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## WISCONSIN FOREST TAX LAW DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS (DRP) OVERVIEW

A new process for resolving disputes within the forest tax law programs is being launched, and Steigerwaldt Land Services has been awarded a contract with the WDNR to be the program Administrator. The DRP was recently developed to provide an alternative to the existing binding processes outlined in statute for challenging forestry-related decisions on private lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law (FCL) programs. It was developed by a committee consisting of representatives from the Division of Forestry, non-industrial private forest landowners, large block forestland managers, Society of American Foresters, consulting foresters, and the logging, lumber, and pulp and paper industries.

### Objectives of the DRP

- Resolve forestry-related disputes for lands enrolled in the MFL and FCL programs on a timely basis
- Facilitate communication between involved parties to reach an agreement
- Have a fair and credible process to resolve disputes in an independent, objective, and unbiased way
- Provide consistent outcomes in line with the goals of good governance
- Facilitate ownership and trust in the process by those involved

### What Qualifies as a Dispute?

The DRP is a voluntary process that can be used when disagreements on lands enrolled in the MFL and FCL cannot be readily resolved between DNR foresters and private sector foresters (cooperators and others), loggers, or landowners. The disagreements can result from differences in professional opinion regarding silvicultural prescriptions, forest health and disease restrictions, BMPs, and/or logging practices and their adherence to the principles of sound forestry for land enrolled in MFL and FCL.

The DRP can be initiated by any involved party disagreeing with a decision made to approve/reject one of the following:

- MFL management plan
- MFL management plan amendment
- Cutting notice
- After receiving a complaint (i.e. from landowner, consultant, logger, member of the public, neighbor, etc.), the DNR forester evaluates and determines sound forestry was not implemented consistent with MFL/FCL guidelines, the management plan, and landowner's objectives.
- When a DNR forester identifies concerns with how a cutting notice was implemented when signing the cutting report or visiting the site to update the forestry inventory.

### Who Do I Contact If I Have Questions?

Please feel free to contact the Steigerwaldt project manager, Ben Williams, at 715-453-3274 or via email at [ben.williams@steigerwaldt.com](mailto:ben.williams@steigerwaldt.com).

If you feel there is a conflict of interest for a specific dispute considering Steigerwaldt's role as program Administrator, please contact Ron Gropp at the WDNR via email at [Ron.Gropp@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Ron.Gropp@wisconsin.gov).

For more information on the DRP, please review Chapter 31 of the Forest Tax Law Handbook at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestManagement/documents/24505.pdf>.