

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2002
Cloquet Forestry Center - Cloquet, MN

Council Members Present: Brad Moore (acting Chair), Ron Nargang, Wayne Brandt, Jim Sanders, Dave Sterr, Bob Stine, Greg Damlo, Rich Holm, Wayne Hammer, Bob Oswald, Jan Green, Norm Moody, Dave Parent, Betsy Daub, Shawn Perich

Council Members Absent: Roger Scherer, Gene Merriam

Guests: John Bathke (Council Alternate), Archie Chelseth, Josh Davis – Sierra Club, Katie Hawes – DNR, Rick Horton – Ruffed Grouse Society, Bernadine Joselyn – Blandin Foundation, Steve Merchant - DNR, Paul Momper – Superior National Forest, Jon Nelson – DNR, Kurt Rusterholz – DNR, Susan Stafford –University of Minnesota, Keith Wendt – DNR, Bruce ZumBahlen.

Staff: Dave Zumeta, Mike Phillips, Dave Miller, Chad Skally, Jenna Fletcher

Chair's Remarks

- Brad Moore stated that the deadline for applying for reappointment to the MFRC is November 26, 2002 for members whose terms end in January, 2003. The deadline applies to seven MFRC members: Wayne Brandt, Betsy Daub, Rich Holm, Ron Nargang, Bob Oswald, Dave Parent, and Shawn Perich. Governor-Elect Pawlenty is not likely to make any decisions on these appointments before late winter or spring. Under state law, current members continue to until they are either reappointed or replaced. Ron Nargang has expressed his intention to not seek reappointment. In addition, Betsy Daub has expressed her intention to not seek reappointment because she has taken a position with the DNR. She views it as inappropriate for her to remain as an environmental interest representative for two reasons: potential conflicts of interest and because the DNR already has a representative on the MFRC. Katie Fernholz, Community Forestry Resource Center, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, will serve as Betsy's alternate until Governor-Elect Pawlenty appoints a replacement.
- On November 14, the MFRC Personnel and Finance Committee decided that Gene Merriam should appoint an Ad Hoc Guideline Review and Revision Committee. Suggested committee members are:

Dave Parent, Chair
Wayne Brandt (Tim O'Hara, alternate)
Brad Moore (Mike Carroll, alternate)
Matt Norton
Shawn Perich

Mike Phillips will serve as staff to the committee. The new committee is charged with working with MFRC staff on all aspects of the guideline review and revision process, including peer review, public review, economic analysis, and guidebook formatting. The committee also will be responsible for making recommendations to the MFRC at key decision points in the process. Note that the full MFRC will still make final decisions about guideline review and revision at several key points in the process. Discussion of the need for additional member representation resulted in a motion by Shawn Perich to add Rich

Holm to the new Guideline Review and Revision Committee. Norm Moody seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input/Communication to the MN Forest Resources Council (MFRC)

A letter from a concerned citizen, Jack Swan, was sent to all Council members. Dave Parent noted that it was sent to individual Council members, not officially to the Council. It was agreed that Chad Skally, Council staff, should informally respond to Mr. Swan.

Wayne Hammer commented that red pines planted in Highway I-35 medians were planted too densely and are now experiencing pocket mortality. MNDOT is aware of the problem and has begun thinning the stands.

Approval of September 24, 2002 Meeting Minutes*

Jim Sanders moved and Norm Moody seconded approval of the September minutes with no revisions.

Approval of November 19, 2002 Meeting Agenda*

Jan Green moved and Norm Moody seconded approval of the agenda.

Executive Director Report

Blandin Foundation's Sustainable Forest for Vital Communities Initiative

MFRC staff and members have met several times with Bernadine Joselyn and other staff of the Blandin Foundation to confer on the Foundation's Sustainable Forest for Vital Communities Initiative. Especially noteworthy was an October 23 meeting in Grand Rapids convened by the Foundation attended by a number of MFRC members and alternates.

MFRC 2002 Annual Report

MFRC staff has been working on completing the 2002 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. The report is expected to be complete no later than the end of January.

MFRC Sustainable Forestry Video

At the September 24, 2002 MFRC meeting, it was indicated that a proposal for a sustainable forestry video would be presented as an action item at this meeting. Work on this video production had to end when the DNR Chief Financial Officer clarified that the funds were from the last biennium and had to be returned to the General Fund. Under state statute, funds must be expended within the biennium in which the funds are appropriated, with some very limited exceptions.

Letter from Dave Zumeta to Laura Hewitt, Trout Unlimited

At the September 24, 2002 MFRC meeting, MFRC members reviewed a proposal from Trout Unlimited entitled "Strengthening the Aquatic Component of Private-State Forestland Certification in The Great Lakes Ecosystem." Trout Unlimited is seeking funding from the Great Lakes Protection Fund, and had asked if the MFRC would be willing to write a letter of support. Based on the divided responses of MFRC members at the September meeting, Dave Zumeta sent a letter to Ms. Laura Hewitt of Trout Unlimited indicating that the MFRC could not formally support the proposal and study, but that MFRC staff could provide a limited amount of assistance.

* Action Item

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance

Because of Gene Merriam's (chair) absence, Brad Moore reported that the Personnel and Finance committee reviewed MFRC's expenditures for the period July-October, and concluded that spending is on track. Brad then provided an overview of the state budget planning process and said that the Department of Finance will be requesting MFRC's appropriation request by February 18. The Personnel and Finance committee will bring a recommendation for MFRC's appropriation request to the January 28 MFRC meeting. Finally, Brad noted that the committee is preparing a performance evaluation for Dave Zumeta.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee (GIMC)

Dave Parent (chair) handed out three written committee updates, with no discussion.

Landscape Planning and Coordination Committee

Because of Ron Nargang's (chair) temporary absence, Dave Miller reported that the next Landscape Committee meeting is December 11. Dave Miller provided an overview of the Landscape Program to the MN Forest Resource Partnership on November 6th. The NC and NE regional landscape committees are preparing recommendations for MFRC review. The Northern regional landscape committee is forming with 20-25 people showing interest. The WC regional landscape committee is compiling existing information and will meet again in January. The SE regional landscape committee met in October and is working on specific goals and strategies for delivery in the spring. Rich Holm commented that he is aware that some NE regional committee members are frustrated and want intervention by the MFRC to help decide between five potential scenarios. Dave Miller responded that if the NE regional landscape committee cannot reach agreement, MFRC will make the decision at the January 28 meeting.

Forest Resources Information Management Committee

Norm Moody (chair) handed out a draft of a public landowner harvest survey. The survey will be pre-tested by sending it to a few counties and other public landowners. The pre-test will identify whether respondents can provide the requested data in the requested format, and whether there will be any resistance to providing the requested data. Dave Sterr noted that Indian bands likely would respond to the survey if they received it.

Written Communications to the MFRC

Jan Green shared a letter that announces that Mike Turner, Executive Director, is leaving MLEP. Wayne Brandt responded that the MLEP board met recently and has reviewed various options for replacing Mike Turner.

2003 Legislative Outlook

Brad Moore shared that the Personnel and Finance Committee had discussed the 2003 legislative outlook at their last meeting and agreed to set up several meetings with current and new Legislators. Wayne Brandt added that past meetings with legislators have helped revise their views of the MFRC.

MFRC/University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources Relationships

Susan Stafford, Dean of the College of Natural Resources (CNR), University of Minnesota, provided a brief overview of her background and her new role. Susan highlighted her support of the important partnership between the MFRC and the College. She cited studies underway by

Charlie Blinn and Mike Kilgore, and Al Ek's efforts to disseminate data related to Minnesota's forests. Susan also reported that she is pleased to provide office space for the MFRC. Susan stated her desire to support the Research Advisory Committee to the MFRC, in part by incorporating the Research Advisory Committee's research priorities into the College's work.

Proposal to Support University of Minnesota, CNR, Center for Continuing Education's Research Review*

Bob Stine proposed a motion that MFRC help sponsor the Forest and Wildlife Research Review to be held January 16, 2003 through a \$1,875 contribution to CNR-CCE. Ron Nargang seconded the motion. Dave Parent commented that he attended last year and saw collaboration and sharing of research and ideas. The motion carried unanimously.

Guideline Training Workshop Outcomes and Participant Perspectives

Louise Yount, University of Minnesota-CCE shared a summary of the Protecting Site Quality workshops held throughout the state this fall. She shared attendance information as well as participant perspectives that were gathered throughout the workshops. Based on the feedback heard from participants, Louise said she has ideas that she would like to share with the Monitoring Committee on how to design future training to address the loggers' and natural resource professionals' feedback. The Monitoring Committee will discuss the feedback and Louise's ideas at a future meeting.

Proposed Resolution on Guideline Issue Relating to Southeast Dry Washes*

Wayne Brandt outlined his proposed changes to the guideline language drafted by the Guideline Review Technical Committee for managing dry washes in southeast Minnesota. Ron Nargang and others suggested several revisions and Betsy Daub asked to strike the phrase "when economically feasible." Ron Nargang proposed a motion to accept the revision language with the proposed changes, and Dave Parent seconded it. The motion carried.

Proposal for MFRC Collaboration with Blandin Foundation Sustainable Forests for Vital Communities Initiative*

Bernadine Joselyn presented an overview of the Blandin Foundation's new public policy initiative in the area of sustainable forests and vital communities. Ron Nargang commented that it seems appropriate for the MFRC to have this connection, and that the Foundation can help in the area of sustainable forest management in Minnesota. Bob Stine proposed a motion to collaborate with the Blandin Foundation in their initiative. Jan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Proposal for Forest-Dependent Community Vitality White Paper*

Dave Zumeta stated that he wants to expand MFRC's work beyond the other core programs to also work on policy analysis. A one-page proposal for a white paper to examine the social aspects of forest-dependent communities in Minnesota was handed out. The white paper is intended in part to help inform the work of the Northern Landscape Committee. Ron inquired about the capacity of staff to complete this policy analysis. To address this, it was agreed that the white paper should be short and will be a synthesis of existing information that frames the key questions. The policy analysis should also differentiate between what the MFRC can and cannot influence. Brad Moore proposed a motion that the staff go forward with the work as discussed and report regularly to the Personnel and Finance Committee. Wayne seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

MFRC 2002 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature

Jenna Fletcher handed out a draft of the annual report to four Council members who requested it. These members agreed to review it by November 25. The report is expected in final published form sometime in January.

DNR Old Growth Forest Policy Implementation Outcomes

Keith Wendt, DNR reported on the outcomes of DNR's work to designate old growth stands on DNR-administered land. DNR's work followed the mitigation strategies recommended in the GEIS. The GEIS recommended an old-growth inventory across all ownerships. The GEIS model runs also assumed 57,500 acres of protected old growth and similar acreage of replacement old growth. With one subsection yet to be completed, the DNR has designated 29,718 acres as old growth and 8,282 acres as potential future old growth. Of this total 38,000 acres, approximately 22,000 are protected on DNR lands formerly available for timber production. For more info, see the report on the DNR website (www.dnr.state.mn.us under the "What's New" section).

Potential Implications of Chronic Wasting Disease for Deer Management and Forest Policy

Steve Merchant, DNR Wildlife, described Chronic Wasting Disease and how it potentially could affect forests. He noted that white-tailed deer are a keystone species, in that their density affects the distribution and abundance of many other forest-dwelling species. For example, density of greater than 20 deer per square mile affects tree and bird species diversity and abundance. The MFRC asked the DNR to keep the MFRC abreast of new information and trends.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None

Council Member Comments

Shawn reported that a wolf was discovered in the southern part of the state where wolves are rare. Wolves have also been reported in Winona county. Norm Moody provided an update on the issue of deer stands. Cass County took a lead on dismantling deer stands and has received positive response (few negative responses) from citizens. Bob Oswald suggested a future Council site tour of a reclaimed gravel pit that has employed forest management.

Future MFRC Agenda Items

Dave Zumeta handed out a list of potential future agenda items.

Jim Sanders moved to adjourn, Bob Oswald seconded.