

Wisconsin Council on Forestry: Tuesday, January 28, 2025

*USDA Forest Products Lab, Building 1, Conference Room 500, 1 Gifford Pinchot Dr, Madison, WI
and via Zoom – [Register for the Zoom meeting here](#)*

Council Members		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Hittle, <i>Chair</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Schienebeck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Van Lopik
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matt Dallman, <i>Vice Chair</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Hoppe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Dorff
<input type="checkbox"/> Heather Berklund, <i>Chief State Forester</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Kerkman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adena Rissman
<input type="checkbox"/> Senator Romaine Quinn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Juris Repsa	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddy Huffaker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senator Jamie Wall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jenn Youngblood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebekah Luedtke
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative Jeff Mursau	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jordan Skiff	<input type="checkbox"/> OPEN-Builders
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative Lori Palmeri	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erik Rantala	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carmen Hardin on behalf of Heather Berklund
Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 11, 2025		

Agenda

Tuesday, Jan. 28	Notes: Decisions, Action Items, Assignments
9:00 AM Welcome & Member Introductions (Chair Hittle) 20 min	Council welcomed new council members: Legislators Rep. Lori Palmeri and Sen. Jamie Wall
9:20 AM Chair Update 10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Hittle reviews Operational Guidelines • Budget paper and Forest Health position paper have been shared with the Governor’s office • Matt and Tom are working to get new legislators checked in and up to speed on Council • Wisconsin Green Fire Webinar took place last month. Council members Tom Hittle, Dr. Adena Rissman participated as panelists. There were over 200 participants. https://wlgreenfire.org/wisconsin-forests-at-risk-webinar/ • The Council’s executive committee has begun work on the 2023-2024 Biennial Report, due June 1st to the Governor’s office. Hittle outlines changes to the report content and format to streamline process and increase usability. • Hittle solicited location input for March and May council meetings. Ideas brought forward included Kemp Research Station and College of Menominee Nation; request for council members to continue to share any ideas they have.

<p>9:30 AM Open Forum for Council Members 30 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jim Hoppe: Brings awareness to Council of issues regarding logging contracts and contract extensions in light of supplier health including inflationary increase, high interest rates, lost pulpwood consumption and mill closures, soft lumber market, minimal recent winters. The Paper Council and GLTPA are working together to develop a fact sheet to provide information so that informed decisions about contracts can be made. Council will revisit this topic at the March meeting ● Jim Kerkman on behalf of profile committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to update Council Fact Sheet ○ Web analytics show spike in November around Council Meeting, otherwise trends look normal ○ Member list needs updating and new member should submit bios ○ Noted error in November minutes. November minutes will be updated to reflect that a motion was passed regarding the Industry Initiative Letter and Whitepaper
<p>10:00 AM Legislative Updates 15 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rep Palmeri: submitting informational piece (January 31st deadline) to explain legislative goals, highlights, etc... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative roadmap ○ Will be coordinating educational/outreach events ○ Would like to get a public hearing with Wisconsin Policy Forum ○ Keeping an eye on bill up for co-sponsorship on land acquisition ○ Call for bills that Council Members and non-member advocates are interested in tracking ● Rep Wall: Biennium budget coming up. Reasonably optimistic that a budget will be produced on schedule.
<p>10:15 AM State Forester Updates National Forest Updates 20 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Forester Updates (Jenn Youngblood): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All USFS leadership changed January 20th, freeze on everything, much remains unknown ○ Brooke Rollins named nominee for Secretary of Agriculture on Jan 23rd ○ From Chequamegon-Nicolet perspective, we know we should be able to continue timber sales as planned, while there may be a slight dip. ○ Chequamegon-Nicolet employees are trying to continue management and have been putting fire on the ground during the past few weeks. ○ Jenn is leaving Chequamegon-Nicolet to take a position in Alaska, last day is February 20th ○ USFS/CNNF is supporting California wildfires. ● State Forester Updates (Carmen Hardin): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New DNR Secretary Dr. Karen Hyun started this week, working to add her to agenda to meet with the Council at an upcoming meeting ○ Elle Soderberg hired as new FP specialist. Brian Cole will be starting in mid-February as the second new FP specialist, so the Forest Products Team will be fully staffed. He is coming from ME and will be working out of Green Bay. ○ Recruitment: Silviculturist, Trillion Trees Program Coordinator, and Forest Health Specialist (2 positions) in various stages of recruitment. They are in various stages of interviews.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kirsten Held, Communications and Outreach Specialist, retired earlier in the month after 34-year career. Division has plans in place for managing this vacancy. ○ National Old-Growth Amendment – Division participated as a Cooperating Agency in the NOGA review process, Greg Edge provided comments on the proposed amendment. 1/7/2025 the Agency decided to withdraw the notice of intent to prepare and environmental impact statement and will not be publishing a final statement. ○ TPO: The WI DNR Forest Products Specialists will be starting soon to conduct the USFS Timber Product Output Survey for 2024 wood consumption with primary forest products mills across the state. This year DNR is taking back administration from USFS. Hoping to give more up to date numbers routinely ○ New class hire of foresters will be posted for recruitment mid to late February. Division hopes to have them on by early June ○ Working to put together 10-person crew to go to Southern California for fire assistance, this ask may change with recent rains. ○ 2025 fire season shaping up to be a long one. 29 fires already over this year to date. Over 50 acres burned. ○ 5-year, \$3 million grant intended for landowner payments through WFLGP, existing eligibility and program requirements are in place. 1/1/2025-12/31/2029 grant timeline. Intended to award the \$3 million in grants over the next 3 years since landowners have 2 years to complete their practice once they receive their award letter in WFLGP. Landowner payments occur at the time of practice completion. Communication and outreach intended to happen within next year to inform landowners, partners, and Cooperating Foresters who may not otherwise be aware of this opportunity. Subset of eligible WFLGP practices are available for IRA funding, tied directly to climate and forest resilience. Covers all of the most common practices (invasive species control, tree planting, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal funding for certain grants has been paused. Don't know yet what means for forestry funding. ○ Incorporating much appreciated feedback on Dispute Resolution Process for MFL from November meeting. Council will be informed when it goes to public commenting. DNR is working on the following adjustments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making sure that landowner roles and expectations are clear ▪ Providing more guidance on when consultants are involved ▪ Providing clarity on who pays for consultants ○ 100-year anniversary for Northern Highland American Legion State Forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interest in programming to celebrate this
<p>10:35 AM Break, 15 min</p>	
<p>10:50 AM State Forest Action Plan Update (Vice Chair Dallman) 15 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forest health paper and Agricultural Road paper are part of projects council has moved forward. ● In attempts to answer question of: "How do we get people to care about forests?", developed a list of facts to showcase why we should care (see meeting materials)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council discusses what to do with this material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jim Kerkman: we should have these facts on the web ▪ Henry Schienebeck: we should review what Counties supply to schools, Rebekah Luedtke to email what they use with schools to Dallman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not lead with economics- general public doesn't care about that as much ▪ Rep. Palmeri: suggests two versions- one for public, one for legislators/decision makers ▪ Jordan Skiff: opportunity to bring importance of transportation into this ▪ Rissman: Can discuss labor and environmental abuses from overseas wood. Asks for data on how much out-of-state/international wood we use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR has big picture numbers on this but not finer scale ○ Assignment: Jim kerkman and profile committee will work with Matt to put together two versions of this Forest Facts paper for each of the audiences identified above. • Reminder/call to continue to think about how our work connects with the State Forest Action Plan, and to identify anything else/new we should be perusing
<p>11:05 AM Age Distribution of Red Pine and Oak Update (Rebekah Luedtke) 15 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces issue of decrease in acreage of young forests and the concerns that Red Pine and Oak will dip as an available resource in the future. (see Meeting Materials) • Discussion on perspectives regarding seedling supply and site prep issues. Including BCPL ability to use funding for site prep purposes and DNRs current seedling stock. • SAF is considering making red pine a topic and their fall meeting. • Minnesota million initiative referenced regarding restoration of marginal crop land, limitations on how this could be applied in WI due to statutory limitations of how state seedling stock can be utilized. • Call to Council: we need enough interest and need to push this forward. Send interested contacts to Rebecca. Council can make recommendations from there. Any interested council members can join the working group.
<p>11:20 AM State Budget Update (Chair Hittle) 10min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Fiscal Bureau Informational Paper 66 is posted, https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/informational_papers/january_2025/0066_conservation_fund_informational_paper_66.pdf • Regarding the Council's budget priorities, the next step is to draft a communication to legislators that is similar to what we sent to the Governor. Letter should be ready to go by February, Council may need to approve electronically before or at March Council Meeting. Rep. Palmeri: A summary of one page or brief 10-minute Ted Talk style presentation is best for delivery to legislators.
<p>11:30 AM Industry Initiative Update (Chair Hittle) 10 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is part of the budget request sent to the Governor. • \$1 million requested for industry strategic plan and roadmap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council is making a recommendation on moving strategic plan forward ○ Council members will be asked if they would show support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members should talk to their groups to garner support where appropriate, and otherwise spread awareness ▪ Messaging should be: <i>“healthy forests, healthy industry, healthy rural communities, healthy state economy”</i>
<p>11:40 AM State Harvest Volumes: Council Report <i>Action Item: Approve Council Report</i> 15 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is statutorily required to submit a report to the Governor if the State reports harvesting under 90% or over 110% of their timber goal • This last year DNR’s goal was 33,664 acres of harvest. Recon was done on 38,000 acres for the final 29,929 acre harvest (88.9% on harvest goal) • Council members note that it would be useful to see a trend/trajectory to accompany this in the future; DNR noted that trends were shared at the January 2024 Council Meeting (https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Meetings/StateLandsTimberSalesandTrendsPresentation.pdf) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note that the Council’s Industry Strategic Plan and Roadmap will look at fiber availability into the future • After discussion, Tom Hittle put forth for consideration the drafted council report titled “State Lands 2023 – 2024 Biennial Harvest Reporting” to be sent to the governor, to the department, and to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion: [Jordan Skiff] moved to approve the drafted report to be sent to the required bodies. ○ Second: [Representative Palmeri] seconded the motion. ○ Opposition: None ○ Vote: Motion Adopted
<p>11:55 PM Lunch, 45 min</p>	
<p>12:40 PM WIST Update (Paul Fowler, Executive Director) 30 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIST is involved in bringing federal funding to state to look at diversifying forest products sector • This presentation serves as a post-pandemic update • Leveraging federal dollars and state investments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wood innovation grant (USDA FS) ○ NSF Engine Grant helps move regenerative ag practices into mainstream agriculture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using low value forest coproducts as compost feedstock source • Re-staffing- have taken on two specialists since last January • Recent developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New grade of art paper- tech based economic development example ○ Labs for testing fiber products ○ Compostability testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trend among brands and consumers ▪ Helping companies support composting and driving market forward • Systematically looking at species (red oak, hemlock, and black ash) and testing pulps to develop applications

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repulpability and recyclability testing is enabling brand owners is helping keep industry resilient, while not necessarily helping find use for virgin pulpwood • Challenging idea of recycling being the end-all-be-all of forest products
<p>1:10 PM USDA Forest Products Lab Projects and Priorities (Cindi West) 20 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only federal lab entirely devoted to understanding how to convert a tree into a forest product • Key competitive interests in the State of WI. • Meeting adjourned for tour of Forest Products Lab
<p>1:30 PM Tour of USDA Forest Products Lab (Alicia King) 90 min</p>	
<p>3:00 PM ADJOURN</p>	