**COUNCIL ON FORESTRY MEETING**

**Date:** 3/25/21

**Location:** Virtually via Zoom

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| **Council Members:** | | **Guests:** | |
| Tom Hittle, *Chair* | Kenneth Price | Faye Bokelman, *DNR* | Richard Wedepohl, *Former CoF* |
| Matt Dallman, *Vice Chair* | Paul Strong | Rebecca Diebel, *DNR* | Ron Eckstein, *Wildlife Soc.* |
| Heather Berklund, *Chief State Forester* | Jordan Skiff | Mike Warnke, *DNR* | Nancy Bozek & Randy Cooper, *WWOA* |
| Senator Janet Bewley | Jason Sjostrom | Andy Stoltman, *DNR* | Dawn Layboldt, *USDA CNNF* |
| Representative Beth Meyers | William Van Lopik | Logan Wells, *DNR* | Claire Widmann, *Student* |
| Representative Jeff Mursau | Michael Bolton | RJ Wickham, *DNR* | Stacey Johnson, *Paper Council* |
| Henry Scheinebeck | Adena Rissman |  |  |
| James Hoppe | Buddy Huffaker |  |  |
| James Kerkman | Rebekah Luedtke | **Next Meeting:** May 19 & 20, 2021 | |
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| **Agenda Item** | **Materials** | **Assignments/Follow Up** |
| Council Business Updates: *Chair Hittle*   * Biennial Report Update * Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS) Update * Michigan-Finland bioeconomy project   + *Logan Wells*, DNR |  | **Council Members**:   * Review the draft 2019-2020 biennial report and send any send comments/edits to Tom or Matt by 5/5/21 * Send nominations and volunteer for REDS listening sessions to Tom or Matt by 4/14/21 |
| **Biennial Report Update:**  Statute requires the Council to submit a biennial report. A draft of the 2019-2020 report is ready for review. Council members should examine the draft and send any send comments/edits to Tom or Matt by 5/5/21. The report will come back at the May meeting for final approval.  **Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS) Update** - The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) oversees the Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS) process, which helps local and regional stakeholders leverage federal programs to advance locally identified economic development priorities. The Council on Forestry (CoF), at the request of Governor Evers, will lead this initiative and collaborate with the DNR, the  Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), and UW-Extension to stakeholders across Wisconsin’s forest products economy to identify priorities that will help the state better understand and capitalize on enhancing existing timber industries and establishing new market opportunities for Wisconsin’s forest products.  To identify Wisconsin’s priorities, WEDC is working on setting up public listening sessions for May 6th (*afternoon*) and 11th (*evening*) and would like CoF members to facilitate breakout sessions on these dates. Council members should send volunteer responses and nominations of industry partners who might be willing to attend and speak at the REDS listening sessions to Tom or Matt by 4/14/21.  WEDC will also be holding individual stakeholder meetings during the first two weeks of May. These smaller meetings will be invitation only and CoF members are encouraged to attend. WEDC is putting together a media packet with more information and will send it to CoF members when it’s finalized.  UW-Extension will be responsible for compiling and analyzing the information gathered from the sessions and drafting recommendations based on the data. They plan to bring these recommendations to CoF for review in the summer; with a view to submit to REDS in the fall.  **Michigan-Finland Bioeconomy Project** - *Logan Wells, DNR*  Maine, Michigan, and Finland signed a joint MOU to address industry issues: reducing waste, emerging markets, future workforce, harvesting practices, etc. They will create three working groups:   * Finland-Maine Advanced wood construction working group * Finland-Maine bioeconomy working group * Finland-Michigan bio and circular economy working group   Link to Maine’s site: <https://formaine.org/> | | |
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| State Budget Review and Joint Finance Committee Letter |  | **CoF’s Forestry Funding committee, Tom, & Matt**: craft a draft letter to JFC on the 2021-2023 state budget |
| Since 2015, the Council has sent a letter to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) regarding forestry-related items after the biennial state budget is publicly released.  2021-2023 DNR budget items:   * Extend Knowles-Nelson Stewardship until 2032: $70 million/year * Increase county forest acreage share payments from $.30 to $.63/acre * Urban Forestry: additional funding for emerging threats to urban forestry due to climate change, create and fund a new category of urban forestry grants to focus on tree planting in urban areas, funding the implementation and administration of the new grant category * Increase Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant (WFLG) program * Increase funding for ATV and UTV trail maintenance, trail development, and recreational projects * Provide expenditure and position authority to administer the GNA program   Non-DNR budget items:   * Pilot program that studies the feasibility of a carbon market covering the state. Provide grants to producers and producer-led groups who participate. Led by Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). * Support grants to train individuals in green jobs – those that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources   A motion to approve the CoF’s Forestry Funding committee, Tom, and Matt crafting a draft letter to JFC on the 2021-2023 state budget was made by Senator Bewley. The motion was seconded by Bill Van Lopik and unanimously approved by the Council. | | |
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| Silviculture Guidance Team – Work Plan Update and Discussion   * + *Andy Stoltman*, DNR |  |  |
| Andy Stoltman, WDNR Forest Economics and Ecology Section Chief, gave a presentation to the Council on the Silviculture Guidance Team (SGT). The presentation included information on SGT’s role, their process for developing the work plan, the current status of the work plan, and future planned activities.  FY22 –FY23 SGT Work Plan Timeline:   * Draft work plan will go to the Field Implementation Team (FIT) for review at their May and/or June meeting * Draft work plan will go to CoF for review at their May meeting   + The Council’s Sound Forestry and Policy Subcommittee will craft a final comment for SGT prior to the June 22nd meeting * SGT will discuss the work plan at their June 22nd meeting (*and the September meeting, if necessary*) | | |

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| DNR Research Priorities |  |  |
| CoF examined the results of the priority ranking of DNR Research Agenda questions by the Council subcommittees. The top questions selected across all research statements were:   1. What factors impact the long-term viability of the forest products industry in Wisconsin? What are the barriers and incentives to capital improvements and business start-up? What is the current and anticipated forest products workforce, and what factors influence the long-term viability of this workforce? 2. What is the potential for developing new markets (foreign and domestic) for the forest products industry in Wisconsin, such as markets for species infected by forest pests or for new products such as cross-laminated timber? 3. What is the current public opinion, awareness, knowledge level, attitude and values on Wisconsin forests, forestry and forest products? Have the results changed since the last survey, nearly 15 years ago? 4. What outreach approaches and training methods most effectively foster positive, long-lasting relationships between service foresters and private landowners? What strategies effectively increase landowner awareness of the role and services provided by service foresters? 5. What are the impacts and effectiveness of various forest management guidelines, including silviculture practices, BMPs, forest health guidelines, species guidance, and other recommendations? Are they achieving their intended results? Is there the opportunity for more flexibility in the implementation of the guidelines and what are the consequences of not following the guidelines? How can this information be used to develop, evaluate, and refine guidelines?   A motion to approve these five questions as the Council’s recommendation to the DNR on research priorities made by Jordan Skiff, seconded by Matt Dallman. The motion passed with unanimous approval by the Council. | | |
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| Legislative Updates |  |  |
| Representative Mursau’s office is currently researching carbon credits/biochar, water filtration technology from Finland for possible use with PFAS, and interstate trucking weight limit restrictions.  Senator Bewley shared that the state budget and COVID are the Legislature’s top focus. The most common forestry topics mentioned in calls from constituents are road funding, trail maintenance, and emergency response in rural areas. | | |

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| State Forester Updates: |  |  |
| Mike Warnke, Deputy Division Administrator at the DNR Division of Forestry, gave CoF updates on the DNR’s COVID policy, stakeholder input process, fire season, nursery seedling distribution, and the DNR’s temporary no-cost extension on timber sale policy.  Paul Strong, Forest Supervisor of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, gave CoF updates on CNNF’s COVID response, timber program (*FY20, FY21, and outyear readiness*), 2019 storm recovery fuels treatment, 2016 flood recovery wrap-up, and American’s Great Outdoors Act. | | |