response: While management plans are one tool used to encourage landowners to invest in sustainably managing their land, they are not always feasible or the preferred option for all forest landowners. The Division will shift a portion of our workload toward helping landowners who are interested in implementing sustainable forestry practices, whether or not they have a plan directing the management of their land. FLT modified its intent to clarify that emphasis of awarding cost sharing funds should be prioritized for practices over plans and for non MFL over MFL.

PF.12. Comment: Avoid the use of state and federal cost share funds for the very same on-the-ground practice. Instead only allow cost sharing from one public agency for any one practice.

Response: In order to best utilize limited funds, FLT concurs that WFLGP should not be used if the practice can be cost shared by federal funds.

STATE LANDS

In response to comment S.1 below, the “Challenges and Opportunities” section was modified to better explain how forest ecosystems have changed over time.

Draft Role Statement:

The Division’s role in managing state lands is to ensure that state-owned forested lands are providing the economic, ecological and social benefits set out in property master plans. The Division is proposing to maintain its capacity to sustainably manage state-owned forested lands, and enhance our ability to improve recreational opportunities and visitor safety on designated State Forests.

Revised Role Statement:

The Division’s role in managing state lands is to ensure that state-owned forested lands are balancing the economic, ecological and social benefits derived from forests as set out in property master plans. The Division will maintain its capacity to sustainably manage state-owned forested lands, and enhance our ability to improve recreational opportunities and visitor safety on designated State Forests.

Reason for Change of Role Statement:

Slight wording changes which did not change the role of the Division in State Lands.

Comments and Responses:

S.1 Comment: Managing under represented forest types was a strategy in the Statewide Forest Strategy, but is only briefly mentioned in the Strategic Direction. Suggest a statement that the Division encourages the development of uncommon forest attributes.

Response: FLT agrees that managing under represented forest types is a role of the Division and how we do so is discussed in detail in property management plans. Given this and the level of detail in a Strategic Direction, FLT feels more specificity is not needed.

S.2 Comment: Concern was expressed that the statement, “Forest ecosystems are always in a state of change”, could be misleading, if not explained further.

Response: Text was added to clarify that when change happens rapidly it can have greater environmental impacts.

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will remain committed to current levels of sustainable forest management on all state lands as identified in property master plans. The Division will continue to meet allowable harvest goals as determined through the master planning process on all state lands. The Division will also continue to work on reducing the current backlog of forest management practices. (S-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

No significant change.

Comments and Responses:

S.3 Comment: There was overall support for the need to meet the allowable harvest goals on all state lands.

Response: N/A

S.4 Comment: As a general comment, some clarification is still needed in the Strategic Direction regarding “allowable” harvests on state lands and how the data are used and interpreted.

Response: The level of detail needed to explain how the allowable harvest is determined is not appropriate for a Strategic Direction and is, therefore, outlined here. The allowable harvest is the number of acres that can be harvested each year, on a sustained basis, without depleting the resource over time. It is calculated based on inventoried forest data collected by foresters in combination with long range planning (e.g. Master Planning) considerations. A property’s ecological, economic, and societal constraints are considered in this determination. The forester uses this information to determine a predicted year of harvest for each stand of trees. The combination of these stands, and their associated treatments, represents the number of acres to be evaluated for harvest in a particular year. The annual allowable timber harvest is a long term monitoring figure. Yearly fluctuations are common due to changing conditions created by storms, insect & disease infestations, fires, or backlogged workload. The annual long term harvest acreage goal in the Wisconsin Forest Inventory & Reporting System (WisFIRS) identifies the annual allowable timber harvest for each property.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase the number of lump-sum timber sales. Where cost effective, the Division will contract with private cooperating consulting foresters to establish a portion of timber sales in order to maximize DNR’s ability to accomplish workload priorities across the Division. (S-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

Intent statement was deleted.

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

Intent statement S-2 (lump sum sales and contracting) was deleted. Instead the intent of FLT to increase use of lump sum sales and contracting as tools to increase the Division's ability in meeting allowable harvest goals was captured in the paragraph leading into intent statement S-1.

FLT realized that the identification of contracting and use of lump sum sales was not appropriate for an intent statement since both are simply tools we can use to accomplish our work. In other words, they are operational tools, not strategies. FLT continues to believe that they both offer opportunities to increase our ability to achieve our allowable harvest goals. However, FLT also recognizes that the use of lump sum or contracting will not be cost effective in every case. The Division is in the process of completing a study evaluating whether, and under what circumstances, using private cooperating consulting foresters to establish timber sales is cost effective. The results of that study will inform how we proceed in the future. With respect to lump sum sales, FLT is compelled by the experiences of other public and private land managers in Wisconsin and elsewhere that lump sum sales are a tool that, in the right place, is cost-effective. Therefore, the Division will increase the number of lump-sum timber sales and establish criteria for their use. Collectively, these tools will be used to maximize DNR's ability to accomplish workload priorities across the Division. The majority of this work will continue to be done by DNR staff.

Comments and Responses:

S.5 Comment: Opinions regarding increasing the use of lump sum sales was about evenly split between support and opposition. Many of those supporting the use of lump sum sales were for allowing their use in very limited or in highly constrained circumstances. Those opposed to the use of lump sum sales doubted the cost effectiveness or believed the state would lose revenue due to the possible inaccurate timber cruises. There was also a concern that many loggers would not bid on lump sum sales due to the potential increase in economic risk. The vast majority of external comments strongly supported the increased use of lump sum timber sales.

Response: The FLT affirms its intent to increase use of lump sum timber sales. FLT recognizes that not every sale is ideal for lump sum and intends to establish criteria for their use. FLT feels that the concerns expressed regarding possible lost revenue to the State from lump sum sales is not realistic in a competitive market since most loggers are familiar with lumps sum sales and the competition in a sealed bid system will set the fair market value. Other large landowners in Wisconsin and nationally have successfully utilized lump sum sales for many years.

S.6 Comment: Contracting should not be used to set up timber sales on state lands. Some of the reasons given were:

- It is not cost effective.
- It takes away work DNR should be doing.
- The Division should focus existing staff duties better (better use of forest technicians and forester rangers in the non fire season).
- Several opposed to contracting supported the use of LTE's or a private forester on a retainer to complete specific services as a good way to increase the time available for timber sales.

Response: The FLT believes that it is important to have a range of tools available for accomplishing our priority work, including meeting the allowable cut on state lands as determined by property master plans. FLT's intent is to emphasize the use of additional tools such as contracting in those circumstances where it is most cost-effective as a means of increasing the overall resources available to accomplish the Division's priority workload. An on-going evaluation of contracting will be used to help inform under what circumstances contracting makes sense as a tool to supplement the work done by state employees.

Draft Intent Statement:

The paragraph leading into this intent statement was revised to better explain how reforestation on state lands is currently funded and why a need exists to find an alternate funding source. See comment S.8

Proposed Change: The Division will increase the amount of funds for reforestation on all state lands, ensuring adequate resources to meet identified reforestation needs. (S-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

S.7 Comment: There was strong support for using a percentage of timber sale revenue for reforestation, but some want to expand the concept to cover timber stand improvement and general treatment/control of invasive species.

Response: This concept will be advanced as a statutory change proposal.

S.8 Comment: The rationale for using a percentage of timber sale revenue for reforestation is unclear.

Response: To date the Division has heavily relied on gift funding for reforestation on state forests which is declining rapidly. As a result an alternate funding source to cover the costs of reforestation is needed. This change, as proposed, would fund reforestation, afforestation, site preparation and release of both natural regeneration and planted stands.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will implement recreation priorities articulated in property master plans and increase the level of investment in the state forest recreation program to enhance unique niche recreation activities such as remote camping and trails, and serve high demand recreation facilities while continuing to provide for visitor safety. (S-4)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will implement recreation priorities on state forests as articulated in property master plans and increase the level of investment in the state forest recreation program to enhance unique niche recreation activities such as remote camping and trails, and serve high demand recreation facilities while continuing to provide for visitor safety. (S-3)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

Wording was added to clarify that this intent applies to state forests only and not other state lands.

Comments and Responses:

S.9 Comment: Overall reviewers supported increasing the investment in the state forest recreation program.

Response: N/A

S.10 Comment: Clarify that recreation management follows the property's master plan.

Response: The text of the intent statement was modified to do this.

S.11 Comment: The following should be added to the end of statement S-4: "visitor safety and timber management, as well as the protection of plants, animals, High Conservation Value Forests, and important cultural resources."

Response: FLT agrees that those values should be protected, but felt they are clearly identified in the individual property master plans.

S.12 Comment: Some reviewers expressed concern over the need to avoid timber management/recreational conflicts whenever possible.

Response: FLT agrees that guidelines to minimize user conflicts should be implemented, as needed, on specific harvests.

S.13 Comment: Some reviewers suggested the Division utilize passive management areas for new recreation developments.

Response: This is a master plan specific topic and should not be generically applied to all recreation areas.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase the investment in land survey and workload associated with property boundary issues such as trespasses and newly acquired land. Acquisition efforts will continue and use criteria aligned with the recently approved Stewardship Land Acquisition Strategy. (S-5)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

S.14 Comment: Overall DNR staff strongly supported increasing the Division's investment in land survey work and work associated with property boundary issues.

Response: N/A

S.15 Comment: There were a few comments expressing concern regarding the impact on local tax revenue as a result of the Department buying land.

Response: The Department of Natural Resources makes an annual payment in lieu of real estate taxes to replace property taxes that would have been paid if the property had remained in private ownership. The payment is made to the local taxing authority where the property is located. Because DNR pays a fair share of aid on all lands purchased since January 1, 1992, there is no loss of property tax revenue in the taxation district due to DNR ownership. In fact, because the purchase price is often higher than equalized assessed value, the DNR payment is often greater. *[The Division understands that this payment system is currently under debate as part of the 2011-2013 budget bill.]*

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will decrease overall investment in planning from current levels due to the pending completion of state forest master plan revisions. Focus will be shifted to assisting other DNR programs with the planning needs for other state lands. (S-6)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

S.16 Comment: Overall the intent to decrease investment in planning had strong support from DNR staff and less support from our external partners.

Response: The decreased planning investment is relatively small with a redirection of more resources to help increase planning efforts on state lands for the next several years. Revision of existing State Forest master plans will again increase resource needs beginning in 2014.

URBAN FORESTS

Draft Role Statement:

The Division's role in urban forestry is that of a convener to bring interests together and build partnerships to advance urban forestry as practiced by local communities, private sector specialists, and community organizations. The Division is proposing to shift emphasis from a public 'street tree' model to an integrated 'community canopy' model that better reflects how it can maximize the public benefits from all trees and forests in our communities.

Revised Role Statement:

The Division's role in urban forestry is that of a facilitator to bring interests together and build partnerships to advance urban forestry as practiced by local communities, private sector specialists, and community organizations. The Division will shift emphasis from a public 'street tree' model to an integrated 'community canopy' model that better reflects how it can maximize the public benefits from all trees and forests in our communities. The Division helps establish and advocate for best management practices in coordination with partners.

Reason for Change of Role Statement:

FLT changed the wording to better reflect the Division's role as facilitators as compared to collaborators. Additional text was added to recognize our role in the development and advocating of best management practices.

Comments and Responses:

U.1 Comment: Overall, external partners supported the Division shifting emphasis to an integrated 'community canopy' model.

Response: N/A

U.2 Comment: DNR does not have a role in Urban Forestry or should decrease its investment.

Response: FLT affirms that the Division of Forestry does have a role in urban forestry and is increasing the level of investment in this program. Just as our rural forests do, Wisconsin's urban forests provide a wide range of ecological, economic and social benefits to a large segment of the state's residents. The Division's role is partner focused. There are actions that the Division won't take anymore, but there are also incredible opportunities to help even more people manage and benefit from their urban forest through our work. Current examples of where the Division has supported or facilitated partnerships are:

- First Downs for Trees – a partnership that engaged the Green Bay Packers, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, the Oneida Nation and 21 Brown County communities to plant trees and promote tree planting.
- Taking Root Campaign of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation – a private-public funding source for tree planting in the Oshkosh Area.

- Green Tier Legacy Communities – a recently chartered partnership where communities pledge to take actions and share information to achieve superior environmental performance.

U.3 Comment: The terminology in the Urban Forestry section is unclear and undefined.

Response: The following terms and phrases were noted as those needing better definition:

- “shift in emphasis” (see UF role statement, also throughout document): This means moving towards the new direction. It does not mean moving from a regional based effort to a central office based effort nor does it mean completely changing everything all at once. The degree of shift will be dependent on the needs, opportunities, and resources of the areas being served.
- “Public ‘street tree’ model” (see UF role statement): This model focuses on trees on public property such as public street trees, park trees and trees on other municipal property. It is a subset of a community's urban forest and generally excludes private property trees.
- “Integrated ‘community canopy’ model” (see first UF role statement): An integrated community canopy model considers all trees within a community – street, yard, park, and so on.
- “Investment” (see UF-4 and UF-5): This term can mean staff, time and financial resources. Until the Division makes decisions on how to implement the Strategic Direction, it is unknown exactly how, when, or where the investment will be made or changed.

U.4 Comment: Describe more of the desired outcomes for each of the intent statements in order to clarify the benefit.

Response: FLT agrees with this suggestion and the text was modified to do so.

U.5 Comment: Define/replace the word “convener”.

Response: FLT recognized that convener was not the appropriate term and replaced it with facilitator.

U.6 Comment: There is no acknowledgment in the document of the past successes of the current model, what has changed, and how have those changes brought us to the point of needing to change our strategy...i.e. "Why?"

Response: FLT recognizes that the Division's urban forestry has been very successful. Many of the Division's long-standing programs have also been successful and yet have evolved significantly over time, reflecting changing conditions, understanding, capacity and needs. Urban Forestry is a maturing program and the changes in its strategic direction do not imply the current model has failed; rather, its success has created a demand that must be met with new methods given limited resources. We are choosing to do this by strengthening and maintaining partnerships.

U.7 Comment: Lack of species diversity and canopy cover are only the challenges for the resource itself. The challenges for the practice of urban forestry, which we are all responsible for, are the lack of technical expertise, the capacity to manage the resource, and the public and private support to do so.

Response: The challenges of the urban forest are met with actions in urban forestry. As a result, no changes were made in the Challenges and Opportunities section as that focuses on the forest resource, but revisions were made throughout the document to emphasize the role the Division will play to facilitate building capacity to manage the urban forests of the state.

Draft Intent Statement:

The paragraph leading into the intent statement was revised to provide more explanation of a 'multi-community' approach and why managing at a "community canopy" level is beneficial as compared to "street tree" level.

Proposed Change: The Division will focus assistance at the regional or metropolitan scale and will do less individualized local program delivery. (UF-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will focus assistance at a multi-community scale and will do less individualized local program delivery. (UF-1)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

FLT realized that "Metropolitan scale" is a term that, in this context, is not well understood. As a result the language was changed to "multi-community scale".

Comments and Responses:

U.8 Comment: Small communities should still be serviced.

Response: The intent is not to abandon small communities; however, the manner in which they receive services will change. Currently DNR coordinators provide direct assistance, often one on one, to communities. There will be differences in how the strategies are implemented depending on region, resources, needs and opportunities. This is a five year Strategic Direction and the Division recognizes that changes will not happen overnight; they will evolve over time. Some examples of larger scale assistance models we are using or could use are:

- Regional urban forestry networking groups that gather community peers together to share information and address common issues. With one effort, many communities are affected.
- Work at the state level to introduce legislation that benefits urban forestry, such as was done to increase DNR's ability to respond to community urban forestry needs after a catastrophic storm event. This resulted in our state Urban Forest Catastrophic Storm Grant program that helps all communities during a crisis.
- Greening Milwaukee, a Milwaukee-based nonprofit, and The Center for Resilient Cities, a Madison-based nonprofit, work with neighborhoods and local governments to get trees planted and cared for on private property and green space developed and managed in their metro areas. DNR not only assists these efforts, but can work to spread these models to other parts of the state.

U.9 Comment: What are regional and metropolitan areas and why should they benefit more than small communities?

Response: The term "regional and metropolitan" was changed to "multi-community" in the text to avoid misunderstanding. In addition "multi-community" is further explained in the text, "depending on the issue or program, could involve communities across several counties, a group of small communities, metropolitan areas, or statewide initiatives." So, it should be clear that small communities are included in this concept. However, it should also be clear that with the Division's limited resources, if given a choice between providing service to impact multiple small communities or providing service to a single small community, the Division will favor the multiple community approach and also seek to create those opportunities. This approach can draw on the capacity and resources of groups of communities and can affect a greater proportion of the urban forest and benefit a greater number of citizens. Examples of successful multi-community initiatives include:

- Waupaca County received one urban forestry grant to develop tree boards in all six of the small communities in the county.

- In two instances, communities in Jefferson County and communities in the Fox Valley each partnered together for one grant to contract for urban forestry services (inventory and Arbor Master training) for all communities.
- The city of Milwaukee tried to enlist other area communities to do a metro region hyper-spectral canopy analysis to identify ash trees. This would have saved considerable contract and administrative costs due to economy of scale compared to individual community fly-overs. Unfortunately only one community signed on to this initiative and it was a missed opportunity for all communities in the Milwaukee area to get valuable resource information. DNR could facilitate these types of partnerships in the future.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase the focus on developing broad scale partnerships and funding mechanisms to enable communities, foundations, non-profits and professional organizations to add value to urban forests. (UF-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will increase the focus on developing broad scale partnerships and funding methods to enable communities, regional planning commissions, tribes, foundations, non-profits and professional organizations to add value to urban forests. (UF-2)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

FLT decided to slightly revise the intent statement to provide better clarity and to recognize the tribes and regional planning commissions as partners in urban forestry.

Comments and Responses:

U.10 Comment: What does “funding mechanism” mean?

Response: The term was changed to “funding method”.

U.11 Comment: It may be unrealistic to assume opportunities for “building partnerships” exist.

Response: As noted in U.3 above, in the "shift of emphasis" definition, partnership development will be dependent on the needs, opportunities, and resources of the areas being served. However, FLT also recognizes that innovation is often incentive-driven and occurs in unexpected places. The program will work to provide opportunities that encourage partnerships and innovation that may be out there but untapped.

Draft Intent Statement:

Text was added to the paragraph leading into this intent statement in order to clarify that small communities will not be excluded from applying for grants.

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain the urban forestry grant program at current levels to enable the communities, primarily through metropolitan scale partnerships, to leverage local resources. (UF-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain the urban forestry grant program at current levels and encourage multi-community partnerships, to leverage local resources. (UF-3)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

The intent statement and the explanatory text preceding it were revised to capture FLT's desire to engage communities in a more efficient manner in order to reduce administration and increase outcomes.

Comments and Responses:

U.12 Comment: The Tree City USA (TCUSA) program has minimal benefits.

Response: FLT disagrees. The Tree City USA program is an efficient outreach tool to raise public official awareness of the value of urban forestry and its local support. It is a partner-based program with national visibility and established criteria. Funding and support comes from the Arbor Day Foundation, the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. TCUSA regularly generates local, regional and state media and public attention that could not be achieved without significant additional state investment. However, the administration of the program could be streamlined and the Arbor Day Foundation is currently working with the DNR to accomplish this. In addition, since TCUSA is an outreach effort, it will be evaluated as part of the Division's upcoming education and outreach assessment.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase investment to help create and support a statewide inventory and assessment of the urban forests of Wisconsin to provide best available data for program planning and prioritization of efforts. (UF-4)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

U.13 Comment: Support was expressed by reviewers for increasing investment to create a statewide inventory and assessment of Wisconsin's urban forests.

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Further clarity was provided by revising the text leading into the intent statement to reflect FLT's intent in regards to education and outreach for urban forestry is to decrease investment by program staff and the resulting importance of partnerships.

Proposed Change: The Division will decrease investment in outreach and education initiatives. The Division will focus on partnerships that can provide services and tools to local governments and organizations working in small communities and those without active urban forest management. (UF-5)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

- U.14 Comment:** It is unclear what role the Urban Forestry program will have in education and outreach.
- U.15 Response:** Investment in the current Urban Forestry program's education and outreach initiatives will be decreased. Some savings will come from our decreased role in Arbor Day activities and others will be identified as part of the work of determining how we will implement the Strategic Direction. The Urban Forestry program's education and outreach focus may change as a result of the Division's upcoming education and outreach assessment and strategic plan. The Division will work with partners to determine our best role.

UTILIZATION & MARKETING

Draft Role Statement:

The Division's role in marketing & utilization of forest products is to facilitate the ability of the private sector to use the state's wood resource in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, maximizing wood's contribution to Wisconsin's economy. The Division is proposing to increase its capacity to provide assistance to wood-producing and wood-using companies around the state and maintain its capacity to assess the condition of the state's forest resources.

Revised Role Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

UM.1 Comment: Strong support was expressed for increasing the Division's capacity to provide assistance to wood-producing and wood-using companies around the state.

Response: N/A

UM.2 Comment: The comments revealed that the word 'marketing' in this context was misinterpreted.

Response: Text was added to the Strategic Direction to help alleviate this confusion. In the context of the U&M program, marketing does not mean work that involves advertising or branding. Rather it refers to work efforts that maintain (e.g. pulp, saw timber, furniture) or develop (e.g. bioenergy, urban biomass) a market sector through data analysis and support services such as sub-state level forest inventory, identification of market opportunities, site location and business plan analysis, manufacturing process improvement, technology transfer, international trade missions and training.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase investment in utilization and marketing expertise to assist existing and new forest industries to retain markets and develop new markets. (UM-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

UM.3 Comment: Majority of respondents support an increased investment in U&M

Response: N/A

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will continue to invest in the forest inventory and analysis (FIA) at the double intensity level, ensuring its continued ability to use the information at a sub-state scale. (UM-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

UM.4 Comment: Majority of respondents support maintaining our investment in FIA.

Response: N/A

CROSS-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will maintain current investments in silviculture/forest ecology and forest hydrology. An increased investment will be made in genetics and forest economics, whereas a shift will occur in endangered resources management, reflecting the maturing of a federal Habitat Conservation Plan. (CP-1)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will maintain current investments in silviculture/forest ecology and forest hydrology. An increased investment will be made in genetics and forest economics, whereas a reduction will occur in the Karner blue butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan implementation, reflecting its maturation. (CP-1)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

FLT slightly changed the role statement to clarify that the Division will only be making a shift in regards to the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and not in endangered resource management as a whole.

Comments and Responses:

CP.1 Comment: Some reviewers expressed concern that our statement about shifting resources from endangered species raises questions about our commitment to endangered or threatened species in general.

Response: It was not FLT's intent to change our commitment to protecting and managing endangered and threatened species. As a result the intent was changed to clarify that the reduction is only in regard to the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Karner blue butterfly (see CP.2).

CP.2 Comment: Please clarify FLT's intention with regard to reduction in the Kbb Habitat Conservation Plan.

Response: We remain committed to the successful implementation of the Karner blue butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan through our support of the Kbb HCP partnership. Because that partnership has matured and the federal Incidental Take permit has been renewed for another ten years, we feel we can afford to shift some of the funding previously devoted to building this partnership to other pressing priorities.

CP.3 Comment: Why isn't climate change specifically mentioned?

Response: Climate change was part of the Statewide Forest Assessment and Strategy and many of the intent statements do recognize the need to increase the resilience and adaptability of our forests due to the effects of changing climatic

conditions. For example, contained within the increased investment in genetics is the intent to expand into testing seedlings for adaptation and gene conservation.

CP.4 Comment: What is FLT's intention with regard to the expanded role for genetics versus the previous focus on tree improvement and nurseries?

Response: The expanded role for genetics will include a continued focus on tree improvement and nurseries, but also include focus on related issues such as species range and other adaptations to changing conditions. Priorities for genetics services will be determined on a periodic basis, taking into account the full range of issues that the Division needs to address.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will modestly increase funding to support informed decision-making. The Division will continue to work with internal and external partners to assess priorities for research on ecological, economic and social aspects of forestry. (CP-2)

Revised Intent Statement:

No significant change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.5 Comment: Generally, reviewers were supportive of our increased investment in research.

Response: N/A

CP.6 Comment: There was a mixture of support for research on deer impacts to the forest.

Response: The Division will use a process that includes field and partner input to prioritize our research investment.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will significantly increase its investment in IT and GIS to support all Division programs. (CP-3)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.7 Comment: Overall, there was support for the proposed investment in IT/GIS.

Response: N/A

CP.8 Comment: Why does IT (information technology) need to be increased?

Response: Many Division IT systems mimic the business workflow that employees are currently performing. The intent is to automate, standardize and be able to more accurately plan work and report accomplishments. Currently, the Division of Forestry's IT project development portfolio contains 20+ projects addressing many programs including invasive species, forest protection, emergency management, nurseries, urban forestry, and training. These cannot be developed due to a shortage of staff and funding to develop and maintain these applications. It is very costly to hire and oversee contractors for this work, so existing resources do not go very far. It is not feasible to use commercially available products for our applications because of the complexity and specialized needs of the work involved, although existing applications are sometimes incorporated as a component of a larger application. As additional applications are developed to meet business practices and customer demands, the need for IT staff to help maintain and support these investments will continue to grow.

Draft Intent Statement:

Assess Program: Within the next two years, the Division will invest resources to assess the Division's role in outreach and education on the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests. A specific strategic direction, planned with the input of staff and partners, will guide the Division's future outreach and education work and investments. (CP-4)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.9 Comment: Generally, there was support for developing an outreach and education strategic plan. Several respondents (internal & external) expressed a strong wish to be involved and to collaborate on the resulting programming.

Response: N/A

CP.10 Comment: Why is the development of an outreach & education strategic plan a good use of resources?

Response: The Division has invested a great deal of funding and staff time in education and outreach over the years, with relatively little coordination among programs or topics. It is not always clear who the audience is, what behavior the message is intended to influence or change, and how success can be measured. The Division and our partners sometimes conduct programming that is somewhat redundant. By investing in a strategic plan for outreach and education, which will include input from Division personnel and partners, we can clearly establish our audiences, messages, and measures for these investments, which will mean a more focused use of resources over the long term.

CP.11 Comment: Why wasn't the development of an outreach & education strategic plan included in work that went into this Strategic Direction? And why will it take two years to complete?

Response: The need for an outreach & education strategic plan was identified during the development of the Strategic Direction. Because outreach and education crosses all programs and many diverse partners, it could not be undertaken while the Strategic Direction was being completed. With so many programs and partners wanting to be involved in this planning process, we estimate it will take 1-2 years to complete.

CP.12 Comment: Will the outreach & education strategic plan address the role of field staff and partners such as basin educators?

Response: Yes

CP.13 Comment: Will staff and partners be involved in the development of the outreach & education strategic plan?

Response: Yes

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will continue our commitment to hiring quality employees, ensuring we have a trained and professional workforce, and supporting leadership development and succession planning. (CP-5)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.14 Comment: Generally, there was support for the Division's continued commitment to employees.

Response: N/A

CP.15 Comment: Please clarify what is meant by "trained workforce".

Response: A "trained workforce" includes continuing education and professional development for all our employees, current and newly hired.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division will increase investment in policy analysis to address the acceleration of forestry issues that have a significant impact across program areas and at both the state and federal level. (CP-6)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division remains committed to its investment in third-party certification of state lands, county forests and the Managed Forest Law. (CP-7)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.16 Comment: Several reviewers called for the Division to add a certification program that would include non-MFL private lands.

Response: The Division is exploring opportunities to increase the amount of certified wood available to the marketplace by possibly partnering with industry in reaching out to non-MFL subscribed landowners. Current efforts include initial efforts to gauge landowner interest and development of promotional material for certification programs.

CP.17 Comment: Certification is not a good use of resources.

Response: FLT remains committed to certification based on input from industry and the Council on Forestry that certification is vitally important. We cannot afford to ignore how crucial certified raw materials are to our forestry-based businesses. At a time when many sectors of the industry have suffered flat or falling demand due to global supply changes, the call for certified products from our forests is experiencing steady upward growth. Forecasted demand for these products is expected to increase even more in the future.

The support the state has provided in the certification of public and private lands has been instrumental in maintaining the competitiveness of important parts of Wisconsin's forest industry. Wisconsin's paper industry's primary customer is the printing industry which demands high levels of certified content in their paper. Without the state's effort in encouraging and certifying forestlands it is likely we would have seen the closure of three large pulp mills as the printing companies would have sourced their raw material from other mills that are certified. These pressures are expected to continue for the paper and printing industries.

The certified supply of products also aids sawmills. Most of the major sawmills in Wisconsin are certified. A significant number of window, door, furniture and other value added wood product manufacturers in Wisconsin are also certified and as a result demand certified wood. This has provided the opportunity for these certified companies to garner market share in a very competitive market, keeping jobs in Wisconsin and helping manage our forests. The Forest Stewardship Council lists 237 certificate holders in Wisconsin.

All indications are that the demand for certified products will continue. Two indications of this are:

- In April 2011, the Walt Disney Company recently released their 2010 Corporate Citizenship report, which outlines the company's product footprint

policy, including requirements for 100 percent paper sourcing from sustainable sources. Paper must contain recycled content, be sourced from certified forests, or be of known source origin.

- Also in April 2011, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) has announced a set of sustainability goals for the forest products industry, dubbed "Better Practices, Better Planet 2020." The program lays out a number of goals to reach by 2020, including increasing the amount of fiber procured from certified forest lands.

Draft Intent Statement:

Proposed Change: The Division proposes to invest in energy audits of our facilities, following which facilities will be prioritized for project implementation. (CP-8)

Revised Intent Statement:

Program Change: The Division will invest in energy audits of our facilities and pursue energy efficiency in the design of new facilities. (CP-8)

Reason for Change of Intent Statement:

Based on comments, FLT changed the statement to clarify that their intent was also to pursue energy efficient design on new as well as existing facilities.

Comments and Responses:

CP.18 Comment: There was overall support for investing in energy audits and pursuing energy efficient facility designs.

Response: N/A

CP.19 Comment: Several reviewers suggested that we include: energy-efficient vehicles, discouraging staff from driving more than they need to "keep mileage up to keep the vehicle," and an assessment of our inventory of buildings with the aim to consolidate operations.

Response: These suggestions will be considered when developing the implementation plan for the Strategic Direction.

Draft Intent Statement:

Maintain Program: The Division will maintain our current level of assistance to other DNR programs and continue to work on collaborative projects. (CP-9)

Revised Intent Statement:

No change.

Comments and Responses:

CP.20 Comment: There was overall support for maintaining our level of assistance to other DNR programs and work on collaborative projects.

Response: N/A

OTHER REVISIONS

Since the document has changed from a draft to a final version, some text was no longer appropriate and was deleted. An example is the text that explained how a person or organization could comment on the draft. Also, in refining the document some text was revised to improve readability and/or moved to a more appropriate location. This type of change occurs throughout the document, but does not change the overall content of the Strategic Direction.