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Form 1100-001N (Rev. 01/22)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

Item No. 6.B

SUBJECT: Forest Regeneration Monitoring Program Update

FOR: August 2022 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Collin Buntrock, Forest Products Services Team Leader; Jeff Pritzl, Deer Program Specialist

SUMMARY

At the request of the Board, the Department will provide an informational overview of the Forest Regeneration Monitoring program. Staff from forestry and wildlife will explain the program's history and role in informing both deer management considerations and forest resource planning.

RECOMMENDATION: Information only

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

- ☒ Background memo
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable

Approved by	Signature	Date
Carmen Hardin, Bureau Director	DocuSigned by: Carmen Hardin 4BE29B5126C14EC...	7/19/2022 | 1:11 PM CDT
Heather Berklund, Division Administrator	DocuSigned by: Heather Berklund 061DC87886CF4B4...	7/19/2022 | 10:26 PM CDT
For Preston D. Cole, Secretary	DocuSigned by: Sarah Barry A7D70DC3770642F...	7/20/2022 | 9:45 AM CDT

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8 DS KLZ

by Sarah Barry Sarah Barry

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CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: July 13, 2022

TO: Natural Resources Board Members

FROM: Secretary Preston D. Cole

SUBJECT: Forest Regeneration Monitoring Program Update

Program Overview

In response to the need for better assessment of forest health and condition, as identified in the Deer Trustee Report and elsewhere, the department launched the Forest Regeneration Monitoring program in 2018. The goals of this program are to consistently monitor the status and progression of naturally regenerating forests across the state and to improve the efficacy of forest regeneration strategies. It also aims to provide indicators regarding regeneration success or failure to inform Wisconsin's deer population goal setting process.

Currently, the inventory covers Wisconsin's 46 counties with more than 30% forested area. Efforts have primarily focused on oak-hickory, northern hardwoods, and pine forest type groups with a lesser emphasis on fir-spruce, bottomland hardwoods, and aspen-birch forest types. The program utilizes a newly developed monitoring tool, the Forest Regeneration Metric, to assess the regrowth of seedling and sapling trees after a harvest. This metric is a plot-based assessment using 1/300th acre sample areas at a density of 1 plot per every 5 acres on recently harvested sites. These sites are assessed for densities of tree species by height class, level of deer browse, overstory shading and plant competition. Stands are remeasured every three years to track regeneration until a to-be-determined point in time when stands either age out of remeasurement or achieve adequate stocking above deer browse height.

The first three-year cycle was completed in 2020 to align with County Deer Advisory Council deer population objective recommendations. Data collected during the first cycle provided a snapshot of county-level and statewide regeneration composition and success across forested lands. Subsequent data collection cycles will provide time-series data that will provide insight into regeneration advancement over time while strengthening the understanding of potential impacts of deer browse on stand progression.

Regeneration Indicators for Deer Management Planning

The Forest Regeneration Monitoring program provided its first reporting to County Deer Advisory Councils in December 2020. Regeneration reports were published at the county-level to align with county deer management units. Reports highlight three indicators that collectively assess the overall risk deer pose to regenerating forests. Moving forward, reports will be updated with new data each winter, and long-term trend data may take several cycles to fully incorporate into the reports. It should be noted that the Forest Regeneration Metric is only one data point in a suite of metrics that each CDAC uses to inform deer harvest recommendations. With other key inputs from the Deer Metrics System, data from the Forest Regeneration Monitoring program can help inform deer population objectives and goals.

Drafted By: Collin Buntrock, Forest Products Services Team Leader; Jeff Pritzl, Deer Program Specialist

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