

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Independent Evaluation of the Economic and Community Impacts, as well as Environmental Benefits, of Wisconsin County Forest Ownership

Issued By: Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA)

RFP Issue Date: June 15, 2026

Proposal Due Date: July 31, 2026

Project Duration: 12 - 16 Months

1. Introduction

The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) invites qualified firms, research institutions, and independent consultants to submit proposals to conduct an independent, third-party evaluation of the economic, community and environmental impacts of county forest ownership under Wisconsin Statute §28.11.

Wisconsin county forests encompass approximately 2.41 million acres across 30 counties and represent one of the most significant forms of public land ownership in the State. These lands are managed for multiple uses, including timber production, recreation, wildlife habitat, conservation, and public access.

WCFA seeks a contractor to conduct a rigorous, neutral, and comprehensive statewide study to inform policymakers, county officials, land managers, and stakeholders.

2. Background

County forests play a central role in many northern and rural Wisconsin communities, influencing:

- Local employment and forest-based industries
- Property tax structures and county revenues
- Outdoor recreation economies
- Conservation and ecosystem services
- Public access to land

Despite their importance, there has not been a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of their cumulative environmental, economic, and social impacts.

3. Project Objectives

The selected contractor will:

1. Conduct an independent, third-party evaluation of county forest ownership under Wis. Stat. §28.11.
 2. Evaluate the economic impacts of county forests on local communities, including but not limited to:
 - Property tax implications
 - Timber revenue and forest product markets
 - Recreation-related economic activity (motorized and non-motorized)
 - Employment impacts
 3. Assess the environmental benefits of county forests, including but not limited to the impacts of healthy forests on essential resources (clean water, clean air, shelter, medicine), physical and mental well-being, and climate and hazard mitigation (flood/erosion control, climate change/regulation).
 4. Examine social and community impacts, including but not limited to public access, recreational use, and stakeholder perceptions.
 5. Compare the economic value of county forests versus private lands and other public lands.
 6. Produce findings suitable for technical, policy, and public audiences.
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4. Scope of Work

The contractor will be responsible for designing and implementing the research methodology. At minimum, the scope shall include:

A. Research Design

- Develop a transparent and defensible methodology.
- Include quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Establish comparison frameworks where appropriate (e.g., public vs. private forest ownership).

B. Data Collection and Analysis

- Economic impact modeling
- GIS-based land use and environmental analysis
- Stakeholder interviews and/or surveys
- Review of county-level financial and management data

C. Reporting Deliverables

- Comprehensive Technical Report
- Executive Summary (policy-focused)
- Data appendix and supporting datasets
- Presentation materials for stakeholder dissemination

D. Participation in Outreach

- Present findings in at least two WCFA-hosted forums (virtual or in-person).
 - Provide technical clarification during report review phase.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

WCFA Responsibilities

- Serve as project sponsor and administrator
- Facilitate connections with county officials and stakeholders
- Provide available background materials and data access assistance
- Lead outreach, education, and dissemination
- Translate findings into public-facing materials

Contractor Responsibilities

- Ensure methodological rigor and neutrality
- Maintain independence and objectivity
- Conduct all analysis and reporting
- Deliver reports on schedule
- Participate in review and dissemination activities

6. Deliverables

1. Project Work Plan and Timeline (within 30 days of contract execution)
2. Interim Progress Report(s)
3. Draft Final Report
4. Final Technical Report
5. Executive Summary (10–15 pages)
6. Supporting datasets (GIS files, economic models, survey summaries as applicable)
7. Presentation slide deck

7. Timeline

Phase	Timeline
RFP Issuance & Selection	Months 1–3
Data Collection & Analysis	TBD
Draft Reporting & Review	TBD
Final Report & Dissemination	TBD

Final timeline will be negotiated with the selected contractor.

8. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

A. Organizational Information

- Firm name and contact information
- Organizational background
- Relevant experience conducting similar studies

B. Technical Approach

- Proposed methodology
- Data sources
- Analytical tools and models
- Quality assurance processes

C. Project Team

- Key personnel and qualifications
- Roles and responsibilities

D. Timeline

- Detailed project schedule

E. Budget

Proposals should include:

- Provide a detailed budget breakdown
- Include hourly rates and estimated hours
- Identify any subcontractors
- Clearly outline assumptions

Cost-effectiveness will be considered alongside qualifications and methodology.

F. References

- At least three references from comparable projects
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9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Demonstrated expertise in economic, environmental, and/or public policy analysis
 - Quality and rigor of proposed methodology
 - Experience with GIS and economic impact modeling
 - Ability to ensure neutrality and independence
 - Qualifications of project team
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Clarity and completeness of proposal
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10. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to:

Rebekah Luedtke, Executive Director

Wisconsin County Forests Association

Email: rebekah@wisconsincountyforests.com

Phone: (715) 539-1097

Submission Deadline: July 31, 2026

Late submissions may not be considered.

11. Additional Information

WCFA reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Request clarifications or additional information
- Negotiate scope and budget with the selected contractor
- Cancel or modify this RFP at any time

