

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes — September 23, 1999

Cloquet Forestry Center — Cloquet, MN

Council Members Present: Wayne Brandt, Steven Daley Laursen, Betsy Daub, Joe Day, Jan Green, Judy Hewes, Rich Holm, Marcie McLaughlin, Gene Merriam (chair), Norm Moody, Ron Nargang, Bob Oswald, Dave Parent, Jerry Rose, Jim Sanders, Roger Scherer

Council Members Absent: none

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

Call to Order

Gene Merriam called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and welcomed all existing and new MFRC members, staff and guests.

Council Member/Staff Introductions

This being the first meeting of the MFRC with new governor-appointed members and chair, the MFRC took time for all members and staff to introduce themselves and get acquainted with each member's background, current work and role on the MFRC.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC

Several of the participants from the public introduced themselves to the MFRC. Rick Horton is the new staff biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society; he is located in Grand Rapids, MN. Allison Rajala will be representing the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership (MFRP) during Terry Weber's three-month absence. She described how the MFRP has and plans to continue supporting the work of the MFRC. Barb Coffin is the director of the Institute for Sustainable Natural Resources, an organization providing continuing education opportunities geared mainly at natural resource professionals.

Approval of March 18, 1999 Meeting Minutes

Gene Merriam noted the date in the header incorrectly indicated the last MFRC meeting was on March 17, 1999. This should be March 18, 1999. Dick Knoll, a former MFRC member, sent in a correction to his comment recorded in the March 18, 1999 minutes. The statement incorrectly reads: "MFA passed a motion to support continuation of the organization and..."; it should say: "MFA passed a motion to support the extension of the SFRA and..."

Motion: Jerry Rose moved to approve the March 18, 1999 meeting minutes with the changes noted. Judy Hewes seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Approval of Agenda

The chair suggested the MFRC move the meeting's adjournment to 3:30 p.m. rather than 4:00 p.m.

Motion: Jan Green moved to approve the September 23, 1999 agenda with a new time for adjournment. The motion was seconded by Bob Oswald. The motion passed.

Review of MFRC Operating Protocols

Prior to addressing specific items of the operating protocols, council members discussed meeting scheduling. Members concluded the staff should poll MFRC members to get a sense of the best day and week during any given month to hold meetings.

This discussion was meant to gather ideas for changing the operating protocols. Staff will enter these changes and distribute adjusted protocols for further discussion and approval at the MFRC's October 28-29 meeting. Gene Merriam, chair, suggested new wording for section C, Council Officers and Organization, *Chair*, given the chair is now appointed by the governor, not elected by the MFRC itself. He also wondered at the need for monthly meetings (recommended under section D, Council Meetings, *Frequency and Location*). Some council members suggested one day each month be set aside for MFRC meetings, such that members can block out that time for MFRC committee meetings if the full council is not meeting in a particular month. A couple MFRC members suggested that several portions of section D, Council Meetings, be altered to include provisions for a group of MFRC members to encourage the chair to call a meeting and have more direct opportunities for members to offer agenda items for upcoming meetings. Further suggested changes included cleaning up language in Section E, Council Procedures, *Record of Decision* and Section G, Council Staff and Support Services. The role of and process of choosing the vice chair (Section C, Council Officers and Organization, *Vice Chair*) also was deliberated. Also brought up was the need, not to change, but to better address the council's protocol to involve the public, listed under D, Council Meetings, *Accessibility by the Public*. Considerable thought was given to Section E, Council Procedures, *Council Decisions*, as members considered the MFRC's current decision-making process, and considered alternatives.

Presentation: Overview of MFRC Programs/Initiatives

With several new members now at the table, Mike Kilgore, MFRC executive director, spent time reviewing the MFRC's work to implement the Sustainable Forest Resources Act. In particular he focused on the MFRC fiscal year 1998-99 Accomplishment Report to help bring all MFRC members up to speed on the expected and actual outcomes for each activity area and task laid out at the start of that biennium. He covered progress on the main SFRA program areas: site-level forest management and timber harvesting guidelines, landscape planning and coordination, forest resources research, monitoring forest management/timber management guideline implementation, public concerns registration process, and monitoring forest resources. Mike also

passed out the MFRC council per diem and expenses policy and lists of all MFRC members and staff.

Presentation: 1999 Legislative Outcomes Affecting the MFRC

Mike Kilgore walked MFRC members through the Sustainable Forest Resources Act, pointing out areas changed during the 1999 legislative session. The membership has increased from fourteen to sixteen plus a chair (17 total). The chair is now appointed by the governor, not elected from within the council. The MFRC was called on to strengthen public involvement in its processes. An annual, not a biennial, report is now required. The MFRP is still encouraged in the SFRA, but given no special relationship with the MFRC. A scientifically-based peer review of the riparian and seasonal pond timber harvesting and forest management guidelines must be undertaken by December 1999; all guidelines must be scientifically peer-reviewed by June 2003. Riparian forest monitoring must be given special attention. The landscape program has new timeline and deadlines to follow. Funding for SFRA implementation was settled at \$500,000 per year for the 2000-2001 biennium, down from \$1.2 million per year over fiscal years '98 and '99.

Discussion: Expectations/Roles/Priorities for the MFRC

Council members shared their expectations for the MFRC over the next several years (paraphrased here):

R. Nargang Advancing the landscape program as far and fast as we can; put as many resources as we can into the landscape program.

N. Moody Information – baseline data in useable format so we can make something of it. Need to know what's happening on the acres.

J. Green Information – getting the information we need from various agencies in terms of acres, not just volume, full-time equivalents, etc.; looking at things in terms of acres & grappling with the lack of data.

D. Parent Monitoring for compliance and effectiveness (of guidelines).

As NIPF representative want assurance that these (guidelines) are scientifically based.

Economic impact of applying the guidelines – particular concern for private landowners.

MFRC should continue to place equal priority on the guidelines as other programs.

W. Brandt Stay the course on implementation and training for the guidelines (keep supporting these efforts) – it is a multi-year process to get guidelines implemented since this is a voluntary program.

Monitoring – are the guidelines used? Are they effective?

Look at the costs on logging community of implementing guidelines.

Like to see some work done on forest productivity – higher quality forest & timber resource.

Address M.S. 89A.05 Subd. 2, paragraph 2 that encourages the agencies to provide in proportion to their forest landscape ability to do so; agencies shifting consequences of forest management on to other ownerships by not managing large segments of their lands...MFRC can address this.

J. Hewes Roles: keep in mind the big picture of SFRA and our role to keep in mind the vision outlines in SFRA to " pursue the sustainable management, use and protection of the state's forest resources to achieve the state's economic, environmental and social goals."

Monitoring a high priority with a voluntary program.

Public Concerns Registration Process – get the word out. It's up to all of us on council through our own groups we represent to get the word out about what this is.

Education about the guidelines – need to continue this.

PR – what the MFRC is doing and also about the broader scope: how the effects of MFRC work are more widely felt.

J. Green Desired future conditions – need to look seriously at this and have information needed to be able to define those and put them into action.

Landscape program – spent lots of time and resources on site-level program, need to put more into the landscape program.

M. McLaughlin PR about MFRC and our activities.

People out on the land, member of communities are being impacted by others who have something to say about the resources. We need to look at how we can have mixed use so folks can reap economic benefits, provide for their families and be out on the land.

N. Moody Meetings in forested areas so when issues come up we can delve right into empirical data and can go out to see directly what's going on in the forest.

J. Rose The DNR's top priorities are implementation and monitoring of the guidelines.

Landscape program

Two areas where we need some opportunity to pounce on when they come up:

Research that's not otherwise funded (i.e. other riparian projects, landscape mosaic and what that means for different habitat types).

Respond to emerging issues

J. Sanders Man activities in SFRA interconnected. For instance the need for information is common to the landscape program and monitoring; guideline implementation is linked strongly with education. Since the various programs and activities are nested, we need to strategically place our resources to keep this total package together.

S. Perich Look closely at how forest management impacts wildlife.

Social context – have to realize the changing demographics in northern Minnesota and recognize that this affecting the nature of the forest; over the long term this may have more destructive impact on the land than what we do in terms of timber harvesting and forest management. Can't reverse this trend but have to address it and tie it all in to our programs.

J. Day Social component and its impacts are critical.

Look at changing demographics and dynamics so get a better sense of the overall picture.

Need to look at what social and economic implications various options, activities, and decisions have.

Discussion: Near-Term MFRC Work Priorities

Mike Kilgore outlined the work priorities for the next two to three months. In October the MFRC needs to settle on work and spending plans that will guide the MFRC over the next two years, look at and approve the monitoring program drafted by staff, and address the Northeast Regional Forest Resource Committee's program and look at the assessment of northeastern Minnesota's forest resources. In November or December, the MFRC will delve into planning the riparian and seasonal pond peer review and discuss the Northeast Regional Forest Resource Committee's desired future conditions report. Being an advisory body to the governor and legislature, long-term priorities will be to address specific, emerging issues.

Appointment of MFRC Committees

Gene Merriam, chair, distributed a grid of the four existing committees and appointments to those committees. He suggested the council retain this committee structure for the time being, changing it later if needed.

Council Member Comments

Shawn Perich indicated that although he writes frequently for Outdoor News, he will not write about the MFRC or its activities.

Marcie McLaughlin asked for a motion that letters of appreciation be sent to all former MFRC members from the new chair.

Motion: Marcie McLaughlin moved that the new chair send letters of appreciation to all former MFRC members. Wayne Brandt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Public Comments

None

Next Meeting:

Motion: Rich Holm moved that the meeting be adjourned. Norm Moody seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Eliason