

Council on Forestry 2025-2027 Biennial Budget Recommendations and Outcomes

Program Description	\$ Requested	\$ Allocated
Forest Industry-Wide Strategic Plan and Roadmap	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Forest Industry-Wide Strategic Plan and Roadmap Committee Position Support	\$300,000	\$0
Council on Forestry Support Position	\$71,000	\$0
Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program	+\$500,000	+\$45,100
UWSP LEAF and WI Forestry Center	+\$616,000	+\$0
Division of Forestry Supplies and Services	+\$675,000	+\$0
WI County Forests Grants	+\$630,000	+\$630,000
WI County Forests DNR Support -Staff Hours Increase	+\$350,000	+\$0
Division of Forestry WisFIRS IT Support	+\$400,000	+\$0

“+” indicated an addition to an existing allocation/budget item

DNR Forestry 2025-2027 Budget Actions (2025 Act 15)

Updated August 5, 2025

The purpose of this document is to summarize primary outcomes of the 2025-2027 State Budget as they relate to the Forestry Segregated Account (forestry SEG) and DNR Division of Forestry work and budgeting. This document does not include items not related to the Division of Forestry or the forestry account.

Forestry SEG is one of ten program accounts that constitute the Conservation Fund. Budgetary authority, generally established in the state budget, is required to access forestry SEG funds. This account funds the Division of Forestry and related administrative activities and provides support for several programs and activities administered by the DNR, (e.g. funding staff salaries, fringe benefits, supplies and services, local aid, capital purchases, and debt services); as well as forestry related activities outside of the agency.

Budget papers referenced in the items included below can be found on the [state legislature website](#).

“Ongoing” refers to new baseline funding provided in FY28 and beyond in addition to FY26 and FY 27.

Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) – Motion 26

Allocates \$220,000 from forestry SEG in FY26 & FY27, and \$155,000 from forestry SEG ongoing for:

- \$170,000 in FY26 and FY27 & \$105,000 ongoing for land asset management costs
 - \$75,000 in both years, with \$10,000 ongoing, for road maintenance
 - \$30,000 in both years for land appraisals
 - \$20,000 in both years for timber and boundary marking
 - \$20,000 in both years for paint supplies
 - \$15,000 in both years for building maintenance and signage
 - \$10,000 in both years for land surveys
- \$50,000 in each year for tree planting costs

DNR – Motion 90

DNR Agencywide 2025-2027 General Items

- **No additional LTE funding provided.** This means our LTE budget is not increasing.
- **eGrants System Licensing and Support (Paper #517).** Adopt Alternative 3 to provide \$350,000 (\$245,000 split-funded conservation SEG and \$105,000 split-funded environmental SEG) in 2026-27 for eGrants system post-procurement costs. In addition, delete \$4,200 GPR, \$19,800 snowmobile SEG, and \$23,400 split-funded conservation SEG in 2026-27 related to LTE salaries allotments and fringe benefits.
- **Building Demolition (Paper #518).** Adopt Alternative B1 to create a GPR continuing appropriation for building demolition and provide the appropriation \$500,000 GPR in 2025-26 for building demolition projects. This is the amount that was in the Executive Budget, which is less than the \$2,921,300 in identified needs/projects.
- **Night and Weekend Differential Pay (LFB Budget Summary, page 467, #4).** Provide \$92,100 conservation SEG each year in additional funding for night and weekend differential pay costs. This is the amount that was in the Executive Budget.

- **GIS Licenses (LFB Budget Summary, page 469, #9).** Provide \$150,000 (\$139,200 split-funded conservation SEG and \$10,800 split-funded environmental SEG) each year for mobile geographic information systems (GIS), desktop OIS licensing, and unlimited server capacity. This would consolidate certain funding for GIS-related activities from various departmental programs to the technology services program in the Internal Services Division with net annual additions of \$139,200 conservation SEG and \$10,800 environmental SEG. This is the amount that was in the Executive Budget.
- **Vacant Position Reductions.** Delete 20.1 FTE DNR positions vacant for more than 12 months, including 4.5 FED, 12.6 PR, and 3.0 SEG, and associated funding for salaries and fringe benefits, including \$365,900 FED, \$1,015,000 PR, and \$249,300 SEG.
 - 1.0 SEG Division of Forestry position was eliminated, as it was vacant longer than 12 months.

DNR 2025-2027 Forestry Items

- **Forestry Account Transfer to the Fish and Wildlife Account.** Transfer \$15,000,000 forestry SEG each year on a one-time basis from the balance of the forestry account to the balance of the fish and wildlife account.
- **Hazardous Tree Removal (Paper #542).** Provide \$2,066,500 forestry SEG in 2025-26 and \$2,167,500 forestry SEG in 2026-27 on a one-time basis for contracting costs for hazardous tree removal on DNR-owned recreational properties. No positions approved. This is the amount that was in the Executive Budget, but without the project positions.
- **Fire Suppression Services Funding and Overtime (Paper #543).** Adopt Alternative A3 to provide \$1,220,400 forestry SEG in 2025-26 and \$1,062,000 forestry SEG in 2026-27 on a one-time basis for costs related to DNR wildfire suppression and prescribed burn efforts. Per the LFB paper, the one-time funding will “give the Department further time to ascertain its needs relating to wildfire suppression and prescribed burn efforts.” No additional overtime funding is provided.
- **County Sustainable Forestry, County Forest Administrator, and County Forest Wildlife Habitat Grants (Paper #544).** Adopt Alternative A1 to provide \$500,000 forestry SEG each year in additional funding for county sustainable forestry and county forest administrator grants. Adopt Alternative B1 to provide \$130,000 forestry SEG each year in additional funding for the county forest wildlife habitat grant program. These are the amounts that were included in the Executive Budget.
- **Wisconsin Private Forest Landowner Grants (Paper #545).** Adopt Alternative 2 to provide \$45,100 forestry SEG each year in additional funding for the private forest landowner and weed management area grant programs. Per the LFB paper, this amount is “equal to the difference between base funding and the average amount applied for.”
- **Forestry Industrywide Strategic Plan (LFB Budget Summary, page 491, #13).** Create a continuing appropriation and provide \$1,000,000 forestry SEG on a one-time basis in 2025-26 to award a grant to the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the Wisconsin Paper Council to conduct a forestry industrywide strategic plan. This is an increase from the \$775,000 provided in the Executive Budget.
- **Forestry Software Licenses (LFB Budget Summary, page 492, #15).** Provide \$76,700 forestry SEG each year on a one-time basis for the purchase of software licenses for the DNR Division of Forestry. This is the same amount as the Executive Budget, but changes it to one-time.
- **Gypsy Moth Treatment (LFB Budget Summary, page 492, #16).** Provide \$230,000 forestry SEG each year on a one-time basis for the treatment of gypsy moths on DNR-owned

properties. This is the same amount as the Executive Budget (for spongy moth), but changes it to one-time.

- **Rothschild Dam.** Create a forestry SEG annual appropriation to provide financial assistance for the modernization of a dam on the Wisconsin River in the village of Rothschild. Provide \$42,000,000 forestry SEG in 2025-26 in program supplements for the Rothschild Dam. This dam is privately owned by Domtar Corporation's US subsidiary.

DNR 2025-2027 Parks and Law Enforcement Items

- **Parks Operations Funding and Vehicle Admission Sticker Conversion Costs (Paper #552).** Adopt Alternative A3 to provide \$1,394,400 (\$950,300 parks SEG, \$384,200 forestry SEG, and \$59,900 split-funded conservation SEG) in 2025-26 and \$1,435,700 (\$978,400 parks SEG, \$395,600 forestry SEG, \$61,700 split-funded conservation SEG) in 2026-27 to increase the Department's supplies and services allotment for operational costs in the state parks system. Adopt Alternative B1 to provide \$28,900 ATV SEG each year for ATV and UTV trail projects on DNR owned lands. Provide \$18,600 forestry SEG each year for property-specific operations funding for the Lapham Peak Lodge in the Kettle Moraine State Forest.
- **Parks Technology Upgrades (Paper #553).** Adopt Alternative A2 to provide \$458,900 (\$321,200 parks SEG and \$137,700 forestry SEG) each year, including \$404,900 each year in onetime funding, for technology upgrades for the state parks system.
- **Parks Maintenance Equipment Funding, Medical Training and Supplies (Paper #554).** Adopt Alternative A3 to provide \$512,900 (\$358,500 parks SEG and \$154,400 forestry SEG) in 2025-26 and \$216,000 (\$151,000 parks SEG and \$65,000 forestry SEG) in 2026-27 for the purchase of maintenance equipment for the state parks system. Specify that the preceding amounts are provided on a one-time basis. Adopt Alternative B1 to provide \$267,000 (\$186,900 parks SEG and \$80,100 forestry SEG) in 2025-26 and \$35,000 (\$24,500 parks SEG and \$10,500 forestry SEG) in 2026-27 for medical training and supplies for staff of the state parks system. Specify that the preceding amounts are provided on a one-time basis.
- **Nonresident Campsite Fees Increase.** Increase the maximum amount that DNR can charge for nonresident campsite fees from \$45 to \$50. Re-estimate forestry SEG-REV by \$412,300 in 2026-27 and parks SEG-REV by \$1,204,400 in 2026-27. Provide \$1,204,400 parks SEG in 2026-27 for the parks and trails development appropriation.
- **Campsite Electricity Fees Increase.** Increase the additional fee amount charged for campsites with an electric receptacle from \$15 to \$25 for Devil's Lake State Park, High Cliff State Park, Kohler-Andrae State Park, Peninsula State Park, and Willow River State Park. Increase the additional fee amount charged for campsites with an electric receptacle from \$10 to \$15 for other DNR-owned properties not specifically enumerated. Re-estimate forestry SEG-REV by \$185,100 in 2026-27 and parks SEG-REV by \$1,350,200 in 2026-27. Provide \$1,350,200 parks SEG in 2026-27 for the parks and trails development appropriation.
- **State Parks System Nonresident Vehicle Admission Sticker Fees Increase.** Increase the range of fees that DNR can charge: (a) \$9 for nonresident daily auto vehicle admission sticker fees to not less than \$19.85 but not more than \$24.85; (b) \$10 for nonresident daily bus to not less than \$24.85 but not more than \$29.85; and (c) \$4 for nonresident daily nursing home bus to not less than \$9.85 but not more than \$14.85. Increase the fee: (a) for nonresident annual vehicle admission stickers from \$37.50 to \$49.50; and (b) for nonresident additional annual from \$20 to \$32. Re-estimate forestry SEG-REV by \$240,200 each year and parks SEG-REV by \$1,264,900 each year. Provide \$1,264,900 parks SEG each year for the parks and trails development appropriation.

- **Conservation Warden Overtime (Page 499, #2).** Provide \$537,200 (\$418,500 split funded conservation SEG, \$73,900 boat SEG, \$22,900 ATV SEG, \$5,600 water resources SEG, and \$16,300 environmental management SEG) in 2025-26 and \$596,700 (\$464,800 split-funded conservation SEG, \$82,000 boat SEG, \$25,500 ATV SEG, \$6,300 water resources SEG, and \$18,100 environmental management SEG) in funding for overtime costs for conservation wardens.

Other Items

Building Program/Capital Budget

- Three requested enumerated projects (large projects costing over \$2 million) were included:
 - \$6,176,000 for the Spring Green Fire Response Ranger Station Replacement (#13126)
 - \$6,134,000 for the Peshtigo & Wausaukee Ranger Station Consolidation (#26891)
 - \$4,725,000 for the Forest Fire Command Center Replacement (#26828)
- At this time, there is no additional information about other specific projects.

Department of Transportation

- **County Forest Road Aid (Paper #755).** Provide \$328,300 SEG annually from forestry SEG and convert the funding source for the existing county forest road aids SEG appropriation from the Transportation Fund to forestry SEG. This provides an increase of \$7,700 to base program funding of \$320,600 annually, in order to fund the existing county forest road aid rate of \$351 per mile.

Compensation Reserve

- **General Wage Adjustments (Paper #236).** Provides for a general wage increase for most (permanent and project) state employees of 3% on July 1, 2025, and an additional 2% on July 1, 2026. This increase would not apply to LTEs.

Shared Revenue and Tax Relief (Forestry Mill Tax Transfer)

- No change to current law on the GPR transfer to forestry SEG. The mill rate equivalent will remain at 0.1697 mills of total equalized values. This is the primary source of funding/revenue for forestry SEG. The department expects a \$12.8 million FY26 revenue increase based on 2025 Department of Revenue equalized property value estimates.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

- The budget bill does not address the Stewardship Program. It is anticipated that it will be handled through separate legislation.