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FORESTLAND MGMT

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January 24, 2018

Mr. Henry Schienebeck
Chair, Wisconsin Council on Forestry
3243 Golf Course Road
P.O. Box 1278
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Re: Forest Tax Law Dispute Resolution Process – Annual DRP Use Report for 2017

Dear Henry:

This report is being provided to you, as the Chair of the Council on Forestry (CoF), as an annual requirement as outlined in Chapter 31 of the Forest Tax Law Handbook. The handbook specifically states that the DRP Administrator is responsible to provide this report as outlined below.

As stated in Chapter 31-2, Item 9: "By February 1st of each year provide a report on the use of the DRP to the Council on Forestry. The report will include; the number of disputes, analysis of types of disputes, who was involved including statistics on number initiated and by whom (cooperator, logger, landowner), number approved and not approved to enter process, number ending with step one (working with Mediators) and duration of process, number going to step two (Expert Panel) and duration of process and recommendations of the Expert Panel, feedback received from participants and any other pertinent information."

As the current DRP Administrator, Steigerwaldt Land Services is providing the following information as detailed above.

- Number of disputes = 2
- Types of disputes: Case #1 was a disagreement between a landowner and a WDNR forester over the changing of harvest methods in an MFL Plan. Case #2 was a complaint from a landowner who felt he was being over-charged by his consulting forester.
- Initiating parties: Case #1 was initiated by a CoF member who was contacted by the landowner. Case #2 was initiated by a WDNR official who was contacted by the landowner.
- Disputes that entered the process = 0; Neither of the two cases entered the DRP. In Case #1, the landowner opted to withdraw their land from the MFL and listed the land for sale. In Case #2, it was determined by the DRP Administrator and the WDNR DRP liaison that the case was not a fit for the DRP.

Other pertinent information involving the administration of the DRP includes:

- Public outreach – The Administrator planned a minimum of two public outreach efforts per year to help advertise and educate forestry stakeholders that the DRP process is available and how the process is to be used. Outreach efforts to date have included a notification sent to forestry stakeholder organizations via email in January 2017, an informational article published in the Tomahawk Leader in March 2017, a mention of the process during the Cooperating Foresters Meeting in April 2017, and an update of the DRP presented at the Council on Forestry Meeting in August 2017. Additional educational/informational events will be planned for 2018.
- Mediator Applicants – The Administrator has obtained approval for 19 Mediators who have been contracted to perform mediator duties in the case of a dispute. The number of Mediators and the counties in which they are willing to perform case work adequately covers the entire state. Mediators will be contacted in January 2018 to assess their willingness to remain on the list.
- Expert Applicants – Approval has been obtained for 10 Experts. The number of Experts and the counties where they are willing to perform work adequately covers the entire state. Experts will also be contacted in January 2018 to assess their willingness to remain on the list.

The following lists the number of forestry Experts that each organization has successfully nominated.

Great Lakes Timber Producers Association (GLTPA) - 1
Society of American Foresters (SAF) – 1
Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) – 3
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) – 2
Wisconsin Paper Council (WPC) – 1
Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) – 1
American Tree Farm Committee – 1

Additional Mediator and Expert solicitation will be initiated after the current, ongoing contact effort if it is determined that the numbers or coverage are not adequate.

- DRP web page – As the DRP Administrator, Steigerwaldt has maintained a page on their website that provides detailed information regarding the DRP process: <http://www.steigerwaldt.com/wdnr-forest-tax-law-dispute-resolution-process/>.

This page provides a list of the Mediators and Experts and a short biography for each. It also provides an introduction, process overview, and a link to Chapter 31 of the Forest Tax Law Handbook, which provides the details that are to be followed for the Administrator and dispute process. The application to apply for the Mediator position is also included on the web page.

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- **DRP Analysis** – According to Chapter 31 of the DNR Forest Tax Law Handbook, one of the DRP Administrator's responsibilities is to "Ensure that in February of even numbered years the DRP is analyzed for process improvements and lessons learned and provide recommendations to address unforeseen complications in its administration." Considering the lack of activity since inception, lessons learned are limited. To address this requirement, the DRP Administrative team, including Steigerwaldt and DNR staff, plan to meet in the first quarter of 2018 to discuss DRP processes and administration. A summary narrative of this discussion will be documented.
- **New WDNR DRP Liaison** – Starting in 2018, the WDNR will be providing a new liaison/coordinator for the DRP. Katharine Haan will take over the duties from Ron Gropp. Katharine is in the DNR's Forest Tax Law Section. We thank Ron for his dedication to the process from its inception.

This concludes the 2017 DRP annual use report. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this report. Please feel free to contact us for further details or with any questions.

Sincerely,

STEIGERWALDT LAND SERVICES, INC.



Benjamin J. Williams
Forest Tax Law Dispute Resolution Process Administrator
Project Forester/Forestry Supervisor

BJW/jlt

cc: Ron Gropp, Jane Severt via email