



**UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Council on Forestry Budget Request - May 2024
\$966,000/year (increase of \$616,000/year)**

The College of Natural Resources (CNR) is the largest undergraduate Natural Resources college in the nation. It is home to the first conservation education major and the United States' largest undergraduate Forestry program. Collectively, our Forestry and Natural Resource degrees and collaborative CNR-UW Extension centers provide a wide array of forestry education, outreach, and training opportunities for students, professionals, and our Wisconsin citizenry.

About LEAF and the WFC

LEAF-Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program and the Wisconsin Forestry Center (WFC) work collaboratively to address a continuum of forestry education and workforce needs in Wisconsin.

LEAF was created in 2001 to develop and support teachers with forestry knowledge, lessons, and skills needed to effectively teach elementary through high school aged students about Wisconsin's forests. LEAF strives to ensure all K-12 students can understand the importance of Wisconsin's forests and their sustainable management. LEAF operates on a statewide reach by providing grade-specific forestry lessons, educator trainings, hands-on forestry kits, consultation to educators as they take students to the forest, partnerships with forestry and education stakeholders, and coordination of both Wisconsin's School Forest Program and Project Learning Tree. Since 2011, \$350,000 has been annually provided from the forestry account through the DNR-Division of Forestry for the LEAF Program.

The **WFC**, established in 2020, serves the needs of Wisconsin's forestry community through workforce recruitment and development, forestry professional development, applied research, and community outreach. Its largest initiative to date is the Wisconsin Forestry Careers Coalition (WFCC), which addresses the urgent need for skilled employees in the forest industry through skills-based curriculum for high school students and immersive training programs for forest operations and mill technology careers.

WFC Total Request: \$374,000 annually

Justification: >90% of the WFC's annual budget, including staffing, depends on grants or program revenue. While the WFC was fortunate to receive a state grant to support the development of the WFCC, sustainable funding after the grant ends next year is crucial to continue this work. Access to federal monies in the pending *Jobs in the Woods Act* (2024 Farm Bill) is contingent upon a demonstrated sustainability plan.

Funding Breakdown

Programming Personnel Support: \$340,000

- Manage the WFCC and coordinate Forest Operations and Mill Technology immersion training programs, with 30 total graduates annually.
- Support skills-based high school curriculum and teacher training, reaching an additional 20 teachers and 40 students annually.
- Outreach messaging through online channels to raise awareness about forestry career opportunities.

Operations Support: \$34,000

- Travel, services, and supplies.

LEAF Total Request: \$592,000 annually;
\$242,000 additional annual funding.

Justification: This year, >99% of LEAF's budget supported salary with virtually no operational costs. This request solidifies personnel funding and restores a position that will focus on high school education and training.

Funding Breakdown

Programming Personnel Support: \$214,000

- Develop materials that support specific forestry topics such as fire, forest health, urban forests, etc.
- Provide forestry education for 40 educators through consultation, professional development, and resources at school sites without a school forest.
- Offer skills-based high school curriculum and teacher training, develop forestry career pathways, create a network of partners to provide career experience, develop website to host forestry career information for K-12 students.

Operations Support: \$28,000

- Travel, services, and supplies.

CNR Forestry Outreach Accomplishments

Examples of WFC Accomplishments

Workforce Recruitment and Development

- Piloted the applied forestry curriculum at Menominee Indian High School.
- Trained 17 high school teachers on the applied curriculum in 2024.
- Signed an agreement with Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE) for the inaugural cohort in the Forest Operations immersive training program.
- Began constructing an industrial training sawmill at Northcentral Technical College in Antigo and the Forestry Advancement Center classroom building at Treehaven near Tomahawk.

Professional Development

- 55+ professional development workshops, 1,730+ participants.
- 815 utility vegetation management (UVM) certificate participants across North America.
- 43 SilviCast podcast episodes with 44,000 downloads worldwide.
- 7 prescribed fire for forest management webinars with 1,400 participants worldwide.

Applied Research

- Completed photographic defect guides for sugar maple and red oak.
- Completed a survey of the forest industry's professional development needs.

Public Outreach

- Developed an online resource for 10 forest habitat demonstration sites across Wisconsin.
- Hosted 15+ public outreach workshops, 200+ participants

Examples of LEAF Accomplishments

Professional Development for Educators

Since 2003

- 8,635+ educators have participated in classes, workshops, and in-services.
- 500,000+ students indirectly impacted.

In the past 5 years

- 85 professional development opportunities, 1,034 teachers.
- Indirectly reaching 62,040+ students.

Outreach

- 14,092 individuals received hands-on learning experiences by using LEAF forestry education kits.
- Kits are available to borrow at no cost to the school.

Curriculum

- Forestry lessons and field enhancements, including urban forest and wildland fire science, for K-12 teachers/students.
- Lessons for forestry professionals to use with students.

Wisconsin School Forest Program

- Provide support to the 254 schools that own 430 registered school forests in Wisconsin (over 27,000 acres).

In the past 10 years

- 386,312+ students have visited their school forests.
- 54 new school forests and 11 new community forests were registered.

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