

Forestry Account Audit

- 2017-19 biennial budget requested Joint Legislative Audit Committee to direct the Legislative Audit Bureau to perform an audit of the moneys received by the DNR for forestry activities and how these monies are spent.
- Legislative Audit Bureau used the following guidelines for the audit:
 1. Review trends in Forestry Account revenues, expenditures and staffing levels
 2. Analyze expenditures and determine if they were:
 - Primarily related to forestry
 - Used to support forestry in addition to other programs
 - Not directly related to forestry
 3. Determine DNR's compliance with statutes governing the use of forestry-related funding

Audit Highlights

- In FY17, 53.5% of all expenditures were for activities primarily related to forestry, 40.5% were for activities that support forestry in addition to other programs, and 6% were for activities not directly related to forestry. A majority of the expenses not related to forestry were for aids in lieu of taxes payments to local units of government for DNR properties that are not state forests
- DNR administrative expenses accounted for 21.9% of all DNR expenditures from the forestry account in FY17
- The number of positions funded by the forestry account declined from 641.3 positions in FY13 to 615.8 positions in FY17

Post-audit Recommendations

- Recommend DNR comply with statutory requirement to spend 4% of the annual funds provided in lieu of the mill tax to purchase forests in a 16 county zone in Southeast Wisconsin
- Recommend UW System comply with statutory spending requirement related to the paper science program at UW-Stevens Point
- Recommend UW Center of Cooperatives spends no more than 5% of forestry account funding on administrative costs

Audit – Next steps?

- The Legislative Audit Committee could call a hearing to further discuss the Legislative Audit Bureau's report

2019-2021 Biennial Budget – DNR requests

- Base request for cost to continue (same funding as the 17-19 biennium)
- Additional requests:
 - reallocate LTE positions for water quality restoration plans
 - GPR-supported bonding for grants to reduce costs to permitted wastewater treatment facilities
 - Statutory language change for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program to keep current funding levels intact through fiscal year 2030 (an additional 10 years)
 - Statutory language change to authorize auto-renew license options for hunters, angler and trappers
 - Statutory language change to authorize an option to purchase multiple licenses in a grouping other than a Conservation Patron package

Division of Forestry Vacancies

- 423.08 permanent positions currently authorized for Division of Forestry
- 26.68 permanent positions currently listed as vacant (excluding the fall of 2018 class of foresters and technicians)
- 6.3% vacancy rate
- All integrated forester and field forestry technician positions are filled