



Wisconsin County Forests Association

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin County Forest Program Exceeds Certification Standards for Forest Sustainability

Rhinelander, WI – Results from a third party audit of twenty-seven of Wisconsin’s County Forests are in and for the 11th consecutive year these forests have exceeded the standards for certified forests as set by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®) and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®). SFI and FSC are two of the most widely recognized forest certification systems in North America. Representatives of NSF-International Forestry Program and Scientific Certification Systems Global Services conducted the evaluations and certification of Wisconsin’s County Forests. Certification means that these forests are managed according to strict environmental, social and economic standards.

According to Jane Severt, Wisconsin County Forests Association Executive Director, “The 2015 certification audit results demonstrate the exemplary efforts individual county forest administrators and their staff make to properly manage these public properties. Collectively, county forests in Wisconsin represent the largest public landholding in the state covering 2.4 million acres.”

The focus of the Wisconsin County Forests is to insure the long-term health and sustainability of forest ecosystems while providing benefits to the public. Primary objectives of these forests include resource and timber management, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat improvement and watershed protection.

Wisconsin's County Forest system provides more than 6,000 miles of snowmobile, ATV, skiing/hiking trails and forest roads along with a wealth of hunting and fishing opportunities. Forest products from these forests generate over \$30 million annually in timber sale revenue for the counties and townships encompassing these lands and are a significant contributor to Wisconsin's \$20 billion timber industry.

A cooperative management framework between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the counties provides the opportunity for the county forest group certification program. DNR holds the group certificates for the 27 participating counties and provides technical support to county forest management efforts. Paul Delong, Chief Forester of the DNR states, "Our department works closely with the staff of the County Forests to manage these healthy, productive and sustainable forests. The county forest program is a unique partnership that stretches back 86 years and it's a great example of how local governments and state agencies can work together in addressing statewide needs."

Sustaining Wisconsin's economy and our forests through responsible management of a renewable resource

Information on the Wisconsin County Forests Association can be found at www.wisconsincountyforests.com.

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