

MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2002

Holiday Inn Express - St. Paul, MN

Council Members Present: Gene Merriam (Chair), Tim O’Hara (in lieu of Wayne Brandt), Jan Green, Dave Parent, Rich Holm, Dave Sterr, Shawn Perich, Norm Moody, Roger Scherer, Greg Damlo, Bob Oswald, Ron Nargang, Wayne Hammer, Susan Solterman (in lieu of Betsy Daub) and Brad Moore.

Council Members Absent: Steven Daley Laursen, Jim Sanders, Wayne Brandt, and Betsy Daub.

Guests: Matt Norton, Don Janes, Jenna Fletcher, Mike Turner, Brian Palik, Susan Clarke, Susan Von Mosch (LCMR) and Susan Thornton (LCMR).

Staff Present: Dave Zumeta, Mike Phillips, Chad Skally, Jim Manolis, and Dave Miller.

Welcome and Chair’s Remarks

Chairman Merriam summarized the current budget situation. The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) has received no cuts this fiscal year, and funding is likely to be \$700,000 for the 2003 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003).

Chairman Merriam also mentioned that Steven Daley Laursen has accepted the position of Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho, and wished Steve well in his new position. Steve was not present but was planning to join the group for lunch. Gene asked what the process is to replace Steve.

Dave Zumeta said he was working on the process to replace Steve, and that Steve’s alternate, Bob Stine, could fill in but not vote. The process begins with Steve sending a letter of resignation to the Governor and the interested people applying to the Governor’s office. Dave said he will follow up with the Governor’s office on subsequent steps.

Chairman Merriam encouraged members to notify interested people of the opening.

Chairman Merriam mentioned the recent announcement that the Potlatch Mill in Cloquet is being sold to SAPPI and the Potlatch Mill in Brainerd is being closed. He deferred discussion until Bob Oswald was present.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC

None

Approval of January 22, 2002 Meeting Minutes*

Motion: Ron Nargang moved to approve the January 22, 2002 meeting minutes. Rich Holm seconded the motion.

Jan Green asked that her name be added to the “members absent” list.

Dave Zumeta said the public input section was missing a reference to the letter received from Al Mitton about Mike Phillips being appointed as Executive Director, and would add a suitable sentence to the minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda*

Motion: Jan Green moved to approve the March 19, 2002 meeting agenda. Norm Moody seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta said his focus has been on preparing and attending legislative hearings and related events. He expressed thanks to MFRC members and alternates for their assistance during this time at the Capitol, especially Wayne Brandt, Ron Nargang, Jan Green, Matt Norton and Bob Oswald.

Dave said he was also pleased with the completion of the MFRC 2001 Annual Report. Linda Schroeder, the contractor who produced the report, finished a day early and within the budget. This report went to the Legislature and Governor. Everyone should have received a copy in their mailing. Additional copies were present if people needed extra.

Dave also mentioned that he has been attending various MFRC landscape and information management committee meetings and is planning on attending a guideline monitoring meeting.

Dave summarized a major issue faced by staff - the freeze of all state contracts. Currently the MFRC has five contracts frozen for the landscape and monitoring programs. Staff are trying to move the contracts through the new approval process set up by the Department of Administration. The five contracts are: a) \$45,000 compliance monitoring contract for 2002 (a DNR contract of major interest to the MFRC); b) \$32,000 contract to supplement the effectiveness monitoring LCMR project (Charlie Blinn); c) \$30,000 contract to study who bears the cost of guideline implementation (Mike Kilgore and Charlie Blinn); d) \$25,000 landscape economic analysis of the Northeast and North Central regional landscapes (Rick Lichty); and e) \$4,800 economic analysis recommendations contract (Rick Lichty).

Dave also mentioned that he is trying to hire a $\frac{3}{4}$ time temporary policy analyst /executive assistant. Interviews were held last week with three candidates. Dave, Mike Phillips, Chad Skally, and Betsy Daub participated in the interviews. Jenna Fletcher was the unanimous selection. Yesterday Dave learned that the position is affected by a state hiring freeze and

* Action Item

additional steps, including approval by Department of Employee Relations (DOER), need to be taken to fill the position. There was discussion on the steps needed to get the position approved. Dave is going to work with Gene and the DNR commissioner's office to get approval, hopefully in the next two weeks. Lastly Dave handed out his new business cards.

Wayne Hammer asked MFRC members to let him know if they knew of anyone from northern Minnesota interested in being an alternate for his seat on the council.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel & Finance

Chairman Merriam said that the committee has not met since the last MFRC meeting.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent said the guideline monitoring report completion date continues to slide. The riparian report will be completed but not published by the end of March.

Jan Green asked about the errors in the site selection process. Mike Phillips responded that there are errors but the staff and contractors do their best to correct these before the monitoring occurs.

Tim O'Hara asked how sites were selected. Mike Phillips responded that satellite data, aerial photos and then field checks were used.

Jan questioned why sometimes only partial areas of harvests were monitored. Mike responded that sites were monitored based on the year they were harvested. Norm Moody added that he thinks the message is getting out there because he has had heard loggers complain about poor site set-up.

Landscape Planning

Ron said the focus of the last meeting was on the Spatial Analysis project. Most of the deadlines in the project are 3-5 months behind. He addressed the issue with a letter to Jim Manolis and Logan Lee, and Logan's and Jim's response letter was included in the mailing. Ron also mentioned that budget cuts might affect Jim's position. Dave Zumeta said that additional money was being sought through the USDA Forest Service.

Ron also noted that the Northeast and North Central landscape processes are moving forward, although the contract freeze affects the economic study that was going to be completed this summer.

Forest Resource Information and Management (FRIM)

Norm Moody passed out the minutes from the committee meeting last week. He acknowledged Jan Green as doing a lot of the work for the committee. He also indicated the importance of collecting harvest and growth data. Attachment A from the FRIM meeting minutes goes through the main items discussed (Jan mentioned that these items are from the Irland report, and that this report is available on the MFRC's website: www.frc.state.mn.us), while Attachment B from the FRIM meeting minutes gives the committee's recommendations. He also said that if Item 1 of

Attachment B (Collect harvest data for a yearly report) occurs, then Item 2 (Consult with USFS North Central Research Station on Council data needs) may need to be focused on private lands.

Written Communication to the MFRC

Dave Zumeta's letter to Nicholas Law was in the mailing.

Discussion on Potlatch

Following Bob Oswald's arrival, Gene continued the discussion of the Potlatch situation. Bob Oswald said that in 59 days they would know the outcomes of the sale. He and other MFRC members provided information on the situation. Later Tim O'Hara passed out the official news release that outlines the details of the buyout of Potlatch by SAPPI.

LCMR Proposals

Susan Clarke and Susan Von Mosch gave a summary of the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) review process. The MFRC discussed how they fit into the process and what actions they could take to support projects. Dave Zumeta and Dave Miller outlined a few LCMR proposals that had been brought to their attention for possible MFRC sponsorship. Since the LCMR deadline is March 28, and the MFRC will not be holding a meeting before then to decide on action items, no vote was taken on sponsoring specific projects.

Motion: Jan Green moved to set up an ad hoc committee to review LCMR projects requesting MFRC support and provide recommendations to the MFRC on support of these projects. Wayne Hammer seconded the motion.

Discussion continued on how the MFRC could best provide input to LCMR. Susan Thornton, LCMR staff, said that if the MFRC does not officially sponsor projects by March 28, they would have the chance to add their endorsement to projects that made it through the first cut. The list of projects making the first cut is expected to be complete by May 15. The schedule for the second round of cuts has not yet been established.

Jan mentioned that all forest related projects should be reviewed by the MFRC. Ron stressed that the MFRC should focus its support on projects requesting its support. Dave Zumeta said he would be in touch with LCMR to see what role the LCMR would like the MFRC to play in the LCMR's review process.

The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Merriam asked for volunteers; Jan will chair the committee, Dave Parent expressed interest. Wayne Brandt and Bob Stine (alternate for Steven Daley Laursen) were mentioned as potential members.

Ducks in the Woods presentation

Tom Landwehr from Ducks Unlimited presented information on duck research and the lack of information on ducks in wooded regions of the state. There was discussion on various topics in waterfowl research. The MFRC could assist by providing support for a multi-partner LCMR proposal for research. MFRC could also play a role in coordination of forest waterfowl research.

Directions for US Forest Service Silvicultural Research

Brian Palik gave a brief overview of the future direction of silvicultural research at the USDA Forest Service's North Central Research Station in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. He said the station has plans to expand silvicultural research, but there are currently federal recommendations to cut funding in this area. He wanted the MFRC to be aware of the situation.

Request to Legislature for SFRA Deadline Revision*

This discussion focused on how the MFRC should address unfunded mandates and deadlines in the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) given the \$200,000 cut. The SFRA specifies several deadlines for landscape program work that we will not be able to meet given the \$200,000 budget cut. Dave Zumeta asked if we should inform the Legislature and whether amendments to the law should be made.

Discussion ensued on what has been communicated to the Legislature so far, and the potential for meeting deadlines by reducing the scope of the products provided.

Motion from Ron Nargang: The MFRC Chair will communicate with the appropriate legislative committee chairs and identify work deadlines in the SFRA that the MFRC will not be able to meet because of the reduced budget. The chair will suggest amendments to the SFRA to modify landscape planning and coordination deadlines. Jan Green seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Jan Green added that she thinks it is important that the act be modified over time, based on what we learn from experience.

Forest Management Guideline Review and Revision*

Mike Phillips reviewed the current status of the guideline review and revision process. He said that some decisions were left hanging at the January MFRC meeting and needed to be resolved.

The first decision was whether to move forward with guideline revision, given the uncertain budget and the expense of doing a complete revision and distribution of a new handbook.

Motion from Dave Parent: Guideline revision will be done. Seconded by Norm Moody, and motion passed unanimously.

The second decision was whether the MFRC needs to revise the schedule for review, revision and approval of guidelines given reduced budgets. MFRC members and staff deferred action on this until a later date.

The third decision was about which guidelines will move forward for revision, and the process for completing the revisions. The decisions were:

* Action Item

- 1) Mike will work with the Guideline Review Technical Committee (GRTC) to complete suggested changes on “doable” issues, and these will be included in the April MFRC mailing, to be discussed and approved at the April 23 meeting. The MFRC will not decide these issues individually unless members have questions or concerns. Mike will identify which of the “doable” issues should receive a focused review by the council.
- 2) Mike will list the “minefield issues” and indicate which ones need more research to determine whether they should be modified, and which ones can be addressed without additional research. This list will be included in the mailing and will be discussed at the April 23 meeting.

Future MFRC Agenda Items

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Shawn Perich: | -Chronic wasting disease presentation. Possibly have Tim Bremicker, DNR Wildlife Director present. (September) |
| | -Discussion on global forest markets and their effects in MN. Have SAPPI, UPM and StoraEnsa present. (September or November) |
| Jan Green | -Overview of certification programs
SFI, ISO, and FSC (September) |
| | -ATV issues on North Shore (September) |
| Dave Zumeta | -Long range sustainability of recreational ATV use (September) |
| | -Guideline revision (April) |
| | -Research discussion with Dean Al Sullivan (June) |
| | -IMC recommendations regarding Forest Inventory and Analysis (June) |

Public Input/Communications to the MFRC

None

Council Member Comments

Bob Oswald handed out a brochure for a Union show in Minneapolis from April 5-8 and encouraged MFRC members to attend.

Chair Merriam mentioned that Steve Daley Laursen was not able to make it for lunch. MFRC members are invited to a going away party at the St. Paul campus Student Center Commons on March 27 at 3pm.

Adjourn

Rich Holm moved to adjourn the meeting.