

## **Site-level Committee Meeting Summary**

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MN Interagency Fire Center, Grand Rapids, April 14, 2011, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

**Members present:** Dale Erickson, Bob Lintelmann, Gene Merriam, Dave Parent (Chair), Shawn Perich, John Rajala. **Members absent:** Mary Richards

**Staff:** Rob Slesak **Guests:** Tim O'hara

The meeting began with Tim O'hara presenting some information related to the leave tree guidelines, including an assessment of State guidelines prepared by NCASI, and some examples related to leave tree locations based on research conducted in MI. Rob then summarized the leave tree assessment that was presented at the previous meeting. Most members expressed support for less prescriptive recommendations in general, focusing on intended outcomes of a practice rather than how to implement it. The Committee recommended removing language for even distribution of leave trees and replacing it with language that emphasized a distribution most appropriate for a given management objective (e.g., specific wildlife species, silvicultural prescription, etc.). There was considerable discussion about whether or not to count RMZ area towards leave tree area, with no clear consensus on any change. Shawn suggested that this be evaluated with the riparian guidelines, and the committee unanimously agreed. The Committee then focused on the recommendation to establish a harvest size minimum for leave tree retention. Rob reiterated that benefits of leave trees likely decrease past some minimum harvest size, but there was little information to determine what the minimum size was. Dale and John supported establishment of a harvest size minimum for operability and economic considerations, and proposed a minimum of 20 acres for leave tree retention. Bob supported their proposal. Gene thought establishment of a minimum size would be arbitrary. Shawn stated that operability should no longer be a concern given the committee's recommendation to remove even distribution of leave trees. The committee voted 3-3 on the proposed harvest minimum, and it was decided to forward the decision to the full Council. Discussion then turned whether or not to recommend avoiding retention of sawlog trees. Some members indicated support for the idea largely from an economic standpoint, but there was general agreement that any change would be politically untenable and ecologically unjustified. The committee voted 5-1 not to recommend changing the guideline, with Dale voting against because of the economic cost of retention.

Prior to evaluation of the biomass guidelines, Rob emphasized that changing the FWD guideline before results from the biomass project were available could be counterproductive, and there is no new information to justify changing the existing recommendation. Although some members thought the FWD level was not well supported, it was agreed not to recommend changing the guideline at this time. The Committee did agree to recommend additional language to allow adjustment of backhauled FWD amounts as appropriate to achieve the 1/3 retention. The committee also agreed to include new language allowing more or less FWD retention depending on silvicultural objectives with reference to the existing examples provided in the guidebook on pages 32-33. The last point of discussion related to incorporation of the biomass guidelines into the larger book. There were 2 options presented to the committee: fully incorporate the biomass guidelines into the existing book, or change any conflicts within pre-existing guidelines and retain the biomass section. Members were unsure of the ramifications of fully incorporating the guidelines, as there was some question if the biomass guidelines applied to every harvest. Rob indicated that they did, since the goal is maintain biodiversity and soil productivity regardless what type of harvest is conducted. Gene requested that Rob identify all areas of conflict between the sections to guide evaluation at the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm