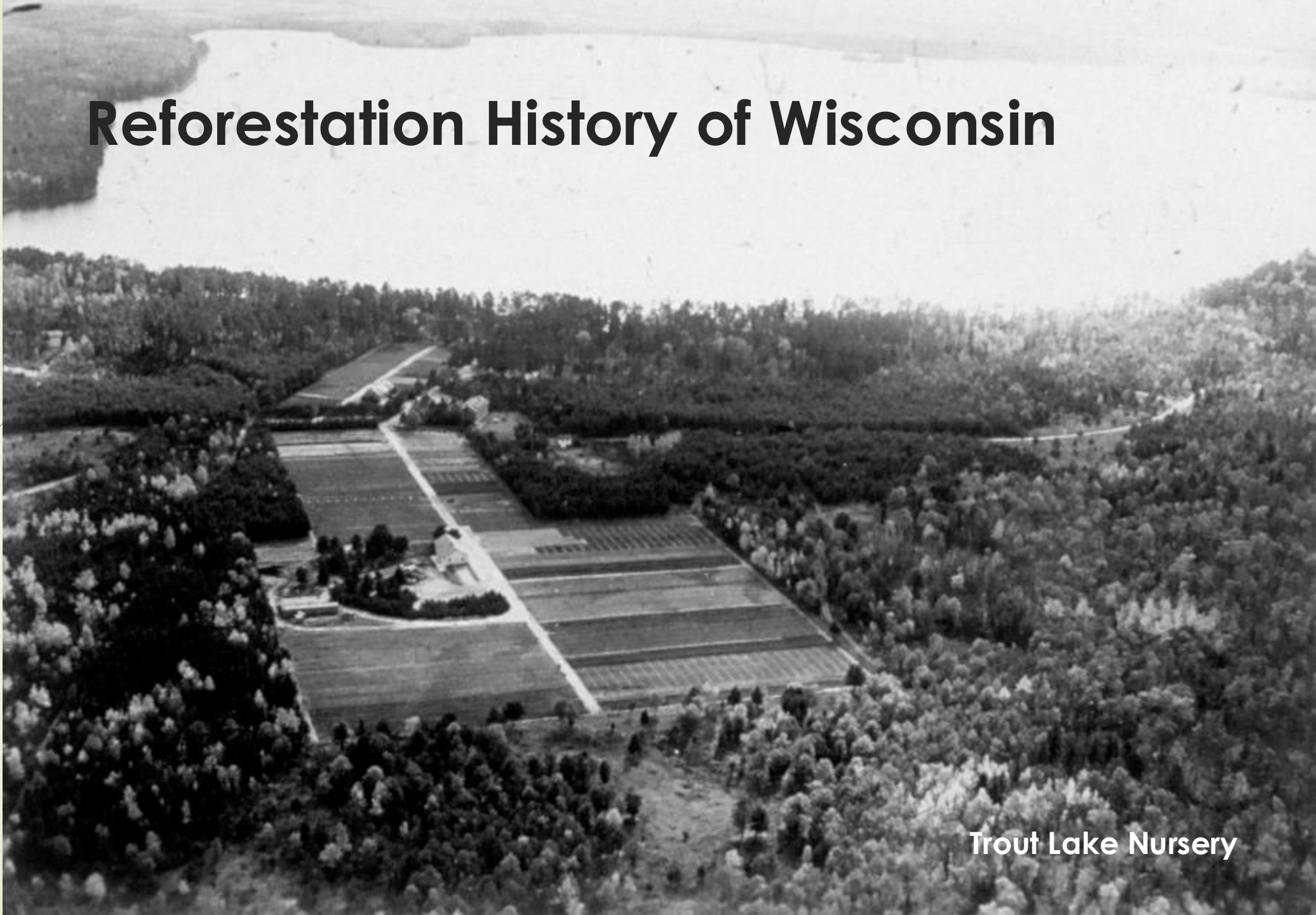


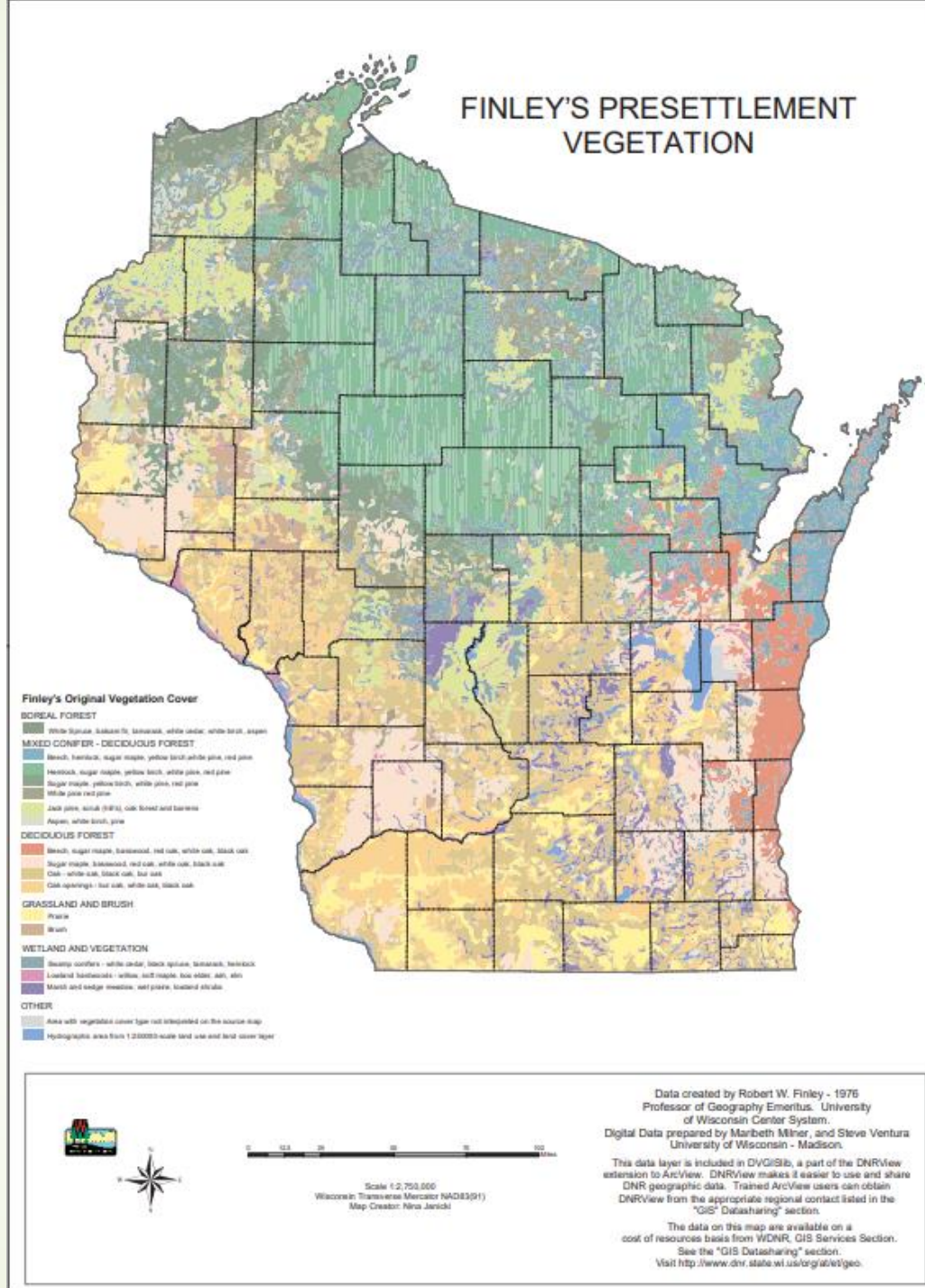
Reforestation History of Wisconsin



Trout Lake Nursery



Wisconsin's Forested Beginning (Pre-Settlement)



The Rise and Fall of Lumbering (Settlement to 1904)







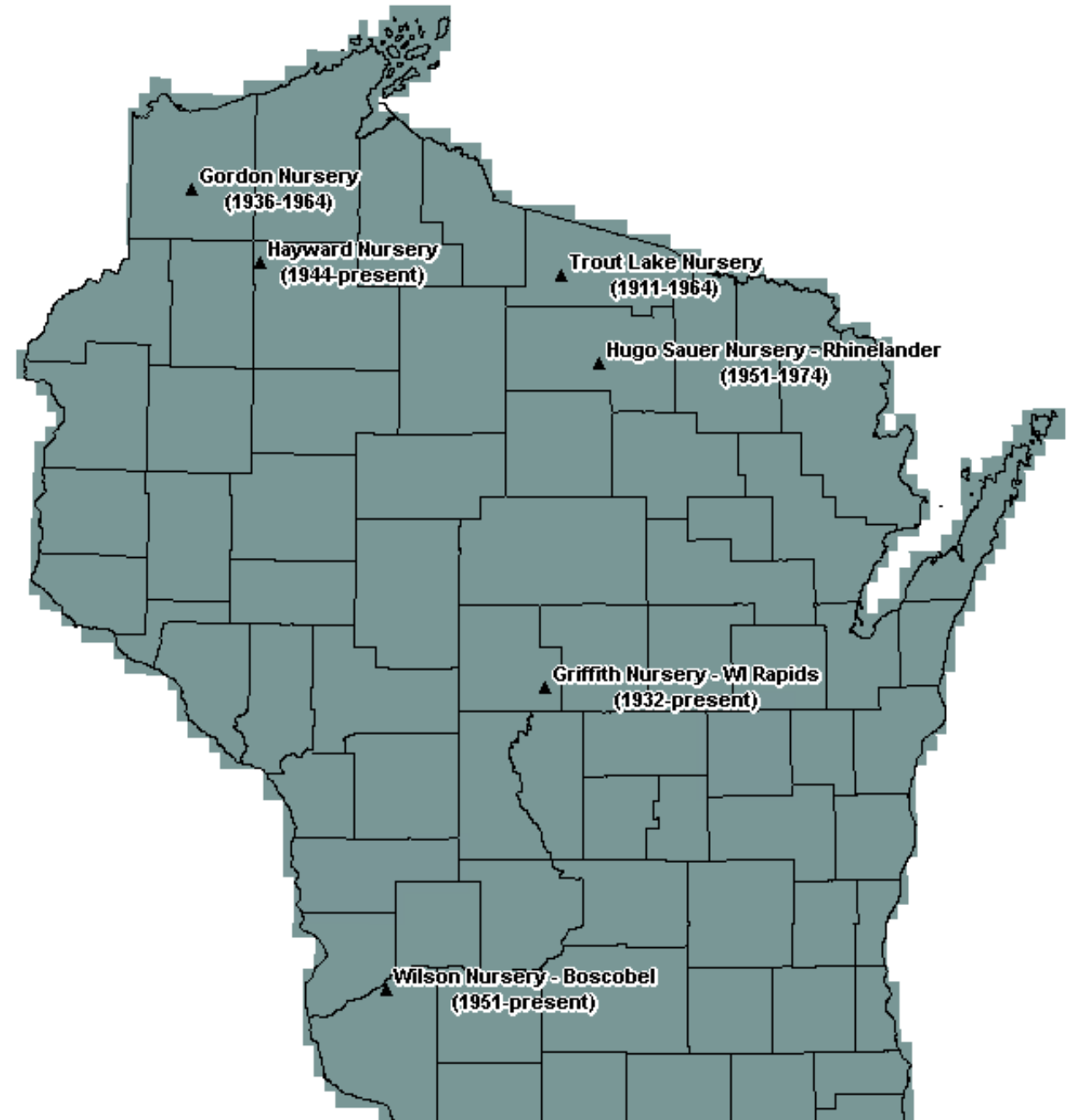
The Early Years (1904 – 1915)

- First state forester, Edward Merriam Griffith, hired 1904
 - Duties included appointing fire wardens for forest fire control
 - Examine the lands held in public trust to determine best use
- Started as an engineering student at Yale, but was interested in Forestry and attend school in Germany his senior year as there was no school for forestry in the United States
- He traveled extensively in Europe and Asia, researching forests and honing skills
- Returned to the United States, working on estates in the South, but also the newly founded national forests in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and the Hawaiian Islands
- As the Wisconsin Forestry Commission required the state forester be certified by the US Secretary of Agriculture. Griffith was eager to further his career and came to Madison. The job paid \$2500/year.

The Early Years (1904 – 1915)

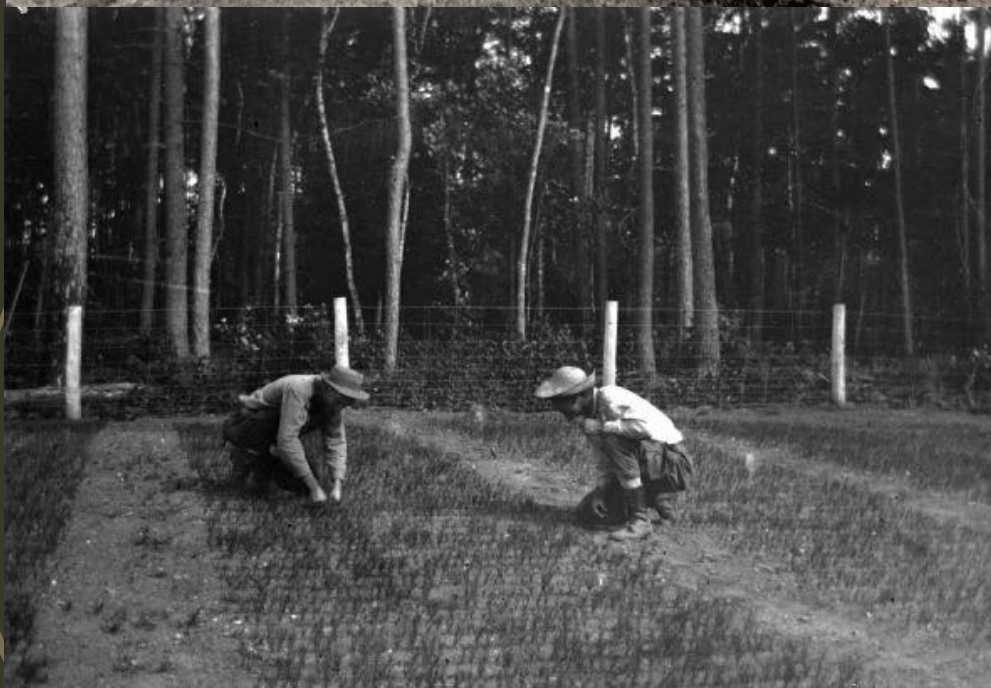
- First nursery was created near the new Forestry Headquarters at Trout Lake
 - Griffith appointed Asst. State Forester, Frank B. Moody, to direct a crew that cleared stumps and plowed an area of 7.5 acres near Trout Lake to act as the first state nursery.
 - Seed was collected from pinecones from the tops of a nearby logging operation of the Yawkey Bissell Lumber Company that fall
 - Seeding was completed in 1911, with an inventory of 933,000 one year old seedlings by the next fall
 - Seedlings were purchased from the Michigan Agricultural College (present Michigan State) to be transplanted in the nursery beds
- First recognized plantation was also established nearby, on a peninsula jutting into Star Lake
 - E. M. Griffith himself selected the site and wanted to prove that tree planting was sound.
 - Fred Wilson, first state forest ranger, oversaw the planting of native red and white pine (and some fast-growing scotch pine, western yellow pine and Norway spruce)
 - Both were determined to keep accurate records and a management plan be created to show how tree planting could be a worthwhile endeavor

Nurseries of Wisconsin



The Early Years (1911 – 1915)

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Star Lake Plantation

Oldest state lands
planting in Wisconsin



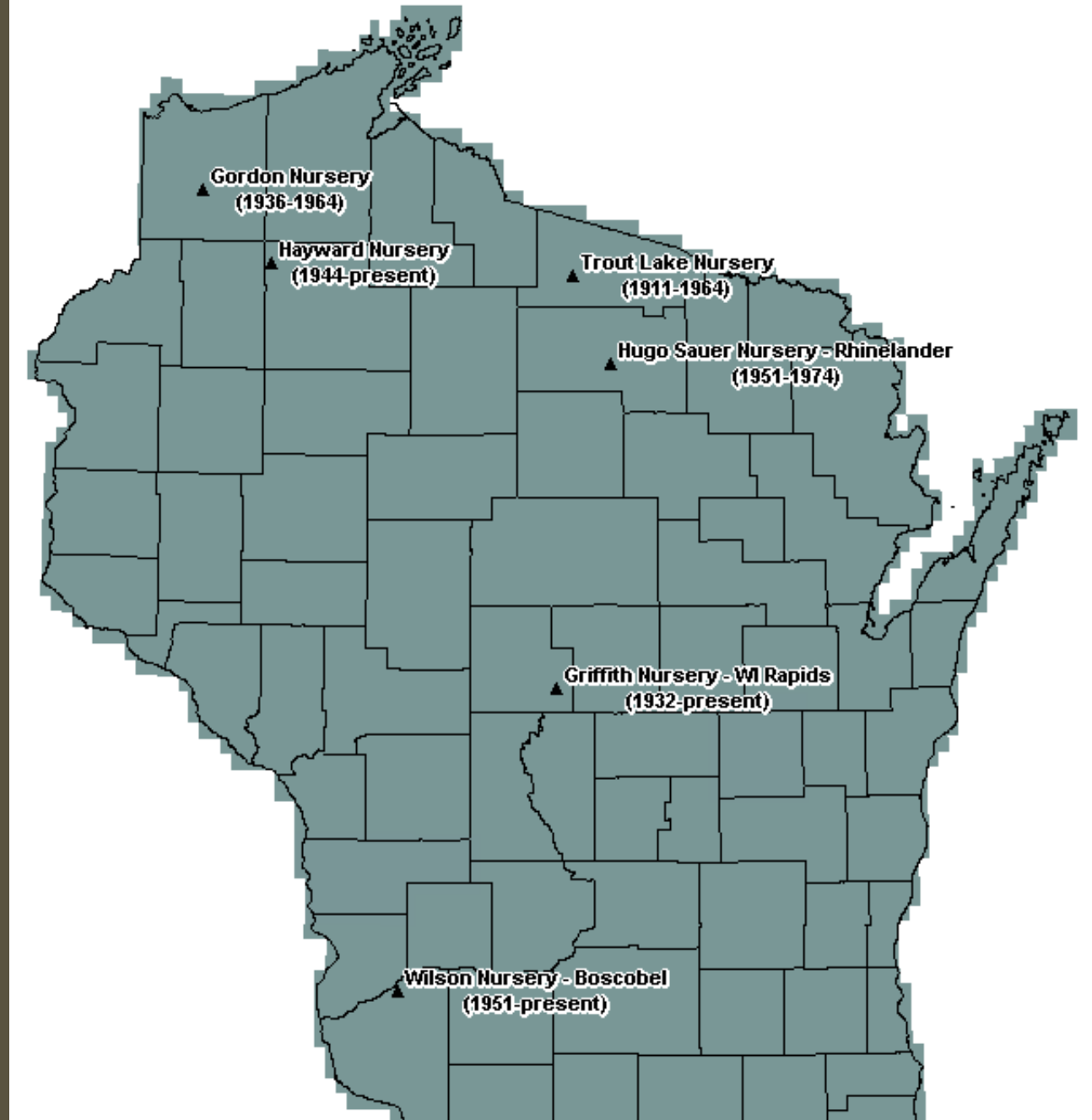
Reverse (1915 – 1924)

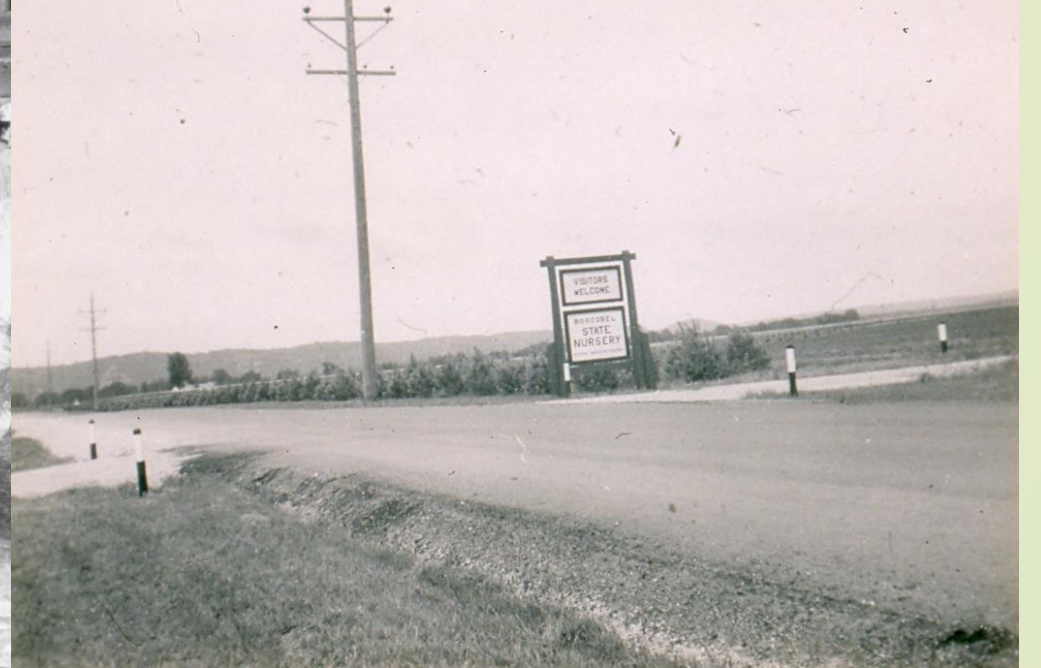
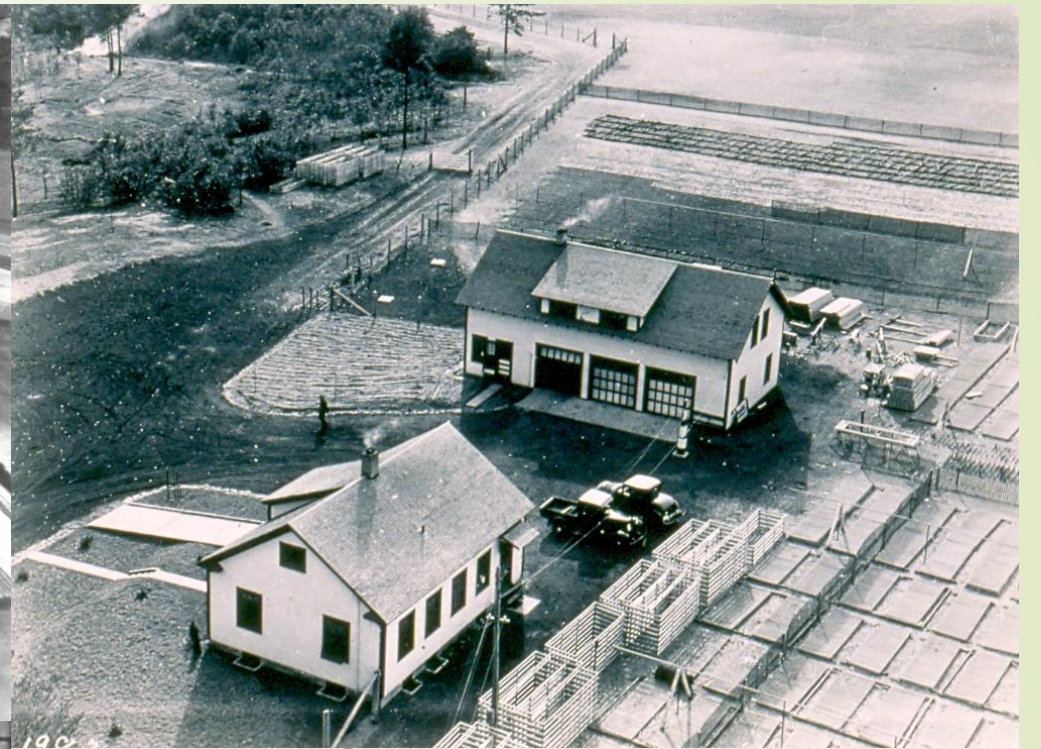
- The work of forestry was spearheaded by E.M. Griffith and others was not always welcomed and culminated in forestry being labeled “illegal” by the WI Supreme Court
 - The original state constitution did not allow for works of internal improvement. There was concern that forestry fit this description, so legislators in both houses passed an amendment that declared forestry did not violate the constitution. It was validated by a popular vote. However, the Assembly failed to use the full formal language required.
 - A friendly court case was forwarded to the Supreme Court, but unfortunately, the court found that forestry was a work of internal improvement, and the amendment had not been properly completed. Forestry was now illegal in Wisconsin.
 - The decision wiped out the forestry fund, reduced the forest reserve to land granted/given to the state specifically for forestry to be practiced and left the State Board of Forestry with only an annual appropriation from which it could operate.
 - Only 77,000 seedlings were distributed from the state nursery in 1915
 - Forestry continued, especially in the nursery, but was limited to state lands
 - Many land companies, university professors and other government officials tried to settle the cutover lands with farmers, but soon found out how poorly suited the land was to agriculture.
 - The land was meant for trees. And the nurseries were slowly beginning to build up their inventory, infrastructure and experience to assist.
- Griffith was very disappointed. He was offered a position on the newly created forestry commission but turned it down. Distraught and taking the rejection personally, he left WI and severed all connections with forestry for the rest of his life.

Return to Glory (1924 – 1960s)

- Constitutional amendment to make Forestry “legal” again.
 - The public interest grew, alongside the recognition of the importance of land and forest management and an amendment to was approved by the legislature and voters, allowing forestry to be practiced.
 - Seedling production soared - from 510,000 in 1925 to 1.1 million in 1926. Growing continually to over 30 million in 1940, until WWII and the restrictions on fertilizer, equipment and manpower.
 - CCC crews planted hundreds of millions of seedlings in WI, including state and federal lands.
 - Griffith Nursery housed and supervised crews that worked in central WI.
 - After WWII, and the expansion of state, county and industrial forests. Foresters wanted to replant the vast expanses still open from the Cut Over.
 - The dustbowl convinced landowners that shelterbelts were important, and the Soil bank programs paid for millions of windbreak trees.
 - WI nurseries expanded, Trout Lake was still producing seedlings, but new nurseries in Central State (soon to be renamed Griffith Nursery) in 1932, Gordon (attached to the prison) in 1936. Hayward (former federal nursery) in 1944, Hugo Sauer (former federal nursery) in 1951 and Wilson Nursery (former state fish and game nursery) in 1951 were created/expanded to supply demand.
 - From 1946 to the mid 1960s, DNR nurseries produced over 500 million seedlings

Nurseries of Wisconsin







Adjustments (1960s – early 1970s)

- Nursery practices became more mechanized, fertilizers and pesticides were more effective, statewide infrastructure improved
 - Transplant nurseries in McNaughton, Silver Cliff, Clark county and others closed
 - Trout Lake and Gordon closed in 1964
 - Hugo Sauer closed and returned to the Federal government in 1974
- Seedling production was maintained at the three remaining nurseries in Boscobel, WI Rapids and Hayward
 - Each nursery can easily grow 6-8 million seedlings/year







Back to Glory, Again (1970s – 2000s)

- Cost share programs, the value of forest products and decreased farm commodity prices kept seedlings affordable and planting opportunities plentiful.
- Improved nursery processes kept seedling production costs reasonable
 - In the early years, conifers were sold as 3-0 seedlings as it took that long to get a seedling large enough to be sold – especially in our northern nursery. But advancements in soil maintenance, fertilizers, pesticides, cultural practices, equipment, etc., dropped the time required, with most conifers being sold as 1-0 (PJ) and 2-0. 3-0 became a much smaller component than in the past.
- The forest products industry, especially pulp and paper, was robust, employing many people and keeping demand for forest products high.



Adjustments – again (mid- late 2000s)

- Industry re-evaluated its property ownership and divested itself of most land holdings, selling to private landowners or investment firms
- Private, containerized nurseries began to distribute to large forest managers
 - Nursery sales dropped dramatically, average distribution dropped from 14.8 million in the early part of the 2010s to an average of 4.3 million the past 10 years.
 - Hayward Nursery stopped producing seedlings in 2013
 - Griffith Nursery stopped producing seedlings in 2017
 - Wilson Nursery produces all seedling stock now, well within its potential capacity



The Present (2015 – present)

- Reforestation Program still produces seedlings, over 4.6 million in 2025 and 1.6 billion since 1911
- Reforestation Program is more than the nursery
 - Regeneration monitoring
 - Seed orchard establishment and expansion
 - Seed collection, cleaning and storage
 - Genetic selections for various conifers and hardwoods



The Future?

