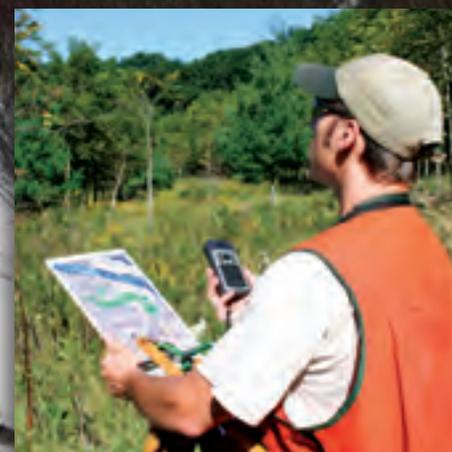


*Wisconsin forests –  
and the Division  
of Forestry –  
hard at work for you.*



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Division of Forestry

2014 | ANNUAL REPORT





# Working in Partnership

## Wisconsin forests – and the Division of Forestry – hard at work for you

The Division of Forestry works 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.

This describes not only the purpose of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry, but also our passion in caring for one of Wisconsin's greatest natural assets. In many ways, forests are the future of Wisconsin — supporting jobs, welcoming visitors and contributing to our quality of life — and are part of the environment, economy and social fabric of our state.

Together, Wisconsin's public and private lands generate forest products valued at \$22.9 billion each year and support more than 59,000 jobs — all while Wisconsin's forests continue to add a net 185 million cubic feet of saw timber annually (enough to frame about 139,000 homes). Wisconsin's forest products

industry strengthens our communities from the ground up, and the jobs it creates branch out beyond traditional logging, trucking and mill operations to manufacturing, forest products research, energy, consulting and tourism industries.

Along with our many partners, the Division of Forestry is proud to champion sustainable forest management practices. This is reflected in this year's report which shows that in 2014 we, working with others, accomplished much in service to the people of Wisconsin. In fact, we saw record high revenues from state land timber sales, an all-time high level of enrollment in the Managed Forest Law, and an historic low level of wildfires. These and several other accomplishments from 2014 are included in the following pages. Thank you for your interest in Wisconsin forestry.

Paul DeLong,  
Chief State Forester



# Our partners and customers speak

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) - Division of Forestry surveyed our key partners in 2014 to gather input on how they feel the division is doing. The survey was part of an ongoing effort to build stronger ties with our partners and support a dialogue that focuses on how we can improve our services in support of forestry in Wisconsin. More than 65 partners were surveyed and nearly 40% responded. The vast majority was satisfied with their level of access to the division's leadership team; the clarity of information they receive from the division; and the opportunities provided to them to participate in policy development. A large majority were satisfied with the overall direction the Division of Forestry is heading.

Although positive overall, we did receive some valuable feedback on areas in need of improvement. We asked what the Division of Forestry can improve upon and heard

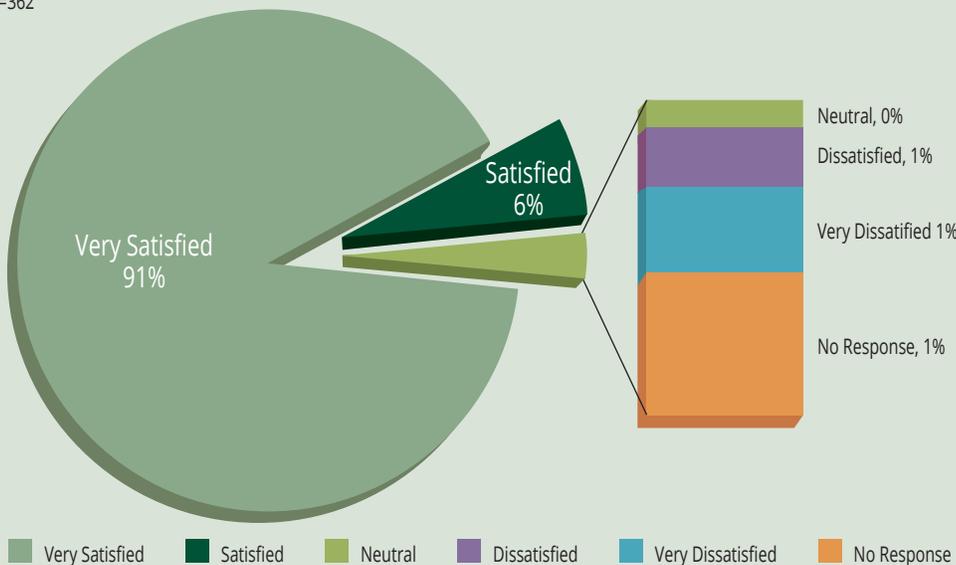
that we need to continue to listen to and interact with our partners; build and maintain good working partnerships through effective communication and dialogue; hold staff accountable; and improve consistency in program implementation. We also received feedback about specific programs. These are all issues we will continue to work on in 2015 and beyond.

The Division also wants to know how the people we serve, whether it is a landowner needing forest management advice or a city forester asking how to develop a plan to minimize impacts of emerald ash borer, feel about the customer service we provide. To help facilitate this feedback, beginning July 2014 all e-mail our staff send had a link to a survey customers can evaluate the service that staff person provided. The results were amazing!



Overall, how satisfied were you with the customer service you received from the DNR staff member?

N=362





# Caring for Wisconsin Forests

## Division assists forest industry

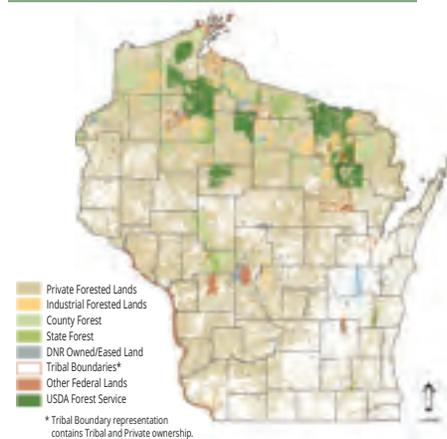
Wisconsin's forest products industry employs nearly 59,600 people and generates an annual output worth \$22.9 billion. This represents 2.4% of the state's GDP. The forest industry is one of the state's top industries by output and value added activities.

In response to a need for more specialized utilization and marketing assistance for the forest industry, local communities, and partners, the Division of Forestry added a statewide and three district specialists to a newly formed Forest Products Services Team. Additionally, the Division of Forestry hired a forest economist. Program staff assists with manufacturing process improvement studies, analysis of forest resources, supply and demand characteristics, market trends, and other opportunities. Team members can also assist with training on log and lumber grading, workplace safety and marketing plans.

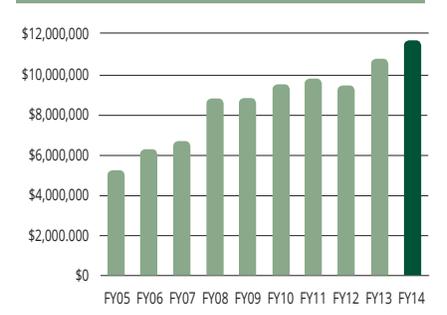
## Record timber sales on state lands

Timber sales from state lands totaled more than \$11.7 million during fiscal year 2014, up nearly 9 percent from the \$10.8 million during fiscal 2013 and up 126 percent from the levels of a decade ago. The record numbers highlight the value of the timber that can be sustainably harvested from state lands while also indicating the need for continued forest management to maintain healthy and diverse

## FORESTLAND OWNERSHIP



## VALUE OF COMPLETED TIMBER SALES



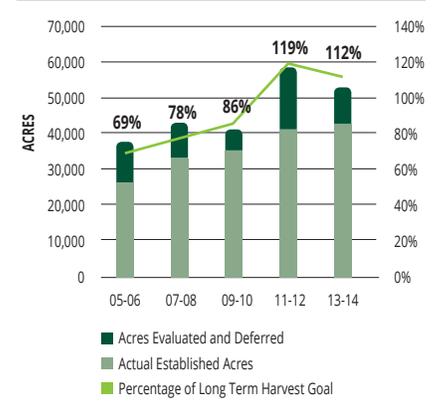
wildlife populations, protect key watersheds and provide opportunities for public recreation.

We achieved **112% of our long term harvest evaluation goal!** This result, which includes our work in 2013 and 2014, reflects, in part, the fact that the department has been working hard to reduce a backlog of timber sales needed to implement objectives outlined in master plans for state properties. Backlogged stands scheduled for timber sale evaluation have been reduced by 47% to 34,500 acres, as compared to 65,000 acres in 2013,

and 107,000 acres in 2011.

Despite a reduction of acres evaluated, during 2013-14, we had an **all-time high in the acres of actual timber sale establishment on state lands!** The increased harvest activity is due to an emphasis on reaching the long term allowable harvest levels and also a focused evaluation of the stands that had backlogged timber harvests. Addressing the backlogged stands resulted in additional timber harvest establishment.

## DNR STATE LAND TIMBER HARVESTS



## TIMBER SALE BACKLOG ON STATE LANDS

	YEAR	ACRES
Significant reduction in timber sale backlog due to updated inventory, plans and increasing timber sales.	2007	170,000
	2009	118,800
	2011	107,000
	2013	65,200
	2014	47,300

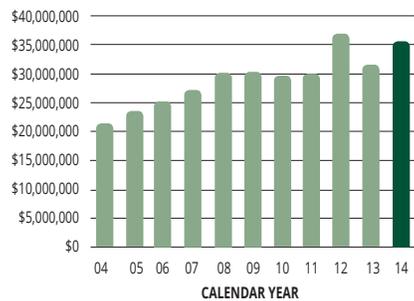
State lands are managed according to long-term plans that balance current environmental, social and economic benefits while ensuring opportunities for future generations. The plans are based on scientific best practices and integrate input from wildlife experts, ecologists, water quality specialists and recreational interests, as well as the general public and forestry stakeholders.

## County Forests

DNR foresters provide assistance to supplement and support the

work undertaken by county forest personnel and that assistance contributes significantly to the numerous accomplishments of each county forest and the county forest program as a whole. In 2014, the revenue produced from completed timber sales on county forests was the second highest (\$35,680,651) in the history of the program.

### COUNTY FORESTS: VALUE OF TIMBER SALES COMPLETED

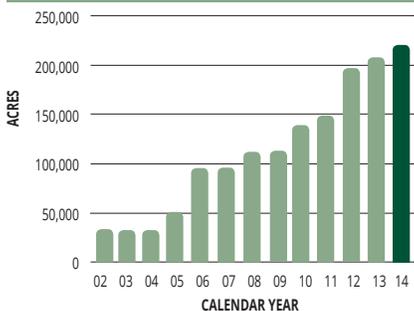


### Protecting Working Forests

In 2014, DNR purchased a working forest easement on 13,692 acres in Iron County called "Twin Lakes." Wisconsin now has over 224,000 acres of forest under working easements which helps protect and preserve the integrity of the northern forestlands in perpetuity, prevent forest fragmentation and promote the sustainable use of the northern forests.

For the first time in the history of DNR purchasing a conservation easement, the process included the creation of an access road fund endowment which was established to care and pay for the management (i.e. maintenance and damage repair) of private roads on which the public is granted access for recreational purposes. The 'road' fund will help ensure the roads do not

### FOREST LEGACY EASEMENTS

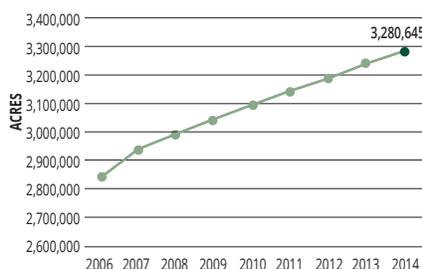


degrade, which has been a challenge on easements purchased in the past, and remain in a condition that allows for continued forest management activities.

### Privately Owned Forest Land and the Managed Forest Law (MFL)

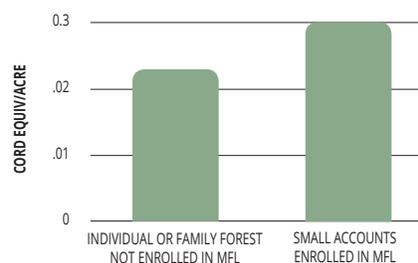
This year enrollment in MFL reached another all-time high! Over 430,000 acres have been added to the program since 2006.

### GROWTH OF ACRES ENROLLED IN MFL



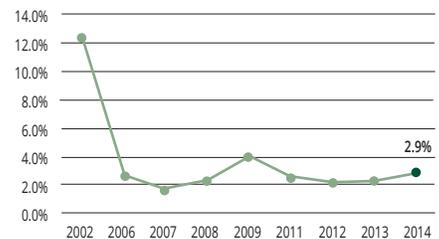
The continued growth of MFL, as seen in 2014, is important since private lands enrolled in MFL as small accounts yielded approximately 33% more wood harvested per acre than those individually or family owned lands NOT enrolled in MFL.

### AVERAGE HARVESTS IN CORD EQUIV/ACRE



The Division ensures that there is a predictable and steady supply of wood from forest lands enrolled in MFL by monitoring whether or not landowners have completed the management practices mandated by their forest management plan. In 2014, the Division was able to keep the amount of small account MFL and Forest Crop Law with back-log mandatory practices to less than three percent of the total acres of mandatory practices.

### % OF SMALL ACCOUNT MFL AND FCL ACRES WITH BACKLOG PRACTICES



### Urban Forests

WDNR urban foresters and their sports team partners took the successful Green Bay Packers' "First Downs for Trees" and Milwaukee Brewers' "Root, Root, Root for the Brewers" tree planting partnerships a step further and created a Team Strategy Playbook providing play-by-play instructions for urban foresters



to win the support of their local sports teams. WDNR added new counties to its partnership with the University of Wisconsin - Extension providing arboricultural training to communities and industry, and provided statewide advanced Master Gardener training, creating a cadre of over 250 urban forestry volunteers.

### New urban wood utilization efforts

Every year, thousands of urban trees are removed from community streets, backyards, and parks due to the effects of age, storms, disease or invasive insects. The Wisconsin DNR-Division of Forestry is committed to help increase the value of this growing resource. The Division's Forest Products Services and Urban Forestry teams are working together to educate municipalities and companies about better utilization strategies.

Division of Forestry representatives serve on the advisory board for the Wisconsin Urban Wood (WUW), an industry-led group that is cooperatively marketing and developing strategies for urban-sourced wood products.





# Protecting Wisconsin People and Forests

## Fight against emerald ash borer continues

In 2014, emerald ash borer (EAB) was found in nine new counties: Adams, Buffalo, Calumet, Colombia, Door, Grant, Monroe, Oneida, and Sheboygan. Infestations have now been found in 29 counties, with additional counties quarantined due to surrounding or border infestations (See below). DNR staff work with private landowners, communities and public land managers to minimize the impacts of EAB.

COUNTIES QUARANTINED FOR EAB AS OF NOVEMBER 2014



■ Quarantined County

The combined \$616, 846 state + \$926,740 local resulted in more than **\$1.5 million** in critical spending on emerald ash borer response, management planning, tree planting, education and outreach.

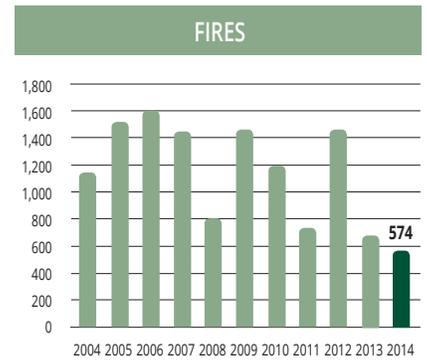
## Catastrophic Events

In June Governor Walker declared a state of emergency in Dane, Grant and Green Counties. This enabled the Division to rapidly deploy **\$105,000** in Urban Forestry Catastrophic Storm grant funds to 6 communities for recovery efforts.

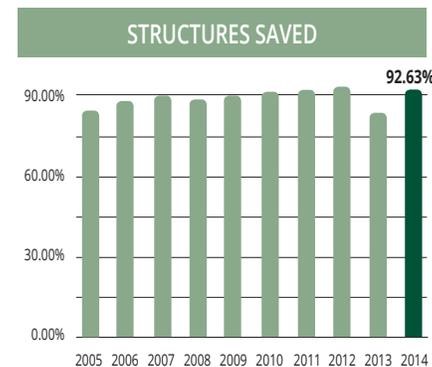
There are 574 cities, villages, and towns in Wisconsin identified as a community-at-risk or a community-of-concern for the possibility of large scale loss due to wildfire. The Division sponsors programs to help communities address the hazards of forest fires. In 2014, through Firewise Communities and Community Wildfire Protection Plans, the Division continued to help homeowners and municipalities develop fire risk reduction strategies. Now there are strategies to reduce risk to wildfire in place on over 1.6 million acres.

## Fire Suppression in 2014

In 2014 we experienced a near historic low number of wild fires detected and suppressed. The low number of fires can be attributed to a wet spring, timely summer rains and strong prevention messages.

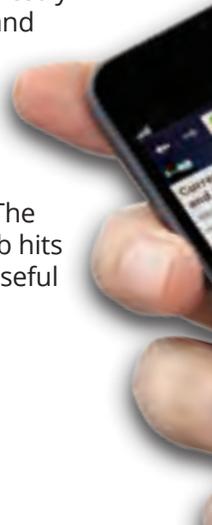


Our goal is to save 90 percent of the threatened structures and in 2014 we achieved our goal! In 4 of the past 5 years we have achieved this goal. Our partnership with local fire departments is an important element in achieving this goal. To help accomplish this, in 2013-14 we awarded \$564,123 in 222 grants to local fire departments to enhance their capacity to suppress wildland fires.



## Burning permits help reduce wildland fires

In 2014, the Division of Forestry introduced a more user- and mobile-friendly page on the WDNR Website for customers wanting to obtain daily burn permit restrictions and current fire danger information. The nearly 600,000 annual web hits shows how popular and useful the new page is!



## Lessons learned from 2013 fires

In 2014, teams reviewed the Germann Road Fire — which occurred on May 14, 2013 and grew to 7,442 acres — and the 656-acre Cranberry Fire which originated from a prescribed burn on Crex Meadows Wildlife Area. The reviews included examination of wildland firefighting, structural protection, organization, safety, communications, air operations, law enforcement and actions leading up to and during the prescribed fire. The report for the Germann Road detailed 80 instances of successful tactics and outcomes and 94 “lessons learned.” The Cranberry Fire report established 13 instances of commendable decisions and actions taken and 23 “lessons learned” and recommendations.

## Reducing fire danger in high-risk areas

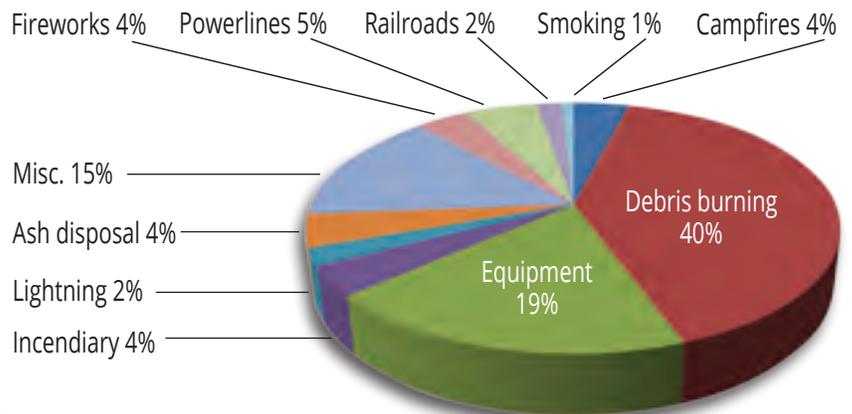
A very serious problem for fire control officials exists where human development meets wildland vegetation (areas known as the wildland urban interface). To help address this problem, the Division of Forestry created Wildland Urban Interface Specialist positions that focus on partnerships with homeowner associations, town boards, and fire departments to encourage community-wide solutions to local wildfire problems. Federal grants are used to support projects such as Community Wildfire Protection Plans, curbside chipping days, fuelbreak creation, radio and TV spots, fire danger signs, and post-fire research.



Ash trees killed by emerald ash borer near Newburg, WI.



2014 DNR PROTECTION FIRE CAUSES





Located in eastern Douglas County in northwestern Wisconsin, the 47,000-acre **Brule River State Forest** (pictured on both the front and back covers of this report) offers exceptional recreational opportunities with a 16-mile stretch of the North Country National Scenic Trail that extends from North Dakota to Vermont, eight miles of frontage on Lake Superior and all 44 miles of the Bois Brule River. The river is a premier trout fishery and attracts anglers from across the state, nation and around the world. The upper and lower stretches of the river combine to offer canoeing and kayaking opportunities ranging from Class I to Class III (high water).

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