



# Wisconsin Council on Forestry

Tony Evers, Governor  
CouncilOnForestry.wi.gov

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Reply to: P.O. Box 7921  
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Email: [hittle.tomj@gmail.com](mailto:hittle.tomj@gmail.com)

To: The Honorable Tony Evers, Secretary Steven Little, Senator Romaine Quinn, Representative Jeff Mursau

## **Subject: State Lands Biennial Harvest Reporting**

The Wisconsin Council on Forestry is submitting our report required by Statute 28.025(3)(a), created by Wisconsin Act 166 (2005), related to timber harvest levels reported to the Council by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR is required to submit to the Council, biennially, the total timber harvest on property owned by the state and under the jurisdiction of the department.

If the department submits a report indicating that the timber harvest in any biennium is less than 90 percent, or more than 110 percent, of the allowable timber harvest, the Council on Forestry shall prepare a report containing the reasons for noncompliance and recommendations on methods of ensuring that the timber harvest is consistent with the annual allowable timber harvest established by the department. The Council on Forestry shall submit the report to the governor, to the department, and to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature.

In the fall of 2023, the Division of Forestry submitted a report to the Council that provided two figures for the 2021-2022 calendar years, indicating harvest levels during this period of 89 percent and 112 percent of the biennial harvest goal. With both measures outside of the stated 90 and 110 percent sideboards, the Council is required by statute to provide this report. (Please note, the methodology used by the Department to report the two figures is attached. This Department report can also be found on the Council's website and links are provided at the end of this document.)

The Council's conclusion after reviewing the report is that the slight deviations from the harvest goal for the 2021 – 2022 biennium do not raise concerns and do not necessitate recommendations for future adjustments.

The Council recognizes the importance and value of planning and monitoring appropriate harvest levels on state owned forestlands to assure management is consistent with master plans which balance social, ecological, and economic considerations and provide a sustainable harvest level that supports our state's forest industry.

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Jordan Skiff

Jennifer  
Youngblood

Dr. William Van  
Lopik

The Council also recognizes that there are complexities and various methodologies to appropriately calculate, identify, and achieve annual or short-term harvest levels. Act 166 was silent on the metrics and methodology to be used by the department and acknowledges the inherent challenges by allowing for a +/- 10 percent biennium variance. The Council is committed to additional conversations with the DNR going forward to evaluate planning and reporting methodology.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Thomas Hittle". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'T' and a stylized 'H'.

Thomas Hittle  
Wisconsin Council on Forestry Chair

\*Please note that due to the nature of their positions, Representatives Jeffrey Mursau and Katrina Shankland, Senators Romaine Quinn and Jeff Smith, State Forester Heather Berklund, and Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest Supervisor Jenn Youngblood abstain as signatories.

### **Reporting Methodology**

To plan, manage and report on sustainable harvest levels, the department sets an annual allowable harvest acreage goal using an annual average of acreage planned for harvest over the next 15 years. This acreage (long-term harvest goal or “LTHG”) is identified using the Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) which is the database housing forest reconnaissance (recon) data, GIS spatial representation of stands, and timber sale information for state owned lands. Allowable harvest is also influenced by department level management objectives, as the Division of Forestry’s management must align with Department Master Plans.

Annually, Department foresters evaluate areas identified for management in WisFIRS and either:

1. Establish timber sales OR
2. Determine a timber sale is not currently viable and subsequently defer management to a later date.

Typically, a timber sale would be determined not to be currently viable because the stand is not silviculturally ready for harvest, and this may occur for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:

- Stand conditions are such that the originally identified date for management must be rescheduled to a future date,
- Original data was inaccurate and required updating,
- Stand is small/isolated, and management can be deferred (while still maintaining silvicultural viability) to a future date to combine with other stands to make saleable

The following table provides a summary of the department’s 2021-2022 harvest acreage figures and the percentages used for these reporting purposes.

<b>CY 21-22</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of LTHG</b>
LTHG	38,346 acres	--
Evaluated (Established + Deferred)	43,097 acres	112%
<b>Established</b>	<b>34,092 acres</b>	<b>89%</b>
Deferred	9,005 acres	23%

The full DNR report can be found here:

[https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Documents/Act166-Report-CY21-22\\_Full.pdf](https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Documents/Act166-Report-CY21-22_Full.pdf)