



# NEWS FROM WISCONSIN'S WOODS



A partnership of the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee and Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association

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## WI State Budget and the Forestry Mill Tax

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association and Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee, along with others, have stated their opposition to the state budget proposal which would eliminate the collection of the Forestry Mill Tax (FMT).

In a 1924 referendum, the citizens of Wisconsin approved an amendment to the state constitution which permitted creating a statewide tax on real property with the proceeds to be used for the purpose of acquiring, preserving and developing the forests of the state. An average Wisconsin home assessed at \$150,000 pays \$27 for the FMT. These monies are deposited in the Conservation Fund and spent through the Forestry Account.

In the past 87 years, this income has provided a stable and sustained funding source to help care for our forests and related natural resources. From Wisconsin's late 1800's landscape of cut-over forests and burned fields of tree stumps, our forests have regenerated into 17 million acres of beautiful, healthy, sustainable lands.

As noted in the various articles on this topic on WVOA's website, [wisconsinwoodlands.org/category/government-affairs/](http://wisconsinwoodlands.org/category/government-affairs/), the FMT provides a variety of benefits to the citizens of Wisconsin. Expenditures from the Forestry Account are used to provide cost-sharing, educational, and technical assistance to private woodland owners. It is used to survey, monitor, and limit or eradicate invasive and exotic forest pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer. It funds the expertise to detect and fight wildland fires in rural areas of the state. When the state suffers natural disaster emergencies such as tornadoes, this account allows an incident management team to assemble in the local community to secure the area, manage the

emergency, and start the recovery process. Our beautiful state and county forests are managed for their timber and recreational resources using this money. Our towns and cities urban forests are improved through urban forestry grants and technical assistance funded by the FMT. The fund also covers a significant portion of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund debt service.

Continued funding of the FMT demonstrates Wisconsin's ongoing commitment to promote the state's second most important economic sector. Our healthy and renewable forests provide raw materials to sustain approximately 1,300 wood-using companies. They create more than 64,000 jobs with total wages contributing about \$3.4 billion per year to our Wisconsin economy. Every job in forestry supports 1.7 additional jobs in our state. Wisconsin leads the U.S. in paper production and wood manufacturing. Wisconsin's forest industry has an output of \$24.7 billion in forest products each year.

Wisconsin forests provide a tremendous natural, sustainable and harvestable resource, promoting industry, providing jobs, supporting tourism and conservation while most notably benefitting Wisconsin citizens and their quality of life.

The proposed state budget will subject our forests to the short-term thinking that appears every two years as the budget is debated. We believe the budget proposal to not collect the FMT and replace it with General Purpose Revenue for the 2017-19 biennium at a cost of \$181 million, followed by an uncertain future, places Wisconsin's nationally recognized forests and their resulting benefits at great risk. *It is not too late to contact your legislators about this important state budget issue! Find your legislators at [legis.wisconsin.gov](http://legis.wisconsin.gov) or call WVOA.*

## Growing Your Legacy

As the weather warms, pick up WWOA's new *Growing Your Legacy* brochure for ideas on how to get your next generation outside and involved in your woods. Some suggested activities and tips for people of all ages and interests: try a family photo contest, a scavenger hunt, some woodland crafts, or brush up on your ID skills with a book or phone app.

Hosting a family work day this season? Practice your old traditions or start some new! Take regular breaks with plenty of food and water to keep energized, teach your helpers new skills to keep them interested, and be sure to explain the value of the work you're doing.

Remember to stay safe out there! Dress for the weather and conditions, familiarize yourself with the tools, and be aware of how to handle regular forest hazards such as dead limbs, poison ivy or poisonous berries. Always do a tick check when coming in at the end of the day!

Can't find your brochure or looking for more ideas? Visit our website at [www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/growing-your-legacy](http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/growing-your-legacy) for a comprehensive list of suggested approaches, activities, and resources to get others outdoors this summer.

## WWOA's New Scholarship

WWOA announces exciting news! We have taken another step forward in our commitment towards sustainable forestry education with the creation of our new WWOA Forestry Leader Scholarship. Won't you help us establish a legacy for UW-Stevens Point forest management students?

A very charitable WWOA contributor gave an initial donation of \$20,000 to establish this scholarship. Our generous donor is offering to expand the current funds by matching contributions up to an additional \$20,000 through our Scholarship Match Campaign. Your donation, of any amount, will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$20,000.

The scholarship will be awarded to one junior/senior student majoring in forest management at UW-Stevens Point, starting in 2018. Won't you help WWOA invest in the next generation of foresters to assist Wisconsin's private woodland owners? Help us reach this goal to maximize the number of students encouraged by this great scholarship. Specify "for scholarship fund" in the memo when submitting your donation online at [www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/donate](http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/donate) or by check payable to WWOA and sent to WWOA, PO Box 285, Stevens Point, WI 54481.



## 2017 Annual Meeting

You asked for a northwoods resort and our Northwest Chapter has delivered! Join us on September 21-24 at beautiful Lakewoods Resort on Lake Namakagon near Cable. Condo units with multiple bedrooms and baths are available—so get your friends together and book a unit. They are offering a special condo bedroom rate of \$85/night plus tax through August 21. Call Lakewoods Resort at 800-255-5937 or 715-794-2561 to book your condo unit.

## [wisconsinwoodlands.org](http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org)

Have you visited our website lately? Keep up with WWOA news, chapter activities, see new gift shop items, learn about volunteer positions, get a jump on the 2017 photo contest themes (on the Annual Meeting page) or browse our links to a wealth of natural resource topics by visit us online. If you are on Facebook find us at <https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinWoodlands/> and then like our page so we can keep in touch with you.

## 2017 Regional Tree Farm Inspector of the Year

Christine Walroth, Forester for the Department of Natural Resources has been named the 2017 North Central Regional Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. Christine received her award on February 23, 2017 in Greenville, South Carolina at the National Leadership Conference sponsored by the American Tree Farm System. States included in the North Central Region, in addition to Wisconsin, include Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kentucky.

Christine has been involved in the Tree Farm program since 1977 and has been actively promoting the American Tree Farm program throughout her career. During this time she has served on various Tree Farm committees, in several different capacities, including district chair, vice and state chair. She completes necessary inspections and re-inspections. She is passionate about her involvement in the Tree Farm Program. She is timely and prompt on her re-inspections. She encourages sound forest management and is a professional forester. She adheres to the Tree Farm Standards and ensures management plans meet all required standards. Christine is an active member of the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee and is an active inspector and serves as a District Chair. She has nominated landowners for Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year. The nominations were selected as county winners, District winners, a state winner and also a Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. Christine is actively involved in the forestry community and has conducted much outreach to landowners. All of these activities lead her to win this impressive award.

## 2016 Tree Farmers of the Year Hosting the 2017 Field Day

Dick & Mary Czaja of Pittsville, Wisconsin were named the 2016 Outstanding tree Farmers of the Year. Their well managed tree farm of 38 acres is located in Wood County and consists of oak/hickory, aspen/birch and other hardwoods. Their first management plan was written in 1993. They have owned their tree farm for 25 years.

Their first management plan identified mature aspen

to harvest as well as improvement thinnings needed in the oak and hardwood stands. Their first timber sale was established in 1994, but they were unable to find a logger to do the harvest. Dick decided to take on the management of their property himself. He completed the initial sale over a period of several years cutting all designated trees by hand and skidding the merchantable wood to the roadside with his ATV. Over the years, he has modified his ATV with a winch and cabling system to get cut products out of the woods. Once wood was decked where it could be picked up, Dick arranged with local truckers to sell his products to local paper and sawmills. Since this time, Dick has harvested trees on every acre of his property and some of those acres have been managed more than once! It's a rare landowner that can handle managing their woodlands on their own. Their management plan calls for managing our woods for the highest output of quality timber and increasing the value of their property through intensive forest management.

In addition to being active Tree Farmers on the land, Dick and Mary have become very involved with the Wis. Woodland Owners Assn. and have been spokespersons for good forestry through WWOA state meetings and by hosting field days at their property. Dick has conveyed many messages to others including "sharing experiences" at the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Associations 2013 annual meeting, during their field days in 2014 and 2015, talking with others, during private tours of their land and with working with friends and relatives in the woods. As Dick clearly points out, "We are a family operation with myself and hardworking wife being joined by our son, son-in-law, grandchildren and my brothers." With all of their hard work, enthusiasm, and pride, they truly deserved to be named the 2016 Tree Farmers of the Year.

On August 12, 2017, Dick and Mary will be hosting the 2017 Tree Farm Field Day on their tree farm. This should be an exciting and educational event. Dick will demonstrate his modified "logging equipment", we will learn about hardwood lumber grading, developing trails in a wet environment, meet with a wildlife biologist talking about ephemeral ponds, red oak management and more. Please mark your calendars for this event. More details will become available as plans are being made. You don't want to miss this.

*A partnership of the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee  
and Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association*

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## **Your Help Increased Cost-Sharing Funds—Can You Do It Again?**

Cost-sharing funds play an important role in assisting private woodland owners with completing projects on their woodlands. Wisconsin receives approximately \$19 million each year in Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) EQIP funding. In 2015 forestry practices were allocated only \$400,000 of this fund. Because of your participation in 2016, the allocated amount rose to \$900,000.

Never heard of EQIP? The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is a program administered by the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to private woodland owners and agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources.

What can you do to help ensure that Wisconsin receives more cost-sharing dollars for woodland projects? Attend the NRCS Local Working Group (LWG) Meetings which will be held across Wisconsin from **June 12-28**. LWG meetings are only held once a year for 2 hours. Woodland owners, this is your chance to voice your opinion on woodland needs in your area for cost-share dollars such as management plans, tree planting, fire breaks, brush management, timber standing improvement (TSI), trails, and stream crossings.

Attend your LWG meeting—Go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/newsroom/pnotice/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/newsroom/pnotice/) or [wisconsinwoodlands.org/category/government-affairs/](http://wisconsinwoodlands.org/category/government-affairs/) or call WWOA at **715-346-4798** for meeting information. Mark your calendar! Then look up some facts — WI DNR has wonderful Economic Fact Sheets by county at [dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestbusinesses/factsheets.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestbusinesses/factsheets.html) to help you with facts and figures about your county. Attend the meeting and speak up for forestry—with your help we hope to be able to double the amount of cost-sharing allocated to help more woodland owners.