



SCOTT McCALLUM

Governor
State of Wisconsin

For Immediate Release

August 29, 2001

Contact: Debbie Monterrey-Millett (608) 266-9806

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES DECISIONS ON FORESTRY, DNR SPLIT

(Madison)--Gov. Scott McCallum announced today he will increase state funding for forestry activities by \$4.5 million and add 15 additional forestry positions to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 2001-03 budget. Gov. McCallum also announced his intention to veto a proposal to split the DNR and create a separate Department of Forestry.

Other provisions Gov. McCallum intends to sign:

- Designating the division administrator of the Division of Forestry within the DNR as the chief state forester and requiring that individual to be a professional forester
- Setting aside funds within the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship 2000 Program to match federal funds for protection of forested lands
- Increasing public education and awareness of forestry issues through a new K-12 education curriculum and public education program

Gov. McCallum stressed that Wisconsin's forests are an important and integral part of Wisconsin's environment, history, culture and economy. In addition to providing valuable timber, they also support wildlife, endangered resources, recreational opportunities, and lake and river ecosystems.

However, for a separate Department of Forestry to adequately manage the state's forest resources, staff would need to be reallocated to provide expertise in fish and wildlife, endangered species and recreational issues. Also, the Department of Natural Resources would need to reallocate staff to address forestry-related management issues on properties such as the Willow, Chippewa and Turtle-Flambeau Flowages.

"I've studied and studied this provision in the budget and I have made my decision based on what is in the best interest of this state," Gov. McCallum said. "I object to the duplication of efforts and reduced accountability to the public for management of Wisconsin's world-class natural resources. In many aspects, creating a separate department would perpetuate some of the same problems the proposal is trying to solve."

###