

## Wisconsin Criteria and Indicators Issue Brief

**Issue Title:** Wisconsin Criteria and Indicator Development  
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**Issue Statement:** The overall project goal is to provide the Wisconsin Council on Forestry, our partners and cooperators, Wisconsin citizens, and potential purchasers of Wisconsin forest products with a comprehensive, but manageable set of indicators to assist them in understanding Wisconsin's forest conditions and trends. The project will collect data on a set of indicators that is broad enough to provide the most important information needed to address the five goals of the Statewide Forest Plan, yet focused enough to allow efficient and cost-effective assessment and tradeoff analysis to be completed in a timely fashion for policy analysis.

The Wisconsin Council on Forestry can play an important role in the development of statewide criteria and indicators (C&I) by engaging a broad array of interested forestry partners in the decision making process. In addition to providing leadership for statewide C&I development, the Council can serve as a focal point for engaging existing forestry partners and identifying new partners that have a direct interest in C&I development. Formal support from the Council would also provide official backing for this initiative and bring a sense of credibility to the C&I development process.

**Background:** Since the early 1990's there has been a movement worldwide to seek out a method to measure and quantify sustainable forestry. From this movement the method of using criteria and indicators C&I to measure various aspects of the forest, as well as monitor continued progress towards sustainable forest management was created. This method is now being used world and nation-wide. Wisconsin has participated in the development of several C&I systems on both regional and national scales, and has yet to address this process on a statewide scale and specifically monitor and evaluate forest sustainability in Wisconsin

**Impact of Issue:** Developing a C&I program specific to Wisconsin forests will complement the regional and national C&I initiatives of which Wisconsin is already a participant. Although participation in these larger scale programs is important, regional and national programs can not accurately reflect the unique aspects of sustainable forest management on the statewide level in Wisconsin. Developing C&I specifically for Wisconsin will address this issue as well as provide the Division of Forestry with an opportunity to develop forest assessments and statewide forest plans based on C&I monitored data.

**Current Status:** The Division of Forestry is requesting the assistance of the Wisconsin Council of Forestry to lead the C&I selection efforts. A proposal and project plan have been developed by the Division of Forestry to provide a possible direction the process may take. The Council can now decide if they would like to spearhead this effort for Wisconsin.

**Next Steps:** 1. Decide if the Wisconsin Council on Forestry would like to be involved in the C&I process. 2. Agree with the proposed project plan or choose another direction. 3. Appoint an Advisory Committee to begin working through the selection process. Once the indicators and their metrics are chosen the next step would be to reach consensus on what the desired conditions and/or trends for the chosen indicators should be. Knowing the desired conditions and then comparing those conditions to the monitored data will provide us a pathway to long-term sustainability and planning.

**Alternatives:** The Wisconsin Council on Forestry can choose to lead Wisconsin's criteria and indicator selection process. The Council can provide the inclusion of statewide partners and can provide un-biased credibility to the selection effort. If the Council chooses not to be a part of the criteria and indicator selection process the Division of Forestry will move forward in the selection process for Wisconsin.

**Timeframe:** Selection of the criteria and indicators is estimated to take a year. Indicator testing and implementation may take another 18 months.