

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan

Five Year Update on National Priorities

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Introduction

The Statewide Forest Action Plan (FAP) was finalized in 2010 to guide the work of Wisconsin's forestry community – including those in non-profit, private industry or government roles. A lot of work was done to produce a 10-year strategic plan that would, through collective effort, protect and enhance the forest resources that play such a vital role in the social, economic and environmental well-being of our state.

This year, the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) organization of the U.S. Forest Service has asked all states and territories to provide a 2015 check-in that showcases forestry success stories that have had a meaningful impact in key areas.

The following report highlights the excellent work that has been accomplished in Wisconsin. The report is organized by the three National Priorities set out in the Farm Bill and includes selected success stories that combine informative performance data with a short description of what was accomplished. The interconnected nature of Wisconsin's forestry community means that, in most cases, these successes are not owned by one entity alone but were only possible through the collaboration of many partners.

This report will become a third part of the Forest Action Plan, following Part 1: Statewide Forest Assessment and Part 2: Statewide Forest Strategy.

This is how the report is organized:

NP: [National Priority]



[Success Story Title/Topic]

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme A:
Strategy 1:

[Where each success story fits within Wisconsin's FAP]

NP1: Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes

Driftless Forestry Network Landscape Scale Partnership

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme E: Sustainably Managed Forest

Strategy 9: Increase acreage of privately owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.

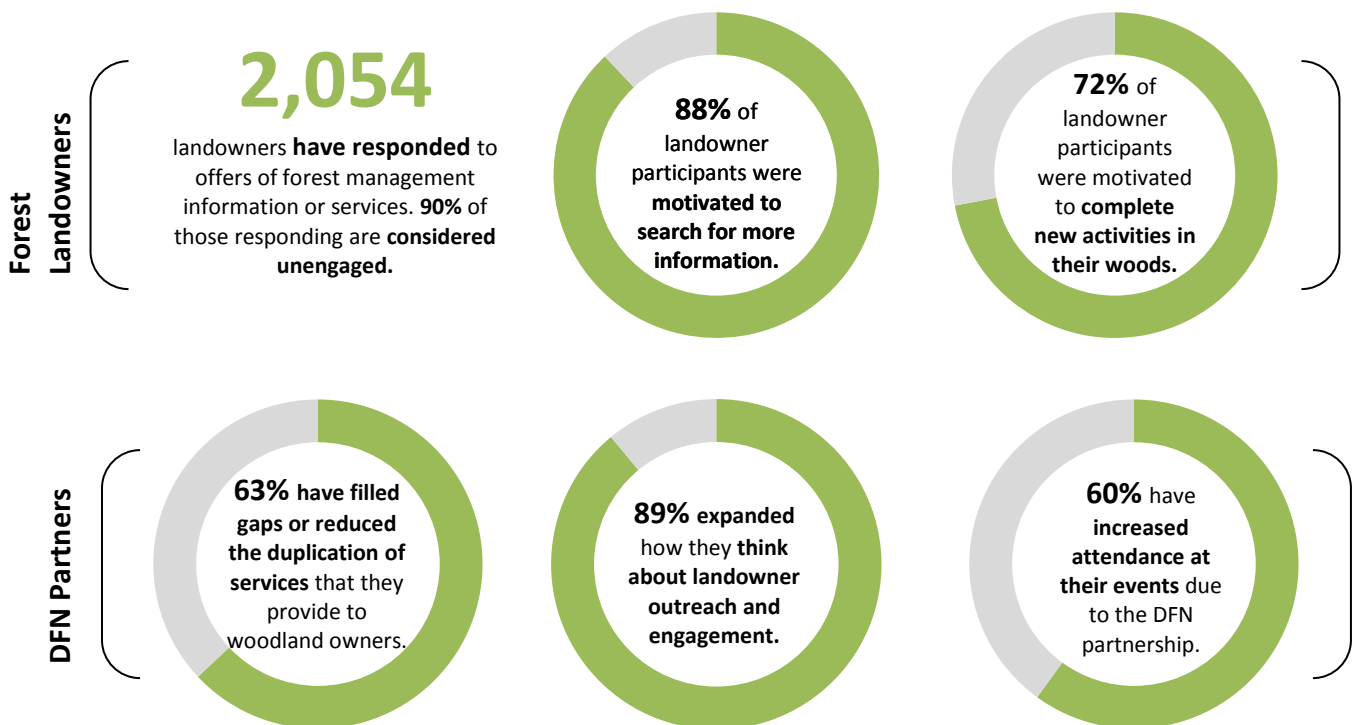
Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme D: Landscape Scale Management

Strategy 7: Increase the functional size of forest blocks by encouraging coordination of management of clusters of forest ownerships.

The Driftless Forest Network (DFN) is a collaboration of multiple partners – including the American Forest Foundation, WI DNR, Aldo Leopold Foundation, UW-Extension, and the Forest Service – working together to increase landowner engagement in the Driftless Area of Southwestern Wisconsin (USA). The region is home to nearly 32,000 family forest owners that collectively own over 2 million acres. DFN’s objectives are threefold.

1. Develop and implement tools and strategies to increase private family forest owner engagement toward active forest management.
2. Create capacity to sustain and enhance relationships among resource professionals and owners over time.
3. Evaluate DFN activities toward a systematic understanding of their efficacy and applicability both within the Driftless Area and beyond.

2015 Evaluations of the impact on forest owners, and the partnership itself, have yielded impressive results:



Sustainable Management of Non-Industrial Private Forest Lands

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme E: Sustainably Managed Forest

Strategy 9: Increase acreage of privately owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme P: Capacity

Strategy 44: Increase the number of private businesses that provide high quality goods and services to effectively and efficiently reach more forest landowners and sustainably manage more forest.

Of Wisconsin's 16 million acres of forestland, individuals and families hold the largest portion (57%). About 360,000 private, non-industrial landowners care for 10.4 million acres of woodland. The active, sustainable management of these forests is integral to the overall success of forestry in Wisconsin and private forestry contributes more than ever.

% of Family Forest Acres with Management Plans

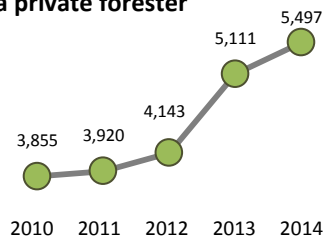


A growing number of private foresters are increasing capacity to deliver sustainable forest management services.

Increase in private forester professionals (Since 2010)



Number of private landowners assisted by a private forester



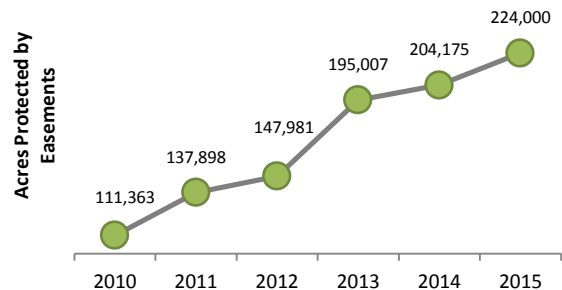
Working Forest Easements & New Road Fund Endowment

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme A: Forest Land

Strategy 2: Reduce the rate of conversion of forestland to alternative uses.

Since 2010, Wisconsin has more than doubled the number of acres of working forest easements, bringing the total to **224,000 acres**. This effort helps protect and preserve the integrity of forestlands in perpetuity, prevent forest fragmentation and promote the sustainable use of the state's forests.

In 2014, an access road fund endowment was established for lands protected under a conservation easement to pay for the management (i.e. maintenance and damage repair) of private roads on which the public is granted access for recreational purposes. The fund will ensure that roads remain in a condition that allows for continued recreational use and as well as forest management activities.

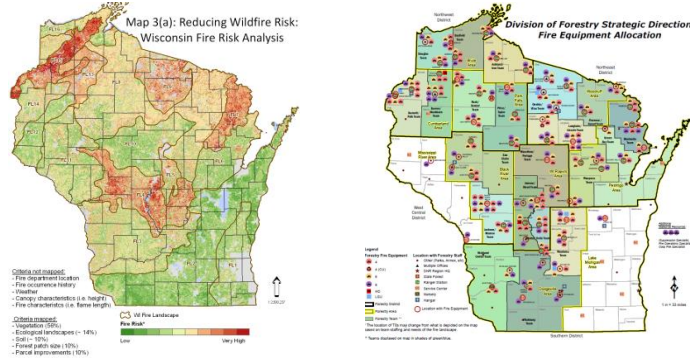


NP2: Protect Forests from Harm

Implementation Success with New Fire Risk Priority Landscapes

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme R: Fire, Safety and Law Enforcement
 Strategy 49: Provide for early detection and rapid initial attack for all forest fires within the state.

In 2010, Wisconsin’s fire protection community collaboratively developed a Fire Risk Priority landscape map to guide strategic placement of fire suppression resources, including staff and equipment, where they are most needed. The change reflected an update to the way the program focuses investments with new tools and updated data.



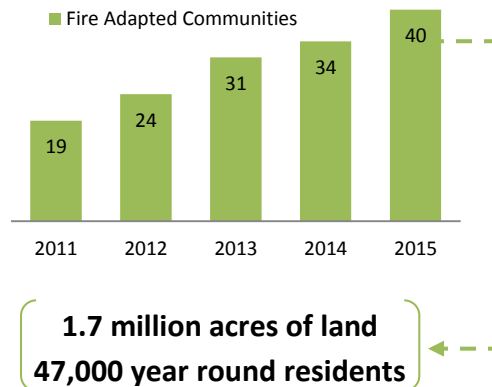
In 2013 the new staffing and resource allocation was put to the test on Wisconsin’s largest forest fire in 30 years. **The Germann Road Fire** started in a high priority landscape that drew additional resources in the reallocation. Ultimately it burned 7,442 acres but was contained in less than 30 hours in no small part due to the integrated response by agency resources, local fire departments and other partners.



Developing More Fire-Adapted Communities

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme R: Fire, Safety and Law Enforcement
 Strategy 50: Reduce wildfire ignition and minimize loss from fire.

The National Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) initiative offers information and actions that can be taken on the property, neighborhood or community level to prepare for wildfires. Wisconsin DNR has embraced the FAC initiative by promoting Firewise Communities, Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the Ready Set Go program. Wildfire Risk Reduction grant funds are prioritized for use in these communities for ongoing education and fuels reduction projects.



Promoting Ember Awareness

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme R: Fire, Safety and Law Enforcement
Strategy 50: Reduce wildfire ignition and minimize loss from fire.



Tying into the Great Lake Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) wildfire prevention campaign for 2013-2014, the Wisconsin DNR launched a full media campaign on the topic of ember awareness in April 2014. A feature of this outreach was a [four minute video](#) that was produced to educate homeowners in Wisconsin's high risk fire communities about the danger of embers and potential for home loss.



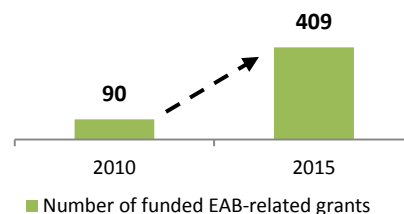
Harnessing the impact that a small "spark" can create, a gripping [30 second teaser](#) was also produced for the campaign which was awarded with a **2015 Telly award** in the Online Video - Online Commercial - Not-for-profit category.



Responding to EAB in Wisconsin Communities

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme J: Invasives
Strategy 22: Strive to prevent infestations of invasive species before they arrive.
Strategy 23: Work to detect new infestations early and respond rapidly to minimize.
Strategy 24: Control and Management of existing infestations.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestations have now been found in 29 counties in Wisconsin. Additional counties are quarantined due to surrounding or border infestations. DNR staff work with private landowners, communities and public land managers to minimize the impacts of EAB. \$1.5 million in state and local funding supported the response to EAB in 2014, including management planning, tree planting, education and outreach activities.



EAB Toolbox: Designed for the planning and response needs of municipal governments, the EAB toolbox for Wisconsin communities is a resource that the DNR hosts online. The toolbox "drawers" include information on ordinances, plans and grant funding sources.



Wisconsin's EAB Information Source: Homeowners, woodland owners, industry professionals and others are supported by Wisconsin's EAB Information Source. Users can find out how to identify EAB and ash trees, signs & symptoms, known EAB locations in Wisconsin, quarantines, regulations, pesticides and much more.

NP3: Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests

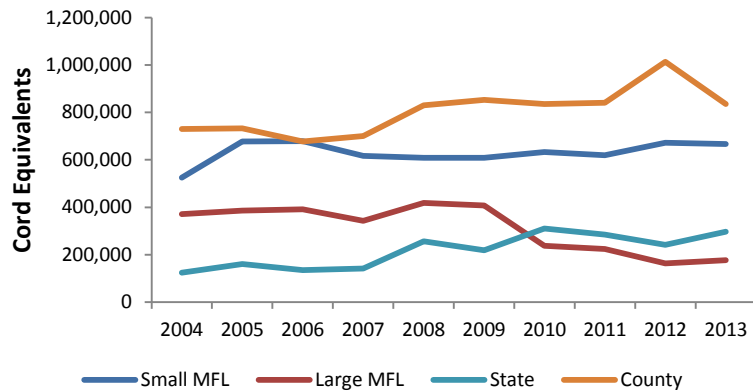
Increased Timber Supply Sent to Market

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme E: Sustainably Managed Forest
 Strategy 10: Increase acreage of publically owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme O: Markets
 Strategy 40: Support existing forest products companies so that they are competitive domestically and internationally.

Steady Wood Supply

The volume produced by timber harvesting that has occurred and is planned has been trending upward in Wisconsin. The Division of Forestry’s cooperative efforts with county, state, federal, and private landowners (Managed Forest Law) ensure a predictable flow of wood to industry.



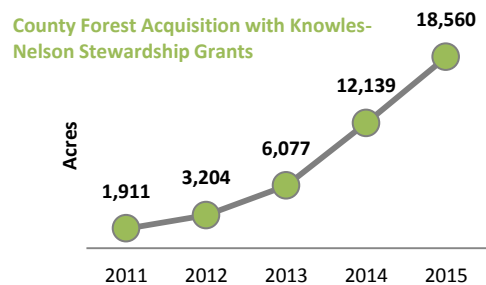
Record Number of Timber Sales on State Lands

Timber sales from state lands totaled more than \$11.7 million during fiscal year 2014, up nearly 9 percent from the \$10.8 million during fiscal 2013 and up 25 percent from only two years ago in fiscal year 2012. The record numbers highlight the value of the timber that can be sustainably harvested from state lands while also indicating the need for continued forest management to maintain healthy and diverse wildlife populations, protect key watersheds and provide opportunities for public recreation.

County Forest Program – Stewardship Grant Acquisitions

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme E: Sustainably Managed Forest
 Strategy 10: Increase acreage of publically owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices.

Already a vast resource of nearly 2.4 million acres, county forests have steadily increased in area. That growth has accelerated in large part due to county forest eligibility for Knowles – Nelson Stewardship grants for land acquisition. Since 2010, county forest stewardship grants have been awarded that will result in an additional 18,560 acres being enrolled in the County Forest Program. The grants provide money for the purchase of high-quality forest land for forest management, conservation and recreation uses.

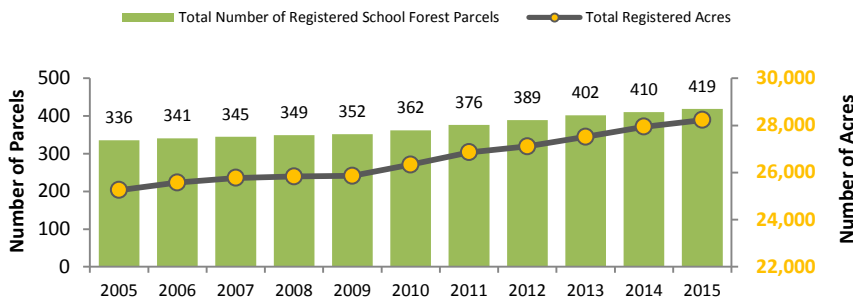


School Forests Program

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme N: Forest Value

Strategy 39: Build public understanding about the benefits provided from investing in forest conservation.

Wisconsin’s school forest program is approaching 90 years old. The number of registered school parcels, as well as the overall number of acres, has steadily climbed since 1928. Since 2010 an additional 67 parcels have been added, totaling over 2,300 acres of forest classroom. The school forests provide direct exposure to applied forestry activities and broader natural resource topics. They are also a source of income – over the last eight years **\$673,769** has been generated from timber sales on some of these forests.



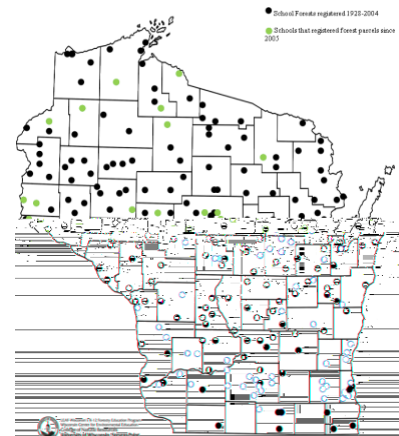
Recent highlights from the program showcase the potential for school forests to host large, integrated educational events, but also to provide an enduring learning platform for natural resources education and other topics.

Goodman/Armstrong Creek Log-A-Load for Kids

A timber harvest on the Goodman-Armstrong Creek school forest property provided a unique, large-scale education opportunity for 250 students from six surrounding school districts. The event integrated lessons in sustainable forest management with a fundraiser to support the Children’s Miracle Network. Proceeds were donated to charity and students were rotated through stations covering an array of forestry focused topics.

Whitnall School Forest

The Whitnall School District, in Greenfield (a suburb of Milwaukee), has enthusiastically embraced opportunities to fully integrate their 17 acre school forest as a classroom for its 2,500 students, 175 staff, and community. While not large, the forest provides for lessons in tree species identification, hands-on work, tree planting and growth, and invasive species. Staff professional development takes teachers into the forest to learn about water rescue vehicles and resources, first aid, forest products and the economy, and careers in forestry. Teachers learn and engage in forest based lessons that can be applied across all grade levels and content areas...even including how to incorporate foreign language classes at the forest.



● Schools that registered school forests since 2005

Urban Forestry Partnerships

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme I: Urban

Strategy 21: Expand and manage a diverse urban tree canopy to provide multiple public benefits.

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme N: Forest Value

Strategy 38: Encourage communities to invest in their urban forest canopy as part of a long-term plan for a community's quality of life.

First Down for Trees



This Green Bay Packers program donates trees to participating communities based on the number of Packer first downs made during the previous season. Since 2011, over 3,290 trees have been planted, providing total lifetime benefits of more than \$15 million through stormwater runoff reduction, CO2 reduction, energy savings, air quality improvement and property value increase.

Root, Root, Root for the Brewers

The Milwaukee Brewers have teamed up with the Wisconsin DNR for 5 seasons, committing to the "Root, Root, Root for the Brewers Plant-A-Tree" program. In addition to distributing 7,500 seedlings at one home game per year, the Brewers purchase one tree for every 20,000 tickets sold, offsetting the number of trees used to print the club's tickets. 150 trees were planted each year from 2011 to 2013. The 2014 season resulted in approximately 70 trees and over 100 shrubs being planted and part-way through the 2015 season there have been 723,428 tickets sold, representing 36 trees and counting.



Building on these two successes, WDNR urban foresters and their sports team partners created a Team Strategy Playbook providing play-by-play instructions for urban foresters in Wisconsin and around the country to win the support of their local sports teams.

Innovations in Urban Forestry

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme I: Urban

Strategy 20: Characterize and assess urban and community forests.

Switching to a Community Canopy model

In 2012 the amount of urban forest being targeted for management in Wisconsin grew by a considerable margin. Across the state, urban forestry partners committed to a programmatic shift towards a "community canopy" model. The focus went from the approximately 15% forest managed by municipalities to now include the additional 85% privately controlled tree population. The focus has moved from local to regional, state and multi-state, allowing for urban forestry to have a greater, more positive impact on the environment, the well-being of our citizens and the economic prosperity for private sector small businesses.

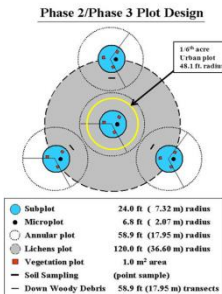
From Managing **Some** of the Urban Forest...



...To Managing **All** of the Urban Forest.

Developing a Wisconsin Continuous Urban Forest Inventory & Analysis System

This first-in-the-nation effort will integrate permanent on-the-ground plots, remote-sensed canopy cover data and existing local community, public and private inventories



to provide a complete picture of the extent, structure, composition and condition of the state's urban forests. The information will be available to state and local partners to identify and track urban forest environmental, economic and social benefits and services at multiple scales and assist managers in planning, prioritizing and decision making.



Plot measurements began in Milwaukee and Madison in the spring of 2015, with the target of statewide plots being initiated in 2016.

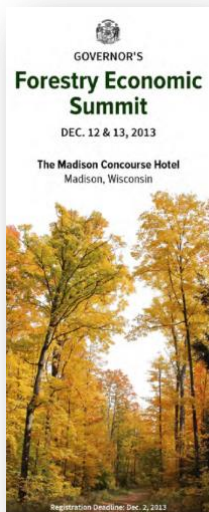
Economic Summit

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme O: Markets (All Strategies)

Wisconsin is a hub of green forest products, producing a diversity of value added solid wood, energy and ecosystem services

Wisconsin Forest Action Plan Theme P: Capacity (All Strategies)

Forest management/protection providers, businesses, and other organizations in the forestry community have increased capacity to protect and sustainably manage forests.



On December 12 and 13, 2013 the Governor's Forestry Economic Summit was held in Madison, Wisconsin. The event brought together Wisconsin's most engaged and knowledgeable forest industry stakeholders to learn and share information from all sectors of the industry. From private and public forest management trends and concerns to participation in the global forest economy, the summit sought to address all facets of the forest industry today while preparing for and addressing future challenges and opportunities. Speakers included representatives from industry, public and private forests, state and regional associations, universities and state agencies as well as elected officials.

The summit produced a unified view of economic challenges and opportunities. It cleared the way for action to be taken.

To date, teams of private and public sector representatives have acted upon key summit objectives, including improvements to communication tools and increased access to valuable timber sale information in Wisconsin.

Unsold Timber Sales

In an effort to bring about opportunities at economies of scale that support viable operations, an online tool was created that identifies unsold timber sales in each county. Landowners, foresters, loggers and all interested parties can make use of this data to operate efficiently as possible and increase the amount of sustainable forest management that can be carried out in Wisconsin each year.

