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WVOA Article

MFL/FCL Cutting Notice Approval Law Change: Interim Guidance

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Many woodland owners are aware of the recent legislative changes in the state budget that have a direct impact to landowners enrolled in Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law (FCL) programs. The intent of the law was to reduce workload and increase efficiencies when processing paperwork involved with implementing mandatory practices scheduled in a landowner's management plan or FCL harvest schedule. Under the new law, an owner who intends to cut on MFL or FCL lands is no longer required to obtain DNR approval if the DNR Cutting Notice is submitted by an accredited forester from any one of the following identified organizations: WI Consulting Foresters (WCF), Society of American Foresters (SAF), Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF), or WI Cooperating Foresters.

The DNR, in conjunction with an external Advisory Team formed by the Wisconsin Council on Forestry, have developed interim guidance policies as part of Phase I in the process, which has been rolled out immediately after the Governor's signed budget, to assist in implementing the new law. Phase II of the process will begin to look at changes in internal handbooks, form updates, policies and procedures, and future training. Marcia Frost-Vahradian is the current WVOA representative on the Advisory Team.

The DNR Cutting Notice and Report of Wood Products form 2450-032 will still be utilized as the official document needed to be submitted to DNR as notification of intent to harvest on MFL/FCL lands. If a landowner is working with a forester from the above said accredited group, the forester will now have to identify their accreditation on the form. According to the law, upon submittal of the form, no DNR approval is needed; harvesting can begin. Even when working with a forester from one of the organizations listed above, landowners still have the option to request DNR review and approval, by checking a box by the signature on the form. Private foresters and landowners are still strongly encouraged to work with their local DNR forester in helping mitigate any cutting prescription or management practice deviations prior to submitting the form. You can find the updated form 2450-032 on the DNR website. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search keyword 'managed forest law' then click 'harvesting'.

DNR staff and private foresters affected by this legislative change have been informed on the new operating procedures and given further detailed guidance documents. Landowners still have the responsibility to ensure their management plan is properly being implemented to avoid potential enforcement action. The ultimate goal is to continue to work with landowners in meeting their management objectives and following the MFL/FCL regulations, while successfully implementing sound forestry practices. Further guidance and details will continue to be rolled out in the future. If you have questions, I encourage you to contact your local WVOA representative, or DNR forestry staff.