

Wisconsin Council of Forestry
Operational Guidelines

Revisions Approved: January 2026

Council Charge (Chapter 26.02)

(<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/26/02>)

1. DUTIES: The council on forestry shall advise the governor, the legislature, the department of natural resources, and other state agencies, as determined to be appropriate by the council, on all of the following topics as they affect forests located in this state:
 - (a) The protection of forests from fire, insects, and disease.
 - (b) The practice of sustainable forestry, as defined in s. [28.04 \(1\) \(e\)](#).
 - (c) Reforestation and forestry genetics.
 - (d) Management and protection of urban forests.
 - (e) Increasing the public's knowledge and awareness of forestry issues.
 - (f) Forestry research.
 - (g) Increasing the economic development of the forestry industry and employment in the forestry industry.
 - (h) Marketing and use of forest products.
 - (i) Legislation that impacts on the management of forest lands in this state.
 - (j) Staffing and funding needs for forestry programs conducted by the state.
2. REPORT: The council on forestry shall prepare a biennial report on the status of the state's forest resources and forestry industry. The report shall include a summary of each of the following:
 - (k) The magnitude, nature, and extent of the forest resources in this state.
 - (l) The current use in this state for forest products and the benefits that these forest products provide to the state.
 - (m) The projected future demand for forest products and the projected benefits that these forest products will provide to the state in the future.
 - (n) The types of owners and forms of ownership that apply to forests in this state, including the reasons why persons own forest land.
 - (o) The success of existing incentives that are offered to stimulate the development of forest resources.
 - (p) The possible economic opportunities in this state that may result if improved forest-product marketing, and increased business dealing in or use of forest products, occurs in this state.
 - (q) Recommendations for increasing the economic development of the forestry industry and employment in the forestry industry.
 - (r) The effect of state and local governmental laws and policy on forestry management and the location of markets for forest products.
 - (s) Recommendations as to staffing and funding needs for forestry programs and other conservation programs related to forestry that are conducted by the state to support and enhance the development of forest resources.
 - (t) Recommendations as to the need to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of forestry issues.
 - (u) The council on forestry shall submit the report under this subsection no later than June 1 of each odd-numbered year for distribution to the governor and to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature under s. [13.172 \(3\)](#). The first report shall be submitted no later than June 1, 2005. Each report shall cover the 24 month period ending on the December 31 immediately preceding the date of the

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report. **History:** [2001 a. 109](#); [2011 a. 32](#).

Council Membership (Chapter 15.347)

(<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/15/II/347/19>)

19. Council on Forestry

(a) There is created in the department of natural resources a council of forestry consisting of:

1. The chief state forester or his or her designee.
2. One member of the senate.
3. One member of the senate.
4. One member of the assembly.
5. One member of the assembly.
6. One member who represents the interests of a forest products company that owns and manages large tracts of private forest land that supply raw materials to the forest products industry.
7. One member who represents the interests of owners of nonindustrial, private forest land who manage the land to produce ecological, economic, and social benefits.
8. One member who represents the interests of counties that have county forests within their boundaries.
9. One member who represents the interests of the paper and pulp industry.
10. One member who represents the interests of the lumber industry.
11. One member who represents the interests of nonprofit conservation organizations whose purposes include the conservation and use of forest resources.
12. One member who is a forester who engages in the practice of providing consultation services on forestry issues.
13. One member who represents the interests of schools of forestry within the state that have curricula in the management of forest resources that are accredited by the Society of American Foresters.
14. One member who represents the interests of persons who engage in the practice of conservation education.
15. One member who represents the interests of persons who are members of labor unions that are affiliated with the forestry industry.
16. One member who represents the interests of persons who are engaged in the practice of urban and community forestry.
17. One member who represents the interests of persons who are members of the Society of American Foresters.
18. One member who represents the interests of persons who are members of an organization of timber producers.
19. One person who represents the interests of persons who are engaged in an industry that uses secondary wood.
20. One member who is employed by the federal department of agriculture, forest service, who shall be a nonvoting member.

(b) Each member specified in par. (a) shall be appointed by the governor.

(d) The governor shall annually appoint a chairperson for the council from among its members before the first meeting of each year, and the chairperson, at the first meeting of each year,

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shall annually appoint the vice chairperson and secretary from among the council's members. Any of these appointees may be appointed for successive terms.

(e) The council shall meet 4 times each year and shall also meet on the call of the chairperson of the council or on the call of a majority of its members. Notwithstanding s.[15.09 \(3\)](#), the council shall meet at such locations within this state as may be designated by the chairperson of the council or by a majority of its members.

Executive Committee and Responsibilities

In order to function as a Council and more effectively meet the Council charge an Executive Committee will consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Chief State Forester or designee. The purpose of this committee will be to provide administrative guidance to the Chair in setting meeting agendas and issues that may require input to the Governor, Secretary of Department of Natural Resources and /or State Forester on behalf of the Council between Council meetings.

Council Operations

The Council functions in the following manner:

Meeting dates and locations

The Council will meet minimally every quarter in March, June, September and December or on the call of the Chairperson or on the call of the majority of its members. Any deviation should be discussed at the prior Council meeting. Location of the meetings will be designated by the chairperson or by a majority of the Council.

Agendas

Tentative agendas for the next meeting may be discussed at the preceding meeting. The Executive Committee prepares an agenda to include follow-up items, State Forester's Report, Legislative report and other topics submitted to him/her by Council members. The Executive Committee makes the final decision on what items will be included on the agenda. Agenda items for consideration must be submitted to the Chair 30 days prior to the next meeting. Discussions prior to the Council meeting result in more informed and productive meetings; lead time is needed to obtain input from diverse sources thereby enabling the Council to understand clearly the effect of the decision being made.

Meeting Summaries

A draft of minutes prepared by the DNR will be released by the office of the State Forester for review by the Executive Committee. Following Executive Committee review, the summary will be released to the full membership and interested parties, within 45 days of the meeting.

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Working Groups

The council may use working groups or committees to work on issues. The chair will appoint working group members from among the council membership and, with concurrence of the Executive Committee, other knowledgeable individuals. The chair will also appoint a committee chair.

Ground Rules

1. Member Responsibilities
 - a. Each member will make every effort to attend each meeting. In the event attendance is not possible a member may send a substitute to participate in the meeting but that substitute may not vote independently on new issues, although they may submit a vote for an absent member on a previously stated topic.
 - b. Each member has the responsibility to freely express his/her feelings and perspective on the issues including members of the Executive Committee.
 - c. Each member is responsible for treating other members with respect, courtesy and in a professional manner.
 - d. Each member shall abide by the Chair or Vice Chair's recognition before speaking and not interrupt other speakers.
2. Quorum
 - a. A majority of the membership constitutes a quorum to do business, and a majority of a quorum may act in any matter within the jurisdiction of the council (see statute [15.09\(4\)](#)). A quorum is a simple majority of filled voting member positions plus one. When all positions are filled, the quorum is 11.
3. Process
 - a. The Council will strive to use full consensus as a decision-making process.
 - i. "Consensus" is defined as a point where all Council members can agree to support the decision. The council will strive for consensus by ensuring that all Council members feel they have had an opportunity to explain their position and influence the decision. Discussions will be interest-based, not position-based. Council members agree to clearly articulate the basis for their inability to reach consensus when such a situation arises, and to articulate what could be done to allow them to reach consensus.
 - ii. When full consensus cannot be reached, the Council will vote with a simple majority of those voting being required to pass a motion. Non-voting members and any members who abstain from voting do not count for or against a vote. In the event of a tie vote, the Chair's vote breaks the tie.
4. Audience Participation
 - a. Audience members may participate at the discretion of the chair. Those wishing to participate should stand until recognized by the chair and should focus their comments on the agenda item being discussed.

Open Meetings Law Compliance

The Council on Forestry and all sub-committees charged by the Council, are considered governmental bodies and therefore held to Wisconsin's open meetings laws ([Wisconsin Statutes § 19.81 – 19.98](#)). The Council on Forestry and all committees charged by the Council will follow the rules put forward in the Wisconsin Department of Justice's [Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide](#).

1. The DNR provides public notice of all Council meetings and adheres to Open Meeting

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Laws.

2. Council on Forestry Committees are required to provide notice of their meetings. Any time a simple majority of a quorum of council members convene to discuss topics that are within the jurisdiction of the council, that meeting must be open to the public and publicly noticed. When all member positions are filled, meetings or gatherings that have 6 or more members must be noticed. The following procedure should be used to request public notice:
 - a. Send the Division of Forestry Policy Advisor Associate the following information (best practice to submit 14 business days in advance of the meeting to ensure that the two-week noticing period is met.):
 - i. Name of committee and contact information for team member receiving RSVPs
 - ii. Time beginning/end, date, location (if in person)
 - iii. Virtual meeting registration links/requirements or passcode information
 - iv. Description of agenda items being discussed and if there are decision items, Provide a link to the agenda if applicable.
 1. Agenda items should be detailed – generic terms like ‘old business’, ‘new business’, or ‘miscellaneous updates’ are not allowed unless followed by a list/description of agenda items to be discussed. Identify which agenda items are decision items. Identify which items will not be open to public comment.