

***Minnesota Forest Resources Council***  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cloquet Forestry Center**  
**March 29, 2007**

**Council Members Present:** Tom Landwehr (in lieu of Paige Winebarger), Bob Lintelman, Bob Stine, Dave Parent, Shaun Hamilton, Matt Norton (in lieu of Jan Green), Dick Walsh, Al Sullivan, Tim O'Hara (in lieu of Wayne Brandt), Jim Sanders, Dave Epperly, Bob Oswald, John Stauber, Bruce Cox, Kathleen Preece, Shawn Perich

**Absent:** Mary Richards

**Guests:** Louise Levy (SFEC), Carrie Pike (SFEC), Dick Rossman, (MN DNR), Peter Bundy (Masconomo Forestry), Dave Chura (MLEP), Bob Krepps (St. Louis County)

**Staff:** Dave Zumeta, Calder Hibbard, Lindberg Ekola, Clarence Turner, Leslie McInenly

**Chair's Remarks**

Al Sullivan noted that the Governor has appointed/reappointed eight of the open Council positions. There has been no decision on the Environmental slot currently held by Jan Green.

Al commented that he and Dave Zumeta visited with Josh Gackle, the Governor's Policy Advisor on Environment and Natural Resources, and hand delivered the invasive species resolution passed by the Council in January. They also indicated that the Council appreciates being contacted when forestry issues/projects arise, but also noted that Council members are concerned about the pressure that is placed on staff workload due to additional projects, such as the Governor's Task Force on the Forest Products Industry.

**Public Input/Communications to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council**

None.

**Approval of November 29, 2006 Meeting Minutes\***

Bob Oswald moved to approve the November 29 meeting minutes and Dave Epperly seconded. The motion passed.

**Approval of January 24, 2007 Meeting Agenda\***

Al Sullivan suggested that two agenda items, the Committee of the Whole discussion and the Productivity Workshop discussion, be combined for efficiency due to their interrelatedness.

Dave Parent made a motion to approve the amended agenda and Kathleen Preece seconded. The motion passed.

**Executive Director Report**

Dave commented that the July 2007 Council meeting will be held in Virginia. The Council meeting will be held on July 18<sup>th</sup> and we will tour Virginia Public Utilities on July 19<sup>th</sup>. A block of rooms has been reserved at Coates Plaza Hotel for July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. In the past, MFRC has held a social event the night of the Council meeting. Dave is considering inviting some legislators to the event. More information will be available in May.

As mentioned in January, Leslie McInenly is working in an expanded role (80% FTE vs. 25%) through June 30<sup>th</sup>. MFRC staff will be expanding its office space in Skok Hall. Leslie, Calder, and Dave will be moving their offices up a floor, but the mailing address and phone numbers will all remain the same.

### **MFRC Committee Reports**

#### *Personnel and Finance*

Al Sullivan stated that the Personnel and Finance Committee has not met since the last Council meeting.

#### *Site Level*

Dave Parent reported that the Site-level Committee is in a phase of administration and paperwork review. Development of the Biomass Guidelines is the main priority. A Site-Level Committee meeting will be held in April to address results of the public review of the Biomass Guidelines. The committee will present the Biomass Guidelines to the Council in mid-May for approval. After dealing with the Biomass Guidelines, the committee will then focus on the Riparian Science Technical Committee report and economic analysis.

#### *Landscape Planning/Coordination*

Bob Stine distributed an agenda for the spring Landscape Committee summit meeting. This meeting will bring together the SE, EC, and WC regional landscape committees, the Landscape Committee, and additional Council members. The summit's purpose is to allow committee members to interact and discuss common issues and provide an opportunity for them to get to know the Landscape Committee. A similar summit for the northern regions will occur this fall. Bob mentioned the value of the landscape committees as a mechanism to encourage collaboration among multiple organizations.

Dave Zumeta noted there is actually a statutory basis for the regional landscapes to meet with and advise the Council on policy issues from the landscape perspective.

#### *Forest Resources Information Management*

Jim Sanders reported that the Information Management Committee (IMC) met on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The Committee is primarily monitoring activities of other agencies/organizations with respect to information management. They also discussed landowner interest in SFIA and the Governor's Forest Products Industry Task Force. The IMC also discussed its potential to be a clearinghouse on conservation easement information.

### **Written Communications to the MFRC**

Kent Lokkesmoe, Director, DNR Division of Waters, responded to the Council's letter of February 1, 2007 regarding its concern with the wording in the alternative shoreland management standards. He indicated that the DNR had accepted the minor wording change proposed by the Council.

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation, asked for MFRC support of the Family Forest Stewardship Conference to be held in September 2007. Sponsorship would be in the form of promotion, not financial support. Dave Zumeta reminded Council members that a formal resolution had already been approved to support the Blandin Foundation's goal of adding one million more acres of family forestland under stewardship plans by 2015. The Council briefly discussed the letter from Ms. Joselyn and agreed to support the upcoming conference.

### **Committee of the Whole: Governor's Primary Forest Products Industry Task Force report and Forest Productivity: Implications of March 27-28 Forest Productivity Workshop**

Dave Zumeta reported that the task force has met twice in 2007. This is a smaller task force than that of the 2006 group; however, the members are representing the same interests. The charge of this task force is to develop long-term recommendations regarding the global competitiveness of Minnesota's primary forest products industry. There will be two more meetings in April and May. The final report will be produced by

June 15<sup>th</sup>. Energy (including biomass but also cost) has been included as an additional topic to be addressed by the task force. Dave discussed the various task force subgroups. Dave Epperly and Dave Zumeta are co-chairing the implementation team (charged with promoting implementation of the 2006 Task Force recommendations). Dave Epperly indicated that there will be a reorganization of subgroups in the next couple of weeks. Topics addressed include wood fiber availability/price, economic issues, social issues, taxes, professional capacity, transportation and research needs.

Tim O'Hara distributed a handout from Wayne Brandt on the legislative session. Dave Zumeta and Dave Epperly provided updates on anticipated actions during the session.

Dick Walsh asked Dave Epperly to discuss why aspen was the only species included in Timber Permit Modifications bill. Dave responded that the bill was developed as a result of the industry downturn and aspen was the primary type of timber affected.

Dave Parent raised concern regarding the transfer of \$50,000 from DNR to MFRC for monitoring. He worries what might happen to monitoring if MFRC were not reauthorized. Dave Zumeta responded that the monitoring effort is a whole lot more than that \$50,000 (e.g., Rick Dahlman and part of Dick Rossman's salaries are paid by DNR). Dave Epperly responded that the transfer was due to funding challenges faced by DNR. Because those funds were from the General Fund, the transfer freed up some General Fund dollars.

Shawn Perich commented that he was struck by the amount of loggers lost in the recent downturn, as described by Dick Walsh in November. He felt that it did not receive the attention such a loss may have if it had occurred in the agricultural community. Council members discussed the media attention that the logger losses did receive and Bruce Cox compared it to the decrease in family farms during the 1970's and 1980's.

Shaun Hamilton asked about the current funding of the Interagency Information Cooperative (IIC) (noting that there is a current bill recommending \$480,000 for the IIC). Dave Zumeta responded that current funding is essentially nonexistent. Shaun asked whether there was a role for the Council to support this effort and Dave responded that oversight of the IIC is one of the roles of the Council's Information Management Committee.

Dave Zumeta distributed a handout pertaining to House File 1183, the Forest and Shade Tree Pest Bill, noting that the Council Emerald Ash Borer resolution in January may have had some impact on the legislation. The bill was introduced by Representative Loeffler (DFL, Minneapolis) and includes a provision that would mandate the Council to create a task force that would develop a Forest Protection Plan to alert the public about invasive pests that threaten the tree cover of Minnesota. Dave Zumeta testified about the bill, noting that the Council didn't have the opportunity to discuss the bill, and said that the Council is neutral on the bill. Funds to create a Forest Protection Plan are not included in the Governor's budget request.

Discussion of the bill ensued. Bob Oswald commented that the MFRC has shied away from working in the Metro area in the past. Al Sullivan indicated that the worst thing that could come out of this would be an unfunded mandate. Dave Parent was concerned that the bill did not address the complexity of "tree cover in Minnesota". Matt Norton mentioned that this is a real opportunity to reach out to Metro-area legislators with whom we rarely interact.

Kathleen Preece distributed information about the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership and read the announcement regarding the Productivity Workshop goals. The first day of the Forest Productivity Workshop was comprised of presentations while the second day provided an opportunity for working groups to discuss and present strategies to achieve the goal of increased forest productivity. Kathleen distributed a handout regarding prioritized strategies and asked Bob Stine to summarize the workshop. Bob discussed the structure of the workshop and noted that we need to be careful not to think that the strategies listed are the only priorities. However, they were the ones that rose to top. He recommended a six-month plan to flesh out the

details (MFRP and MFRC each have a role), work collaboratively among all organizations on obtaining funding for these priorities, and provide time for individual organizations to identify those strategies most important to them. He hopes that the six-month planning period will allow participants to come back in October really prepared to further this conversation.

Kathleen reiterated there is a great deal of work to do. The Partnership has not met since the workshop, but she presumed they will take these strategies and develop a better narrative, as well as document some additional strategies. The results will be available on the MFRP website.

Jim Sanders said that the IMC should get involved with MFRP to really flesh out some of the ideas. Dave Zumeta offered his thoughts about how the strategies may be linked with the Council and the Research Advisory Committee. Particular linkages include information sharing (depends to some degree on IIC funding), analyses of forest-wide management strategies, maintenance of working forestland, policies to enhance productivity, research on forest pests, and forestry/wildlife interactions. Bob Stine also noted that the SFEC has been busy providing Ecological Classification System training.

Shawn Perich asked how climate change was addressed and why it was not prioritized. Council members who attended the conference responded that climate change came up a great deal, but either fell under other topics (e.g., silviculture) or was not considered a strategy (there was more a *recognition* that climate change is happening).

Bruce Cox credited the Partnership for putting on a great workshop. He didn't see anything new, but this is where the rubber hits the road and there was a lot of "rubber" in those meetings. There was a recognition that we are all in the same ship.

Al Sullivan suggested the Partnership needs to advise the Council on how to follow up on this conference, and requested that the Partnership introduce a resolution for the Council to pass at a future meeting. Bob Stine suggested that we keep this as a standing agenda item for our meetings through October. The Council needs to be thinking about what role we play. Another important piece is to have all the organizations in the state putting their weight behind these ideas and speak with a unified voice.

Tom Landwehr inquired about the workshop's final product. Kathleen responded that the Partnership will have a better idea about what the final product ought to be once it has an opportunity to meet. Bruce added that the workshop was organized to gain broad consensus on the goals. Consensus has been reached and the challenge now is to move forward. Dave Epperly provided background on the development of the workshop in response to challenges met by MFRP and the recognition that keeping healthy, productive forests was fundamental.

Jim Sanders commented on the changes in the MFRC/MFRP relationship. The groups have had a turbulent past and that is gone. Dave Zumeta and Dave Parent both agreed with Jim's perspective on the improved relationship.

### **Survey of Minnesota Consulting Foresters**

Dave Zumeta explained his concern that there may not be the public forester capacity to obtain the Blandin Foundation's goal of adding a million more acres of private forests under stewardship plans in the next decade. As a result, he initiated a survey of private consulting foresters (PCFs) to assess their capacity. Dave then introduced Peter Bundy, a private consulting forester who conducted the survey and developed the report as a contractor to the MFRC.

Peter explained the development and goals of the survey. He surveyed 35 consultants and had a 74% response rate. Peter reviewed the results of the survey with respect to financial and non-financial incentives that would help PCFs increase their services to family forests and their business challenges.

Consulting capacity has increased significantly in recent years. Consultants reach >140,000 acres of family forestland annually (a conservative estimate). If current capacity increases continue, this number could be 200,000 acres per year. He also stated that the DNR Stewardship Incentives Program has been very beneficial. It is a very good way to reach landowners, but there is room for improvement. Some recommendations from the report are to strengthen the SIP program, improve communications between the DNR and the consulting community, and assist consultants with low cost training.

For a copy of the report, please visit: <http://www.frc.state.mn.us/Info/MFRCdocs.html>

### **Master Logger Certification Update**

Dave Chura provided an update on Minnesota Master Logger Certification (MMLC). He discussed the history of the Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) and noted that over 90% of timber harvested in the state is done by MLEP members. Dave distributed a copy of the 2007 MLEP education workshops, noting that training is focused on areas identified as weaknesses by MFRC site-level guideline monitoring. He then reviewed the hours of training required to be a member of MLEP, indicating that a database of members and training hours is maintained. The latter database is useful to both employers and auditors.

The Minnesota Master Logger Certification program (MMLC) was developed to provide certified forest management for private landowners. Dave discussed the history of the MMLC and described the certification process/MMLC standards. The program currently has 25 certified logging businesses and an additional 22 applicants at various stages of the certification process. This is a voluntary add-on component to MLEP, which raises the bar with respect to professionalism and guideline implementation and increases the amount of certified wood in the marketplace.

Dave Parent inquired about demand for certification in Southeast Minnesota. Dave Chura responded that participation in MLEP is low in the Southeast and that MLEP has not received any applications from that area.

John Stauber noted that he has seen an increase in requests for certified lumber and asked whether Time, Inc. is the only business that recognizes MMLC as certified. Dave Chura responded that the MMLC program is included in the [www.Metafore.org](http://www.Metafore.org) Environmental Paper Assessment Tool (EPAT) that is used by companies to measure sustainability.

### **Timber Harvesting and Forest Management Guideline Training Needs**

Dave Parent introduced Louise Levy and Carrie Pike from the University of Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Education Cooperative (SFEC), and then asked Dave Chura to discuss MLEP and Guideline training needs. Dave Chura stated that there were 35 workshops in 2006, including 926 total participants (21% attended more than the required amount of training). Site-level guideline training participants have increased from 2003 to 2007. Currently, 101 loggers have registered for courses this year. Dave presented some recommendations to improve the program, including an annual MLEP presentation to the MFRC, reviving the role of the Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership in maintaining a qualified instructor pool, development of an online CD-ROM-based guideline training option, and increasing the number of workshops provided.

Louise Levy and Carrie Pike talked about SFEC's role in the partnership with MLEP and MFRC. They provided a history of SFEC in relationship to MFRC. Louise commented that the original instructor pool intentionally reflected the membership of the Council. She distributed annual attendance charts and discussed enrollment fluctuations.

Louise reported that it has been increasingly challenging to put workshops on due to the difficulty of getting qualified instructors. She indicated that Council membership historically played a role in accessing suitable instructors and currently the pool primarily reflects the DNR. Council members discussed the change in available instructors and the possibility of soliciting consulting foresters. Louise noted that they had both short-term needs (to fill instructor positions this spring) and long-term needs (to develop a new pool of qualified instructors).

Council members recognized their responsibility to help identify suitable instructors. Dave Zumeta commented that he would help Louise and Carrie find instructors for this spring and noted that there is quite a bit of concern among staff relative to training needs over the next few years. There will be a significant need for training and SFEC/MLEP are not to be taken for granted by the MFRC or Council staff.

Jim Sanders suggested that folks from the Council work with Dave and Louise to come up with a long-term training plan. He stressed that the certification world is ratcheting up. Certification is important and competition is significant. We are going to need to invest in trainers. Dave Epperly agreed with the need for increasing the instructor pool, but also stressed that DNR Forestry is not trying to abdicate any responsibility. He recommended looking to MFRP to help with this matter. Dave Parent commented that he would rather have SFEC/MLEP come to us to address this versus sending Louise and Dave Chura on to MFRP. Al Sullivan commented that this is an important concern and we will follow through with help.

### **Biomass Guidelines Update**

Dick Rossman provided an update on the peer and public review of the Biomass Guidelines. The peer review received fairly good remarks and there were no major changes made to the guidelines. Both sets of guidelines scored quite well. Some clarifications were needed in the soils language and the definition of Riparian Management Zones in brushlands. There was some concern over the utility of the brushland guidelines decision tree. Some additional changes were also made to structural descriptions of reserve areas in brushlands and openlands.

The committee received comments from five individuals and three organizations during the peer review. Comments were well thought out and to the point.

Common concerns apparent from the review process included the need to incorporate both documents into the site-level forest management guidelines, problems with layout/repetitiveness, dealing with Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) sites, retention on salvage sites, retention of fine woody debris, RMZs in brushlands, invasive species, the brushland biomass matrix, implementation training and monitoring, effectiveness monitoring and research, and cost analysis.

The Council discussed the concern regarding biomass harvest on MCBS sites. Dave Parent stated that the Biomass Guidelines will be written to conform to state statute regarding MCBS sites. Dick stated that based on the state statute, a significant amount of acreage would be excluded from biomass harvest and noted that the legislation only addresses biomass harvesting (i.e., timber harvest is allowed). Jim Sanders commented that biomass removal could be used as tool for management on these sites so there is missing logic. Matt Norton clarified that the statute being discussed was a restriction placed on the Laurentian Energy Authority (LEA) as part of an agreement for the legislation that help to establish the LEA. The concern was that there were no biomass guidelines at all. This legislation is the reason we have the guidelines. He feels there is some rationale to limitations on biomass harvest and recommended that documentation of the gaps in the biomass harvest research be available for the public.

The Council discussed the appropriate place to document gaps in research. Dave Parent stated that the Biomass Committee will provide a letter to the Council to communicate research needs. Dave Epperly

recommended the Council invite the MCBS to give us their interpretation of this matter. Dave Zumeta suggested the Council also invite Lee Pfanmuller, DNR Director of Ecological Services, to the May 16 MFRC meeting.

Dick stated that he is planning one or two Biomass Guideline Committee meetings in April, followed by a Site-level Committee meeting in late April. The final draft Guidelines will be sent out with the May 16 Council meeting mailing.

Dick Walsh asked whether there had been any discussion about guidelines for different species. Dick Rossman responded that there had been discussion, but they ended up combining species due to a lack of information.

Jim Sanders stated that the one area in which his colleagues raised a question was related to soil productivity and the frequency of reentry as it influences soil compaction. Dick responded that the committee did not adequately consider reentry frequency. It may be something they need to explore in the future. Jim said that he will try to provide a generic statement from the scientists with which he has been working.

#### **Public Communications to the MFRC**

None

#### **MFRC Member Comments**

Shawn Perich said that he would like some agency to step up and address the issue of moose population declines. Matt Norton asked whether the Council ought to develop a committee to address certain high profile wildlife concerns such as moose. Jim Sanders stated that the Council heard a presentation on the moose decline from Mike Schrage, Fond du Lac Resource Management Division, last November, and that until researchers know why there is a decline he is not sure what role the Council can play. Matt responded that moose are just one example, and that there are many species and situations the Council could discuss in a committee.

Jim Sanders reported that federal funding for the Forest Service is dropping exponentially. Fifty percent of their budget is captured in fire suppression alone.

Dave Zumeta reviewed potential agenda items for the May 16 Council meeting, including: formal action on approval of the Biomass Guidelines, a productivity workshop status report, and climate change. Al Sullivan recommended that we reserve a significant block of time for the Biomass Guidelines discussion.

Matt Norton asked whether the letter from the Biomass Guidelines Committee regarding: research needs could be available for approval at the next Council meeting. Dave Parent responded that they will try to develop the letter, but will need to make completing the Biomass Guidelines the top priority.

Jim Sanders moved to adjourn the meeting. Dave Epperly seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.