

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2023-25 BIENNIAL REPORT



Kayaking in the Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area
Photograph courtesy of the Wisconsin DNR



October 2025

State of Wisconsin
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October 15, 2025

Governor Evers and Members of the State Legislature

On behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, I am pleased to submit our 2023-25 Biennial Report. In accordance with s. 15.04(1)(d), Wis. Stats., the report includes a review of our performance and operational highlights and a summary of our agency's policy on flex-time and alternative work schedules.

Let us know if you have any questions regarding this report or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Karen Hyun, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Department of Natural Resources
2023-25 Biennial Report**

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AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Legislature created the department in 1967 by combining closely related conservation functions and combined them with newly emerging environmental protection programs. The department is administered by a secretary who is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Natural Resources Board establishes policy for the department and consists of seven citizen members who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The department is organized with a headquarters office in Madison, six regional offices and over 165 other field stations and offices. The central office staff assists the secretary in directing the regions, which carry out the field operations of the department. Over 70 percent of the department's personnel operate from field stations outside of Madison.

The department coordinates the preservation, protection and regulation of the natural environment for the benefit of the people of this state and its visitors. Included in its objectives are water and air quality maintenance; water supply regulations; solid and hazardous waste management; fish and wildlife management; forest management and protection; providing parks and recreation opportunities; lake management; wetland, shoreland and floodplain protection; and law enforcement.

The department also coordinates federal, state and local aid programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies; and administers federal funds available for outdoor recreation, thereby taking a lead role in planning state outdoor recreation facilities. In addition, it administers state aid programs for local outdoor recreation and pollution abatement.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Division

The Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks plans and direct activities to protect, manage, conserve and wisely use the state's lands, plants, wildlife, fisheries, and recreational resources. This program's goals are accomplished by establishing objectives that include developing and maintaining game and nongame fish and wildlife populations; coordinating long-range programs of management and protection for natural heritage conservation; and providing necessary access, opportunities, development and operations for statewide recreational and conservation activities within state parks, southern forests, wildlife and fish lands, public water bodies, scientific areas, and state natural areas.

Division programs include:

Wildlife Management – protects and manages Wisconsin's wildlife populations, their habitats, and promotes wildlife enjoyment and appreciation for the benefit of current and future generations. Its staff function as the habitat managers for 672,400 acres of land, made up of state wildlife areas, state parks and southern state forests, and state fishery areas.

Parks and Recreation Management – provides citizens and visitors, of all ages and abilities, with the highest quality state parks, forests, trails, educational experiences, natural resource stewardship and services in their pursuit of a full range of outdoor recreational opportunities. The state park system boasts 49 state parks and recreation areas, more than 500 boat launches, 15 state forests, 16 state and national trails, over 5,000 campsites, plus thousands of acres for adventures.

Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) – works to conserve Wisconsin's native plants, animals and their habitats using science, collaborative approaches, and creative strategies. The program is responsible for managing and providing guidance on hundreds of non-game species throughout Wisconsin, including state and federally threatened and endangered species and their habitats. The program also manages the country's oldest and largest system of State Natural Areas which protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's natural communities and areas of significant biodiversity.

Fisheries Management – protects, maintains and develops Wisconsin's fisheries and aquatic resources for the benefit of all resident and nonresident anglers. In total, it manages fisheries in 15,000 inland lakes, 42,000 miles of rivers and streams, 1,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and 250 miles of Mississippi River frontage.

Office of Applied Science – provides research and consultation services on statewide fish and wildlife priority issues. It is an independent unit, comprised of a fisheries research team and a wildlife research team, which reports directly to Division leadership.

Office of Business Services – supports the work of the Division by providing centralized administrative services such as budget and grants management, fiscal processing, policy development support, division learning and workforce development, and communications.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Number of visits to the Wisconsin State Parks System.	15,500,000	20,094,668	15,600,000	20,215,546
Processing time for endangered resource reviews.	7 days	8.3 days	7 days	12.8 days
Percentage of approved fish quotas produced at State Fish Hatcheries that are stocked out.	90%	107%	90%	105%
Average statewide testing turnaround time for CWD samples	15 days	16.7 days	13 days	9.1 days

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Number of visits to the Wisconsin State Parks System.	19,000,000	19,250,000	19,500,000
Processing time for endangered resource reviews.	7 days	7 days	7 days
Percentage of approved fish quotas produced at State Fish Hatcheries that are stocked out.	90%	90%	90%
Average statewide testing turnaround time for CWD samples	10 days	10 days	10 days

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Division Accomplishments

Wildlife Management

- In FY24 and FY25, WDNR submitted samples from over 34,751 deer for CWD testing to the CWD Processing Center. Through the **CWD Adopt-a-Dumpster program**, 130 dumpsters were available each year to provide proper deer waste disposal with more than 70 of the dumpsters “adopted” by partners each year.
- Wildlife Management staff implemented a sustained **barrens habitat management plan**, including the enhancement of 16,500 acres using prescribed fire and 7,000 acres using a variety of habitat treatments to control woody shrubs, as well as the restoration of approximately 1,000 acres of new barrens habitat to support wildlife species, culminating in the first sharp-tailed grouse hunting season in Wisconsin since 2018.
- In FY24 and FY25, a total of 163,169 acres of state lands had **priority habitat management treatments** including invasive species management; wetland enhancement and restoration; prescribed burns; tree, shrub and grass planting; and water level drawdowns.
- In calendar year 2024, wildlife management staff assisted more than 2,800 individuals or property managers experiencing conflicts with wildlife. Each year, staff provided **wildlife damage abatement assistance** to more than 1,000 agriculture producers to limit agricultural damages caused by deer, bear, elk, geese, or turkey.
- In 2024, **Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP)** enrolled 2,334 properties and 3,444 members who managed a combined 492,275 acres. DMAP staff presented 8 workshops with a total of 250 participants, averaged 1,500 unique opens and 550 engagements monthly through DMAP’s newsletter, and provided herd and habitat recommendations to landowners at 79 in-person site visits, covering over 40,000 acres.
- In 2024 the **voluntary public access program** enrolled an additional 1,400-acre property in Sauk County. Through a grant secured in 2020 from U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service, voluntary public access program enrolled 56 new agreements totaling 6,786 acres. This grant contributed to securing a peak of 235 leases and 45,200 acres across 42 Wisconsin counties.
- In FY24 and FY25, the **Wisconsin Elk Management Plan and Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan** were completed and approved by Natural Resources Board.
- In FY24 and FY25, the Department worked with County Deer Advisory Councils to conduct a **deer management unit review in the Northern and Central Forest Zones** which resulted in new habitat-based deer management units. These new units better positioned Deer Advisory Councils to recommend antlerless harvest permit availability that aligned with deer populations and hunter expectations.

Parks and Recreation

- Launched the **125th Anniversary** of the Wisconsin State Park System (WSPS) with the capitol holiday tree being state park themed and a proclamation that 2025 is the 125th anniversary of WSPS and held **hundreds of events across the state** highlighting property and the system anniversary.
- Launched a **robust WSPS merchandise program** for the first time in 25 years.

- Partnered with Travel Wisconsin and UW Athletics for the relaunch of **the Wonders campaign featuring five state parks**.
- Participated in **national collaborations** including First Day Hikes, Run for the Trees and Girl Scouts Love State Parks.
- Participated in **statewide volunteer collaborations** including Work Play Earth Day, Invasive Species Awareness Weekend and Check Out Wisconsin State Parks at Your Library.
- WSPS received the Governor's "**Outdoor Recreation Destination of the Year Award**" and program staff were nominated for seven other awards.
- Opened the **Lapham Lodge at Lapham Peak**.
- **Hosted the Governor's office at several properties** including a cabinet Earth Day workday and 9/11 Day of Service workday.
- Implemented **a new 12-month from date of purchase annual state park pass**, representing a change from the historical calendar year format. The entire state park pass system was redesigned and strategically implemented to enhance the customer experience and staff efficiencies.
- All annual and daily State Trail passes were added to **the Parks ecommerce system**. Annual State Trail passes are now available in an electronic format that users download to their phone's wallet and can show whenever needed instead of needing to have a physical pass on their person or attached to their bike or horse.
- Implemented **a camping self check-in** feature where registered campers can check in to their campsites on their cell phone or computer on the day of their arrival at the property. This feature was piloted at 10 properties in 2024 and was implemented statewide in 2025.
- Hosted approximately **600,000 camping nights** at State Parks and Forests in 2024.
- Continue to strategically **increase the electronic pay station program at the properties**. The fleet of electronic pay stations is now 45 machines across the state and provide all daily and annual products for sale during all open hours for visitors.
- WSPS highlighted the DNR presence at **the Wisconsin State Fair in 2025**. The theme of the DNR State Fair Cabin was the "125th Anniversary of the State Parks" and State Parks staffed two booths at the fair including an informational booth with 125th Anniversary merchandise for sale and another informational booth with a historical timeline and pictures celebrating 125 years.
- Introduced **new map, publication and signage standards**, and piloted **new trail signing standards at select properties**. Received overwhelmingly positive feedback from visitors and property staff.

Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC)

- Completed **prescribed burns on 17,494 acres** of prairie, grassland, oak savanna, and barrens habitats managed by program.
- **Controlled terrestrial and aquatic invasive plant species on 13,579 acres** of State Natural Area properties and other public lands.
- Coordinated over **584 volunteers who worked over 8,799 hours to improve and restore habitats on 69 State Natural Area properties**. This volunteer effort **improved habitat conditions across 7,755 acres of public lands**. (SNA Volunteer data from FY24 only. FY25 data won't be compiled until early 2026).
- Completed **1,332 rare, threatened, and endangered species field visits and desktop reviews**, which provided technical assistance or consultation for permitted and reviewed projects.

Fisheries Management

- **Stocked over 10.9 million fish** to enhance fishing opportunities for anglers throughout the state.
- Fisheries staff received and processed **1,715 fishing tournament permit applications, 468 wild bait harvest permit applications** (we simplified the process and went from monthly to annual permits starting at the end of June 2024), **7 natural waterbody permit applications, and 207 natural waterbody jurisdictional reviews**.
- **Habitat enhancement projects** were completed on 31 lakes and 1 spring pond. Projects included installation of wood habitat in the form of shoreline tree drops and fish cribs in lakes and dredging of spring ponds that enhanced fishing opportunities throughout the state.
- **Improved 78 miles of stream riparian areas through vegetation management** to enhance fishing opportunities and access throughout the state.
- Completed **24 instream trout habitat projects** on 22 streams to enhance fish populations and fishing opportunities throughout the state.
- **Wisconsin Inland Trout Management Plan** – There was a total of 131 trout stream classification changes in 2025. Changes occurred on 104 streams within 23 counties. There are 75 streams with new trout water classifications, 54 with new class I designations, 20 with new class II designations and 1 stream having both new class I and II designations.
 - The total number of streams statewide with classified trout water are 2,983, an increase of 63 streams (2.2%) from 2023. Total miles of classified trout are 13,779, an increase of 230 miles (1.7%) from 2023.
 - There are 4 spring ponds with new class 1 designations. Total number of ponds statewide with classified trout water is 110, an increase of 3.8%. Total acreage of ponds with classified trout water will be 387.84, an increase of 5.33 acres (1.4%).
- From July 2023 through June 2025, the DNR has **monitored PFAS in fish from 16 different waterbodies**. The finding of elevated levels of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) in fish in these waterbodies will be used to determine the issuance of fish consumption advisories to protect public health.

Office of Applied Science (OAS)

- **Snapshot Wisconsin** – a statewide network of trail cameras to monitor wildlife year-round, **celebrated its 10-year anniversary and the collection of 100 million photos**. Snapshot Wisconsin was born from a DNR initiative to involve community members in wildlife monitoring throughout the state. The data collected from these efforts helps the DNR monitor wildlife populations throughout the state and informs management decisions.
- **Trout-Beaver Interactions** – One of the largest field studies ever undertaken by the Office of Applied Science, the trout-beaver interactions study was statewide in scope and experimentally removed beaver control from some trout streams, maintained beaver control on some trout streams, and monitored trout streams not influenced by beaver. Trout population status, stream habitat characteristics, and beaver status was monitored on study streams. **Findings from the study will be used to inform trout and beaver management** in Wisconsin.
- **Creel Survey Efficiencies** – Point-intercept creel surveys are labor intensive, expensive, and can only be conducted on a small number of lakes each year yet provide critical fisheries-dependent data on angler behaviors and fish exploitation rates. The creel survey efficiencies project used modeling to test whether reductions in traditional creel surveys (e.g., removal of some weekdays, periods of year) could provide similar information for Ceded Territory of Wisconsin lakes and Lake Michigan. Results suggested that traditional point-intercept creel surveys could be reduced, and modeling could be used to provide similar information for a greater number of lakes in Wisconsin.
- **Walleye Forecasting** – Walleye populations in Wisconsin are threatened by declining natural recruitment caused by climate change. Thus, decisions are required as to whether to resist this change, accept this change, or direct this change in relation to walleye conservation. A structured decision-making exercise was conducted by the Wisconsin DNR, USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to **inform the decision-making process for walleye in relation to climate change**. This study will be used to inform which lakes may be best suited for walleye populations and what types of interventions are best suited for those populations.
- Worked with private landowners and members of the public to identify and survey bear dens as part of the **Wisconsin Bear Reproduction Research Project**. This study aims to estimate bear reproductive rates and cub survival to improve our understanding of Wisconsin's bear population and better inform bear management decisions.
- Completed an **evaluation of deer hunter license trends** and forecasted the shifting demographics of the deer hunting population. This research is improving our understanding of factors influencing hunter participation and harvest rates. This work is helping predict changes in harvest across the state and its influence on deer management outcomes. It is also informing the drivers of change in the hunter population to **better inform recruitment and retention efforts** and improve our understanding of current and future license sales.
- Worked with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) partners to **investigate the impact of waterfowl on wild rice**. This research is improving our understanding of how changes in goose and swan populations may be influencing wild rice preservation and restoration efforts.

Office of Business Services (OBS)

- Developed **the new division support section** which focuses on consolidation, coordination and delivery of employee development opportunities and required training.

- Facilitated **a cross-division work team** charged with monitoring and recommending budgetary modifications to programs to address **an ongoing structural deficit in the Fish & Wildlife account**.
- In collaboration with the FWP Operations Team, **developed strategies and pay-setting philosophies** for recruiting diverse, well-qualified candidates for various division positions to enhance staff retention and reduce turnover.
- In preparation for the DNR movement to Hill Farms Office Complex in 2026, **OBS coordinated 3 events** to help FWP staff going through the physical records in GEF2 and assisted with moving records to the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS)

Forestry Division

The Division of Forestry is responsible for developing and implementing programs to protect and sustainably manage the state's forest resources. The 17 million acres of forest land and the millions of urban trees in Wisconsin significantly contribute to our quality of life. The division plans, coordinates and administers current and long-range programs for the protection, improvement, perpetuation and sustainable use of Wisconsin's forests, as well as the protection of life, property and resources from wildfire. The purpose of the Division of Forestry is to work in partnership to protect and sustainably manage Wisconsin's forest ecosystems to supply a wide range of ecological, economic and social benefits for present and future generations. It accomplishes its purpose through an organizational structure that is significantly decentralized. Collaboration occurs across bureaus, and much work is shared to meet the division's goals and objectives.

The three bureaus within the Division of Forestry are the Bureau of Applied Forestry, the Bureau of Field Operations, and the Bureau of Forestry Business Services. Field operations are dispersed across the State and are located within three geographically based Forestry Districts.

Bureau of Applied Forestry: Informs and supports sustainable management of rural and urban forests and helps foster the growth of Wisconsin's forest-based industries to maintain healthy forests, communities, and businesses that rely on them. The Bureau of Applied Forestry contains the following programs: Reforestation, Urban Forestry, Forest Health, Forest Products Services, and Forest Economics and Ecology.

Bureau of Forestry Field Operations: Provide services for promoting sustainable forestry on private and public forest land. The Bureau of Forestry Field Operations contains the following programs: Forest Fire Protection, Forestry Tax Law, Public and Private Forestry.

Bureau of Forestry Business Services: Supports Forestry and Forestry staff throughout the state by providing tools, support, funding, training and other services to staff. The Bureau of Forestry Business Services contains the following programs: Aeronautics, Budgets and Grants, Division Effectiveness, and Equipment Research and Development.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Number of trees planted on public and private lands as part of Wisconsin's Trillion Tree Pledge	7,500,000	9,800,000	7,500,000	10,695,700
Number of acres conserved as part of Wisconsin's Trillion Tree Pledge	12,500	3,200	12,500	57,300
Wildland fire response time.	<30 minutes	15.4 minutes	<30 minutes	16 minutes

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Number of trees planted on public and private lands as part of Wisconsin's Trillion Tree Pledge	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Number of acres conserved as part of Wisconsin's Trillion Tree Pledge	12,500	12,500	12,500
Wildland fire response time.	<30 minutes	<30 minutes	<30 minutes

Forestry Division Accomplishments

Fire and Emergency Management

- Protected life and property across the **2,345 wildfires** that occurred in Wisconsin DNR protection areas in FY 2024-25.
 - Over 99% of those fires were controlled within the first 12 hours.
 - Over 93% of fires were kept under five acres and 89% of threatened structures were saved.
- Supported other states and provinces through national and regional agreements in both CY24 and CY25. In **CY24, mobilized 74 staff** which included 39 trainees to out of state assignments. In **CY25, mobilized 111 staff** which included 45 trainees to out of state fire assignments. Staff assisted over 20 different states as well as the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.
- Supported in-state federal partners with fire suppression and prescribed burning. In FY25, **supported the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest** with 6 staff and 2 engines during a period of elevated fire danger.
- Flew reconnaissance for **search and locate missions** as well as several **natural disasters** including severe flooding in southeast and southcentral WI as well as a train derailment in western WI.
- Photographically **documented damage** for use by both governmental and civilian agencies.
- Integrated staff assisted numerous local governments with all hazard emergencies including flooding, search and rescue and wind events.
- Completed flying in **support of wildland fire detection and suppression support and SEAT training**; the team was able to support all flight requests.
- **Built and configured heavy equipment** replacing aging units in the field including six new Cat D2 dozers as tractor plows, 18 new 1-ton trucks as Type 7 wildland fire fighting engines, 10 truck 125-gallon slip-on units for upfits or replacements **for field wildland fire suppression**.
- Conducted a **radio communications propagation study** to be used as a reference to identify **coverage gaps** and verify adequate coverage and added a **backup network connection to the DNR radio dispatch centers** to allow for **reduced downtime** from potential Microwave network interruptions.
- Launched the **Wisconsin Certified Burn Boss Program (CBBP)**, a statewide pilot to certify and grow experienced prescribed burn practitioners, in partnership with the Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council.

Public Forest Lands (Rural and Urban)

- Improved the health of WDNR-owned forest lands by **completing 425 timber sales on 36,438 acres, with a value of \$25.1 million**.
- Contributed over 95,000 hours off staff time to **timber sale establishment and other forest management work on County Forest lands**.
- In 2025, celebrated 10 years of collaboration under Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). **Wisconsin ranks #2 nationally for GNA contributions**, accounting for 14% of GNA timber volume nationwide and 25% of CNNF's annual timber establishment.

- Established **7,500 acres of timber and completed 48 GNA timber sales across 6,800 acres of CNNF, with a stumpage value of over \$3.1 million over the past biennium**. This brings WDNR's 10-year GNA program accomplishments to 210 timber sales across 34,000 acres, with an estimated volume of 557,000 cords and stumpage value of \$21.9 million. Over \$4.4 million of GNA timber revenue has been used to fund restoration projects on the CNNF.
- Continued to meet strict ecological, social, and economic sustainability standards for forest management on WDNR lands and certified County Forests, verified through Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®); and the Managed Forest Law (MFL) Certified Group, the nation's largest group of certified family forest owners, verified through FSC® and American Tree Farm System® certifications. Independent audits in FY24 and FY25 confirmed conformance and continued certification, with WDNR remaining the **nation's largest public FSC® certificate holder** at 5.77 million acres.
- Awarded **\$4 million in pass-through grants for urban and community forestry** projects to local governments, tribes, and non-profits.

Private Forest Lands

- Approved **3,266 Managed Forest Law (MFL) applications**, growing the program to 3.52 million acres with 937,000 acres open to public access.
- Certified **21 new Certified Plan Writers (CPW) maintaining a partnership of over 195 CPWs**.
- **Completed 8,403 sound forestry practices on lands enrolled in WI Tax Law programs**, providing a consistent flow of wood products to market and further promoting healthy **working forests** for people and wildlife who benefit from clean air, water and habitat.
- Through the Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP), awarded cost share **funding to 813 Wisconsin forest landowners** in FY24 and FY25, 441 of which were receiving assistance for the first time.
- Launched a federally funded project in 2024 in partnership with University of Wisconsin – Division of Extension that connects eligible landowners with Cooperating Foresters to develop Forest Stewardship Plans at no cost to the landowner. At the end of FY25, **98 Forest Stewardship Plans were developed covering over 4,000 forested acres in Wisconsin**.
- Completed the **acquisition of the 54,898-acre Pelican River Forest Conservation and Access Easement**, completing one of the largest conservation projects in state history. Funding for the acquisition came from the federal Forest Legacy Program (FLP).

Forest Health and Applied Forestry Research

- Partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a **Dutch Elm Disease screening trial**.
- Launched an application in FY24 that is used to **track invasive plants on state lands**.
- Provided technical assistance to **389 forest products businesses and organizations**, including presentations and consultations.
- Completed a study with Michigan State University that found **Wisconsin is well-positioned for mass timber industry** with abundant softwood resources and existing resources. A new facility could

generate 115–750 jobs, \$60–\$370 million in output, and up to \$20 million in tax revenue, while also promoting sustainable forest management and revitalizing rural communities.

- Increased **understanding of global markets** by surveying Mexican wood product manufactures on its growing export market and supply chain connection to Wisconsin.
- Engaged in over **30 ongoing research projects** across Wisconsin. Focus of projects have included a wide range of concerns including forest resilience, forest genetics, control of invasive species, and silvicultural prescriptions.
- Provided **aviation services** including wildlife surveys, monitoring and telemetry; forest and habitat management; fisheries and aquatic work; wildlife and land management photography; and law enforcement support to a variety of customers.

Reforestation

- Began a project to **renovate the seed extraction, processing, and storage facility at the Hayward State Nursery**, made possible through federal grant funding awarded to WDNR in FY24. Additional funding was awarded in FY25 to expand tree improvement capacity and provide further funding for a forestry technician position at the nursery.
- **Distributed more than 10 million seedlings in FY24 and FY25** to private and public landowners, including tribal, county, state, and federal partners, representing a significant increase in historic trends.
- The Trillion Trees Initiative has seen strong early progress since its adoption in 2021. In 2024, Wisconsin's tree planting goal increased to 100 million trees. Across partnerships, a total of **42.7 million trees have been planted**, nearly 43% of the updated goal, and **over 76,000 acres of forestland have been conserved**, 61% of the conservation goal.

Training and Outreach

- Hosted valuable and well-reviewed trainings for WDNR staff and forestry partners, **including 21 forest management related courses in both FY24 and FY25, with 681 total participants and 31 fire and law enforcement-related courses in both FY24 and FY25, with 950 total participants**. In FY25, the division also hosted four additional Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) sponsored courses with 111 total participants.
- **Expanded outreach and education** to support earlier detection of forest health concerns, including 12,906 newsletter subscriptions and over 11,000 participants at trainings and presentations in FY24-25.

Capital Development Projects

- DNR completed 30 maintenance and repair projects on Forestry-owned roads and completed 63 repair and renovation projects on Forestry buildings. **Gresham Ranger Station, Minong Ranger Station, and Mercer Ranger Station** were constructed. **Pattison Radio Tower** was constructed to provide radio communications into the Namadji River Valley, and the **Skinner Creek Road Bridge** on the Flambeau River State Forest was replaced.

Public Safety and Resource Protection (PSRP) Division

The Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection (PSRP) provides public safety, resource protection and promotion of the safe and responsible use of Wisconsin's natural resources. PSRP's primary objective is to achieve voluntary compliance by the public through a three-pronged approach of enforcement, education and community-based warden practices to ensure fair and equal treatment.

PSRP Responsibilities include:

- Public engagement through directed patrols and complaint response to address specific issues and problematic activities.
 - Directed patrols (vehicle and foot patrols) emphasize observations of a specific activity or issue and encourages contacts (warden initiated) with the user public.
 - Patrol efforts are directed to the following: sport fishing (trout, walleye, sturgeon and fish runs); commercial fishing on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River; hunting (deer, turkey, waterfowl, small game, bear); trapping; night hunting; safe firearm use; boating; snowmobiling; off-highway vehicle use; operating while intoxicated (OWI) enforcement; state lands, state parks and state forest use; habitat protection; environmental protection; and forest protection.
- Support of department-wide law enforcement regulatory and managerial activities.
- Administration of safety education programs for hunting, boating, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs/UTVs) and snowmobiles in partnership with volunteer instructors and web-based learning.
- Fatal recreational vehicle crash investigations.
- Outreach and educational presentations to the public, tribal nations, special interest groups and other external partners on the responsible use and the application of both environmental and natural resource recreational laws and regulations.
- Timely investigation of natural resource and recreational vehicle-related violation complaints, and if warranted, referral to the judicial system.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Reduce the number of recreational fatalities per 100,000 combined users each year. Includes off-highway vehicle (snowmobile, motorcycle and UTV/ATV), boating and hunting related fatalities.	4.53 per 100,000	3.71 per 100,000	Reduce fatalities per 100,000 users from 2023 actual.	2.96 per 100,000
Investigate 100% of fatal recreational incidents.	100%	83%	100%	75%

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Reduce the number of recreational fatalities per 100,000 combined users each year. Includes off-highway vehicle (snowmobile, motorcycle and UTV/ATV), boating and hunting related fatalities.	Reduce fatalities per 100,000 users from 2024 actual.	Reduce fatalities per 100,000 users from 2025 actual.	Reduce fatalities per 100,000 users from 2026 actual.
Investigate 100% of fatal recreational incidents.	100%	100%	100%

PSRP Division Accomplishments

- **Standardized Off-Highway Vehicle Warden Training:** Snowmobile, ATV and UTV emergency operations training now includes both classroom-learning and an operations course. Recruit wardens receive nationally recognized ATV Safety Institute Certification and off-road vehicle safety certification, as well as warden-specific law enforcement operations training. For more information, please refer to the most recent [2024-Recreational-Vehicle-Annual-Report.pdf](#)
- **Environmental Protection:** Staff continued to ensure public health and safety by resolving environmental complaints and violations through the stepped enforcement civil process, which is a series of incremental actions designed to resolve violations at the lowest level appropriate for the circumstances. *Note: Some data may include cases that originated or carried over from prior years.*

Environmental Enforcement Data Summary			
Enforcement Action	2023	2024	2025*
Cases Accepted	125	96	60
Notices of Violations	147	113	81
Enforcement Conferences	115	98	60
Orders	26	40	33
Referrals to DOJ	13	9	4
Cases Closed	130	133	81
<i>*2025 data as of Sept. 22, 2025</i>			

- **Deer Season Safety Marketing Campaign:** The Deer Season Safety Marketing Campaign was a collaborative effort between the Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection, the Office of Communications and K2W to **target safe hunting with simplified safety messaging** aimed at the largest causes in hunting incidents – “muzzle control” and “target identification.”
- **Shooting Range Improvements:** In collaboration with the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Shooting Range Committee, the Bureau of Recreational Skills and Outdoor Safety has utilized federal Pittman Robertson funding to increase security and available services at multiple shooting ranges, including **security improvement at the Columbia County shooting range**. The DNR shooting range program continues to experience growth and expansion under the direction of a newly established statewide shooting range program manager position. This growing program is focused on providing safe, quality shooting experiences at state-owned ranges using the DNR’s brand standard and clear explanation of range safety rules. The DNR **finished a substantial range improvement project at the McMiller Sports Center** in Eagle, WI, including new shooting sheds, benches, lighting, safety baffles, solar power, and radiant heating in some areas. The DNR finalized a 10-year lease agreement with Wern Valley Outdoors Inc. for the operation of McMiller. In addition, the DNR completed a project that **provided additional shooting opportunities at the Flambeau River/Hay Creek shooting range in Ashland County** by adding a 200-yard range and a handgun range. The project was accomplished with local support from the Flambeau Area Sportsmen’s Club and additional donors.
- **Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Program:** In 2024, the division’s R3 staff, in collaboration with external partners, worked to **provide 140 educational hunting and shootings sports programs** covering skills like deer processing, shooting and hands-on hunting experiences for turkey, bear, deer, upland birds, raccoons and waterfowl. One hundred and three programs were intended for beginners and 37 programs were for experienced hunters. **Seventy-four percent of the programs reached full-capacity registration** and 86% of participants reported having a “very positive” experience. Fifty-one percent of participants indicated they are “much more likely to go hunting because of this experience” (note some programs were intended for target shooters rather than hunters). Of the 140 total programs, 104 were DNR-sanctioned Learn to Hunt programs (under administrative rule NR

19.025) reaching over 1,000 participants. In addition, 65 **mentored hunts** were coordinated for youth participants age 11-17. 321 schools participated in the **National Archery in the Schools Program** (NASP). In 2024, 97,464 First-time and mentored hunting licenses were sold, representing a 1.5% increase from 2023.

- **Hunter Education Program:** The hunter education program **established a strategic roadmap to provide continued certification services for in-person and all online learners**. In 2024, approximately 22,525 students were certified through Wisconsin hunter and bowhunter safety education courses. In addition to formal instruction, the division worked hard to engage the public via radio, social media, digital media and news releases, with the goal of enrollment in safety courses and reducing hunting incidents. For more information on the hunter education program and how it promotes safety and conservation of our natural resources, refer to the most recent [HE AnnualReport2024.pdf](#).
- **Marine Enforcement Team:** Throughout 2024, with the assistance of DNR Fisheries, the Marine Enforcement Team (MET) utilized the more efficient and accurate auditing capabilities within the new electronic reporting systems for commercial anglers, Great Lakes fishing guides, and charter captains to identify and investigate compliance matters. Some of these compliance issues were found to have been occurring for years; however, identifying the issues was more difficult with the previous paper reporting systems. Enforcement was taken for significant issues of commercial anglers not lifting commercial fishing nets within required timeframes and missing reports by charter captains and fishing guides. Several cases were also concluded in 2024 for many individuals found to be guiding anglers without licenses on Green Bay. Some of these guide and charter investigations were **conducted in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)** since several individuals were operating without required federal OUPV (Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels) licenses often called a "six-pack" license.
- **Operation Dry Water:** Operation Dry Water is an annual national boating campaign focusing on **educating the public of the dangers of operating motorboats while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol**. During the campaign, conservation wardens are encouraged to focus their efforts on public awareness and intoxicated boat operation enforcement. Conservation wardens participated in the 2024 National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Operation Dry Water Impaired Operation Awareness and Enforcement Campaign over the 4th of July Weekend. In total 89 wardens participated in the campaign contacting 1,815 boats and about 4,970 passengers and operators. There were 166 citations issued with 24 being boating under the influence of intoxicants and 3 operating under the influence of drugs. The highest blood alcohol content (BAC) was .24 with the legal level of intoxication being 0.08. In 2025, **Wisconsin received national recognition from NASBLA**, who asked the DNR to host the opening weekend and ceremony of the national Operation Dry Water initiative in Green Bay.
- **Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) program:** In 2024, the DNR's Angler R3 program continued to provide angler outreach, marketing and education programs intended to welcome new anglers and support current anglers who enjoy Wisconsin's fishing resources. The DNR and conservation partners **provided 75 angler education programs for beginners**. All of these programs reached full registration capacity and 100% of participants who responded to the program evaluation indicated they had a very positive experience. These popular programs resulted in 80% of participants who responded to the program evaluation expressing they are much more likely to go fishing because of this experience. The DNR provided mobile first catch centers (called the Fishmobile) stocked with basic fishing equipment for use at urban water bodies in the Madison and Milwaukee metropolitan areas. The DNR saw a **7.6% increase in the number of first-time fishing license purchases from 2023**.
- **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Work:** Wardens and environmental enforcement staff have significantly increased efforts into investigating invasive species over the past several years, **deploying strategic tactics** to achieve this goal. One of these tactics includes focused work in **identifying aquatic**

invasive species within illegal trade and consumer distribution. In addition to traditional patrol-based invasive species work (such as ensuring boaters are not leaving the water with invasive plants or zebra mussels), approximately 50 wardens have received specialized training on issues surrounding invasive species in trade on a larger scale. In 2024, additional efforts and funding from the Organisms in Trade grant program were identified and utilized to increase the amount of AIS work completed annually, with a special emphasis on bait dealers statewide.

- **On-Water Search and Recovery:** Since acquiring our first Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (uROV) in 2006, division staff have helped locate and recover dozens of drowning victims. Each year, the uROV team also **provides assistance to external partners through investigating boating incidents, locating hard to find underwater evidence, assisting with cold cases and supporting port security in harbors.** In 2025, uROV operators assisted local government in the search for an individual later determined to have faked the suspected drowning. The uROV team information was included in the final court ruling in the case which included restitution to all agencies involved in the search.
- **Boating Safety Welcome Centers:** To reduce the trend in boating-related fatalities, the division hosted Boating Safety Welcome Centers. DNR staff promoted lifejacket use, responsible boating practices and water safety marketing to the public. In the program's first season (2022), the division was present at 22 venues, primarily in the state's Southeast and South Central regions. The program has expanded. The welcome centers were used at 20 venues in 2023 and 17 venues in 2024, **providing more than 500 safety demonstrations annually** with roughly 1,000 public contacts.
- **Community Service Officer (CSO) Program:** The goal of the program is to provide hands-on learning and internship opportunities to individuals interested in the conservation warden career, DNR opportunities or traditional law enforcement work. CSOs assist the division by **facilitating community outreach** at special events, educating the public on DNR rules and regulations, assisting with crime prevention efforts, providing general office assistance and more. At least one CSO has been hired as a conservation warden for the past three years, while others hold other DNR positions.
- **Dignitary Protection Details CY 2024:** Throughout the 2024 Presidential Election Campaign, presidential candidates, the sitting president and vice president, a variety of other politicians and dignitaries visited Wisconsin. For example, the The Safe Boat Operations Team (SBOT), Tactical Team and the Remote Operated Vehicle Team (ROV) all **provided security** for the Republican National Convention (RNC) held in Milwaukee.
- **Dignitary Protection Details CY 2025:** During the 2025 Democratic Governor's Association on Lake Mendota, the **division was part of the security team** for the governors and their staff. We were specifically requested by Wisconsin State Patrol to **manage water security** for approximately 10 governors. The division assigned forward surveillance patrol boats provided by the Madison Team Wardens. The Specialized Boat Operations Team (SBOT) members were set to shadow/escort any boats with a governor on them. In addition, a few Joint Tactical Team (JTT) members teamed up with SBOT members to provide an extensive and comprehensive security package for all dignitaries.
- **Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Fleet Planning:** In 2022, the Recreational Safety and Outdoor Skills (RSOS) Program worked in conjunction with the Office of Business Services to strategically evaluate the division's OHV enforcement needs. (i.e., ATV and snowmobile patrols) Most of the recreational fleet was 17 or more years old at the beginning of 2022. In the winter of 2024, an analysis identified that the initial replacement efforts have been successful, demonstrating continued improvement in fleet age. Additionally, analysis identified that **OHV enforcement efforts have increased in all areas of recreational patrol** in line with public recreation trends.

- **Patrol Boat Fleet Planning:** In 2023, the RSOS Boat Safety Program and the Boating Law Administrator worked in conjunction with the Office of Business Services to strategically evaluate the division's boat enforcement needs. Most of the boat patrol fleet was 15 or more years old at the beginning of 2023. Subsequently, **a boat replacement plan was developed** to allow patrol boats to be scheduled for replacement on a 16-year cycle. In the beginning of 2023, contract specifications were identified for multiple types of patrol boats, including specifications for three large Contender boats for use on the Great Lakes. The division took delivery of the first Contender in the spring of 2024, with the second and third Contenders arriving in the fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025, respectively.
- **Body Camera Implementation:** In 2023, 70 Axon body cameras were purchased for implementation by field wardens in the Northeast and Southeast regions of the state. This implementation required staff to learn how to properly use the new equipment, and dedicate time to maintaining proper records. Since the implementation of the body camera program, **multiple complaints against conservations wardens have been mitigated and litigation avoided due to the presence of body camera footage.** It is the goal of the division to eventually implement body cameras statewide, when adequate funding becomes available.
- **Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Implementation:** In 2024, AEDs were purchased for all field wardens statewide. The goal of the division is to provide wardens with every tool possible to help save lives in the course of their work. Since their deployment into the field, there have been more than 10 deployments of the AEDs in the field, with **multiple lives saved** due to the successful use of the AEDs.

Environmental Management (EM) Division

The Environmental Management Division (Division) protects human health, safety and the environment by working in partnership with citizens, communities, businesses and advocacy groups. The Division recognizes the interrelationships between air, land and water resources, and relies on environmental indicators, feedback from others, and self-evaluation to continually improve services. The Division's programs include:

Drinking Water and Groundwater – Protects the quality and quantity of the state's groundwater resources and ensures the safety of drinking water.

Water Quality – Manages activities and land uses that affect water quality and both public health and safety. The program's primary objective is to provide an integrated watershed approach to managing these activities, such as policy development; watershed planning; point source regulation; water quality assessment; and water resource protection and restoration.

The Office of Great Waters – Implements a comprehensive program to protect and enhance Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, the Upper Mississippi River, their tributaries, their shorelines, their habitats and to identify problems and solutions and serve as a contact point for the Great Lakes and Mississippi communities in Wisconsin.

Air Management – Protects human health and the environment while accommodating economic growth by developing air quality implementation plans and collaborating with local, state, regional and international partners to meet state and federal air quality standards.

Remediation and Redevelopment – Oversees the investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination and the redevelopment of contaminated properties. The program provides a comprehensive, streamlined process that consolidates state and federal cleanups into one program (including hazardous waste cleanup, underground storage tank investigation and cleanup, spill response, state-funded cleanups, and brownfields).

Waste and Materials Management – Protects public health and the environment by ensuring proper management of solid and hazardous wastes, encouraging recycling of materials, and fostering efficient use of resources through waste minimization.

The Office of Emerging Contaminants – Supports Wisconsin's work to address contaminants of emerging concern through coordination, collaboration and information sharing among internal and external partners to protect people and the environment.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Processing time to issue an individual air construction permit (from completed application to permit decision).	58 days	56 days	58 days	70 days
Acres of abandoned/contaminated property cleaned and made available for redevelopment.	800	815	800	1,025
Maintain Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (majors) water permit backlog at under 10 percent.	<10%	17.9%	<10%	16.0% backlog ¹
Percentage of annually permitted private drinking wells inspected during construction or installation.	≥ 10%	9.5%	≥ 10%	11%
Percentage of community public drinking water systems inspected at least once in the past three calendar years.	100%	99.0%	100%	100%
Percentage of noncommunity public drinking water systems inspected at least once in the past five calendar years.	100%	100%	100%	100%

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Processing time to issue an individual air construction permit (from completed application to permit decision).	58 days	58 days	58 days
Acres of abandoned/contaminated property cleaned and made available for redevelopment.	800	800	800
Maintain Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (majors) water permit backlog at under 10 percent.	<10%	<10%	<10%
Percentage of annually permitted private drinking wells inspected during construction or installation.	≥ 10%	≥ 10%	≥ 10%
Percentage of community public drinking water systems inspected at least once in the past three calendar years.	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of noncommunity public drinking water systems inspected at least once in the past five calendar years.	100%	100%	100%

¹ Incorporates EPA's new definition of "backlog" to be permits that have been expired for greater than 180 days.

Environmental Management (EM) Division Accomplishments

The EM Division publishes an online-only quarterly digest of highlighted news and accomplishments. The EM Insight can be viewed online at the website below and can be subscribed to for ongoing updates.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/divisions/EM/Insight.html>

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Implementation

Staff from Environmental Management are working closely with staff from the Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (CFA) to continue **administration of federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)** and coordinate across divisions. During this two-year period, over \$389 million in BIL funding supplemented the existing Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water loan programs and **provided new funding to communities to address PFAS and other contaminants in their drinking water**. The top priorities for using this funding include ensuring all impacted communities or communities that may not otherwise have access to resources are able to invest in needed infrastructure projects, accelerating progress on lead service line replacements, addressing PFAS and infrastructure improvements.

Drinking Water & Groundwater

Results of Statewide PFAS Sampling in Private Wells Published

In Nov. 2023, the scientific journal *Environmental Science & Technology* [published results](#) from the [DNR's study](#) into the occurrence of PFAS in Wisconsin's shallow groundwater. Over 95% of Wisconsin's communities and about 70% of Wisconsin residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply. For this study, the DNR's Drinking Water and Groundwater Program **partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH)** to collect 450 water samples from shallow private wells across Wisconsin. The samples were tested for 44 PFAS compounds as well as other organic and inorganic compounds. PFAS have been detected in groundwater in some areas of the state, but overall prevalence in groundwater prior to this study was unknown.

DNR Releases Statewide Drought Resources Webpage

In Aug. 2023, the DNR launched a [Drought webpage](#) as a new public source for information related to drought conditions experienced by the state. The new webpage **gives viewers access to current drought conditions across Wisconsin**, helpful resources from various DNR programs and other state and national resources regarding drought conditions. Visitors to the webpage can also find tips for conserving water and information about accessing water during a drought based on their specific water use needs.

New Webpage Highlights Drinking Water Success Stories

In spring 2025, the Drinking Water and Groundwater program published a webpage that highlights [success stories](#) that happen because of **collaboration between the DNR and its many partners**. Success stories are helpful reminders of what is possible when groups work together and look at creative solutions to often complex problems. The first success story described a small community in northern Wisconsin that confronted a nitrate issue. Through partnerships, collaboration, time and commitment, the community pursued a creative option, alternative land use, to protect their drinking water.

Water Quality

Celebrating Two Years of the Wonderful Waters of Wisconsin

In Aug. 2024, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released the [Year 2 - Wonderful Waters of Wisconsin Progress Report](#) that details the steps made toward this collective goal, summarizes resources that were developed to support water resources protection, and puts a spotlight on partner success stories. In 2022, the DNR launched the first statewide water resources protection initiative, the Wonderful Waters of Wisconsin. This groundbreaking effort seeks to strike a balance between **protecting high-quality water resources and restoring those impacted by pollution**. The Healthy Watersheds, High-

Quality Waters (HWHQW) Action Plan details a series of actions and subsequent strategies for success that the DNR and a wide range of partners can use to achieve the goal of keeping Wisconsin's priority healthy watersheds and high-quality waters at or better than their current conditions through 2030.

DNR Announces New Online Tool for Analyzing Water Quality on Lakes and Streams

In Aug. 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced the release of the [Wisconsin Water Explorer \(WEX\)](#), a **web-based tool that can help Wisconsin residents address concerns about the quality of water** in their local lakes or rivers. Answering water quality questions requires sophisticated computer software and extensive datasets. The WEX tool makes scientific data analysis accessible to the public by automating the process of finding and analyzing data. The tool provides insights into current conditions and trends through graphs, maps and automated reports.

DNR Awards \$6 Million in Grant Funds to Protect Surface Water

In Feb. 2025, the DNR Surface Water Grant Program [announced](#) approximately \$6 million in grant funding to lake organizations, nonprofit organizations and municipal and county governments throughout Wisconsin. Funding will help to **restore and protect our state's surface water resources** in 2025 and beyond. This year, the program received 418 applications from eligible applicants requesting nearly \$8 million in funding. The selected projects are incredibly diverse, including education and outreach activities, management planning, habitat restoration, runoff management, water quality improvement projects and aquatic invasive species prevention and management.

Office of Great Waters

Largest Ever Cleanup Under Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Announced for Milwaukee Area of Concern (AOC)

In Oct. 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), public officials, state and local partners announced funding for the largest cleanup project to ever be implemented under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Great Lakes Legacy Act. Under a new project agreement between EPA and five non-federal sponsors, an estimated investment of \$450 million will go toward the **cleanup of nearly two million cubic yards of contaminated sediments** from the Milwaukee Estuary AOC. The new project agreement reflects a partnership between EPA, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, We Energies, the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Parks and the DNR.

DNR Celebrated New Fish Passage Around Kletzsch Dam on the Milwaukee River

In June 2024, the DNR celebrated completion of the new fish passage around Kletzsch Dam on the Milwaukee River. The project addressed needed dam repairs and was also key to addressing loss of fish and wildlife habitat in the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern. The new passage now allows fish, such as lake sturgeon, northern pike, smallmouth bass and other native species, in the Milwaukee Estuary to move from Lake Michigan to upstream areas encompassing 25 miles of river north of the dam, 29 miles of tributary streams that feed into the river and 2,400 acres of wetlands – **reconnecting river habitats and allowing fish to migrate throughout the region**.

Collaboration to Update the St. Louis River Estuary Manoomin Restoration and Stewardship Plan

The [St. Louis River Estuary Manoomin Restoration and Stewardship Plan](#) was updated in March 2024 as part of the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) program. **Restoring healthy, harvestable stands of Manoomin (Ojibwe name for wild rice) to the St. Louis River Estuary** will help address loss of fish and wildlife habitat in the AOC and return a vital cultural resource to the Anishinaabe people. The 2024 Manoomin Plan builds upon the many partnerships that were established in earlier restoration efforts and incorporates additional culturally significant indicators from Indigenous perspectives to gauge restoration progress. The update addresses emerging challenges to Manoomin restoration in the St. Louis River Estuary, namely enhancing resiliency in the face of growing threats from climate change. It also establishes a revised set of indicators of restoration progress, guides restoration and stewardship actions, defines a set of data-driven thresholds to inform management decisions and identifies important information needs

associated with Manoomin restoration in the St. Louis River Estuary. Funding support for this plan was provided by U.S. EPA through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Air Management

A Summer of Air Quality Events

In the spring and summer of 2023, Wisconsin and many other areas of the United States were impacted by smoke from unprecedented wildfires in Canada. More than 33 million acres of Canadian forests burned – seven times the 10-year average and the worst in recorded Canadian and North American history. The Wisconsin DNR responded to this event by **issuing multiple air quality advisories, posting news releases and social media posts, giving media interviews and offering tips** on how the public could stay safe and what they could do to protect themselves. Additionally, the Air Management program developed a [new webpage](#) with information specific to wildfire smoke.

Air Quality Trends Report and StoryMap

In Oct. 2023, the DNR released the annual Air Quality Trends Report. The report includes state monitoring data through 2022. While concentrations of the pollutants measured (i.e., ozone, fine particulates, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and lead) have decreased over the last two decades, in recent years the report shows two of the most harmful pollutants – ozone and fine particulates – have decreased only modestly. To better illustrate the latest air quality trends, the DNR updated [the interactive StoryMap](#) which shows Wisconsin's air quality trends for each pollutant over the last 20 years. This tool, first launched with the 2022 trends report, provides a more **user-friendly visual way to convey complex air quality data**.

Updated Air Reporting System Available for 2025 Reporting Season

Late in 2024, the DNR [updated](#) the Air Reporting System (ARS), a web-based program used by facilities to submit Emissions Inventory (EI), EI Certification or an Under-Thresholds-Notification (UTN). The updates aimed to improve the user experience and provide an opportunity for the DNR to offer more **user-friendly tools to their customers**. The DNR also hosted a webinar to provide reminders on existing resources, orient attendees to new resources, bring awareness to noteworthy events and highlight ARS updates. In total, 420 people attended the webinar.

Waste & Materials Management

E-Cycle Wisconsin 2024 Report Shows Unprecedented Electronics Recycling Access Across Wisconsin

In May 2024, the DNR released its E-Cycle Wisconsin report, providing the latest assessment of the state's electronics recycling law. During the program year covering July 2022 to Dec. 2023, **E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors received 28.8 million pounds of eligible electronics from Wisconsin households and schools**, bringing the total collected since 2010 to 400 million pounds. All 72 Wisconsin counties had at least one electronics collection site or event during this period, including at least 60 free collection events in 39 counties. This record number of collection opportunities was due, in part, to increased funding from electronics manufacturers and the DNR's E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Site Grant program.

DNR Celebrates Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award Winners on America Recycles Day

In Nov. 2024, the DNR [recognized](#) 13 communities and organizations for going beyond the basics required by Wisconsin's recycling law. The annual Recycling Excellence Awards celebrate outstanding recycling and waste minimization efforts. In addition to landfill-banned items, which include curbside recyclables and electronics, the winners **diverted many tons of food waste, furniture, plastic film and household hazardous waste** for reuse or recycling.

DNR Encourages Residents to Reduce Food Waste

In June 2025, the DNR has launched a new set of webpages for [Sustainable Management of Organics](#) that provides information to **help residents, businesses and institutions prevent and reduce food waste and find alternatives to landfill disposal** of food waste and other organic material. The DNR's 2020-2021 Statewide Waste Characterization Study found that organics such as wasted food, food scraps and yard waste make up about 30% of the waste stream going to landfills in Wisconsin. Diverting organics from disposal saves landfill space and reduces methane emissions from landfills. Recycling organics can transform the materials into resources like compost, a nutrient-rich soil amendment, or renewable energy through anaerobic digestion. Preventing food waste can also save households and businesses significant amounts of money each year.

Remediation & Redevelopment

New Vapor Intrusion-Focused Subgroup for DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment External Advisory Group

In Aug. 2023, the DNR's [Remediation and Redevelopment program External Advisory Group](#) (RR EAG) added a new subgroup focused on vapor intrusion, after a proposal during the July 2023 EAG meeting. The vapor intrusion subgroup met for the first time on Sept. 7, 2023, to discuss initial ideas for a work plan.

Municipalities Have a New Tool in Fighting Vapor Intrusion

In Oct. 2023, the [Vapor Intrusion for Local Governments webpage](#) was launched to provide municipal stakeholders with **content on vapor intrusion prevention and planning resources**, health information, ways of locating contaminated sites, and considerations for development or redevelopment. Designed with the unique needs of local municipalities in mind, the site gives government decision-makers readily available information about this health risk, and information on how to incorporate it into their daily work on items such as permitting, redevelopment, road work and planning. Additionally, [a new landing page](#) was created to organize vapor intrusion resources into three main categories and provide a streamlined path to the vapor intrusion information each group needs. These groups are: [local governments](#), [environmental professionals](#) and [property owners, occupants and the public](#).

Office of Emerging Contaminants

New Videos Available to Learn About PFAS

In March 2024, the Office of Emerging Contaminants developed three new videos to provide a very **quick introduction to PFAS and their impacts**. By watching these videos, viewers can learn what PFAS are, how they impact fish and wildlife and what Wisconsin is doing to address them. These videos are available on the DNR's [YouTube channel](#).

PFAS Updates for Tribal Nations

In July 2024, staff from the divisions of Environmental Management and Fish, Wildlife and Parks recorded a **webinar about PFAS in Wisconsin for members of Wisconsin's Tribal Nations**. The DNR's staff shared information including where PFAS are found and how they move through the environment, current regulations for PFAS in drinking water and surface water, the DNR's environmental sampling efforts and how to find sampling results and information about PFAS sampling in fish and wildlife.

PFAS Contamination in Private Wells Webpage Launched

In Sept. 2024, the Office of Emerging Contaminants collaborated with the Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater on a new webpage to **help private well owners with information specific to PFAS in private wells**. The [PFAS Contamination in Private Wells](#) page describes the voluntary actions that private well owners can take to understand if their well water contains PFAS and resources that may be available if the well is found to contain PFAS.

Internal Services Division

The Division of Internal Services (Division) provides support and services to WDNR staff throughout the state to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The Division's programs include:

Facilities & Lands – Provides professional technical services related to planning, development, and maintenance of WDNR facilities, with responsibility for the acquisition, disposal and maintenance of the Department's vehicles and heavy equipment.

Finance – Administers and manages the Department's fiscal and procurement functions.

Human Resources (HR) – Recruits, develops, and maintains a diverse, qualified and productive workforce, and coordinates payroll and benefits functions.

Technology Services – Provides information management consulting, systems development and computer processing to best meet the Department's business needs.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Percent of simple open records requests fulfilled within 10 business days.	95%	94.1%	95%	95%
Number of lost workdays per 100 employees resulting from worker's compensation claims.	3 days	16.1 days	3 days	5.8 days
Percent of department-managed property under an approved master plan.	70%	71%	85%	71%

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Percent of simple open records requests fulfilled within 10 business days.	95%	95%	95%
Number of lost workdays per 100 employees resulting from worker's compensation claims.	3 days	3 days	3 days
Percent of department-managed property under an approved master plan.	85%	85%	95%

Internal Services Division Accomplishments

Facilities & Lands

Outdoor Recreation

Over the 2023-2025 biennium, the department completed or nearly completed the construction on **projects for improving outdoor recreation, public access, and property experiences**, including:

- **boat launches** at Flambeau River State Forest, Chippewa Flowage, Northern Highlands American Legion State Forest, Governor Earl Peshtigo River State Forest, Governor Dodge State Park, Devils Lake State Park, and Lake Lucerne Public Access
- **public road and parking improvements** at Amnicon Falls State Park, Big Bay State Park, Brule River State Forest, Devils Lake State Park, Harrington Beach State Park, Point Beach State Forest, and Governor Dodge State Park
- **toilet shower buildings** at Devils Lake State Park, Hartman Creek State Park, and Peninsula State Park
- **observation tower** at Potawatomi State Park

Public Health and Safety

Over the 2023-2025 biennium, the department completed or nearly completed the construction on **projects for public health and safety**, including:

- replacement of **fire response ranger stations** at Grantsburg, Mercer, Minong and Washburn; and
- replacement of **over 150 water fountains** at DNR properties statewide,

Communication and Outreach

- Shared the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Alternatives for the **Central Lake Michigan Coastal Regional Master Plan**. The department received over 500 public comments through online survey, email, written letter and two public meetings about the future of this region and input on the vision.
- **Initiated two Regional Master Plans**. Southern Lake Michigan Coastal and Central Lake Michigan Coastal Regional Master Plans launched in June and July, respectively. Together these projects received over 900 public comments through two in person meetings, online surveys, emails, letters and one petition regarding recreation and natural resource issues, needs and topics the public would like to see addressed in these plans.
- Completed **seven Master Plan Variances (plan changes)**. Through this process, approximately 500 public comments were received from the public regarding these proposed changes. Each variance includes a press release and email blast that can reach over 10,000 people

Fleet Updates

- DNR Fleet, in partnership with all DNR programs, continues to make great strides towards lowering vehicle emissions. The online DNR **carbon emissions dashboard** provides users/programs with past and current vehicle emission data.

- Fleet has **purchased lower emission vehicles** as manufacturers have made them available, including:
 - 16 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)
 - 12 Electric Vehicles (EV)
 - 67 Hybrid Vehicles
- The DNR provided **infrastructure support for electric vehicles** by installing charging stations at nine DNR locations.
- Providing real-time emission data to users and the flexibility to use low or zero emission vehicles has resulted in a **reduction of 18% of CO2 emissions** in the DNR fleet since 2018

Land Acquisition

Notable real estate acquisitions include:

- 40 access abandonment applications received and addressed.
- Acceptance of 15 donations of land or bargain sales, with an estimated value in excess of \$2.3 million.
- 1-acre land acquisition for the **Deansville Wildlife Area** that provides critical public access connecting the southern portion of the Wildlife Area to Meadow Lane. The Wildlife Area is bisected by the Maunsha River, over 40 feet wide, deep, and impassible by foot. The acquisition was funded with Stewardship bonding.
- 99-acre land **acquisition in the White River Fishery Area-Bayfield**, covering 1.25 miles of river frontage. Funded with land sales proceeds, land sales proceeds from Act 20 and Stewardship.
- 193-acre land **acquisition in the Brule River State Forest**, covering ½ mile of undeveloped Lake Superior shoreline. The acquisition was fully funded by an US EPA Great Lakes Habitat and Species Program grant and bargain sale from the landowner.
- 28-acre land acquisition for the **Ice Age Trail (IAT) in Waupaca County**, allowing for a 1/3 mile reroute to provide a connection between the IAT as currently developed through the Skunk and Foster Lakes State Natural Area and the Tomorrow River State Trail to CTH V. Also includes 1,800 feet of two bank frontage on Sannes Creek, a Class 1 trout stream.

Rural Prosperity

- Conveyed over 199 DNR property easements to utilities, which are essential **for expanding broadband to rural communities**.

External Services Division

The Division of External Services serves as a primary entry point to DNR for the public, businesses, and local government; facilitates cross-divisional integration and project management; and invests in sustainable infrastructure projects.

The Division's programs include:

Office of Communication – Oversees agency communication efforts and consults with management and programs to direct the department's communications, public affairs management, marketing and outreach initiatives. It also serves as a focal point for department media requests and contacts statewide.

Community Financial Assistance – Administers grant and loan programs and works closely with local governments and interested organizations to develop and support projects that protect public health; natural resources; the environment; and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Customer and Outreach Services (COS) – Serves as a first point of contact for many public inquiries regarding the interpretation of regulations pertaining to natural resources use and management; sale of outdoor recreational licenses and permits; registration of boats and watercraft, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles and off-highway motorcycles; and the titling of boats. It manages license and registration sales and general information service delivery at DNR Service Centers, online sales and statewide DNR call center operations. It is responsible for the daily management of the Go Wild System, that is used to issue license and off highway recreational vehicle privileges for natural resources users.

Environmental Analysis and Sustainability (EAS) –EAS leads interdisciplinary analysis and review of and facilitates interagency coordination on transportation, energy, utility and mining projects; coordinates department compliance with the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act, administers social science methods and surveys of customer attitudes to inform policy development and management decision making; coordinates delivery of laboratory services to department programs; certifies environmental laboratories, well drillers, pump installers, operators of private and public wastewater and drinking water systems, septage services and incinerators; provides regulatory compliance assistance and resources to small businesses and recognizes businesses and communities for implementing systems for achieving superior environmental performance.

Office of Agriculture and Water Quality (OAWQ) --- Responsible for generating clear, achievable goals in collaboration with communities representing agricultural and environmental interests and serves as the internal point of contact for the science and policy approaches to addressing agricultural impacts on water quality.

Watershed Management – Manages stormwater runoff from agricultural, construction, and industrial sites and municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) to protect water quality and public health and safety.

Waterways – Manages activities and land uses that affect wetlands, Public Trust and public health and safety. Its primary objective is to provide regulatory oversight for dam safety and land use planning and activities in and near waterways and wetlands including wetland fill, water withdrawal, waterway structure placement, grading, floodplain zoning and shoreland zoning.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
Number of small business contacts made through Small Business Environmental Assistance Program.	95,500	121,282	95,500	122,760
Processing time to issue waterway individual permit decisions (measured from the date of receipt of a completed permit application to issuance of the permit decision).	70 days	101 days	70 days	79 days
Processing time to issue wetland individual permit decisions (measured from the date of receipt of a completed permit application to issuance of the permit decision).	30 days	121 days	30 days	115 days
Processing time to issue storm water construction site permit decisions.	30 days	23.7 days	30 days	19.4 days
Percent of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses purchased online.	50%	68%	50%	68%

2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
Number of small business contacts made through Small Business Environmental Assistance Program.	95,500	95,500	95,500
Processing time to issue waterway individual permit decisions (measured from the date of receipt of a completed permit application to issuance of the permit decision).	70 days	70 days	70 days
Processing time to issue wetland individual permit decisions (measured from the date of receipt of a completed permit application to issuance of the permit decision).	30 days	30 days	30 days
Processing time to issue storm water construction site permit decisions.	30 days	30 days	30 days
Percent of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses purchased online.	60%	60%	60%

External Services Division Accomplishments

Community Financial Assistance

- Awarded a total of **6,074 grants** to local governments, tribes, lake districts, lake and river associations, fire departments, dry cleaners, nonprofit conservation organizations, and individuals through forty-one distinct grant programs totaling over \$198 million.
- Awarded 139 **Clean Water Fund loans** totaling over \$698 million; 104 **Safe Drinking Water loans** totaling over \$233 million; 11 **Emerging Contaminants (PFAS) Safe Drinking Water Loans** totaling over \$76 million; and 35 **Private Lead Service Line Replacement** Funding Program awards totaling over \$70 million. In total, awards were made to 167 different Wisconsin communities.
- The department received additional federal infrastructure funding, including an additional \$5 million contribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, for the **Well Compensation and Well Abandonment grant programs** as well as the second and third years of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds to supplement the Clean Water Fund and Safe Drinking Water loan programs. The additional funding is included in the grant and loan awards listed above.

Customer & Outreach Services

- Despite a very competitive job market, the COS program was able to **maintain staffing and service at 13 service counters** across the state. The program answered over 280,000 customer phone calls and emails and averaged over 15,000 tip line violation contacts per year.
- Customer demand for **online sales options** continued to increase. Over 6.6 million hunt, fish, trap licenses and harvest authorizations were issued by all sales channels in FY 23, increasing to 6.8 million in FY 24, with over \$78 million of gross revenues for hunt/fish/trap products.
- Implemented a **dealer portal**, which allows dealers to register recreational vehicles online through Go Wild.

Environmental Analysis & Sustainability (EAS)

- **Enbridge Line 5 EIS and Permitting Decisions:** In late 2024, the department published the final environmental impact statement and issued permits for the proposed relocation of a 42-mile segment of Enbridge, Inc's Line 5 pipeline around the outer borders of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa reservation. These actions were the culmination of **over 5 years of work** by dozens of department staff, contractors, consultants and partners.
- **Updated Wind Power Generation Facility Siting Guidance:** There has been increased interest in the development of wind power generation facilities across Wisconsin as utilities look for renewable energy solutions to meet increasing power demands. Office of Energy and Natural Heritage and Conservation Staff collaborated to update [Wisconsin DNR Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) For Land-based Wind Energy Projects & Wildlife](#) guidance to **ensure projects are proposed in areas which are least likely to result in conflicts** with known concentration areas for birds and bats.
- **Wisconsin Cave Bat Broad Incidental Take Permit:** Office of Energy and NHC staff developed a [Wisconsin Cave Bat Broad Incidental Take Permit](#) which applies to all wind generating facilities to ensure facilities are operated in a manner that **reduces the chances for adverse impacts on state-protected bat species**.

- **WisDOT Design-Build Pilot Projects:** DNR's Transportation Construction Liaison Program partnered with WisDOT staff and consultants to successfully implement the alternative construction methods pilot program created by 2019 Wisconsin Act 9. The environmental review and project approval liaison processes established in the longstanding DNR-DOT Cooperative Agreement are predicated on a traditional design-bid-build construction model that does not contemplate alternative methods. DNR and DOT convened an interagency team to develop an MOU that memorialized a liaison process for the review and approval of projects administered using design-build methodology, which enables projects to commence construction at the early stages of project design and adjust to emergent engineering challenges in real time as construction progresses, thereby **reducing the timeline from initial design to project completion**. Successful projects include the new state highway 130 Wisconsin River bridge at Lone Rock, reconstruction of state highway 125/College Avenue in Outagamie County and reconstruction of US Highway 45 in Shawano and Waupaca Counties.
- **Environmental Science Day:** In February 2025, DNR Lab Services partnered with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene on the "Environmental Science Day" event to showcase research and laboratory work and to **highlight how laboratory data is being used by state agencies to improve public health and environmental quality**. This day featured 19 different presentations from various DNR programs, as well as the Department of Health Services (DHS), and WSLH, emphasizing interagency communication and featuring subjects such as enforcement cases, drinking water contaminants, surface water indicators, and more. It was a very well attended event, with over 270 attendees both in person and virtual, from over 8 different entities, with almost half of the participants being affiliated with DNR.
- **Successful EPA Audit:** The EPA Region 5 Drinking Water Laboratory Certification Program conducted an assessment of the DNR Laboratory Certification Program in June 2025. The purpose for the review was to assess the adequacy of the program for certifying drinking water laboratories in accordance with the guidelines established in the Manual for the Certification of Laboratories Analyzing Drinking Water. No findings were identified during the review. The **DNR continues to maintain an acceptable laboratory certification program for drinking water compliance samples**.
- **Operator Certification Exams:** In response to demand from Wisconsin's certified operators, the Operator Certification Program in 2024 transitioned from offering third-party online exams to in-person exams proctored by DNR staff. This transition led to stronger partnerships and increased collaboration among DNR programs who assist with exam proctoring. The Program also **formed new partnerships with industry organizations** (Wisconsin Rural Water Association, Wisconsin Water Well Association, and Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association) as well as Wisconsin technical colleges to host exams statewide. Between January 2023-June 2026, a total of 10,310 in-person exams will be offered.
- **Stakeholder Surveys and Public Input:** The social science team conducted multiple studies and managed public input opportunities to inform department policy. Particularly noteworthy achievements include:
 - A comprehensive statewide, household survey of public attitudes and opinions regarding beavers and beaver management in Wisconsin. Interviews to assess trapper and trout angler experiences with and opinions regarding beavers. These efforts **support development of an updated beaver management plan**.
 - **Surveys of Wisconsin ruffed grouse, waterfowl, and wild turkey hunters** to understand hunting and harvest behaviors and opinions and preferences regarding hunting seasons and regulations in Wisconsin.
 - **Interviews with anglers at Urban Fishing Ponds** in southeast Wisconsin to characterize anglers, document fishing activities, assess angler satisfaction and opinions, and help evaluate fish stocking.
 - Statewide, conducted a **household survey to identify outdoor recreation habits** and anticipate future demand. Surveyed municipal and county parks directors to assess facilities, funding levels, needs and priorities. Focus groups with non-traditional/under-represented stakeholders were held.

These efforts supported development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

- An online public input process for the County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs) that resulted in individual county-level reports and statewide and zone summaries to inform CDAC recommendations for the 2025 deer hunting season.
- An **online survey of 21,000 deer hunters** and evaluation of the effectiveness of communications encouraging hunters to have their deer tested for chronic wasting disease (CWD).
- An **economic impact analysis of ruffed grouse hunting** in Wisconsin.
- Interviews of wildlife biologists and farmers regarding their experiences implementing recently revised farming agreement policies for department-managed lands.
- A comprehensive evaluation of key hunter recruitment, retention & reactivation (R3) programs including **interviews with shooting range visitors** and DNR's first ever survey of hunters regarding their use of shooting ranges.

Office of Agriculture and Water Quality

- The Office continues to collaborate with the Inter-Agency Water Quality Workgroup on Wisconsin's **Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy**. Partner organizations include DATCP, NRCS, USGS, UW-Madison, etc.
- The Office received a \$2.5 million grant from EPA to address the Hypoxic Zone ("dead zone") in the Gulf.

Office of Communication

- Published **872 news releases** sharing news from the DNR with media across Wisconsin.
- Published **3,754 social media posts** across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor and X.
- **Responded to 10,565 direct messages** from the public across all social media platforms.
- Published and distributed 10 issues of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine to 81,000+ subscribers.
- Completed **205 graphic design projects and 130 video projects**.
- **Won two awards** from the Association of Conservation Information in 2025 – First Place: How-to/Instructional Video and Second Place: Magazine.

Watershed Management

- Implemented streamlining efforts that reduced the CAFO wastewater permit backlog from 30% in 2021 to 13% as of September 2025.
- Executed 6 water quality trades for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) permittees during the 2023-24 biennium, the first water quality trades for MS4s. These trades represent a proof of concept that could be repeated by other **MS4s seeking to comply with water quality goals** established in Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) wasteload allocations.

Waterways

- Developed and launched a new **web-based general question and complaint intake** form for all stakeholders to improve customer responsiveness.
- Dam Safety and Floodplain program assisted with 1,380 **floodplain-related questions** and conducted and reviewed nearly 350 **dam inspections**.

Policy On Flexible Work Schedules
(in accordance with s. 230.215(4), Wis. Stats.)

The Department of Natural Resources recognizes the benefit for employees and Department operations to have a variety of work schedules and alternative work patterns. Further, the Wisconsin legislature finds and declares under Section 230.215, Wis. Stats., *That employment practices which provide flexibility in scheduling hours of work often result in increased worker productivity, reduced absenteeism, improved employee morale and a more economical and efficient use of energy, highways and other transit systems.*

Alternative Work Schedules include flexible schedule variations and telework options. Many factors are considered prior to the approval of an alternative work schedule, or to offer these benefits as part of a recruitment strategy. At the same time, it is important to review and consider these options as there are business benefits for the Department and employees.

Alternative Work Schedules allow the Department to accommodate employees with varying scheduling needs and provides an incentive to employees, yet it allows the Department to maximize efficiency of agency operations, maintain and improve its level of services to the public, and facilitate energy conservation and employee productivity.