

DRAFT

**Minnesota Forest Resources Council
March 27, 2001 - Meeting Minutes
St. Paul, MN**

Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC or Council) Members Present Wayne Brandt, Janet Green, Steven Daley Laursen, Wayne Hammer, Rich Holm, Gene Merriam (Chair), Norm Moody, Brad Moore, Ron Nargang, Bob Oswald, Dave Parent, Shawn Perich, Jim Sanders, and Roger Scherer

Council Members Absent Greg Damlo and Joe Day

Staff Present Amie Brown, Chris Edgar, Mike Kilgore, Dave Miller, Mike Phillips and Chad Skally

Welcome and Chair's Remarks The meeting was called to order at 9:30. The Chair reminded Council Members of their obligation to attend meetings as directed by Minnesota Statutes §15.0575, subd. 4. The statute states that "a member may be removed by the appointing authority at any time (1) for cause, after notice and hearing, or (2) after missing three consecutive meetings. After the second consecutive missed meeting and before the next meeting, the secretary of the board shall notify the member in writing that the member may be removed for missing the next meeting."

Approval of January 23, 2001 Meeting Minutes

The following corrections to the meeting minutes were suggested:

Page 1	Header: Executive Director's Report	Subject: Reauthorization	first bullet, strike "obtained" and add "contained"
Page 2	Header: Committee Reports	Subject: Guideline Implementation Monitoring	second sentence add after the number 130 "sites"
Page 2	Header: Sustain Forest Resources Act Funding Priorities		strike "Sustain" and add "Sustainable"
Page 3	Header: Guideline Implementation Monitoring Report		second sentence strike "ad" and add "and"
Page 3	Header: DNR Forestry Summit		second sentence item 5, strike "polar" and add "poplar"
Page 3	Header: Council Member Comments		second bullet, strike "priority" and add "prioritized"

Motion: Ron Nargang moved to approve the January 23, 2001 meeting minutes as corrected. Wayne Brandt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Approval of March 27, 2001 Agenda

Dave Parent asked for a few minutes on the agenda before 1:30 p.m.

Motion: Jim Sanders moved to approve the March 27, 2001 meeting agenda as amended. Brad Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Executive Director's Report

International Conference on Private Forestry in Atlanta At this meeting the MN process for guideline practices and the monitoring results were presented. There was considerable interest from other states and Australia.

MN FIA Cooperative This was a follow up item discussed at the January 23, 2001 meeting about establishing a cooperative to create a series of reports using FIA data (annual inventory) to address a variety of forest resource issues. An example of a brochure from Indiana was passed around for Council Members to view. Possible partners to the cooperative include the University of Minnesota, USFS North Central Research Station and the State and Private Forestry Program, the MN DNR, and others. This group is in its beginning stages. Interested parties will be brought together in late Spring.

Forestry Summit The Summit will take place on May 30, 31, and June 1. MFRC staff has been involved as part of the planning group. Later today Jon Nelson and Keith Went will address the Council to discuss the Summit further.

MFRC Meeting Dates

- May 22, 2001 in Cloquet, MN
- July 24, 2001 in Cloquet, MN

Committee Reports

Forest Resources Information Management (Chris Edgar reporting)

The second phase of the information review will be complete next week. A committee meeting will be held in mid May to review the report.

Landscape Planning/Coordination (Ron Nargang reporting)

The Committee met on March 6 and focused on two topics including the white pine proposal brought before the Council by the Sierra Club and the Spatial Analysis Project.

White Pine Information Highlights

- All of the 17,000 acres of candidate old growth white pine is currently part of public planning process that will determine if it will be officially designated as old growth.
- Sierra Club clarified their position in that they would like to see 10,000 acres of candidate old growth reserved to replace the BWCA loss.
- The Forest Service cannot administratively designate candidate old growth to old growth outside the planning process, but most likely these areas will not be treated until the planning process is complete.
- There are spatial concerns and historical distribution concerns with white pine; The MFRC regional landscape committees will handle these concerns.
- The 20-50 year age class has only 2900 acres causing a gap in the age distribution. However, it is not typed as white pine cover.

Spatial Analysis Project

- A contractor was chosen to do the aerial photo work.
- Aerial photo interpretation costs exceeded budgeted amount. The DNR has secured additional funds to complete the project in its entirety.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring (Dave Parent reporting)

The Committee met on March 7 and covered several items including: (1) the implementation guideline monitoring report; (2) the draft MFRC agreed to findings and conclusions document on guideline implementation monitoring; (3) the draft MFRC guideline implementation monitoring goals report; (4) the draft MFRC report on the public concerns registration process; (5) the Request for Proposal for the second round of implementation monitoring; and (6) a joint letter from the Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) and the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) on education programming in response to monitoring results. Many of these items are slated for discussion later at today's meeting.

Personnel and Finance (Gene Merriam reporting)

The PFC has not met since the last MFRC meeting.

MFRC Task Force

Blowdown Report Task Force (Amie Brown reporting)

Amie met with Dennis Neitke of the USFS to discuss the blowdown information that is available on the world wide web and gained valuable material from him and plans to report to the Council in May on progress.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC None

Legislative Update (Mike Kilgore reporting)

MFRC Policy and Budget Initiatives

- Budget overview and discussions in the Senate and House Environment and Natural Resources Committees went well.
- Both committees were concerned with the Governor's recommendation of \$375,000 for SFRA.
- The MFRC was able to articulate what was possible under various funding scenarios.

SFRA Reauthorization Bills

1. HF 1306 is the Administration's bill and SFRA is part of the DNR's technical forestry bill. This bill reauthorizes SFRA for 6-years. The bill was heard before the House at which there was very little discussion of SFRA. The bill was then referred onto the House Transportation Policy Committee,
2. HF 1595 is a bill to reauthorize and fund SFRA. It adds several amendments to SFRA, reauthorize for 4-years, directs funding level at \$1.15 M in year 1 and \$900,000 in year 2. This bill was heard in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and referred to Government Operations committee.
3. HF1235 is a bill to reauthorize and fully funds the SFRA, but has not yet been heard in the House or Senate

Forest Taxation Study

HF 1346 implements most of the MFRC recommendations regarding refunds to Minnesota's forest property tax system. The bill has been heard by the House Property and Tax Division and there seems to be a general interest in forest tax reform. The Governor will include forest tax reform provisions in the supplement budget (no language has yet been drafted). Interests are working to reconcile differences between HF 1346 and the Department of Revenues's position. Outstanding issues include: (1) mechanism for determining credits; (2) involvement of local county assessors; and (3) public access.

Proposed Changes to the Public Concerns Registration Process (Amie Brown reporting)

The Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee made two recommendations to the Council regarding confidentiality and walking the site. The Council accepted with amendment the suggestion of the committee regarding confidentiality (read motion below). On the issue of walking the site it was agreed that staff would revisit the issue following the legislative session and that a set of criteria would be drafted for the Council to review with the intention of having them ready in July when the current contract is dated to end.

POLICY CHANGE: As a result of the MFRC March 27, 2001 meeting a change is requested in the manner of which PCRCP reports are prepared. Specifically, the contractor shall not identify any of the people involved in the PCRCP process in future reports prepared for the MFRC.

The key people involved in the public report will be referred to as follows.

- **concern registrant**
- **landowner** (private or corporate) public lands shall be identified by agency, e.g. DNR, US Forest Service etc.

- **forester, logger, land manager**, or other appropriate title (not names). If more than one employee from the same agency/company is referenced, they shall be referred to numerically, as in "Forester #1 with the Department of Natural Resources"
- Other categories maybe necessary in some cases (e.g. "concerned neighbor").

Information regarding the identities of the people contacted in regards to a registered concern will be transmitted to the MFRC staff as a document separate from the report. The identities of individuals involved in the registered concern are available to the public upon request to the MFRC (not the contractor). The concerned registrant's confidentiality is protected by the Data Practices Act.

Motion: Wayne Brandt moved that the MFRC shall instruct the contractor not to report the identity of all of the people involved in the PCR process. The MFRC will provide individuals or organizations the identification of the parties involved (excluding the concerned registrant) if it is requested. Norm Moody seconded the motion. The motion passed.

White Pine Harvesting and Reforestation Information (Ron Nargang reporting)

The Landscape Committee met on March 6 to discuss the white pine proposal brought before the MFRC by Sierra Club. In preparation for the meeting a background document was put together (*Minnesota's White Pine in the Future*) and used to discuss the proposal.

The Committee brought back to the Council a series of recommendations in response to the concerns raised by the Sierra Club. The recommendations were reviewed and the Council voted to accept the recommendations with minor modifications and a friendly amendment to add a seventh recommendation.

Motion: Ron Nargang moved that the recommendations as amended be adopted by the Council. Roger Scherer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

It was agreed that the revised version of the recommendations would be circulated to the Council, that a letter from the Chairman would be sent to Sierra Club to describe the MFRC's response, and a letter would be sent to the working group that helped to put the white pine report together.

DNR Forestry Summit

Jon Nelson and Keith Went updated the Council on the Forestry Summit planning process.

Planning

- Additional co-sponsors include the Blandin Foundation and the Minnesota Environmental Initiative.
- 100 invitations will go out mid-April.
- Demonstration forest sites are still being discussed.
- The Commissioner's vision dated February 1, 2001 was distributed.
- Information to present at the summit is being pulled together. In particular a series of definitions for various forestry terms to keep folks on the same page.
- The MFRC has been working with the program group.
- Council members will be invited to play a role during the summit.

Monitoring - prep work

- A dictionary of terms is being put together to help move the discussion of forestry techniques along.
- The Summit will bring people into the forest and allow them to see on-the-ground practices.
- A literature search of forest management techniques and impacts will be put together.

- Seven fundamental forest values have been identified that need to be monitored. Indicators to measure the 7 forest values will also be identified.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring Report (Mike Phillips reporting)

The guideline implementation monitoring report presentation was completed. The report is available in hard copy and on-line.

Guideline Implementation Goals Report (Amie Brown reporting)

The Council reviewed the goals document and offered several additions and changes and asked to see the document after the changes have been made. The requested changes and additions are listed below by section.

- ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT: A second letter would be sent to the organizations that did not response to our previous request.
- AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING: Add information about the other education courses offered and their guideline content.
- GUIDELINE COMMITMENT: Baseline information would be used to evaluate the four established goals.
- APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES: The Council agreed that it would like to see a list of prioritized recommendations for specific guidelines in order that the MFRC concentrate its efforts, rather than the across-the-board five percent improvement goal recommended by the Guideline Implementation Committee.

Motion: Ron Nargang moved that the GIMC look at the monitoring report again and come back to the MFRC will a prioritized list of specific guideline applications to focus on improving. Wayne Hammer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Guideline Training Response to Baseline Monitoring

Mike Turner, executive director of the MN logger Education Program (MLEP) and Barbara Coffin, coordinator, Center for Continuing Education, were invited to speak to the Council to address questions about guideline training and continuing education initiatives. There was a discussion of how the Council can achieve its goal that 90% of the state's natural resources professionals who are involved in administering timber sales or silvicultural operations attend both guideline training session. Barbara Coffin explained to the Council that enrollment in the basic guideline sessions have dropped significantly and that presently only one introductory class will be offered this spring. Mike Turner shared with the Council MLEP's plan to share the monitoring information and ways to improve operations and monitoring results with its members. This fall MLEP hopes to offer water quality guidelines courses. Mike Phillips will present the monitoring results to the MLEP board.

Barb and Mike expressed a sincere appreciation for the instructors that have helped to present the continuing education course thus far. They are a dedicated and talented group. However, a lot has been asked of these folks, and many of them have contributed to this process since its inception. There is a need to recruit additional instructors.

MFRC Response to the Baseline Monitoring and the Implementation Goals Report (Mike Kilgore reporting) Following the discussions of the guideline implementation monitoring report, the implementation goals report, and education components, the Council adopted a series of agreed to findings and conclusions.

Motion: Ron Nargang moved that the MFRC adopt the proposed recommendations with the following modifications. Under Agreed to Findings and Conclusions, item 5 should read

"The MFRC's assessment of its 2000 guideline implementation goals concluded that:

- *A variety of organizations (19) stated support for the guidelines. Only one organization contacted by the MFRC indicated it does not support the guidelines. The MFRC will work to further broaden organizational support for the guidelines.*
- *Of the 429 Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) member companies, 393 have completed both guideline training sessions in 2000. The volume of wood harvested in Minnesota by loggers who completed guideline training met the MFRC's goal of 75 percent.*
- *Seven hundred and seven resource professionals attended guideline training sessions. While this did not meet the MFRC's 2000 target, it is a significant achievement.*
- *The MFRC contacted more than 47,000 landowners that own at least 20 contiguous acres of forest land to inform them of the guidelines. While this fell short of the goal of contacting 75% of the state's private forest landowners (89,000) that own at least 20 acres, it represents a substantial number of landowners contacted."*

Under Follow Up strike item 3 and should read "The MFRC will further review the guideline implementation monitoring report to identify and focus on the most important practices where its application needs to be improved, while simultaneously seeking continuous improvement in all areas of guideline use."

Forest Easement Proposal

Norm Moody shared with the Council a land easement proposal that Cass County is involved in. The first was a land exchange during the negotiation an easement was put in place as well as a small section for development as part of the sale agreement because the community was concerned about losing that forest land. This easement is a life-time easement, but can buy out of the easement at some time in the future. What the cost would be to buy out is not yet determined. The second example is land that the county has purchased. Then an easement will be put on it along with requirements to develop a forest management plan and building restrictions. The land will then be put up for sale.

Future Agenda Items None

Public Input/Comments to the MFRC None

Council Member Comments None

Adjourn Gene Merriam adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Amie Brown