



February 1, 2022

Tom Hittle
Chair, Council on Forestry

RE: Forest Tax Law Dispute Resolution Process – Annual DRP Use Report for 2021

Dear Mr. Hittle,

This report is being provided to the Chair of the Council on Forestry (CoF) as outlined in Chapter 31 of the Forest Tax Law Handbook.

Under 31-II, IV Item 9, the following report parameters must be submitted: *By February 1st of each year provide a report on the use of the DRP to the Council on Forestry. The report will include; the number of disputes, analysis of types of disputes, who was involved including statistics on number initiated and by whom (cooperator, logger, landowner), number approved and not approved to enter process, number ending with step one (working with Mediators) and duration of process, number going to step two (Expert Panel) and duration of process and recommendations of the Expert Panel, feedback received from participants and any other pertinent information. Ensure that in February of even numbered years the DRP is analyzed for process improvements and lessons learned and provide recommendations to address unforeseen complications in its administration.*

As the current DRP Administrator, Renewable Resource Solutions, LLC, is providing the following information for calendar year 2021 as detailed in the above description.

- Number of contacts = 5
- Number of formal disputes = 0

Summary of contacts:

1. May 7, 2021, Kewaunee Co.

Complaint: Landowner was working to renew a MFL entry, Cooperating Forester started the project and realized while mapping the project the total acres were no longer eligible for enrollment. DNR Forester confirmed parcel was no longer eligible, but it was not clear why the landowner had not been previously notified. Resolution: DNR relayed to RRS, LLC that this was an internal DNR issue that would be followed up on and DRP need not be involved any longer, though it could potentially come back to DRP if the landowner wanted to dispute the findings.

2. June 3, 2021, Sauk Co.

Complaint: Timber sale was set up by a timber buyer and landowner MFL plan was not followed. The cutting notice was not approved. Landowner does not want to file a formal dispute and would like to come to acceptable harvest plan between MFL plan and timber buyer. Resolution: ongoing. Landowner was on vacation much of June, complaint is open. The DRP Administrator will follow up with the landowner.

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3. July 19, 2021, Price Co.

Compliant: Landowner reached out to RRS, LLC with the complaint that the DNR rewrote the MFL plan without his consent to include a clearcut. Resolution: Landowner was connected through email with RJ Wickham and the DNR MFL staff for that area.

4. October 4, 2021, Marinette Co.

Complaint: A gentleman reached out on behalf of his sister and brother-in-law. He thought they were being taken advantage of by a mill who set up a sale on their MFL property. Resolution: It was a cooperating forester issue and was turned over to Ron Gropp.

5. October, 2021, Langlade Co.

Complaint: Henry Schienebeck referred a logger to the DRP that was having issues with the DNR MFL forester regarding property lines on his MFL property and staging logs on that property. I have talked to the logger, and he said he will get back to me about how he wants to move forward. Resolution: issue has been resolved as they withdrew 4 acres withdrawn to satisfy statute requirements.

Contact Summary:

- Landowner initiated: 4
- Logger initiated: 1

There were not any formal disputes filed during the calendar year; therefore, there are not any approved to proceed past step 1 of the process.

Additional pertinent information involving the administration of the DRP includes:

- Award of DRP contract to RRS, LLC, effective 12/2/2020 through June 30, 2022.
- Update to DPR information on the DNR website was made live 2/24/2021 with RRS, LLC, being the contact listed on the site. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestlandowners/mfl/drp>
- Ongoing communications with the Forestry Experts and Mediators will be taking place through winter 2022 to re-confirm or edit the list of available resources for the DRP Administrator to call upon if needed.
- The DRP Administrator does not currently suggest any major process improvements at this time. On-going data analysis should be considered for future process improvements along with overall user feedback of the program; however, Mediator and Forestry Expert selection could be revised to every two or three years instead of annually. Due to the number of disputes that come through the process and the longevity of the mediators and experts, annual renewal seems unnecessary.

Please contact me if you have questions or would like further information. Thank you for the opportunity to continue providing DRP Administrator services.

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