

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Results from a survey tool employed in 2009
to evaluate five annual conferences held from 2005 to 2009



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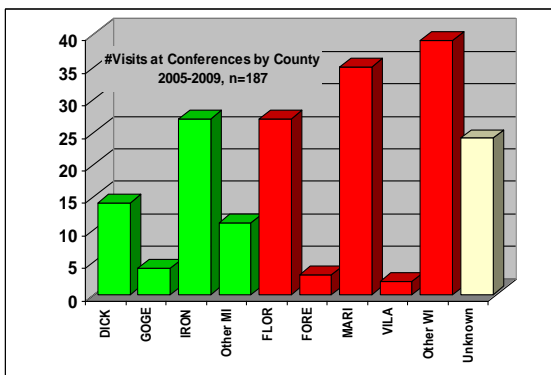
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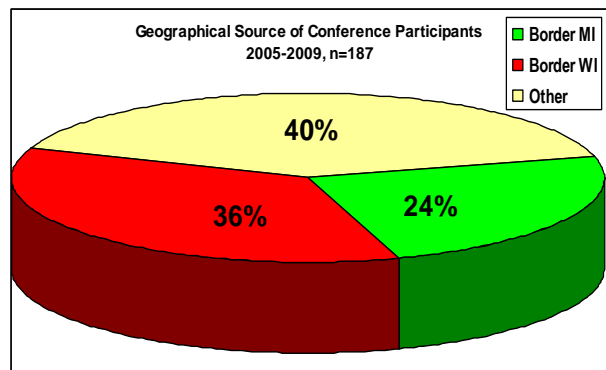
Sustainable Forests Conferences 2005-2009 – Survey Results

These Sustainable Forestry Conferences are joint efforts between Wisconsin and Michigan, with a particular emphasis on border county issues. Target audiences are forestry professionals, loggers, and local government units. Forests and forestry are key economic drivers in the region, as well as providing high value social and environmental services. These conferences are designed to articulate current topics, emerging industries and industry trends, and issues affecting sustainable utilization of the regional forests. A total of 320 surveys were mailed in the fall of 2009, with 94 returned, for a response rate of 29 percent. Registration data from each of the five conferences were used to construct a mailing list.

1. What is your zip code? 85 responses were distributed as follows: 57 from Wisconsin, 27 from Michigan, and 1 from Minnesota. Wisconsin responses were about twice that of Michigan. 9 returned surveys did not indicate a zip code. The 85 responses checked 187 attendances. “Attendances” were indicated in question 2. For instance, a single respondent may have attended 3 conferences. That would “count” as 3 attendances. The following charts are weighted by those locations with the greater degree of repeat attendance. At the end of this document is map showing distribution of responses by county. The top five attending counties were Marinette, Florence, Iron (MI), Oneida, and Dickinson.



The bar chart above shows the attendance by border counties, for each state, as well as other counties and the number of those surveys that did not enter a zip code.

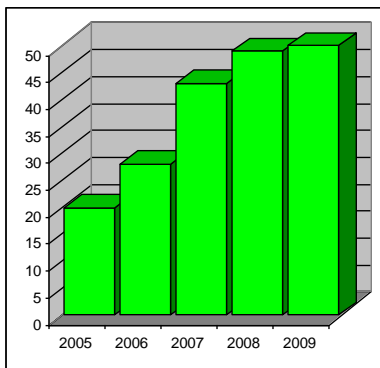


60% of attendances are from border counties.

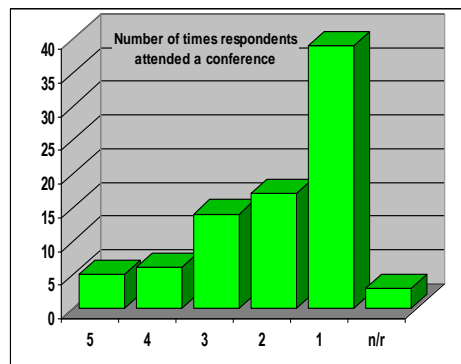
2. To the best of your memory, which Sustainable Forestry Conferences did you attend in Florence, Wisconsin? Please check all that apply

Attendance count by year of conference
190 conferences were tallied from 91 responses

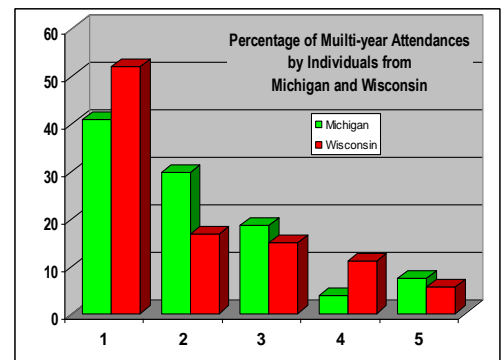
2005-**20** 2006-**28** 2007-**43** 2008-**49** 2009-**50**



The number of responses were greater for more recent conferences.



39 respondents (43%) had attended only 1 conference.



Michigan has a somewhat stronger tendency to attend more than one conference. Each bar color adds to 100% of responses.

3. What profession(s) best describes you? Please check all that apply

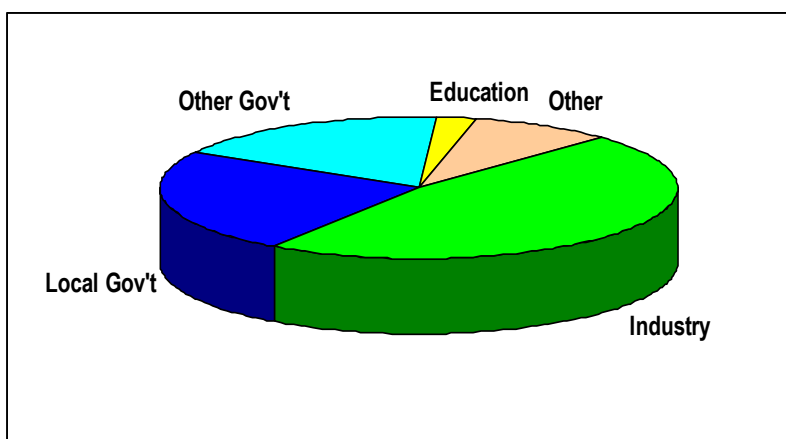
31	Local Government
15	Logging
13	Consulting Forester
12	Resource Agency
9	Business Owner
8	State Government
8	Planning Organization
7	Economic Development
6	Sawmill
6	Pulp & Paper

6	Entrepreneur
4	Land Management Company
4	State/Local Association
3	Trucking
3	Teacher
1	School Board/Administration
1	Utility
0	Wood Manufacturing
0	State Legislator
14	Other

The 20 response choices were categorized into six groups.*

1. Industry – 74
2. Local Gov't – 38
3. Other Gov't – 28
4. Education – 4
5. Other - 14

* Industry: wood mfg, sawmill, pulp & paper, logging, trucking, consulting forester, land mngt co, entrepreneur, state/local assn, utility, business owner. Local Government: local gov't, economic dev't. Other Government: state gov't, legislator, resource agency, planning organization. Education: school board/admin, teacher.



Industry and government groups dominate the attendance at the conferences. There was little difference in the profession distribution by state.

All returned surveys indicated at least one profession, with a total of 158 checks. About 2/3 of responses indicated only one profession.

4. How helpful or valuable would you say the Sustainable Forestry Conference information has been to you? Please circle one

(not valuable) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Valuable)

The average score was **3.65** from 93 responses.

Little difference in values appears among conference dates.					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Count	19	24	36	43	42
Average	3.3	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.9

Little difference in values appears among profession groups from question 3					
	Industry	Local Gov't	Other Gov't	Education	Other
Count	43	34	24	4	13
Average	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.9

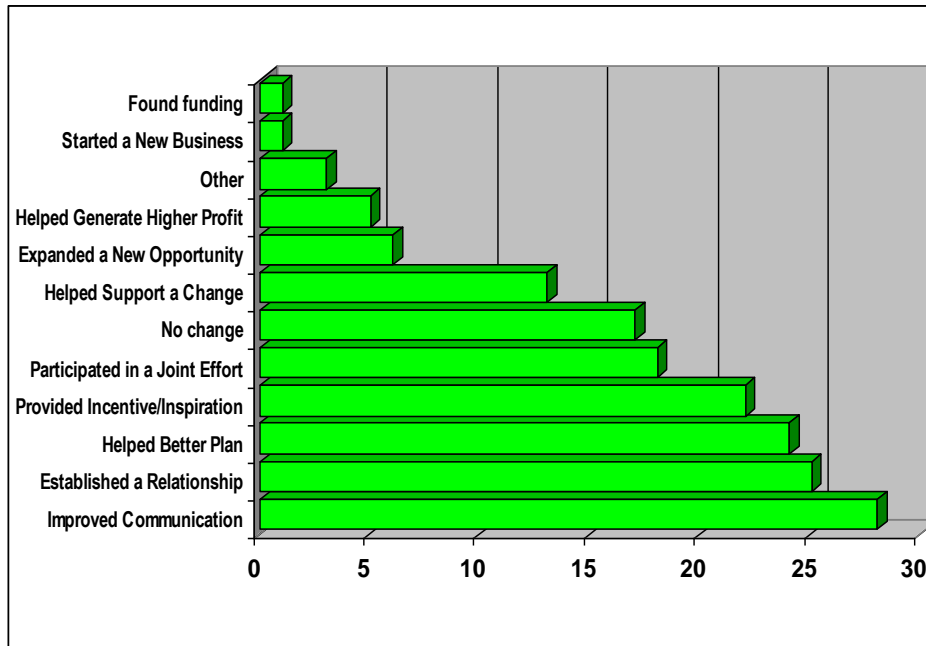
5. Generally, would you say that the Sustainable Forestry Conference has given you a better understanding of the forest industry and forest management? Please circle one

Yes - 80 No - 13

From 93 responses, 86 percent of respondents indicated a better understanding of forestry.

6. What areas have you applied what you've learned from any of the conferences where there's been a change in the way business has been done? Please check all that apply

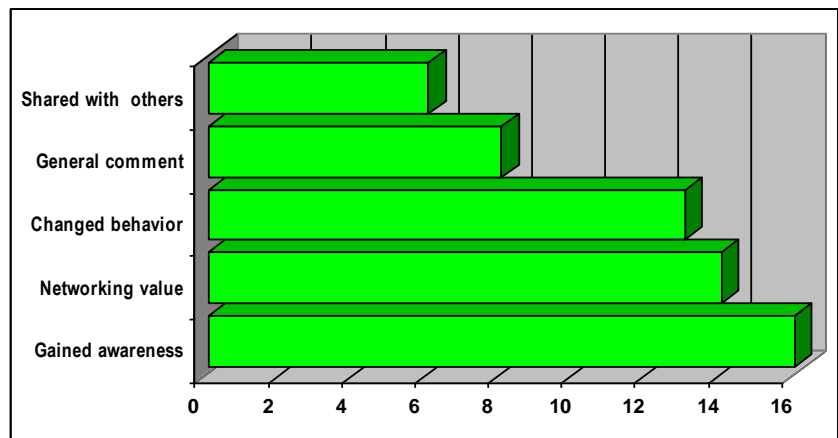
The responses suggest that one of the most important functions of these conferences have to do with networking and communication.



28	Improved communication with business, government, and education.
25	Established a relationship(s) that has benefited my business or agency.
24	Helped me better plan for my business or agency.
22	Provided incentive or inspiration to improve my job.
18	Participated in a joint effort between business, government, and/or education.
17	No change in the way business is done.
13	Helped support a change in my business or agency.
6	Expanded into a new business opportunity.
5	Helped generate a higher profit margin for my business.
1	Started a new business.
1	Found funding/fiscal resources.
3	Other:
163	Total responses from 85 surveys

7. If you checked any of the above, please briefly explain.

Respondents made 57 comments which were categorized into five categories.



8. As a result of attending a Sustainable Forestry Conference, have you researched or explored issues or topics related to the forest industry or forest management? Please circle one

Yes - 71 No - 21 About 75% of respondents said that the conference prompted them to explore forestry topics.

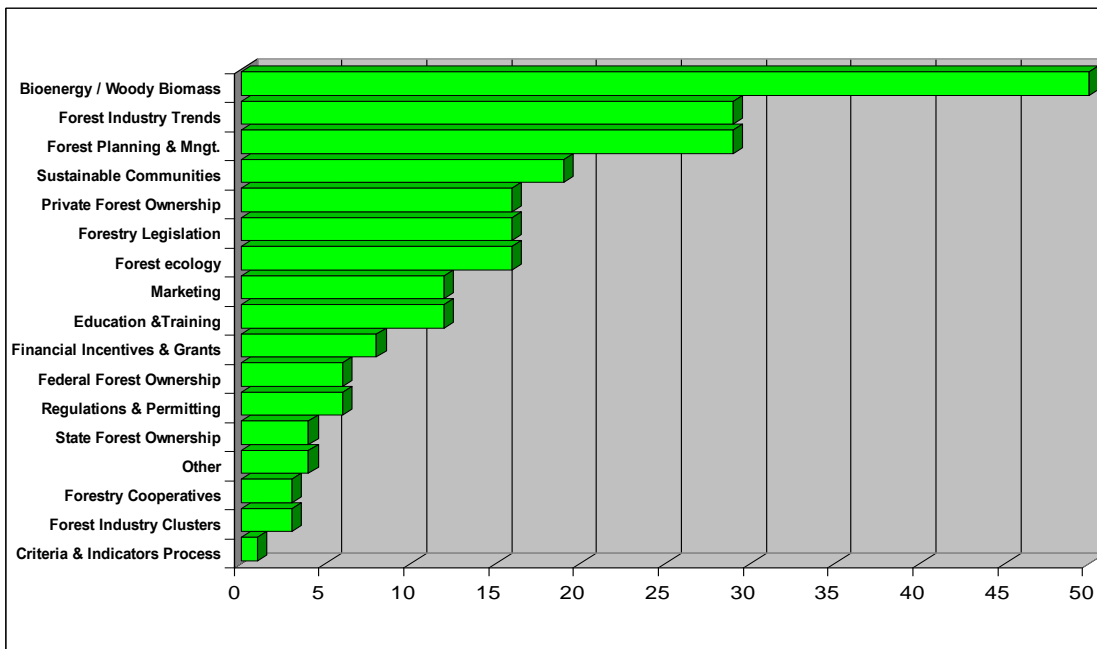
9. If you answered yes to question 8, what general topic area(s)? Please check as many as apply

50	Bioenergy / woody biomass
29	Forest industry trends
29	Forest planning & management
19	Sustainable communities
16	Forest ecology
16	Forestry / forest industry legislation
16	Private forest ownership
12	Education & training
50	Bioenergy / woody biomass

8	Financial incentives & grants
6	Federal forest ownership
6	Regulations & permitting
4	State forest ownership
3	Forest industry clusters
3	Forestry cooperatives
1	Criteria & indicators process
4	Other:
234	Total

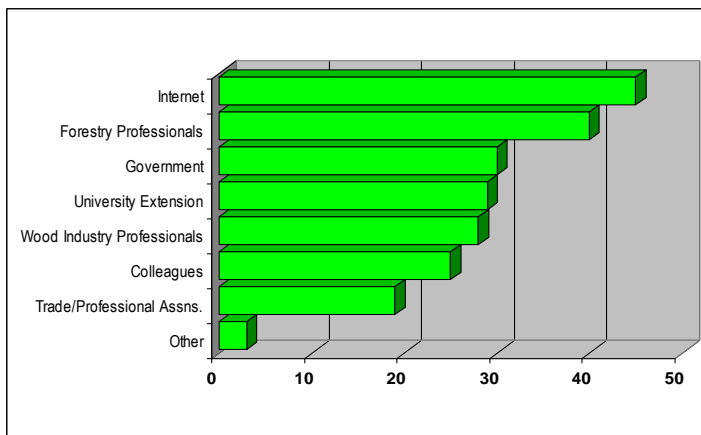
About 46% of responders said that they explored one of the top three topics, presumably as a result of attending one of the conferences.

1. Bioenergy / Woody Biomass
2. Forest Industry Trends
3. Forest Planning & Management



10. If you answered yes to question 8, what sources have you used to learn more about forestry/forest industry?

Please check as many as apply



45	Internet
40	Forestry Professionals
30	Government
29	University Extension
28	Wood Industry Professionals
25	Colleagues
19	Trade/Professional Assns.
3	Other
219	Total

Nearly 40% of responses cite either the Internet or Forestry Professionals as preferred information sources.

11. If you've discovered specific examples of particularly useful sources of forest or forestry information, what might they have been?

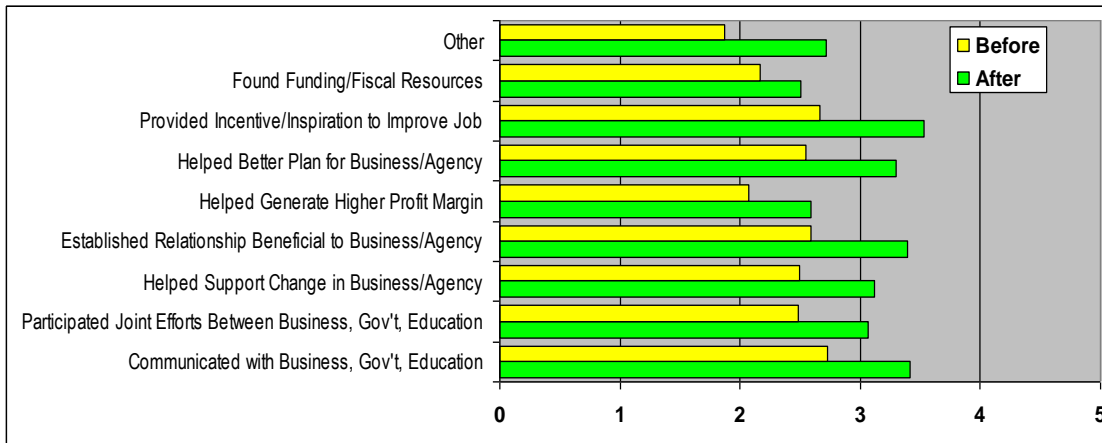
27 surveys provided comments. Of those, 12 were unrelated to the question and were excluded from consideration.

- Biomass publications, e-newsletters, and articles.
- FPL [USFS Forest Products Laboratory]
- MSU Extension
- WI-MI timber Producers Magazine / WI County Forest Association emails
- WDNR website
- www.forestry.msu.edu & related linked pages
- USFS Forest Products lab; WIDNR utilization & marketing staff.
- Biomass Magazine
- GLTPA classes [Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association]
- MN & WI biomass harvesting retention guidelines.
- "Rules of Thumb" for Bioenergy conversions, online eg Green cords ----->> to generate ----->> 1MW
- Bill Cook's University Extension forestry web pages are great ways to find local sources of information, foresters, mills and education.
- By taking part in decision making questionnaires sent by US Forest Service, reading their management plans.
- Wisconsin County Forests Association Executive Directory emails and presentations.
- The Farm Service Agency has a BCAP (Biomass Crop Assistance Program) program that I discovered & forwarded to an interested business owner who is in the process of working with a mill to be an approved biomass source. This will benefit his company financially!

12. How has your level of activity of certain aspects of forest management and the forest industry changed due to your participation in the Sustainable Forestry Conferences? Please respond to each item

Scale used →	Before Conferences					Now					
	No Opinion	Not At All			A Great Deal	No Opinion	Not At All			A Great Deal	
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	5

CONCEPT	Average Scores				Percent Change
	Before	n	After	n	
Provided incentive or inspiration to improve my job.	2.66	68	3.53	68	33
Established a relationship(s) that has benefited my business or agency.	2.58	65	3.39	66	31
Helped better plan for my business or agency.	2.55	67	3.29	68	29
Communicated with business, government, and education.	2.73	80	3.41	78	25
Helped support a change in my business or agency.	2.49	67	3.12	67	25
Helped generate a higher profit margin for my business.	2.07	43	2.59	44	25
Participated in a joint effort(s) between business, government, and/or education.	2.49	76	3.07	76	23
Found funding/fiscal resources.	2.16	49	2.5	50	16
Other:	1.88	8	2.71	7	45



13. Have colleagues used you as a source of information about the forest industry or forest management as a result, at least in part, of your participation in the Sustainable Forestry Conference/s? Please circle one

Yes - 50 No - 41

14. If you indicated "yes" to question 13, approximately how many people might have been influenced by the information you shared? (Enter Number)

374
summed from 45 responses

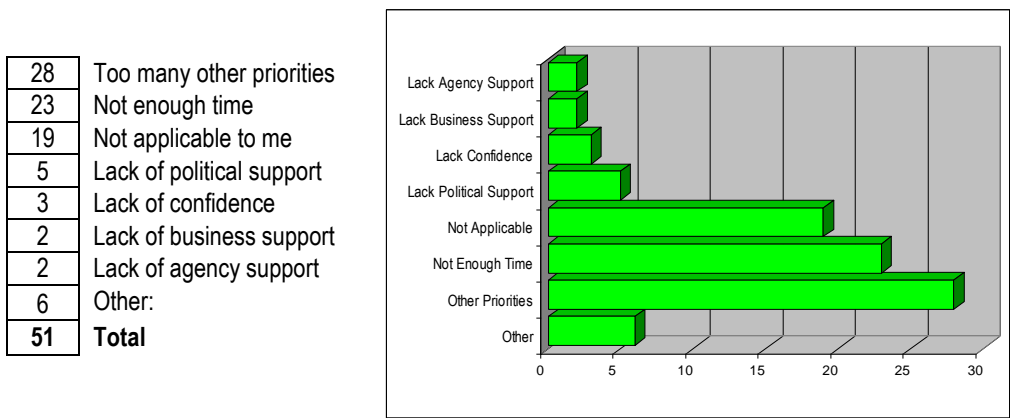
15. If you indicated "yes" to question 13, how many people would you guess might be influenced within the next 5 years? (Enter Number)

1205
summed from 43 responses

16. If you have *not* yet used material, knowledge, or information gained from the Sustainable Forestry Conference/s, do you plan to in the future? Please circle one

Yes - 48 No - 14

17. If you have *not* yet used, or not used as much as you would like, the material, knowledge, or information gained from attending the Sustainable Forestry Conference/s, why not? Please check as many as apply



18. Have you encouraged colleagues to attend one of the Sustainable Forestry Conferences? Please circle one

Yes - 69 No - 23 75% of conference participants have encouraged colleagues to attend these events.

19. Now that you've had time to reflect on your participation in one or more conferences, how would you now rate the value of the conference/s you've attended over all? Please circle one

(not valuable)

1	2	3	4	5
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 (Very Valuable)

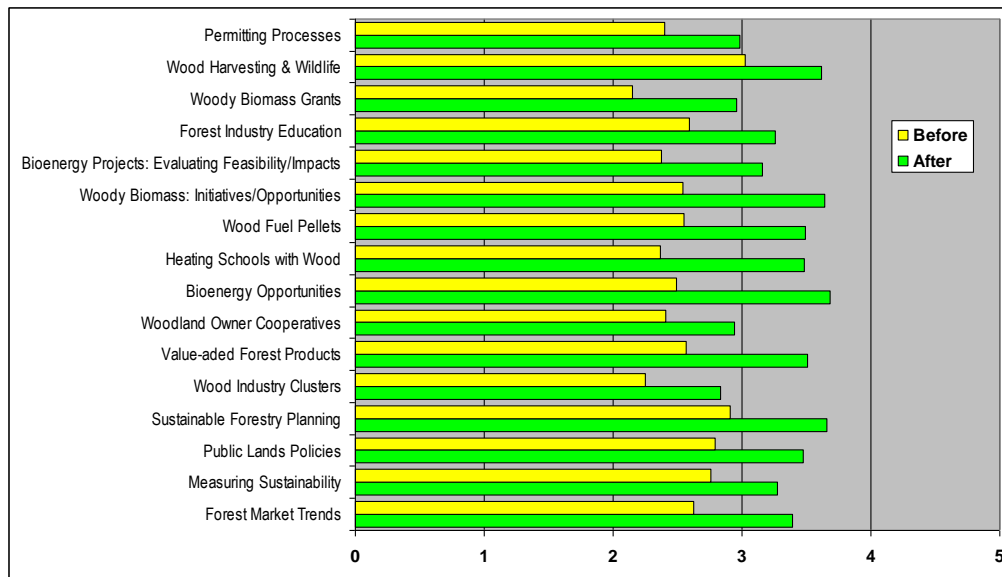
The average score was **3.78** from 92 responses.

This is a slightly higher value than the 3.65 average from similar question 4;
 "How helpful or valuable would you say the Sustainable Forestry Conference information has been to you?"

20. Please relate your confidence in relating the following concepts to others (colleagues, friends, family, etc.) Please respond to each item

Scale used →	Before Conference/s					Now						
	No Opinion	Not at all Confident		Very Confident		No Opinion	Not at all confident		Very Confident			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5

CONCEPT	Average Scores				Percent Change
	Before	n	After	n	
Bioenergy Opportunities	2.49	77	3.68	78	48
Heating Schools with Wood	2.37	79	3.48	81	47
Woody Biomass: Initiatives/Opportunities	2.54	78	3.64	80	43
Woody Biomass Grants	2.15	68	2.96	70	38
Value-added forest products	2.56	78	3.51	79	37
Wood Fuel Pellets	2.55	78	3.49	80	37
Bioenergy Projects: Evaluating Feasibility/Impacts	2.37	75	3.16	76	33
Forest Market Trends	2.63	83	3.39	84	29
Sustainable Forestry Planning	2.9	84	3.65	84	26
Wood Industry Clusters	2.25	68	2.83	71	26
Forest Industry Education	2.59	81	3.26	81	26
Permitting Processes	2.4	68	2.99	70	25
Public Lands Policies	2.79	77	3.47	78	24
Woodland Owner Cooperatives	2.41	71	2.94	72	22
Wood Harvesting & Wildlife	3.02	85	3.62	86	20
Measuring Sustainability	2.76	78	3.28	79	19



21. Is forest industry an important economic driver in your community? Please circle one

Yes - 85 No - 4 Unsure -1 Conference participants highly value forest industry.

22. How might the following best describe your perceptions towards forest industry, forestry, and forest management?

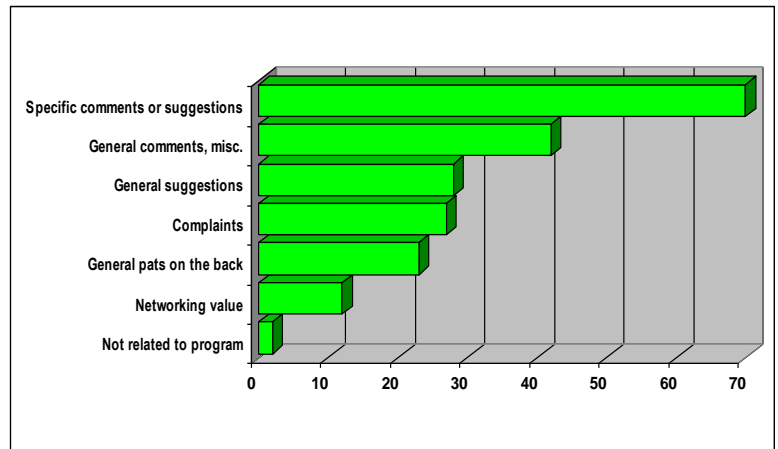
Please circle one

(Negative) 1 2 3 4 5 (Positive)

The average score was **4.56** from 90 responses.

23. Please jot down anything that you might wish to share with us about your reflections on the conferences you've attended. Use additional sheets if necessary. Comments are wonderful!

Responses were provided on 46 surveys. Responses were categorized into 7 categories. Some comments were entered into more than one category.

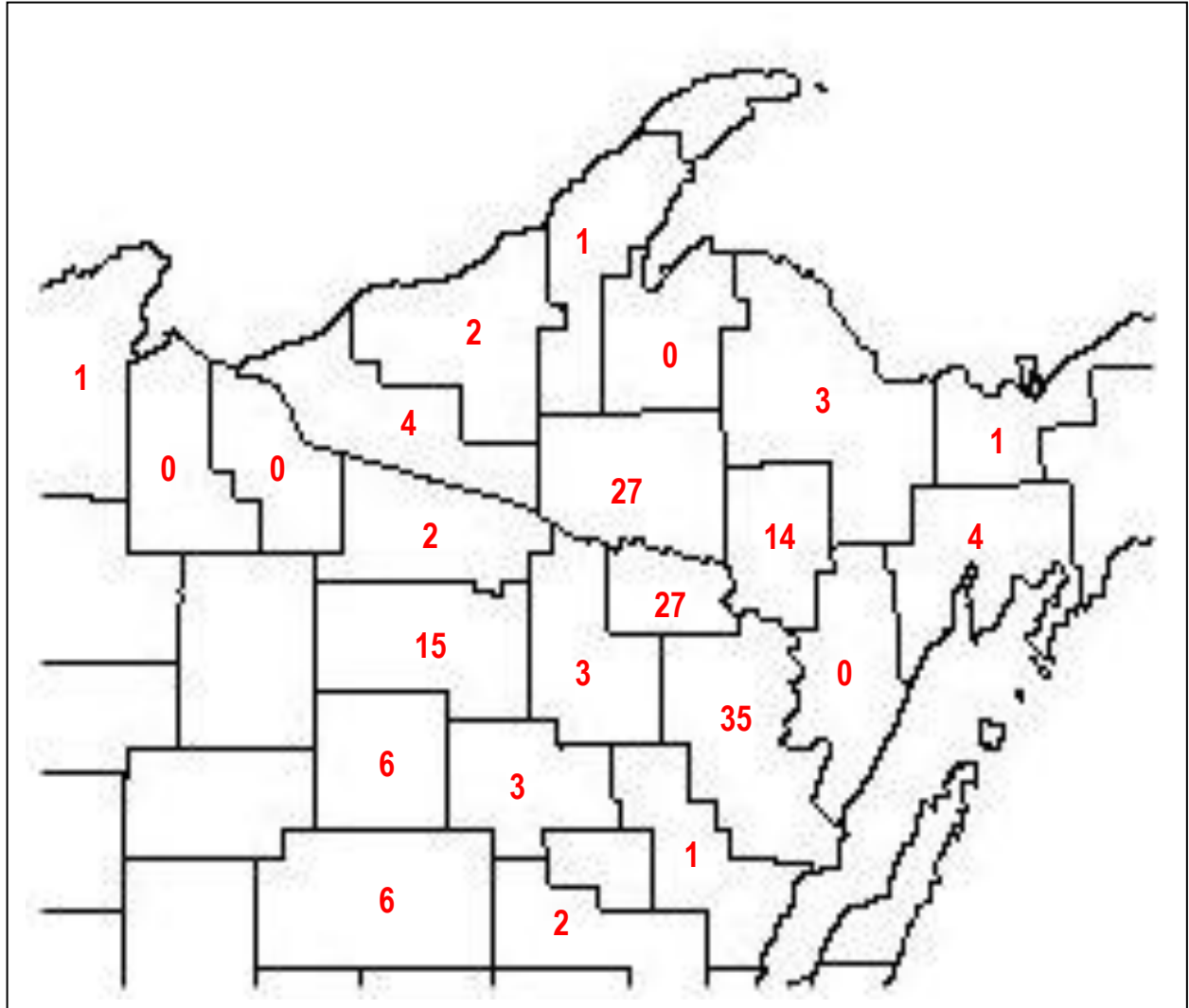


- The lunch problem at the 2009 conference was handled graciously- despite some unhappy attendees. This was unfortunate but it was great that it was so well attended!
- I learned a lot and met some fine folks and made some valuable contacts.
- Best of luck with continued success with these programs!
- Bad times - mill closings and loss of customer base.
- It is a useful tool at a time when anything helpful is greatly appreciated. Thank you for the good conference.
- I feel we need more sessions that relate to real-world issues and solutions to actual situations, less on theoretical. We also need more on emerging trends & recognition of opportunities.
- Move the day of week off of Thursdays for conference. Always the 3rd Thursday. Conflicts.
- I enjoyed the conference. Have more speakers that offer funding opportunities.
- Keep them going.
- The one really important thing I took away from the 2006 conference was a distinction between environmentalism and forestry management. I gained a great respect for the latter.
- 2009 Conference site in Florence didn't accommodate the attendees in terms of size. An opportunity for interaction among attendees is always valuable when all the players meet. Regulators-implementers-contractors-producers-loggers-producers.
- Experienced animosity towards environmentalism.
- Keep up the Good Work! 2. More on wood energy. 3. Market trends for various forest products.
- Too much repetition-greatest contribution is in the social aspect-most material is of common knowledge to persons interested in forestry related issues.
- Again, I implore part of your conference to show that trees are a crop to be managed for future healthy growth and harvest correctly. The WCFA [Wisconsin County Forest Association] has 29 counties in Wisc managing county forests correctly with the state's help and very productive harvests and health. The national forest is hampered with law suits & court dates not allowing the harvesting of crops to sustain a healthy forest and a productive product. This should be aired at any "Sustainable Forestry Conference" and also stated that wood is a very "Renewable Energy".
- As our society changes and evolves so must the wood industry and especially for developing jobs in the Lake States. It's not easy and hopefully markets will get better as soon as everything else picks up and not lag behind. Also its nice to meet up with associates or contacts at these conferences along with obtaining the necessary CE [continuing education] credits. Food is great, sometimes it is a little crowded, but location is nice for me. Maybe a session on GIS mapping or GPS and its detailed workings, also continue current market trends or any new developments in each states' government as relates to our industry. Keep up the good work and I pray our industry or I should say our region will not suffer too much with any developing changes from our Federal Government and the emissions legislature. Not even sure where that is all going. Sounds like a topic! Thanks again and may we all remember who is really in charge. God Bless.
- I appreciate information on biofuels, wood pellets, trends information on where the forest industry is going. Information on SFI, FSC Certification [Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council] and what trends are happening, are these certifications going to continue or perhaps disappear. The above items are best explained by University professors. I would like information on biofuel efforts to use wood to make liquid transportation fuel. Trends in forest industry-lack of logging infrastructure (trends), markets in forest products.
- Very informative, great way to bring together economics & forest stakeholders. Keep up the good work!
- Very informative and interesting. I would encourage others to attend.
- Overall, good conferences. I really find the information about heating schools with wood interesting. Like the discussions about alternative energy sources.
- When survey results complete, please notify email list. Thanks!
- Although I attended as an elected official, I was somewhat disappointed that I did not receive notice by direct mailing as a business owner. I gained valuable information for my business and if I would have missed that advertising from the newspaper or wasn't aware of the conference because of my elected official capacity, I might have missed valuable information.

- The conference I attended was an excellent learning opportunity and very well done. All public officials & community resource people (chambers of commerce, county & twp officials, state agency people) who live in areas dependent on forest products industries (every place in the UP) would benefit from attending.
- Real-world examples of projects and findings are more useful.
- Bitch session! Needs more meat!
- Keep diversity of topics. Keep politics to a minimum unless you introduce a breakout session on "How to influence your political representatives."
- At the 2008 conference: I know there was technical problems hooking up w/Congressmen Kagen & Stupak; however, I was highly insulted by the tone of Congressman Kagen's comments. I will do everything in my power to un-seat Mr. Kagen in the next election cycle.
- Very useful!
- I would like to see these conferences continue.
- Good job in the past. Keep up the good work.
- Conference was good-need some free time to network. Each year seems to cram more subjects in same time frame. Facility is to capacity each year & food seems to be an issue. These people are loggers-so either have more food or serve the attendees. Questionnaire is way to lengthy-I'll be surprised if many respond due to this.
- Needed, well done & looking forward to the next conference.
- It was a spur of the moment thing for me to even go.
- The wood industry is very important to the economy of the UP, whether it be fuel, building, RGC, furniture, wild life on Land Mgmt, we need you!
- I participated in the conference as a presenter and retired shortly thereafter.
- Bill Cook is a great speaker!!!! Thankx.
- The information provided was useful to an educator and woodland owner. Enjoyed listening to the future trends. Was a great place to network with land owners & operators. University provided the latest background of information. Enjoyed the day and the people who appreciated the opportunity to meet other people employed in the wood industry.
- I have never heard a negative comment about these conferences. As an officer of [deleted] I will always support funding for its continued success.
- The Conference is a good mix of representatives w/different backgrounds & experiences. It provides a nice change from conferences that are driven almost entirely by DNR staff. Whether I use the information or not it is always interesting & provides points of discussion when talking w/other professionals. Keep up the good work. I look forward to next year's Conference.
- Have used Conference to obtain bio-fuel information.
- The Sustainable Forestry conference was a great way to see how woody biomass initiatives are faring in our forest community: where people can get funding, more information, and others who are in the forest woody biomass business. It was very helpful to see how the spectrum of forest landowners (private, industrial, public) can have marketable woody biomass opportunities. It was also great to raise concerns about changes and feasibility for those already in the industry to add biomass to their repertoire.
- Of little value to a user of Internet & reading material.
- I work in [deleted]. A sustainable Forestry Conference in [deleted-other than Florence County] would be great!
- I am very pleased at your work at bringing these people together. We need much more co/op across our border. Too much politics keep us separated. A. business practice b. Insurance health c. Contracts
- Tell a story on how are getting better.
- *Conference should strive for stronger participation by legislators having impact on natural resource legislation.
*More emphasis needs to be placed on terrestrial invasive species, control, management and salvage (EAB) of dead timber.
*Stronger effort is needed to change federal forest management regulations to allow professional foresters to manage our forest resources rather than asking John Q. Public on the street to approve management plans. Timber harvesting contracting procedures need to be streamlined to facilitate needed harvesting.
*Sustainable Forestry Conference should provide an opportunity for developing united lobbying efforts in support of needed corrective forestry legislation. A legislative forum should be considered.
- Continue positive push for alternative uses of our forests. Evaluate threats to printed page (ie Kindle 2, Sony Reader). Evaluate foreign competition in wood industry.
- Bill Cook is an excellent speaker & it was very enjoyable gaining information from him. I would like to attend more of his seminars if I had the time.
- Thank you for conducting these conferences. They are valuable and educational.
- Pellets, biomass, bioenergy, need to be brought to life here. With mills closing, lumber markets up & down, the logging industry needs to be more stable
- It only makes sense to make the products here where the supply is.

Geographical Distribution of Attendances by Zip Code (n=187)

Values indicate the number of conference *attendances*, not the number of returned of surveys. Individuals could attend up to five conferences. The number of returned surveys was 94.



Additionally, 6 attendances were from outside the region and 24 attendances did not provide their zip code. A total of 320 surveys were mailed.

The top five attending counties were Marinette, Florence, Iron (MI), Oneida, and Dickinson, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all attendances.