

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes – March 25, 2003

Roseville Oval – St. Paul, MN

Council Members Present: Bob Stine (acting Chair), Ron Nargang, Wayne Brandt, Mike Carroll (Brad Moore's alternate), Jim Sanders, Dave Sterr, Rich Holm, Bob Oswald, Jan Green, Dave Parent, Katie Fernholz (Betsy Daub's alternate), Norm Moody, Brad Moore, Shawn Perich

Council Members Absent: Gene Merriam (Chair), Roger Scherer, Wayne Hammer, Greg Damlo

Guests: Clyde Hanson – Sierra Club, Don Janes – Sierra Club, Rick Horton – Ruffed Grouse Society, Maureen Arnold – Department of Revenue, Emmett Mullin – DNR, OMB, Calder Hibbard - University of Minnesota, Jon Rosales - DNR

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

Chair's Remarks

MFRC Appointments and Reappointments

Governor Pawlenty and John Berns, Appointments Coordinator for the Governor, are meeting on March 25th to discuss Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) appointments. There will be nine new appointments or reappointments, as follows:

- 1) **Chair.** Dr. Al Sullivan, currently Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Facilities, University of Minnesota, and formerly Dean of the University's College of Natural Resources, is very likely to be appointed MFRC Chair. This appointment will most likely occur in April or early May.
- 2) **DNR.** Mike Carroll, Director of the DNR, Division of Forestry, will probably replace Brad Moore as the DNR representative.
- 3) **Game Species.** Shawn Perich will probably be reappointed.
- 4) **Forest Products Industry.** Wayne Brandt will probably be reappointed.
- 5) **Non-industrial Private Forest Landowner.** Dave Parent will probably be reappointed.
- 6) **Labor.** Bob Oswald will probably be reappointed.
- 7) **Environmental Interest.** Betsy Daub was unable to continue serving due to her work with the DNR. She will be replaced by either her alternate, Katie Fernholz, who is with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP); Warren Hansen, an outfitter from NE MN and a former legislative candidate; Catherine Nicholson, who has an extensive background serving on various environmental and related boards and working for various state government environmental agencies; or Sharon Stevens, a Sierra Club volunteer and attorney with a background in forestry and related issues.
- 8) **Conservation Interest.** Ron Nargang, who is vacating this position, will be replaced by either Katie Fernholz - IATP; Shaun Hamilton - Trust for Public Land; or possibly Tom Landwehr - Ducks Unlimited.
- 9) **Logger.** Rich Holm has applied for reappointment, and Dick Walsh, former MFRC alternate in this position, has applied for appointment.

All of these appointments may be made before the May 20th MFRC meeting.

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

Clyde Hanson – Sierra Club expressed members' disappointment in not having quantifiable landscape goals in the Northeast and North Central Landscape plans, because he believes the Legislature expected them. In addition, in 1995 the GEIS Roundtable said the Landscape Program should set specific Desired Future Conditions. Further, he pointed out that Boise Cascade internally set a voluntary 10% goal for aspen-spruce-fir, yet the related goal in the NE Regional landscape was only 8%. Finally, Clyde expressed his wish that the regional committees use a standardized decision-making process for each of the landscapes.

Rick Horton – Ruffed Grouse Society cited his participation in the NC Landscape Committee, and said that his group is satisfied with the outcomes. He expressed hope that other Ruffed Grouse members would participate in other landscape committees. He commented that if quantifiable goals had been set, it would have polarized the parties and led to gridlock. He feels that flexible goals are more likely to lead to implementation.

Approval of January 28, 2003 Meeting Minutes*

Bob Oswald moved and Jim Sanders seconded approval of the meeting minutes.

Approval of March 25, 2003 Agenda*

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

Executive Director Report

Legislative Testimony

Since the January 28 MFRC meeting, members of MFRC have had numerous meetings with legislators about the MFRC, including the chairs of the natural resources policy and finance committees in both the House and Senate. Staff has appeared at several committee hearings. Due to support from key legislators, the DNR Commissioner's office, and interest groups, the Executive Director is hopeful that the proposed \$730,000 annual MFRC budget for FY04 and FY05 will be approved by the legislature.

Blandin Foundation Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative

On February 7, the Blandin Foundation convened a steering committee to provide input on the goals, themes, content, and sequencing of a series of Blandin-sponsored forest policy forums. A large number of MFRC members, alternates, or staff participated in this planning meeting. The Blandin Foundation plans to host up to three forums this calendar year.

MLEP Training Sessions

Dave Chura, the new Executive Director of MLEP, has scheduled an introductory guideline training session from April 24-25 at the Cloquet Forestry Center for new MLEP members and other interested professionals who need basic classroom and field training on the guidelines. Particular emphasis will be placed on ways to protect site quality.

MLEP has also scheduled a series of ten workshops in six different locations throughout the state during the month of May that will focus on Business Management, Certification Programs and Activities, and Wildlife Management. For more details visit -www.mlep.org.

* Action Item

Bear River Demonstration Forest Quarterly Updates

Last year the MFRC directed staff to provide quarterly updates on Bear River Demonstration Forest activities and accomplishments. The last update was September 2002. Given the change in administrations, it was decided that the MFRC wants updates twice a year, with the next update planned for May.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance

Bob Stine (acting committee chair) reported that the committee met on March 13 to review a draft MFRC budget for FY04-05. Due to the support from the DNR Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner, the Governor's proposed budget includes \$730,000 per year for the MFRC. If the legislature approves this budget, it would provide a \$30,000 (4%) increase compared to the MFRC's \$700,000 FY03 base budget. This increase would be the first increase in the MFRC budget in six years.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee (GIMC)

Dave Parent (committee chair) reported that an evaluation of site selection methodology for implementation monitoring is nearly complete, and will be reviewed during a joint meeting with the Information Management Committee. Also, the 2003 Riparian Monitoring report is complete and awaiting approval before general distribution.

Ad-hoc Committee on Guideline Review & Revision

Dave Parent (committee chair) reported the debate during the March 19th meeting regarding the appropriate RMZ width for uneven-age management. The ad-hoc committee was not able to agree to an earlier MFRC decision of equalizing them at 150 feet, so it reverts to the original language. Shawn Perich commented that the idea of equalizing the widths was not liked by some fish and wildlife folks at the DNR who are concerned that the guidelines may be too narrow for conditions in the North Shore. The Ad Hoc Committee agreed that there are enough issues to warrant further examination of this topic, and Shawn will present a motion at the next Council meeting that reflects the input from field DNR staff. Wayne asked that the motion include facts and concrete information for why the Council should reopen this topic. A final reminder was given to council members that they should nominate individuals who could serve as peer reviewers for the revised guidelines by April 22.

Landscape Planning and Coordination Committee

Ron Nargang (committee chair) reported that the Landscape Committee met twice since the last MFRC meeting in order to gain approval on the NE and NC Regional Landscape reports. (Refer to the Northeast and North Central Landscape Committee Recommendations section of minutes for more information.)

Forest Resources Information Management Committee

Norm Moody (committee chair) reported that the committee met on March 6th to discuss the status of the harvest survey to determine acres harvested by covertype in 2001.

Written Communications to the MFRC

Dave Zumeta reported that he received a letter from Senator Robling regarding MFRC's and the Forest Resources Research Advisory Committee's expiration dates. He responded by providing the legislative language that extended the sunset dates to June 30, 2007.

Second, Ron Nargang sent a letter to Jan Hacker regarding the MFRC's response to the Forest Resources Partnerships' Landscape White Paper.

Northeast and North Central Landscape Committee Recommendations*

Ron Nargang proposed a motion to approve the Northeast and North Central Regional Landscape Committee reports. Dave Parent seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. A concern was expressed that the reports do not include specific goal statements for the landscape. However, staff pointed out that page 7 of the NC report and page 8 of the NE report list goals that can be used for measurement and monitoring in the future. Shawn Perich expressed a desire for a map of existing vegetation so it could be compared with the Potential Plant Community map. Staff responded that a comparison of that type would be difficult since the Potential Plant Community map is based on forest succession and range of natural variation, not existing vegetation. Shawn requested the Potential Plant Community map be moved to a different section of the reports to avoid confusion. Staff will move the map.

Rick Horton asked what the definition in the report is for "native wildlife." For example, does the term refer only to pre-settlement species, or does it include naturalized species? To address this, Jan Green suggested an amendment to change the last part of the sentence in the third bullet of the DFFC in the NE report to "for animal and plant species in NE Minnesota" and the same change on to the second bullet on page 8. Wayne moved to accept Jan's change and Dave Parent seconded. With these revisions, the motion to approve the two reports passed unanimously.

Status of the FY 2004-05 State of Minnesota Budget and Implications for MFRC

Brad Moore shared that an extra \$100K was added to the original proposed budget of \$630K because it was felt that there is a minimal level under which the MFRC cannot effectively operate. The Commissioner's office feels that forest management is a high priority. Dave Zumeta commented that we need to view this 4% increase (\$30K) as very favorable relative to the 78% cut proposed last year. Dave asked Brad Moore to thank the DNR Commissioner for the budget support.

Governor's Assessment of the Long-Term Competitiveness of Minnesota's Forest-Based Industries

Brad Moore reported that the Governor asked the Departments of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) and Natural Resources (DNR) to carry out an assessment of the long-term competitiveness of Minnesota's forest-based industry. A working group was created to write a proposal, which the Governor accepted in early March. Soon after, the Governor appointed nine individuals to an Advisory Task Force: Ron Salisbury, Plant Manager of Potlatch Corporation; Joe Maher, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Blandin Paper Company; Howard Hedstrom, President of Hedstrom Lumber; Gene Foster, Vice President of Minnesota Operations for Boise Paper Solutions; Susan Stafford, Dean of the College of Natural Resources for the University of Minnesota; Dave Epperly, Land Commissioner for St. Louis County; and Clarence Johnson, CO for Johnson Logging.

The assessment will examine the competitive status of Minnesota's forest-based industry relative to several other states as well as to regions and international industry clusters. Based on these comparisons, the assessment will identify the key constraints to continued industry health, and potential expansion and new development of Minnesota's primary forest products industries. These identified key constraints will then provide a framework for potential policy and program

options that would enable the industry to more effectively compete. The assessment will review data related to approximately 10 factors that affect competitiveness relative to other states, regions and countries.

The MFRC is involved through participation in the working group that is supporting the Advisory Task Force. MFRC's participation is due to the statute that mandates MFRC to advise the Governor and Legislature on policy that affects Minnesota's forests.

Sustainable Forest Incentive Act Implementation

Maureen Arnold, Department of Revenue presented an update on Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA). This new legislation was passed in 2001, so 2002 was the first year of implementation. The first payment will occur in September 2003. The Department of Revenue originally anticipated 3500 first year enrollees, but only 350 enrolled. However, it was the larger landowners who did enroll (95% of enrollees own more than 40 acres, and seven applicants enrolled more than 1,920 acres.) Next year, 1,000 landowners are expected to enroll about 100,000 acres. One of the reasons for lower than expected enrollment is a year-long waiting list for foresters to do the management plans.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) Implications for Landscape Planning and Coordination

Emmett Mullin, DNR Office of Management and Budget Services, presented the eighth plan in a series of 5-year State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans. These broad statewide plans provide a strategic framework for more specific outdoor recreation planning. Also, the completion of this plan helps maintain eligibility for the state to participate in the Federal Land and Water Conservation funding process that has brought \$60 million to Minnesota since 1965.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None.

Council Member Comments

- ❖ Jim Sanders – The draft EIS and plans for the Superior and Chippewa National Forests will be complete by late April early May, at which time the 90-day comment period begins.
- ❖ Jim Sanders – Norm Wagner is the new Supervisor of Chippewa, effective early June.
- ❖ Jan Green – Handed out a memo with issues identified from the landscape planning process that she feels the Information Management Committee should work on more closely (for example, uniformity of data).
- ❖ Bob Oswald – Reminded Council members that April 28th is Worker's Memorial Day, and asked members to take a moment at 12 noon that day to reflect on lost and hurt workers.

Future MFRC Agenda Items

Dave Zumeta handed out a list of potential future agenda items. Dave Sterr has arranged for MFRC's July 22nd meeting to be held at the Bois Forte Reservation, Fortune Bay on Lake Vermillion. The agenda will include time for presentations on such topics as allotments, land management issues on reservations, housing in forested areas, or gaming's impact on reservations. Dave Sterr asked Council members to fax questions/information requests to him (218-751-4367).

Rich Holm moved to adjourn, Dave Sterr seconded.