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☛ 2005-2007 State budget

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Forestry...

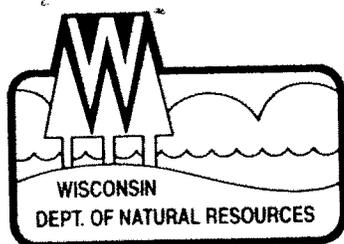
COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

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INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

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(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
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* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (July 2013)



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Assembly Committee on Forestry
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
Paul DeLong, Division Administrator

March 1, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Good morning. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you to discuss Governor Doyle's 2005/07 Budget as it relates to forestry issues.

As Governor Doyle made clear in his budget address, the State continues to face a challenging fiscal situation and that he will continue to reduce the size of state government. These two issues are producing a challenging budget process for the Department of Natural Resources as well as the rest of state government.

Although I will be outlining some of the significant challenges that the Division of Forestry is facing, I want to begin by highlighting provisions within Governor Doyle's 2005/07 Budget that will enhance opportunities to advance the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests. Over the 2005/07 biennium the Governor has proposed increased spending authority of \$10.4 million for the Division of Forestry to address many key needs.

The Governor has proposed \$1.2 million over two years to help equip, train and assist volunteer fire departments, DNR fire fighters and forest landowners with the resources necessary to continue to protect Wisconsin's forest resource. The funding will renew the radio communication infrastructure utilized by the Department's fire fighters, update a fire fighter's personal fire protection equipment (shelters), and continue to strengthen the partnership with volunteer fire departments within the cooperative fire protection areas.

The Governor has proposed \$1.1 million over two years to continue the effort to add efficiencies to the long-term Managed Forest Law program. The funding will begin to relieve workload management issues within the Forest Tax Section and will begin the design of an efficient electronic method for processing MFL applications. The funding will also continue the annual contracting with private consultant foresters for the preparation of MFL management plans, in light of the very large workload associated with this important program.

Governor Doyle has requested \$2 million per year to implement the MFL Public Access Grant Program and to create a Managed Forest Land Board. Spending authority and statutory language initiatives have been advanced to implement this request. The MFL Public Access Grant program is designed to offset the impact of the increasing amount of MFL closed acreage by acquiring easements or by purchasing land. The Managed Forest Land Board would be responsible for providing grants, funded from closed acreage fee revenues, to local governments, the Department and non-profit conservation organizations. The grant program was initially proposed within last year's Assembly Bill 323.

The Governor has requested \$2.1 million over the biennium to advance sustainable forestry and forest certification initiatives across the state. These initiatives will help to advance and strengthen Wisconsin's economy. The request will provide support for implementing sustainable forest management projects

(e.g. timber sale establishment and administration, site preparation, forest health monitoring, seedling release) at the State Forests and the Department's non-State Forest properties, addressing some of the backlog of forest management work on those properties. The request will also enable us to develop and implement a continuous forest inventory on the Northern and Southern State Forests, support the annual forest certifications registration fees, and increase the Sustainable Forestry grant funding for the County Forests. In addition the funding would modernize and maintain the critical public forest reconnaissance and timber sale tracking systems. These are key data systems that support public forestland management. This funding will advance Governor Doyle's Grow Wisconsin Initiative that is designed to create a competitive business climate and to invest in Wisconsin businesses.

The Governor's budget also requests \$882,000 over the biennium to monitor and control non-native, invasive plants and insects. Invasive plants and insects continue to be one of top issues facing the Department. It is an emerging and expanding problem that has resulted in tremendous social and economic cost increases, and ecological stresses to native communities. The Governor has requested funding to develop educational materials, develop bio-control suppression techniques, create monitoring techniques, create tracking databases, and to suppress the invasive species on the State Forests and State Natural Areas.

The Governor further proposes allocating \$600,000 over the biennium to support the development of the Forestry Education and Awareness Center on the Milwaukee County Grounds. Recent research shows that the citizens of the state use the forest resource extensively for forest products while simultaneously holding the view that harvesting trees is undesirable. This project targets Wisconsin citizens and visitors to enhance their appreciation for sustainable forestry and the value of the state's forests - ecologically, economically and socially -- to their daily lives.

The Department is pleased that the Governor has recognized the importance of the initiatives that I have outlined and is advocating that the legislature allocate resources from the Forestry Account to fund them. However, as I mentioned at the outset, the Governor's efforts to effectively address the state's fiscal concerns and his initiative to reduce the size of state government will impact how we do business.

To address the GPR funding shortfall, the Governor has proposed shifting \$39.5 million over the biennium from the Forestry Account to pay part of the (GPR) debt service that has accrued as a result of the Stewardship bonding program. These bonds were to be paid back with GPR funds.

In addition, the Governor has proposed using an additional \$4.0 million over the biennium of Forestry Account funding to support the Aids in Lieu of Property Tax payments that are required for Department properties. These in lieu of tax payments were also originally to be paid with GPR funds.

The Governor has also recommended a reduction of 40.75 FTE's from the Division of Forestry, as part of his initiative to reduce the size of state government. The Division Leadership has initiated an assessment of the position reduction situation and has implemented a process to identify which positions will be given up. The process has been based on an assessment of Division priorities, responsibilities, and alternatives for accomplishing workload.

The 40.75 FTEs to be eliminated represents a reduction of one-third of the Division's FTE in the private forestry program. In recognition of the significant workload the Division must address, the Governor has proposed to mitigate our reduced ability to meet workload demands by shifting the salary and fringe dollars, which would be freed up by the position reductions, to Forestry's supplies and services line for use in funding alternative ways to accomplish some of our activities in the areas being reduced. We greatly appreciate being able to obtain this funding as it will certainly mitigate part of the impact of cutting over 40 positions.

We are in the process of assessing what services are most readily accomplished in another manner, and how we transition in a way that minimizes the workload costs associated with contracting for services. The bottom line is that, even with contracting, our capacity to achieve our mission will be adversely affected by these reductions. We will continue to meet the needs related to forest fire protection, county

forest assistance, mandatory MFL workload and management of the designated State Forests. Having said this, the ability to identify other ways to deliver some of the services we provide is critical to maintaining a basic ability to meet the highest priority functions we perform.

I firmly believe that the DNR has a role to play in private forestry that is critical to maximizing the sustainable management of Wisconsin's private forests, as clearly outlined in the 1999 Private Forestry Study. The Division of Forestry is committed to the critical role we play in private forestry and to aligning the resources we have in a manner that maximizes the sustainable management of private forest lands in Wisconsin. To do so, we will work with our partners including private sector foresters, landowner organizations, and others engaged in sustainable forestry on private lands to dramatically expand the availability of forestry assistance outside DNR. We are well aware of the work capacity limitations within the private sector and the significant amount of required workload that would shift under this proposal. We will work both within DNR and externally to assess how to effectively address the large workload shift called for in this budget.

Let me be clear. Through his budget the Governor is demonstrating support for key forestry initiatives while also working aggressively to address the State's challenging fiscal situation. Although I would be remiss not to mention the adverse impacts of some aspects of the budget, I also believe it would be a mistake to conclude this budget ignores the needs facing forestry. The Governor's budget provides some much needed funding for several important initiatives and allows the Department to maintain funding associated with positions targeted for reduction to mitigate some of the impact of those losses. I know that you and your colleagues are also working aggressively to prepare and advance a fiscally restrained biennial budget, and so appreciate the magnitude of the challenge the state faces. I don't envy your task as you prepare to finalize a budget and send it back to the Governor.

The state's forests are an integral part of Wisconsin's economy and environment. The Department will work diligently with the resources we are provided to work in partnership to protect and sustainably manage our state's magnificent forest resources.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak with you today and I welcome your questions.

Thank you.



DIVISION OF FORESTRY
2005 - 2007
BUDGET REQUESTS
SUBMITTED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
(October & December, 2004)

Topic: Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Protection (Decision Item #5120)

Request: \$2,247,700 the first year and \$2,237,700 the second year. Transfer 12 aeronautic positions to Forestry.

Initiatives:

Aeronautics - Transfer the Aeronautic Section to the Division of Forestry and \$797,000 of Forestry Account funding to support the associated salary and fringe benefits for the twelve positions each year beginning with the 2006 fiscal year.

Overtime and Compensatory Time Salary Line - Because of the necessity to maintain an adequate fire protection capacity during times of fire risk, Forestry has been annually exceeding the authorized funding designated for overtime costs. An additional \$587,000 annually in salary line authorization for forest fire suppression overtime is requested.

Cooperative Fire Program - After an extensive evaluation of the Cooperative Fire Program, the Division of Forestry has begun to strengthen the relationship between the State and local Town Chairs and Volunteer Fire Departments within the cooperative fire protection area. The requested \$349,800 per year would provide assistance and guidance to strengthen the wildfire suppression techniques of the volunteer fire departments. \$10,000 is requested the first year to purchase radio repeaters.

Wildland-Urban Interface - The department is responsible for disseminating information on fire prevention to the public with the intent of changing people's behavior through awareness and knowledge. \$215,100 is requested to coordinate the Wildland-Urban Interface initiatives and to conduct home and community forest fire risk assessments in each of the WDNR Organized Fire Protection Areas. \$116,000 is requested to enhance the fire prevention effort in Wisconsin and to produce and distribute structural zone maps.

Convert Two Permanent Positions to State Funding - Forestry requested \$173,000 of state funding for two critically important forest fire management positions that are currently funded with federal grant funds.

Topic: Meeting Managed Forest Law Responsibilities (Decision Item #5121)

Request: \$2,454,700 the first year and \$2,795,700 the second year.

Initiatives: Although Act 228 has established changes that will improve the Managed Forest Law program, the Act will not solve all of the issues identified in the analysis completed by the Governor's Council on Forestry. Three issues that Forestry anticipates to solve through this budget process are workload management within the Forest Tax Section (\$70,400 per year),

creation of an efficient electronic method for processing applications (\$341,000 the second year) and improvements to computer network connections at forester offices (\$64,250 per year). These three improvements would contribute to the continuing effort to add significant efficiencies to the long-term Managed Forest Law program.

Implementation of Act 228 will require a change in the source of funding for contracting MFL management plans. Appropriation 20.370(1)(mv) should be reduced by \$800,000 and the new appropriation 20.370(1)(cx) should be increased by \$1,120,000.

Governor Doyle within his Wisconsin Act 228 approval message requested that the Department of Natural Resources pursue through the biennial budget process the restoration of the proposed MFL Public Access Grant Program and the restoration of the proposed Managed Forest Land Board. Spending authority of \$2,000,000 per year and statutory language are requested to implement this portion of the request.

Topic: Growing the Wisconsin Forest-based Economy (Decision Item #5122)

Request: \$551,700 the first year and \$595,700 the second year.

Initiatives: The Governor has directed the Department to investigate forest certification to address the growing demand for certified wood. Businesses are turning to forest certification both to address the demands from influential, non-governmental organizations and to assure that they have sustainable management systems.

Certification requires additional resources for the management of the forests and for reporting to the public. This is a request for the resources necessary to provide and maintain sustainable forest certification for Wisconsin's State Forests.

Manage and Coordinate the Certification Programs - Funding (\$56,400 per year) is requested to maintain the necessary documentation, develop the required monitoring and reporting systems, contract for the auditing services and facilitate all of the other requirements of certification.

Certification Registration - Annual funding of \$83,100 is requested so that the Department may maintain certification registration for the state, county and private forestry programs. These funds would be used to pay for the annual registration costs and for contracting the required third party audits.

Continuous Monitoring of the State Forests - \$309,200 the first year and \$356,200 the second year is requested to measure sustainable forest management on 500,000 acres of State Forest lands. The Department would utilize the funding to develop and implement a continuous monitoring process. This monitoring process would provide the scientifically supportable, accurate, detailed, and up to date information necessary to maintain the certification of sustainability.

Maintenance of State Forest Roads - Sustainability certification of the State Forests require the continuous maintenance of the roads that the recreationists and contractors utilize. Forestry is requesting Forestry Account funding of \$100,000 per year to maintain the roads and trails within the Forest that do not qualify for Road Aid funding. The Department is requesting \$1,500,000 of Transportation Fund funding to maintain the public roads that cross the Forests and qualify for Road Aid funding.

Topic: Invasive Species Management (Decision Item #5000)

Request: Forestry's portion of this Department-wide request is \$500,400 per year of Forestry Account funding. The Department is also requesting \$112,000 per year of Fish & Wildlife Account and Parks Account funding and a reallocation of \$2,000,000 recreational boating aid funding to support the control and management of invasive species.

Initiatives: Invasive species continues to be one of top issues facing the Department. It is an emerging and expanding problem that has resulted in tremendous social and economic cost increases, and ecological stresses to native communities.

Forestry portion of the Department's request includes:

\$62,000 to develop monitoring and reporting systems for new non-native invasive species; share information about the efficacy of control methods; develop educational training materials to aid managers and the public; and support biocontrol projects to control garlic mustard and buckthorn.

\$175,000 to facilitate the invasive species monitoring through the development of inventory, mapping, and control plans for existing infestations at the State Forests.

\$40,000 to create a reforestation monitoring effort that would measure overall survival and growth of reforestation plantings across the state, as well as detect the presence of non-native species that are interfering with plantation success.

\$41,500 to support the removal of invasive non-native species from the forested State Natural Areas.

\$122,500 to support gypsy moth suppression efforts at both the Northern State Forests and the other DNR managed state lands.

Public demand for information is increasing in reaction to the gypsy moth outbreaks in the eastern counties and the invasion of the moth into new areas. \$50,400 is requested to support the necessary communication efforts.

\$9,000 to support travel and aerial survey costs for Regional Gypsy Moth Program Coordinators in the Northeast, Southeast, and West Central Regions.

Topic: Sustainable Forestry Opportunities (Decision Item #5123)

Request: \$1,052,600 the first year and \$1,076,900 the second year.

Initiatives: Forestry has identified a variety of issues that with adequate funding would significantly improve the Department's ability to manage, protect and operate the State Forests and the Department's other state-owned forests.

Sustainable Forestry Projects - \$415,800 is requested to support 22,880 hours per year of forest management assistance at the State Forests and the Department's non-State Forest properties. \$388,600 is requested to implement site preparation, forest health monitoring and sustainable management activities at the Northern State Forests. \$21,000 is requested to implement site preparation, forest health monitoring and seedling release projects at the Department's non-State Forest forested properties.

Forest Reconnaissance & Timber Sale Database Software Upgrade & Maintenance - \$125,000 is requested to modernize and maintain the forest reconnaissance and timber sale databases. The software platform for the current public forest reconnaissance system and timber sale tracking

application (Oracle 6i) is obsolete and is no longer supported and maintained by the manufacturer. This is a key data system that supports public forestland management.

Kettle Moraine State Forest GIS Equipment & Digitizing - The Northern State Forests currently have GIS systems in place, the two Kettle Moraine State Forests do not. Both the equipment and data digitizing is needed for the Kettle Moraine. The initial digitizing of the 50,300 acres of the two Kettle Moraine State Forests will cost \$38,000.

Topic: Fire Fighter Safety and Communications (Decision Item #5124)

Request: \$457,400 the first year and \$183,300 the second year.

Initiatives:

Fire Shelters - This request is a direct result of a health and safety order to meet forest fire protective clothing and equipment standards for personnel assigned fire line duties. One-time funding of \$384,000 is requested to purchase the new design fire shelters for the Department's fire fighters.

Base Station/Repeater Replacement - A key component of the Department's radio communication system is the base station repeater. These base station repeaters are well past the end of their life expectancy and are no longer supported by the manufacturer (most were installed during the late 1970's and early 80's). This is a request to utilize a variety of funding sources to replace the base station repeaters. Forestry is requesting \$73,400 the first year and \$183,300 the second year. Other Department programs are requesting \$82,500 the first year and \$154,600 the second year to support the replacements. The equipment would be replaced using a master lease contract.

Topic: Grant Partnerships for Sustainable Forestry (Decision Item #5125)

Request: \$295,800 the first year and \$442,800 the second year. Transfer two grant management positions to Forestry.

Initiatives:

Forestry Grant Managers - Transfer two unfunded grant management positions to the Division of Forestry and \$134,800 of Forestry Account funding to support the associated salary and fringe benefits for the two positions each year beginning with the 2006 fiscal year. The Division of Forestry currently manages the Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP), the federal Forest Land Enhancement Grant Program (FLEP), the federal Forestry Stewardship Program, and portions of the Urban Forestry Grant Program. The addition of the two positions within Forestry will improve efficiency and consistency and will streamline the grant process for recipients.

MFL, FCL, CFL Aid Payments - Wisconsin statutes 77.85 (2) and 77.05 (2) require the Department to pay to towns and villages twenty cents for every acre of Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law land in the municipalities. Also Wisconsin statute 28.11 (8) (a) requires the Department to pay to the towns thirty cents for every acre of county forest lands in the municipalities. Expenditures are expected to increase by \$30,000 during 2006 and \$67,000 during 2007. Forestry requests an appropriation increase to fund the required resource aids.

County Forest Administrator Grant Program - Forestry requests \$81,000 the first year and \$191,000 the second year to fully fund the existing County Forest Administrator Grant program. The first year request of \$81,000 would cover the anticipated salary and fringe benefit growth.

The second year request of \$191,000 consists of the 2004 increase plus an increase of \$80,000 for salary and fringe benefits and \$30,000 for another county to join the grant program.

The County Forest Administrator Grant Program makes annual payments to each of the eligible Counties for 50% of the salary and 50% of the fringe benefit costs (not to exceed 40 percent of salary) of one County employed professional forester in the position of County Forest Administrator or Assistant County Forest Administrator.

County Forest Sustainable Forestry Grant Program - Forestry is requesting an increase of \$50,000 for the County Forest Sustainable Forestry Grant program. Because the Department was having trouble fulfilling their commitment of Forestry staff time to individual County Forests the Sustainable Forestry Grant Program was established by the 2001/03 biennial budget. The grants are based on project proposals submitted by individual counties for specific unmet short-term forestry work. Counties are encouraged to contract with private forestry consulting firms or hire limited term employees to complete the work.

Topic: Forestry Education & Awareness Center (Decision Item #5126)

Request: \$400,000 the first year and \$800,000 the second year.

Initiative: The lack of public awareness of sustainable forestry and its benefits is a problem that has been recognized for many years. At the October 2001 Natural Resource Board meeting the Board approved a Feasibility Study and environmental analysis for siting a Forestry Education and Awareness Center on the Milwaukee County Grounds in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Now that the property has been acquired, partnership building, planning, and fund-raising must begin. Forestry is requesting funding to support these efforts in the short term and for operation of the facility in the long term.

The first year funding would support program management, partnership building, fund-raising and early stage program and exhibit design.

The second year request would provide partial funding for on-going programming, staffing, exhibit development, property and facility maintenance, and supplies and services. The on-going request of \$800,000 represents 60% of the estimated operating cost for the facility.

Topic: Forest Legacy - State Funding (Decision Item #5127)

Request: \$2,000,000 per year

Initiative: This is a request to establish a State Forest Legacy fund of \$2,000,000 annually to be used to provide the match necessary to utilize Federal Forest Legacy funding. The Federal Forest Legacy program identifies and protects environmentally important private forestlands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. A match fund of \$2,000,000 would facilitate the acquisition of \$6,000,000 of Federal funding.

The availability of the Forestry SEG funded Forest Legacy fund would reduce or eliminate the necessity of using Stewardship funding for the match.

Topic: Stewardship Debt Service Funded by the Forestry Account (Decision Item #5700)

Request: \$8,000,000 per year

Initiative: This is a continuation of the one-time budget initiative that began with the 1997/99 biennial budget. Every final state budget since the 1998 fiscal year has included a transfer of Forestry Account funding to the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Program debt service. Between July of 1997 and June of 2005, \$56.7 million of Forestry Account funding will have been used to offset GPR debt service payments.

Topic: Reduce Department Staffing

Request: Reduce Forestry staffing by 32 positions.

Initiative: The Department of Administration has requested all State Agencies to submit a budget proposal that includes permanent staffing reductions. The Department has submitted a proposal to reduce staffing by 173 positions.

The Division of Forestry's would reduce staffing by 32 positions. The reductions would reduce Forestry staffing within the following program functional areas: private lands assistance, facility operations, public awareness, training delivery, equipment maintenance, Karner blue butterfly HCP project, and tribal liaison work. The retention of the associated funding is requested so that alternative mechanisms may be utilized to continue to produce the desired benefits.

SUMMARY - DIVISION OF FORESTRY'S 2005-2007 BUDGET REQUEST as it moves through the budget process - Prepared 2/10/2005

As interpreted by JBH 2/10/05

Department Decision Item #	Title	FR's BUDGET REQUEST (May 2004)		DNR BUDGET REQUEST (Sept. & Oct. 2004)		Gov. #	GOV. BUDGET REQUEST (Feb. 9, 2005)		Comments Governor's Request
		2006 \$	2007 \$	2006 \$	2007 \$		2006 \$	2007 \$	
5120	Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Protection	\$2,247,700	\$2,237,700	\$2,247,700	\$2,237,700	7	\$174,500	\$174,500	1 WUI LTE (\$66,200) + 1 Coop Fire LTE (\$48,300) + Coop Fire FD Training, Suppression Fund, one-time responders (2006 = \$70,000 & 2007 = \$60,000) - NO overtime, NO comp cash out, NO FED FTE Conversion, NO pilot transfer.
5121	Meeting Managed Forest Law Responsibilities	\$2,454,650	\$2,795,650	\$2,454,700	\$2,795,700	5	\$2,725,300	\$2,725,300	Public Access Grant program (\$2,000,000); Contracting Reduction (-\$600,000); LTE assistance (2006 = \$64,300 & 2007 = \$48,300); one-time processing efficiency (2007 = \$337,000); \$1,120,000 for mgt. plans. NO high speed network connections
5122	Growing the Wisconsin Forest-based Economy	\$551,700	\$595,700	\$551,700	\$595,700	6	\$358,100	\$358,100	CFI on State Forests (2006 = \$275,000 & 2007 = \$300,000) + Cert. Annual Registration costs (\$53,100); NO CFI LTE; NO Certification LTE; NO State Forest Roads Maintenance.
5000	Invasive Species Management	\$500,400	\$500,400	\$500,400	\$500,400	1	\$441,000	\$441,000	Invasive monitoring & reporting LTE (\$37,600); training materials & biocontrol (\$24,200); Invasive monitoring at SF's (\$175,000); reforestation monitoring (\$40,000); 0.0 invasive removal at Natural Areas (\$41,500); GM suppression at SF's & other State Lands (\$122,500); NO GM communication; NO additional support for Regional GM FTE
5123	Sustainable Forestry Opportunities	\$1,052,600	\$1,076,900	\$1,052,600	\$1,076,900	6	\$581,700	\$581,700	\$248,800 for Sustainable FR projects at SF's & non-SF's, 11,440 hours of LTE assistance (\$207,900); \$125,000 for Recon & maintenance; NO KMSF GIS equip; NO KMSF digitizing; NO GPS Units
5124	Fire Fighter Safety and Communications	\$791,700	\$407,700	\$457,400	\$183,300	7	\$337,900	\$337,900	Shelters (one time \$384,000) & Repeaters (FR picks up Partners share) 2006 = \$155,900 & 2007 = \$337,900
5125	Grant Partnerships for Sustainable Forestry	\$295,600	\$442,800	\$295,600	\$442,800	6	\$117,000	\$117,000	Sust. FR Grants to Co Forests (\$50,000); aid payments for tax law 0.0 lands (2006 = \$30,00 & 2007 = \$67,000; NO new Co Forest Actm Grant \$'s
5126	Maintaining Forestry Program Operations Forestry Education & Awareness Center Additional Forestry Budget Issues:	\$855,625 \$400,000 \$6,405,325	\$855,625 \$800,000 \$5,766,625	\$0 \$400,000 \$6,405,325	\$0 \$800,000 \$0	8	\$400,000	\$400,000	

