

Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Meeting Minutes
Cloquet Forestry Center
December 4, 2003

Council Members Present: Al Sullivan (Chair), Bob Stine, Mike Carroll, Dave Sterr, Dick Walsh, Jan Green, Dave Parent, Wayne Brandt, Norm Moody, Katie Fernholz, Jim Sanders, Bob Oswald, John Bathke (alternate for Wayne Hammer), John Stauber (alternate for Roger Scherer)

Council Members Absent: Shaun Hamilton, Wayne Hammer, Greg Damlo, Roger Scherer

Guests: Dave Chura, MLEP; Norm Wagoner, Chippewa National Forest; Bruce ZumBahlen, MFA; Clyde Hanson, Sierra Club; Don Janes, Sierra Club; Jim Lemmerman, BWSR; Rick Horton, Ruffed Grouse Society; Al Mitton - private citizen; Louise Yount – CNR Center for Continuing Education

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

Chair's Remarks

Al Sullivan reported the status of applications and reappointments for Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) seats. There are currently eight MFRC positions up for reappointment. Four (Jan Green, Mike Carroll, Bob Stine and Jim Sanders) have applied for reappointment and are the only applicants in their respective positions. Roger Scherer has clarified that he is not reapplying for reappointment, but has referred John Stauber as an interested applicant for secondary wood products manufacturing. Greg Damlo has chosen to not reapply. Both Norm Moody and Bruce Cox have applied for the County position. Wayne Hammer is not seeking reappointment, but at least two applicants are applying for his nonindustrial private forest landowner position. Action on the eight positions will likely not occur until late winter or spring of 2004.

Public Input/Communication to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Clyde Hanson made the following comments:

- A concern under the Public Concerns Registration Process (PCRP) that Clyde submitted was determined to be outside the scope of the program, but he had hoped his concern would stop a timber sale that was changed from a winter harvest to a summer harvest.
- Sierra Club has concerns about the integrity of the landscape planning process and decision-making rules, specifically, openness to public involvement.
- The Sierra Club is against the proposed agreement with MN Forest Resources Partnership (MFRP) on how MFRC and MFRP would work together during the coordination phase of landscape planning. Clyde expressed concern that significant stakeholders, including environmentalists, were excluded from the process of developing the proposed agreement. In addition, Clyde feels that the agreement contradicts Minnesota statutes relative to MFRP's rights and interests. Finally, Clyde expressed concern that the MFRC/MFRP proposed agreement regarding the coordination phase of landscape planning restricts access to information, lacks accountability and opens the landscape plans to change without full participation by stakeholder groups.

Approval of September 23, 2003 Meeting Minutes*

Jan Green moved to approve the minutes, Bob Oswald seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of December 4, 2003 Meeting Agenda*

Jan Green made a motion to approve the revised meeting agenda, Dave Parent seconded. Jan Green reminded staff that the asterisk indicating action items should be identified at the bottom of all agendas.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta reported that the 2003 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature is under development. MFRC members will receive a draft copy by December 12th for a second review. Dave Zumeta also reported that Chad Skally has changed from 100% to 50% time. His focus will now be mainly on providing GIS and other information technology for landscape planning. He will also continue as staff liaison to the Southeast Landscape. The remaining 50% time of Chad's previous position will be replaced with a new hire who will serve an 18-month assignment to develop an East Central Landscape plan. This 50% position is expected to be filled by December 31.

Wayne Brandt requested that MFRC send a letter to Greg Damlo to recognize his service to the MFRC.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance.

Al Sullivan (Chair) reported that the Personnel and Finance committee met immediately following the September 4th MFRC meeting. Committee members reviewed MFRC's monthly financial report for August, then concluded that MFRC's FY04 spending is on pace. The committee requested to receive this financial report quarterly. Also, MFRC's FY04 Work Plan was reviewed and approved by the committee.

The committee discussed the additional costs needed for DNR Division of Forestry's evaluation of guideline monitoring sites if third party guideline monitoring was conducted in 2004. (MFRC's current budget can cover only 1st party monitoring.) Mike Phillips reported that an additional \$75,000 would be needed to fund 3rd party evaluation for the fieldwork portion only. At that time, Wayne Brandt volunteered to look for the additional funding. After the committee report, Wayne Brandt shared with the MFRC that MFI is prepared to provide \$25,000 to the DNR towards 3rd party evaluation. Mike Carroll said DNR could provide \$10,000. Dave Zumeta indicated that MFRC is willing to contribute an additional \$10,000 in FY04 funds above the current budgeted amount of \$30,000. A majority of the MFRC supports 3rd party monitoring, but understands budget constraints, and feels that Mike Carroll can and should make the decision as to how to proceed.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent (Chair) distributed a written update of the committee's activities. The baseline report on three years of monitoring results is under development, and will be completed in early 2004. Satellite imagery and aerial photography have been completed in preparation for 2004 site monitoring of guideline implementation.

Ad Hoc Guideline Review/Revision

Dave Parent (Chair) said there was nothing to report.

Landscape Planning/Coordination

Bob Stine (Chair) distributed meeting minutes from the Landscape Committee's meeting on November 19. The committee will meet again on January 13, 2004.

Forest Resources Information Management

Norm Moody (Chair) announced that the report on acres sold for harvest in 2001 is almost complete. This project proved that if MFRC requests data from public landowners and managers, the data can be easily combined to provide an answer to the question of how many acres of publicly owned and managed timberland is harvested each year.

Written Communications to the MFRC

Dave Zumeta summarized the following written communications:

- 1) MFRC's response to Al Knaeble: MFRC's letter included a report assessing the rutting observed on the site referenced in Al Knaeble's letter. Wayne Brandt said that the Al Knaeble did not agree with the report's assessment.
- 2) MFRC's response to a request for support for Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative: MFRC declined to provide direct financial support, but pledged to continue to provide substantial in-kind support.
- 3) Al Mitton's letter dated 12/4/03 regarding his concerns that timber harvesting may be occurring too fast for the forest to be sustained, and for jobs in forest-dependent industries to be sustained.
- 4) Al Sullivan's response letter acknowledging the concerns raised by Clyde Hanson regarding the Northern Landscape's planning and decision-making process.
- 5) MFRC's response to Kara Dunning: MFRC agrees that there may be cost-efficient methods to address both guideline implementation monitoring requirements and auditing requirements specified by SFI and FSC certification systems, but that additional work would be required to evaluate the opportunity.

Approval of Guideline Changes Based on Peer Review Comments and of Public Review Initiation*

In order to proceed to public review, Mike Phillips asked the MFRC to approve the proposed changes to the guidelines based on peer review comments, modifications by the Guideline Review Technical Committee (GRTC) and the Ad Hoc Committee. Discussion ensued.

- 1) Wayne Brandt made the point that there were no economists on the GRTC, and that Tim O'Hara did not attend GRTC meeting because of scheduling conflict.
- 2) Jan Green moved to retain the original definition of "cavity tree" (a live or dead tree that can be excavated or used by wildlife for nesting and reproduction) in the glossary. Dave Parent moved, and Mike Carroll seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- 3) Wayne Brandt moved to amend one of the decisions of the Ad-hoc committee on guideline revision. Wayne's motion was to establish a de minimus size of 0.5 acres for recommending the establishment of an RMZ adjacent to open water wetlands. Voting in favor of amendment: 6, opposed: 5.

Dave Parent made the motion to accept the proposed guideline changes, as amended above. Katie Fernholz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Resolution to Approve MFRP/MFRC Position on Landscape Plan Coordination and Implementation

Bob Stine summarized the history of how the MFRP/MFRC position statement was developed. Jan Green proposed a change to the first line of the fourth bullet: "the Partnership and MFRC will...", and Jim Sanders agreed. Mike Carroll expressed concern with wording that appears exclusionary. Katie Fernholz questioned the value of this document, stating that if it is really a document of cooperation between two organizations, more detail is needed. A suggestion was made that templates may be needed for the regional committees, but Wayne Brandt argued that MFRC should not be overly prescriptive to regional committees since planning and coordination should be specific to the region and should be self-directed by the participants.

Based on this discussion, it was agreed that MFRC staff will amend the position statement, and bring it back to the MFRC meeting on January 27, 2004 as a proposed resolution and a formal action item.

Potential Amendment to Public Concerns Registration Process Field Investigation Protocol

Shawn Perich distributed a handout detailing his concern that Public Concerns Registration Process (PCRP) field investigation criteria are not being applied. Dave Zumeta clarified that MFRC staff, under Zumeta's direction, determine if a site visit is needed, which is a judgment call. He then reviewed the history and original intent of the PCRP. Dave Zumeta agreed to work on the procedures document with Shawn Perich and MLEP. Shawn stated that the MFRC needs to make sure that citizens feel that their concerns and questions are being heard and answered. Wayne Brandt pointed out that the site visit is an important protection to the logger and the

landowner. Katie Fernholz concurred with Jan Green's recommendation that a decision tree for whether or not a site visit/field investigation is warranted be added to the procedures document.

Seasonal Pond Research Results and Implications for Management

Brian Palik presented specifics on his research on forested wetlands and the impact of timber harvest activity on the function of seasonal ponds.

Leave Tree Research and Implications for Guideline Revision

Clarence Turner presented initial findings from a data set obtained from a former forestry graduate student that provides information on the windfirmness of residual trees following harvest. The analysis of the data from this study will be used to determine if the leave tree guideline recommendations need to be modified.

Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) Strategic Plan

Dave Chura, Executive Director of MLEP, presented the business plan for MLEP. Dave Chura requested that the MFRC consider greater financial support for MLEP, especially for Guideline Revision training in 2005.

Public Communications to the MFRC

Al Mitton expressed his concern that timber harvesting in Minnesota may be occurring too fast for the forest to be sustained, and for jobs in forest-dependent industries to be sustained. Rick Horton commented that National Forest plans should specify minimum as well as maximum harvest levels.

MFRC Member Comments

Shawn Perich asked MFRC staff to compile a list of riparian issues and take steps to create a riparian committee of scientists. He also pointed out concerns about Minnesota's birch resource on the North Shore and asked who should be contacted. Jim Sanders informed the MFRC that President Bush signed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, and explained that the next phase is to develop regulations to implement the legislation.

January 27, 2004 MFRC Meeting Agenda Ideas

- A motion related to Shawn Perich's comment about creating a riparian science technical team.
- A motion related to changes to the PCRCP procedures.
- A presentation on the Right to Practice Forestry Act may be rescheduled if Garrett Ous contacts us.
- An update on FIA.
- Presentation on Ecological Classification System implementation.

Other future agenda items:

- Jan Green requested that Lisa Shulte present at one of the upcoming meetings.
- Katie Fernholz suggested inviting a certification expert from Wisconsin DNR since Wisconsin will be making a decision in February on how to proceed with certification.
- Dave Parent would like to see an update on the topic of ducks, water and forests.

Jim Sanders moved to adjourn. Mike Carroll seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.