

Outcome Based Forestry Concept

Outcome based forestry (OBF) is a forest management concept the Division of Forestry (DOF) is exploring for landowners enrolled in the tax law program with large account status. It would allow timberland owners more flexibility and creativity in achieving their management goals while conserving the public resources and values of Wisconsin's forests.

This option is intended to be a long-term approach to ensure the sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests. The DNR Division of Forestry is in the process of exploring outcome-based forestry processes and procedures, enabling a corresponding reduction in the number of step-by-step approvals. This approach might help facilitate, promote, stimulate and reward innovative ways to achieve a well-managed forest, yet still provide protection for critical public resources as guided by Chapter 77, NR 46 and DOF's Forest Tax Handbook.

Principles of an OBF system are;

- Assure that all practices will include but are not limited to forest management planning, productivity, protection and maintenance of water resources, biological diversity, visual and recreational benefits, protection of special sites and efficient use of forest resources.
- Through forest management, maintain a well-managed forest while reducing forest's susceptibility to disease, insect infestations and damage caused by fire, wind or other events.
- Ensure reforestation success, growth rates, and/or timber quality on site specific areas and on a landscape basis, using a variety of forest management techniques.
- Recognize that maintenance of third-party verified forest management certification by the participating landowner will be evidence that the participant has satisfied conditions of this section. Any conflicts between certification standards and Managed Forest Land (MFL)/Forest Crop land (FCL) program requirements will be governed by MFL/FCL requirements.

We are proposing instituting a pilot program to assess OBF. The pilot will allow 1-2 qualifying landowners to develop and implement an OBF program to sunset on December 31, 2016.

The department is now soliciting comments from the public on this concept of this proposed pilot program. Once the 21 day notice period is complete, all comments will be considered, revisions will be made to the documents as needed, and final guidance will be made available to internal and external stakeholders. Questions and Comments related to this draft pilot program concept should be sent to Public and Private Forestry Section Chief – James K. Warren at: jamesk.warren@wisconsin.gov

Program Elements

- This program will be available on a trial basis for a period ending December 31, 2016
- An evaluation will be conducted at the end of the trial period
- DOF will consider up to two tax law large account landowners for the trial period
- Enrollment will be limited to those lands with Aspen and Red Pine Cover types
- Interested landowners will submit an application for consideration (details below)
- Applications will be reviewed and considered by the Council on Forestry (COF). The COF will make a recommendation to the State Forester regarding which applicants should be considered for participation in the pilot.
- Notification of harvesting activity will still occur through the cutting notice and report form procedures.
- The Division will institute an auditing/monitoring program with regular surveillance audits to determine if the participant continues to meet the standards of the MFL/FCL program.
- In the event that the two parties disagree on a particular provision of an OBF agreement or the policy and procedures of MFL/FCL, the disagreement shall utilize the normal MFL administrative channels except that any disagreement related to silvicultural practices will be referred to the Silviculture Guidance Team to hear the matter and make a recommendation to the State Forester.

Program Eligibility

- Lands enrolled in Managed Forest Land (MFL) or Forest Crop land (FCL) program.
- Maintain large account status per NR46.
- An acceptable inventory system that guides on-the-ground decision making.
- Hold a current certificate of 3rd party forest management certification through SFI, Tree Farm and/or FSC.
- Resource management shall be consistent with practicing sound forestry and be guided by a Department approved management plan.

Application Elements (form to be developed and provided)

- A. Landowner Name
- B. Location of lands and associated cover types
- C. Verification of nationally recognized 3rd party forest management certification
- D. Description of foresters on staff or access to professional assistance
- E. Description or attachment of management plan that describes how the participant will manage the requested cover type (Red Pine and/or Aspen), the desired outcomes and how their systems or processes meet sustainable forestry as defined in Wisconsin
- F. Description and evidence of the participant's inventory system that will guide the decision process for field staff and verification by auditors.
- G. Participant monitoring and/or internal auditing plan and procedures