

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes — October 28 & 29, 1999

Sawmill Inn — Grand Rapids, MN

Council Members Present: Wayne Brandt, Steven Daley Laursen, Betsy Daub, Jan Green, Gene Merriam (chair), Norm Moody, Ron Nargang, Bob Oswald, Dave Parent, Shawn Perich, Jerry Rose, Jim Sanders, Roger Scherer

Council Members Absent: Joe Day, Judy Hewes, Rich Holm, Marcie McLaughlin

Alternates Present: Greg Damlo (for Judy Hewes), Larry Jones (for Rich Holm)

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 9:30 a.m. and welcomed guests Joe Cannella (Shawn Perich's alternate), Alison Rajala, Rick Horton, Bob Stine, Jim Hart, Dick Rossman, Mike Houser, Charlie Blinn, Jim Erkel, Rick Dahlman, Pat Emerson, and John Gunther.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC

None

Approval of September 23, 1999 Meeting Minutes*

Betsy Daub asked that more detail be added to the minute's description of the conversation regarding the MFRC's decision-making process. She offered to provide text that could be included as part of the October 28-29, 1999 meeting minutes.

Motion: Ron Nargang *moved to approve the September 23, 1999 meeting minutes.* Wayne Brandt *seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

Approval of Agenda*

Jan Green brought a concern that one hour is too little to talk about the landscape program in northeastern Minnesota. Mike Kilgore noted that this concern would be addressed by extending the discussion through lunch.

Motion: Jerry Rose *moved to approve the October 28-29, 1999 agenda with more time allotted for the landscape program discussion.* Jan Green *seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

Executive Director's Report

Mike Kilgore handed out several items:

- letter to past MFRC members from Gene Merriam
- a The Nature Conservancy memo about TNC research initiatives
- updated MFRC member and alternate mailing list
- copy of M.S. 89A (SFRA) as text will be codified

Mike discussed results of the MFRC meeting survey, noting that the fourth Tuesday of each month is the best regular meeting day. All future meetings will be set for this day of all months in which meetings are held.

Mike talked about a forestry tour he set up and guided for Joe Bagnoli, the governor's point person on environmental issues. They met with several agency representatives, visited an active harvesting job, and talked about forestry in Minnesota. Joe's interest is making forestry a high priority in the governor's office.

Mike mentioned the guideline informational booklet geared at nonindustrial private forest landowners. So far 25,000 have been shipped to NIPF landowners throughout the state and more are being distributed through Soil Water Conservation District offices, DNR Area offices, woodland councils and others.

Mike announced Chris Edgar's resignation as full-time staff of the MFRC; he will pursue his doctorate degree full-time at the University of Minnesota. Chris will not be completely absent from MFRC activities, as he will stay on to work with the Forest Resource Information Management Committee.

MFRC Committee Reports

On behalf of committee chair Norm Moody, Chris Edgar updated the MFRC on work of the Forest Resource Information Management Committee. He provided a one-page overview of plans and progress for identifying baseline questions and indicators (slated for completion in early 2000) and evaluating existing information resources (slated for completion by the end of 2000).

Written Communication to the MFRC

A letter from Jack Rajala on behalf of the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership was distributed. Attached to this letter was a strategy for forest management guideline monitoring developed by the MFRP.

Approval: FY 2000-01 MFRC Work and Spending Plan*

Mike Kilgore reviewed the work and spending plan agreed to by the Personnel and Finance committee on October 12. Council members discussed areas where funding is now limited due to a smaller budget than in the previous biennium, areas where Chris previously provided leadership and now need to be covered by other staff and

resources, and how to address guideline effectiveness monitoring in the work plan and budget. Considerable attention was paid to how the DNR and MFRC will work together to plan and carry out those areas of the SFRA in which both have responsibilities – in particular monitoring. MFRC members decided that Jim Sanders, Steven Daley Laursen, Jerry Rose and Mike Kilgore should meet and develop a package of strategies for how the DNR and other agencies can together respond to SFRA mandates for forest resource trend, guideline implementation and effectiveness monitoring. These strategies should address the goal in each monitoring area and plan how to attain that goal.

Motion: Jan Green moved to approve the FY 2000-01 work and spending plan. Dave Parent seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Prior to voting on the above motion, the MFRC engaged in a further discussion about guideline effectiveness monitoring. During that discussion the following amendment to the motion was made:

Motion: Wayne Brandt moved to amend the motion and unallocate the \$50,000 under line item "guideline monitoring field evaluations" for FY 2001 and decide at a later date exactly how to use these funds for monitoring. The funds could be temporarily placed under a line item "second-year monitoring" in FY 2001. Bob Oswold seconded the motion. By opinion of the chair on the standing of "aye's" to "no's" the motion to amend the motion prevails.

Presentation: Northeast Regional Forest Resource Committee

Dave Miller provided the MFRC with an overview of the Northeast Regional Forest Resource Committee, its history, progress to date and future activities. Bob Stine and Jim Hart, both members of the regional committee, offered some greater insight to the committee's work. Jim focused on the assessment of the northeast done to address MFRC goals 1-4 for the landscape regions. Gaps remaining in the assessment are due to lack of ecological data across the landscape, lack of information about private forest landowners, and age of forest inventory analysis data. He suggested the MFRC revisit goals 3 & 4 and develop more clear objectives for these goals that are commendable yet vague and operationally difficult to measure. Bob encouraged the MFRC to focus more time on the landscape program in order to address tough questions such as "How much harvest can we sustain?" Bob mentioned that in developing desired future conditions the committee found it easy to talk in generalities and harder to focus on predicting specifics. An ecosystem typing system (something like the Boise Cascade ecosystem matrix) is needed to define desired future conditions for the landscape's forests. The MFRC can play a role in collecting a uniform set of coarse and fine scale data to establish this ecosystem typing. Bob further suggested the MFRC develop a more efficient process for the landscape program. For instance, in order to move the process along, each regional landscape could have a small committee that has final decision-making authority.

MFRC members commended the Northeast Regional Forest Resource Committee for its work thus far, and noted the group's comments and concerns deserve response from the MFRC. Members agreed the MFRC's landscape committee needs to begin meeting again to address the issues faced in northeastern Minnesota and help refine the process for other landscape regions.

Overview: Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Mike Phillips provided an overview of the Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee's and the Guideline Implementation Monitoring Technical Committee's work during the past several months. He then introduced the afternoon's field tour and stated objectives for the tour: observe application of timber harvesting and forest management guidelines on the ground; give MFRC members the opportunity to ask specific questions about the monitoring program; and learn how guideline application is measured or evaluated in the field. He further noted that implementation monitoring will initially focus on measurable timber harvesting, forest roads and general guidelines.

Field Tour: Monitoring Use of Timber Harvesting/Forest Management Guidelines

MFRC members, staff and guests met with Kevin Lyden, John McCoy, and Bob Behr, all of Blandin Corporation (UPM Kymmene) in Grand Rapids, on a Blandin forest site harvested according to the guidelines. The Guideline Implementation Monitoring Technical Committee (GIMTC) used this site for testing guideline implementation monitoring plans. After a brief introduction to the site, MFRC members spent the next several hours learning which guidelines will be monitored and what issues the GIMTC encountered when running through the monitoring worksheets during their pilot test. Six areas of guideline implementation monitoring were included on the tour and presented by various members of the GIMTC: forest roads (Rick Dahlman), seasonal ponds (Mike Houser), soil productivity (Dick Rossman), wildlife habitat (Mike Houser), riparian areas (Charlie Blinn), and historic and cultural resources (Pat Emerson).

Revisions: MFRC Operating Protocols*

Gene Merriam highlighted the changes made to the MFRC operating protocols – changes suggested at the September 23, 1999 MFRC meeting. He noted in particular the elimination of a permanent vice-chair, explaining that the role of chair will be filled with another MFRC member selected by the chair whenever needed. Some discussion ensued regarding MFRC decisions and the need for a majority on decisions. Gene noted a difference between taking final action on motions and voting on amendments to motions. The former requires a majority of MFRC members present to pass, given there is a quorum on hand. Taking final action on motions requires a majority of the whole MFRC (i.e. of all 17 members) to pass.

Motion: Jerry Rose moved to approve the MFRC operating protocols as changed. Jan Green seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Approval: Guideline Implementation Monitoring Protocols*

Mike Phillips presented the Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee's (GIMC) recommendations for how the guideline implementation monitoring program should be structured (the report "Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring for Forestry in Minnesota: Recommendations and Options for the Minnesota Forest Resources Council). These recommendations covered issues such as: which guidelines should be monitored (i.e. measurable timber harvesting, forest roads and general guidelines); when sites should be evaluated; how sites should be selected and accessed; who will conduct the monitoring; options for obtaining

permission to access private sites; involving the landowner; dealing with problem sites; and setting up a quality assurance/quality control team.

Following Mike Phillips' presentation, MFRC members posed numerous questions about and provided ideas for improving the recommendations for guideline implementation monitoring. A primary point of discussion was effectiveness monitoring and looking for opportunities to couple implementation and effectiveness monitoring activities. The GIMC had considered addressing effectiveness monitoring along with implementation monitoring, but was concerned about any monitoring team's ability to be thorough and get to all sites that need to be monitored if trying to monitor for both. It was decided the GIMC will work with the ad hoc group set up Thursday (Jim Sanders, Steven Daley Laursen, Jerry Rose and Mike Kilgore) to look at opportunities for monitoring guideline effectiveness. Other points brought up were that the water quality best management practices will serve as a baseline standard, TSI is not included because the three guideline areas cover nearly everything occurring on the ground; legacy patches are not included because that is a recommendation, not a specific guideline; and some time and cost information could be captured for each site monitored.

Motion: Dave Parent moved to approve the guideline implementation monitoring recommendations in the report "Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring for Forestry in Minnesota: Recommendations and Options for the Minnesota Forest Resources Council" and sanction the Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee to move ahead. Roger Scherer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Prior to final action on the motion, MFRC members discussed further details of the report and clarified what changes would be made to the document to reflect MFRC comments on the monitoring program put forth.

Future MFRC Agenda Items

Ron Nargang: recent controversy over harvesting statistics

look at different planning activities in various organizations

Jan Green: how good GEIS is as a predictive model

Jim Sanders: effectiveness monitoring

Shawn Perich: developing an MFRC recommendation to the governor on DNR Wildlife's push for license- fee increases

Wayne Brandt: update on MFRC funded research projects

the EPA's NPDES notification/permit rule-making – providing a comment from the MFRC

Jerry Rose: blowdown and strategies to deal with that

Norm Moody: University of Minnesota divesting lands in Crow Wing and other counties – look at ways to keep this in public ownership

Public Comments

Alison Rajala offered a report from the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership. Guideline implementation is already a reality for many partners, thus she recommended the MFRC consider a presentation in January 2000 from the MFRP looking at implementation and issues landowners, loggers, and agencies are facing. She congratulated the MFRC on thinking outside the box on monitoring to consider guideline effectiveness in addition to guideline implementation. The MFRC should consider working with the MFRP to generate ideas for accomplishing effectiveness monitoring. Productivity has grown into a more prevalent topic at MFRP meetings and collaboration is building to address forest productivity issues. The MOU on the guidelines is moving along. It's not an easy process since MFRP member organizations are concerned with certain elements of the guidelines.

Next Meeting:

Motion: Roger Scherer moved that the meeting be adjourned. Steven Daley Laursen seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Eliason