

Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Meeting Minutes
The Nature Conservancy
May 25, 2004

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

Prospective Council Members Present: Bruce Cox, Butch Eggen, John Stauber

Council Members Absent: none

Guests: Clyde Hanson – Sierra Club, Mike Prouty – USDA Forest Service, Rick Horton – Ruffed Grouse Society, John Bathke – MFA, Lee Pfanmueller and Kurt Rusterholz – DNR Ecological Services, Don Janes – Sierra Club, Anthony Snider – University of Minnesota, Mike Kilgore – University of Minnesota

Staff: Dave Zumeta, Dave Miller, Mike Phillips, Jenna Fletcher, Lindberg Ekola, Clarence Turner

Chair's Remarks

Al Sullivan reported that the Governor's appointments and reappointments of eight MFRC members have been delayed, but they are expected to occur within the next several weeks. In the meantime, he welcomed prospective MFRC members Bruce Cox (County land departments), Butch Eggen (Resort and tourism industry), and John Stauber (Secondary wood products manufacturers) to the meeting. Al handed out a list of current MFRC committee assignments, and noted that when appointments are made, new members will be added to committees. MFRC's protocol specifies that each MFRC member must serve on at least one MFRC committee. Finally, Al reiterated that his top priority is to lead the MFRC in developing strategic direction for the next two to four years. To do so, the July 27 MFRC meeting in Grand Rapids will include two hours identifying major issues the MFRC should address, and on July 28 the MFRC will determine strategic direction for the MFRC. MFRC members are asked to consult with their constituencies prior to the July 27th meeting regarding issues the MFRC should address over the next two to four years.

Public Input/Communication to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Clyde Hanson expressed his concerns about the Northern Landscape planning process. First, he pointed out that the Northern Landscape Committee agreed to a consensus approach that would document the disagreements, but he sees no documentation of the disagreements. In addition, by conducting landscape meetings during work hours, these meetings are not really accessible to the public. Third, the Northern Landscape plan does not include ecological analysis at the coarse filter level, and Clyde feels that while 46% of the landscape is DNR land, "special interests" are driving the plan. Clyde encouraged Council members to not approve the plan because he feels it does not honor the goals of the MFRC.

Approval of March 16, 2004 Meeting Minutes*

Wayne Brandt moved to approve the minutes, Bob Oswald seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of May 25, 2004 Meeting Agenda*

Jim Sanders moved to approve the meeting agenda, Dave Parent seconded. The motion carried.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta reported that MFRC has contracted for a portion of a DNR employee's time to provide GIS support. Next, Dave handed out a summary of legislative activities in three areas: Forestry Bill (H.F. 2383), Transportation Bill (S.F. 2263, Section 10) and LCMR proposals. The Forestry Bill included a provision to revitalize the Interagency Information Cooperative (IIC) that was originally established by the 1995 Sustainable Forest Resources Act. The Bill specifies the addition of new members and encourages the Dean of the University of Minnesota's College of Natural Resources to assume a leadership role. The Transportation Bill included a provision that allows timber haulers to carry an additional 10,000 pounds of wood in both summer and winter with the addition of a sixth axle with brakes. Five LCMR proposals that are of particular interest to the MFRC are advancing through the decision process: 1) Evaluating Riparian Timber Harvesting Guidelines: Phase 2 – Continuation; 2) Sustainable Management of Private Forest Lands; 3) Completing Third-Party Certification of DNR Forest Lands; 4) Third-Party Certification of Private Woodlands; and 5) Forestry GEIS Implementation Progress, Accuracy and Update Priorities.

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance

Al Sullivan (Chair) reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee met on May 3rd jointly with the Strategic Directions steering committee. Al reported that budget expenditures are on pace, and unspent balances on June 30th will rollover into the next fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2004.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent (Chair) handed out a summary of activities. Dave provided a brief overview of monitoring of 87 sites by the third party contractors (TetraTech).

Ad Hoc Guideline Review/Revision

Dave Parent (Chair) noted that the proposed changes to guidelines have undergone public review. Nine individuals and organizations provided comments, which will be reviewed by the Guideline Review Technical Committee prior to the MFRC meeting on September 28, at which time MFRC will see the proposed language changes.

Landscape Planning/Coordination

Bob Stine (Chair) handed out an April 22 Landscape Committee meeting summary. Bruce Cox will be convening the North Central Coordination Committee, but he is awaiting identification of possible NIPFs in order to increase participation. Bob also handed out a summary of plan implementation monitoring that shows the common goal statements across the plans. These may form the bulk of landscape plan implementation monitoring efforts. Finally, Bob highlighted early meetings to discuss the idea of possibly conducting landscape planning in the Metro Landscape Region.

Forest Resources Information Management

Jenna Fletcher (Staff Liaison) reported that this committee did not meet, but activity is underway on the 2002/2003 Timber Sold information request. The draft version of the 2001 report will be finalized and approved at the next committee meeting, expected to occur in June.

Written Communications to the MFRC

Dave Zumeta distributed a letter received 05/25/04 from Al Mitton stating that his idea of a perpetual timber inventory is consistent with a statement included in a draft version of the Great Lakes Forestry Accord (dated 3/12/04).

Resolution to Approve Northern Landscape Plan*

Bob Stine explained that the resolution sent in advance includes revisions suggested by the Landscape Committee (see Attachment A). Bob reported that this region is experiencing significant economic and social

issues. Therefore, the plan emphasizes these components. Bob pointed out that by recommending that the MFRC approve the proposed changes in the resolution, the Landscape Committee is indicating that it is important for the Northern Landscape Committee to begin implementation of the goals and strategies sooner rather than later. Wayne Brandt pointed out that the Landscape Committee has not developed a template for regional landscape plans but has encouraged autonomy and uniqueness in landscape planning. He referred to a sheet developed by Clarence Turner that was handed out and earlier indicated a wide variety of social, economic and ecological goals developed by the landscape committees to date.

Jan Green said that she looked at the product, not the process, and that the Northern Landscape Plan does not include sufficient ecological analysis, so she would only agree to call it an interim report. Katie Fernholz expressed concerns about the plan, and while a template didn't exist, there were precedents from neighboring landscape regions. Katie could live with "interim" title, but was not sure what the benefit would be of approving an interim plan.

Jim Sanders offered an amendment to the resolution that would approve the Northern Landscape Plan "*as an interim report.*" Jim commented that this approach indicates the iterative nature of planning. Jan Green seconded this amendment, assuming that the title would clearly say "interim."

Wayne Brandt then offered an amendment to the first amendment to insert "*as an interim report in that the Northeast, North Central, Southeast and West Central regional plans also be termed interim.*" Dave Parent seconded this amendment to the first amendment. This amendment to the first amendment was not approved by a voice vote.

Discussion turned to the first amendment. Shaun Hamilton pointed out that the Landscape Committee did discuss the idea of identifying the Northern Landscape plan as "interim" or "draft" but did not end up suggesting this for the reason Katie mentioned above. The hand vote on this first amendment to add "interim" to the plan title was 11 opposed, 2 in favor. Motion failed.

The voice vote on the original resolution as written and mailed in advance was a majority in favor - motion passed.

Resolution to Approve Riparian Science Technical Committee Scientist Selection*

Shawn Perich reported that fourteen scientists applied for the Riparian Science Technical Committee. Nine of the fourteen applicants were chosen by Shawn Perich, Dave Parent and staff. Shawn noted that not every candidate asked for compensation. He noted that the nine recommended applicants are highly qualified and represent a broad diversity of scientific disciplines.

Wayne Brandt responded that he feels this list of "usual suspects" is heavy in public sector employees, which is inherent to this type of panel. He also is uncomfortable that many of these individuals were involved in original guideline development.

The resolution passed on voice vote.

Implications of Native Plant Communities of Minnesota Publication for the MFRC

Lee Pfannmuller, Director, DNR Division of Ecological Services, described the new Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province. She also described the plan for training DNR employees, and stated that all sites/stands will be classified using this tool eventually, and that use is mandatory for conversion sites.

Mike Carroll described past emphasis on covertype and stand age as now insufficient for good forest management. Mike explained that the new native plant community classifications lend precision, allow logical

extrapolation and provide a common language shared by foresters and others in natural resource disciplines. Mike expressed excitement that both the younger and older foresters are “getting it.” Mike and Lee then responded to questions about implications of this new publication.

MFRC Strategic Directions Workshop Presentation

Charlie Petersen, Department of Administration, stated that the Strategic Directions Workshop includes one hour during this meeting and two hours during the meeting on July 27th, and is the sole focus of the meeting on July 28th. To set the stage, Wayne Brandt and Jan Green provided an overview of the history of the MFRC.

Next, Dave Zumeta highlighted MFRC’s major activities since its inception in 1995. Finally, Charlie Peterson gathered a list of MFRC’s major accomplishments from members, and asked what key pieces of the SFRA statutes have been valuable. Charlie also asked what part of the SFRA statutes should be emphasized in the future. This information will be utilized in the next stage of the Strategic Directions session on July 27th.

Status of Forest Parcelization in Minnesota

Anthony Snider and Mike Kilgore, University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, reported on two research efforts related to the extent of parcelization (the breaking up of larger parcels of land into smaller parcels, but retaining the same land use) of forestland occurring in Minnesota. Anthony Snider presented analysis using land classification obtained from nine counties (Aitkin, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Lake, Sherburne, St. Louis, Koochiching and Carlton). Anthony obtained parcel information for those coded as “2b” (forestland) over the last 10 years. He grouped the parcels into four size classes: <20 acres, 20-40 acres, 41-100 acres, and > 100 acres. He examined the number of splits of parcels in every size class, examined which owners are receiving the split parcel, and looked at the number of acres in each of the size classes over time. In some cases, he expected to see the number of larger landowners dropping, and the number of smaller landowners increasing, and in some counties that was true. To more deeply examine the trend of parcelization, Anthony suggests looking at parcel status a year after splitting to see if it remains in 2b status or is recoded as homestead or recreational class. Additional analysis, especially to identify trends, is possible with this dataset.

Next, Mike Kilgore discussed his analysis of sales data obtained from the Department of Revenue Certificate of Real Estate Value form. He presented information on the value of forestland sold, size of sales, and sellers. The data indicate that the majority of sales are in the 20-40 acre parcel category, and that sales and purchases are dominated by individuals (vs. industry in the western U.S.). The data do not conclusively indicate that parcelization is occurring.

USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs: Existing and Prospective Connections with the MFRC

Mike Prouty described key State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service programs that are of interest to MFRC. In 2003, State and Private Forestry (S&PF) allocated, primarily through MN DNR, almost \$4 million in Minnesota. Specifically, \$600K was allocated for stewardship plans, more than \$500,000 for Forest Legacy projects, and \$500,000 for fire management. In addition, Mike pointed out that competitive grant programs can be used to focus dollars on projects in a startup mode. For example, this was one source of funds that helped fund the creation of the original water quality best management practices that were later integrated into MFRC’s site-level guidelines. Also, a grant from S&PF to the University of Minnesota’s College of Natural Resources helped launch the Forest Resource Information Cooperative run by Al Ek. Mike highlighted a couple areas of interest to MFRC. First is the growth in utilizing the Forest Service’s Forest Legacy program in Minnesota. Four tracts are currently proposed for conservation easements. Second, S&PF is doing interesting work with Indian bands by developing a collaborative sustainable forestry center with the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None

MFRC Member Comments

Shawn Perich remarked that he wants to know more about the USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program. Jan said that she is willing to serve as the interim chair for the Information Management Committee until appointments are made.

Dick Walsh moved to adjourn. Dave Parent seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTACHMENT A

Proposed Resolution: Approve Northern Landscape Report

May 13, 2004

Background

Landscape planning has been conducted in the Northern Region. The planning phase is now complete, as documented in the report the committee developed describing goals and strategies. At a meeting on April 22, 2004, the MFRC Landscape Committee reviewed the report and unanimously agreed that the report should be recommended to the full MFRC for approval at the May 25th MFRC meeting.

Motion

It is proposed that MFRC approve the Northern Regional Landscape Committee's final "Recommended Vision, Goals and Strategies" report as recommended by the Landscape Committee with the following modifications:

- **PROCESS SUMMARY, VII** (final paragraph in this section, first line on p. 5): The Committee will assess its progress approximately every five years or when significant new data becomes available and, if needed, modify the report.
- **COORDINATION FRAMEWORK** (sole paragraph on p. 10): Coordination and implementation will occur by landowners in the landscape on an ongoing basis with support from Council staff. The Northern Landscape Committee will meet after this plan is approved to determine how coordination and implementation will begin. The Committee will then meet every 5 years (next meeting April, 2009), or when significant new data becomes available, to assess the impact of any new data and develop an assessment report with recommendations to the MFRC.