

Silviculture Guidance Team (SGT) and Silviculture Guidance Update for the Governor's Council on Forestry

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Overview

- Background of SGT
- Role of SGT
- Role of Ad Hoc Teams
- Process for Revising Chapters
- Value of the Guidance Publication
- Current Status of SGT and The Wisconsin Silviculture Guide





SGT and Silviculture Handbook Background

- Historically, we used cover type guidance developed by the Forest Service
- ~1990 the need for more specific guidance led to the development of the Silviculture Handbook
 - Focus on public land management
 - (Mostly) internal DNR teams developed the Handbook



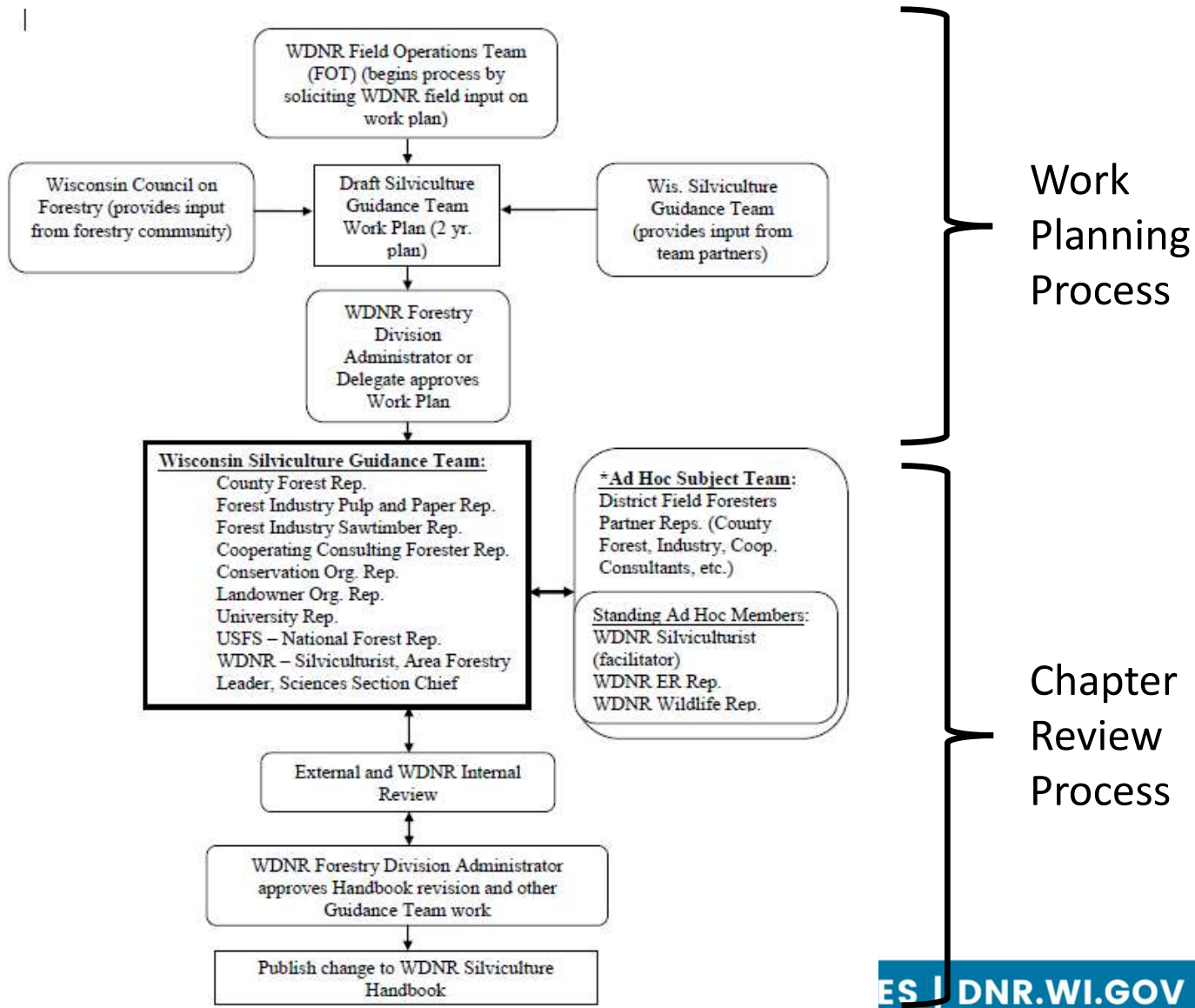
SGT and Silviculture Handbook Background

- In 2013, based on input from CoF and others SGT was formulated to have more input into the development of the Handbook
- In 2019, decision was made to rescind the Handbook and re-issue it as a guidance document like our other guidance documents (BMPs for Water Quality, Oak Harvest Guidelines for example)

SGT Role since 2013

- Assist in setting work planning goals
- Review updates to Silviculture Handbook Chapters (soon to be Wisconsin Silviculture Guidelines)
- Provide direction and feedback to Ad Hoc Teams who update the chapters
- Review related silviculture guidance like Endangered Resources species guidance or Biomass Harvest Guidelines





SGT Current Membership (3-year terms)

- County Forests
- National Forests
- Universities/Research
- Conservation Organizations
- Large Landowners/Land Managers*
- Small Landowners
- Silviculture/Ecology (not DNR)*
- Logging Professionals*
- Sawtimber industry (North)
- Sawtimber industry (South)*
- Paper and Pulp Industry
- Consulting Foresters
- DNR Forestry Team or Area Leader
- DNR Wildlife Biologist*
- DNR Silviculturist/Ecologist
- DNR FEE Section Chief (Co-chair)



Work Planning

- Sets goals and priorities for 2 years for DNR Silviculturists/Ecologists and Ad Hoc Teams
- May identify needs in Silviculture Handbook, other guidance, training, silviculture tools or others
- Driven by CoF, FIT, and SGT
- Approved by Chief State Forester



Silviculture Handbook

- SGT helps to identify priorities, issues, and concerns with chapters
- Reviews work of Ad Hoc Teams
- Conducts final review before public comment
- Provides responses to public comments (if necessary)

Ad Hoc Teams

- Chapter/Subject Specific
- 6 to 12 members
- Members can include DNR, County, industrial, NF, and private foresters as well as other natural resource professionals
- Standing DNR members: Silviculturist/Ecologist, Wildlife Biologist, ER Forestry Liaison, Forest Health Specialist
- Applications for membership reviewed by SGT Co-chairs & Silviculturist/Ecologist



Chapter Revision Process



- Initial direction and priorities from the workplan (CoF, FIT, & SGT)
- Extensive review of the science draws information from a variety of sources
 - Silviculture trials
 - FIA and other data
 - Scientific publications
 - Guidelines from other areas
 - On-the-ground review of forest management

Chapter Revision Process

- Ad Hoc Teams draft chapter sections
- Provide updates & opportunity to SGT to review as work progresses
- When final draft is ready
 - SGT review and approval
 - DNR Legal Services staff review
- Posted for public input
- Ad Hoc Teams/SGT respond to comments
- Office of Communications approves
- Chief State Forester approves
- Update published



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Good

“The handbook is [a] very useful tool. If you use it and become familiar with it, it is very easy to use.”

– DNR state lands forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Good

“The handbook contains great information and I consider it all valuable at some level.”

– Private forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Good

“The only reason I do not reference these sections more often is because I, more or less, have them memorized. However, their value to me earlier in my career was greater.”

– Private forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Not So Good

“The whole document is cumbersome and confusing and impossible to implement or consider all the suggested application when implementing or creating a plan or timber sale.”

– Private forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Not So Good

“I think this information can be useful, although I find some it to be pretty dated and not always relevant with current science and market considerations.”

– Private forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users –
The Not So Good

“The handbook is so broad, it doesn't give a recommendation. Rather than give options for every scenario under the sun, narrow it down to give specific recommendations to attain an objective!”

– Private forester



Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users – The Contradictory

“Making the mobile friendly version abbreviated for quick searching in the field, AND/OR including the searchable function on the mobile friendly version for quick searching.”

– Private forester

Value of the Guidance

- 2018 Survey of Handbook users – The Contradictory

“Why on earth do I need a "mobile-friendly version" of the silvicultural handbook? What kind of nonsense is this. Who has the time in the field, while being bitten by mosquitoes, deer flies, and ticks and while trying to meet important deadlines, to review a mobile app?”
– Industrial forester

Where is SGT now?

- 2019 Survey of current and former SGT and ad hoc team members asked about the effectiveness of SGT?
 - 24% Very Effective
 - 68% Somewhat Effective
- How can we be more effective or what are the barriers?
 - Personal opinions/advocacy
 - SGT sometimes gets “too deep” in editing the work of the ad hoc teams
 - Bureaucracy
 - Members have varying levels of engagement/ownership

Most important takeaway...

- **93%** of current or former SGT or ad hoc team members felt their input was very or somewhat valued
- Ultimately, this survey did not result in any recommendation for major change to SGT



Where is the guidance publication now?

The last couple of years have been tough!

- But, in April:
 - Gov delivery announcement that the Handbook is rescinded, and a guidance document called The Wisconsin Silviculture Guide will be released in its' place
 - 4 Chapters that have been recently updated will be put out for public comment in the new format
 - Northern Hardwoods (complete chapter revision)
 - Oak (revision to rotation ages)
 - Natural Regeneration (update on single-tree selection due to NH chapter revision)
 - Tree Marking & Retention Guidelines (partial revision)

Where is the guidance publication now?

- April (cont.)
 - Rest of the chapters and other materials will be posted in the new format, but the content will not have changed
 - The Silviculture Handbook will remain during transition period
- May/June
 - Kickoff the fir/spruce ad hoc team
- Summer
 - Completed draft of the bottomland hardwoods chapter

Where are we going?

- Future
 - Continue to revise chapters
 - Quick guides
 - Mobile version
 - More applied tools (economics calculator, for example)
 - Expanded wildlife management sections
 - Expanded climate change sections



Questions?



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"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"