

Council on Forestry Update

Following Rebekah's update in March, the red pine / oak subcommittee has met a couple times to discuss the challenges with red pine and oak regeneration, which impact both public and private land management across Wisconsin. The need for improved funding mechanisms, enhanced landowner assistance, and stronger coordination among stakeholders is becoming apparent. Moving forward, the subcommittee's focus has been on data collection, expanding contractor capacity, and finding innovative solutions to boost reforestation efforts.

Here's a summary of key discussions and updates from our latest subcommittee meeting:

1. Red Pine Harvest Data:

- New data from the DNR below shows that red pine accounted for 16% of the total state harvest in 2022. This percentage appears to be increasing, but there are no additional figures available beyond 2022.
- **Red Pine Utilization and Market Overview:**
 - **Mill Usage (2018 TPO Data):**
 - Sawtimber Mills: Biewer, T&T, Pukall, Bell Timber, PotlatchDeltic (MI)
 - Pulpwood Mills: Ahlstrom, Billerud, Domtar
 - Other Uses: Log home manufacturers and smaller sawmills
 - **Harvest and Market Trends (VGRM Trends Spreadsheet):**
 - In 2022, red pine represented 16.5% of the merchantable annual harvest.
 - 60% of red pine harvest comes from plantations, while non-red pine species account for just 3%.
 - Red pine harvest has increased steadily since 1983 in both volume and proportion.
 - **2018 TPO Data Summary:**
 - Red pine made up 16.2% of total roundwood product production, contributing 26.1% of statewide sawlog production.
 - The majority of red pine roundwood is used for sawlogs, followed by pulpwood.
 - 72% of red pine roundwood production comes from sawtimber-sized trees.

2. Conversations with Bell Timber:

- There was a discussion between WCFA, WDNR, and Bell Timber has taken some interest in looking at establishing a reforestation division to assist landowners with site preparation. This interest includes exploring the acquisition of mechanical site preparation equipment, which would allow Bell Timber to offer contracting services to private landowners, thereby enhancing reforestation efforts.

4. Red Pine Seed Shortage:

- Nurseries are facing a significant shortage of red pine seeds, and there is a limited window for collecting viable seeds, which may impact future reforestation efforts.

5. Round Table Discussion:

- The committee expressed interest in organizing a roundtable focused on red pine management. This would serve as a collaborative space for stakeholders to share insights and develop coordinated strategies for red pine regeneration.
- WCFA volunteered to host the stakeholder meeting in Merrill
- Timeframe would be first or second week in June
- 20-40 stakeholders would be invited (Consultants, private landowners, pulp and lumber, DNR, WCFA, nurseries etc.)

6. Potential Funding Opportunities:

- A discussion was raised regarding potential funding opportunities through the Secretary of State, Sarah Godlewski's office. Further details are needed, but this could provide additional financial support for red pine regeneration efforts.