



August 7th, 2015

Good Neighbor Authority Will Boost Timber Harvest

In July of 2011, while I was serving in the State Assembly, I joined Michigan State Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba) to hold a hearing in Michigan to discuss the problems facing our national forests and the benefits that would come from coordinating between the different layers of government.

Yesterday, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources announced they have entered into an agreement and will partner with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to help manage the 1.5 million acres in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). Under the collaboration, called the Good Neighbor Authority, the USFS and DNR will coordinate to perform forest, rangeland and watershed restoration projects on federal and non-federal lands. The national forest's forest management plan will also result in opportunities to increase timber sales. It is anticipated that timber harvest will increase approximately 25 percent to more than 100 million board feet in the CNNF in 2016. This is, however, still below the level authorized in the approved plan for the forest.

Wisconsin will be the first state east of the Mississippi to utilize the Good Neighbor Authority. In the recently passed 2015-17 state budget, I authored a motion to provide funding and authority to the DNR to get this program off the ground. A portion of the receipts from Good Neighbor Authority timber sales will reimburse the state for its costs to do this work, with remaining funds available to be used by the state of Wisconsin to conduct additional restoration activities that will be identified through a collaborative process.

I want to thank Paul DeLong, the head of the Wisconsin DNR Division of Forestry, and the rest of the DNR staff that worked hard to get this going. I look forward to working with the rank and file in the USFS to help benefit Northern Wisconsin. This authority is critical for Northern Wisconsin because it benefits not only the forest products industry, but also sportsmen and our rural communities. I also want to thank Congressmen Reid Ribble and Sean Duffy for their efforts and support at the federal level to implement the Good Neighbor Authority.

Cougars Sighted in Northern Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists have confirmed two cougar sightings in Langlade County in Northern Wisconsin.



On July 27, the department received a trail camera photo from a Langlade County landowner of a cougar taken July 9.



On Aug. 3, a second Langlade County landowner submitted a trail camera photo of a cougar - this photo was also taken July 9.

After site evaluations, DNR staff confirmed the location of each photo. These photos were taken roughly six miles apart at a 20-hour interval.

Genetic evidence suggests cougars known to have entered Wisconsin are male cougars dispersing from a breeding population in the Western United States. There is currently no evidence that cougars are breeding in Wisconsin.

Cougars are a protected species in Wisconsin and hunting is not allowed. Cougars are not considered a threat to public safety, and in the unlikely event that a person is confronted by a cougar, face the animal and spread your arms and open your coat or jacket to appear larger. If a cougar approaches, make noise and throw rocks or sticks.

Individuals who observe cougars in Wisconsin are urged to report their findings using the Rare Mammal Observation form. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keyword "cougar."

Broadband Expansion Grant Applications

The recently passed 2015-17 state budget tripled the amount available for local grants to extend broadband to underserved areas of the state, and the state Public Service Commission (PSC) is now accepting applications for Fiscal Year 2016 Broadband Expansion Grants!

This is a great opportunity for the Northwoods to improve its technological infrastructure.

The grant program provides reimbursement for equipment and construction expenses incurred to extend or improve broadband telecommunications service throughout the state. It was first started in the 2011-13 biennial state budget, and in the recently passed state budget, the amount of grants available each year was tripled from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000.

The budget also included changes to increase the impact of the grants—by including consideration of projects that are “scalable,” and giving the PSC more flexibility in its execution of the grants throughout a given biennium.

An application for a grant may be submitted by any of the following entities:

- An organization operated for profit or not-for-profit, including a cooperative.
- A telecommunications utility.
- A city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility.

Priority will be given to projects that can be expanded in a cost-effective way to match higher capacity demands in the future. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the long-term prospects of the investment and how best to reach as many homes and businesses as possible

Applications for the Broadband Expansion Grants for Fiscal Year 2016 are due September 30th, 2015.

Application instructions and additional information may be found at:

<http://psc.wi.gov/utilityInfo/tele/broadband/grants/bbGrantApplicationPage.htm>

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

Start Date		Location
August 8	Antigo Tater Trot	Antigo
August 8	Boulder Junction History Day	Boulder Junction
August 8	Minocqua Triathlon	Woodruff
August 8	Open Studio/Garden Walk	Phelps
August 8	Ride with Leinie Bike Ride	Land O'Lakes
August 8	Thrilla on the Grilla	Tomahawk
August 8	Annual Little Hearts for Life Corn Roast	Oconto Falls
August 8 - 9	Hazelhurst Lions and Firefighter Events	Hazelhurst

August 9	Musky Jamboree	Boulder Junction
August 9 - 15	Northern Woods & Waters Bicycle Tour	Three Lakes
August 11	Krazy Day	Minocqua
August 13	Crazy Daze	Merrill
August 13 - 16	Vilas County Fair	Eagle River
August 15	Gleason Mud Bogs	Gleason
August 15 - 16	Oconto County Fair	Gillett
August 22	Hodag Triatholon	Rhineland

As always, if you have any comments or thoughts regarding the subjects of this e-update, please feel free to contact me.

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