

Selected Resources for Conservation-Minded Forest Landowners

Making Our Private Lands Count for Birds

Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Conference, Chippewa Falls, 19-21 March 2015

Contact Michael.mossman@wi.gov for an electronic copy with active links.

My Wisconsin Woods (MWW) and Driftless Forest Network (DFN). <http://mywisconsinwoods.org/>
1-855-MY-WOODS (699-6637)

MWW offers convenience to landowners across Southwest Wisconsin interested in caring for their woodlands. It is supported through the programs and services of a partnership of federal and state agencies and non-profit organizations within the Driftless Forest Network (DFN). MWW supports woodland owners and knows that caring for woodlands is challenging. Yet, every question has an answer; each problem has a solution. Taxes? Wildlife? Tree health? Financial assistance? Harvesting timber? MWW is also an excellent source for keeping up with many cost-share and other assistance programs.

WDNR and Private Consulting Foresters. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestlandowners/dnrforesters.html>
<http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/fr/fr0021.pdf> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestlandowners/locator/>
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestManagement/>

Check out these links for information on county foresters, licensed private consulting foresters (many of whom also conduct other habitat management), and links to many other resources on forest management and assistance.

Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA). <http://wisconsinwoodlands.org/>

WWOA comprises private woodland landowners and others interested in the sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests. Members come from all walks who gather to share their passion for our woodlands. Through WWOA you can learn more about your woodlands through online resources, a quarterly magazine, gift shop publications, local chapter field days, regional winter conferences, statewide Annual Meeting, and more.

American Forest Foundation (AFF). <https://www.forestfoundation.org/>

AFF works on-the-ground with families, teachers and elected officials to promote stewardship and protect the values provided by our nation's forest heritage. It works nationwide and in partnership with local, state and national groups to address ecological and economic challenges that require the engagement of family forest owners. It provides tools, resources, and information for woodland owners and educators about the role of forests and the global environment, and opportunities for conservation action.

American Tree Farm System (ATFS). <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/>

Dedicated to private forest stewardship, ATFS includes a certification program for sustainable forestry, as well as providing many other resources to landowners and stewards.

Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin (IPAW). <http://www.ipaw.org/Home.aspx>

IPAW is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote better stewardship of the natural resources of Wisconsin by advancing the understanding of invasive plants and encouraging the control of their spread. It serves as an umbrella organization for Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas, and is an avenue to inform legislators about invasive species control. Although Wisconsin-based, it serves the entire Upper Midwest.

WDNR Invasive Species Program. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/>

The go-to site for information on invasive species ID, management, and links to more information.

Land Trusts. There are many. For a good summary, see the Gathering Waters website:
<http://www.gatheringwaters.org/about-land-trusts/>

This is Wisconsin's alliance for land trusts, providing background and web links. "A land trust or conservancy is a private, nonprofit organization that actively works to conserve land through acquiring important parcels and by entering into conservation easement agreements with private landowners. Land trusts bring together landowners, donors, and federal, state and local agencies to identify, protect and manage unique lands to improve the health and beauty of their communities now and for future generations. Each local land trust works with its community to determine the most important land to conserve."

"For some, the focus is on open space for recreation and tourism, for others it may be working farmland or forests, protecting endangered flora, wildlife habitat and undeveloped landscapes, or setting aside waterfront property to protect water quality and provide public access and scenic vistas. The common thread is a commitment to healthy communities and our responsibility to be sure our grandchildren and their grandchildren are able to enjoy the special places with which we have been blessed."

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/endangeredresources/lip.html> and <http://dnr.wi.gov/news/features/feature.asp?id=2&article=12>

The goal of LIP is to help private landowners create and manage habitat for species that are rare or declining. The program provides management advice, assistance with management plans and cost-share funding to individuals and organizations on private lands throughout the state. Habitats range from forests to open wetlands, prairies, savannas and barrens. The program can reimburse a landowner for up to 75% of the cost for the on-the-ground practices that are involved in the management of the project.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/programs/financial/eqip/>

EQIP is a federal program administered by the NRCS, with DNR Forestry providing technical advice for forested lands. This program provides up to a 75% cost share, with 65% of funds allocated to priority areas and the remainder available statewide. Contracts are for 5 or 10 years. Maximum cost shares set by the program are currently \$10,000 annually and \$50,000 per contract. Cost sharing is available for tree planting, ecosystem management including prescribed burning and brush management, erosion control, agricultural waste management, and stream buffers. Currently, the program administers the Young Forest Initiative, for which northern Wisconsin landowners are eligible.

Managed Forest Law (MFL). <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/fr/FR0295.pdf> and <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestLandowners/mfl.asp?s1=FTax&s2=MFLenrollment>

MFL is a landowner tax incentive program that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. Together with landowner objectives, the law incorporates timber harvesting, wildlife management, water quality and recreation to maintain a healthy and productive forest. Sustainable forest management benefits Wisconsin's economy, hunting, fishing, wildlife, recreation, soils, waterways, and air quality, and renews our beautiful forests for everyone to enjoy. It requires a minimum of 10 acres, and an approved forest management plan written by a Certified Plan Writer. Contracts run for 25 or 50 years. Tracts over 160 acres must allow non-motorized recreation. A 5% yield tax is applied to any wood products harvested.

Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP). <http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/ForestLandowner.html> and <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestLandowners/documents/WFLGPFactsheet.pdf>

This program assists private landowners in protecting and enhancing their forested lands, prairies, and waters. It allows qualified landowners to be reimbursed up to 50% of the cost of eligible practices, such as Forest

Stewardship Plan development, reforestation, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, fire hazard reduction, invasive species control, watershed protection, and wetland restoration. Practices must be identified in the landowner's Forest Stewardship Plan or MFL management plan (except if applying for plan development) to be eligible for cost-sharing. Landowners are required to contact their DNR forester for guidance prior to submitting the application. Public access is not required.

Partners for Fish & Wildlife.

Sponsored by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), this program teams with private conservation organizations, public agencies and tribes to help private landowners restore wetlands, cold-water streams, prairies, savannas, threatened and endangered species habitats, by providing technical assistance and up to 100% cost-share for approved projects. Contracts run for 10 years, and public access is not required. See <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/partners/index.html>

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

These land conservation programs are administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the programs agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Approved cover types include non-native and native grasslands, savanna, buffer strips, wetland restoration, and more. Contracts are 10-15 years in length. Cost-sharing for practice installation is provided as well as other incentives. Public access is not required. CRP is the overall program whereas CREP provides additional incentives and flexibility in specific geographic areas of special conservation need. For more info see your county FSA agent or go to: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp>
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=cep>
https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crepwifactsheet.pdf