

Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Shoreview Community Center
January 27, 2004

Council Members Present: Al Sullivan (Chair), Wayne Brandt, Mike Carroll, Katie Fernholz, Shaun Hamilton, Wayne Hammer, Jan Green, Norm Moody, Paul Momper (in lieu of Jim Sanders), Bob Oswald, Dave Parent, John Stauber (alternate for Roger Scherer), Bob Stine

Council Members Absent: Greg Damlo, Roger Scherer, Dick Walsh, Shawn Perich, Dave Sterr, Jim Sanders

Guests: John Bathke – MFA, John Velin – LCMR, Garrett Ous – Itasca County Land Commissioner, Bud Stone – Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Bernadine Joselyn – Blandin Foundation, George Jerzy Hornik - Blandin Foundation

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

Chair's Remarks

Al Sullivan reported on the status of appointment or reappointment of eight members. Four MFRC positions are reappointments of existing members (Jan Green, Mike Carroll, Bob Stine and Jim Sanders). John Stauber, Innovative Pine Technologies, has applied for the secondary wood products manufacturing position. Butch Eggen, Crane Lake Resort, has applied for the resort and tourism industry position. Bruce Cox, Clearwater County, has applied for the county land manager position. Three applicants are applying for the nonindustrial private forest landowner position. Action by the Governor on these appointments is expected in February or early March.

Al also noted that he has been the chair for two MFRC meetings and feels that it is a good time to reflect on MFRC's goals and future direction. Therefore, MFRC's July meeting will include a day of visioning work. This would include an overview of what MFRC has accomplished, the "lessons learned", and what kind of issues to tackle in the future. Al feels that MFRC could provide more policy advice to the Governor and public agencies.

Public Input/Communication to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council

None

Approval of December 4, 2003 Meeting Minutes*

Dave Parent moved to approve the minutes, Bob Oswald seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of January 27, 2004 Meeting Agenda*

Dave Parent made a motion to approve the revised meeting agenda, Jan Green seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta reported that the 2003 Annual Report is complete. Copies will be delivered to the chairs of the appropriate committees in the Legislature. Dave also announced that MFRC hired Lindberg Ekola as the East Central Landscape Planner.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance.

Al Sullivan (Chair) reported that the Personnel and Finance committee did not meet since the last MFRC meeting.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent (Chair) described the completion of a draft three-year implementation monitoring summary report, placement of a Request for Proposal in the State Register and EQB Monitor for bids on third party guideline monitoring, and the timeline on land use change monitoring work.

Ad Hoc Guideline Review/Revision

Dave Parent (Chair) reported that the Ad Hoc committee did not meet since the last Council meeting. Approved guideline revisions were released for public review on January 26th, and comments are due no later than April 16th.

Landscape Planning/Coordination

Bob Stine (Chair) noted that two of this meeting's agenda items relate to landscape planning. Wayne Brandt noted that the regional landscape committees sometimes put positions on issues in their regional landscape plans. If the MFRC then approves the plan, this approval could be perceived as MFRC endorsement of the positions. The committee has struggled with how to deal with this, and Wayne Brandt sought input. Dave Parent agreed that this is an issue, and discussion ensued. It was agreed that the Landscape Planning/Coordination Committee should take a first shot at dealing with position statements within regional landscape plans, and elevate any issues that can not be resolved to the full MFRC. Dave Zumeta pointed out that Minnesota Statutes allow for regional landscape committees to raise statewide policy issues to the MFRC, but there is not a lot of precedent for this. Parcelization and fragmentation may be examples of issues that could get elevated. Dave Parent suggested a parallel form of communication that is separate from the Regional Landscape Committee that would channel statewide policy issues from committees to the full MFRC. Al Sullivan agreed that some type of process should be in place to avoid accidentally delegating policy issues to regional committees. Bob Stine clarified that this is exactly what regional committees will do - provide some recommendations to the MFRC rather than make position statements.

Forest Resources Information Management

Norm Moody (Chair) reported that a draft of the 2001 Acres of Timber Sold Report is on the MFRC documents webpage, and will be formally approved at the next IMC meeting. Requests for the same data for the years 2002 and 2003 will be sent out in a few weeks. If recipients do not respond to the request, Jan Green suggested that we request the data under Minnesota's Data Practices Act, whereby the governmental agency must provide the data, and we pay the cost of making copies.

Written Communications to the MFRC

None

Resolution to Table Consideration of the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership/MFRC Position Statement on Landscape Plan Coordination and Implementation*

Bob Stine made the motion to accept the proposed resolution as written, and Wayne Brandt seconded. Discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously. Bob Stine added that he spoke to John Vogel, and both agree that determination of how coordination will go forward needs to be addressed. Dave Zumeta noted that during the last Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership (MFRP) meeting, Bruce Cox offered to convene the North Central Region Coordination meeting, but his role would not be as a representative of the MFRP. This informal approach is nice, but may not serve the MFRC in the long run because it depends on the interest and availability of individuals who choose to convene coordination meetings. Since MFRC has explicit responsibility to monitor landscape coordination activities, this informal approach may not be a good long-term approach. Bob Stine will work with staff and the MFRP on next steps.

Resolution to Approve Amendment to North Central Landscape Plan*

Bob Stine made the motion to accept the propose resolution as written, and Dave Parent seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Develop Process for a Riparian Science Technical Committee*

Dave Parent made a motion to accept the proposed resolution as written. Mike Carroll seconded. Discussion ensued. Wayne Brandt pointed out that at the April 2002 MFRC meeting, the Council deferred riparian guideline revisions from the current review and revision cycle, which ends by June 2005. Dave Zumeta clarified that the riparian issues are a highly contested area of the guidelines. Therefore, the goal is to begin to lay a foundation for addressing riparian issues as part of the next guideline revision cycle that begins July 2005. The creation of a Riparian Science Technical Committee (RSTC) is intended to gather the latest science related to riparian management zones. To make the RSTC's work effective, a process for how the committee would be created and operated needs to be developed. Therefore, Wayne Brandt moved to amend the resolution as follows:

It is proposed that MFRC staff will develop options for the process that will be used to create and operate a riparian science technical committee and for how the MFRC will interact with this committee.

Jan Green seconded. The motion to amend passed unanimously. Full motion to accept the resolution with the amendments passed unanimously.

Additional discussion provided staff with direction on what the MFRC members want included in the riparian committee process definition:

- Scope of the riparian issues to be addressed
- Clear criteria for selecting scientists to serve on this committee,
- Topics/questions that will be addressed by the riparian science committee
- Process for committee operations
- Role of RSTC vis-à-vis MFRC
- Timing of the committee's operations and sequencing within the next round (July 2005 and beyond) of guideline review and revision
- How to deal with uncertainty in the science

Resolution to Approve Changes to Public Concerns Registration Process Procedures*

Due to the absence of Shawn Perich, action on this agenda item was deferred. However, discussion did occur. Dave Parent commented on the note on page 4 that discusses the protection of the Data Practices Act for the person filing the concern. Dave argued that since guidelines are voluntary, the Data Practices Act might not apply. Second, if it does apply, should it apply to the person who is the subject of the allegation ("allegee") as well as the person who submitted the concern ("alleger")? Council staff will investigate this question, but Wayne Brandt feels that the current protocol already protects alleger and allegee. Dave Parent also asked why status in Minnesota Logger Education Program and Society of American Foresters are determined as part of initial data gathering, and is concerned that this info could bias the investigation. Norm pointed out that many concerns have dealt with rutting in wet sites, but the Council has not yet done anything about the issue of rutting. It was noted that Charlie Blinn and Mike Phillips are researching whether "excessive rutting" is defined anywhere. The discussion ended with a request that MFRC members send their suggested revisions to the PCRFP procedures either to Shawn Perich or Jenna Fletcher.

Proposed Right to Practice Forestry Act

Bud Stone – Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and Garrett Ous - Itasca County Land Commissioner presented information related to the proposed Right to Practice Forestry Act. Bud articulated the commitment from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to healthy forests and to those businesses that rely on them. "Sister" legislation called the Right to Practice Agriculture Act is also being developed by the Minnesota Chamber of

Commerce. Garrett Ous described the intent of the Right to Practice Forestry Act – to ensure the availability of forest resources that in turn help public safety, the health of communities, etc. Currently, Garrett and others are promoting the bill, and 15 counties and ~9 Chambers of Commerce have supported resolutions for the concept. Other organizations that support the concept include the Minnesota Wood Fiber Council and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The bill was introduced in the 2003 Legislative session by Senator Saxhaug (S.R. 1092) and Representative Solberg (H.R. 1247), but no hearing was held. During the current legislative session, a working group meeting was held by Senator Saxhaug and Representative Solberg, and a more thorough review and analysis process will follow to improve the proposed bill.

Jan pointed out that Minnesota's secondary wood products market comprises 60% of forest products in Minnesota, and asked how this bill would assist those firms, since many source their wood from out-of-state. For example, Anderson Windows is a large secondary firm that relies on 200,000 board feet of Ponderosa Pine coming in on trains from outside of Minnesota. Dave Parent pointed out that the MFRC is evaluating the impact of land use change on Minnesota's forests, and therefore wonders if this bill would limit the ability to build and/or affect the demand for these homes. Bud and Garrett responded that these may be good points, and that's why the bill is being reviewed by authors to resolve these types of questions.

Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) Request for Proposals in Relation to the MFRC

John Velin provided an overview of the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR). LCMR gives grants for good natural resource projects as chosen by elected decision-makers, not LCMR staff. Each year, 5.5% of the market value of the fund (currently about \$300 million) can be utilized for projects. Lottery proceeds are added to the fund's principal at about 5 cents for every lottery dollar gathered. This fund is managed by the Minnesota State Board of Investment. To target grants, the LCMR developed a strategic plan which targets water, habitat, energy, and state outdoor recreation areas. Currently, LCMR is funding an MFRC-initiated project: *Assessing the Effectiveness of Riparian Guidelines*. MFRC expressed hope that LCMR will allocate money for continued funding of this project.

Dave Zumeta remarked that two years ago MFRC created an ad hoc task force to review relevant LCMR forestry-related proposals, and provided feedback on the extent to which how each proposal would assist in implementation of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act. John Velin agreed that the MFRC's task force feedback was helpful. A discussion of what is MFRC's "standing" relative to LCMR led to a conclusion that MFRC has high-level policy influence, and therefore it is not a good fit for MFRC to directly propose projects. Wayne Brandt argued that some of our programs and projects could benefit from research monies. Mike Carroll asked how tied LCMR is to the Governor's priorities such as Clean Water Vision, the Competitiveness of the Primary Forest Products Industry Task Force, etc. John Velin clarified that these are addressed in the strategic plan's funding priorities (water; habitat; energy; state parks, recreation areas, trails and other enhancements to state outdoor recreation system) as well as providing funding for matching grant programs, and continuation projects. He noted that forestry fits under the habitat funding priority.

The discussion concluded with an agreement that if LCMR receives more than a substantial number of proposals related to forestry, MFRC would repeat the feedback process completed in 2002.

Vital Forests/Vital Communities LCMR Proposal

Bernadine Joselyn, Vital Forests/Vital Communities Program Director, Blandin Foundation, gave an update on the Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative. She described the initiative's advisory board, which includes four MFRC members. Based on the work of the Certification and the NIPF Task Teams that presented at the December conference, Blandin Foundation is helping develop a proposal for LCMR funding. The fiscal agent for the project is not yet determined, but could be the University of Minnesota Extension or University of Minnesota College of Natural Resources. This proposal outlines a pilot of NIPF certification in three counties, beginning July 2005. In the meantime, work must be done to determine how certification would be deployed in

a cost-effective manner. In other words, Blandin Foundation is willing to invest in the “how” so that LCMR and the foundation can invest in doing it. Bernadine cautions that this proposal does not imply that certification is the most important outcome of Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative. Rather, certification is a topic where matching funds from LCMR are most appropriate, especially since another LCMR proposal would fund certification audits on state land.

Katie Fernholz commented that there is no silver bullet for all landowners in the state with one certification scheme. Wayne applauds the NIPF certification effort, but contended that one of the endpoints of certification is another means of demonstrating good forest practices on the land, rather than the goal itself of becoming certified. Wayne Hammer disagreed, pointing out that he personally wants (and so do other co-op members) to have their lands certified. Mike Carroll feels that success of certification is highly dependent on increasing the capacity to prepare and implement forest management plans.

Bernadine concluded by asking for MFRC’s level of comfort with this proposal and forest certification in general. MFRC members are generally pro-certification, and agree with the concept of this proposal, but would like to see the details.

Forest Inventory and Analysis Update

Pat Miles, USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station, presented an update on the collection of five years of forest inventory data. Since the Minnesota Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data must be processed within the national reporting process, final compiled data will not be available until May 2004. A written report is expected October 2004. Pat commented on his observations of change from the 1990s:

- 1) Stand size has shifted, possibly due to a general diminished timber emphasis and more of an ecological emphasis.
- 2) Forestland area was 16.7 million acres in 1990, but has been reduced 3% to 16.3 million acres in 2002 (this may be due to methodological changes).
- 3) Timberland area has increased slightly from 14.7 million acres in 1990 to 15.0 million acres in 2002.

Paul Momper asked whether it is appropriate to compare 1990 data to 2002 data. Pat replied that the number of trees and volume data are comparable, but stand attributes are far harder to compare until the data is processed within the national algorithm. When asked, Pat answered that the spatial scale for which the trends in this data would have good reliability is about 30,000 acres.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None

MFRC Member Comments

Katie Fernholz distributed an on-line posting regarding ATV use in the woods, and highlighted the upcoming Aitkin County Forestry Tour. Wayne Hammer thanked MFRC staff and members for an interesting time on the MFRC. On behalf of Shawn Perich, Dave Zumeta distributed an article that describes interaction between forests and water. Norm Moody expressed his opinion that MFRC could help DNR to understand that complete elimination of deer stands is not necessary. Rather, the focus should be on deer stands that harm trees.

March 16, 2004 MFRC Meeting Agenda Ideas

In addition to the possible agenda items listed on the handout distributed by Dave Zumeta, an update from Charlie Blinn on the effectiveness monitoring research project funded by LCMR was requested. Dave Parent requested a briefing on forest certification systems, rationale for why landowners and managers would want their lands to be certified, and the costs of certification.

Bob Stine moved to adjourn. Al Sullivan. seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.