

## **Minnesota Forest Resources Council**

Meeting Minutes — September 17, 1998

Concordia Language Villages — Bemidji, MN

**Council Members Present:** Wayne Brandt, Bob Dunn, Paul Ellefson, Steve Eubanks, Jan Green, Alan Knaeble, Dick Knoll, Marcie McLaughlin, Norm Moody, Bob Oswald, Jerry Rose

**Council Members Absent:** Joe Wood, Judy Hewes

**Staff Present:** Mike Kilgore, Sara Eliason, Dave Miller, Chris Edgar, Chad Skally

### **Call to Order**

Paul Ellefson called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He then introduced and welcomed Joe Day of the Minnesota American Indian Affairs Council, the MFRC's newest member attending his first meeting. Bob Dunn also introduced his new alternate, Tom Duffus, a recent addition to the Nature Conservancy's Minnesota staff. Paul further bid farewell to Steve Eubanks, attending his last meeting before moving to Oregon. He also welcomed the numerous guests in attendance.

### **Approval of May 21, 1998 Meeting Minutes**

*Motion:* Norm Moody moved to approve the July 16, 1998 meeting minutes. Steve Eubanks seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Motion:* Jerry Rose moved to approve the September 17, 1998 agenda. The motion was seconded by Bob Oswald. The motion passed.

### **Chair's Remarks**

Paul Ellefson reported on the following events regarding the MFRC and other forest related activities:

- Attended the meeting of the Landscape Committee in Hinckley and joined in the discussion of the landscape program.
- Met with the staff of the Nature Conservancy to brief them on council programs, progress to date and outlooks for the future on council activities.
- On September 8<sup>th</sup> Paul, along with Mike Kilgore, met with Jack Rajala and Terry Weber of the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership (MFRP). Discussion focused on reauthorization of the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) and how that process might unfold. They also talked about progress in development of the timber

harvesting/forest management guidelines. Lastly, the group addressed and attempted to clarify the roles of the MFRC and MFRP in guideline implementation and education/training.

Paul also outlined the breadth of issues before the council this fall. He reiterated that the November and December meetings will be two day sessions and asked for council members' continued commitment to attending every meeting. Lastly, Paul laid forth a suggestion of establishing three new committees in order to manage all the work on the council's plate. These three are for: Information and Information Management, Continuing Education/Certification of Natural Resource Professionals, and Guideline Implementation and Monitoring. These committees will be appointed this fall and winter as appropriate.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Mike Kilgore updated Council members on the following items:

- **New MFRC staff.** Mike introduced and welcomed Chad Skally who was hired as the MFRC's GIS specialist in July.
- **Meetings.** In August Mike attended a meeting of the Minnesota Association of Counties (MAC) and talked with their Environment and Natural Resource Policy Committee about the MFRC, the SFRA. He briefed them on MFRC activities and the role of the counties in the process. The MAC is considering placing SFRA reauthorization as part of their legislative platform for the coming year.
- **Policy and Budget Initiatives.** Work on budget and policy packages is ongoing. SFRA implementation budget narratives were delivered to the Department of Finance in early September, and this will play into the finalization of budget packages for the next biennium. Because of the pending repealer of the SFRA, these SFRA implementation budgets are proposed as a new budget initiative.
- **Quarterly Budget format.** Increasing level of activity in all MFRC programs decreases our ability to track specific budget expenditures using the current reporting format. Changes will be made to the reporting format to conform more with that of the DNR, MFRC's fiscal agent.
- **Public Concern Registration Process.** Mike handed out a letter from a forest landowner whose property was the focus of a concern registered this summer. The landowner expressed appreciation of the process and plans to proceed with mitigation work on his property.

### **Communications**

#### **Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership**

Paul distributed a letter from Jack Rajala, and Paul's response letter, that addressed guideline education and training initiatives.

Terry Weber provided a report on the MFRP. The advisory committee met on September 15<sup>th</sup> and began developing ideas for moving forward with guideline education and training plans. A task force was appointed that will first develop a needs assessment, outline a potential curriculum, find ways to work within existing programs to deliver training, and then set goals for education and training. The primary concern is to address the educational needs of loggers, landowners, and natural resource professionals.

Norm Moody circulated a resolution from the Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners endorsing the Jack Rajala's letter and efforts regarding guideline education and training.

### **MFRC Committee Reports**

#### **Landscape Committee**

Marcie McLaughlin reported on the meeting of the Landscape Committee held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> in Hinckley, MN. Jan Green, Dick Knoll, Jerry Rose, Wayne Brandt and Marcie met with Dave Miller. The pilot in the northeast region is going along well. Three working groups have come out of this regional effort: Landscape Coordination, Outreach and Education, and Assessment and Monitoring. A meeting of the entire Northeast Regional Landscape Committee has been called for September 29<sup>th</sup> in Duluth, MN. This will update the members on progress over the past six months and look forward to future directions.

#### **Economic and Finance Committee**

Bob Dunn addressed the activities of the Economic and Finance Committee. With the completion of the economic and financial analysis of the proposed integrated timber harvesting/forest management guidelines, the function of this committee is at an end. Bob thanked the committee members for their concerted participation. The full MFRC will be taking over the report from this point.

### **Discussion: MN Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) Re-Authorization**

Initiating a discussion on SFRA reauthorization, Paul Ellefson distributed and outlined a discussion piece he developed listing topics needing focused discussion. These cover an evaluation of the SFRA programs, reflection on their implementation, and assessment of their outcomes. He emphasized that reauthorization focuses on the SFRA itself, not the MFRC.

Council members then generally discussed options for reauthorization. Wide agreement was expressed that the most reasonable option is to actively work for reauthorization of the SFRA. To leave the process would be to ignore the benefits of a cooperative effort in which all parties remain involved. Also, with so many people participating, so many programs running, and so much time invested, council members thought it most logical to use the current momentum and build on the foundation of programs and cooperation established over the past two years. Council

members recognized the importance of evaluating the council and the initiatives it sponsors. This needs to be done internally, but stakeholders and constituents must participate in an evaluation as well. Considering this, the council decided to convene a group of citizens in early January. They would be briefed on council programs and progress, then offer their comments, critique and suggestions on past activities and future directions. This input will help in decisions on how to maintain or alter the SFRA to most suitably deal with evolving forest issues. Paul Ellefson asked staff to pursue putting this meeting together.

### **Presentation of Proposed Integrated Timber Harvesting/Forest Management Guidelines Guidebook for Public Review**

Mike Phillips offered an overview of the guidebook for the proposed integrated timber harvesting/forest management guidelines. He indicated sections included in the guidebook, ongoing work to format the text to be user-friendly, and plans to incorporate descriptive graphics. He thanked the integration team for their dedicated work.

Some specific council member questions and comments were forwarded regarding formatting, items in the guidebook, the need to designate the guidebook as a council document up front, and the need to acknowledge the process and level of agreement on the guidelines. Integration team members offered clarification on several points. Audience members made comments on the proposed integrated guidelines. Comments were centered on issues of the recently completed economic and financial analysis. Paul Ellefson stressed that at this point the council's task was not to approve the proposed guidelines, rather to accept and pass them on to public review. It was agreed that "accept" does not assume agreement with every detail of the proposed integrated guidelines or the financial/economic analysis. It was also reiterated that the council had agreed several months ago to move the proposed integrated guidelines and the financial/economic analysis along to public review together.

*Motion: Wayne Brandt moved that the MFRC accept the proposed integrated guidelines from the Integration Team, and defer any action on forwarding the proposed integrated guidelines for public review pending the presentation to and acceptance by the MFRC of the Financial/Economic Analysis of the guidelines. Dick Knoll seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

### **Presentation of Financial/Economic Analysis of Proposed Integrated Timber Harvesting/Forest Management Guidelines**

The report on the Financial/Economic Analysis of Proposed Integrated Timber Harvesting/Forest Management Guidelines was distributed to council and audience members. A presentation on the financial/economic analysis was delayed in order to allow council members sufficient time to read the report prepared by Chris Edgar and Mike Vasievich. A special meeting was scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup> from 7-9 p.m. in order to discuss the report. At that time a decision on acceptance of the analysis will be reached.

*Motion: Wayne Brandt moved to defer action on this agenda item until the September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Dick Knoll seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

## **Discussion: Timber Harvesting/Forest Management Guidelines Implementation Goals**

Mike Phillips presented a discussion paper written for the MFRC about developing implementation goals for the timber harvesting/forest management guidelines. He stressed that beyond putting together the guidelines, the MFRC needs to establish implementation goals in looking ahead. Success in reaching goals will be determined through monitoring programs, about which the council must also deliberate. Paul Ellefson indicated the legal obligation of the council to decide on implementation goals, as it is mandated in the SFRA.

Council members recognized the importance of this task. A suggestion was to first learn about baseline practices, by looking at current activities in the field and assessing what is happening on the ground. Furthermore, landowner groups and harvesting operators must be involved in setting these goals. To this end the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership members and representatives of numerous organizations with an interest in Minnesota's forests will be asked to closely interact with the MFRC in developing implementation goals. Also input must be solicited from other stakeholders and groups who have an interest in forest issues.

Preliminary discussion of how to set these goals ensued. Council members discussed ideas about the measurability of goals, need to vary goals by landowner category, what exactly to measure or evaluate, how to reach compliance goals by ensuring understanding of guidelines through education, ways to encourage implementation of guidelines through management plans, how to make goals fluid and dynamic, and the need to make goals reasonable and yet solid. This discussion will continue throughout the upcoming meetings.

### **Council Member Comments**

*Rose* - Chairing national group that is doing white paper and providing recommendations on the relationship between the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Forest Service, state forestry agencies, and state emergency management agencies.

*Oswold* - Reported on the AFL CIO conference in Duluth. Mentioned another resolution passed that the new governor consider the needs of working people in appointing a new DNR commissioner.

*Moody* - Told the MFRC of a new stream crossing system developed by a logger. It has an unbelievable design, is removable and truly leaves minimal impact on the site.

*McLaughlin* - MN Rural Partners held their first rural summit in August which 350 people attended. This coincided with the Blandin Foundation report on rural issues. The GEIS on feedlots are dealing with drainage issues and may be helped by the integrated guidelines. She also asked that although the council is under a time constraint this fall in making decisions about various items, the relationships built not be jeopardized by pushing too hard.

*Eubanks* - Spoke to the public input process in developing revised forest management plans for the National Forests in Minnesota. Although the outcomes were not exactly what hoped or expected, this participatory method is working and will be continued. He was interview on

KAXE public radio and had an opportunity to mention the MFRC, its activities and his positive perspective on this process. Said farewell to the MFRC and thanked all those involved on the council, staff and the many MFRC programs.

*Knoll* - Invited all in attendance to the East Central Woodland Council's Small-Scale Logging Equipment Field Demonstration on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Day* - Talked about a joint project between the US and Canada - the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. He is looking to good things to come out of his involvement on the MFRC. He is planning to ask the MN American Indian Affairs Council to develop a resolution that will support SFRA reauthorization in their legislative platform. This is a pledge to work closely with the MFRC.

*Motion:* Wayne Brandt moved to thank Steve Eubanks for his service on the Council. Norm Moody seconded. The motion passed!

### **Public Comments**

*Larry Jones* - Asked whether comments on the financial/economic analysis would be accepted by the council, because loggers will certainly have something to say about the results. (The MFRC will take comments on this report.) Also emphasized the MFRP's conviction in moving forward with planning for guideline education and training programs.

*Tim Webb* - Asked whether guidelines, although not yet out for public review, could be distributed to colleagues for professional comment.

*Bruce ZumBahlen* - Spoke about a successful collaborative effort going for the past two years - the Balsam Bough Partnership. This group is addressing ways to reach sustainability for the balsam bough enterprise.

**Next Meeting:** The next full-day business meeting will be held at the Cloquet Forestry Center near Cloquet, MN. A regular business meeting will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Later that day, from 6-8 p.m. the MFRC will hold an open house for the public to learn more about and provide comments on the propose integrated guidelines.

*Motion:* Dick Knoll moved that the meeting be adjourned. Wayne Brandt seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Eliason

