

Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Forest History Center
July 27, 2004

Council Members Present: Al Sullivan (Chair), Wayne Brandt, Mike Carroll, Barb Spears (alternate for Katie Fernholz), Paige Winebarger, Shaun Hamilton, Bob Oswold, Dave Parent, Jim Sanders, Bob Stine, Dave Sterr, Dick Walsh, Kathleen Preece, Bruce Cox, John Stauber, Shawn Perich

Prospective Council Members Present: Butch Eggen

Guests: Rick Horton – Ruffed Grouse Society, Al Mitton, Brenda Halter-Glenn and Duane Lula – Superior National Forest, Catherine McLynn – Itasca County Commissioner – District 2, Dick Rossman – MN DNR, Charlie Peterson – MN Department of Administration, Rick Dahlman – MN DNR, Eric Zenner – University of Minnesota, Jeremy Fauskee – University of Minnesota, MN Senator Tom Saxhaug, Representative Loren Solberg

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

Chair's Remarks

Al Sullivan welcomed new Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) members: Bruce Cox representing county land departments, Kathleen Preece representing nonindustrial private forest landowners, John Stauber representing secondary wood products manufacturers and Paige Winebarger representing environmental organizations. Two council positions remain open, awaiting the Governor's decision. Due to the importance of the Strategic Directions Workshop, Butch Eggen and Barb Spears agreed to attend this meeting as representatives of the tourism industry and environmental interests, respectively.

Public Input/Communication to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council

Catherine McLynn stated that Itasca County Commissioners are interested in the state of Minnesota's forest, forest products industry, and recreation and recently, they have become involved in forest issues related to certification. Catherine is also involved in the Governor's Clean Water Initiative.

Approval of May 25, 2004 Meeting Minutes*

Small wording corrections were made to the May 25 meeting minutes as suggested by two Council members. In addition, a council member suggested that the number of voice votes not be included in minutes, and therefore this was deleted from the original version of the minutes. A revised version of the minutes was distributed. Mike Carroll moved to approve these revised minutes, Wayne Brandt seconded. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Approval of July 27, 2004 Meeting Agenda*

Bob Stine moved to approve the meeting agenda, Bob Oswold seconded. The motion carried.

Executive Director Report

Dave Zumeta distributed an updated list of MFRC members and their contact information. Dave also reported on recent funding decisions for sustainable forestry initiatives. LCMR recently agreed to recommend to the Legislature to provide \$2.3 million in funding for five sustainable forest management proposals: 1) Evaluating Riparian Timber Harvesting Guidelines: Phase 2 was allocated \$300,000; 2) Sustainable Management of Private Forest Lands was allocated \$874,000; 3) Completing Third-Party Certification of DNR Forest Lands was allocated \$200,000; 4) Third-Party Certification of Private Woodlands was allocated \$302,000; and 5) Forestry

GEIS Implementation Progress, Accuracy and Update Priorities was allocated \$124,000. For additional information, see <http://www.lcmr.leg.mn>.

In addition, Blandin Foundation awarded grants totally \$753,000 for four sustainable forestry projects as part of its Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative. Details are available at www.blandinfoundation.org/html/public_vital_grants.cfm

MFRC Committee Reports

Personnel and Finance

Al Sullivan (Chair) reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee has not met since the last Council meeting, but the committee will meet soon to approve FY05 budget and work plan.

Guideline Implementation Monitoring

Dave Parent (Chair) reported that this committee met recently to review the 3-year report of baseline guideline monitoring which will be printed by the end of August.

Ad Hoc Guideline Review/Revision

Dave Parent (Chair) reported that this committee has not met since the last Council meeting, but will meet soon to finalize guideline revision recommendations for Council approval at the September 28th meeting.

Landscape Planning/Coordination

Bob Stine (Chair) reported that this committee has not met since the last Council meeting, but regional landscape committees are active.

Forest Resources Information Management

Jim Sanders reported that this committee met on June 21 to review and approve a draft version of the report entitled "Minnesota's Publicly-Owned Timberland: Request for Information of Areas of Timberland Sold in 2001." The committee approved it with changes. The committee is also working to examine its member composition.

Written Communications to the MFRC

Dave Zumeta distributed a document received from David L. Horn entitled "An Inquiry into the Destruction of Minnesota's Timber Industry." Several people, including some MFRC members, also received a copy. Mike Carroll is tracking the DNR's response and will update the MFRC on what activities may generate from it.

National Forest Plan Revision in Relation to MFRC Landscape Plans and Guidelines

Duane Lula and Brenda Halter-Glenn, both forest planners for USDA Forest Service, provided information on how the about-to-be-released national forest plans for Superior and Chippewa National Forests have been influenced by MFRC's landscape and guideline programs. Jim Sanders informed MFRC that the Record of Decision for the revised management plans for Minnesota's national forests will be delivered in approximately three weeks. Brenda Halter-Glenn then described how MFRC's site-level guidelines will be implemented when managing resources on the national forests. Both management plans include standards and guidelines that are intended to provide equal or greater protection than MFRC's guidelines. However, there are some differences between MFRC's guidelines and Forest Service standards and guidelines, notably in the areas of cultural resources and visual quality. For example, the Forest Service uses their own Scenery Management System rather than MFRC's visual sensitivity classification. Duane Lula then talked about how the about-to-be-released forest plans link to MFRC's landscape level program. In developing the plans, they utilized MFRC's Northeast and North Central Regional Landscape Plans' desired future conditions.

Duane also commented that, based on review of the public comments received on the forest plans, it appears that the general public understands MFRC's site-level guidelines, but public understanding of landscape level goals

and strategies is not as well developed. Duane commended MFRC's landscape planning program, citing the benefits of working together, sharing information, and utilizing an ecological approach. He hopes that the Forest Service's use of MFRC's landscape plans may encourage other landowners in Minnesota to do the same.

Implications of Soil Productivity Research for MFRC Guideline Revision

Jeremy Fauskee, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, presented study results based on his work examining soil productivity relative to timber harvesting. His work follows up on a prior study of logging impacts on soils, regeneration and plant diversity. Jeremy examined the long-term impacts of summer harvesting in an aspen stand in northern Minnesota. He evaluated the effects of trafficking on soil strength and compaction of skid trails at three points in time: 1) pre-harvest, 2) immediately after harvest and 3) thirty-six months after harvest on a site logged in August 2000. The general result, which is consistent with other studies, is that the top layer of soil is impacted the most, but also recovers faster than the lower layers of soils. Also, he noted that after > 250 equipment passes, regeneration can be significantly impacted.

Exemption for Silvicultural Activities under Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act

Mike Carroll reported that DNR Forestry has worked with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BSWR) to provide guidance to local government units (LGUs) to help them determine the applicability of the forestry exemption under Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act. This guidance can be utilized when a landowner applies for the exemption, or when a wetland impact is inspected after the fact and the landowner claims the forestry exemption, and therefore can assist LGUs in determining if the forestry exemption has been misused. MFRC's three-year guideline monitoring results indicate that logging roads are not a problem; it is more likely that developers misuse this road exemption.

MFRC Strategic Directions Workshop

Charlie Petersen, Department of Administration kicked off the Strategic Directions workshop by asking Council members to 1) Identify issues that may impact MN' forest resources in the next 3 to 5 years, and 2) Identify concerns related to MFRC's effectiveness. The results of this work were utilized the next day for the Strategic Directions Workshop. (A meeting summary of the Strategic Directions Workshop is available by contacting Dave Zumeta, Executive Director).

Three Year Summary Implementation Monitoring Report

Rick Dahmann presented highlights from a pending report that summarizes guideline monitoring results from sites harvested and/or under contact prior to publication of the Council's TH/FM guidebook. On-site evaluation of guidelines at 315 sites forms the basis of these monitoring results. Analysis of the monitoring results shows that, prior to the publication of the guidelines, the forestry community complied reasonably well with some of the guidelines (e.g. RMZ width and residual basal area, filter strip integrity, amount of infrastructure on site), and not very well with others (e.g. water diversion practices roads and skid trail segments and approaches to crossings). Implementation of recommended guideline practices was highest on publicly administered and forest industry lands, and lowest on NIPF lands. This report confirms the need to emphasize continued education and training efforts for loggers, resource managers, and landowners.

Shawn Perich suggested that MFRC should develop a public announcement to share the results of this 3-year analysis.

Public Communications to the MFRC

Representative Loren Solberg thanked us for meeting at the Forest History Center. He noted that conflicting perspectives in forest issues were the norm prior to the creation of the MFRC. He stated that state funding of MFRC is very important. Representative Solberg also commented that he has observed improvements in harvesting practices over the years.

Senator Tom Saxhaug commented that the Forest History Center at one point was in danger of closing, but, due to support from the forest product industry and other parties, it is successfully operating and its exhibits recently have been updated. Senator Saxhaug said that MFRC is the state's best bet to keep forests healthy. He also noted he is proud of the recently passed Forestry Bill, especially the forest management fund that reinvests revenue from timber sales to hire twelve foresters.

MFRC Member Comments

None

September 28 Agenda items

Dave Zumeta said that he expects there will be some change to the September agenda based on the discussions during the Strategic Directions Workshop. Some of the currently planned agenda items include: a) action item to approve the recommended revisions to site-level guidelines, b) Wisconsin DNR will talk about their experience in obtaining dual certification of their state forest land, c) Lisa Shulte will talk about her research related to aspen distribution and Bernadine Joselyn will provide an update on the Blandin Foundation's activities.

Wayne Brandt moved to adjourn. Shaun Hamilton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.