

THE LOG

February / March 2025

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Letter from the President

Hello LSLA Members,

I'm Kirby Kendrick, with Kendrick Forest Products, and I'm proud to serve as your new LSLA President. First, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Jim Maltese for his leadership over the past few years. Jim has done a fantastic job, and we appreciate all his hard work.

Growing up in Iowa, we unfortunately didn't have the luxury of professional sports teams, unlike many of you in Wisconsin and Michigan. I became a Cubs fan for baseball and a Vikings fan for football. I've been fortunate to see the Cubs have one successful season and win the World Series, but as for the Vikings... I truly thought this year was the year I'd have bragging rights, especially with most of you being Packers, Lions, or even worse, Bears fans! The collapse happened in the final week of the regular season leading into a humiliating wild card weekend and the Vikings found themselves in a familiar spot—out of the playoffs. But hey, one positive takeaway is that we can all share the disappointment together for another season.

I assure you, though, next year at this time, the Vikings will be wrapping up their Super Bowl victory, celebrating with a parade in Minneapolis, and heading off to Disney World! #SkolVikes

On a more serious note, I'm deeply honored to be your next LSLA President. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any board member if you have ideas, concerns, or suggestions. Together, we'll continue to strengthen and grow our association.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with all of you.

Kirby Kendrick
LSLA President
Kendrick Forest Products
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Back Row (left to right): John Yeshe (Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands), Bill Millard (Granite Valley Forest Products/ Rockbridge Sawmill), Jamie Peters (North Country Lumber), Jim Maltese (Stella-Jones Corp.), Dave Kuehl (A & M), Kirby Kendrick (Kendrick Forest Products), Loren DeJonge (Constructive Sheet Metal), Kyle Jeske (Richard Hardwoods), Steve Peters (Rockland Flooring)

Front Row (left to right): Kate Miller (Northern Hardwoods/JM Longyear), Tammy Sue Donaldson (Beaam Hardwoods), Nikki Loehr (LSLA Administrative Coordinator)

Photo courtesy of Chris Fehr, Miller Wood Trade Publications

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LSLA Education Report



Each year at the LSLA Education Board meeting in January, the Board reviews requests for funding that various organizations have submitted to LSLA Education. Since 2008, LSLA Education has granted over \$56,000 of funding to organizations such as Kemp Natural Resources Station, Trees for Tomorrow, Northcentral Technical College Foundation and others. All of the funds given have been used for forestry education for elementary, high school or college students.

In January of this year, the Board of LSLA Education again considered requests for funding and awarded the following:

To: **Northcentral Technical College Foundation:** \$3,000 will be used to support their spring recruiting event, NTC Wood Olympics. The funds will go to help develop skills needed to get them started on a career path in the forest products industry.

To: **Trees for Tomorrow:** \$3,000 will be used for students to attend educational field workshops in the forest industry.

The LSLA Education Board discussed plans for educational opportunities that will be offered this year such as the Hardwood Lumber Grading Short Course; Sawing, Edging and Trimming Class; Dust Collection Course and OSHA workshops.

Each year, on the LSLA membership renewal invoice, a voluntary contribution option is listed to give \$25 to LSLA Education. These voluntary contributions are used to help LSLA Education give funding to the organizations listed above. Other sources of income for funding is the raffle at the winter meeting, support from the Golf Outing, and workshops offered by LSLA Education.

Watch your email inbox and *The Log Newsletter* for details on upcoming classes.

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Thank you to all of our donors who donated items for the live auction and the bucket raffles.

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2025 Meeting In Review

The annual winter meeting was held January 15-17 and nearly 160 attendees convened in Green Bay at the Hotel Northland. Wednesday evening started off with the Welcome Reception that was held in “The Alley”. We were fortunate enough to have WI State Representative Jeff Mursau from the 36th Assembly District join us at the reception with brief overviews. After his presentation participants took part in the “Bar Olympics” games for a prize and there was an ample amount of networking among everyone.

Winners of the “Bar Olympics” games were as follows:

- *Pool Game Winner:* Dale Harris, Pukall Lumber Company
- *Dart Game Winner:* Cam Personette, Acme Pallet
- *Bowling Game Winner:* Ryan Peterson, Northern Hardwoods
- *Shuffleboard Game Winner:* Dave Messer, MacBeath Hardwood

Thursday morning started out with breakfast and moved into the meetings. A huge thank you to all the speakers that donated their time during the day to share important information with us.



After the meetings concluded, the evening consisted of the ever-popular social hour, with networking followed by dinner, presentations of various awards along with the live auction and bucket raffle drawings. Thank you to our auctioneer Rob Paradise from Devereaux Sawmill for his auctioneering skills for the evening.

Award presentations were handed out to the following:

- *Carl Danielson Scholarship* was presented to Kristin Vandenburg, Snowbelt Hardwoods.
- *Al Anderson Memorial Attendee Award* was pre-

ented to Dan Hansen, Midwest Hardwoods.

- *Golf Outing Certificate* (good for two free passes to the summer Golf Outing) was presented to Sierra Borntreger, wife of Fred Borntreger of TQMM.
- *Sponsor Prize Drawing*— Wolverine Hardwoods received a \$250 Amazon gift card.
- *LSLA Education Prize Drawing*—Steve Hanson from Stella-Jones received a \$500 gift card to Great Wolf Lodge.
- *Louis “Lumber Lou” Chicquette Memorial Scholarship* recipients were announced—Gunner Hynek and Michael Richardson each received a \$2,500 scholarship.

Periodically, LSLA honors individuals for their years of dedication and service to LSLA and the forest industry. This year, the LSLA Board of Directors presented David Caldwell from HMR with a plaque for his time and dedication. David will be retiring from HMR this year.

To all attendees and sponsors, LSLA says “Thank You!” Without you and your support, LSLA would not be where it stands today.

As we move ahead, mark you calendars for the annual Summer Golf Outing that will be held July 23 and 24 in Wisconsin Dells and the 2026 Winter Meeting that will be held once again at Lambeau Field in Green Bay January 14-16.



Hardwood Federation Update

By Dana Lee Cole, Executive Director



First Hundred Days—What’s in Store on the Federal Policy Front

As we begin a new year, a new Congress and a new Administration, much attention has been paid to what will happen in the first 100 days of a second Trump Administration. It is fact that the GOP controls both houses of Congress and the White House, but the margin of control is markedly slim, particularly in the House. With a couple of House Members departing for roles in the incoming Administration, the GOP will only have a 2-seat margin of control until special elections are held to fill those seats. Add in the fact that there are factions of House Republicans with differing priorities—for example, Northeast and Pacific Coast Republicans that want state and local tax (SALT) deduction relief v. fiscal conservatives that wish to curtail spending—and the path forward begins to look complicated. With that said, the new (and returning) Republican leadership and President-elect Trump have been very clear about policy items they wish to address beginning Day 1 of Trump’s second term, including the following:

Tax

Making the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) business tax deductions permanent is a lead talking point for the incoming Republican leadership and will be a centerpiece of legislative action in 2025. As we know, the ability to fully write off research and development costs in the year in which they were incurred expired in 2022. Now those costs have to be amortized over 5 years, essentially making the cost of R&D more expensive. Full expensing—also known as 100 percent bonus depreciation—has taken a considerable hit, phasing down 20 percent in 2023, another 20 percent in 2024 and a 20 percent haircut at the beginning of this year. That benefit, which allowed companies to fully write off the cost of machinery and equipment in the year in which they were purchased, will phase out completely in 2027 without legislative action. Also looming is the 20 percent deduction for S-Corporations and other pass-through structures. That deduction expires at the end of this year. Already this year, the House Ways & Means Committee has held a hearing on the importance of restoring and extending these tax benefits.

To raise the 5.5 trillion necessary to cover the cost of legislating in these areas, a one pager was released this week outlining potential cuts to existing programs.

Among them was repealing green energy tax credits, reforming federal nutrition assistance programs, repealing the electric vehicle mandate and ending the student loan forgiveness program.

So how is this all accomplished? When a single party controls both houses of Congress and the White House, the parliamentary procedure known as budget reconciliation comes into play. It is how the Affordable Care Act, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act were passed. The appeal of this process is it allows for a simple majority vote in the Senate instead of the usual 60 vote threshold in the upper chamber. While there are restrictions on what types of policy may be legislated through reconciliation, Congressional staff over the years have proven to be fairly creative in checking the right boxes to secure the Parliamentarian’s approval. The way the process works is that a set of reconciliation “instructions” will be developed by the budget committees that will direct policy committees of jurisdiction to begin drafting legislative language. Once the policy committees have produced their legislative products, they will be sent back to the budget committees and be rolled up into a single package.

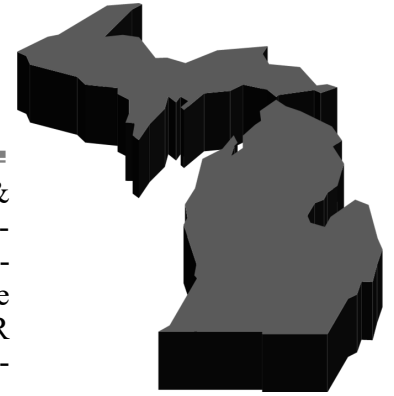
Members of Congress and staff that we have met with are predicting that budget reconciliation instructions will not be ready until April or May at the earliest. Recall that the TCJA was enacted at the very end of President Trump’s second year in office so these efforts are complicated and take time to mature. The other issue under discussion is whether all of the issues outlined above should be combined in one large package or cleaved into two reconciliation measures, with tax proceeding on its own after the measure addressing immigration, energy and military readiness moves. The situation is fluid.

Immigration

The President-elect and Republicans in the House and Senate campaigned throughout last cycle on the need for tightening the border, particularly our border with Mexico. Threading the needle on immigration reform in Congress has proven to be elusive, however. One of the complicating variables is that so many sectors—including agriculture and forestry—rely on immigrant labor to perform critical work like crop harvesting and

Michigan Legislative Report

By Scott Everett, MI Legislative Consultant



Tipped Wage Clears House

SB 8, which would adjust the minimum wage increase schedule and raise the sub-minimum wage to 50 percent of the minimum wage, passed the House 69-40 and is on its way back to the Senate for a vote on immediate effect. HB 4002 involving earned sick time is tie-barred to SB 8 and as of this writing still awaits action from the Senate. Under the Senate-passed bill, servers would begin making 38 percent of a \$12.48 minimum wage on Friday. Currently, they make 38 percent of minimum wage. Then, over a gradual schedule, they would make 50 percent of the minimum wage by Jan. 1, 2031. Under the bill, minimum wage will go up to \$15 an hour by 2027 and then rise based on the rate of inflation in the years that follow.

House Committees Announced

House Speaker Matt HALL (R-Richland Township) unveiled committee assignments with partisan margins nearly identical to the majority/minority split last term.

Natural Resources & Tourism Chair: Rep. David MARTIN (R-Davison); Agriculture Chair: Rep. Jerry NEYER (R-Shepherd) APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES:

Agriculture and Rural Development and Natural Resources Chair: Rep. Ken BORTON (R-Gaylord) Environment, Great Lakes, Energy Chair: Rep. Cam CAVITT (R-Cheboygan) State and Local Transportation Chair: Rep. Donni STEELE (R-Lake Orion) Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and Insurance and Financial Services: Chair: Rep. Timothy BESON (R-Bay City). **Complete Committee listings HERE: <https://www.house.mi.gov/Committees>**

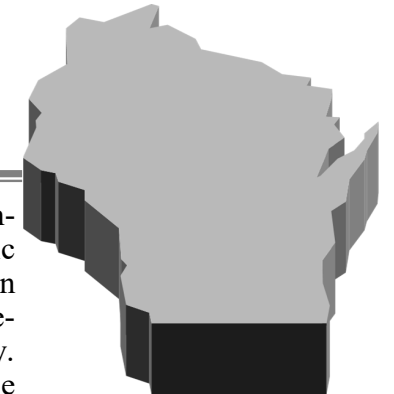
Proposed 2026 Budget Grows Slightly

Budget Director Jen Flood rolled a \$83.5 billion budget proposal for next year that

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Wisconsin Legislative Report

By Amy Boyer, WI Legislative Consultant



Governor Tony Evers (D) unveiled his two-year \$119 billion Wisconsin spending plan on Tuesday, February 18. Almost immediately after the budget address concluded, Republican leaders said they would be unlikely to work from the Governor's proposal and instead work from the current base budget.

Some highlights included in the Governor's plan, however include:

- \$50 million to continue the successful Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP). \$25 million in the first year from General Purpose Revenue (GPR) and \$25 million in the second year from the Forestry account of the conservation fund.
- Future Forestry Workforce. The Governor recommends increasing the expenditure authority for the Wisconsin Forestry Careers Pathway Program (\$500,000 annually) and the Learning, Experiences & Activities in Forestry Program (\$150,000 annually) at UW-Stevens Point.
- Forestry Liaison. Providing one position within the DNR for a forestry liaison to better support coordination between the DNR and forestry stakeholders.

The Joint Finance Committee will hold public hearings state-wide in March and April with deliberations starting in May. The goal will be to get the budget passed by both houses and signed by the Governor by July 1.

Forestry Day at the Capitol

LSLA along with the Great Lakes Timber Producers, the Wisconsin County Forest Association and the Wisconsin Paper Council will hold a two-day event in Madison to highlight the importance of the forestry industry in Wisconsin.

A kick-off reception will be held on Tuesday, April 22 and programming will begin the morning of Wednesday, April 23. We will hear from legislative leaders and administration officials on their priorities relating to our industry before going to the State Capitol to meet with individual legislators. Stay tuned for more information!

WI Biochar: Will Increased Demand Impact Residue Markets?

By: Brian Zweifel, Forest Products Specialist, WI DNR

What Is Biochar?

Biochar is basically charcoal with a special mission to be used in the soil. The U.S. Biochar Initiative (USBI) defines it as "carbonized biomass obtained from sustainable sources and sequestered in soils to sustainably enhance their agricultural and environmental value under present and future management." Almost any form of biomass can be transformed into this carbon-rich material in a low-oxygen environment, cooking most non-carbon materials out of it and leaving the material's basic structure intact.

This carbon skeleton is what gives biochar many of its beneficial properties, making hardwood feedstock highly desirable for biochar production. The former vessels and pores in the plant material are now able to adsorb nutrients and water before they can move below the rooting zone. This helps reduce nutrient leaching into groundwater and lowers plant water stress by keeping it available in the rooting zone. This structure also has a high cation exchange capacity, making biochar very effective at binding pollutants like mercury and other heavy metals found in urban or industrial areas. An added benefit of using biochar in degraded soils is that it provides protected spaces for beneficial soil fungi and microbes.

Another promising attribute of biochar is that it is a stable and long-lived form of soil carbon. Studies in the Amazon Basin have found evidence of charcoal (biochar) used by indigenous groups to improve the heavily leached soils that date

back several hundred to thousands of years ago. The discovery of this "terra preta," or literally "black soil" in Portuguese, was the spark that started researchers looking into the long-lived nature of biochar, its ability to improve soil health, and the possibility of using it to sequester carbon in soils for centuries. A wide variety of scientific trials are underway across the globe, including right here in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources (DNR) Nursery Biochar Trial



*1. Microscopic structure of biochar./
Phone Credit: UK Biochar Research Centre*

Currently, Wilson State Nursery in Boscobel, WI, relies on regionally harvested sedge peat to increase the soil organic matter in the seedling beds. However, the cost of harvesting and transporting the sedge peat to the nursery is high, the practice is not sustainable and the organic peat material readily breaks down in the soil and must be replenished regularly.

Biochar trials are being carried out at greenhouses and nurseries around the world that use peat products and other non-renewable media, like perlite or vermiculite, for containerized woody and herbaceous plant production. DNR nursery managers decided to test the effects of biochar at Wilson State Nursery because of the promising initial results of these other trials. In the Fall of 2022, DNR staff produced biochar from hardwood brush collected from nursery fencerow tree trimmings. In the Spring of 2025, the final seedlings grown in the first round of biochar trials will be lifted. Seedling root and shoot biomass, stem diameter and several soil properties will be compared between biochar and non-biochar plots. A second round of trials is beginning this spring, again utilizing hardwood feedstock and adding softwood biochar to study differences in how the different feedstocks impact soil acidity.

Biochar Cost-Share Program May Boost Residue Markets

As of October 2024, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) began supporting agricultural producers who are interested in applying biochar to their fields. With this program, 4-12 cubic yards (roughly 1-3 tons) of biochar per acre can be applied in a single application. This translates to approximately 2-9 tons of hardwood residue feedstock, usually chips, needed per acre. Cost-share payments from NRCS may be as high as \$1300 per acre to cover the cost of the biochar, transportation and application, with an average application of 4 cubic yards per acre. Allowing farmers to utilize biochar at a reduced risk should increase demand for locally produced biochar and its feedstocks. With few biochar producers located within Wisconsin at this time, costs associated with transporting biochar from out of state should incentivize businesses to start production closer to where it will be utilized. Sawmills grappling with limited markets for their residues may soon see an uptick in interest from prospective businesses

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WI Biochar: Will Increased Demand Impact Residue Markets? (cont'd)

By: Brian Zweifel, Forest Products Specialist, WI DNR

looking to produce this soil amendment locally.

In addition, many municipalities are also looking into utilizing biochar as an effective filtration tool to reduce levels of nitrogen, phosphorous, mercury and other pollutants entering their watersheds via unmanaged stormwater runoff. With previous demand levels for biochar, many producers sought free sources of woody biomass as their feedstock, and in some areas, producers could expect to collect tipping fees for wood waste normally taken to landfills. As the use of biochar increases, the supply of "free" waste biomass will no longer meet demand and should help improve market conditions for sawmill residues, especially in areas with no access to pulp markets.

Key Takeaways

The Wisconsin DNR Forest Products Services team will continue to monitor and promote biochar production in the state as part of our commitment to promote markets for wood residues, small-diameter trees, and underutilized species in Wisconsin. By promoting emerging markets and technologies like biochar, we aim to improve wood utilization and strengthen Wisconsin's forest products industry. Lessons learned from the Boscobel nursery trial and others allow us to provide technical assistance to groups or businesses that wish to incorporate biochar production into habitat management work, wildfire fuels reduction projects, better utilization of wood waste or as an addi-

tional revenue stream from woody biomass, facility heat or power production.

Biochar is an emerging market that has a lot of hype around it, but there are many scientific studies and trials underway to continue sifting and winnowing the many claims associated with biochar's benefits. If the claims prove to be scientifically supported, biochar may someday be an established global market that benefits us all by removing harmful pollutants from soils and groundwater, reducing methane emissions and noxious odors from livestock production, improving soil health and fertility, reducing the amount of water needed to grow crops and even reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.



2. Biochar applied at Wilson State Nursery in Boscobel, WI. Following application, the biochar was rototilled into the test beds. Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

Michigan Legislative Report (cont'd)

By Scott Everett, MI Legislative Consultant

spends nearly all the \$770.4 million projected to be left over with this year's budget and the \$910.2 million in extra revenue projected for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. The plan boosts the General Fund to \$15.3 billion and the School Aid Fund to \$21.2 billion, but doesn't come with a long-term road funding plan, broad tax relief or a flagship new spending proposal. Overall, the proposed Governor's FY '26 budget is a 2.7 percent increase from last year.

DNR Will Need A Warrant Under Proposed Bill

Reps. Greg Markkanen (R-Hancock) and Dave Prestin (R-Cedar River) are poised to introduce legislation

requiring Department of Natural Resources conservation officers to wear body cameras and to obtain a search warrant before entering private property. Body cameras

and search warrants are standard practice for most Michigan law enforcement officers. Exceptions to the warrant requirement mirror those for other departments: to protect life, preserve evidence, when in hot pursuit or if the officer receives permission to enter the property.



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Where is David Bradley?

David visiting LSLA member Quanex Custom Components and industry friend, Duane Keck, in St. Cloud, Minnesota.



Thank you Legacy Load of Lumber Sponsors

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors for the LSLA Winter Meeting but especially the Legacy Load of Lumber Sponsors. Your support has been invaluable in helping us raise funds for our Hardwood Federation Dues. This Winter Meeting by far has went in the record books for the most fun(ds) raised for the load of lumber by the GOAT Herder.

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