

Site-level Committee Meeting Summary

MN Interagency Fire Center, Grand Rapids, June 22, 2011, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Members present: Dale Erickson, Bob Lintelmann, Dave Parent, Mary Richards,

Members absent: Shawn Perich, John Rajala, Gene Merriam

Staff: Rob Slesak

Guests: Tim O'hara

Rob reviewed some information on the agenda and issues related to a pending government shutdown, and stated that the scheduled July 13 meeting would proceed if a budget was agreed upon by the 12th. The meeting then turned to addressing the remaining topics associated with the biomass harvesting guidelines. Rob reviewed the new language that was developed to reconcile differences between the BHG's and the pre-existing guidelines, noting that most of the new language was focused on slash retention recommendations. Committee members requested several changes to clarify the intent of the slash recommendations. Contingent on these changes being made, the members unanimously approved inclusion of the reconciliation language. Members then discussed the suitability of the this new language as related to salvage harvesting, and generally agreed not to create specific slash retention guidelines for salvage harvests to retain flexibility in application for a wide range of site conditions and salvage types.

The meeting focus then turned to development of invasive species guidelines, beginning with Rob presenting some additional information on existing laws and regulations related to invasive species, some shortcomings of those laws, and some factors to consider when deciding whether or not to create the guidelines. Much of the initial discussion focused on MDA's noxious weed law, and its suitability for application in forestry. Some of the Committee thought that referencing the weed law would sufficiently address the invasive species issue. Rob stated that the law as written has limited utility for application, especially if trying to provide guidance on how to prevent or minimize the spread of invasives on private forestland. Dave thought that the existing regulatory framework was detailed, but still suitable to address invasive species on forestlands. Dale was generally against creating any invasive species guidelines, stating it was futile to control invasive species and any guidelines that add cost are a non-starter. Bob thought that the invasive species issue has to be addressed with some guidelines, and Mary generally concurred.

After further discussion, it was generally agreed that some invasive species guidelines should be created, but the appropriate scope and form were unclear. There was generally little support to address the recreational pathway of spread, even though members agreed that this vector was a major contributor to invasive species management. Dave suggested that focus be placed on efforts to prevent the spread of invasive plants during timber harvesting, including a development of a road map for practitioners to access and utilize existing regulations and resources. Most of the members agreed with this suggestion, but Dale indicated little support for any guidelines that might include detailed recommendations. Rob suggested that he develop some general guidelines based on those created by MN and WI DNR which could then be evaluated by the Committee for suitability. Members agreed, and suggested that Rob contact MDA and WI DNR for additional information and guidance. The Committee will evaluate and finalize invasive species guidelines after the revision of the riparian guidelines is completed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2pm