

MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes – April 23, 2002
League of Minnesota Cities - St. Paul, MN

Council Members Present: Gene Merriam - Chair, Betsy Daub, Logan Lee (in lieu of Jim Sanders), Jan Green, Bob Stine (in lieu of Steven Daley Laursen), Brad Moore, Wayne Brandt, Greg Damlo, Rich Holm, Ron Nargang, Norm Moody, Dave Sterr, Dave Parent, Bob Oswald, and John Bathke (in lieu of Wayne Hammer).

Council Members Absent: Roger Scherer and Shawn Perich

Guests: Remi Stone (League of Minnesota Cities), Mike Turner (MLEP), Matt Norton (MCEA), Lynn Mizner (DNR), Dennis Asmussen (DNR), Susan Solterman (Audubon MN), and Sharon Stephens (Sierra Club).

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

Welcome

Remi Stone, League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) welcomed the group and explained the organization's key activities in representing 850+ cities and townships.

Chair's Remarks

Gene Merriam welcomed Bob Stine as Steven Daley Laursen's alternate. There have been no further budget cuts beyond the currently approved Fiscal Year 2003 appropriation of \$700,000 from the Legislature. A copy of a letter sent to each of four Legislative committee chairs (Senator Krentz, Representative Holsten, Senator Price, and Representative Ozment) was handed out. The letter outlined suggested changes to statute language regarding MFRC deadlines given the lower level of appropriation.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC

None.

Approval of March 19, 2002 Meeting Minutes*

Two small changes to the March 19 minutes were noted.

Motion: Jan Green moved to approve the March 19, 2002 meeting minutes with the two name changes as discussed. Bob Oswald seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

* Action Item

Agenda approval*

Motion: Bob Oswald moved to approve the April 23, 2002 meeting agenda. Norm Moody seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta discussed the open Council position being vacated by Steven Daley Laursen. Steven Daley Laursen resigned as the MFRC's Higher Education and Research representative effective March 22. A Notice of Vacancy has been filed with the Secretary of State's office, which will appear in the May 6th State Register. After consideration of the applications, the Governor may make an appointment as early as June 7, 2002. The length of the appointment will be through June 30, 2003. An Open Appointments Application Form is available on-line (www.sos.state.mn.us, under Open Appointments, Forms). Bob Stine, Director of the Cloquet Forestry Center and Steven Daley Laursen's alternate, is a potential candidate for this position.

Five of five contracts totaling \$137,000 have been approved as part of the Department of Administration's waiver process. The approved contracts are:

- a) \$45,000 compliance monitoring contract;
- b) \$32,000 contract to supplement the LCMR effectiveness monitoring project;
- c) \$30,000 contract to study who bears the cost of guideline implementation;
- d) \$25,000 economic analysis of the three forested northern landscapes; and
- e) \$4,800 economic analysis recommendations contract.

There are five additional contracts relating to landscape planning and spatial analysis that will be submitted in the near future.

Dave announced that he obtained approval to hire Jenna Fletcher as Policy Analyst/Executive Assistant on a ¾ time, three-month basis. Dave handed out an updated version of the MFRC's Council Per Diem and Expenses Policy dated April 2002. A reception/dinner with the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Leadership Team will occur in St. Paul on May 21st. Council members are invited to attend. Council members also are invited to participate in an optional tour of the St. John's University Forest with Tom Kroll, the Forest Manager. The tour is the afternoon of June 24th, prior to the next Council meeting on June 25th.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel & Finance

No committee meeting was held since the March 19 Council meeting. Gene Merriam noted that a 2003 fiscal year budget and work plan must be created and reviewed by the Personnel and Finance Committee, then reviewed at the June 24th Council meeting.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent reported that the Guideline Review Technical Committee met on April 3, 2002 and created a proposed resolution from the MFRC to the DNR that guideline implementation monitoring of timber harvesting not be done in 2003. Ron Nargang asked if the committee considered the downsides of the resolution. Dave Parent responded that one year of data will be missing, but there will still be three years of data. Also, riparian change monitoring still will be done annually. Other administrative and political risks were discussed.

Norm Moody suggested that cost and outcomes of guideline monitoring should be discussed by the Council. Since guideline monitoring is performed by the DNR, the Council feels that the fiscal aspects are unclear. Dave Zumeta suggested that we add this topic as an agenda item for the June meeting. In addition, Norm Moody requested an overall MFRC quarterly budget report for the Council.

Landscape Planning Committee

Ron Nargang reported approval of the waiver on the contract for economic analysis of the three forested northern landscapes.

Forest Resources Information Management Committee

Norm reported that the Information Management Committee would meet soon to begin creating a survey to gather harvest information.

Written Communication to the MFRC

None.

Approval of the “Doable” Forest Management Guideline Revision Language*

Mike Phillips asked the Council to approve the remaining “doable” guidelines included in the “*Doable*” Issues 2, 3, 28, 44 document sent as pre-reading. Wayne Brandt expressed concern that not all Council members had the full set of “doables” in front of them. Mike Phillips agreed to send the total package by April 26th, categorized by “no-discussion doables,” and the “doables” needing discussion. Mike will request Council input by May 24th and expects discussion and approval of all the “doable” issues at the June meeting.

Decision to defer or address “Minefield” Guideline Issues*

Mike Phillips asked the Council to decide which minefield guideline issues should be addressed as part of the guideline revision process, and which issues should be deferred. Discussion about the minefield issues ensued. Ron Nargang commented that many of the minefield issues are related to riparian management, which has landscape implications, and expressed a concern that all riparian circumstances cannot be represented in a single riparian (RMZ) protection guideline (e.g. 150’). Instead, Ron suggested that we write guidance for loggers, DNR forest planners, and others. Jan Green commented that the watershed-level aspect and roads are missing from guideline language. Dave Parent

* Action Item. If readers of these minutes would like a list of guideline issues, or copies of specific issues, please call Mike Phillips at 651/297-4924, or contact him via e-mail: mike.phillips@dnr.state.mn.us

commented that a variable RMZ width guideline would make monitoring more difficult. Mike Phillips responded by clarifying that guidelines are not developed for purposes of monitoring, but to support sustainable forestry. Dave Parent commented that Stewardship Plans should address the landscape level. Norm Moody suggested that a software program be developed to enter site characteristics and then determine appropriate RMZ width. John Bathke mentioned that Montana is already doing some of this based on slope, size of watershed, and other factors. Betsy Daub said Brian Pollock developed a technical key two years ago that could be rewritten for non-technical users.

Motion: Wayne Brandt moved to remove from consideration the 11 items that staff has identified as “defer consideration.” Norm seconded. Dave Parent made a friendly amendment to add “in the current review cycle” which was accepted by Wayne and Norm. Jan raised a concern that someone should look at available material regarding RMZ and not just ignore it until next review cycle.

Betsy Daub made an amendment to add to the motion that a Council committee be formed to address all the riparian guidelines (including deferred items) and be charged with developing a set of guidelines that address site-specific issues for inclusion in the next round of guideline revisions. Ron Nargang seconded. Motion on the amendment (10 yes, 1 opposed) prevailed. Vote on whole motion prevailed (9 in favor, 2 opposed).

Motion: Wayne moved that Guideline Minefield issues numbered 2, 4, 5, 9, 18, 22-24, 27-29, 31-35 be referred to the Landscape and Guideline Implementation Committees. Dave Parent seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Wayne suggested that guideline Minefield issues 25, 30, 37 and 40 could be removed. Discussion ensued, with agreement that only issue 40 should be removed.

Motion: Wayne moved that Guideline Minefield issues # 40 be removed from further consideration. Dave Parent seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Bear River Demonstration Forest (BRDF) Update – Lynn Mizner

Lynn Mizner reported that actions are being taken to create a non-profit structure for the BRDF. A draft of articles and bylaws will possibly be approved later this summer. Various concerns about public agency involvement in the non-profit were raised and discussed. Text for a one-page brochure is being reviewed by stakeholder groups. The BRDF will use the National Woodland Owner Survey with the BRDF landowners to compare with other landowners within the state of Minnesota. Dave Zumeta promised to send out the draft document he prepared that outlines areas of existing and potential interaction between the BRDF and MFRC.

Riparian Forest Monitoring Report – Clarence Turner

Clarence Turner, DNR Forestry, presented key information from the Riparian Forest Monitoring Report, which is not yet available. Our estimate of annual forest harvest, based on remote sensing data for the period August 1999 - July 2001, was 157,212 acres. This represents about 1.1% of total forested acres. In addition, our estimate of annual

harvest of riparian forest is 10,145 acres, about 0.4% of riparian forest. Note that the riparian management zone as defined in this study is 200' (100' on either side of a river or stream).¹

Potential Involvement of MFRC in Addressing All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Issues

Brad Moore gave a brief overview of the DNR's involvement in the ATV debate in the Minnesota Legislature. The Legislature is working on a bill that specifies creation of an ATV Task Force to review, advise and provide recommendations on use and management of ATVs on state forest land. Susan Solterman (Adubon Minnesota) handed out bill language. It is expected that the new task force will be convened in June. A related funding bill is still moving through the Legislature.

Norm Moody asked what the Council role should be. Gene clarified that when this item was put on the Council's meeting agenda, MFRC was specifically named in the bill. Dave Zumeta pointed out that the MFRC should be concerned to the extent that the issue relates to MFRC's statutory mandate to promote long-term forest sustainability.

Betsy Daub expressed hope that the ATV Task Force will prove to be positive, and asked MFRC to play a role. Wayne Brandt expressed hope that the DNR will ask a MFRC staff member to have a seat on the ATV Task Force.

Spatial Analysis Program Presentation

Due to time constraints, Jim Manolis' presentation was postponed.

Future MFRC Agenda Items

- Spatial Analysis Program presentation that was deferred during this meeting.
- Bring in someone who is working on site-specific riparian zones.
- Action item to approve "doable" guideline issues.
- Action item on minefield issues.
- Report from Al Ek as part of MFRC's \$23,000 contribution to FIA analysis. Mike Prouty (U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry) also should be involved.
- Possible update on Research Advisory Committee status.
- Sustainable Forestry Tax Incentive update – Mike Kilgore publication.
- Future: bring in prairie managers to discuss tree planting issues in prairies.

Public communications to the MFRC

None.

Council Member comments

Bob Oswald reminded council members that Sunday April 28th is Worker's Memorial Day.

¹ NOTE: This was incorrectly stated in the presentation. The correct definition used to estimate riparian harvest for this study is the area that extends 200 feet from the edge of the water of lakes and wetlands and 200 feet from the edge of the water on each side of rivers and streams.

Motion: Rich Holm moved to adjourn at 3:40pm CDT.