

Division of Forestry
Education and Outreach Strategic Plan:
Assessment Phase Report



March, 2013

The information presented in this report follows from the data gathering and analysis activities of the project's Assessment Team. The project was managed and facilitated by Colleen Robinson Klug. Project direction was provided by the Guidance Team. Data summaries were compiled by Kim Peterson of DNR Science Services.

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Goals of the assessment process

This assessment is the first of two phases in the development of a strategic plan to guide the Division of Forestry’s education and outreach (E&O) efforts over the next five years. The completed Education and Outreach Strategic Plan helps implement the Division’s Strategic Direction.

The assessment phase began in June 2012 with the goal of gathering information to understand:

1. The Division’s current E&O efforts, resources and use of those resources
2. The quality and results of those efforts now, informally measured by feedback from staff and partners and current information.
3. What is missing in terms of resources, what the Division is doing, or the desired results related to education and outreach?
4. What improvements can be made for the future?
5. The current state of our partnerships.
6. How the Division’s niche and roles can be best matched with those of partners in future planning so E&O work is collaborative, not duplicated.

An Assessment Team (A-team) was assembled to accomplish these goals and provide deliverables. This team included staff members familiar with E&O activities in each of the Division’s programs as follows:

Program	A-team Member Representative
Forest Health	Colleen Robinson Klug
Forest Product Services	Steve Hubbard
Forest Protection	Catherine Koele and Jolene Ackerman
Nurseries	Pat Murphy
Private Forestry	Carol Nielsen and Mary Ann Buenzow
State Lands	Melissa Baker
Urban Forestry	Laura Wyatt
Division-level E&O	Kirsten Held

The Division of Forestry Education and Outreach (E&O) Assessment included four sequential steps: (1) Task list construction and analysis, (2) E&O partner evaluations, (3) Assessment team (A-team) interviews, and (4) Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This process

was conducted in a thorough and highly collaborative manner, and sought to build a shared understanding among A-team members of *all* of Forestry's E&O efforts, as well as enhance the efficiency of future planning steps. Brief summaries of these steps follow.

Task (activity) spreadsheets

An inventory was needed to better understand the Division's current E&O efforts, resources and use of those resources. A-team members listed the main E&O tasks (i.e., activities) that are accomplished in their respective programs. This helped them investigate, document, and understand the current E&O components of the program, as well as technical transfer and assistance. They produced spreadsheets with the following information: **Work Tasks** (the element for which all other features were then described), **Tools** (how is the work task accomplished), **Frequency** (how often does the program engage in the task), **Staff Time Spent** on the task per year (central vs. district), **Timing** for recurring tasks (seasonal or year-round), **Resources** needed to accomplish the task, **Partners** (with whom do you work on the task), **Audience** (for whom is the task undertaken), and **Evaluation** (list and describe any formal or informal evaluation done). A-team members completed these spreadsheets based on their own knowledge, plus information and assistance they received from other staff members in the programs.

Partner evaluations

Partners who have worked closely with the Division on E&O over the last several years were asked to contribute their insights. Six questions were crafted and partners were solicited via personal telephone calls made by A-team members. The 38 partners who agreed to participate were sent the six-question evaluation form via email. They were encouraged to provide a complete and candid assessment regarding their E&O work with the Division of Forestry in general, not just for a specific or recently contacted program. The forms were then returned and reviewed by A-team members, and were also shared with the project's Guidance Team. A summary analysis report was also produced (see Appendix A).

A-team interviews

The task spreadsheets helped us accomplish the assessment phase goal of understanding what E&O work is done in the Division. A-team interviews helped us to understand how these tasks are conducted and how well they work. Thirty interview questions were developed and each A-team member chose 12 to 15 questions to address during their interview with a social scientist from the Bureau of Science Services. Each interview lasted from 2.0 to 2.75 hours and was recorded and transcribed. Copies of each transcript were then shared with A-team members, and an analysis report was produced (see Appendix B).

SWOT analysis

Given the knowledge gained in these first three steps, the Assessment Team identified E&O strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Forestry program areas and at the Division level. Strengths were identified as internal characteristics that give the program an advantage. Weaknesses were identified as internal characteristics that place the program at a disadvantage. Opportunities were identified as external chances to improve performance. Threats were identified as external elements that could cause trouble for the program.

Each A-team member conducted a SWOT analysis specific to the program they represented. Team members used information from their previously created task list, interview transcript, partner surveys, and any other available information from past surveys or program evaluations. Team members were also encouraged to engage other Forestry staff in this process when possible, and to focus on a few people who could provide insight that team members might not have. A variety of approaches were taken to get this input, including SWOT exercises with field staff, staff meetings, and one-on-one conversations.

Assessment major conclusions

Following the completion of these assessment steps, each A-team member was directed to consider the key questions the assessment phase was charged with answering per this project's scoping document and produce a list of major conclusions for the program they represented. The scoping document questions included the following:

1. What E&O activities do we currently engage in?
2. What resources do we currently have?
3. How do we use these resources?
4. What is the quality of our work now, as measured by partner and staff feedback regarding outcomes, efficiency, and other broad aspects?
5. What are the results of our work now, as measured by partner and staff feedback regarding outcomes, efficiency and other broad aspects?
6. What is the current state of our partnerships?
7. What's missing in terms of the E&O work we do?
8. What's missing in terms of desired results?

The conclusions cited as most important by A-team members follow in outline format. They are organized by Forestry program and for Division-level E&O as well. Lettered statements represent major conclusions; numbered statements represent assessment findings that support the major conclusion.

Division-level findings and conclusions.

A. The Division can learn from and build on past successes.

1) Hallmarks of past Division-level successes include working in partnerships with other organizations, reaching new audiences, and outcomes that have longevity. The Year of Wisconsin Forestry is a good example as it was a partnership effort, several of the projects reached new audiences and the 4th-grade historical fiction book produced as part of the celebration is still being requested by teachers and used in classrooms to teach Wisconsin history. The Forest Exploration Center holds similar potential and, if done well, could become a national role model for forestry education and outreach.

2) Such successes demand a high level of staff time for “care and feeding.”

B. The Division can utilize key strengths and opportunities to create an effective public awareness program.

1) Sustainable forestry offers a rich source of content for communication, education and outreach efforts.

2) DNR is perceived by some as an unbiased source of information and the Division of Forestry is generally seen as providing assistance rather than wearing a regulatory hat (phone survey in 2000 revealed this perception).

3) The large workforce offers opportunities to build local support, when trained and utilized effectively for E&O.

C. The Division should address barriers to maximum effectiveness in the communication, education and outreach arena.

- 1) *A lack of statewide consistency is noted in messages, supervisory support and accountability for communication, education and outreach work. A coordinated statewide effort can still offer flexibility to localize the messages and address site-specific concerns. Providing tools for field use can help increase message consistency and quality control as well as save staff time.*
- 2) *Limited communication planning (the five-step communication plan development and/or a “plan-do-check-act” system) has hindered continuous quality improvement of the Division’s E/O efforts.*
- 3) *A lack of protocols and management systems means that communication, education and outreach efforts don’t function as smoothly as possible. Examples where improved systems could help: exhibit management, publication management, graphics management, special events (guidelines, toolkits and idea-sharing) and social media.*
- 4) *Improved cross-program collaboration could facilitate sharing of multiple program messages and/or a Division-level message along with a specific program message.*
- 5) *Division employees are predominantly comfortable presenting data-heavy content and may miss the human side of the story. Making better use of visual tools (photos, stream video via Mediasite and YouTube) can help us better connect audiences with the “heart” of our messages.*

D. The Division can more fully utilize existing E/O tools.

- 1) *Events offer unique opportunities. Arbor Day, National Forest Products Week and other designations offer “hooks” to capture interest and engage audiences. Events like Farm Technology Days and the Milwaukee Woodworking Show have offered us the opportunity to target a specific demographic with a particular message, while the Wisconsin State Fair has offered the Division an unparalleled opportunity to connect with a large segment of Wisconsin’s urban population.*
- 2) *Technology has grown to be an essential tool for the Division’s communication, education and outreach work, with the Internet and*

Intranet becoming increasingly important. Areas for future improvement include more use of social media tools and better use of technological tools for crisis communication. The Division had an initial success in developing a forestry outreach app.

- 3) *Employees are both the message and the messenger. The work done throughout the Division forms the basis of the stories we share in our newsletters, via news releases and Twitter, and in briefings to the Secretary who, in turn, shares them with audiences around the state. However, we are unable to fully utilize these outreach avenues since we don't have an effective mechanism in place to gather the stories about our employees and their good work.*

E. Partnerships for education and outreach need to be nurtured.

- 1) *The Division funds education work that is delivered via partners – Natural Resource Educators, LEAF and Project Learning Tree. It is important to ensure that their messages stay focused on sustainable forestry and their annual work plans reflect Division E/O priorities. Transparency and communication in the program planning, delivery and evaluation are key to maintaining staff confidence in their work.*
- 2) *We are currently lacking effective outreach partnerships at the Division level, although in the past we have had successful partnership projects with other agencies and forestry organizations in Wisconsin. The Division has a network of liaisons to partner groups that could be tapped to improve broad outreach efforts.*

F. The Division should target priority audiences and reach out to new groups.

- 1) *Although we lack the financial resources to conduct large-scale statewide media campaigns, we can focus education and outreach efforts on specific groups (members of a particular organization; demographic targets identified in public opinion research; or others).*

- 2) *To avoid “preaching to the choir,” the Division should pursue new audiences. Successful past examples include two projects that drew in artist communities – a wood furniture exhibit and the “Forest Art” exhibit.*
- 3) *Listening to our publics is a critical component of shaping effective outreach efforts. We’ve done this in the past via public opinion research, liaisons to interest groups, and monitoring news coverage.*

Forest health program findings and conclusions.

- A. **The forest health program lacks the full E&O resources needed to coordinate E&O efforts across the program, capitalize on and multiply successes.**
 - 1) *FTE field staffing is spread very thin.*
 - 2) *Staff roles often shift, making them more difficult to define.*
 - 3) *There’s no FTE E&O staff to take a broader view and develop and coordinate all efforts. Specific E&O duties take up most of E&O LTE time.*
 - 4) *Program coordination is weak. Lots of E&O is being done, but not strongly coordinated between the plants group and pest group, central and district, though huge improvements have been made and continue slowly.*
 - 5) *Many non-E&O trained staff do E&O work of varying quality, consistency, effectiveness.*
 - 6) *E&O is sprinkled in with technical work – this muddies the water of roles without clear direction or coordination.*
 - 7) *Staff members don’t always know or follow protocols for E&O.*
 - 8) *Resources are missing for collaboration (time), design expertise (skills), evaluation (time & money), building/nurturing more partnerships (time).*
- B. **The program has developed many strong and effective messages that are also important to audiences. More work is currently being done to improve messaging.**

- 1) *Many program topics are critical, urgent, important or attention-getting, such as emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, worms and some noxious weeds.*
- 2) *Positive, normative, results-oriented messages are used and need to be expanded. Research suggests such messages are more effective in influencing desired behavior change (instead of “don’t move firewood” message about what we WANT people to do: “protect the places you live, work and play - get firewood where you burn it”).*
- 3) *Challenges exist with regard to complex regulation and messaging on some topics such as firewood, pest quarantines and plant restrictions.*

C. Program E&O planning is not always deliberate or complete.

- 1) *We lack strong audience consideration in some E&O efforts, which likely reduces effectiveness.*
- 2) *We don’t know how well we are reaching some audiences because we don’t have time or money to evaluate or follow up consistently.*
- 3) *More consistent, structured approach to goals, audiences, activities and partner selection would help increase the ability to evaluate.*

D. Program is strong in use of E&O tools, but needs resources to expand this further.

- 1) *There’s excellent use of web for high-profile, high impact threats.*
- 2) *GovDelivery and Twitter are used as effective outreach tools and also as a way to streamline work with our DATCP partner during spray season and to significantly reduce workload.*
- 3) *Information lines and call center use provides timely customer service while reducing workload by 80% with regard to gypsy moth calls. Also helps us track public interest and complaints by frequency and geography so we can know when and where topics are hot.*
- 4) *There’s successful use of evaluation regarding EAB and firewood E&O efforts to leverage partnerships.*

- 5) *E&O is used as a management tool. It is viewed as a management step.*
- 6) *Currently planning for increased use of social media tools.*
- 7) *Plant mapping tools would benefit E&O about invasive plants.*

E. Forest health has very strong partnerships that serve effective and efficient work.

- 1) *Partnerships are seen as a critical E&O tool so time is devoted to developing them just as other tools. We partner in nearly every task we do.*
- 2) *Program partnerships are often born out of the need to deal with an urgent threat to forests, such as emerald ash borer, oak wilt or a new plant invader.*
- 3) *The program does well with finding partners such as the invasive species program who are committed to a similar, longer term vision.*
- 4) *The program has many successes related to determining what a partner's best role is, what our best role is, and sharing duties that speak to our strengths as we work together (i.e., DATCP regulatory and DNR science work together to educate. DNR information used by private campground or retail businesses to reach a wider audience).*
- 5) *Involves partners early, thinking about how they can enhance our efforts as they are developed. This creates opportunity to build things together, which is more effective than selling partners on your idea after it is created.*
- 6) *The program would benefit from more time/resources to develop and coordinate successful partnerships to multiply successes.*
- 7) *Opportunities exist to leverage more with partnerships, especially internally and with the business sector.*

F. A large portion of forest health staff time is used to develop and update tools that customers can learn from on their own to reduce workload (website, information lines, GovDelivery) and for presentations and other face-to-face time.

- 1) Invasive plant presentations and booths at events are frequent, reaching many people with little investment (we re-use displays and reach lots of people per staff person working).*
 - 2) Forest pest and disease presentations are common as well, to both public and professional audiences, as ways to train them to take on work.*
 - 3) All staff work with media outlets and contribute to online content to some degree. Efforts are being made to send content more through OC/E&O staff so messages are consistent. Local connections are helpful but everyone needs to be telling part of a bigger story.*
 - 4) Print materials are important to this program and its audiences. Most print materials are 'timeless', so fewer updates are needed, reducing workload.*
- G. The program has successfully evaluated E&O efforts related to firewood, emerald ash borer and gypsy moth.**
- 1) Goals, audience and tools were measured for effectiveness. Now future E&O and other management efforts are being guided by those evaluations.*
 - 2) Proper evaluations, including baseline measures, not only improve E&O effectiveness, but have provided critical information about audience perceptions and behavior. With that knowledge we can work with partners to enhance or shift perceptions and improve service depending on what is needed (i.e., firewood movement/quality connection).*
 - 3) More time and resources devoted to evaluation could strengthen effectiveness of E&O related to other forest health issues in a similar way.*

Fire prevention program findings and conclusions.

- A. The fire prevention program assesses and strategizes education and outreach for statewide impact (targeted in high hazard areas). Secured funding has allowed for many opportunities to succeed.**

- 1) *Fire Program Assessment (FPA) identifies high fire risk areas by landscape which assists in more targeted fire prevention efforts.*
- 2) *Hazard mitigation funds in recent years has allowed for many fire prevention and education projects to occur.*
- 3) *To support E&O efforts, a concise self-study fire prevention and WUI web-based training series for new hires available. A student task book, evaluation, and certification compliment this training.*
- 4) *Prevention and WUI strategy includes having dedicated staff in place in high fire risk areas and there is support for regional positions from FPA and SD.*
- 5) *Each year, the program analyzes fire occurrence, causes, acres burned, etc. and is used to support targeted prevention efforts.*
- 6) *The fire program has defined goals, objectives, & program communication plans exist. Communication plans occur roughly every two years.*
- 7) *Although resources support many opportunities for E&O they are not sufficient for face to face contact with the public so there is a steady movement away from this type of contact with our audiences.*
- 8) *The Fire Prevention Specialist Team (FPST) consists of various field level experts and is utilized to help strategize statewide prevention efforts (e.g. electronic burning permit system).*

B. The fire prevention program has been developed from the start with FTEs. This depth and history allows for opportunities to evolve and grow.

- 1) *Burning permits are a tool that provides an opportunity for education with the public; technology has allowed for more effectiveness and efficiencies.*
- 2) *The FPA identified the value of various tools (e.g. PSA's, fire danger signs, posters, displays, videos, presentations, magnets, brochures, etc.). Many resources already exist.*
- 3) *Local staff who conduct activities at local events are a valuable tool for E&O because they are known and respected in community. Field staff typically*

live in their community long-term and bring a known face to the issues (these statements are based on professional judgment and staff feedback during FPA).

- 4) Smokey Bear is a highly recognizable symbol for fire prevention. Branding and image associated with many campaigns over the years assists with E&O efforts.*
- 5) Internal web pages for other DNR staff (e.g. customer service, air/waste, Office of Communication, LE, forestry, etc.) provide for others to learn our messages.*
- 6) Social media, apps, QR codes, GovDelivery and mobile web pages continue to be opportunities to reach additional audiences.*

C. The fire prevention program utilizes the seriousness of the subject matter to target specific audiences as conditions change. Media plays a key role in picking up and distributing these messages.

- 1) Due to the seriousness of the message (e.g. protecting life, property, natural resources), the program has had much success with press releases, articles, web hits, and on-camera or radio interviews being picked up by the media.*
- 2) The media tends to pick up fire message more frequently when conditions are prone to fire occurrence.*
- 3) Extended drought conditions or big fires heighten message importance and have proven to increase public, media, and political interest.*
- 4) Target audience varies by season and weather conditions. Historical fire occurrence data assists with identifying key fire cause problems through the fire reporting system.*
- 5) Not only is the public a target audience, but the media is a key target audience for messaging so they can partner in getting critical information to a broader audience. More opportunities exist with social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, chats, etc.).*

D. The fire program is able to identify some fire prevention success, though evaluation of efforts continues to be challenging.

- 1) The FPA identified the current investment in fire prevention activities, the success (or value) of these activities and made several recommendations for conducting these activities based on fire landscapes.*
- 2) It is difficult to measure success of fire prevention efforts due to other contributing factors, such as weather conditions, which can significantly influence fire occurrence and acres burned.*
- 3) The internet based burning permit system and fire danger page has 500K hits annually and is the most visited DNR webpage.*
- 4) The fire prevention program has a good foundation; there are many existing resources that staff and partners feel are working (such as fire danger signs and internal web kits), and we have established partner relationships to help deliver E&O. Don't have to reinvent the wheel.*
- 5) Building community relations supports E&O efforts by exposing the public to local field experts. Knowing the local Ranger on a first name basis brings credibility to the message and the DNR.*
- 6) A single Smokey appearance at an event may not prevent a fire, but builds awareness of the fire problem in the community. This could lead to local empowerment.*
- 7) When evaluating the effectiveness of school programs, it's difficult to measure long-term success in adult behavior. However, the message could be brought home by the student to the parent.*

E. DNR is the primary leader in Wildland fire messaging. Fire departments are a key partner.

- 1) Through the FPA, fire departments expressed interest in assisting with school fire prevention programs.*

- 2) *Many fire departments look to the DNR for fire outreach materials, ordinance language, and burn permit templates.*
- 3) *According to WI Ch. 26, the DNR has a statutory obligation to engage in fire prevention efforts statewide.*
- 4) *Although part of a national program, DNR has the flexibility to produce relevant messages for Wisconsin and is the major message producer for its fire prevention program.*
- 5) *DNR shows leadership in Wildland fire (e.g. no other agency determines the fire danger); various partners look to us as the Wildland fire experts.*
- 6) *Many partners (e.g. town governments) rely on us as a funding source for prevention and fuels reduction projects.*
- 7) *Proper partner training and tools will be required to be successful when engaging partners. Not being able to hold a partner accountable is a fear by some staff.*
- 8) *The fire program routinely reaches out to internal partners to cross-check with other DNR programs to avoid conflicting messages (e.g. air or waste).*

F. While most feel education is important, there is an overall lack of understanding of the long-term benefits of E&O and therefore at times forestry leadership has not made E&O priority work.

- 1) *When forced to make a decision about the prioritization of workload, E&O tends to be identified as a “lower priority” (per the workforce memo reductions since 2007).*
- 2) *Some forestry supervisors appear more focused on efficiency rather than effectiveness (e.g. fire danger signs are proven effective, yet are considered time consuming to change).*
- 3) *Many staff indicate variability among forestry supervisors as to how much direction they provide for E&O and display a lack of accountability for accomplishing the work.*

- 4) *There are varying levels of staff & leadership interest in prevention programs; some staff may not be comfortable conducting school programs while others enjoy them.*
- 5) *Existing grant funds for education are not being taken advantage of by field staff in some areas due to mixed supervisor support for field staff to conduct hazard mitigation projects (potential ad-on workload).*
- 6) *Perception that the role of the FPST (as well as WUI & Prevention Specialist) is solely E&O based however many of the projects also deal with fire operational issues (e.g. burning permits, EFW's, law enforcement).*

Wildland urban interface program findings and conclusions.

- A. **The WUI program is engaged in a wide range of E & O activities, with focus varying from creating awareness to teaching people how to implement activities and providing solutions to problems. The bulk of WUI activities are tied to the implementation of national initiatives, which are in turn supported by federal grant dollars.**
 - 1) *Information is shared with the public via the internet, written articles, displays, direct mailings, presentations, information repositories, newspaper inserts, press releases, advertisements, and outreach items. Internally, staff is provided with information via the Forestreporter, intranet fire prevention kit, talking points, & communication plans.*
 - 2) *People are brought together through internal specialist teams, Firewise Communities committees, Community Wildfire Protection Plan working groups (for planning E&O work), home ignition zone assessments, fairs & events, open houses, town meetings, homeowner association meetings (this is where we build awareness), workshops, and training sessions (to teach people how to implement solutions).*

- 3) *Input is compiled through the use of mailed public & partner surveys, computer-based staff surveys, interviews, and post-fire structure survival assessments for purposes of evaluating efforts.*
- 4) *National Fire Plan grant funds are used to conduct education, planning, and fuels reduction projects in communities-at-risk. On average, \$250,000 is spent each year on these activities.*

B. There is a specialized and dedicated WUI staff and team constructs focused on common E&O goals and sharing ideas.

- 1) *Major program products and initiatives are funneled through a central office WUI coordinator and delivered regionally and locally through WUI specialists. Together, they form a WUI team and while not operating in an 'official' team construct, they meet and communicate regularly to share information, ideas, and products.*
- 2) *The WUI coordinator regularly strategizes with Forestry's fire prevention specialist; both of whom are permanent members of the Fire Prevention Specialist Team. The FPST affords us the opportunity to get field buy in, a process to flesh out ideas, and approve activities. Multiple planning teams are created through the WUI program including Community Wildfire Protection Plan working groups and Firewise Community committees. These teams regularly meet to determine which E and O activities should be conducted in their communities.*

C. There is a wide range of views on WUI activities depending on who you talk to and how closely they are involved with program elements.

- 1) *Some staff feel that broad awareness-generating efforts such as billboards and outreach through the media are the most efficient and effective outreach mechanisms. Other "hands-off" activities like direct mailings, internet postings, and availability of publications are thought to be quite effective. Others yet see value in the face-to-face education opportunities afforded through activities such as home ignition zone assessments. There have been other suggestions that the WUI program should be more involved*

in working with insurance providers and zoning officials. Perhaps most wisely noted is the acknowledgement that it is a combination of well-timed efforts in the areas of greatest risk that produces the most desired effects.

- 2) Staff on the periphery of WUI activities, meaning foresters not intimately engaged or specific to WUI, have mentioned a need or desire to be involved with planning local WUI efforts as well as a desire to have more communication regarding the WUI work planning process. They also tend to have the most complaints/confusion about WUI activities (note: this also speaks to items E and F below).*
- 3) E&O survey feedback suggests that our partners feel we excel at reaching broad audiences on issues of concern (e.g. wildfire prevention, storm recovery) and providing objective one-on-one counseling for landowners; through this, DNR foresters build strong and trusting relationships with landowners.*
- 4) Our E&O items are thought to be quality products that carry the appropriate message.*

D. The WUI program is very engaged with three primary partner groups: fire departments, local government, and homeowner groups; these partnerships provide opportunity for collaboration, workload sharing, and additional E&O outlets.

- 1) The WUI program enables local stakeholders to come together and craft long term solutions. Partners rely on the WUI specialists to bridge the gap between the community members, agencies, VFDs, resources, and funding.*
- 2) Our community partners like the ‘personal service’ provided by WUI coordinators as well as the funding we provide for their projects and the continuing education (mentoring & leadership) which prepares them to make informed decisions.*
- 3) There are many more partner groups that provide some level of assistance and information outlets (e.g., state & county forests, UW Ext., federal*

agencies, WWOA, youth groups, newspapers, power line companies and emergency management as well as internal DNR partners).

E. Time and time again, field staff convey the message that they believe that programs are most effective when they are implemented at the local level, yet local staff involvement is often missing.

- 1) Some staff members believe that materials and guidance can come from central office, but it's the local staff & community partners – the 'face' of the community – who should be doing much of the actual implementation.*
- 2) Having local staff conduct E & O activities during times of acute fire danger is usurped by the need for staff to be ready for fire suppression and prescribed burning (in some cases).*
- 3) Supervisory support for staff to engage in E & O activities is lacking.*
- 4) Some supervisors focus on efficiency rather than effectiveness and want E&O efforts to be conducted by a centralized source.*

F. Communication can be improved on numerous levels.

- 1) Staff has expressed desire to get info by means other than email and the Forestreporter. Face to face is preferred, especially in situations where interaction is possible.*
- 2) Staff has mentioned a missing internal and cross-program collaboration, conflicting or competing messages, and the Forestry 'silo.'*
- 3) Evaluation of program activities is occurring; we need to communicate the results to better explain the 'why' of what we're doing.*
- 4) There is so much potential in our partnership with Natural Resource Educators, especially in the balance of skill sets between them and DNR forestry staff. For example, NREs have evaluation experience, which is one area we need more support. However, a weakness in setting expectations of them and/or providing clarity as to what they should be doing may be limiting the utility of our partnership.*

Forest products services program findings and conclusions.

A. The Forest Products Services Program (FPS) increasingly relies on leveraging established partnerships to enhance our current budget and staffing resources in order to carry out new and traditional education and outreach activities that it engages in.

- 1) The Forest Products Services Program currently collaborates with multiple external customer groups in a variety of education and outreach activities. At present, these efforts are primarily confined to speaking engagements as requested, one to four day workshops covering timely topics in the wood using industry, and industry short courses. In general, the program centers on traditional topics such as lumber grading, kiln drying, sawmill improvement strategies, and workplace safety. Examples of more reactionary topics includes: export markets, green built considerations, Nano- crystalline cellulose technology, and adapting to regulatory changes for compliance.*
- 2) FPS education and outreach efforts have become somewhat confined in terms of audiences served. FPS has not had a presence at the State Fair in years nor does it deliver education or outreach activities to k-12 with any notable frequency. Although the program does occasionally (1-3 times per year) participate in field day outreach activities through WWOA or the Lake States Lumber Association, this is not currently a high priority.*
- 3) Our programs primary resources can be categorized by staffing, time, and money.*
- 4) The strain on staffing currently means that time spent on education and outreach will likely become heavily challenged. We have done a successful job of leveraging partner resources to maximize our dollars. We align closely with the Lake States Lumber Associations educational arm as well as the University of Wisconsin extension and technical colleges throughout the state.*

5) Supervisory leadership is not a barrier. Past and current supervisory staff have not restricted financial resources, education and outreach topics, or the allocation of staff time as deemed fit by program staff.

6) FPS sometimes lack the physical resources to accommodate certain courses both in terms of equipment and space.

B. The effectiveness of the Forest Products Service's education and outreach efforts have been met with mixed results as reported by partners and staff.

1) It should be noted that measuring the effectiveness of current education and outreach activities is difficult because FPS relies largely on word of mouth. Generally FPS does not have any formal evaluation methods in place.

2) For those partners that we engage with most frequently, results - based on continued collaboration and requests - indicate that our program is meeting the expectations of the intended audiences.

3) Some partners, exclusive to members of our forest products industry, have indicated that they would like to see more cross functional alignment within the agency to promote greater awareness of other program offerings that may benefit them. Others (industry partners and other governmental agencies) have suggested we might provide more offerings each year.

4) Any perceived or real quality issues seem to stem from the unintended model of typically putting educational and outreach efforts together quickly and restricting them to short delivery times.

C. The current state of the Forest Products Services partnerships is strong.

1) FPS continues to maintain, grow, and sustain active partnerships. These relationships have been built on years of collaboration and sharing of resources to accomplish goals.

2) We typically partner with 3 to 5 primary external partners in our E&O efforts. It has been suggested that there is room for our program to branch out into other venues with expanded partners.

3) With vacancies, FPS has been more reliant on internal partners and other staff to help strengthen our efforts. Aligning the FPS program with other department functions is now viewed with greater appreciation in efforts to maximize benefits with diminished resources.

D. To optimize its efficacy and efficiency, the Forest Products Services Program must overcome several distinct challenges.

1) The Forest Products Services Program is most notably missing staffing resources. This may be the biggest single threat to our upcoming E &O efforts.

2) FPS lacks well-defined and clear messaging. Instead we continue to rely heavily on ongoing requests. We have tended to be a more “reactionary” program in our delivery of education and outreach to interested stakeholders.

3) Prioritizing our intended offerings has worked very well but is not framed in any consistent construct such as work plans.

4) Our program is not engaged in social media or emerging technology as well as it might.

Nursery program findings and conclusions.

A. The nursery program lacks expertise and resources to develop and implement a highly effective reforestation education and outreach program.

1) Nursery staff is keenly interested in promoting reforestation in Wisconsin, however, lack marketing/education training, knowledge, expertise and computer programs.

2) No “go to” person available in Division of Forestry for guidance or direction in education and outreach communications.

3) Reforestation education and outreach ideas routinely are broached and implemented within the program, but a formal education and outreach plan

has not been developed by the nursery team which would support consistent messaging across the division.

- 4) Field foresters traditionally provide a first line of reforestation education and outreach information when engaging with private landowners.*
- 5) UW-Natural Resource Educators have been an effective partner in periodic development of graphics and text for new/updated brochures.*
- 6) More leveraging from the LEAF program, which the nursery supports through its \$0.03 per seedling surcharge, would benefit reforestation education and outreach (i.e., revision of Arbor Day materials).*
- 7) No formal evaluation method currently exists to measure appropriateness, effectiveness or outcomes.*
- 8) Landowner action may occur years after a reforestation education and outreach contact.*

B. Landowners, public and private, remain the nursery's sole customers; however, their profile and reforestation needs are changing.

- 1) The "historical/traditional" reforestation customer base (i.e., agricultural community) is declining.*
- 2) Today's landowners own smaller parcels with less land available for planting and have diverse ownership objectives, some incompatible with tree planting.*
- 3) Identify reforestation messages which resonate well with today's landowner base and develop education and outreach tools/incentives which encourage action.*
- 4) Participation at events which attract landowners interested in conservation plantings, such as Deer Expo, Farm Technology Days, is a relevant reforestation education and outreach venue.*

C. Partnerships are valuable.

- 1) *Expand cross program integration specifically with Forest Health and Private Forestry, including cooperating consulting foresters, to reach more landowners interested in reforestation.***
- 2) *The UW Natural Resource Educator program provides critical graphic design and content work for various nursery E&O products; partnership could be expanded to include Arbor Day promotions.***
- 3) *Develop reforestation education and outreach tools to assist DNR foresters and cooperating consultants to better advocate for tree planting in Wisconsin.***
- 4) *New outreach partnerships have been forged (i.e., Milwaukee Brewers Green Week participation, Polar Bears International tree planting grants, State Parks Heritage Tree Planting Project) which reaches additional audiences in unconventional venues to expand a knowledge base for reforestation needs in Wisconsin; additional partnerships (i.e., Bird City, shore land restoration, social media) will further expand reforestation education and outreach opportunities.***
- 5) *School forests partnerships have value to the nursery program by educating today's youth, who will be tomorrow's landowners, about the importance of reforestation and its role in sustainable forestry.***

D. Arbor Day remains an important education and outreach tool for the nursery program.

- 1) *State statute 28.06 gives authority for distribution of state grown seedlings to school children for celebrating Arbor Day; NR 1.20 provides similar authority.***
- 2) *The nursery program sponsors an effective free seedling distribution program for all Wisconsin 4th graders <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TreePlanting/arborForm.asp>.***
- 3) *Explore options to revise or expand existing Arbor Day program to create relevant messaging for today's youth.***

- E. Most state fair visitors have an urban tree focus or interest which has marginal education and outreach value to the state nursery program which is statutorily restricted to conservation plantings.**

Private forestry program findings and conclusions.

- A. There is inconsistent support (policy, work planning, time, dollars) for E&O from Forestry Leadership. There is inconsistent recognition of the importance of E&O. Private Forestry does a large amount of E&O, much of which is not accounted for or work planned for.**

- 1) One-on-one landowner meetings and walk-throughs are not accounted for under E&O activity codes.*
- 2) Foresters receive mixed messages from leadership as to whether or not they should consider E&O a priority.*
- 3) There is no centralized message and delivery directive from Division leadership.*
- 4) Partners identified these inconsistencies.*
- 5) DNR private foresters interviewed confirmed the inconsistent messages from leadership and reported a wide range of involvement in E&O activities (including outreach activities that were outside of the support of local supervisors).*

- B. Private Forestry works with partners to accomplish most of its Statewide and regional E&O events.**

- 1) Most of these partners steer the messages.*
- 2) These partners may or may not “buy in” to DNR messages.*
- 3) Landowner organization and education partner E&O (including WWOA, WTFC, Walnut Council, UW-Extension, County Land Conservation*

Departments, etc.) does not reach a large percentage of unengaged landowners.

4) Where we have staff and time to be consistently involved in the planning of these events, we have the opportunity to influence the messages.

C. Much of the “general” public awareness that occurs falls upon the private lands foresters to deliver.

1) School groups, civic orgs, field trips, youth groups, Arbor Day programs are activities that typically fall upon private land foresters lead, because they are the local forestry staff known to the public and partners.

2) Many of these include topics outside of the foresters’ specific expertise (forest health, urban forestry, fire, etc.), but others better qualified to address these topics are not available statewide.

3) Time for general forestry E&O is not included in private forestry work plans.

D. Evaluation of current E&O activities is minimal or non-existent. Most of the documentation is anecdotal.

1) Praise (or criticism) often comes in the form of an e-mail or letter.

2) Repeat requests presumably mean they were satisfied with a previous effort.

3) When UW Ext is involved, they conduct evaluations of the efforts (participant surveys).

4) The most common responses on the Private Forestry work task list for evaluation is “# attendees” or nothing.

5) Anecdotal documentation of private forestry’s E&O activities does not consistently document the RESULTS of the outreach – did the recipients of the E&O change or reinforce their opinions/attitudes towards forestry and/or take action based on what they learned?

E. Private Forestry has a well-distributed workforce across the State. This staff has local knowledge and forestry expertise and they are trusted sources of unbiased information.

1) Partners noted and value:

- The availability of local staff as planners and presenters at workshops and conferences
- Division level staff with statewide perspective
- A wide range of staff expertise and knowledge in technical forestry and other multiple use subject areas
- Objective, one-on-one counseling with landowners – sharing technical information with interested landowners
- Information is based on sound science

2) SWOT – DNR Private Foresters provide unbiased opinions on resource management decisions and are considered valued resources for partners.

F. One-on-one E&O with NIPF landowners is a specific strength of Private Forestry and is the most effective method of outreach and most likely to result in sustainable forestry practices.

1) At least six partners contacted for input regarding DNR Private Forestry's E&O efforts specifically mentioned the valued role of DNR field foresters as private landowners' initial source for unbiased professional forest management advice - the success of these contacts is based on the observations of and feedback to these Partners.

2) SWOT Strength - "One on one relationship with landowners builds trust with the audience."

G. There is no coordination of Forestry E&O activities or messages across the state and no time allotted for statewide coordination or support.

- 1) *The E&O goals approved in 2009 were not consistently communicated, supported nor implemented by the Division.*
- 2) *There is one E&O goal for private forestry in the Strategic Direction but it has not been implemented - its success is linked to time savings that may or may not be achieved through MFL efficiencies.*

State lands program findings and conclusions.

A. State Forest/State Lands have high potential for delivery of effective education and outreach in support of program and division strategic goals.

- 1) *Forests have many points of contact with a variety of audiences (visitors, community leaders, tourism and timber businesses, local residents, etc.) through person to person contacts with visitors and stakeholders, signage, and distributing printed materials.*
- 2) *Potential audiences for education and outreach associated with state forests likely would recognize a personal impact based on the results of how the property/forest is managed (either as part of their recreational experiences or because of their proximity to and reliance on the forest) and therefore are primed for education and outreach messages.*
- 3) *The “multiple use mandate” for state forests provides rich material for education and outreach. State forest staff members are highly knowledgeable and experienced in balancing and managing the multiple outcomes of state forest management and are uniquely positioned to provide examples of the inter-connectedness of environmental, economic, social, and cultural objectives.*
- 4) *State forests/lands provide a living laboratory for education and outreach that has the potential to be reinforced through multiple points of contact during a participant’s visit (direct contact with employees, signage, newspapers, brochures, etc.).*

- 5) *Education and outreach conducted on state forests can be targeted to general nature-based education or to property, program, division, and department strategic goals.*
- 6) *Education and outreach activities have the potential to complement law enforcement activities through education efforts that are related to visitor behavior. (Specifically using forest related themes to teach outdoor skills, safety, and ethics).*
- 7) *Education and outreach has the long term potential to improve stakeholder capacity for and interest in participating in the master planning process by helping to communicate the mission of public lands, fostering citizen involvement in environmental stewardship, providing historical context to management decisions, and promoting the profession and the relevance of the department, etc.*
- 8) *With proper leadership, state forests/lands could provide well organized, coordinated, and synergistic education programs that could be complementary and cumulative across properties while still allowing for the unique niche of each forest.*

B. State Lands do not have clearly defined and formalized goals and objectives for education and outreach.

- 1) *It is difficult to create a culture of understanding the importance of education and outreach when, as a program, we do not prioritize it.*
- 2) *Without formalized goals and objectives, education and outreach cannot be adequately captured in work planning and is often left undone or handled in a piecemeal and sometimes reactive manner.*
- 3) *Lack of goals and objectives prohibits state lands from creating a well-organized and unified program of coordinated messaging for education and outreach resulting in missed opportunities, inefficiencies, and lack of effectiveness with sometimes redundant and/or conflicting efforts.*

4) Many staff members are frustrated by the lack of ability to provide education and outreach to forest stakeholders.

C. Although education and outreach is seldom expressly acknowledged in work plans/goals, state forest staff engage in education and outreach.

1) State lands are required to create a public engagement plan during the master planning process.

2) Forest management activities often include points of contact with the public. For instance, public notice of pre-sales is conducted, and foresters will often engage directly affected stakeholders during the planning, pre-sale and harvesting processes.

3) A variety of staff have regular contact with forest visitors throughout the year. By answering visitors' questions and taking care of their needs these staff members are conducting education and outreach.

4) One of the challenges associated with this is that without a work planning goal associated with this work, it is difficult to have a consistent message or to evaluate performance.

D. State forests have worked with many partners to provide education and outreach. This work, however, is often piecemeal, related to the interest of the partner groups, and is dependent on the desires and resources of outside entities.

1) State forests have a variety of partners who are interested in and are currently providing or have provided educational services in the past. These partners include: other programs within the division (e.g. fire), friends groups, volunteers (for coordination and message delivery).

2) Where partnerships do exist, forest managers are rarely in a position to prescribe the messages that are being presented. (i.e., if an interest group or individual volunteers to give a program, it is usually out of a desire to speak about a specific topic of interest to them, which is not necessarily aligned with the needs of management).

- 3) *Although the Division of Forestry partially funds basin educator positions in extension, forest managers have little, if any, ability to provide direction or to assess their efforts. In addition, people placed in these positions may be missing skills or lack a focus on and/or acknowledgement of the value they could provide.*
- 4) *With the wide range of management outcomes from state lands, there is a wide variety of potential partner groups that could assist with education and outreach. Without education and outreach leadership, however, these partners are often not clearly identified, and when they are there is little coordination between partner groups who may share the same goals.*

E. State Forests/State Lands lack the capacity/resources to engage in planned, deliberate, coordinated education and outreach.

- 1) *While state forests/lands' staff are well versed in a range of management issues, few have been trained to translate that information to visitors, stakeholders, and partner groups.*
- 2) *Although forest employees have many individual contacts with the public, little training exists to prepare them for those education and outreach opportunities.*
- 3) *Additionally, there is no staff capacity to create, organize, ensure consistency, distribute, and deliver messages.*
- 4) *Most state lands are lacking education facilities or true visitor centers (vs. contact stations which are primarily used to sell entrance passes and check in campers).*
- 5) *Without clear goals and objectives it is difficult to find funding for education and outreach.*
- 6) *A deep-seated frustration exists among some State Forest staff with the inability to accommodate their customers' desire for educational programming due to lack of staff, resources, or program support.*

- F. If resources did exist for a planned, deliberate, and coordinated program of education and outreach, state lands are uniquely able to share resources and to reinforce messages across properties.**

Urban forestry program findings and conclusions.

A. Urban forestry E & O resources are limited.

- 1) UF program is facilitated by “influencers not regulators” The public urban forest resource is managed by local authorities but not regulated by any state/national authority.*
- 2) UF program is facilitated through relationship building which is based on personal communication and trust. It is a challenge for individual staff who are servicing a region with 5 to 18 counties and hundreds of municipalities of all sizes with varying resources.*
- 3) UF is serving an expanding audience as the program moves from “street tree view” (covering public urban lands with a focus on municipal forestry) to a “canopy” view (including both public and private urban lands/trees) and potentially covering 80% of WI population. UF will also be challenged to help our traditional municipal audiences identify the need to shift their view.*
- 4) Grant program is oversubscribed by 58% indicating that our partners need increasing financial support to carry messages. This was verified through partner surveys.*
- 5) Formal E & O activities have been assigned to LTE staff which has led to limited program stability, long-term planning and follow through.*

B. E & O is a large part of program delivery, but goals and objectives have not been articulated.

- 1) E & O activity is a significant part of the program’s successful programming as demonstrated by the high number of Tree City USA communities (WI ranks second in the nation at 184-2012), a strong UF Council presence, effective*

municipal networks and other E&O efforts. Work is getting done, but would be more effectively accomplished if operating with a strategic E & O plan and work plans which included E & O goals and objectives for individuals and the team.

- 2) With an increasing audience through a shift to canopy view and reduction of UF E&O resources as stated in the strategic direction, it will be more critical for DNR UF to prioritize audiences and messages. Who are the priority audiences and what are the priority messages we want to promote through our efforts and those of our partners . . . municipalities, private businesses, elected officials, general public?*
- 3) UF staff are comfortable with E & O media communication.*
- 4) This situation may be a symptom of having 5 different supervisors and should be resolved with the new team leader system.*

C. Urban Forestry program has numerous successful E & O tools which could be more effectively utilized with better goal planning and additional resources (people/funds).

- 1) \$500,000 annual grant program (supports many partners E & O activities-oversubscribed by 58%).*
- 2) Program for Tree City USA and Tree Line utility and Tree Campus programs.*
- 3) Urban Forestry Council - printed advisory reports, UF awards program, and advocacy.*
- 4) Urban Forestry Insider (electronic newsletter-over 3000 commercial users), print newsletter.*
- 5) EAB Toolbox and state wide outreach efforts, regional municipal networking groups.*
- 6) New USFS data and tools generating quantifiable data supporting value of UF resource, NER i-Tree project.*

D. Urban Forestry's broad and varied partnerships are based on strong public interest in "TREES" and the positive reputation of DNR UF program.

- 1) *Limited but skilled staff works with a wide sector of partners including municipalities, private businesses, county government, townships, non-profits, etc.).***
- 2) *WDNR UF program considered highly respected source of technical information.***
- 3) *Emerald ash borer is a crisis which the media is interested in covering. It is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase the need to manage and plant trees. UF has many partners, but few (outside of municipalities) have urban forestry as a mission/core message. Broad categories of partners include professional organizations (interested in labor/training/certification issues related to members), municipalities (with an interest in the technical management of the UF resource) and advocacy groups which are generally non-profits with a sustainability and/or environmental focus. As stated by a non-profit organization board member, the organization's core messages/mission is directed by support from donors and the grants they receive. One partner interview stated that "DNR Forestry should match support our time and investment. . ." This translates to a lack of financial support and need for greater grant dollars with an expanding canopy view.***
- 4) *UF currently works with numerous non-profits, but they often lack organizational leadership and funding; they are looking at DNR to fund their efforts.***
- 5) *We need to be cautious of a shotgun approach to funding and consider how each grant can be leverage to achieve greater outcomes.***

E. Evaluation has been difficult to achieve.

- 1) *Municipal UF partner database has been created but limited staff makes evaluation difficult let alone compiling and maintaining the data.***

- 2) *Have collected antidotal program evaluation but unable to conduct more complete result/outcome evaluation because of limited staffing.*
- 3) *A formal survey of the print newsletter was conducted in 2006. This was before the regular launch of the Urban Forestry Insider (electronic bi-weekly newsletter with 3000 subscribers).*

F. Urban forestry is the “new kid” in the forestry neighborhood and is an excellent venue to showcase and introduce urban audiences to the value of Wisconsin’s forest resource.

- 1) *Staff and volunteers often feel the urban forestry program audience is not fully leveraged to support all of forestry.*
- 2) *Urban forestry is a conduit to introduce urban audiences (80% of the Wisconsin population) to DNR forestry. With this new urban audience, DNR forestry must identify and engage in critical forestry related issues impacting urban audiences such as green infrastructure, storm water and trees, low impact design and more.*
- 3) *Urban forestry provides numerous opportunities to integrate and leverage popular forestry programs such as, Arbor Day, Champion Tree program and more to promote forestry industry/appreciation-understanding. Make these outreach events part of a larger E & O statewide forestry awareness and appreciation plan that builds on identified goals and objectives.*

Appendix A: Education and Outreach Assessment – Partner Evaluations



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This report summarizes education and outreach (E&O) evaluations contributed by 38 Division of Forestry partners: five from other divisions within the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and 33 from external organizations (partners responded in October and November of 2012). The goals of this effort were to introduce these partners to Forestry's E&O strategic planning effort, ask them for feedback on six questions, and prepare them for involvement in next steps. Members of the Division's Assessment Team (A-team) telephoned each partner to ask for their help, and then sent the six-question evaluation form. Respondents had two weeks to consider their responses, gather input from others in their organization if possible, and return the form to their A-team contact. Brief summaries of responses to each question follow.

- 1. What is working well in the partnership between DNR forestry and your program/organization/agency with regard to Education and Outreach efforts? Please consider all of the Division's programs you interact with on education and outreach, and offer examples and reasoning for your evaluation.**

Many partners said that communication with Division of Forestry personnel was not only working well but was important. They cited one-on-one and small group educational contacts (e.g., landowner meetings related to the Conservation Reserve Program, seminars, and work groups), Forestry's carefully researched and prepared publications and videos, its efforts to identify new E&O resources and develop creative public education programs, and its special outreach to unengaged private landowners.

Many partners cited collaboration as especially important, in particular the sharing of information and ideas, responding quickly and precisely to requests for assistance, and aligning on organizational goals. Some partners said

that they appreciate opportunities to participate on Forestry committees, and welcome Forestry's participation on their committees as well. One academic partner offered a comprehensive review of their relationship with the Division, noting that historically the University of Wisconsin System and DNR have collaborated to address critical gaps in the forestry knowledge base, and have worked together on research projects, pilot implementation projects, professional training, and community education. They noted that as a consequence of these partnerships, critical information has also been made available regarding the investment of State monies in forestry education and training at post-secondary institutions. Partners also cited Forestry's work on many programs ranging from financial assistance (e.g., Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program) to technical assistance (e.g., CRP, non-industrial private forest landowners).

In addition to communication and collaboration, Forestry's *expertise* was cited as important, especially in the training it offers through motivated/passionate Forestry personnel (e.g., in prescribed burn courses and one-on-one problem solving), input it provides for planning and implementing teacher professional development programs (e.g., with LEAF), technical help with grant applications (e.g., for the Sustainable Resources Institute, Inc.), and in the production and dissemination of high-quality technical information (e.g., through publications of research findings and industry trends, press releases, and website design and maintenance).

2. What is not working well in the partnership between DNR forestry and your program/organization/agency with regard to Education and Outreach efforts? Please consider all of the Division's programs you interact with on education and outreach, and offer examples and reasoning for your evaluation. If you think that everything is working well or are unsure, please indicate that.

Of the 38 partners who provided an evaluation, 10 said that things are generally working well or they have no E&O related problems. Of those who discussed problems, several focused on *communication issues*, and one was disappointed that a Forestry team they had participated on had been disbanded, thus eliminating "an important venue for learning and sharing." Lack of clarity regarding Forestry expectations of partner programs was also cited, as was failure to share results or outcomes with partners. One program noted that *continuous* communication was important for keeping landowners informed of new management techniques (e.g., by personal contact, newsletters, email), or to remind them of their stewardship responsibilities. One partner felt they had often been overlooked or included late in planning for education initiatives.

Cited *errors of omission and shortcoming* included lack of recognition—failing to properly acknowledge the efforts of private sector foresters and support them, failure to create a broad public understanding of the need for and benefit of proper tree care, and failure to adopt proper tree care processes on public forest land (i.e., a failure to lead by example). Problems between Forestry and its academic partners were also noted, including the need for Forestry to (1) provide feedback on how input solicited had been used, (2) formally recognize services rendered, and (3) support sustainable management through investments in staff positions where E&O is a primary, not add-on, responsibility. Partners also cited the need for more flexibility in scheduling to reach private landowners after hours, better prioritization of workloads, and the streamlining of program housekeeping (e.g., Managed Forest Law).

Promotion of arborists certified by the International Society of Arboriculture may also be inadequate, and recognition of good private sector firms is lacking as well.

Several UW-Extension respondents described *structural problems*, the most basic of which may be goal or mission misalignment. Other partners commented on the lack of uniformity in commitment to E&O across DNR administrative regions, and a lack of coordination between State and national forest lands management. Other partners noted that E&O seems to be low priority, and that Forestry staff cannot participate in even higher-level activities like planning a conference. Other partners noted that foresters are highly restricted in their workload priorities, that limits on their travel and time plus work directives make coordinating with them more difficult, and that younger Forestry employees do not seem to appreciate the value of partnerships, and do not commit sufficient time to their development and maintenance.

Problems with partnerships also arise due to *resource shortages* (structural problems were sometimes implied), including staff positions, time, and program support. One partner noted that technology transfer is suffering, and that there's an unmet need for publishable articles, as priorities seem to have shifted due to budget cuts. Several partners cited shortages that prevent better delivery of services, and one noted that loss of Wildland-Urban Interface specialists has been notable and *not* overcome. One Urban Forestry consultant lamented the suspension of fall workshops for small communities, many of which don't have a forestry department or dedicated expertise on staff.

3. Considering your program's/organization's/agency's education and outreach partnership with the Division of Forestry over the last several years (including all of the Division's programs you've interacted with on education and outreach), how could this partnership be best improved?

Partners who thought that *communication* is a problem want it improved. One internal (to DNR) partner wanted more formal and informal check-ins, given that a Forestry team it had participated on had been disbanded. Partners also wanted more sharing of information about what Forestry is doing, more "learning from one another and, possibly, the sharing of resources." Other suggestions for improvement included: clear and simple guidance given to Forestry staff, strong communication and creative problem solving, a clearer set of expected outcomes to help partners meet Forestry expectations (e.g., x% increase in unengaged landowner contacts), regular meetings between partnership staffs, improved website organization, periodic emails, and more one-on-one interaction "...especially at the local level and with regard to emerging issues."

Collaboration was also cited for improvement, and one internal (to DNR) program offered a detailed plan for using state forests to accomplish E&O goals. Specifically, educational efforts within each forest could address topics of relevance to the forest and its mission, and could involve neighboring communities in the master planning process; a travelling naturalist could also be hired to serve smaller properties. Several external partners called for explicit recognition of partnership importance, and consistent maintenance despite changes in DNR administrations and

budget constraints. One partner called for greater sensitivity to partner needs, and several others made requests for building personal relationships and developing trust.

Improvements in bureaucratic structure, policies, and procedures were also suggested, including standardization (at a state-wide or regional level) of private landowner walk-throughs, and summaries to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these communications. One external partner wanted higher priority for E&O, and for incorporating some E&O activities in each DNR forester's position description, work plan, and annual evaluation. Another external partner wanted to train Forestry office and front line staff on recreation use regulations, and to include private sector participants in some Forestry training sessions as well. Other partners wanted more leeway for local DNR staff to determine or direct their E&O efforts, as well as more travel funding, more staffing (e.g., more WUI specialists), and improvements to the Forestry website. Better outreach to elected officials was also cited, as well as encouragement for cities, towns, and villages to collaborate (e.g., through Forestry's support for and hosting of regional workshops). Another partner thought that more support should be given for E&O, and that it should be made more consistent across all Forestry staff levels.

4. With regard to forestry related education and outreach, in what ways does your organization/agency excel? This might be certain activities, reaching certain audiences, or something else.

Partners with a strong membership focus said that they excelled at understanding their members and serving them, and at helping the Division of Forestry reach them through sponsored events such as meetings and conferences (e.g., Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association), or through lists they provided for one-on-one contact. Some of these partners also identify and monitor their members' knowledge or awareness gaps and communicate these needs to Forestry personnel.

Academic partners cited their education and outreach expertise as strengths, and their capacities to engage in a full range of E&O activities ranging from needs discovery, to educational program design and development, to delivery (e.g., UW-Extension, UW-Stevens Point, and LEAF). One UW-Extension partner offered provocative advice to inform Forestry's thinking about its role in these partnerships: "Education and outreach is the mission of UW-Extension...and is the one area where I would urge WDNR to consider how they do what they do, as there already is a state agency charged with Education and Outreach...There are opportunities for each organization within their mission to consider its role as it relates to the charge of the legislature, as well as the constituencies that they serve. Collaboration and thoughtful consideration to what each organization brings to the table and how we can best work together would be beneficial to all." Another partner noted its excellence in training pre-service and licensed Pre-K through 12 teachers at low cost (i.e. Project Learning Tree), and one described its efforts to train a wide range of young people and adults in sustainable management (i.e., Trees for Tomorrow).

Other partners said they excel at various partnership building and nurturing activities—for example, reaching out to other organizations (e.g., WDATCP), expanding partnerships and providing seed money for special projects (e.g.,

US Forest Service), providing opportunities to build trust based relationships with landowners and the public (e.g., Driftless Forestry Network), and partnering with diverse groups to offer training in specialties such as kiln drying and lumber grading (e.g., North Central Technical College).

5. With regard to Education and Outreach, in your view, in what ways does the Division of Forestry excel? This might be certain activities, reaching certain audiences, or something else.

Many partners said that the Division of Forestry excels at one-on-one contact, and four of 38 programs cited Forestry’s work with woodland owners in particular. This type of contact is highly regarded, but is also becoming a cause for concern. For example, one partner complained (mildly) that Forestry is becoming known for its enforcement of the MFL program, because it is the only time a landowner sees or hears from the Division. They also noted that in the past their organization appreciated the technology transfer the Division provides, whether in the form of articles for newsletters, presentations at workshops and conferences, or in-the-field contact at chapter events or annual meetings; lately, this seems to be happening less and less.

Forestry also excels at group contact and educating broad audiences on issues of concern—for example, by getting the word out regarding emerald ash borer or wildfire prevention. At the nuts-and-bolts level, Forestry also gets high marks for managing continuing education requirements (e.g., Cooperating Forester Program), and for enforcing the MFL.

Forestry is valued as a structure provider, planner, and facilitator—for its ability to bring diverse players together into partnerships and to distribute or manage E&O funds that are raised through taxes and grants. For example, one partner noted that Forestry has “...the unique trust of managing the funds raised through the forestry mil tax,” and commended its collaboration with partners to underwrite activities they could not achieve on their own. Forestry is also valued for its high quality work—for example, for disseminating information based on sound science, developing and distributing high quality publications and presentations, providing dedicated passionate mentors, maintaining an excellent website, and for effective use of social media. Forestry is also valued for its help in planning and collaborating on workshops and conferences, not just for presenting.

Forestry E&O personnel are known for their innovation and leadership. One partner cited the Urban and Community Forestry Program for “...being innovative and pioneering in the development of outreach and education approaches to reach a diverse audience.” Another partner noted that Wisconsin DNR is well positioned to facilitate change and advance urban forestry through its education, outreach, and technical support efforts, and that it has the personnel, structure, and established partnerships to touch all sectors of urban forestry (e.g., individuals, private businesses, communities, townships, counties). DNR was also cited for its capacity to bring together and mobilize agencies and/or organizations external to state government to solve common problems, and to investigate new approaches to problem solving. Another partner said that the Division excels at mobilizing forces and resources when there is a recognized need (e.g., messaging related to emerald ash borer preparedness).

6. How does your organization/agency evaluate its education and outreach efforts?

Partner evaluation practices vary greatly, but often focus on how well target audiences are reached or satisfied with information or training. Less often, changes in audience awareness, attitude, and/or behavior are evaluated. Still less frequently, these changes are formally compared to goals of the education or outreach effort. Evaluation also varies in terms of rigor, precision, and timeliness.

At a very ***basic level***, one partner evaluates its efforts through level of follow-up contact by attendees at presentations. Some government agency partners measure volumes of trees and/or species planted over time, but don't say if they consider other factors beyond education and outreach (e.g., drought and/or economic conditions and events). This highlights a general weakness of this evaluation type: the failure to account for other-than E&O influences. Several state agencies measure return on outreach spending—for example, website traffic counts, media calls per press release, and/or column inches per topic in newspapers. Such approaches measure market coverage and, perhaps, penetration of E&O, but do not measure awareness, attitudes, or behavior effects.

An ***intermediate level*** uses simple metrics to capture program impact. These are typically collected through participant and partner surveys. Another partner noted that evaluation consists of the favorable responses its instructors get from program recipients, and good questions and answers that reveal whether intended messages are getting through. These are obviously qualitative measures that are difficult to generalize, but they are useful approaches nonetheless.

At an ***advanced level*** another partner, Waste and Materials Management, measures public awareness, attitudes, and behaviors before and after implementing program changes, and also researches where its audiences get their information. It uses survey research and Internet resources, and also tracks hits on traditional media releases (e.g., print, radio, and TV). Similarly, UW-Extension crafts its programs using a logic model approach, where changes in knowledge and behavior are defined in short, mid, and long term goals. It evaluates its efforts based on these goals and whether it achieves desired outcomes in target audiences or groups. It uses various techniques that include session evaluations, impact surveys, depth interviews, and focus groups, and has highly trained staffs that are dedicated to practicing these approaches.

Appendix B: Education and Outreach Assessment – Team Interviews



Prepared by:

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February, 2013

Reading this interview report

The Table of Contents that follows may be read as an abstract of this report. For more detail related to the 12 topics discussed, please read each topic's introductory statements and **Summary** paragraphs. Detailed synopses of program contributions to each summary section have been omitted, but may be made available as a free standing document (i.e., the summaries are based on these synopses, which were written to highlight interview content; all synopses and summaries were reviewed and edited by A-team members).

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Overview

This report presents findings from interviews conducted for an education and outreach (E&O) assessment. It addresses goals specified in a scoping document prepared for the Division of Forestry’s Strategic Plan for Education and Outreach (approved at the Forestry Leadership Team meeting April 24, 2012), and follows an exhaustive inventory of E&O tasks completed by an assessment team (A-team) in August 2012.

Following their inventory, A-team members compiled a list of questions to evaluate the current state of each Forestry program’s E&O work. These questions addressed important issues specified in the scoping document (page 4), and after elaboration and refinement provided the basis for interviews. Thirty questions comprised 12 general topics: (1) Goals and objectives, (2) Work planning, (3) Messages, (4) Unplanned activities, (5) Tools, (6) Audiences, (7) Partners and roles, (8) Partnerships, (9) Resources, (10) Evaluation, (11) Opportunities, and (12) Barriers.

Ten A-team members discussed these topics in interviews held between August 16 and September 12, 2012. Each interview lasted from 2.0 to 2.75 hours and was transcribed. Each A-team member structured their interview by selecting 12 questions from the list of 30, plus three more to discuss if time allowed. These selections are shown in the Appendix

The text that follows presents key findings for each topic and includes a brief introduction followed by several summary paragraphs. Members of the A-team edited the interview synopses that provided the basis for these summaries (the synopses are not included here). Colleen Robinson-Klug edited the summaries and contributed key overview statements (which comprise the Table of Contents), and the Assessment Guidance Team reviewed earlier versions of this report and offered helpful comments. This final draft should therefore be viewed as a highly collaborative effort.

1 Goals and objectives (Q1 - Q2)

Two interview questions addressed goals and objectives. The first asked if the interviewee's program had identified any, and if they are well defined and clear. The second asked if the program was missing E&O opportunities due to lack of direction or support from these goals. Seven programs discussed question 1; five programs discussed question 2. The questions were stated as follows:

Q1: Has your program identified E&O goals and objectives? If so, which of them do you think are most important? Do you think that your program's E&O goals and objectives are well defined and clear?

Q2: Is your program missing potential E&O opportunities due to lack of direction or support from goals and objectives (program or E&O)?

Summary

Clearer education and outreach (E&O) goals and objectives are needed. Only three of the seven A-team members who answered Question 1 said that their program had identified E&O goals and objectives, and that they are well defined and clear. Five of the six who answered Question 2 said that their program was missing E&O opportunities due to lack of direction and support from these goals. It follows that more and better E&O goal setting is required, and that established goals and objectives should be re-evaluated for clarity, direction, and support.

Definitional problems and lack of clarity complicate program management. In some programs, E&O goals are only implied in program activities or tasks, and may also lose power to direct and support due to differences in interpretation. For example, education and outreach are distinguished from technical assistance and technical training in work plans, yet technical assistance in one program (e.g., Private Forestry) may be viewed as education or outreach in another (e.g., Forest Health), and technical assistance and training may include E&O features or components, and the reverse may also be true. These problems can frustrate program management, make cross-program coordination difficult, and complicate evaluation.

Clear and consistent support for E&O is needed. A second general set of concerns relates to operational variance. E&O efforts are often implemented unevenly across geographic areas, may be difficult to manage because of differences in workloads and supervisor preferences (especially for non-E&O personnel who have E&O opportunities), and may vary due to differences in how partners are utilized and their performance. Although supervisor discretion is important to the effective functioning of Forestry programs, staff thought there was not enough weight given to E&O activities, and that long term benefits are being sacrificed to address short term workload problems. They also cautioned against trading away the benefits of program control over E&O activities to gain partnership-based efficiencies.¹ Interviewees thought that resolution of these issues will most likely require action by Division of Forestry leadership.

Historically, E&O has been given low priority, as measured by resources allocated and manager support. Another fundamental problem repeatedly alluded to, or stated directly, is that there's a perceived lack of commitment by Forestry managers to education and outreach activities—at *all* levels of the organization. Repeated demonstrations of willingness to curtail E&O activities as a first response to budget and/or workload constraints support this view. Additional evidence may be found in several previous program assessments that did not lead to planning or implementation (of an E&O plan or education program). Despite these discouragements, this current assessment has generated enthusiasm and optimism.

2 Work planning (Q3 - Q7)

During the course of this assessment, several A-team members expressed concern that E&O activities are widespread, if not pervasive, yet are seldom properly planned for. One reason for this is that E&O efforts are often embedded in programs or included as a function in the duties of non-E&O staff. Another reason is definitional; for example, there is disagreement that technical assistance and technical training constitute E&O work, and also that the reverse can be true. Three programs discussed question 3, one program discussed question 4, and two programs discussed questions 5, 6, and 7. The questions were stated as follows:

Question 3: Are E&O activities addressed directly in the program's annual work plan, your personal work plan, other program staff's annual work plans, or your position description?

Question 4: If E&O activities are addressed directly in the program plan, how did they get there?

Question 5: Do you know of other programs engaged in E&O activities that benefit your program?

¹ Partners often have better access to facilities for meetings/conferences than DNR, contracts with supporting players (e.g., local purveyors of coffee, meals, etc.), and may get better turn-out of relevant audiences (e.g., mailing lists of their members and interested publics).

Question 6: Are E&O activities that benefit other programs addressed in either your program’s annual work plan or your personal work plan?

Question 7: Do you have enough time to accomplish your program’s planned E&O goals?

Summary

E&O work planning is seldom clear and directive, and does not support accountability. Given problems related to E&O goal existence and clarity, and the relative lack of direction and support from these goals (discussed above), it may not be surprising that work planning discussions were sparse. This raises the question of how E&O work planning discussed here compares to that in non-responding programs. This reservation notwithstanding, conclusions can be drawn, and it seems that although programs may include E&O goals and activities in their work plans, few carry these through into personal work plans and position descriptions (PDs).² This means that E&O activities may not be executed—especially if they depend on the enthusiasm of employees and support from their supervisors. Another weakness is that E&O activities, even when planned for (or by) field level staff, are often treated as expendable in the face of heavy workloads and unplanned events, as discussed for the topic above. A further reduction of E&O carry through may occur when E&O activities are conducted by LTEs who do not benefit from a formal work planning process (for their E&O responsibilities, at least). Reliance on partnerships to lead or implement E&O activities poses yet another challenge, as it may trade away message control and effectiveness for increased efficiency.

Programs do not communicate or coordinate well on E&O. Although programs are aware of E&O activities performed by other programs that benefit them, and perform E&O work that benefits other programs, the communications supporting these collaborative efforts seem to be mostly informal and/or result by chance. Additional impediments to effective collaboration include silo vision, an affliction that was also mentioned in discussions of other assessment topics, and a tendency for staff at all levels to cling to the familiarity of their ruts (another term several times mentioned).³

² This conclusion follows from the observations of a relatively small number of interviewees (three programs). They noted that LTEs generally do not have work plans or PDs, and one stated that since their program did not have E&O goals, it was impossible to carry anything through to a personal work plan or PD.

³ This is not to say that staff members deliberately go out of their way to avoid collaboration, but there appear to be ample opportunities for them to pass up E&O opportunities that may arise. Foresters, being somewhat reticent as a group (this was noted by several interviewees), may be less likely to collaborate, as they were also cited as passing up opportunities to engage the public in classroom settings and such.

3 Messages (Q8 - Q11)

Given the findings discussed for topics 1 and 2 above, problems with E&O messaging could be anticipated, especially with cross-program coordination. Four questions were used to address this: six programs discussed question 8, three programs discussed question 9, one program discussed question 10, and two discussed question 11. The questions were stated as follows:

Q8: How does your program develop E&O messages?

Q9: Do you or the program staff doing E&O work cross-check messages with other programs or divisions (and, do you personally do this and/or is it done by staff)?

Question 10: Have there been situations where messages conflict?

Question 11: Do you know of opportunities for message cross-checking (collaboration) that aren't already being practiced?

Summary

Message development is neither uniform nor well-coordinated across Forestry programs. It seems to be most effective and efficient when partners are involved, and for several programs these relationships are formal and well defined (e.g., where programs distribute partner-supplied grant money). For programs without messaging partners, or where partner relationships are informal, message development appears to be more challenging. Some programs employ well-considered protocols and may use and/or conduct research to support their efforts; other programs use ad hoc approaches or rely on messages developed by partners.

Message cross-checking is also not uniform. Programs with strong partnerships and/or grant funding arrangements follow this practice most carefully. Some Forestry programs have cross checked more frequently with external (to Forestry) partners than with internal partners.

Message conflicts are more frequent with external partners than with internal ones. Although only two interviewees discussed message conflicts, the comments they made are consistent with other message-related question responses (noted above). Conflicts seem to be more frequent between Forestry programs and external to Forestry) partners than between two or more Forestry programs. In either case, there are ample opportunities for improvement, including the need for more consistency across DNR regions. There are also opportunities to cross-check and collaborate with several other State of Wisconsin agencies.

Messaging shortcomings invite further study. First, the contrast in message development and cross-checking across Forestry programs is striking. Some programs function as “well-oiled machines” (as described by

program managers) while other programs struggle. Comparison of these programs' approaches could produce useful insights.

Second, invasive forest pests and climate change are widely recognized as presenting both challenges and opportunities for Forestry programs, not the least of which are to increase public awareness and provide critical services. Yet these threats seem not to be widely recognized or accommodated in messaging strategies or their development, much less in program work plans (at least not as discussed in these interviews).⁴

Third, mention was also made of several message campaigns that were initiated and eventually abandoned. For example, one program researched and developed goals (one related specifically to E&O) but then failed to publicize the effort. Interviewees mentioned budget problems, inertia, and silo vision as possible reasons for these failures to implement or communicate; they also thought that failure to recognize the value of education and outreach may have played a part, as well as failure to adopt a sufficiently long-term view.

4 Unplanned activities (Q12)

Planned E&O activities are obviously important to the Division of Forestry, but unplanned activities can be important as well. Three programs chose to discuss these activities (Note: A-team members extensively documented both planned and unplanned activities in their inventories, which may explain part of this somewhat low response rate). The single question was stated as follows:

Q12: What were the program's most important three reactive/unplanned activities this past year? How did you determine that they are important (what reasoning or criteria did you use)?

Summary

The three interviewees who discussed this question deal extensively with unplanned events—either due to the nature of their work (e.g., provide technical assistance to address industry queries, resolve forestry related conflicts), or because of the scope and severity of event consequences and their program's responsibilities in dealing with them (e.g., address fire danger related to storm damage and drought).

Unplanned events are often important. This is because of their impact on natural resources, their importance to partners and/or audiences, their political dimensions or consequences, or because their resolution reflects on Forestry's or DNR's public image.

⁴ Urban Forestry and Forest Health are notable exceptions.

Managers have found innovative ways to anticipate and deal with unplanned events. For example, Forest Products monitors industry trends and works proactively with partners, State Forests looks for better ways to distribute educational materials and work with neighboring communities (often by participating on local government/public committees and boards), and Fire Prevention designs public information campaigns to facilitate easy modification, repackaging, and distribution. Forest Products will soon add three new positions to provide better insights into local (district) needs, and to be more visible to audiences and partners. This is important because it helps the program enhance its presence in a community and keep a finger on its pulse, and to reduce the occurrence of unplanned activities and thereby become more efficient.

5 Tools (Q13 – Q14)

When we discuss tools or activities we're really describing how education and outreach are delivered or produced, with or without help from partners, and using resources of various sorts. Six programs discussed question 13, and two programs discussed question 14. The questions were stated as follows:

Q13: What are the most important two or three tools (or activities) you use to accomplish E&O goals and objectives? Does location of each tool's use matter - that is, does localized expertise or knowledge of an area enhance the effectiveness of the tool's use, or could this be done from a central location where it MAY be more efficiently done?

Q14: Can partners or others be enlisted to substitute for this tool's use or assist with its use (if not currently involved)?

Summary

Partners are considered important tools for accomplishing E&O tasks. A-team members discussed their most important tools and activities at considerable length. They view partnerships as among the most important of their tools, and stated that they must be developed and then nurtured or maintained, which requires repeated or continuous allocations of attention and time.⁵

Research is considered an important tool for developing E&O. Another significant finding is that research is considered an important tool for developing E&O. This includes research used to support technical training and assistance, including primary research (e.g., studies conducted by forest health entomologists and plant pathologists), and secondary research (e.g., searches of science and business journals and archives for published

⁵ Differences in the effort required to nurture or maintain partnerships are striking, and vary with a wide range of partner, program, and situation-specific characteristics (that will be discussed in topics ahead).

research, which is then used to improve program capacity or distribute to audiences). In addition, programs use research to identify audience wants and needs, and to measure E&O efficiency and effectiveness, the latter including changes in audience awareness, attitudes, behaviors, and other constructs.

Local staff determines the effectiveness of education and outreach. Perhaps the most widely discussed feature of E&O tool use is locality. For example, when asked if personal relationships between program staff and foresters in local areas made a difference, one interviewee responded “The longer I’m in this program the more I realize that local dynamics drive everything that happens in a community. I may drive up and talk to a community about what works best, but the local DNR people who will be on the planning committee make it happen.” An important qualification to this judgment was also discussed...repeatedly: participation by local Forestry staff requires the support of their supervisors, especially in situations where workload may be (or may become) an issue.

Credibility and effectiveness should be considered in relation to localized services. When discussing the efficiency and effectiveness of relying on local talent, one interviewee contrasted this with E&O specialists working at an area or district level: whereas the area specialist might appear to be more efficient, local talent is generally more effective, and may also be more efficient when considered over a longer term. In addition, local staff and partners are often more effective and/or credible in delivering Forestry’s messages than someone working from outside the local area.

E&O tools provide benefits beyond their immediate time of use and context. Interviewees also thought that E&O tools can produce benefits beyond the immediate time and context in which they are used, especially when implemented locally. For example, DNR staff can build rapport with an audience or local populace, and perhaps even trust, in the course of providing E&O services. This may also apply to partnerships. One interviewee noted: “In the case of some activities, like Smokey Bear, you probably couldn’t show that his appearance at an event prevented a single fire, but given the community event at which he appeared, you’re building awareness...and a community presence.” This notion was also extended to DNR participation in partner sponsored events. Several interviewees noted that these often provide face-to-face contact with an interested, if not also motivated audience, and this type of information sharing can be much more efficient than cold calling or direct mail campaigns.⁶ And although DNR may not always be controlling the message(s) delivered at these events, it is connecting with audiences and partners on a personal basis and working to gain their trust.

⁶ Although information can be disseminated in many ways, face-to-face contact often affords better opportunities to establish or build relationships and establish trust, which may lead to more receptive audiences in the longer term, and to audiences that are more readily convinced or persuaded by DNR’s messages in the future.

6 Audiences (Q16 - Q18) ⁷

The focus of E&O efforts are generally the audiences to be reached, although goals related to partnerships may also be considered. Three questions were developed to investigate this topic. Four programs discussed question 16, two programs discussed question 17, and eight programs discussed question 18. The questions were stated as follows:

Q16: Do you and/or the program consider your audiences with respect to program strategy or work effort required, or do you take them more or less as given?

Q17: Who are the program's predefined audiences? For example, who are the audiences required by grant programs, laws, or partnering contracts?

Q18: Who are the program's most important (explain how defined) three audiences?

Summary

Many factors influence the extent to which Forestry programs consider their audiences.

Division of Forestry programs vary considerably in the extent to which they know and consider their audiences. Some programs use research to explore audience characteristics, and to develop and target messages or deliver services, while others rely on partners to provide audiences and specify message content, thus operating more in a supporting or secondary role. Several factors determine the approach taken, including: (1) Support from bureau directors and upper level management (i.e., E&O coordinators may be given a free hand, or a program may be restricted from pursuing certain audiences), (2) Competence and enthusiasm (and even passion) of the staff members who plan and deliver this work, (3) The nature of a program's partnerships, and (4) Resources such as money and time (and, by implication, available staff). Related complications discussed by several interviewees are that partners can be audiences and audiences can become partners, and Forestry program staffs may even be seen as audiences by some of their partners (e.g., the Nurseries Program would like to inform each newly hired forester about the services and products it offers).

Forestry programs serve their audiences in many ways. Another important finding is that some programs extend their outreach activities beyond their usual areas of interest and responsibility; for example, by participating (and/or encouraging participation) in programs and committees of the communities where they are based or that they serve. These activities reflect the importance of building broad support among audiences, not only for a particular program, but for all the work the Division of Forestry does.

⁷ Question 14, which ended the previous topic, was repeated as question 15 due to clerical error, so this topic begins with question 16.

New approaches are recommended for reaching the unengaged. One long-standing problem addressed by several interviewees is the struggle to reach the unengaged (i.e., those who may eventually need a program's services but are presently unaware of them). Many partnerships provide access to motivated audiences, which may increase program efficiency while missing the unengaged (i.e., sometimes characterized as preaching to the choir). Several interviewees thought that a more promising approach would consider audiences first and *then* identify relevant partners to work with. Desired audience outcomes would also be specified and activities planned (e.g., to increase awareness, change attitudes and/or behaviors, build rapport, establish trust, etc.). This approach would not only reach the unengaged (or provide better opportunities for doing so), but could also sidestep problems associated with disagreements about what constitutes education, outreach, and technical training and assistance.

7 Partners and roles (Q19 - Q22)

The questions discussed for this topic focused on Forestry's partners for education and outreach and their roles. Seven programs discussed question 19, two programs discussed question 20, four programs discussed question 21, and two programs discussed question 22. The questions were stated as follows:

Q19: Who are the program's most important partners for accomplishing E&O goals and objectives? How did you determine that they are important?

Q20: Do certain partners help in particular ways?

Q21: What E&O activities does the Division of Forestry address that other agencies, organizations, and partners do not address as well?

Q22: What E&O activities do other agencies, organizations and partners address more efficiently and/or effectively than the Division of Forestry?

Summary

Division of Forestry partners have unique needs, and their contributions vary as well.

Assessment team interviewees identified a wide range of partners and described the reasons for their importance. They noted that partners help in particular ways, and discussed the activities at which their programs and partners excelled. As might be expected, partner importance varies with the type(s) of contribution made and with Forestry program needs. For example, some partners provide access to specific audiences in efficient ways (e.g., planned events where a partner provides or specifies location-relevant content, arranges for meeting space, supplies an interested, if not motivated, audience, and/or handles other logistics). Some partners contribute their expertise, some contribute specialized tools and facilities, some help to influence policy makers at state and local levels of government, and others provide money that Forestry programs can distribute as incentives (these partners may also

specify goals and/or guidelines). Other partners engage in forestry tasks for profit, and may take training as a requirement for doing so (e.g., consulting foresters, MFL plan writers).

Forestry contributes to E&O in ways that many of its partners cannot. While discussing E&O activities that Forestry addresses well, several interviewees cited the administration of federal grant programs, and that the Division has been the leader when it comes to fire danger. Several others focused on sustainable forestry management and stewardship for natural resources, noting that Forestry is well positioned to convey these messages, and can do so without a perceived agenda (i.e., surveys have shown that DNR is believed to care about *both* trees and people, which sets it apart from many environmental groups). But interviewees also expressed concerns. Some thought that the sustainable forestry message has not been effectively communicated to the general public, and that DNR may be losing its ability to effectively lobby for natural resource stewardship in years to come. Specifically, audiences are changing in their recreational pursuits and how they get their information, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to reach young people with environmental messages, or to involve them in the outdoors. Several interviewees wanted DNR to do more to address these challenges, which is a sentiment expressed by staff in other DNR departments, and by educators in other institutions and settings.⁸

8 Partnerships (Q23 - Q25)

The preceding topic addressed important partners and their roles; this topic addresses partnership dynamics. Five programs discussed question 23, three programs discussed question 24, and no program discussed question 25. These questions were stated as follows:

Q23: Which three of the program's partnerships are working especially well (choose one or two if you prefer)?

On what do you base these evaluations?

Q24: Which partnership is not working well? On what do you base this evaluation?

Q25: Are there partnerships in which Forestry is just helping the partner accomplish their goals and objectives and not its (DNR's) own?

Summary

⁸ Several DNR research projects and program initiatives have tried to discover why young people are not taking up hunting and fishing, and to find ways to reverse these trends. Several interviewees were aware of these efforts, and also noted that DNR is in a unique position to address these challenges—especially with respect to sustainable forestry.

The partnerships identified as working especially well may be characterized by one or more of the following: complementary educational approaches and/or venues, synergy and/or energy, and specific expertise. Interviewees also cited some partnerships as working well and yet needing some improvement.

Successful partnerships depend on shared understanding of needs and responsibilities. Some partnerships are based on contract, but most are not. All seem to depend on personal relationships to some extent, and these may be longstanding but are not necessarily so. One key requirement for success seems to be a shared understanding of needs and responsibilities, and it also helps if personal interests are in sync. Partnership success also varies with how one partner's strengths and weaknesses complicate or compensate for those of the other(s), and with whether adequate time is available for partnership development and nurturing or maintenance.

Partnerships also vary in their functioning depending on the E&O issues faced, and on whether Forestry supervisors support or encourage their employees' participation in them (e.g., in programs with field staff that have E&O opportunities). Functioning also varies with changes in audiences and their needs and preferences, with changes in technologies and social/communication environments, and also according to location—whether partners are available for support where and when they're needed.

New technology is important to education and outreach, but barriers to embracing it exist.

Changes in technology present both opportunities and challenges for education and outreach. Several interviewees noted the importance of the Internet in shaping how Forestry interacts with partners, serves its audiences, and harnesses the abilities of its staff. Another interviewee worried about employee willingness and ability to keep up with the pace of change, and about supervisor reluctance, because of demanding workloads, to permit employee use of the Internet on Division of Forestry time. Differences in approach to the Internet and use of social media were also discussed, especially with respect to current and future generations of young people. These are the citizens who will both consume Forestry services and support stewardship efforts through their contributions to tax revenues, their willingness to comply with regulations, and their contributions of time and other resources to outdoor recreation and environmental causes. Effective use of the Internet for education and outreach is therefore thought to be of great importance.

9 Resources (Q26)

Effective functioning of Forestry programs depends on an adequate supply of resources. A single question was asked to address this, which is stated as follows (four programs discussed it):

Q26: You listed many resources on your task list. Does the program have all the resources necessary to accomplish its E&O goals and objectives, or specific tasks? If not, or not enough of them, what's missing or deficient?

Summary

Several resources were cited as consistently deficient or absent. These include the following: (1) A coordinated plan for all programs to engage in education, outreach, and technical assistance; (2) Adequate time and money to support E&O efforts; (3) Specialized help in defining E&O goals and objectives, and how to achieve them; (4) Management support and encouragement at all levels of the organization for education, outreach, and technical assistance; and (5) Dedication to evaluation of E&O efforts both before and after the fact, plus resources sufficient for doing this work.

Of these resources, the one cited most frequently and needed most is the clear and unequivocal commitment of Forestry leadership to education, outreach, and technology transfer. Interviewees thought that this commitment could be demonstrated through the following:

- Leadership would publicly confirm the importance of education, outreach, and technology transfer activities, and require supervisors at all levels to support employees who pursue these tasks.
- Leadership would provide the funding and additional staff needed to accomplish E&O goals instead of adding tasks to current employee workloads.
- Leadership would also work to ensure that E&O activities are no longer the automatic first choice for reductions, suspension, or elimination in times of budget constraints, and also specify how more balanced trade-offs with other activity types could be made.
- Leadership would publicly recognize that E&O activities serve a critical leveraging function that can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of other Forestry and DNR activities, in both the near term and for generations to come.

A shared understanding is needed of what constitutes education, outreach, and technical assistance. Definition is essential to measurement and management, and current ambiguities seem to cause or contribute to problems. These problems include misunderstandings between managers and their staffs, difficulties in coordinating E&O messages and activities across programs, disagreements over the usefulness of particular activities (e.g., State Fair, parades, partner sponsored events), and suboptimal program efficiency and effectiveness. In addition to a shared understanding, a four-step approach to program planning could be used to address these issues (as suggested by several interviewees): (1) specify goals and objectives (e.g., develop a partnership, change audience awareness, attitudes and/or behaviors, transfer technology, build rapport, establish trust, etc.), (2) identify important audiences to reach (if not included with previous step), (3) specify activities or tools to use, and (4) identify the partner or partners needed (if any) to accomplish this.

10 Evaluation (Q27 - Q29)

For this topic, A-team members identified their most effective and ineffective activities and described how they had determined this. They also discussed how these activities could be improved. A brief introduction helped to frame this topic for the interviews: “Evaluation often addresses effectiveness, and several different approaches may be used. One approach is to measure your effort—things like print or TV placements, number of brochures mailed, or post-presentation reviews (by attendees); another is to measure changes in your audiences or publics—things like awareness, attitude, or behavior.”

Six programs discussed question 27, five programs discussed question 28, and two programs discussed question 29. These questions were stated as follows:

Q27: Of all the activities or tasks you included on your task list, which three are/were the most effective? How do you measure effectiveness, and do you also consider results, however measured, with respect to goals and objectives?

Q28: Of all the activities or tasks you included on your task list, which is the least effective? How do you measure effectiveness, and do you also consider results, however measured, with respect to goals and objectives?

Q29: How can these activities be improved (e.g., if you could suggest one or two things to improve any or all the program’s E&O activities, what would that be)?

Summary

Effective E&O activities can be identified, but seldom are rigorously assessed. In fact, rigorous evaluative research was cited for only a handful of Forestry programs, and much of this work had been done on a national scale by partners or in neighboring states. One difficulty in measuring effectiveness is finding measures that accommodate multiple activities and isolate the influence attributable to each. Another problem relates to time frame—whether one considers short term or long term effects. For example, an activity may be ineffective in changing behavior in the short term, but may foster increased awareness, produce positive attitude change, and build rapport and trust that influence future behavior, and do so over a longer term (e.g., years to a lifetime).

In situations where effectiveness has been evaluated, if not formally measured, interviewees said that the most effective activities accomplished one or more of the following:

- Addressed shortages in a community’s forestry expertise by providing education or technical assistance.
- Built or strengthened a community’s infrastructure or capacity for doing forestry work.
- Provided grant money that attracted matching funds, thus leveraging DNR resources.

- Developed partnerships that could deliver education, outreach, and/or technical assistance for the program, or lobby policy makers on DNR’s behalf.

Face-to-face contact is widely viewed as the most effective approach to education and outreach.⁹

Although it may not be viewed as *efficient* in the short term, in the long term it may be highly efficient, due largely to the durability of effects and reduced need to re-educate or re-train. In addition, there are other positive effects, including putting a ‘human face’ on Wisconsin DNR, creating contacts for public interaction, and engaging community leaders who will further communicate Forestry’s messages to larger audiences (such as members of homeowner associations, local government, and recreation groups).

Planning with goals, measures, and evaluation in mind would improve E&O efficiency and effectiveness.

Several interviewees thought that marketing expertise could improve program effectiveness by identifying target markets and developing effective E&O strategies for reaching them. This type of approach also could be used to address Division-wide disagreements over activity effectiveness—for example, Forestry’s participation in the Wisconsin State Fair and local parades. For some programs these activities are regarded as effective and efficient ways of maintaining awareness and building rapport. Other programs view them as inefficient and ineffective. Several interviewees suggested that these differences could be resolved with an ordered approach that included the following: identify and rank E&O goals, specify objectives (e.g., raise awareness, change attitudes or behaviors, transfer technology, build rapport and trust), target audiences, and choose enabling or contributing partnerships (this approach was also discussed for the Audiences and Resources topics above).

DNR’s website and social media are considered both effective and efficient. DNR website visitors and social media participants seek out Forestry’s information and are receptive to its messages. Unfortunately, it is difficult to evaluate these tools’ effectiveness with respect to specific E&O goals.¹⁰

DNR’s recent website and social media successes also call attention to changes in the audiences Forestry is trying to reach. Several interviewees were seeking better tools and marketing expertise to help understand these audiences,

⁹ E&O professionals generally agree that face-to-face contact is the most effective approach, although few programs evaluate this in a systematic and quantitative way, or even qualitatively using a consistent and controlled approach (Forest Health is an exception). Measuring effectiveness is difficult and sometimes controversial, as shown by the many debates over testing in public education.

¹⁰ Evaluations of these tools generally focus on “hits” or traffic counts, and do not address changes in visitor awareness, attitude, or behavior that may have been influenced as a consequence of exposure.

and argued for a process approach to identifying important attitudes and behaviors to change, as well as how best to accomplish this (as discussed above). In addition to marketing expertise, a rethinking of the skills required of new Forestry hires was recommended—especially for field foresters, as they were repeatedly cited as a highly effective means for accomplishing education, outreach, and technical training. As one interviewee noted, the world is rapidly changing, and given the apparent directions of change, the skill sets that worked best for the last 20 years may not work as well for the next 20.

11 Opportunities (Q30)

A single question for this topic allowed A-team members to discuss new opportunities to accomplish E&O goals (opportunities not previously addressed for any topic). Five programs discussed it. The question was stated as follows:

Q30: What new opportunities (internal and external) do you know of that could help the program accomplish its E&O goals and objectives? How difficult or easy would it be to take advantage of each?

Summary

Coordination and integration of E&O efforts are needed, as well as support from Forestry leadership. A-team members cited several new E&O opportunities in these discussions, as well as several they had discussed previously. One recurring *theme* addressed as an opportunity is the need for better coordination and/or integration of education and outreach across Forestry programs, and with other departments. Another recurring theme is the importance of strong support for E&O activities from Forestry leadership: without a clear public declaration of this support, E&O activities will continue to suffer due to workload pressures, supervisor preferences, and budget constraints. Inclusion of E&O responsibilities in the PDs of employees who do this work is an opportunity that would effectively demonstrate this support.

In addition to these general themes, some interviewees saw opportunities in specific projects or programs that have been tested and could be extended over time and to different audiences. Several also cited the Internet and social media as presenting opportunities to capture new audiences and future generations of natural resource consumers and stewards.

Marketing expertise and social media skills would improve E&O results. Several interviewees said that marketing expertise was a critical need for their program and the Division, and that this tool would help them identify and capture market opportunities for their products and services. Another thought that a forestry

“evangelist” with strong high tech and social media skills was needed to effectively promote the sustainable forestry message. Interviewees also recognized that these capabilities would probably require new full-time E&O positions.

12 Barriers (Q31)

This topic, with its single question, allowed interviewees to address barriers that prevent their program from fully engaging in activities or seizing new opportunities. Six programs discussed this question, which was stated as follows:

Q31: Do barriers exist that prevent the program from engaging in some long-standing activities or seizing new opportunities? If barriers exist, what are they?

Summary

Barriers to E&O exist in terms of resources, practices, and system structure. Resource related barriers often involve shortages of money, time, staff, and/or expertise. For example, when field foresters are overwhelmed by their workloads, their E&O responsibilities are often the first to be cut or reduced. Similarly, several Forestry programs would be much more efficient if at least part of one full-time position could be assigned to coordinate E&O activities, and/or if E&O responsibilities could be included in the position descriptions of relevant staff. Also, an absence of marketing expertise was noted as an important barrier for several programs, and as contributing to confusion and discouragement in one of them.¹¹

Practice related barriers include restrictions on out-of-state travel, failure to fully engage partners to deliver Forestry messages (i.e., the “drive the bus” problem), and defaults on previous agreements with partners. Failure to carry through on new or experimental programs was cited as another barrier to E&O improvement. Lack of supervisory support and encouragement for E&O activities was seen as a practice related barrier, but may also be considered as structural or resource related.

Structural barriers include lack of control over partner practices and message delivery. Changing audiences and forestry practices comprise another structural problem, and the inability to adapt to these changes has both practice and structural components. An agency culture that seems not to value E&O was cited as a structural barrier, as was lack of empowerment for field staff to engage in E&O work (also discussed as a practice and resource barrier). Individual personalities, preferences, and agendas are structural features that can prevent the seizing of E&O opportunities, and impede coordination, collaboration, and integration of activities across the Division and with

¹¹ Confusion and discouragement are considered barriers in their own right, not only for education and outreach, but for general program functioning.

other programs. Insufficient field-level accountability is another structural barrier, as is the silo-like structure of DNR's organization, not just Forestry's, and the reluctance of Forestry leadership and staff to try new things.

Appendix: Questions Discussed by Each A-team Member*

Question	Question Group	Steve Hubbard - Forest Product Services	Laura Wyatt - Urban Forestry	Melissa Baker - State Lands	Jolene Ackerman - Forest Protection, Wildland Urban Interface	Catherine Koele - Forest Protection, Wildfire Prevention	Carol Nielsen - Private Forestry, statewide focus	Mary Ann Buerzow - Private forestry, field focus	Kirsten Heid - Statewide, division level E&O for forestry	Pat Murphy - Nursery Program	Colleen Robinson Klug - Forest Health Protection Program	Total
1	Goals and Objectives - 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
2			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
3	Work Planning - 2		3	3			3					
4							4					
5								5	5			10
6		6							6			
7		7						7				
8	Messages - 3	8	8		8	8	8	8	8			
9		9			9	9			9			14
10							10					
11							11	11				
12	Activities - 4	12		12		12						3
13	Tools - 5		13		13	13	13	13	13	13		
14			14									10
15		15										
16	Audiences - 6			16	16			16		16		
17				17				17				15
18		18	18	18		18	18	18	18	18	18	
19	Partners and Roles - 7	19	19		19		19		19	19	19	
20		20			20							16
21		21			21	21		21	21			
22				22		22						
23	Partnerships - 8	23				23		23	23	23		8
24			24			24					24	
25												
26	Resources - 9		26	26			26	26			26	5
27	Evaluation - 10		27		27	27	27	27	27	27	27	
28			28		28	28		28	28		28	16
29		29									29	
30	Opportunities - 11			30	30	30	30	30	30	30		7
31	Barriers - 12	31		31	31	31	31	31	31	31		8

*Questions 14 and 15 were identical due to clerical error. Interviews for Jolene Ackerman and Catherine Koele were summarized as a single program (Fire), as were interviews for Carol Nielsen and Mary Ann Buerzow (Private Forestry)