

Resolution to Support Current Forestry Account Property Tax Financing

Whereas, the Wisconsin Forestry Account funds all state forestry programs to restore and maintain Wisconsin's healthy forests; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Forestry Account besides restoring the Northern Wisconsin forests from the cutover of the late 19th and 20th centuries, the fund supports the State Forests, the County Forests, the management of the private Managed Forest Land program, State Tree Nurseries, Forest Pest prevention and treatment program and the Forest Fire fighting and prevention programs; and

Whereas the forests that have been restored and maintained by the Wisconsin Forestry Account provide tens of thousands of jobs in the state through the logging, lumber mill, paper and printing industries, which make up a major portion of Wisconsin's economy; and

Whereas, specifically, the Wisconsin Forestry Account, supports 64,000 jobs in Wisconsin with total wages of \$3.4 billion for Wisconsin's economy with each of those jobs supporting 1.7 million jobs in the state and a total forestry industry output of \$24.7 billion in forest products a year; and

Whereas, the forests that have been restored and maintained by the Wisconsin Forestry Account provide a major role in the state's \$12 tourism economy and the habitat provided by the forests creates excellent fish and wildlife populations that are critically important for hunting, angling and trapping in the state; and

Whereas the Wisconsin Forestry Account has been funded since 1924 through a Wisconsin Constitutional Amendment by a one-twentieth of a cent mill rate mill rate on the state property tax and thereby is a stable funding source for the reforestation and maintenance of all the mentioned forestry programs mentioned above; and

Whereas the Governor's budget has called for the removal of the funding of the Forestry Account from the property tax and instead funding all the forestry programs through the state income and sales tax (GPR); and

Whereas, it is critically important that there be a very stable funding source for the Forestry Account because of the nature of forest management being a very long term management enterprise and the Forest Mill Tax has provided such a stable funding source since 1924; and

Whereas, General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding is used for funding many other educational, health, welfare and other critical state programs and GPR funding can change significantly due to major changes in the state and national economies and such fluctuations would likely lead to instability in the Forestry Account.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its 2017 Annual Meeting held April 21st and 22nd in Wisconsin Rapids, calls on the Wisconsin Legislature to restore funding for the Forestry Account and all state forestry program to the Constitutionally approved Forest Mill Tax thereby assuring stable funding for forestry in Wisconsin.

Submitted by the WWF Forest and Parks Committee, Jerry Knuth, Chair and by the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association