



DNR Forest Management

Update to 2014 Evaluation Report

March 2016

Problems Identified

- **Some Actions Did Not Support Interdisciplinary Forest Management.** Overall, we concluded that the DNR Forestry Division's approach to managing forest resources considers economic, recreational, and environmental benefits as well as sustainability. However, some actions emphasized economic uses of forest resources. DNR also accelerated changes to some forest management policies rather than following its interdisciplinary planning process. Finally, the division did not sufficiently monitor forest management plans or provide clear guidance to staff about balancing interests when school trust land is involved.
- **Insufficient Options to Address Logging Issues.** DNR Forestry staff reported that most loggers who harvest state timber performed well, but options to penalize those who do not were insufficient. DNR foresters also noted challenges to efficient forest management when loggers receive extensions and are not timely in carrying out their timber harvests.
- **Resource Challenges.** The division's forest management database was inadequate to support some activities and fully monitor progress toward forest management goals. In addition, direct appropriations to the division had dropped.

Changes Implemented

- **The Forestry Division's Continuous Improvement Team Assessed Recommendations.** The team prioritized all of OLA's recommendations based on impact, ease of implementation, and leadership input; assigned responsible staff; and continues to monitor progress.
- **DNR Has Taken Steps to Address Interdisciplinary Forest Management Issues.** The Forestry Continuous Improvement Team is devising an approach to implement policy changes. Additionally, staff from multiple DNR divisions revised portions of a document that guides inter-divisional work and drafted guidance for management of school trust land. Finally, the Forestry Division developed plan-monitoring tools, and staff from several DNR divisions met to review forest management plan goals and ideas for achieving them.
- **Requested and Received Additional Resources.** The Legislature appropriated additional funds for forest management and to begin planning for updated information technology.

Action Needed

- **Address Logging Issues.** The Forestry Division has drafted a policy to address chronically underperforming loggers and is researching incentives for loggers to harvest in a timely manner. To the extent that these issues continue to reduce forest management efficiency, interfere with management goals, or have other negative consequences, the Forestry Division should continue work in this area.