

Executive Summary

Wisconsin enjoys a diversity of forest types and large expanses of private forestland. Private lands support diverse and productive forests. Some of this private forest is being lost to development. The Forest Legacy Program of the USDA Forest Service is designed to prevent the irreplaceable loss of productive private forests. This document, the Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need, is intended to identify those areas in the state where this loss is most likely to occur.

The intent of this Assessment of Need is to provide the background information in the form of a natural resource primer that supports, reveals, or highlights areas that could or should be protected. This document provides justification for focusing protection efforts on those areas identified as environmentally important, threatened by conversion and having the most long-term benefits from being protected. The ultimate goal of the document is to delineate Forest Legacy Areas for approval by the Secretary of Agriculture. These Forest Legacy Areas must meet the eligibility requirements outlined by the USDA Forest Service and the State of Wisconsin. An associated long-term goal is to begin the process of identifying where we, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), as a public natural resource conservation agency, should begin focusing our time and resources on private forestlands management. Public comment in this process will help us determine where, and to some extent, at what level, we should be involved in management of the private forestlands of Wisconsin.

