

Forestry Division FY'17 High Profile Work Priorities

This memo describes some of the work planning tradeoffs that the Division of Forestry anticipates for FY'17. Attached is a selected list of high-profile work that, along with at least a base level of our core work, will be addressed. The memo also introduces some of the areas in which the Division will temporarily reduce or forgo work due to vacancies and higher priority work.

Each spring, the Division of Forestry begins a comprehensive work planning effort with the dual purpose of setting our priorities for the upcoming fiscal year and assessing how our current resource levels and changing responsibilities impact the work that we can get done.

FY'17 marks the final year of our 5-year Strategic Direction and we are very proud of what we have accomplished as we look back over the last four years and begin to look forward to an updated Strategic Direction. This past year, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) embarked on an agency-wide Strategic Alignment process with the goal of increasing efficiency, flexibility, and accountability while ensuring that we are aligned with the DNR's mission and vision. The decisions made through the Strategic Alignment process will serve as the basis of our updated Strategic Direction, help us prepare to address important and emerging issues as they arise, and ensure we are fulfilling our role in protecting and sustainably managing Wisconsin's forests. The results of the Strategic Alignment and Strategic Direction revision process will be to ensure the Division remains able to achieve our highest priority work, recognizing the resource limitations we face.

Attached is a list of the high-profile work priorities that either carried over from last year or are just now coming to the forefront. This list is not meant to spell out the core work of our diverse programs. The Division remains committed to fully accomplishing a number of large workload items – including state land timber sales, county forest time standards, suppression of forest fires, and priority MFL processes – which consumes a significant percentage of available Division resources. Additionally, we will be dedicating time in the coming fiscal year to addressing new and emerging high priority issues. This includes increasing our efforts to find administrative efficiencies in the Tax Law program; continuing our collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service to implement the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program; and increasing our efforts to utilize private contractors on state and private lands. Furthermore, we have the authority to use timber sale proceeds from State Lands to contract additional services, thereby freeing up some of our time for other important work, building greater capacity in the private sector, increasing our support for the GNA program, and in turn, helping us to collectively achieve our shared sustainable forestry goals.

While the majority of core and high-profile activities will be completed, with the level of available resources in the Division, we are making choices with respect to what aspects of the Division's workload will be either deferred or foregone. For the coming fiscal year, this means that relatively lower priority tasks will, to varying degrees, not be completed consistently throughout the state. This includes outreach work and events such as school forest work, MFL workshops, and career days. On private lands, we will prioritize which mandatory practices we verify (furthest past due, not reviewed recently, older plans), and first-time visits to private landowners will be a higher priority. We will work with partners to implement practices on private lands with ongoing management. On state lands, backlog recon and regeneration work will be completed to a lesser extent. Finally, in keeping with the focus on locally important work, cross-program activities will be reduced and out-of-state fire operations beyond those from our fellow Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact members will only be to provide training opportunities to meet required Wisconsin qualifications and experience needs. In anticipation of this decrease in service capacity, the Division has identified measures to limit the impact of these temporary reductions.

The following is a list of the Division of Forestry's FY'17 High Profile Work Priorities:

Forestry Division FY'17 High Profile Work Priorities¹

Department / Division	1. Update the Division's Strategic Direction to reflect the outcomes of the Department's Strategic Alignment and any changes in the Division's work that have occurred since FY12.
	2. Assist with forest management activity on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) under the Good Neighbor Authority by using a variety of implementation options.
	3. Emphasize the direction identified by the Division's accountability and culture management work (including the Cultural Beliefs and Key Results) through performance management, communications and day-to-day operations.
Leadership Development	4. Enhance the leadership skills within the Division by implementing a 1-day course in Adaptive Leadership for all supervisors.
County Forests	5. Maintain commitment to counties to meet agreed upon county time standards and continue to work with counties to assist in implementing Good Neighbor Authority to help achieve the management goals of Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.
Forest Health	6. Begin review of annosum root rot (Heterobasidion Root Disease) research and evaluation of current guidelines.
Forest Products Services	7. Convene an Advisory Committee to approve the Forest Products Services work plan and to provide valuable partner perspectives on priority services provided by the team.
Forest Protection	8. Continue to build relationships with Fire Departments by annually offering training, completing all Forest Fire Protection (FFP) Grant audits, making quarterly contacts with fire chiefs, and conducting a 2016 Fire Department Survey.
	9. Ensure that all staff with fire duties meet the fire qualification standards required for their position by attending the Equipment Operator's Conference in September 2016, attending other relevant training, and participating in experience building opportunities.
	10. Host an Incident Management Team (IMT) Summit in December 2016 and improve IMT qualifications and depth by utilizing the Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) s-420 training and Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC) training.
	11. Implement Coop Fire Program to address Fire Department training, fire suppression and Forestry Law Enforcement needs in the cooperative protection areas of the state.
IT/GIS	12. Make completion of WisFIRS a consistent high priority by focusing staff and fiscal resources in any way needed throughout the year.
	13. Initiate Master Lease, prepare and deploy field data collection devices, and train staff in their use to reduce the amount of time spent transcribing information into our systems.
Privately Owned Forests	14. Implement legislative changes within the Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program.
Reforestation	15. Develop property master plans for Wilson, Griffith and Hayward State Nurseries.
	16. Work with the Natural Regeneration Ad Hoc Team to evaluate and develop natural regeneration monitoring protocols; develop, test, and implement deer browse metrics; and continue implementation and assessment of the revised artificial regeneration monitoring protocol.
Sciences	17. Provide training on new Forest Economics chapter of the Silviculture Handbook and establish an inter-agency forest economics workgroup to address forest economic issues.
	18. Evaluate rotation ages of red pine, oak and aspen, with consideration of economic factors.
State Lands	19. Increase usage of contracting for timber sale establishment on state lands.
	20. Conduct 15-year Master Plan Review on Brule River State Forest, revise northern state forest master plans (with exception of Governor Knowles State Forest) to meet requirement to classify 75% of total acreage as Forest Production area, and complete assessment of motorized access on northern state forests.
Urban Forestry	21. Begin statewide collection of Urban Forest Inventory plot measurements and implementation of canopy assessment to inform future decisions.

¹ The listed priorities are in addition to the on-going core functions within each program area.