



January 7, 2010

**Wisconsin Consulting Foresters(WCF) Position Statement on
2009 Assembly Bill 271, including Amendments 1 and 2**

Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) is a 501.c.6 non-profit trade association whose members provide professional forestry services to clients throughout Wisconsin. WCF provides a voice for forestry professions that serve the small woodland owners of Wisconsin. Members of WCF contribute greatly to the continued growth and development of forest management practices and policies throughout the State. We thank the Senate Committee on Economic Development for the opportunity to comment on 2009 Assembly Bill 271 and its amendments.

Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF), following review of 2009 Assembly Bill 271 and its Amendments, find potential for the Bill to have significant negative impacts on forest management and all wood dependent industries. The broad language utilized in 443.01 (6s) (page 24, line 22 through page 26, line 4) will cause significant conflict with the natural resource management professions that conduct field delineations as well as mapping of those delineations. Professional foresters, as well as other natural resources professions, have historically utilized mapping as the most effective method to portray natural resource features present on land ownerships. Mapping of these resources is used for inventory, planting, site preparation and timber harvesting purposes. These maps have never been construed or misinterpreted as representing work or mapping performed by professional land surveyors. While forest mapping technology has improved significantly through the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), these tools have not been suggested as replacing the precision work of professional land surveyors. Professional foresters, as well as other natural resources fields, must be allowed to continue the mapping of natural resource features on private lands free of potential inclusion under 443.01 (6s).

The broad language in 443 (6s) also threatens significant financial hardship for private forestry providers as well as small woodland owners seeking to manage their forest. The inclusion of "Any service comprising the determination of the location of the boundaries of one or more tracts of land..." (page 25, lines 1 and 2) would require all forestry field work to be conducted by a professional land surveyor. This requirement would significantly raise the cost of rural woodland management and significantly delay the delivery of forestry services by professional foresters. Forest management on the largest acreage of woodland in Wisconsin would be significantly reduced due to the burdensome requirement and significant cost to survey all boundary lines. Forest management on small woodland ownerships would become uneconomical and thus significantly reduce the wood supply for Wisconsin's forest products industry. Professional foresters must be permitted to continue to deliver woodland management services free from inclusion under 443.01 (6s).

Wisconsin is home to approximately 130 private forestry firms employing over 200 professional forestry providers that have signed cooperating agreements with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Nearly 100 of these private professional foresters are also Certified Plan Writers (CPW) under an agreement with the WDNR. This base of private forestry professionals provides significant services to small woodland owners throughout Wisconsin. Approximately 1364 forestry plans covering 87,565 acres were prepared by Cooperating forestry professionals in 2009 alone. An additional 103,000 acres were examined by professional foresters on small private woodlands during 2009. This work all required the use and production of resource mapping for the Managed Forest Law (MFL), the Stewardship Program, and other State and Federal grant programs available to small woodland owners. This level of forestry service to Wisconsin's small woodland owners would not be possible with the delays and significant costs potentially created by 2009 Assembly Bill 271 and its amendments.

Private professional foresters provide substantial services to small woodland owners through the preparation and administration of timber harvesting projects. In 2009, over 1600 timber sales were conducted by professional foresters on small woodland ownerships covering 55,570 acres. These timber sales produced over 26.5 million board feet of timber and over a half million cords of pulpwood for Wisconsin's forest products industry. This significant contribution to the State's economy by small woodland owners is generated by timber sales that average less than 35 acres in size! Economic viability of these small timber sale projects would be significantly reduced through the requirement that all mapping and field layout be conducted by a professional land surveyor. The additional surveying costs required under this Bill would result in a significant reduction in sound forest management and production of raw forest products from small woodland owners in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) recognizes the positive efforts of professional land surveyors in advancing the standards of their profession through 2009 Assembly Bill 271 and its amendments. Seeking to improve and police one's profession is an honorable and desirable process and goal. We support the profession of surveying in Wisconsin and its desire to realize higher standards in both personnel and product, but not at the inclusion of other professions that have historically been close partners with professional surveyors. Professional foresters and professional surveyors have historically worked closely to provide the public with the level of service dictated by the client and need. We anticipate a continued close working relationship between foresters and surveyors through the mutual respect of the role each plays in fulfilling land management needs in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) respectfully requests that the Committee consider clarifying language that **excludes** Professional Foresters and other Natural Resource Management Professionals from inclusion in the scope of 2009 Assembly Bill 271 and its amendments.

Sincerely,

Kimberly K. Quast, Chair
Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF)