



## High-Profile Information Technology Project Status Report

Department: Natural Resources

Project Name: WI Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) Private Lands Management (Release 3)

Business Sponsor: Wendy McCown

Date of Report: 06/25/2015

Reporting for Quarter: FY15 Q4

Project Start Date: 5/1/2010

Planned Implementation Date: 1/1/2015

Estimated Project Cost: \$5,000,000

Amount Provided Through Master Lease: \$0

**Project Description** – Enter a brief description of the project, including the business case for it and its major deliverables.

WisFIRS (Wisconsin Forest Inventory & Reporting System) is a system that will enable foresters to store data collected in the field, plan for and track completed practices (e.g. timber sales), report accomplishments, and track Managed Forest Law (MFL) lands open to hunting and recreation to name a few. This application manages core business functions for public and private forest management in Wisconsin, serving hundreds of DNR staff as well as our partners.

This dashboard report splits out the WisFIRS Private Lands Management release, which is the initial release of the Division of Forestry’s private lands forest management application, also referred to as Release 3. It is used to enter, review, approve, and maintain data about privately-owned lands enrolled in a forest tax law program (either the current Managed Forest Law System (MFL) or the previous Forest Crop Law (FCL)).

Forest tax law programs offer private landowners incentives in the form of property tax reductions if they agree to sustainably manage their forest land and allow some public access to their land. A percentage of timber harvest profits on those lands are returned to the local municipalities to help offset the property tax reductions. The property tax reduction aspect means that the data within the system is also used by local municipalities and the Department of Revenue – and also that the program is under frequent scrutiny by the legislature.

Historically this information was managed by a PowerBuilder application (called “Managed Forest Law” system or “MFL”) and an MS-Access application (Plantrac). MFL is used to manage the legal aspects of the plans, e.g., exactly which land is enrolled, who the owners are, etc. MFL is also used to manage the financial portion of the tax law programs. Plantrac is used to manage the forestry aspects of the plan: stands, practices, and compliance.

WisFIRS Private Lands Release or R3 replaces all components of the existing Plantrac application and many of the components of the MFL PowerBuilder application including but not limited to Plan Writing, Plan Maintenance, and Maintenance of Legal Data.

**Project Funding** – Please describe all sources of funding for the project, which should add up to the estimated project cost cited above.

SEG: \$3,400,000 FED: \$890,000 TOTAL: \$ 4,290,000 Incl. travel, contractors, HW/SW, staff time w/ fringe.

**Project Status** – Determine the status for the Schedule and Budget categories below based on the guidelines on the right and described in more detail on page 2 of this document.

Insert an X in the column that best describes the status of the category. Add comments for that category as needed.

Additional comments are not required if the status is Green, but if a category has a status of Yellow or Red, describe the issues or problems and what actions the agency is taking to address them.

STATUS COLOR INDICATORS	
Green	On target as planned
Yellow	Encountering <b>issues</b> (e.g., Schedule or Budget over by 10% to 25%)
Red	Encountering <b>problems</b> (e.g., Schedule or Budget over by 25% or more)

## Project Status Categories

	Green	Yellow	Red
<p><b>Schedule Status</b></p> <p>The majority of WisFIRS Private Lands Management Release 3 is complete. The remaining work includes the components associated with the maintenance of legal data from the Managed Forest Law program. This work is currently ongoing and good progress is being made. However, the 2015-17 state budget currently contains directives that will need to be implemented as soon as possible after July 1, 2015. WisFIRS developer resources will need to be reallocated to meet those obligations. Full details regarding these changes have yet to be determined, making it difficult to predict the full impact on the development team and thus determine a final completion date. In addition, implementation of the STAR system will also likely require reallocation of some developer resources to address changes related to the new financial system in the first quarter of FY16.</p> <p><b>Cause:</b> Recent efforts to gain efficiencies and improve timely delivery of services to our customers have resulted in new, priority IT projects which require developer resources and impact the timeline for completion of WisFIRS Release3. Cutting notices, cutting reports and tracking of these tasks have been determined to be best developed inside the WisFIRS Private Lands application, but not within what we are referring to as WisFIRS Release 3. It is worthy to note however, that the activities referenced above are included in scope of future releases of WisFIRS Private Lands (e.g. Releases 6 and 7) so we may gain some time back in the future given these tasks will have been completed already.</p> <p>From the beginning, WisFIRS Private Lands Management Release 3 was recognized as an ambitious project with many very complex components. The complexity itself made accurately estimating an end date very challenging, in that the full nature of the impacts of the complexities often isn't known until working on that specific component. As such, we always viewed the end date as an optimistic target, and recognized it would likely have to shift. Other pending, large projects such as the STAR project will likely have an impact on the timeline for the WisFIRS Private Lands application although it is unclear to what extent at this time. Impacts from the state budget are also possible and cannot be confirmed until the budget is finalized.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Discussions continue to take place at our management meetings regarding the potential impacts that any new projects may have on the WisFIRS Release 3 development schedule. In addition, we have made some progress on backfilling technical resources that were previously lost from the project. We recently completed a successful recruitment for two developers who will start working with the WisFIRS team on July 1, 2015.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Budget Status</b></p> <p>We previously estimated going over budget when we assumed that Electronic Cutting Notices and Cutting Reports would be incorporated into WisFIRS Release 3. However, now that Electronic Cutting Notices and Cutting Reports will be treated as a separate project, we now anticipate that Release 3 will be delivered within budget.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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**Summarize Any Completed Major Tasks or Project Phases:**

Summary of completed major tasks:

Timeframe: April 2015 – June 2015

#### COMPLETED WORK (not yet in production)

Larger tasks:

- Print-to-mail application
- New developer hires

Medium tasks:

- Plan submittal process code review – mitigation procedures
- Addressed defects and usability issues requested by users
- Endangered Species (NHI) search enhancements and related special handling of existing approved plans
- Expiration letters
- Apply Order Page implementation
- CPW Certification Reporting
- Page to administer security by role/function

Smaller tasks:

- Expiration implementation for Cutting Notice Tracking
- Assorted WisFIRS Public Lands fixes and evaluation of high priority enhancement requests
- Various transaction processing components

#### ONGOING WORK:

- MFL Transfer Lean Team participation
- Transaction processing package for applying transfers, withdrawals, etc.
- Order document creation, printing, mailing, scanning and archiving
- Conversion of custom FR accounts receivable (AR) interface to standard DNR AR interface
- Data entry user interface (UI) for transfer, certification change and account type change transactions
- QA and edit checks for transaction processing
- Administration User Interface (UI) modifications
- Miscellaneous application defects and usability fixes

#### NON R3 WORK OF SIGNIFICANCE:

- Troubleshooting/maintenance of non-WisFIRS applications (ongoing)
- Statistics for cutting notice tracking (completed)

#### **Summarize Any Significant Project Changes Affecting Schedule, Budget or Scope:**

For each change, describe what the change involved, when it was approved, and the reasons behind the approved change.

Staffing Issues:

To alleviate recent staffing losses, we recently completed a successful recruitment for two new developers. They will be joining the WisFIRS Development Team on July 1st.

As reported previously, a number of factors generated additional demands for staff time, such as technology upgrades, staffing changes, maintenance demands of the portions of the application currently in production and new high priority items that have come up. The cumulative effect of these factors posed a potential threat to the overall project's schedule. We have addressed this by adjusting the schedule but will continue to monitor the efforts, therefore we are reporting "Yellow" schedule status and "Green" for the Budget status categories.

Key staff departures/changes continue to cause a loss of institutional knowledge both on the project as well as within the department. When feasible, we will try to meet with those who are leaving their positions to mitigate this risk, but at times it is with little warning.

One of the significant areas of support that we are still working to address/supplement is GIS Server administration. Although we have a highly skilled contractor currently serving in this capacity, he cannot serve all of the needs we have

in this area. We need another administrator to provide assistance to applications as they move through the different server environments. Providing guidance to applications as they are being developed, ensuring existing projects get migrated through software and hardware upgrades successfully and serving as back-up server support (something we don't have now) are services that WisFIRS and many other department applications rely on in order to meet our business obligations. This would free our current administrator up to focus specifically on the architecture and day-to-day operation and maintenance of the server environment so that it operates at peak levels of efficiency and reliability. Previous attempts to hire a permanent GIS server Administrator have failed twice. A GIS section chief was hired as of March 9th, but it is not clear yet whether they will renew the contractor for FY16 and/or try to fill the vacant permanent server administrator position.

**Additional Comments or Issues (optional):**

If you have any additional overall status comments about the project (e.g., project news, accomplishments, emerging challenges or risks that could affect the project), please provide them here.

The deadline of 1/1/2015 was not met as a result of changing priorities and unknown impacts pending from the STAR project and the state budget. An assessment continues as other high priority items that are a part of future WisFIRS releases are being moved up and impacts from the final state budget are identified. These issues will impact the Release 3 time line, but the details are not known at this time.

**Project Status Category Guidelines**

**Schedule Status**

**Green** – Indicates that the project or phase is on track for the targeted implementation date.

**Yellow** – Indicates that the project or phase may be falling behind and analysis needs to be done to determine if the project can recover and still achieve the targeted implementation date, or if adjustments must be made to that date.

**Red** – Indicates that the project or critical tasks have fallen behind schedule, and corrective action must be taken to still achieve the targeted implementation date or that date must be changed.

**Budget Status**

**Green** – Currently on target with project budget.

**Yellow** – Project is over budget by 10 to 25%.

**Red** – Project is over budget by 25% or more.