

# Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes – January 28, 2003  
Metropolitan State University – St. Paul, MN

**Council Members Present:** Gene Merriam (Chair), Bob Stine (acting Chair), Brad Moore, Ron Nargang, Wayne Brandt, Mike Carroll (Brad Moore's alternate), Jim Sanders, Dave Sterr, Rich Holm, Wayne Hammer, Bob Oswald, Jan Green, Dave Parent, Katie Fernholz, Roger Scherer, Greg Damlo, Rick Horton (Shawn Perich's alternate), Norm Moody

**Council Members Absent:** Shawn Perich

**Guests:** Alaina Berger – DNR, Bruce ZumBahlen, John Bathke (Wayne Hammer's alternate), Tom Baumann – DNR, Don Janes – Sierra Club, Dennis May, Tim Swedberg, and Pat Miles – Forest Service North Central Research Station, Matt Norton (Jan Green's alternate), Mike Martinez – DNR Trails & Waterways

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

## **Chair's Remarks**

- Gene Merriam stated that he has been appointed DNR Commissioner. Gene's term on the Council expires June 30, 2003, so he will not formally resign from the MFRC until the Governor appoints a new MFRC Chair. He has asked Bob Stine to be Acting Chair, beginning at today's meeting and ending at the time of the Governor's appointment of the Chair.
- Brad Moore has been named as DNR Assistant Commissioner. Due to the scope of that responsibility, Mike Carroll, who is Brad's alternate, will fill the council role.
- Bob Stine handed out a list of the MFRC Vacancies and known applicants as of January 2003.
- Bob reviewed MFRC meeting protocols:
  - Only Council members may be seated at the table, or alternates attending in the absence of the member for which they are an alternate.
  - Two staff are allowed at the table – the Executive Director and Policy Analyst.
  - Guests may speak only during the designated times on the agenda for public input and communication.
  - Non-appointed Council members cannot vote on action items.

## **Approval of January 28, 2003 Agenda\***

A revised agenda was handed out. Jan Green moved and Jim Sanders seconded approval of the revised agenda.

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\* Action Item

### **State Budget Update/Implications for DNR and MFRC**

Brad Moore described the state budget shortfall in the current fiscal year, and stated that a 4% cut in General Funds has been submitted for DNR. The budget planning process is underway to address the large shortfall predicted for the '04-05 biennium. The focus will be to continue to operate areas of the DNR that are core to conservation on the ground, and core to the economic stability of MN. However, the DNR is expecting across-the-board cuts.

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

None

### **Approval of November 19, 2002 Meeting Minutes\***

Ron Nargang moved and Jim Sanders seconded approval of the November minutes with no revisions.

### **Executive Director Report**

Dave Zumeta asked that members who submit invoices do so ASAP after each meeting. Also, the IRS has adjusted the mileage reimbursement rate from 36.5 to 36 cents per mile.

The MFRC contributed \$1,875 to Forest and Wildlife Research Review held January 16<sup>th</sup> at the University of MN - Duluth. Jim Manolis and three other MFRC contractors began the forum with presentations on the spatial analysis project. Mike Kilgore presented preliminary results on MFRC-sponsored timber sale study. About half the speakers gave credit to MFRC for helping support their research either financially or in some other way.

Dave also reported that MFRC staff continue to be involved with the Blandin Foundation's Sustainable Forest for Vital Communities Initiative.

### **MFRC Committee Reports**

#### *Personnel and Finance*

Wayne Brandt reported that the committee reviewed budget and expenditures at its January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and found them to be on target. The committee also reviewed the FY 02-03 and 04-05 budget reduction scenarios, discussed meetings with key legislators, and reviewed the table of contents for the Forest-Dependent Community white paper.

#### *Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee (GIMC)*

Dave Parent (chair) handed out a written committee update. He noted that the database used for storing and analyzing monitoring data is now updated.

#### *Ad-hoc Committee on Guideline Revision*

Dave Parent (chair) reported that this new committee met on January 24 for the first time. The discussion focused on a peer review process, including how peer reviewers will be selected. Wayne Hammer commented that loggers play a crucial role in the peer review process. Dave Parent cited the law that stipulates scientific review, but it was agreed that there should be a separate practitioner's review.

Dave indicated that he Ad-hoc Committee approved all guideline revision language agreed to by

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\* Action Item

the Guideline Revision Technical Committee except for the language related to RMZs for uneven-age management and the language for southeastern dry washes. Both issues were deferred for further discussion.

#### Landscape Planning and Coordination Committee

Ron Nargang (chair) reported that the Landscape Committee met three times since the last MFRC meeting and regional meetings continue in the SE and WC regions. The spatial analysis project is generating good information for Regional Committees and is on track to be completed in June.

#### Forest Resources Information Management Committee

Norm Moody (chair) shared that the request for information for acres of timber sold in 2001 has met some resistance, but a pilot test is underway. Norm asked that the IMC committee meet briefly at lunch to discuss the emerging concerns about the survey.

#### **Written Communications to the MFRC**

Dave Zumeta reported that he received a thank you letter from Randy Halvorson, MN/DOT for his comments on their Draft 20 Year Transportation Plan.

Rick Horton sent a letter to Dave Zumeta citing a position document from MN Chapter of the Wildlife Society regarding short rotation woody crops. A copy of the position document was made available.

#### **Status of Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Annual Inventory**

Dennis May, USDA FS explained that due to the 1998 Farm Bill that stipulated annual forest inventories across all ownerships, the process has changed from a decadal inventory to an annual inventory. Under this new system, the entire inventory is complete after 5 years. This new sampling methodology uses 5 “panels” within plots, of which each panel is measured each year. Therefore, the data are merely estimates with a life span of only that year. Annual publications are not mandated, but the North Central Research Station is publishing annual updates that are snapshots of the forest condition.

Minnesota is 2 years ahead of schedule in implementing the mandate thanks to the support of the Minnesota DNR. Also, to increase accuracy, DNR provided support for the intensification of the sample plots.

The results from 2001 are preliminary and estimates of change are not available. The 2002 data (panel 4) is being edited right now and will be complete later this spring. Measurement is currently underway on the 2003 plots (panel 5).

The data from the 2001 panel is posted on the North Central Research Station website [www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/4801/FIADB/index.htm](http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/4801/FIADB/index.htm). An electronic publication also will be posted soon to this website: [www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/](http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/)

As we approach the 5<sup>th</sup> (final) year of sampling, FIA will provide estimates of the forest condition with greater confidence and precision. The full cycle annual inventory will be finished by October, at which time 100% of the plots will be surveyed, and therefore the estimates will be final. 5<sup>th</sup> year data will give a solid basis for comparison with the 1990 inventory that will be reviewed in the 5-year report. The MFRC was asked to provide any topics of interest that could be analyzed and addressed in the report. The IMC Committee will follow-up on this request.

### **Analysis of GEIS Implementation Based on Most Recent FIA Data**

Based on the newly available 2001 panel of FIA data, Dr. Al Ek presented areas where MFRC could conduct cost-effective and rapid monitoring/analysis in order to assess progress on GEIS recommendations. He provided highlights of the data, but said that, due to procedure and definition changes in FIA sampling, interpretations should be made with caution from 1990 to 2001.

- Loss in forest area...was 16.7 million acres, now 16.3 million acres,
- Increase in timberland area...14.7 million acres, now 14.9 million acres
- Average age of cover types remains stable
- Age class imbalances continue for most cover types
- Aspen age class imbalance improving, but shortfall continues
- Balsam fir cover type increasingly converted to hardwoods

Dr. Ek suggests that an assessment of the GEIS recommendations could occur at *site*, *landscape*, *organization*, and *research* levels. He cited an assessment recently published in the Journal of Forestry<sup>♦</sup> as a model that uses a report card of implementing forestry recommendations.

Dr. Ek also identified the following topics that may warrant further analysis within the FIA data:

- Aspen timber supply
- Spruce/fir timber supply
- White pine restoration
- Aging of forest and cover type change
- Identification of trends occurring on the landscape relative to landscape goals set by MFRC regional committees
- Forest edge changes (e.g. changes in acres of non-forest with trees)
- Silvicultural and harvest practice changes and their effects
- Timber quality change
- Guideline implementation monitoring trends at a small watershed scale
- Development in riparian areas

Bob Stine suggested that the Information Management Committee discuss Dennis May's and Alan Ek's presentations and bring specific recommendations for GEIS implementation monitoring back to the MFRC as an action item at the March or May meeting.

### **Recommendations to Revise Landscape Planning Timeline\***

Ron Nargang proposed and Dave Parent seconded the proposal to accept the revised landscape planning schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Potential Implications of DNR Motorized Task Force Recommendations for Forest Sustainability**

Tom Baumann – DNR gave a brief update on his participation on the DNR Motorized Task Force.

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<sup>♦</sup> Malmshiemer, R. W., W. R. Bentley, and D. W. Floyd. 2002. Conserving the Northern Forest: A Report Card on State and Federal Implementation of Recommendations of the Northern Forest Lands Council, Journal of Forestry 100 (3):34-39.

\* Action Item

The Task Force's Recommendations Report will be presented to Senator Marty's Environment and Natural Resources Committee on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

As a next step, the DNR OHV Policy Committee will look at the Auditor's report and Task Force report and put together a recommendation for Legislature, maybe this year.

### **Northeast and North Central Landscape Committee Report Status (formerly identified as an action item)**

Ron Nargang indicated that the process has been fruitful in improving working relationships. Regional committees agreed on Defined Future Conditions (DFCs), but did not reach agreement on numerical measurements as a means to assess progress towards DFCs. Both committees did agree on three areas:

- Suggest 5 year intervals of detailed monitoring to measure progress and analyze rate of change relative to landscape goals
- Monitor changes in silvicultural practices
- Ask agencies/land managers to identify how the strategies and goals could be accomplished through their management

Ron handed out a draft 2-page report that summarizes the Landscape Committee's recommendations. This document will be refined and part of action item at the next MFRC meeting.

### **Public Communications to the MFRC**

Rick Horton stated that provisions in the House budget bill which would cut the Future Resources Fund portion of LCMR that has been helpful for the Ruffed Grouse Society and other organizations. There are no similar provisions on the Senate bill.

### **Council Member Comments**

- Mike Phillips alerted attendees about a key deadline: names of potential peer reviewers need to be submitted by MFRC members by March 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Bob Oswald commented that Minnesota lost 300 union members with the recent Blandin layoff, with additional indirect economic losses.
- Wayne Brandt handed out a new MFI brochure that shows that the forest products industry is now \$ 6.9 billion (2001 data). Compared to the same statistics from 1999, this represents a 9.4% drop in forest product value to the State of Minnesota.
- Norm Moody handed out the first page of an article entitled "Responses of Isolated Wetland Herpetofauna to Upland Forest Management" from the Journal of Wildlife Management 66(3):2002.

### **Future MFRC Agenda Items**

Dave Zumeta handed out a list of potential future agenda items and suggested adding "MFRC Motorized Task Force -- Next Steps" for the March meeting. Dave Sterr has arranged for MFRC's July meeting to be held at the Bois Forte Reservation, Fortune Bay on Lake Vermillion.

*Rich Holm moved to adjourn, Greg Damlo seconded.*