

## **Program Guidance – Division of Forestry, Education & Outreach Strategic Plan**

### **Summary of Changes Based on Public Comments**

Thank you to all of the individuals and groups that provided feedback on the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry proposed new guidance titled, “Division of Forestry, Education & Outreach Strategic Plan.” Six comments were received; all are included in this document.

#### The Division of Forestry made the following changes based on the feedback:

1. Removed the following bullet from page 37 because at this time it is not possible to produce this data: “Provide an annually refreshed database list of where curriculums are being used and where LEAF trained educators work (at the time of training) so DNR staff can refer to this information as part of their decision tree for fulfilling a request.”
2. Clarified the following terms and concepts: forestry teams (p. 38), landowner (p.11), unengaged landowner (p.51), financial investments in partnerships (p.36).
3. Throughout the document, removed reference to the long term Reforestation program goal of ‘greater seedling sales to more landowners’ because this is not an education and outreach focused goal.

#### We received several questions and comments on broad components of the plan. We grouped these questions and our response into themes:

##### **Implementation of the plan**

We received several valuable suggestions on activities our programs should continue and how to improve delivery of messages. We will reference these ideas as we move forward with determining how to implement the Education & Outreach Strategic Plan.

Several comments made suggestions on how to implement specific components of programs and activities and suggested ways to make sure messages carry across program areas (e.g., tree planting projects can message more topics than just why planting trees is good but include how to care and maintain trees and plant in appropriate locations). Other comments suggested the continuation of current activities (e.g., Community Tree Management Institute). The majority of the plan does not determine which activities will be conducted, how they will occur, and whom we will work with. We will use the comments and suggestions we received to inform decisions as the division moves into implementing the plan.

## **Partnerships**

Several questions came in about how we will work with partners and who we will work with. As we go through a process to implement this plan, we will work with partners to discuss in more detail what activities they are currently doing and how we can partner with them. The logic models (Appendix B) provide initial ideas on what activities we could do to reach our long term outcomes and where we can work with partners.

We partner on many E&O projects with a variety of partners. Most of the time, we each provide time and fiscal resources and there is no formal agreement or contract. We have added more detail regarding these relationships on page 36 and plan to continue these partnerships and develop more in the future. Other relationships are more formal where we contract with partners to do specific work. These are described in more detail in the plan.

Several partners expressed interest in wanting to serve on the Forestry Education Leadership Team. This team will be focused on how division programs can collaborate on division E&O work, evaluating division efforts, and figuring out how to implement a new system for the division's E&O work (i.e. developing staff roles, hours, and resources for projects). Because the team will be working on a wide variety of messages, audiences, program areas, and internally focused operations, it would be challenging for partners to participate in all of these areas. We felt it was most effective to ask partners to participate when it was most relevant to their interests. As topics and issues arise that are relevant to partners, they will be invited to work with the team and provide input. Over time we will evaluate the team structure and membership. The final team membership and reporting structure is provided on page 46.

One comment assumed, based on the strategies for unengaged landowners, that the Private Forestry program was only focused on unengaged landowners. The plan specifically included strategies for reaching the unengaged landowners because that is a new area of emphasis for our Private Forestry program and the division needed to develop a comprehensive process for that new work. That said, we are continuing to work with "engaged" landowners that are currently managing their forests consistent with our niche in private forestry. One of the important ways we assist these landowners is through supporting our partnerships (as described on page 56 and in the diagram on page 58).

## **Investments**

We received two comments regarding the investments we will make in our programs. As described in the "E&O Efforts Organized by Audience" section (page 10), division programs determined what their priority audiences are following several criteria. These decisions were made based on an understanding of what our current capacity can accomplish. For some programs, we will decrease efforts in certain E&O work as directed in the division's Strategic Direction (e.g. Urban Forestry). We will work with partners to assess which are the most valuable E&O activities and programs to retain.

One comment suggested that the Forest Health program should increase efforts with private landowners instead of maintaining the effort. The Forest Health program niche is to provide

technical expertise and assistance to both public and private forest landowners. They will continue to use partnerships and seek new opportunities for others to help distribute forest health education and outreach. The program will expand their use of the web and social media as a tool.

#### Plan approval

The Division of Forestry's Leadership Team approved the plan (including the changes described above) on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The division will now work to implement the plan. We will update our website with information on the process.

If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Diebel at (608) 266-9261 or [rebecca.diebel@wi.gov](mailto:rebecca.diebel@wi.gov).