

*Minnesota Forest Resources Council*  
DRAFT Minutes  
Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN  
November 13, 2013

**Members Present:** Don Arnosti (alternate for Susan Solterman Audette), Bob Stine (Chair), Greg Bernu, Wayne Brandt, Alan Ek, Dale Erickson, Shaun Hamilton, Darla Lenz, Jan Green (alternate for Gene Merriam), Bob Owens, Dave Parent, Olin Phillips (alternate for Forrest Boe), Kathleen Preece, Mary Richards,

**Members Absent:** Mike Trutwin, Shawn Perich, Forrest Boe, Gene Merriam, Susan Solterman Audette, Bob Lintelmann

**Staff Present:** Dave Zumeta, Lindberg Ekola, Calder Hibbard, Amanda Kueper, Michael Lynch, Jeff Reinhart, Rob Slesak, Clarence Turner

**Guests:** Amber Ellering (MN DNR), Linda Nagel (U of MN), Catherine Reed (Office of the Legislative Auditor), Mike Reinikainen (U of MN), Brian Trick (U of MN)

**Chair's Remarks**

Introductions were made. Bob Stine called attention to the proposed changes to the SFRA that Dave Zumeta provided to Council members. Bob asked Calder Hibbard to summarize the September 30 terrestrial invasive species meeting with the Commissioner of the DNR and other staff from DNR and Agriculture. Calder said that the discussion focused on an LCCMR policy proposal to study state policies and agency roles in managing terrestrial invasive species. Meeting outcomes were to revise the proposal and elaborate on reasons why the proposal should be funded. Bob mentioned that the meeting was positive.

The September 2014 two-day MFRC meeting and field tour will be held in Grand Marais. Dave Parent mentioned that the Gun Flint Lodge, a previous meeting spot, was for sale. The North House Folk School is another potential meeting site. Dave Zumeta suggested that the council may want to visit the Hedstrom Mill during its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Bob asked for public input from guests. Catherine Reed, Office of the Legislative Auditor, explained that she was attending to get a sense of what is on MFRC's plate and how the council's work intersects with the DNR's forest management work.

Alan Ek asked Dave Zumeta to speak about the new MFRC offices. Dave mentioned the MFRC's new location is in 201C and 201A Green Hall. Jan Green wanted to make sure that archived records were kept. Dave assured her that archival material had been moved to the new offices.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes\***

Bob Owens approved, and Wayne Brandt seconded, the meeting minutes. *The minutes were unanimously approved.*

### **Approval of Agenda\***

Wayne Brandt approved, and Alan Ek seconded, the draft meeting agenda. *The agenda was unanimously approved.*

### **Executive Director Remarks**

Dave Zumeta thanked Dale Erickson for hosting the council in Baudette in September.

Dave mentioned that Rachael Nicoll, MFRC Information Specialist, will reduce her time to 80% to pursue a Master's degree. A student worker has been hired to back-fill her position: Becky Enfield, a junior undergraduate at the University of Minnesota who has a strong interest in forest policy, as well as excellent office management skills and experience.

Dave reported that the Office of the Legislative Auditor will release a report on the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act, which will have impacts for state policy affecting private land. Dave and Calder Hibbard submitted comments on a draft of the Auditor's report. The report will be available at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Dave discussed his recent brief presentation to the Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy, a bipartisan group made up of many legislative leaders. Several members said good things about the council. Dave provided handouts on the MFRC at the presentation. The commission decided to retain both the Minnesota Forest Resources Council and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The exposure of the council to legislative leaders was positive.

Dave briefly reminded MFRC members about the goals of the ad hoc guidebook committee: to develop a guidebook (a short version of the site-level guidelines) and to develop implementation goals. The committee will meet twice before the end of the year to finalize these goals, if possible, and will ask the council to approve the guidebook on January 22, 2014. Rob Slesak will send out a draft to Council members prior to the meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Personnel and Finance Committee*

Bob Stine reviewed the September meeting summary, which included highlights from FY 2013, a work plan and budget update for FY 2014, and proposed edits to the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA). Dave Zumeta's position was extended for two years.

#### *Site-Level Committee*

Dave Parent said that the Site-level Committee has not met. Dave asked Rob Slesak to provide updates. Rob reported that there had been no formal meetings, but activities are ongoing, including work on new monitoring initiatives. The monitoring program will hire a landscape ecologist, housed at the University of Minnesota, to assist with the spatial metrics of the revised guideline monitoring approach. The focus will be on water quality monitoring. Rob mentioned that the DNR recently addressed a forest certification Corrective Action Request

related to providing field staff with Forest Management Guideline training. Rob said that the training sessions were effective in disseminating information about the revised guidelines. Rob described ongoing research projects focused on biomass, jack pine, emerald ash borer (EAB), and a retrospective study that includes returning to sites where guidelines were applied up to 15 years ago to assess their effectiveness. Shaun Hamilton asked about integrating certification into monitoring efforts. Rob said this is difficult to do, but that staff is continuously trying to find ways to do that.

#### *Landscape Committee*

Shaun Hamilton said the Landscape Committee met last Wednesday. They talked about the prospective changes to the SFRA, the need for additional budget, and processes for updating the Northeast and Southeast Landscape Plans. Lindberg said that background documents for the plans will be posted when they are in the final form. Shawn mentioned that the older landscape plans are still on the web site.

#### *Information Management Committee*

One scheduled meeting was canceled due to the federal government shutdown. The committee met via conference call on November 6 to discuss updates to the SFRA.

#### **Written Communication to the MFRC**

None. Bob mentioned the forest products industry global competitiveness study, but nothing has been received in writing concerning this yet.

#### **Committee of the Whole: Proposed revisions to the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (M.S. 89A)\***

Bob Stine explained that the proposed revisions to the SFRA are not final legislation, but rather are proposals that, pending Council approval, will be forwarded to prospective legislative authors. There will likely be some changes made to the SFRA that are beyond the council's control. Many of the proposed changes would remove outdated language.

Don Arnotsti suggested adding "sequestered carbon" to the forest resources definition in 89A.01, DEFINITIONS, Subdivision 8. Dave Parent suggested including the definition from 89.001 directly in the text. Bob Stine responded that this change would pertain to revising other legislation, so this change may have to wait. Jan Green mentioned that there was no definition of "wildlife" anywhere in Minnesota legislation. MFRC members agreed to the other minor changes that were proposed in Subdivision 9 and in 89A.02, POLICY, paragraphs (3) and (4).

With respect to 89A.03, MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL, Subdivision 1, Membership, Dave explained the proposed changes to the description of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council appointment. Wayne Brandt did not think the language would make it through the Office of the Revisor of Statutes because it would make the appointment less clear, but he did not suggest changing it. MFRC members agreed to the proposed changes.

MFRC members then discussed an addition to paragraph (8) that had been proposed by the Minnesota Forestry Association (insert the phrase "a representative from an association")

representing family forest woodlands who is an owner of nonindustrial, private forest land of 40 acres or more.” Mary Richards asked about the difference between the two private forest landowner appointments: one requires that the appointee own 40+ acres and one has no acreage specification. The council speculated on the reasoning for this. Don and Wayne said it was part of negotiations over the original act in 1995.

Kathleen agreed that one of the designations should specify a landowner association, but thought that it is important to mention Tree Farm as well as Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) if either is mentioned. However, neither she nor Wayne thought that the SFRA should mention any specific organizations. Dave Parent mentioned that a small percentage of landowners are in MFA, so the designation might be too restrictive, though Wayne noted that there were only two seats to fill. Darla asked for clarification of what the change would accomplish; would the person represent their organization instead of themselves? Wayne and Bob clarified that the person would represent the specific interest (e.g., private landowners).

Kathleen explained a suggestion from a MFRP member to add language to Subdivision 2, Purpose, about invasive species. Dave Zumeta and Kathleen agreed that invasive species is too specific of an issue to include in the Purpose section of the act.

Bob Owens expressed concern about membership representation in the Council: are Timber Investment Management Organizations sufficiently represented? Wayne responded that they have never expressed a desire for a separate seat on the council, and they seem to be content with him as their spokesperson.

Dave Zumeta explained the proposed change to Subdivision 6, Report, from an annual to a biennial report, indicating that it would save money. Shawn had a clarifying question about how it would fit with budget requests. Olin asked whether the report should precede the release of the state budget, or rather should be done at the end of the biennium. Dave responded that traditionally it has been done by calendar year. Bob Stine said that it is less about developing budgets and more about starting a conversation. MFRC members agreed to the proposed changes, as well as to two minor changes in 89A.04 PARTNERSHIP that had been proposed by a Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership member.

After considerable discussion, Council members agreed that Section 89A.05, TIMBER HARVESTING AND FOREST MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES, Subdivision 1, should be revised to state: “The council shall coordinate the development and periodic revision of comprehensive timber harvesting and forest management guidelines based on information derived from forest resources, practices, implementation, and effectiveness monitoring and other issues deemed appropriate by the council.” They also agreed to other additions and deletions proposed for that subdivision.

Bob Stine proposed retaining the original statutory language in Subdivision 2, Economic Considerations, and not adding the word “revised” prior to guidelines in line 1. MFRC members agreed with retaining the original language.

Wayne disagreed with the proposed addition of “and clean water” to paragraph (2) of Subdivision 2, which is focused on encouraging sustainable timber supplies to maintain a healthy timber industry. Don said “forest resources,” from 89A.001, already covers water (although not sequestered carbon), so “and clean water” is redundant. “Timber supplies” is redundant too, but should be left, as this was an important political agreement in 1995 and remains so. MFRC members agreed with retaining the original statutory language, as well as to the deletion of obsolete language in Subdivision 2a, Review.

Greg questioned the proposed addition of “when achieved” at the end of the first sentence in Subdivision 3, Application. Dave Zumeta agreed to delete the proposed addition. Mary said that the third sentence is too wordy, and suggested adding parentheses, but Wayne said the Office of the Revisor of Statutes would change the language back to its current form. MFRC members agreed to other proposed revisions to this subdivision.

Subdivision 4, Monitoring riparian forests, was proposed for deletion because of a lack of resources to do the monitoring and no indication from monitoring results in the early 2000s that there was a need to continue this type of monitoring. MFRC members agreed.

MFRC members agreed to retain the existing title of 89A.06, LANDSCAPE-LEVEL FOREST RESOURCE PLANNING AND COORDINATION. All proposed changes in Subdivision 1, Framework, and Subdivision 2, Regional forest resource committees, were agreed to, with the exception of paragraphs (8) and (9). After some discussion, MFRC members agreed that the proposed new language in paragraph (8) should read: “periodically recommend that the council undertake revisions of their region’s landscape plan.” Wayne suggested striking all of the proposed new language for paragraph (9). Lindberg clarified why the suggestion was made originally, as it is what the Committees do. Wayne felt this can be done without adding language directly to statute. There was agreement to delete the proposed language. MFRC members agreed to all proposed changes to the remainder of 89A.06.

The final sentence of 89A.07 MONITORING, Subdivision 1, Forest resource monitoring, was proposed for deletion. Don asked if the DNR Commissioner should be held to the law rather than change the law. Alan suggested that other agencies’ capacities and access to information had increased sufficiently to preclude the need for a periodic report on forest resource conditions and trends. There was agreement that it is a dated idea to suggest that all forest resource information comes from the DNR, and the proposed changes to this subdivision were approved.

Greg suggested also striking the “commissioner” language in Subdivision 2, Practices and compliance monitoring. Bob Stine suggested this is a different situation, as it refers to a duty that can be delegated by the commissioner. Dave Zumeta said that every other year the commissioner provides an implementation monitoring report to the MFRC. Shaun said that practices are not mentioned in the paragraph and therefore should not be in title, which was changed to “Implementation monitoring.” This and other proposed changes to this subdivision were approved, with the understanding that the “commissioner” language would be retained.

After considerable discussion about the language in Subdivision 3, Effectiveness monitoring, Olin suggested that the section is about effectiveness evaluation, not effectiveness monitoring, and proposed changing the title. Council members agreed to this change, as well as to all of the proposed changes to the text of this subdivision.

In Subdivision 4, Citizen concerns, Greg Bernu suggested striking the words “perceived negligent” in the second line. MFRC members agreed to this change.

All proposed changes to 89A.08, RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, were agreed to, with the exception of Subdivision 2, Purpose, paragraph (4). The proposed language was revised to read: “(4) communication with the legislature on funding the council’s priority forest resources research activities.”

Alan discussed the proposed changes to the first few lines under 89A.09 INTERAGENCY INFORMATION COOPERATIVE, Subdivision 1, Establishment. Wayne suggested the IIC stay at the University of Minnesota. There was a decision to propose the following language: “The Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences shall maintain an Interagency Information Cooperative.”

Jan asked about the Forest Service seat; it is vague and does not reference a specific position like other seats do (e.g. “the Dean”). Darla Lenz said that it makes sense to leave the agency, but refer to it as the USDA Forest Service. MFRC members agreed to this proposal. Shaun asks why the council is not referenced as a participant in the IIC. Bob Stine suggested that the council is part of all the committees referenced in the act. No changes were proposed.

MFRC members agreed to all other proposed revisions to 89A.09 – 89A.12, REPEALER.

Alan Ek moved and Dave Parent seconded a motion to approve all of the proposed revisions. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **DNR nursery and tree improvement report to the legislature**

Olin Phillips, Forest Protection and Health Section Manager, DNR Division of Forestry, mentioned the two goals of the DNR nursery and tree improvement report to the legislature: 1) to make recommendations on addressing challenges facing the nursery and tree improvement program, including reforestation, invasive species, and climate change; and 2) to find how the state nursery and tree improvement program can support those goals.

Olin provided a preliminary draft of the report and described proposed changes to the program. The first section covers potential DNR responses to identified challenges. The DNR cannot solve these challenges on its own, so there are no plans to expand the program to try to meet *all* of these needs by itself. At this point in time the demand for seedlings has flat-lined, so there is no real need to increase seedling volume in the near future. If afforestation increases, it will be on private lands. Currently, demand for afforestation or reforestation on private land is at an all-time low. Olin mentioned that the report does not address the question of how to build demand. If demand increases, how should the program prepare to address it?

Olin asked whether it is time to start exploring introducing gene pools from further south to see how they survive in Minnesota (e.g., Kansas provenance bur oak). Dave Parent asked about EAB and what research has been done on it in relation to climate change. He also asked about GMO's and the possibility of developing a "Bt ash." Olin said this has not been addressed, as it is beyond the DNR's capabilities.

Mary Richards asked about issues related to tamarack. Olin replied that Minnesota has lost 100,000 acres of tamarack due to lengthening warm seasons and double attacks per year from a native insect, eastern larch beetle. Olin pointed out that climate change affects more than invasive species; it also alters the patterns of native species. Jan Green discussed large die-offs of tamarack around the turn of the century in the early 1900's. She asked if the cause was ever ascertained. Olin suggested that the cause could have been the beetle.

In response to a question, Olin explained that the nursery is not subsidized, and it is not intended to be for profit. However, it still needs to be self-sufficient and expand seed operations. Bob Owens asked about what has been done in terms of marketing, considering expansion of private ownership. Olin explained that marketing cannot be too aggressive due to potential competition with private industry, but nurseries still do a good job of reaching smaller ownerships. Shaun Hamilton mentioned that specificity of site selection should be based on certain criteria, considering climate change. Olin said this is part of the research that is needed: will certain seed sources survive further north? The former policy was to not sell seeds outside of "seed zones" because the goal was local revegetation. Olin said that climate change will impact more than trees; how do you regenerate understory vegetation? Climate change will exceed the rate of natural adaptation. There needs to be a serious discussion about what we should do about that.

Unless there is evidence in the future that demand cannot be met, only one nursery (Badoura) is necessary. Seed production capacity must be available to meet needs.

Dave Zumeta inquired about the due date for submitting comments on the draft report. Olin replied that the due date is the end of November, and comments should be turned into him at olin.phillips@state.mn.us. A final draft will go to the DNR Commissioner in the first part of December, and then to the legislature on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Vision for forest resources research and education at the Cloquet Forestry Center**

Alan Ek introduced Dr. Linda Nagel, Director of Operations at the Cloquet Forestry Center (CFC) and Professor, Department of Forest Resources, University of Minnesota. Linda described her background and introduced Mike Reinikainen, the new Forest Manager at the CFC. Linda noted the MFRC's important relationship with the CFC and provided a brief history of the CFC. The primary intent of the CFC was to determine how to best reforest cutover lands. Today, the CFC remains the primary research and education forest for the University of Minnesota. The CFC is home to diverse, long-term research. It is also home to the Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative (SFEC), an Extension Regional Center, and the Minnesota Tree Improvement Cooperative.

The CFC's mission is "to conduct applied education, research, and outreach related to northern forests." The CFC has a national context and is a world-class facility. It is multi-disciplinary, science-driven, focused on present and future natural resource issues, and field-based. It is both a forest and a facility. The center's goal is to strengthen the relationship between the Fond du Lac Nation and the local community and with many other entities. The CFC is both a research and working forest. Historically, the research program was modest, but there are many research foci to expand on. The center also wants to clarify forest access and remove 'no trespassing' signs.

Linda mentioned the planned creation of an advisory board, and asked MFRC members how the board could best serve the needs of people in Minnesota and beyond. She also discussed a research project entitled adaptive silviculture for climate change (ASCC). This project includes experiments on the effects of climate change on forests being conducted at several sites around the nation, including the Chippewa National Forest's Cutfoot Experimental Forest. Linda has also proposed moving the National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP), a USDA Forest Service intensive training program, to the CFC.

Linda is seeking enhancements to continuing education at the CFC. The goal is to work through SFEC to create more robust training for forestry professionals. Cutting-edge science should infuse the program. Linda wants to bolster the involvement of MFRC and collaborate with MLEP. SFEC also wants to work with Eli Sagor to improve the CFC's web presence.

Dave Parent asked if Linda has had involvement with Ontario. Linda responded that she had yet had involvement with Ontario. Bob Owens commented on Linda's impressive enthusiasm to expand the program and asked about the status of forming the advisory group. Linda responded that she hopes to do this soon. Her goal is to reach out broadly but also to have a workable group that can provide tangible direction. Amber Ellering commented that the DNR has a strong interest in advanced silvicultural training and asked if DNR should contact Linda directly about training ideas. Linda responded that there is great potential to build interest in this type of training, as it has waned for state agencies. Dave Zumeta thanked Linda and noted that MFRC staff will make a strong effort to support her in achieving the CFC's mission.

#### **Update on report to the administration on competitiveness of Minnesota's primary forest products industry**

Bob Stine reported that the official letter from the governor or DNR Commissioner still has yet to arrive. He noted that Brian Trick has been doing volunteer work related to this effort for the MFRC Policy program.

#### **Northeast and Southeast Landscape Plan revision updates**

Lindberg Ekola described work being done on the Northeast Landscape Plan revision by Jeff Reinhart and Mike Lynch. He discussed the three major planning steps: Where have we been? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? Lindberg noted comments from DNR Division of Forestry Planning Supervisor Jon Nelson that the first generation landscape plans were too

general and too variable in content and structure. MFRC staff and the Northeast Planning Committee are trying to address these concerns as part of the revision effort.

Lindberg described the various aspects of the plan: 1) sub-landscape level; 2) ecological: using Native Plant Community systems to describe the landscape; 3) economic: forest products, tourism, and mining; and 4) social: importance of resources to communities, the wildland-urban interface relative to wildfire issues, and Native American cultural traditions. Lindberg also described supporting documents (e.g., Conditions and Trends report, Forest Policy Inventory report).

Mary asked about the public comment process. Lindberg described the process, which will be open for a 30 day period. He mentioned that the Landscape Program keeps track of interested persons and tries to let them know about progress. Dave Parent suggested “watershed” as simplified language for the transitional range between site-level and landscape-level scales.

Lindberg next described the Southeast Landscape Committee meeting that took place last week, in which committee members discussed strategies to revise the Southeast Plan. The committee has not yet come to the council requesting approval to officially update the plan, but they received federal funding to move forward on revising it. Committee members want this revised plan to link in with other relevant plans.

Wayne mentioned that his members in the southeast are concerned that more timber is being harvested by Wisconsin crews than previously. There is concern as to whether these crews have equivalent training to what we have in Minnesota (e.g., MLEP training). Should the Southeast Committee look at this? Should the DNR? This is a particular concern on private lands. Also, can anything be done to encourage processing of timber in Minnesota instead of moving it over to Wisconsin? Lindberg will take these concerns to the Southeast Committee. He also described public input efforts, which included a stakeholder survey and follow-up focus groups.

Lindberg asks for formal approval to move forward on the Southeast Plan. Dave Zumeta commented that the council could move for that in January when there is a quorum again. The Southeast Committee should move forward now, since funding is available.

Lindberg said that the goal is to complete development of supporting documents by January 1, before the Planning Core Group meets to begin the plan writing process. Other issues in the Southeast Landscape include: climate change leading to invasive species, forest fragmentation, capacity changes/loss of the Southeast DNR Region, frac sand mining, and oak regeneration.

**Public Communications to the MFRC**

None.

**MFRC Member Comments**

Kathleen Preece updated the council on a recent Blandin Foundation-sponsored Vital Forests/Vital Communities meeting. The council will likely see renewed forest productivity and health initiatives as outcomes from that meeting.

In the absence of a quorum, Bob Stine declared that the meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.