Wisconsin Forestry Center

2025 Annual Report

WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | APPLIED RESEARCH | PUBLIC OUTREACH

ABOUT THE WFC

The Wisconsin Forestry Center (WFC), part of the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point, serves Wisconsin's forestry community through professional development, workforce development, applied research, and public outreach initiatives that promote vibrant, sustainable forests and forest-based economies.

WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT

WISCONSIN FORESTRY CAREERS COALITION (WFCC): WFC's WEDC grant was extended to June 2026, providing more time to develop the WFCC forestry education and career pathway program.

- **HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM:** Showcased the curriculum at a statewide teacher conference (520 attendees), four high school events, the Wisconsin Science Festival, and Forest Products Week, directly engaging 1,576 students and 35 teachers. An additional 31 teachers from three states accessed the curriculum online. In partnership with LEAF, Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program (LEAF), trained nine teachers to implement the two curricula and portable sawmill into coursework. In June, seven students completed Forestry Skills Camp at Central Wisconsin Environmental Station (CWES).

The use of drones in forest management practices was demonstrated during the June 2025 High School Skills Camp .

- **FOREST OPERATIONS TRAINING PROGRAM:** The second training ran from March 30 to May 9, with three participants. Revisions are being discussed for future offerings. Stumpage contract with the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands was extended for future offerings of the training.
- **MILL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM:** Completed sawmill construction with a ribbon-cutting in April. The first Mill Technology training ran from March 17 to April 17, with six participants completing the program.
- **EQUIPMENT:** Purchased a compact harvesting simulator as a portable option to train a larger audience. Purchased Milwaukee Tool generators to power the simulators on the road. Wrapped the training trailers to promote the program.

FOREST OPERATIONS TRAINING NETWORK: The Forest Operations Training Network currently spans six states and continues to build a national coalition of training providers. In January, the team hosted an online summit to provide a space for participants to collaborate, plan, and address shared challenges.

TREE FELLING COURSE: In March, a three-day Science of Tree Felling course was hosted at Treehaven with five high school students and 25 UWSP students. Support from the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA), Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Milwaukee Tool, Husqvarna, and Aspen Fuel enabled the high school students to attend at no cost.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS: Offered 10 in-person, virtual, and online workshops, engaging a total of 202 participants. The Prescribed Fire webinar series has reached 3,452 participants internationally since inception. Initiated the Applied Ecological Silviculture series reaching 1,250 people nationally.

Pine Insects, Disease and Management workshop hosted by the WFC in May 2025 at Schmeekle Reserve.

ONLINE COURSES: Offered six on-demand online courses, with a total of 86 participants.

DNR NEW-FORESTER TRAINING: Offered one Silviculture Orientation course with 22 participants and one Introduction to WisFIRS course with 20 participants.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS: Offered the Foundations of Utility Vegetation Management (UVM), with 31 graduates, the UVM Professional certificate with 14 graduates, and the Certified UVM Professional® credential with 12 graduates.

SILVICAST PODCAST: **Released** 11 episodes in Season 6 with 17,126 downloads in 2025, surpassing 90,000 downloads across all six seasons.

APPLIED RESEARCH

SFI DEFECT GUIDES: The red oak defect guide design was completed and will be published in early 2026.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS RESEARCH: Assessment results published in the Journal of Forestry in May. The assessment identified current skill gaps and training preferences of forestry-related professionals in Wisconsin, barriers preventing training participation, and training outcomes that motivate training engagement.

NRCS NATIONAL FORESTRY HANDBOOK: Continued our contract with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist in revising the National Forestry Handbook, a training resource for conservation planners. The contract is set to expire January 2026.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS: WFC was represented at the Society of American Forester (SAF) Rising Professionals Conference, Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers Conference, Cooperating Foresters Meeting, Tree and Utilities Conference, Southern and Northeastern Forest and Conservation and Nursery Association Annual Meeting, WI SAF Annual Meeting, Forest Resources Association annual meeting, GLTPA Board of Directors meetings, Wisconsin Governor's Council on Forestry meeting, Golden Sands Resource Development Council first annual banquet and WiSCiFest. In addition, the WFC and Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology co-led the inaugural Wisconsin Forest Products Week in October, partnering with organizations across the state to deliver regional learning events that educated school groups and the public on forestry and wood products.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: In partnership with the UWSP LIFE program, we delivered three in-person workshops and one virtual workshop, engaging 89 participants. Co-led a factory lumber and log grading workshop with Northcentral Technical College (NTC) and Lake States Lumber Association, instructing 16 participants from the hardwood industry, and co-instructed 13 Wisconsin high school shop teachers during a three-day wood bootcamp at NTC covering wood grading, kiln drying, and wood properties. Facilitated marketing and registration for eight Wisconsin Local Use Dimension Lumber Grading trainings, reaching 89 participants.