
Wisconsin Forestry Notes

April 2011

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

More than 98% of the wildfires in Wisconsin are human-caused and can be prevented.

Wildfires Cost You!

Wildfires Cost You is the message from DNR wildfire officials during this 2011 Wildfire Prevention Week (April 18-22). They are using this designated week to share the message that most wildfires are human-caused and preventable and that all unwanted, human-caused wildfires cost everyone by the potential loss to natural resources, property and even lives. And, wildfires can cost you in another real way -- anyone found responsible for starting a wildfire is liable for all suppression costs! Even with the wet spring we've been experiencing, DNR fire control and local fire departments have already responded to more than 100 wildfires in 2011 so please be safe and help share the message that wildfires are costly.

You can obtain a burning permit and check daily burning restrictions online.

It's easier than ever to obtain a burning permit

Statistics show that burning permits, if used appropriately, are an important tool in wildfire prevention and, in areas under DNR fire protection, current law requires individuals wishing to burn legal materials (e.g. leaves, brush, and pine needles) to first obtain written permission and then call or check online on the day of the burn for the daily restrictions. Written permits [can now be obtained online](#) or by calling 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876) from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. A customer service representative will issue the permit over the phone and it will be mailed or instantly emailed. Customers can also still visit their local Ranger Station or Emergency Fire Warden for permits. All permits are good for the calendar year and are issued at no cost to the customer. The brochure "[Burning Permits: It's Your Responsibility](#)" answers common questions about burning regulations and permits. You can also find more information on burning permits and the current fire danger in Wisconsin at dnr.wi.gov/wisburn. Still have questions? Contact Division of Forestry Wildfire Prevention Specialist [Catherine Koele](#) at 608-266-2359.

Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality have been updated and the new field manual is now available.

New BMP manual for water quality now available

The new Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Water Quality Field Manual is [now available electronically](#). These updated BMPs went into effect beginning January 1, 2011 as new timber sales and other forest management activities are established. The majority of the BMPs are unchanged; however, some significant changes were made to riparian management zones, dry wash management zones, and wetland filter strips. Changes and updates to the BMPs are noted by **red text** in the field manual. The new manual also includes more information on how to achieve the BMPs and describing Wisconsin's water resources. Anyone with questions about the BMPs or who would like to request a print copy of the new BMP Field Manual can contact Forest Hydrologist [Carmen Hardin](#) in the Division of Forestry at 715-365-8911.

In 2010, the legislature directed a committee (comprised of 3 Senators, 1 Representative and 14 public members) to review the Managed Forest Land (MFL) Program to ensure the long-term management and sustainability of private forest lands and to increase participation in the program.

Study committee proposes MFL changes

Although the Legislature has not approved the report or acted on the recommendations, a legislative study committee finished a review of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) in January. The seven recommendations from the study report are:

1. Repeal the prohibition against receiving consideration for recreational activities on MFL lands. This recommendation would reverse the January 1, 2008 statutory change that prevented a landowner's ability to lease their MFL lands for hunting and other recreational activities and give landowners the expressed right to receive consideration for recreational activities.
2. Allow additional acres of land to be added to MFL entries that were enrolled from 1987 through 2004 without being withdrawn and re-designated.
3. Change the calculation of the acreage share tax and the closed acreage fees. Landowners who choose to close their lands to public access would pay the higher of two options:
 - a. The acreage share and closed acreage fee using the 2005 tax rates. This rate is recalculated every five years by DOR and remains fixed for the period.
 - b. 25% of their actual property tax bill.Change the distribution of the closed acreage fee and direct counties to use the money to acquire public access. The municipality would continue to collect the closed acreage fee, but would send the Department of Natural Resources 20% and the county 48%. Currently the Department retains 100 percent of the closed acreage fees.
4. Move language regarding large ownerships from administrative code to statute, then create statutory authority for landowners to form groups of 1,000 acres or more in order to manage these lands under a management commitment.
5. Authorize payments to municipalities and counties for MFL lands enrolled in a Forest Enterprise Zone (areas to be designated by municipalities or counties where zoning or land use planning would target forest resource management). Create an annual allowable harvest for large landowners and groups of landowners with land ownerships of 1,000 acres or more (similar to #4 but adds the requirement that harvesting must occur on an annual sustainable basis).
7. Create a review board for landowners to appeal silvicultural decisions.

For more details about these proposals, see the [study report online](#) or contact DNR Tax Law Policy Specialist [Kathy Nelson](#).

EAB survey season begins

The emerald ash borer (EAB) survey season will begin on April 25. The Wisconsin Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection will place 5,935 traps across the State of Wisconsin as part of this survey effort. More than 2,000 detection traps will be set in Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Grant, Iron, Lafayette, Polk, Sawyer and Washburn Counties. The remaining traps will be set at risk locations across Wisconsin. Questions about the survey can be directed to 1-800-462-2803 or www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov to receive an email response from program staff.

DNR is a partner with DATCP in the fight against invasive species such as the emerald ash borer, an insect that could devastate Wisconsin's ash resource.

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