

## Wisconsin Council on Forestry – Aligning with our State Forest Action Plan

States across the nation develop 10-year strategic plans, called [State Forest Action Plans \(SFAPs\)](#). These plans facilitate the receipt of funding through the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (Farm Bills) and other funding opportunities, as well as support statewide collaboration on priority forestry work. While the DNR coordinates the development of WI's SFAP, it is intended to be a collaborative document and, in its development, significant effort is focused on engagement. WI's SFAP was last drafted and approved in 2020. States are required to report out on accomplishments every 5 years.

Over the course of 2023-2024, the WI Council on Forestry worked to determine where their existing efforts and initiatives align with WI's 2020 SFAP, and where they may consider expanding efforts based on the priorities identified in the plan. To complete this effort, the Council Chair, Vice Chair, and committees completed an analysis identifying which of the goals and strategies outlined in the SFAP align with their objectives using the following questions as a filter:

- Is it within the Council's role/duties as defined by State Statute?
- Is it something that partners are already working towards?
- Is it something that the Council can feasibly accomplish?

With a list of aligned broad goals and strategies, committees then worked to turn them into 40 actionable items the Council could work towards and accomplish. Council members were then asked to rank the priority of each action item. Outcomes of this prioritization activity allowed for a broader discussion on where the Council should focus its efforts, and also showed a range of perspectives around action items, even those that ranked highly.

Using this group prioritization, ultimately 13 actions were decided upon as areas of focus (the top 1/3 out of the prioritization activity), many of which align with work that the Council is already engaged in. The prioritized actions are included in the table below.

Through this effort to align the Council's priorities with the SFAP, the following take-aways were reinforced:

- The primary purpose and value of the Council is in its role as an advisory body. Learning about varied relevant forestry topics at Council meetings supports the Council's ability to serve in this manner. There is potential for more focus on the advisory nature of the Council.
- A significant portion of the work the Council has naturally focused on falls within SFAP priorities, and align strongly with the Council's Top Five Strategic Goals (see last column in table below), speaking to how connected the Council is with the forestry community.
- Connecting the Council's work to the SFAP elevates both the plan and the Council's efforts.

Category	SFAP Related Goal	Prioritized Council on Forestry Action	Related Council Strategic Goal
<b>Industry Strategic Plan and Roadmap</b>	L. Wisconsin is a hub for diversified forest markets & non-market forest benefits.	Continue to <b>encourage research of innovative new uses of under-utilized forest products</b> such as pulp and sawdust—and emerging technologies to make these uses more cost effective. For example, more portable and affordable equipment can greatly expand the availability of bio-char to use as a soil amendment or stormwater quality tool. Advocate to legislators and state officials for policy and budget decisions that assist in promoting such advancements.	Research, promote and support efforts to increase utilization of the State's forest products.
		Support the <b>DNR's Forest Products arm</b> in its various efforts to study and promote a wide variety of forest products throughout the State. Encourage legislators and local officials to make economic development tools available for the restructuring and reopening of shuttered forest industry facilities and businesses.	
		Industries are showing great <b>creativity in using forest products to move our country toward sustainability</b> , including bio-fuel, paper packaging products, paper insulation, etc. The Council and its partners can spread the word about this <b>innovation and encourage companies to use these products</b> on a large scale as part of ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) policies.	
	R. Private forest landowners are better connected to each other through peer groups & networking opportunities.	The Council can use its diverse membership and partner organizations to bring different components of the <b>forest industry together to share ideas and work toward common goals.</b>	Enhance the Council on Forestry's profile and ability to be viewed as the source of expertise on broad forestry topics in Wisconsin.
<b>Budget</b>	B. Forested landscapes provide connectivity between patches of forests of all seral stages & types for forest-dependent	<b>Support MFL.</b>	Promote the benefits of sound forest management and policies that provide ecological, economic, social,

	species & related natural communities.		and cultural benefits for present and future generations.
	M. The forest products industry remains competitive in both domestic & global/international markets.	Rural townships and counties have legitimate concerns about the impact of heavy trucks using their roads during spring thaws, but road bans greatly impact the timber industry during a significant part of the year. <b>Advocate for part of the State's transportation budget to be designated specifically to improve roads serving key timber areas</b> , similar to a new program benefitting agricultural areas.	Raise awareness, and advocate for, the critical role our state's transportation infrastructure plays in supporting our timber industry.
	O. Forests provide a balance of social, ecological, economic benefits across all ownerships for current & future generations.	Continued <b>support for LEAF, WI Forestry Center, Mid-State, WI Institute Sustainable Technology, forest innovation and employment.</b>	Explore options for stable state funding for forestry and the programs the DNR's budget support.
	I. Forest health threats are identified & managed in a fashion that is adaptive & responsive to multiple values.	Support <b>WI Forest Landowner Grant Program</b> to meet growing demand	
	C. Keep forests as forests to maintain the long-term value & benefits they provide.	Support <b>Mill Tax commitment</b> Support <b>Refund of \$25M</b> from Wildlife to Forestry Account	
<b>Communications</b>	L. Wisconsin is a hub for diversified forest markets & non-market forest benefits.	<b>Utilize the new website</b> as a tactical means for addressing the goal; "Wisconsin is a hub for diversified forest markets & non-market forest benefits" by highlighting stories on our website on how Wisconsin is a hub for diversified forest markets and non-market forest benefits.	Promote the benefits of sound forest management and policies that provide ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits for present and future generations.
	H. Forested land & ecosystem functions are maximized, while losses due to forest health threats are minimized.	Communicate with the public, DNR, legislature about forest health and the <b>need for ongoing capacity to minimize forest health concerns.</b>	

	<p>M. The forest products industry remains competitive in both domestic &amp; global/international markets.</p>	<p><b>Communicate to local municipalities on the importance of maintaining transportation networks</b> for the timber industry and considerations for road restrictions and weight limits.</p>	<p>Raise awareness, and advocate for, the critical role our state's transportation infrastructure plays in supporting our timber industry.</p>
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