



Red Pine and Oak

Reforestation Roundtable

June 10, 2025



Council History

- Early forms of the Council in existence since 1982 when Gov Lee Sherman Dreyfus created the Governor's Council on Forest Productivity.
- In 1987 Gov Tommy Thompson re-created the Council and changed the name to the Governor's Council on Forestry.
- Gov Thompson continued to re-establish the Council with executive orders in 1991, 1995 and 1999.
- In 2002, the Council was formally created in State Statute and name changed to the WI Council on Forestry.

I. 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.

Council Membership – Appointed by the Governor

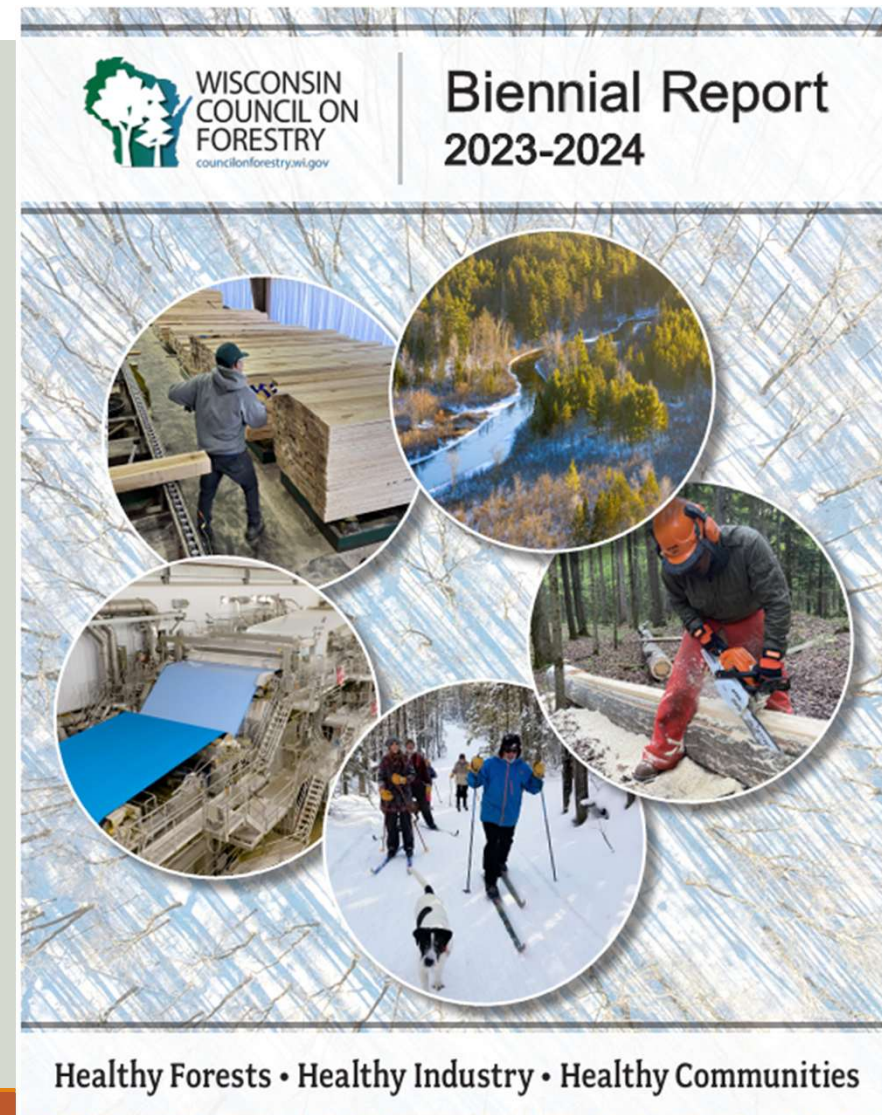
- Chief state forester
- Two members of the senate and assembly
 - Sen. Romain Quinn, Sen. Jamie Wall, Rep. Jeff Mursau, Rep. Lori Palmeri
- Owner/managers of large tracts of private forest land
- County forests
- Non-industrial, private forestland owners
- Paper and pulp industry
- Lumber industry
- Conservation organizations (Matt Dallman, Vice Chair)
- Forestry consultants
- Forestry Schools (Universities)
- Conservation education
- Labor unions affiliated with the forestry industry
- Urban and community forestry
- Members of the Society of American Foresters
- Organization of timber producers
- Industry that uses secondary wood (vacant)
- Federal department of agriculture, forest service



Members and meetings follow WI governmental bodies rules and regulations

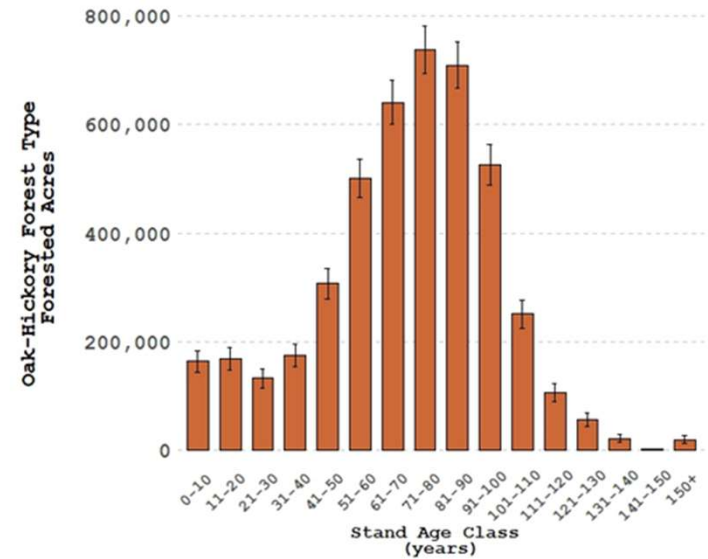
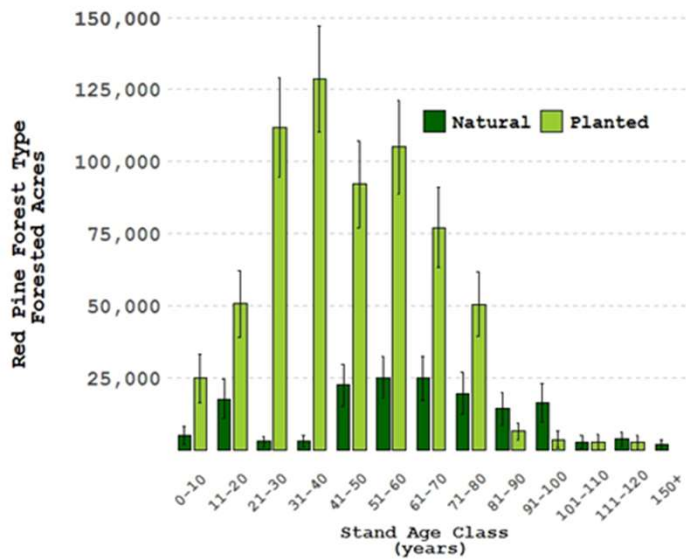
1. The magnitude, nature, and extent of the forest resources in this state.
2. The current use in this state for forest products and the benefits that these forest products provide to the state.
3. The projected future demand for forest products and the projected benefits that these forest products will provide to the state in the future.
4. The types of owners and forms of ownership that apply to forests in this state, including the reasons why persons own forest land.
5. The success of existing incentives that are offered to stimulate the development of forest resources.
6. 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.
7. Recommendations for increasing the economic development of the forestry industry and employment in the forestry industry.
8. The effect of state and local governmental laws and policy on forestry management and the location of markets for forest products.
9. 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.
10. Recommendations as to the need to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of forestry issues.

Due to Legislature June 1 of
odd numbered years



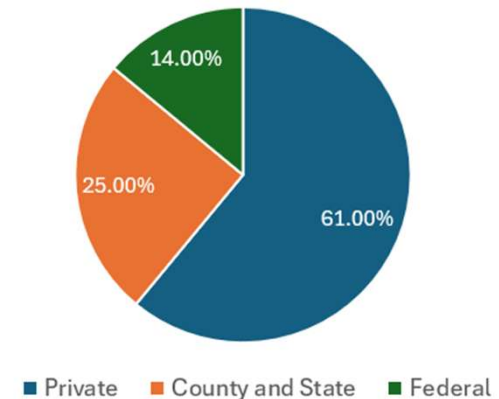
Initiative Background Information

- Wisconsin's roughly 17 million acres of forest includes about 815,000 acres of red pine and 4.5 million acres of the oak-hickory forest type.
- The weighted average age of planted red pine has changed from 27 in 1983 to 44 years of age today across all owners.
- The weighted average of the oak/hickory forest type has remained around the mid 60's for the past 40 years, only 7 percent of this forest type is 20 years old or less.

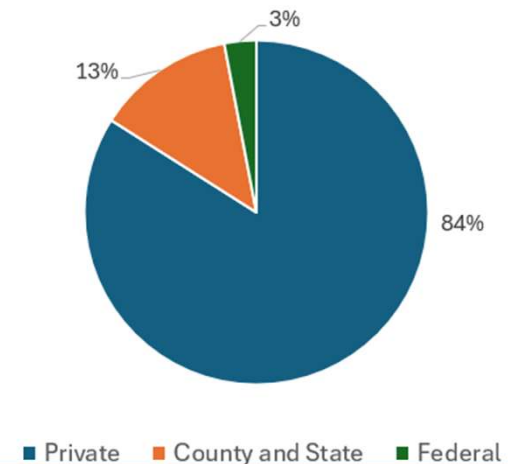


- WisFIRS data on public lands indicates about 70 percent of the red pine forest acreage has a management objective to continue as red pine plantation through rotations, while 40 percent of the small private MFL red pine forest type includes a management objective of continued red pine management with planting after rotation. (also some gain in plantation acreage from natural pine and other types being converted to red pine plantation)
- There are approximately 20,000 acres of planted red pine with an even-age harvest planned in the next 20 years on state and county forestlands. About three-fourths of this acreage is schedule to be planted again into red pine.
- On small private MFL lands, about 18 percent of the nearly 8,500 acres of planted red pine that have an even aged harvest planned in the next 20 years is scheduled to be planted again to red pine. (There are roughly 650,000 acres of large account MFL lands where information for this initial look was not investigated.)
- Presently, similar information on oak management has not been summarized.

Planted Red Pine Ownership



Oak/Hickory Forest Type Ownership





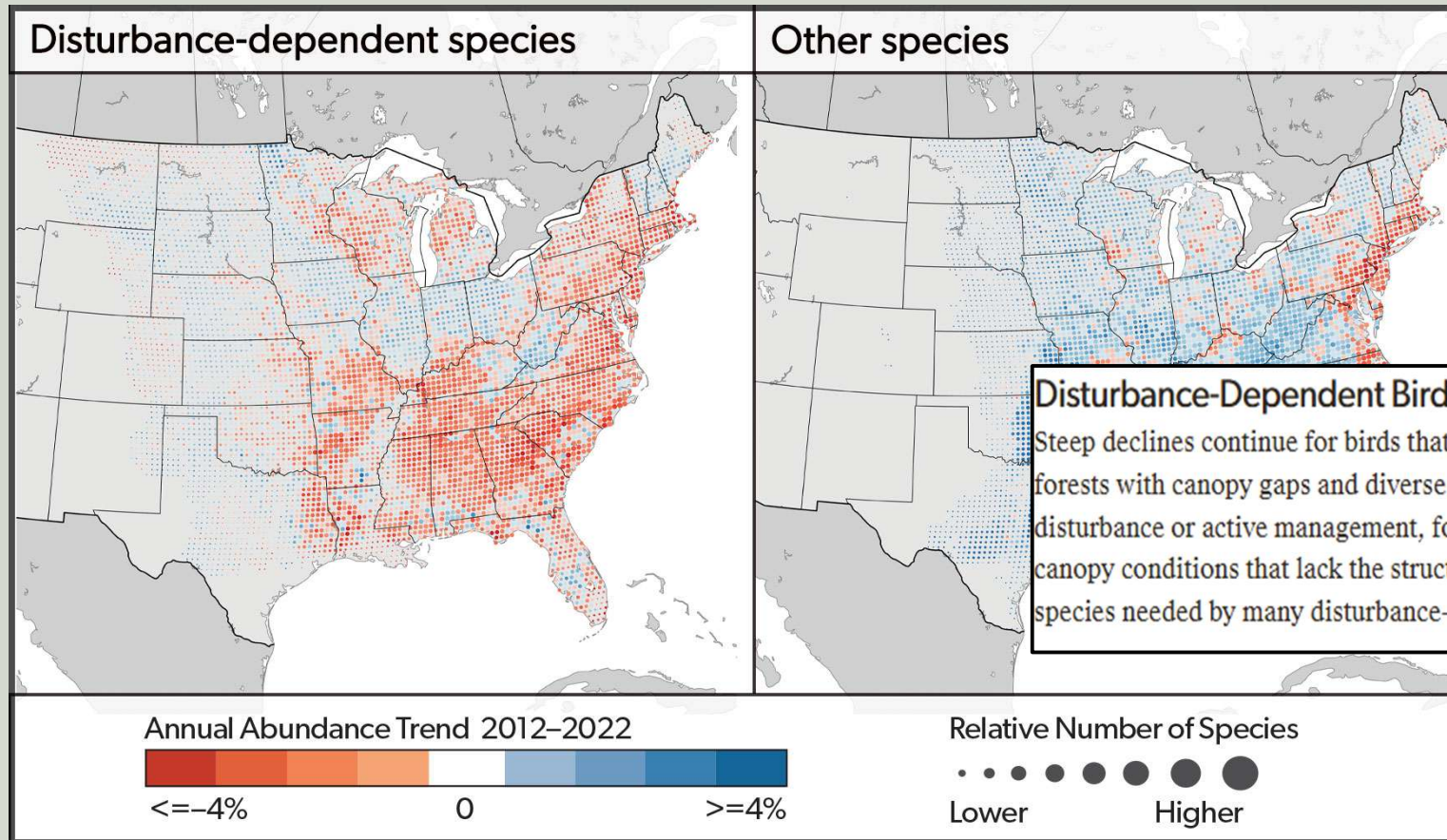
Forest Age Class

Maintaining an appropriate balance of forest age classes and tree species across the landscape is increasingly important as a strategy to create resilience to future climate impacts, improve wildlife habitat, and provide for a consistent flow of forest products. Wisconsin's forests are aging with less acreage in young forest stands and a bubble in the 60 to 80-year-old age class. Regeneration of Wisconsin's many diverse forest types and establishing vigorous young forest stands is critical to keeping forests as forests. The Council considers actions that result in an appropriate age class structure for our forests as a cause to advocate for and support.



The average age of forests is increasing and the extent of young forests is decreasing, however forests with high-conservation values and old-growth characteristics remain rare. These trends in forest ages have implications for forest management as well as for the conservation values forests support. It is increasingly important to promote more species rich and complex conditions in forests of all ages, as well as more diverse forest landscapes that include forests of all ages and conditions.

<https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2025/eastern-forest-birds/>



Disturbance-Dependent Birds Are In Trouble

Steep declines continue for birds that use shrubby areas or older forests with canopy gaps and diverse understories. Without disturbance or active management, forests progress toward closed-canopy conditions that lack the structural complexity and tree species needed by many disturbance-dependent birds.

Red Pine & Oak Reforestation Challenges / Considerations

Operational / Logistical Challenges

- Knowledge
- Resources
 - Labor
 - Equipment
 - Scheduling
 - Scale needed for efficiency
- Cost / ROI / Timeframe
- Vegetation competition
- Browse
- Land use conversion
- Seedling availability
- Current and future products and markets



Landowner and Public Considerations

- All lands
 - Even-age management
 - Economic
 - Aesthetics / Recreation
 - Landscape or property level
 - Fire (as a tool)
 - “Plantations”
 - Herbicides
 - Natural forest conversion trade-offs
 - Alternative silviculture
 - Forest health / diversity / habitat
 - Certification
- Public Lands
 - Master Plans
 - Multiple Use Objectives
- Private Lands
 - Forest Tax Law
 - Landowner Objectives



What do you think? What shall we do?

Thank You!

Tom Hittle

Chair – WI Council on Forestry

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Agenda

1. 1:00 – 1:05 Welcome (Hittle, Luedtke)
2. 1:06 – 1:25 Attendee Introductions and Participation Interests
3. 1:26 – 1:50 Council on Forestry Red Pine / Oak Reforestation Topic Background (Hittle)
4. 1:51 – 2:00 WCFA Efforts and Interests (Luedtke)
5. 2:01 – 3:00 Roundtable Discussion, Questions 1 – 4
6. 3:01 – 3:45 Roundtable Discussion, Questions 5 – 7
7. 3:46 – 4:00 Wrap up

Interests, Concerns, Barriers

Facilitator – Rebekah Luedtke, WCFA

1. What is your level of concern or interest in red pine / oak forest establishment? (e.g., high and immediate, high but not urgent, moderate – something to look more into, low – interesting but we will see over time what evolves, other?)
2. What are your main concerns or interests in addressing the red pine and/or oak age class imbalance and reforestation needs? (e.g., fiber, forest health/diversity, habitat, forest tax law compliance, cost vs. return on investment (ROI), other?)
3. What is your level of interest or concern in forest regeneration in other / all WI forest types?
4. What are the most significant barriers to establishing young red pine (plantations) and/or oak stands? And, what might a solution(s) be? (e.g., equipment, logistical support, seedling availability, labor, overall cost, questionable ROI, landowner objectives, public/social considerations, other?)

Solutions, What Comes Next?

Facilitator – Shawn Brantmeier, WPC

5. What would you / your organization / your business need to become more engaged in addressing red pine and oak forest reforestation, and/or other forest type regeneration needs? (e.g., more information, more funding, more community engagement, more general support, other?)
6. Who should be at the forefront of continued efforts to seek and implement solutions? And what needs to be done next?
7. What can you offer going forward to the red pine, oak, and/or broader forest regeneration discussions, efforts and solutions?