



W.W.O.A. ALERT

DNR Forestry Program Funding Jeopardized By Governor's Budget

The DNR Forestry Program has been an important partner with the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association since WWOA's founding in 1979. Governor Walker's budget proposal to eliminate the Wisconsin Forestry Mil Tax and shift DNR Forestry funding to general purpose revenues (GPR). This will jeopardize the stable funding source which has supported the DNR Forestry Program for almost 100 years. WWOA strongly opposes the elimination of the Forestry Mil Tax and encourages those interested in the stewardship of our natural resources to make your views known to your Wisconsin legislators.

The Forestry Mil Tax is the only tax stipulated in the Wisconsin Constitution and is equally levied on all property tax payers. It was developed in 1924 to promote sound forestry practices and improve the ecological, economic, and quality of life effects on the state and its citizens.

This funding source, dedicated to acquiring, preserving and developing the forests of the state, has provided the stability needed to address the long-term nature of forestry and forestry related industry. The Forestry Mil Tax supports DNR services such as the private forestry program, fire protection, assistance to the county forests, forest health, urban forestry, and forest marketing and utilization. It also helps fund Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and many other valuable conservation activities. As a result, Wisconsin's forests have been restored from a decimated condition to the productive and healthy forests the State has today.

If the Forestry Mil Tax is replaced by GPR, it will open the door to biennial budget reductions for DNR forestry and conservation efforts that will almost certainly subject one of the best programs in the nation to the same program erosion seen in other states. Forestry will find it difficult to compete with the more immediate needs of other state programs resulting in the failure to manage and protect the forests of the State, thus repeating history. Revisiting these conditions, along with the time, expense, and effort to restore our forests would surely not be in the interest of the citizens of Wisconsin or the forest industry. For more information please visit the WWOA website at wisconsinwoodlands.org, select News then Government Affairs.

