

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2003
Cloquet Forestry Center

Council Members Present: Al Sullivan, Bob Stine, Wayne Brandt, Mike Carroll, Dave Sterr, Bob Oswald, Jan Green, Dave Parent, Norm Moody, Katie Fernholz, Duane Kick (alternate for Jim Sanders), Shaun Hamilton, Mike Carroll, Norm Moody, Dick Walsh, Shawn Perich, Wayne Hammer

Council Members Absent: Roger Scherer, Greg Damlo

Guests: Don Janes – Sierra Club, Bernadine Joselyn – Blandin Foundation, Mike Prouty – USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, Al Mitton, John Bathke-MFA, Tom Baumann – DNR Forestry, Archie Chelseth

Staff: Dave Zumeta, Dave Miller, Chad Skally, Jim Manolis, Jenna Fletcher, Clarence Turner

Chair's Remarks

Al Sullivan distributed a list of new committee assignments for current and incoming Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) members. He asked for feedback before the Personnel and Finance Committee approves the suggested committee assignments. In addition, Al proposed six meeting dates in 2004 for MFRC meetings.

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

None.

Approval of July 23, 2003 Meeting Minutes*

Dave Zumeta distributed copies of a letter in which John Vogel objected to wording contained in MFRC's July 22, 2003 meeting minutes. Jan Green made a motion to revise the language to "John Vogel spoke to implementing landscape plans." Mike Carroll seconded the motion. Shawn Perich noted that he was incorrectly listed as absent. A motion to approve the meeting minutes with the proposed changes was approved unanimously.

Approval of July 22, 2003 Agenda*

Jan Green moved to approve this meeting's agenda, and Bob Oswald seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta described his key meetings and presentations in the last month that showed the breadth and diversity of organizations with which the MFRC collaborates.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance

Al Sullivan (committee chair) reported that the Personnel and Finance committee will meet immediately following this Council meeting.

* Action Item

Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee (GIMC)

Dave Parent (committee chair) handed out a timeline for the 2004 guideline monitoring work. Norm Moody commented that the guideline monitoring approach should be determined vis-à-vis third party certification. Dave Parent noted this topic is being considered as part of the Blandin Foundation's Certification Action Team (see page 3 of these minutes for more information).

Ad-hoc Committee on Guideline Review and Revision

Dave Parent (committee chair) reported that comments from peer reviewers on the proposed guideline revisions had been received. Dave shared comments and ratings from peer reviewers. In addition, a set of documents listing the suggested guideline revisions and peer reviewer comments was distributed in preparation for the next Council meeting. **Council members were asked to review, and bring all materials, to the December 4th meeting.**

Landscape Planning and Coordination Committee

Bob Stine (committee chair) handed out a summary of the committee's activities. Bob reported that the committee reviewed the Northern landscape plan, then decided to send it back to the regional landscape committee to add more content and to address the question regarding the decision-making process. Bob also reported that the North Central Regional Landscape Committee wants to add a third strategy to their plan. The Landscape Planning & Coordination Committee agreed that the regional committee should do additional work to the proposed new strategy, and then the regional landscape committee will approve it.

Forest Resources Information Management Committee

Norm Moody (committee chair) reported that the Information Management Committee had not met since the last MFRC meeting. However, the staff and committee drafted a report that summarizes data on timber sales by public landowners in 2001. Copies of the draft report were distributed. Norm proposed a motion that a letter should be sent to the two counties who did not provide data (Clearwater and Itasca). Norm pointed out that the counties did not respond in spite of having received state funding from the Interagency Information Cooperative in 1998-1999 to improve counties' information systems and to allow easy response to these types of requests. Wayne Brandt seconded the motion to send letters requesting the information, and the motion carried.

Written Communications to the Council

- 1) Dave Zumeta outlined the steps to be taken before responding to Al Knaeble's letter of May 8, 2003, beyond his initial letter of response dated September 8, 2003. MFRC and DNR staff will visit the two harvest sites in late September and October and summarize their findings in a report, which will be appended to MFRC's response letter.
- 2) Dave Zumeta said his response to Bernadine Joselyn's letter seeking monetary contribution to the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative will say that the Council provides support through significant in-kind contributions such as staff time, but will not make a monetary contribution.
- 3) Dave Zumeta shared a letter sent from Clyde Hanson to Al Sullivan. Dave said that a response letter is in draft form.
- 4) Dave Zumeta recently received a letter from Kara Dunning – Boise. He will work with Mike Phillips to draft a response.

Approval of Landscape Plan Implementation and Coordination Resolution*

Jan Green suggested some additions to the resolution that was mailed in advance of this meeting. In addition, Bob Stine shared a document that articulated Minnesota Forest Resource Partnership's (MFRP) position on coordination activities within landscape regions, which differs from MFRC's views. Wayne proposed redrafting the resolution to provide time to continue to work through differences with the MFRP's position. Jan Green agreed that redrafting is a good idea. Bob Stine clarified that the NE region has long had a coordination group and a broad outline of coordination in the landscape plan, but the NC region coordination plan is under debate and waiting for agreement between MFRP and MFRC on how coordination will operate. Wayne moved to table the resolution, Dave Parent seconded. The motion to table was unanimously approved. Dave Zumeta will meet with Jan Hacker, Executive Director of the MFRP, to develop language to clarify the roles of MFRP and MFRC regarding landscape plan implementation and coordination, which will then be approved by the MFRP, the MFRC Landscape Committee, and the MFRC.

Governor's Advisory Task Force Report on Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry

Mike Carroll provided an update on the activities of the Governor's Report Implementation Team. Five workgroups will draft legislative language and define specific administrative actions for detailed recommendations. Jan Green noted that the Wood and Fiber Availability workgroup needs an NIPF representative. Mike Carroll said he will clarify who speaks for NIPF owners. Dave Parent pointed out that NIPF owners are very diverse, so no one organization is truly representative. However, Mike Reichenbach – Extension and MFA Secretary could possibly serve as a good spokesperson for NIPF owners. Jan Green commented that the Environmental Review workgroup is a potential flashpoint, which could be mitigated by bringing in an environmental perspective. Dave Zumeta responded that Ann Foss, the Environmental Review workgroup chair, is working to bring in an environmental representative.

Several Council members suggested the need to clarify how this implementation effort and the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/ Vital Communities are linked. Dave Zumeta clarified that Governor's Task Force outcomes will be focused on FY04 legislative action, while Blandin Foundation is focused on 3-5 years and is broader in scope.

Blandin Foundation Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative: Summary of September 10-11 Policy Forum and Next Steps

Bernadine Joselyn presented an update on the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative. Since she spoke to the MFRC last December, the main programs have taken shape. A key program began with the Call-to-Action Conference held on September 10-11. Dave Zumeta noted that sixteen folks at today's meeting also attended the September 10-11 Conference. The conference was the first step in identifying opportunities that the Blandin Foundation is uniquely positioned to act on as a neutral convener. Bernadine expressed her belief that the biggest success was the diversity of participants, which led to rich discussions and new perspectives. Seven Action Teams were formed as a result of the conference. Dave Zumeta pointed out that 11 of 69 Action Team members are Council members, Council alternates or staff. The Action Teams will identify strategies and goals that could be deployed. On Dec. 10th, the Action Teams will report back. The Blandin Foundation may use the suggested strategies as input towards grant making in 2004.

Dave Parent suggested that the chairs of the Governor's Task Force Implementation and Blandin Foundation Action teams should share meeting outcomes. Bernadine agreed, noting that Action Teams will be posting meeting minutes and information on a webpage. Wayne Brandt pointed out that Blandin Foundation is not a legislative advocacy organization, which differentiates their initiative from the Governor's Task Force implementation group.

DNR Division of Forestry Vision for Forest Management

Tom Baumann shared DNR Forestry's vision statement: "to be the best forest managers in North America." He outlined several goals that support the vision statement, one of which is to pursue "dual certification" of state-owned and managed lands under the SFI and FSC certification systems. Jan Green asked how this vision and the supporting goal goals would be shared with constituents. Tom replied that accomplishment reports are given to the legislature. Katie Fernholz asked how DNR will be accountable to citizens of Minnesota. Mike Carroll responded that lobbyists and legislators ask detailed questions.

Wayne Brandt asked for clarification on the Department's timber sales program. Tom Bauman responded that budget cuts negatively affect all of Forestry's programs, including timber sales.

Summary of the Spatial Analysis Project results

Jim Manolis summarized the results of the Spatial Analysis and Modeling project. Spatial analysis involves mapping and measuring spatial patterns of vegetation, age classes, land uses, and natural and human-caused disturbances. The project included three components; 1) historical and current analyses of spatial patterns, 2) modeling future scenarios, and 3) assessing effects of spatial patterns on plant and animal species. The project results confirm that important wildlife, recreational, and timber values (e.g., cost savings from larger harvests) depend on larger patches. More specifically, the project findings indicate the following management implications:

- Larger patches of both young and older forest are under-represented today compared to past conditions.
- If a larger patch structure is desired, using simple rules such as "harvest in large patches" or "reserve large patches" can result in unintended consequences, such as loss of older large patches when they are in shortest supply or, conversely, unnecessary reduction in timber harvest levels.
- Maintaining adequate representation of large patches over time requires careful, long-term planning and the use of models to help determine the most efficient ways to meet a variety of management objectives.
- Ecological subsections differ in patch size and disturbance patterns. Thus:
 - There are no "one-size-fits-all" solutions to spatial pattern management
 - It is important to tailor forest management plans to existing conditions: e.g., small patch management where landscape is already finely divided; large patch management where large patches already exist or where there is the best potential for restoration.

The final report is being developed.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None.

Future Council meeting agenda items

Dave Zumeta asked for suggestions for future meeting agenda items. Mike Prouty suggested an overview of the USDA Forest Service - State & Private and possible links to MFRC's work. Dave Parent suggested a presentation on ownership parcelization within riparian areas. Katie Fernholz suggested experts who could present their experiences in implementing dual certification, and include others who have chosen to certify under a single system. Jan Green suggested that Lisa Schulte present her findings regarding aspen and forest change. Shawn Perich suggested that a visioning exercise could help MFRC plan for the future, possibly during the two-day meeting in July. Wayne Brandt suggested that a chronology of what MFRC has accomplished during its lifetime should be developed. Dave Parent reminded members that the December meeting will include important Guideline revision work. Norm Moody wants to revisit the SFIA, especially how the state will monitor SFIA-enrolled land.

Council Member Comments

Jan Green asked if staff could examine land use change in Minnesota. She cited an article in the Duluth News Tribune on September 16th that described issues in the northeast region of Minnesota.

Shawn Perich commented that he has heard that developers are selling land parcels without telling buyers that access to the land is not possible or planned.

Wayne Brandt moved to conclude the meeting, and Wayne Hammer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.