

**Committee Name:**

**Assembly Committee – Rural Affairs and Forestry  
(AC–RAF)**

**Appointments**

99hr\_AC–RAF\_Appt\_pt00

**Committee Hearings**

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**Executive Session**

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**Hearing Records**

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**Misc.**

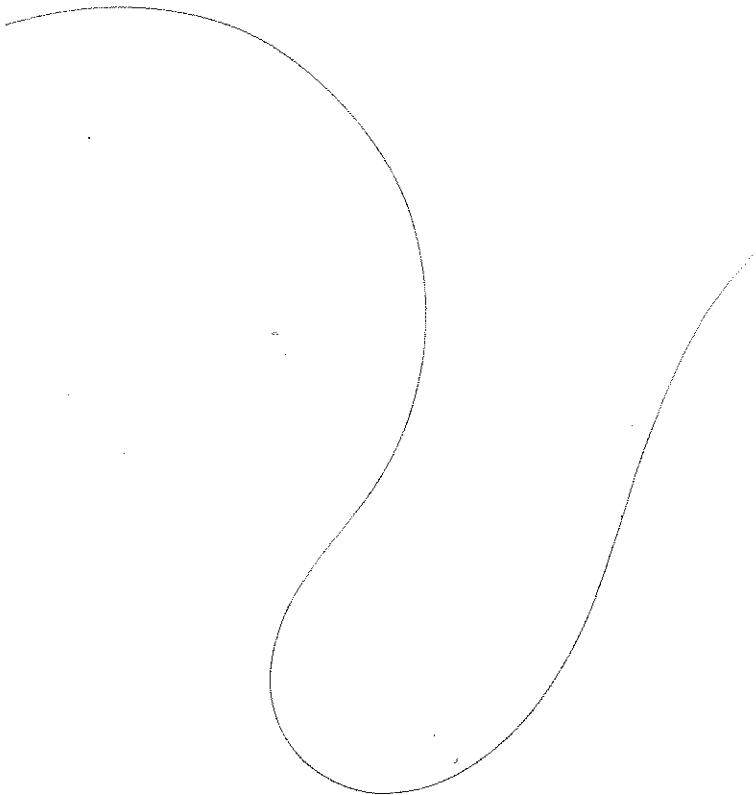
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**Record of Committee Proceedings**

99hr\_AC–RAF\_RCP\_pt00

8-21-00

LAONA Forestry Mtg



Assembly Committee on Rural Affairs & Forestry

Department of Natural Resources Testimony

Paul DeLong, Director

Bureau of Forestry

August 21, 2000

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Good afternoon. My name is Paul DeLong and I am the Director of the Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry and Wisconsin's Deputy State Forester. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss several topics related to forestry in Wisconsin.

Gene Francisco, Wisconsin's Chief State Forester and the Administrator of the recently created Division of Forestry, is unable to be here today due to a previous commitment involving a number of his fellow State Foresters from other states.

You have asked us the Department to address several issues pertaining to forestry, which I am pleased to be able to do. I will try and keep my comments on each topic brief and will welcome additional discussion and questions from the Committee.

Creation of the Division of Forestry

The first topic that you requested we address is the creation of the Division of Forestry. 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 contained a provision creating a Division of Forestry. In January of this year, Secretary Meyer appointed Gene Francisco as Administrator of the new Division. The Bureau of Forestry was maintained as the single Bureau within the Division. I was appointed Director of the Bureau following Gene's appointment. No other personnel shifts have occurred in response to the creation of the Division.

Secretary Meyer has made it clear that Gene Francisco has the authority and responsibility for the entire forestry program. Gene has full authority over all forestry positions and funds. He is responsible for assigning statewide forestry work plan priorities and insuring forestry field services are being delivered consistently throughout the state. Gene also now sits on the Department Leadership Team, where he ensures that Forestry is appropriately considered in decision making.

Foresters in the field continue to report back to the Division through the regional structure. Work plans drive program work, and the Division establishes those priorities. Orders are received through the regional supervisory structure.

The Division was created without any additional funding. We are requesting some funding in the FY'01-03 budget to operate the Division without taking it from already over-committed Bureau operations funding. Other appropriations have remained unchanged.

Forester Positions and Forest Management Plans

1999 Wisconsin Act 9 provided five additional forester positions within DNR. These positions were authorized in response to the large unmet workload that DNR foresters face. The size of the DNR forestry program shrunk by over 60 positions between the mid-1980s and 1997, at the same time the private forestry workload was continuing to escalate. The result has been a growing backlog in both statutory Managed Forest Law (MFL) workload and a reduction in our ability to service landowners requests for service.

The five forester positions were placed in five counties with the largest unmet private forestry workload. However, the gains we have seen from having several additional foresters have been more than offset by an unprecedented 48% increase in MFL applications this year. The large increase is probably due to increased

*allow participation in MFL without plan as long as no commercial cutting takes place*

taxes on private woodlands assessed as recreational lands and the effects of implementing agricultural use value assessment. We anticipate that this trend will continue.

The \$150,000 we received through the budget to contract with private consulting foresters was quickly exhausted. We requested an additional \$150,000 through a 13.10 requested, which was authorized by the Joint Finance Committee in May. The combined \$300,000 enabled us to contract for the preparation of more than 400 plans. This has enabled our Department foresters to handle the remaining MFL applications and address their other critical responsibilities, including forest fire suppression and county forest management.

*Compare with requests*

The backlog in MFL mandatory practices and our inability to effectively reach out to new landowners both remain acute. We are requesting in the FY'01-03 budget some additional forester positions as well as funding to enhance our collaborative efforts with the private sector, through contracting, grants to promote wood cooperatives, educational efforts and an increase in our landowner grant program. Much work remains to be done.

*make permanent in new budget*

### Fire Danger and Protection

The 2000 forest fire season in Wisconsin started in late February, which is very early. We had 1,377 fires this spring that burned 4,423 acres. This compares to a five-year average of 1,517 fires and 3,056 acres and a 50-year average of 1,654 fires and 8,087 acres.

Over the past decade, Wisconsin has received sufficient and timely precipitation. It has been more than a decade since Wisconsin has endured a significant dry season and a prolonged fire season. During the period of 1988 to 1990, the last significant drought period, between 7,500 and 10,000 acres burned annually.

Some of the significant events that occurred this past spring include the Four Corners Fire entrapment. A copy of the investigation report was sent to members of this committee earlier this month. We view the report as an opportunity to learn from and a tool to teach our personnel about fire line tactics and safety. Recommendations from this report are currently being adapted for our September in-service training sessions and for the Incident Management Team re-certification in January 2001.

During the spring fire season we used, for the first time, CL-215 aircraft. These aircraft, stationed in Minnesota, assisted in the suppression of the Flamang Fire in Douglas County on May 23. These large air tankers carry 1200 gallons of water and are able to scoop water from lakes in flight, allowing extremely quick drop cycles and, therefore, more water delivered to the fire. The CL-215s were very effective in suppressing this fire.

1999 Wisconsin Act 9 permanently authorized the Department's Forest Fire Protection Grant Program, which had been run on a trial basis since 1998. The grant program annually uses \$327,000 in federal funds and \$198,000 in state forestry funds. This year, more than 150 fire departments received \$525,000 in state forestry funds through this program for protective clothing, suppression tools, communications equipment and vehicles that are capable of fighting forest fires. This program is a key component in our efforts to strengthen the important partnership between the DNR and local fire departments, which in turn strengthens our initial attack fire suppression capabilities on forest fires.

Wisconsin is not currently in the midst of fire weather. In the absence of a drought, summer is not conducive to significant fire weather in Wisconsin. However, as I am sure you all are aware, several states in the Western United States are experiencing the worst fire season in fifty years. DNR is currently assisting our partner agencies in the western United States suppressing a large number of catastrophic forest fires. We have to date sent 79 trained personnel and five of our type 4 engines on assignments to the states of Utah, Nevada, California, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota and Idaho. The benefits of this experience to Wisconsin are in the training and experience our personnel receive in the Incident Command System and in the operations of a major forest fire. In most years, personnel in Wisconsin do not have the opportunity to participate in a major incident. By providing assistance to our partners in their time of need,

we are able to gain valuable experience that will benefit Wisconsin when we next have a major forest fire. Additionally, Wisconsin's forest fire protection program does rely on national forest fire fighting resources to compliment our ground forces during our spring fire season.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to report to you with sadness that Tom Roberts, Chief Forest Ranger in Wisconsin, passed away on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000 after a courageous battle with cancer. It was through Tom's leadership, passion, dedication and tireless effort that Wisconsin's forest fire fighting program is one of the most highly regarded in the nation. Tom will be greatly missed by all of us with whom he worked.

#### Forestry Education Efforts

I am pleased that the committee is interested in forestry education and that Eden Koljond is here to discuss the Wisconsin Forestry Education Resource Alliance (WFREA). I would like to share a few thoughts about the DNR's efforts regarding forestry education.

Current education and awareness programming within DNR is based on 1992 Focus Group research and widely reported anecdotal evidence of the following:

- (a) There is a major disconnect in public understanding of the relationship between consumption of wood products and the need to harvest trees.
- (b) People also do not understand that sustainable forestry practices meet the ecological, economic, and social demands on Wisconsin's forests in a way that maintains opportunities for current and future generations.
- (c) Further, people do not understand that Wisconsin is, by virtue of our climate, soils, and environmental regulations, well positioned to manage our forests in a sustainable manner.
- (d) When harvest of trees is limited in Wisconsin while consumption levels remain the same or continue growing, harvest pressure may be displaced to another part of the world where sustainable forestry is either not practiced or not viable.

*and to private forests*

We have no way of knowing how effective our existing public awareness and education efforts are in addressing these problems. As a result, the Forestry Division is currently investing in a public opinion poll to provide baseline data on public opinion, understanding, and attitudes about consumption of wood products, forests roles in their lives, and the basic concepts of sustainable forestry. This poll, which is being conducted by the UW-Madison Survey Lab, was inspired by presentations at a WFREA conference last year, at which coordinators of similar projects in Minnesota and California presented their results.

A strategic plan for forestry public awareness and education will be developed, based on data from the poll. In the course of planning, we will inventory all of the resources that can help with this effort, both within and outside the agency. There are a number of existing education efforts – such as the new UW-Extension Basin Educators program, a new curriculum CD coordinated by WFREA, and “Into the Outdoors,” a DNR-sponsored public television program – that will be folded into this strategic plan. As an emerging leader in forestry education, WFREA will be an important partner in this effort.

In a related effort, the Forestry Division is taking the lead on creating a Forestry Discovery Center to be built on 50 acres of old oak forest on the Milwaukee County Grounds. We are currently in negotiations for a conservation easement, and have contracted through DOA with Engberg Anderson, a Milwaukee-based architectural firm, for preliminary concept development and design work. We see this project as an ideal opportunity to reach primarily urban and suburban audiences, which are the most removed from and skeptical about forestry.

#### Gypsy Moth and Forest Tent Caterpillar

The gypsy moth continues to spread across Wisconsin and build in areas in which it has become established. It is increasing to outbreak levels at sites in the Fox River Valley, along the Lake Michigan and Green Bay shoreline, and in the Milwaukee area. Defoliation has occurred this summer in several

areas characterized by oaks grown in lawn. Four parks were treated with Btk to reduce the pest's population below damaging levels in Milwaukee, Brookfield, Appleton and Green Bay. Caterpillars are becoming a nuisance in areas where numbers are building and the public is beginning to demand action from local governments.

This spring, we successfully petitioned for a 13.10 emergency funding request in order to hire two gypsy moth suppression coordinators for the Northeast and Southeast regions of the state. We are in the process of hiring these coordinators and expect to have them on board this fall. These suppression coordinators will process treatment requests for a federal cost sharing program and participate in bid development, treatment programs and follow-up surveys of treatment efficacy. They will also provide training and technical support for the full range of management methods including physical, biological and silvicultural controls, privately funded pesticide treatments and the state organized and federally cost shared treatment program.

We are actively collaborating with DATCP on development of the suppression program, which will complement the existing Slow the Spread (STS) program administered by DATCP. The STS program treated 76 sites in 18 counties in a band running North to South through the center third of WI. A total of 81,201 acres were treated; 58,246 acres were sprayed two times with Btk and pheromone flakes were scattered aerially over the remaining 22,955 acres. Pheromone traps were placed in all Btk sites to monitor the success of the treatment. Collection of the traps has just started and we will have the final results in a few weeks.

We are working on a packet and accompanying training session on how to run a privately funded aerial spray program against either gypsy moth or forest tent caterpillar. We expect to have the packet finished next month and the training sessions for arborists and consulting foresters scheduled soon after.

Switching pests, the forest tent caterpillar populations in northern Wisconsin began a new outbreak this year and defoliated hundreds of thousands of acres of hardwood trees, mostly aspen and oak. Outbreaks begin every 10 - 12 years in northern Wisconsin and last about 5 years. The defoliated oaks and aspen produce new leaves a few weeks after peak defoliation. The aspen seldom die but the defoliated oaks are occasionally attacked by secondary insects and die. The greatest impact of the tent caterpillar is on shade trees in residential and recreational areas -- the caterpillars and their droppings become a nuisance to cabin owners, homeowners, picnickers and campers.

The DNR's Forest Health Specialists provide advice and technical assistance to woodland owners. Our main approach is to advise landowners to reduce the chance of tree mortality by applying good forest management techniques. While we do not conduct suppression spraying, we do provide information and technical assistance for suppression projects. An information leaflet has been prepared to help landowners arrange spray projects.

The moth flight in late June and early July was very heavy this year, which means we can expect a very large population next year. Egg mass surveys are conducted during the winter to predict next year's defoliation levels in areas where spray projects are contemplated.

#### Forestry Cooperatives

I would like to briefly make a few comments about forest cooperatives. As I am sure Rosemary Mahoney will discuss, we are seeing a dramatic increase in interest in forest cooperatives. Cooperatives are one of several mechanisms that can facilitate expanding the number of landowners practicing sustainable forestry in Wisconsin. We are pleased to see the increasing interest and are working to more clearly define how we can most usefully support these efforts.

The Department supported funding in the most recent biennial budget for a wood cooperative grant program administered by the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives. The Forestry Division is also a co-sponsor of the Wood Cooperative Conference being organized by the Community Forest Resource Center at Madison's Monona Terrace in mid-October.

In an effort to continue the process of encouraging cooperatives, the Department is including a request in its biennial budget to continue funding for contracting with the Cooperative Development Services for another two years.

The Department also has supported a USDA Forest Service grant that is enabling the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to conduct a survey on the attitudes of landowners and forest industries toward working with wood cooperatives in the future. The Department also is co-sponsoring a research project at the UW Madison Department of Forest Ecology and Management on how landowners' needs might be served by wood cooperatives.

I anticipate we will be learning a great deal more about the ways in which cooperatives can expand practice of sustainable forestry in Wisconsin.

I have appreciated the opportunity to discuss these issues with you this afternoon and I will be glad to address questions from the Committee if your schedule permits.

The following is submitted as testimony before the Assembly Committee on Rural Affairs and Forestry hearing held August 21, 2000, at Laona, Wisconsin.

Chairman Ainsworth and members of the Committee, my name is Colette Matthews, I live in Tomahawk, and am the Executive Secretary for the Wisconsin County Forests Association.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to hold this hearing in Northern Wisconsin. By traveling up to our northern forests, you are able to view the forests that Wisconsin's citizens have worked long and hard, through active management, to restore.

First cut over, then burned and plowed, and finally abandoned, these lands have been brought back to productivity through the hard work of many far sighted people, who, nearly one hundred years ago realized that trees once harvested could be regrown; who knew that a better way could be found to manage and maintain these forests; and who worked with an equally far sighted legislature to put together programs that allowed this to happen. One such program was established under the County Forest Law. It has been highly successful.

**During the last seventy years, over eighteen million cords of wood have been harvested from Wisconsin's county-owned forests. Nearly two hundred eighty-one million board feet of saw logs have been harvested. During this same time span these counties have planted nearly two hundred fifty-five million trees. In addition, more than one hundred fifty-three million dollars in timber revenues have been realized by the participating counties.**



This remarkable record did not happen without help. The counties worked in partnership with DNR Forestry. So it is with some background on the issues before you that we offer this testimony.

The twenty-nine counties now participating in the County Forest Law program work closely with Wisconsin's Division of Forestry. For instance, DNR Forestry provides member counties with grants, interest-free loans, access to forestry experts, and on the ground assistance. Each county is assigned a liaison forester, who works closely with the county foresters to properly manage the county forests and assure the state that the statutes are followed.

This partnership has worked smoothly. But during the past several years, counties have seen an excellent Forestry program broken apart and put back together in a manner that makes doing good on the ground forestry work a real challenge.

Our association came to the legislature a year ago and asked for your help. We hoped that by creating a Division of Forestry, this most valuable program could be rebuilt into some semblance of its former self. Sad to say, this has not occurred.

Wisconsin now has a Division of Forestry; our Chief State Forester now sits on the Department Management Team. The Deputy State Forester now heads the Bureau of Forestry. But nothing else has changed, nor is it about to change. We still have a disconnected Forestry program in Wisconsin. And I am at a loss as to how it can be fixed under the present system.

Forestry is extremely important to Wisconsin. Our citizens may not even realize how much it contributes to the state's economy. But they would surely realize the hole in the economy if the state does not allow this important segment of Wisconsin's industry to progress into

the 21st century. A strong Forestry Department is necessary for this to happen. We cannot continue with a system that puts non-forestry personnel in charge of forestry decisions.

We cannot risk having to fight wildfires with personnel untrained in Wisconsin's fire fighting procedure. Those in charge must be people, able through years of training, to make split second decisions; these decisions are carried out by people whose lives are in the balance. One life lost is one too many. If we can learn anything from the wildfires in the western US this summer, it should be this.

During the past two years the DNR has lost too many excellent foresters. People have retired as soon as the ability presents itself. These are good people who loved their jobs, but who could no longer deal with the system. Please listen to those who can tell the story without fear of retribution.

Years ago, everyone knew where the 'Ranger Station' was located. The people who worked there knew the local people, and they were familiar with the area. When locals had a question or needed help, they knew who to ask. And the people who worked in those ranger stations were admired by the local community.

Somehow, down the years this close connection to the local community has vanished. A 'disconnect switch' seems to have been activated. We need, again, to be connected. The 'how' is up to you.

Colette J Matthews, Executive Secretary  
Wisconsin County Forests Association  
W7300 Ridge Road  
Tomahawk WI 54487  
715-453-9125

**TESTIMONY FROM  
THE CHEQUAMEGON-NICOLET NATIONAL FOREST  
TO  
THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
ON  
L a k e RURAL AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY**

**Bob Lueckel, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest  
Monday, August 21, 2000  
Laona, Wisconsin**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on the topics of road policies on national forests and federal payments to local governments. You all have a copy of my testimony. I am accompanied today by Paul Strong, the Chequamegon-Nicolet's Public Affairs Officer.

I begin with the topic of federal payments.

**USDA Forest Service – Payments to States**

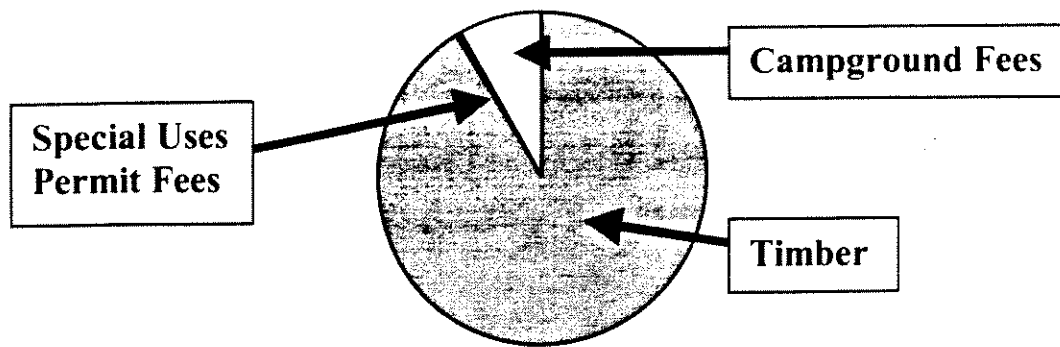
States and local units of government receive a number of payments from the federal government. Two of these are directly associated with the Forest Service. The first, commonly referred to as the "25% Fund", returns twenty-five percent of the revenues collected by the national forests to the state in which the national forest lies. This payment was authorized by Congress in 1908. The legislation restricts the use of these funds to expenditures on roads and schools.

Each state through legislative proceedings determines the unit of government to receive these funds. In Wisconsin, Town governments are the ultimate recipients.

The primary revenue-generating activity on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is the sale of federal timber, in recent years accounting for over 90 percent of the annual revenues. Other revenue sources include some campground fees, permits for special uses of the national forest, and mineral leases. Funds collected under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Project for parking at certain recreation sites are not subject to the 25% Fund legislation and are used to improve recreation facilities on the Forest.

**Figure 1**

## **Programs Contributing to 25% Fund Payments on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest**



During the last decade, there has been a substantial increase in revenues collected on the national forest. The annual revenues have more than doubled and in the last few years have been between seven and a half and eight million dollars. The funds returned to the state have been around 1.7 to 2 million dollars.

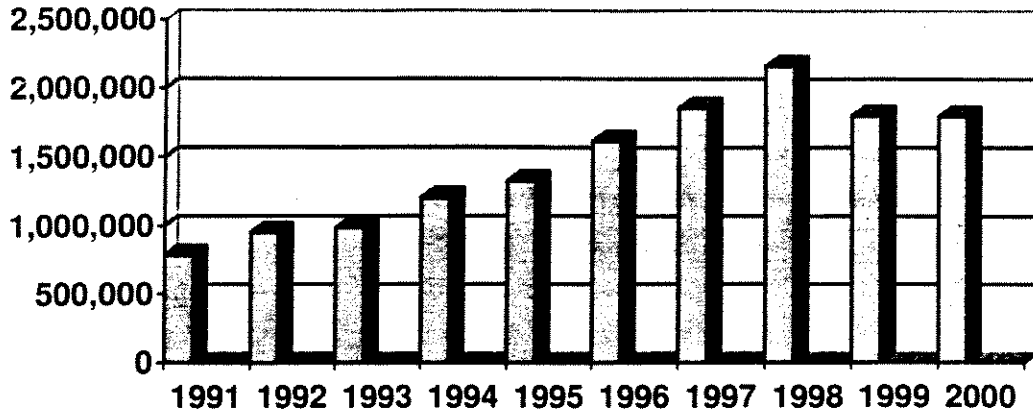
The amount of timber sold and eventually harvested from the national forest has not changed a great deal during the same period nor has the quantity of certain types of timber products. Thus, the increase in 25 percent fund revenues cannot be explained by a corresponding increase in the timber program. Rather, the increase is attributable to the increases in the value of wood products. For example, the average price of aspen has increased nearly three-fold over the same period and the price of red pine sawlogs has increased to over \$200 per thousand board feet.

Figure 2

*\$7,000,000 - 9,000,000 from timber sales & campground fees.*

**Wisconsin 25% Fund Payments 1991-2000\***

\*FY 2000 payments estimated



There are 65 townships that share these funds based on the amount of national forest they contain. These Townships occur in eleven counties. Forest County, where we are today, receives the highest amount, nearly a half million dollars, because it has the greatest amount of national forest land – 53.5 percent of its land base. Nearby Oneida County with just two percent of its land base in national forest acreage in the state receives a correspondingly small amount.

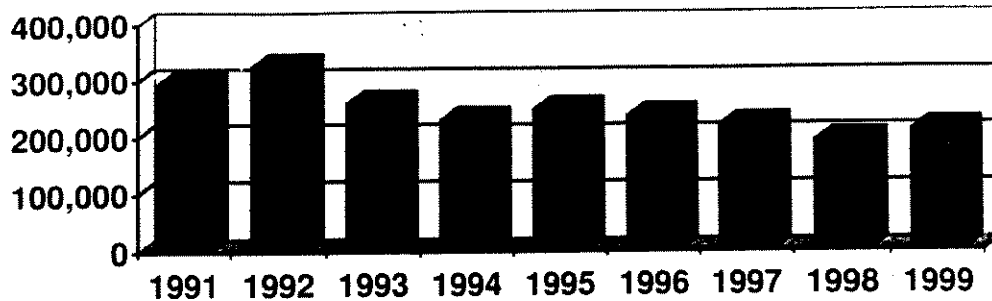
The second payment associated with national forest programs is what is referred to as Payment in Lieu of Taxes or "PILT" for short. As the name suggests, this payment is designed to help offset taxes not paid by federal land management agencies. Unlike the 25% Fund program, payments from the PILT legislation are made on a per acre basis and are the result of annual federal appropriations legislation. In recent years, appropriations bills have funded PILT at only 40% of its authorized level.

*contact Green*

*1.65 per acre  
 46  
 66.00 per forty replaces  
 \$300. to \$500. in taxes*

**Figure 3**

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments to Wisconsin from National Forest Acreage 1991-1999**



PILT funds are also distributed to Wisconsin's town governments with national forest and other federal lands. Unlike the 25% Fund payments these funds can be used for any local government program. The amount of money Towns have received from PILT is considerably less than monies from the 25% Fund, in recent years about ten percent of the revenue sharing payments. There are two reasons for this. The first is the overall amount appropriated. The second is the formula for PILT that includes a negative factor when the same unit of government receives PILT and the 25% Fund payments.

The Administration and the Congress have been discussing possible changes to the current 25% Fund program. The Forest Service has proposed to stabilize these payments to local governments and to decouple them from activities like timber harvesting, livestock grazing, and mining, for which fluctuations in annual outputs can affect annual payments. Several bills have been introduced in Congress on this topic and there is a good deal of discussion on it.

**Forest Service Road Policies**

Allow me to now address the topic of federal road policies starting first with some historical and geographic perspective. Since its inception around the turn of the last century, the Forest Service has built thousands of miles of roads with a current total of over 380,000 miles. These roads provide access for millions of users of national forest lands.

In recent years, the backlog of road maintenance needs has created unfavorable public safety and environmental conditions, primarily in rugged terrain in the West, but also here in the Midwest. Additionally, the Forest Service's past and current roads policies have been controversial, spawning numerous appeals of timber and recreation projects and some lawsuits.

*most within 1/4 to 1/2 mile from road*  
 On the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, many of today's roads were in place when the lands were acquired in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Abandoned rail lines also

criss-crossed the landscape. New roads were built to access timber and other resources where roads didn't exist. Today, we estimate over 11,000 miles of roads on the Forest, an average of over 4 miles per square mile of national forest land.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet's roads vary in length, width, and condition. Some are well-maintained gravel roads that are connectors between Township and County roads. Others are unmaintained dead ends used primarily for timber management activity.

When the Forest Plans for the then separate Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forests were approved in 1986, the Forest Service and the public realized that not many new roads would need to be built to carry out management activities on the Forest. There was also recognition that the existing road system could stand to have some roads eliminated to reduce maintenance needs, to reduce the possibility of resource damage, and in some cases to improve habitat for some wildlife species. Other roads were determined to be needed for long-term management, but were to be closed to public vehicle traffic to help meet recreational and wildlife values.

During the first 14 years of implementing the Plans, there have been a few new roads built, some closed to vehicles, and others decommissioned. Essentially, the Chequamegon-Nicolet has a mature road system with most of its permanently needed roads in place. The challenge is to make adjustments to it to meet the multiple values demanded from national forest lands.

During the last few years, the Forest Service at a nation-wide level has initiated two proposals to modify part of the code of federal regulations dealing with roads - one, referred to as the **Transportation Policy**, and another, referred to as the **Roadless Area Conservation Rule**. I'll summarize each of these and offer perspective on what adoption of the proposals may mean to management of the Chequamegon-Nicolet.

The **Transportation Policy** would require each national forest that is revising its Forest Plan to: (a) create a "transportation atlas" for its land base, essentially a map and database of all roads, and (b) work with local governments and citizens to identify the roads needed for the future management of the national forest and those that could be decommissioned. It also specifies a formal, scientific analytical process national forests must use in deciding when to build a new road. The public comment period on the draft policy closed on May 17, 2000. The final rule is expected this fall. For the Chequamegon-Nicolet, our work to establish a comprehensive database and maps of the Forest's eleven thousand plus miles of roads began a few years back and should be completed within a year.

The **Roadless Area Conservation Rule** is also in a draft stage. The public review and comment period closed on July 17, 2000. A final rule is expected later this year, possibly in December.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule proposes to impose a prohibition on the construction of new roads in areas identified as roadless twenty years ago that still can be

considered roadless today. It also proposes regulatory language that would require national forests to consider the values of old inventoried roadless areas and any other smaller roadless areas in existence as they conduct local national forest planning.

It is instructive to state what the Roadless proposal doesn't do. First and perhaps most importantly, it does not prohibit or restrict anything outside inventoried roadless areas. It does not close any existing roads or trails. It does not restrict any activities that currently are permissible in roadless areas except the construction of new roads. It does not prohibit the construction of new roads in areas currently considered roadless. It does not direct national forests to make any particular decisions about the future management of existing roadless areas.

On the Chequamegon-Nicolet, the proposed Roadless rule would mean no new road construction in some part of 69,000 acres of national forest land identified as roadless in 1979 and scattered around the Forest. The acreage that is still unroaded is not known, but we think this could be about two-thirds of the 69,000 acres. Overall, we estimate about three percent of the Forest could be affected by the road construction prohibition.

The second part of the proposed rule would provide regulatory language that directs national forests to consider roadless values when revising their forest plans. The Chequamegon-Nicolet is currently in the process of revising and combining the existing Forest Plans for the Chequamegon and Nicolet that last done in 1986. As we work on Forest Plan revision, we already are taking into consideration the Forest's road system and areas that are unroaded or lightly roaded as we determine what mix of future management designations will be most appropriate for the next ten to fifteen years. Thus, we don't believe that the proposed Roadless Area Conservation Rule will change the way we are conducting our Forest Plan revision effort.

In summary, the Forest Service is attempting to adjust its roads policy – to make a paradigm shift from being a road development agency to becoming a road management agency.

This concludes my testimony today. Thank you again for the invitation to address your Committee. I will be pleased to take your questions during the course of this hearing.



Assembly Committee on Rural Affairs & Forestry

Department of Natural Resources Testimony  
Paul DeLong, Director  
Bureau of Forestry  
August 21, 2000

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The five forester positions were placed in five counties with the largest unmet private forestry workload. However, the gains we have seen from having several additional foresters have been more than offset by an unprecedented 48% increase in MFL applications this year. The large increase is probably due to increased

taxes on private woodlands assessed as recreational lands and the effects of implementing agricultural use value assessment. We anticipate that this trend will continue.

The \$150,000 we received through the budget to contract with private consulting foresters was quickly exhausted. We requested an additional \$150,000 through a 13.10 requested, which was authorized by the Joint Finance Committee in May. The combined \$300,000 enabled us to contract for the preparation of more than 400 plans. This has enabled our Department foresters to handle the remaining MFL applications and address their other critical responsibilities, including forest fire suppression and county forest management.

The backlog in MFL mandatory practices and our inability to effectively reach out to new landowners both remain acute. We are requesting in the FY'01-03 budget some additional forester positions as well as funding to enhance our collaborative efforts with the private sector, through contracting, grants to promote wood cooperatives, educational efforts and an increase in our landowner grant program. Much work remains to be done.

### Fire Danger and Protection

The 2000 forest fire season in Wisconsin started in late February, which is very early. We had 1,377 fires this spring that burned 4,423 acres. This compares to a five-year average of 1,517 fires and 3,056 acres and a 50-year average of 1,654 fires and 8,087 acres.

Over the past decade, Wisconsin has received sufficient and timely precipitation. It has been more than a decade since Wisconsin has endured a significant dry season and a prolonged fire season. During the period of 1988 to 1990, the last significant drought period, between 7,500 and 10,000 acres burned annually.

Some of the significant events that occurred this past spring include the Four Corners Fire entrapment. A copy of the investigation report was sent to members of this committee earlier this month. We view the report as an opportunity to learn from and a tool to teach our personnel about fire line tactics and safety. Recommendations from this report are currently being adapted for our September in-service training sessions and for the Incident Management Team re-certification in January 2001.

During the spring fire season we used, for the first time, CL-215 aircraft. These aircraft, stationed in Minnesota, assisted in the suppression of the Flamang Fire in Douglas County on May 23. These large air tankers carry 1200 gallons of water and are able to scoop water from lakes in flight, allowing extremely quick drop cycles and, therefore, more water delivered to the fire. The CL-215s were very effective in suppressing this fire.

1999 Wisconsin Act 9 permanently authorized the Department's Forest Fire Protection Grant Program, which had been run on a trial basis since 1998. The grant program annually uses \$327,000 in federal funds and \$198,000 in state forestry funds. This year, more than 150 fire departments received \$525,000 in state forestry funds through this program for protective clothing, suppression tools, communications equipment and vehicles that are capable of fighting forest fires. This program is a key component in our efforts to strengthen the important partnership between the DNR and local fire departments, which in turn strengthens our initial attack fire suppression capabilities on forest fires.

Wisconsin is not currently in the midst of fire weather. In the absence of a drought, summer is not conducive to significant fire weather in Wisconsin. However, as I am sure you all are aware, several states in the Western United States are experiencing the worst fire season in fifty years. DNR is currently assisting our partner agencies in the western United States suppressing a large number of catastrophic forest fires. We have to date sent 79 trained personnel and five of our type 4 engines on assignments to the states of Utah, Nevada, California, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota and Idaho. The benefits of this experience to Wisconsin are in the training and experience our personnel receive in the Incident Command System and in the operations of a major forest fire. In most years, personnel in Wisconsin do not have the opportunity to participate in a major incident. By providing assistance to our partners in their time of need,

we are able to gain valuable experience that will benefit Wisconsin when we next have a major forest fire. Additionally, Wisconsin's forest fire protection program does rely on national forest fire fighting resources to compliment our ground forces during our spring fire season.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to report to you with sadness that Tom Roberts, Chief Forest Ranger in Wisconsin, passed away on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000 after a courageous battle with cancer. It was through Tom's leadership, passion, dedication and tireless effort that Wisconsin's forest fire fighting program is one of the most highly regarded in the nation. Tom will be greatly missed by all of us with whom he worked.

### Forestry Education Efforts

I am pleased that the committee is interested in forestry education and that Eden Koljord is here to discuss the Wisconsin Forestry Education Resource Alliance (WFREA). I would like to share a few thoughts about the DNR's efforts regarding forestry education.

Current education and awareness programming within DNR is based on 1992 Focus Group research and widely reported anecdotal evidence of the following:

- (a) There is a major disconnect in public understanding of the relationship between consumption of wood products and the need to harvest trees.
- (b) People also do not understand that sustainable forestry practices meet the ecological, economic, and social demands on Wisconsin's forests in a way that maintains opportunities for current and future generations.
- (c) Further, people do not understand that Wisconsin is, by virtue of our climate, soils, and environmental regulations, well positioned to manage our forests in a sustainable manner.
- (d) When harvest of trees is limited in Wisconsin while consumption levels remain the same or continue growing, harvest pressure may be displaced to another part of the world where sustainable forestry is either not practiced or not viable.

We have no way of knowing how effective our existing public awareness and education efforts are in addressing these problems. As a result, the Forestry Division is currently investing in a public opinion poll to provide baseline data on public opinion, understanding, and attitudes about consumption of wood products, forests roles in their lives, and the basic concepts of sustainable forestry. This poll, which is being conducted by the UW-Madison Survey Lab, was inspired by presentations at a WFREA conference last year, at which coordinators of similar projects in Minnesota and California presented their results.

A strategic plan for forestry public awareness and education will be developed, based on data from the poll. In the course of planning, we will inventory all of the resources that can help with this effort, both within and outside the agency. There are a number of existing education efforts – such as the new UW-Extension Basin Educators program, a new curriculum CD coordinated by WFREA, and "Into the Outdoors," a DNR-sponsored public television program – that will be folded into this strategic plan. As an emerging leader in forestry education, WFREA will be an important partner in this effort.

In a related effort, the Forestry Division is taking the lead on creating a Forestry Discovery Center to be built on 50 acres of old oak forest on the Milwaukee County Grounds. We are currently in negotiations for a conservation easement, and have contracted through DOA with Engberg Anderson, a Milwaukee-based architectural firm, for preliminary concept development and design work. We see this project as an ideal opportunity to reach primarily urban and suburban audiences, which are the most removed from and skeptical about forestry.

### Gypsy Moth and Forest Tent Caterpillar

The gypsy moth continues to spread across Wisconsin and build in areas in which it has become established. It is increasing to outbreak levels at sites in the Fox River Valley, along the Lake Michigan and Green Bay shoreline, and in the Milwaukee area. Defoliation has occurred this summer in several

areas characterized by oaks grown in lawn. Four parks were treated with Btk to reduce the pest's population below damaging levels in Milwaukee, Brookfield, Appleton and Green Bay. Caterpillars are becoming a nuisance in areas where numbers are building and the public is beginning to demand action from local governments.

This spring, we successfully petitioned for a 13.10 emergency funding request in order to hire two gypsy moth suppression coordinators for the Northeast and Southeast regions of the state. We are in the process of hiring these coordinators and expect to have them on board this fall. These suppression coordinators will process treatment requests for a federal cost sharing program and participate in bid development, treatment programs and follow-up surveys of treatment efficacy. They will also provide training and technical support for the full range of management methods including physical, biological and silvicultural controls, privately funded pesticide treatments and the state organized and federally cost shared treatment program.

We are actively collaborating with DATCP on development of the suppression program, which will complement the existing Slow the Spread (STS) program administered by DATCP. The STS program treated 76 sites in 18 counties in a band running North to South through the center third of WI. A total of 81,201 acres were treated; 58,246 acres were sprayed two times with Btk and pheromone flakes were scattered aurally over the remaining 22,955 acres. Pheromone traps were placed in all Btk sites to monitor the success of the treatment. Collection of the traps has just started and we will have the final results in a few weeks.

We are working on a packet and accompanying training session on how to run a privately funded aerial spray program against either gypsy moth or forest tent caterpillar. We expect to have the packet finished next month and the training sessions for arborists and consulting foresters scheduled soon after.

Switching pests, the forest tent caterpillar populations in northern Wisconsin began a new outbreak this year and defoliated hundreds of thousands of acres of hardwood trees, mostly aspen and oak. Outbreaks begin every 10 - 12 years in northern Wisconsin and last about 5 years. The defoliated oaks and aspen produce new leaves a few weeks after peak defoliation. The aspen seldom die but the defoliated oaks are occasionally attacked by secondary insects and die. The greatest impact of the tent caterpillar is on shade trees in residential and recreational areas -- the caterpillars and their droppings become a nuisance to cabin owners, homeowners, picnickers and campers.

The DNR's Forest Health Specialists provide advice and technical assistance to woodland owners. Our main approach is to advise landowners to reduce the chance of tree mortality by applying good forest management techniques. While we do not conduct suppression spraying, we do provide information and technical assistance for suppression projects. An information leaflet has been prepared to help landowners arrange spray projects.

The moth flight in late June and early July was very heavy this year, which means we can expect a very large population next year. Egg mass surveys are conducted during the winter to predict next year's defoliation levels in areas where spray projects are contemplated.

#### Forestry Cooperatives

I would like to briefly make a few comments about forest cooperatives. As I am sure Rosemary Mahoney will discuss, we are seeing a dramatic increase in interest in forest cooperatives. Cooperatives are one of several mechanisms that can facilitate expanding the number of landowners practicing sustainable forestry in Wisconsin. We are please to see the increasing interest and are working to more clearly define how we can most usefully support these efforts.

The Department supported funding in the most recent biennial budget for a wood cooperative grant program administered by the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives. The Forestry Division is also a co-sponsor of the Wood Cooperative Conference being organized by the Community Forest Resource Center at Madison's Monona Terrace in mid-October.

In an effort to continue the process of encouraging cooperatives, the Department is including a request in its biennial budget to continue funding for contracting with the Cooperative Development Services for another two years.

The Department also has supported a USDA Forest Service grant that is enabling the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to conduct a survey on the attitudes of landowners and forest industries toward working with wood cooperatives in the future. The Department also is co-sponsoring a research project at the UW Madison Department of Forest Ecology and Management on how landowners' needs might be served by wood cooperatives.

I anticipate we will be learning a great deal more about the ways in which cooperatives can expand practice of sustainable forestry in Wisconsin.

I have appreciated the opportunity to discuss these issues with you this afternoon and I will be glad to address questions from the Committee if your schedule permits.

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I submit the following as testimony before the Assembly Committee on Rural Affairs and Forestry hearing held at Laona Wi. on August 21, 2000:

My name is Michael Beaufeaux and I live in Rhinelander Wisconsin. I retired from the Department of Natural Resources in February of this year after serving over 35 years in most of the forestry programs on both public and private lands in a technical and supervisory capacity. I served as the north central district staff specialist for over 20 years and spent the last 3 years of my career as forest ecologist/silviculturist for the northern region.

I would like to share with you some of my observations and thoughts on the **“Creation of the Division of Forestry”**. Elevating Forestry to Division status has been a long time in coming and has been a dire need in recognizing the importance of Wisconsin’s forests to the people that live here! Forests occupy almost half of the land base in Wisconsin and at over 18 billion dollars in annual revenue value to the economy, forestry outranks agriculture and tourism combined according to the former Department of Revenue’s statistics.

Why should a resource of this social and economic importance and management need of this magnitude be tucked away as a bureau in the Department of Natural Resources? Fortunately this oversight has been corrected and now needs to be energized into the new Division’s full potential!

A new structure is needed within the Division of Forestry, which will enable forestry personnel to more fully achieve sustainable ecosystem management. A catalyst is needed to attract gifted resource managers towards pursuing a career based upon technical achievement. A career ladder is lacking for scientifically inclined personnel who are needed to inspire and train field managers in full spectrum resource management. Currently the only way to achieve career advancements in the Department is to become a supervisor over several resource management functions and lose the specialist expertise gained through past experience.

Most corporation CEO’s now recognize that they can’t take just any employee with good managerial skills and put him or her in a supervisory capacity over technical employees. Otherwise, the results is a supervisor who doesn’t understand the problems of the subordinates and lacks drive to accomplish the technical mission and lacks vision for long term technical goals such as those in sustainable forestry.

Integration in natural resource management is best served through building and sharing knowledge of the ecological connectiveness of the various disciplines rather than through supervisory mandates. You need to establish a Forestry Division structure which will accomplish intelligent, well thought out management applications. This needs to be done by maintaining resource management knowledge up through the chain of command, otherwise, much needed mission and visionary emphasis will get lost along the way.

In summary, now that the Forestry Division has been established out of well documented need, the next step is to empower that Division with adequate structure and backing to get the job done! Thank you for giving me this opportunity to give you feedback.

**The following is submitted as testimony before the Assembly Committee on Rural Affairs and Forestry hearing held August 21, 2000 at Laona, Wisconsin**

Good afternoon. My name is Kenneth Sloan and I live in Minocqua, WI. I would like to make a few comments relative to the creation of the Division of Forestry.

I am a forester who recently retired from the Department of Natural Resources. During my 30 year career, I worked as a field forester, a forestry supervisor, and most recently, as the Fire Management Officer for the DNR's Northern Region.

Forestry is a very important in Wisconsin. In addition to its role in ensuring a healthy vigorous forest for the benefit of our citizens, it supports recreational and hunting opportunities that attract millions of tourists to our state.

Forestry is also one of our best kept secrets. When people think of Wisconsin, they usually think of cows and snowmobiles. Most people do not know that our paper industry is number one in the country. In fact, the total contribution made to the economy of Wisconsin by Forestry and its related industries exceeds that of both Agriculture and Tourism combined.

Agriculture has long had Department status to reflect its importance. Tourism was recently elevated to Department status for the same reason. Over the years I've watched the Bureau of Forestry grow until it was the largest in the DNR. Indeed, it was larger than most of the current Divisions. When Forestry was recently elevated from Bureau to Division status I was hopeful that its importance had finally been recognized. I thought the intent was to create an organizational structure more in keeping with the scope and complexity of the forestry program in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case. A Division Administrator was appointed, which has elevated the status of forestry within the Department, but otherwise, no changes have been made. We continue to operate with a single Bureau and "share" a supervisory structure with the Land Division. As a result, forestry staff at every level are overloaded to the point where they cannot be effective.

Forestry Section Leaders continue to supervise more staff than Bureau Directors in other programs. Regional forestry experts are expected to support four to five times the number of field staff as do regional experts in other programs. Field foresters are unable to get the technical support they need. Low job classifications and impossible workloads continue. Frustrated key veteran employees are leaving and recruitment is becoming more difficult.

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In my case, for example, as the Northern Region Fire Management Officer, I was charged with supporting approximately 150 forestry field employees, while my counterpart regional experts in other programs dealt with 30 or less. As a result, we had to create an additional level of experts in each of the four Basins. It took almost three years to fill three of the Basin level positions because they were classified at the same level as field foresters and qualified candidates were simply not interested. We ended up going out of state to fill two of the positions.

Providing technical direction to staff and ensuring consistent, quality work continues to be a problem. Forestry has to share a supervisory structure with the Lands Division, in which most key supervisors have no background or training in forestry. In the Northern Region, for example, only about one half of the critical first line supervisors are foresters and none of the Basin level Supervisors have a forestry background.

By contrast, the Division of Law Enforcement has a number of Bureaus and all their field supervisors are experts in the field of law enforcement. They have developed the organizational structure necessary to do a quality job. They are able, for example, to devote an entire Section to the critical recruitment, training and mentoring function - headed up by a Section Chief with a staff of five. Forestry, on the other hand, must make do with a single Training Officer (classified one level higher than a field forester) and one assistant. Because all Law Enforcement Supervisors are trained officers, they do not have to dedicate additional positions to function as "experts" to support field wardens. Meanwhile, Forestry is proposing to add an additional eight to ten experts as the only way to ensure program quality.

It's time to finish the job and create a forestry organization equal to the task. If both Agriculture and Tourism justify full department status, surely Forestry at least deserves a REAL Division.



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