

**Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Cloquet Forestry Center
Minutes
3 December 2008**

Members Present: Al Sullivan, Don Arnosti (in lieu of Joel Koemptgen), Wayne Brandt, Bruce Cox, Alan Ek, Craig Engwall (in lieu of Dave Epperly), Dale Erickson, Jim Jones (in lieu of Bob Lintelmann), Gene Merriam, Bill Nightingale (in lieu of Rob Harper), Dave Parent, Shawn Perich, Kathleen Preece, Bob Oswald, John Rajala, Susan Schmidt (in lieu of Shaun Hamilton)

Members Absent: Dave Epperly, Shaun Hamilton, Rob Harper, Joel Koemptgen, Bob Lintelmann, Mary Richards

Guests: Dennis Becker, Grant Domke, and Louise Levy (University of Minnesota), Frank Frederickson and Steve Betzler (Minnesota Power), Dave Chura (Minnesota Logger Education Program), Jean Coleman (CR Planning), Susan Thornton and Shelley Shreffler (Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources)

Staff: Dave Zumeta, Lindberg Ekola, Calder Hibbard, Leslie McInenly

Chair's Remarks:

Al Sullivan distributed a hard copy letter from Matt Kramer, Chief of Staff for the Governor's office. This letter, dated 14 October 2008, was a notice regarding ethical standards for public officials, which the office has interpreted to include gubernatorial-appointed board and commission members. Al noted that there might be a potential conflict regarding our plans to meet at the Maplelag resort in September 2009. Based upon the protocols of the Council, it is the decision of the Chair to establish meeting locations. In Al's view, there is no conflict of interest with respect to meeting at the Maplelag Resort as planned, but it is a sensitive issue. There is also some concern within the DNR about holding meetings at resorts. Until the issue is clarified, we have been advised to hold meetings at locations in which there is no, or minimal, room fee. In March and May we will meet at the MN-DOT Arden Hills Training and Conference Center. The July meeting will be in Grand Rapids and the September meeting will be in the Detroit Lakes area. We still intend to conduct a field tour of Maplelag Resort. Al shifted the November MFRC meeting to December 2, 2009. Discussion about implications of the letter ensued.

Public Input/Communication to the MFRC

None.

***Approval of 17 September 2008 Meeting Minutes**

Bruce Cox moved to approve the 17 September 2008 meeting minutes. Dave Parent requested consideration of deletion of the word "the" from page 4, paragraph 5, line 6, as a friendly amendment. Gene Merriam seconded the motion to approve the minutes, as amended. The minutes were approved.

***Approval of 3 December 2008 Meeting Agenda**

Al Sullivan noted that the draft agenda had been amended by deleting the word "tentative" and adding "Frank Fredrickson" after the presentation on carbon flows. Wayne Brandt moved, and Bruce Cox seconded, to approve the 3 December 2008 agenda. The agenda was approved.

Executive Director Remarks:

Dave Zumeta reported that December 10th would be the first day of work for Rob Slesak, the Council's new Site-level Program Manager. He thanked Wayne Brandt and Dave Parent for serving on the interview panel and commented that Rob will be visiting many of the MFRC members over the coming months as part of his orientation to Minnesota and the MFRC.

Dave also reported that the MFRC was not invited to submit a full proposal to the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. Of 58 proposals submitted, only three were chosen to submit a full proposal. None of the selected proposals were from the Lake States. The silver lining for MFRC is two-fold: (1) there will very likely be other RFPs from the U.S. Endowment to which the MFRC can respond; and (2) we are using ideas in our proposal to develop other funding proposals.

He noted that Minnesotans recently voted to pass a constitutional amendment for wildlife habitat, clean water, parks and trails, and the arts. The state sales tax will be raised by 3/8^{ths} of 1% beginning 1 July 2009, providing a projected \$240 million in FY2010. The legislature will make appropriations for the purposes described in the amendment. A new, 12-member Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council (LOHC) has been formed to provide advice on allocation of the wildlife habitat funds. This Council met for the first time on 1 December 2008 and voted in Mike Kilgore, former MFRC Executive Director, as their Acting Chair.

Committee Reports:*Personnel and Finance*

Al Sullivan reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee has not met since September.

Site-level

Dave Parent noted that the Site-level Committee report concentrates on the response to a comment from a budgetary oversight committee (which reports to DNR on Game and Fish expenditures) regarding riparian zones. Dave Zumeta added that he and Clarence Turner prepared a response to clarify a misunderstanding. The response was vetted through DNR staff. The DNR response is provided at the bottom of page 1 in the *Committee Update*.

Dave Parent asked Calder Hibbard to provide an update on the Riparian Science Technical Committee (RSTC) ad-hoc economic committee. Calder reported that a committee was formed late last year to address some of the suggestions made by the RSTC report. The committee initially identified a number of information needs necessary to do the economic analysis. Since then, a number of folks have collaborated and pulled together the riparian information that is available/possible. Calder is now working to convene the economists to conduct an analysis of economic implications of potential revisions to the riparian guidelines.

Dave commented that he, as president of the Itasca woodland committee, has been promoting intermediate harvest for use with the Firewise program. He noted that the MFRC and the guidelines were mentioned in the Grand Rapids Herald recently with respect to urban or community forestry. Dave commented that this is a group that the MFRC has not targeted in past (i.e., tree-care professionals, urban tree trimmers) and this gap illustrates a potential for promotion of our work on a local level. Further discussion regarding incorporation of Firewise guidelines into MFRC site-level guidelines ensued. There seemed to be consensus among Council members that inclusion of, or reference to Firewise guidelines would be a good idea in the next revision of the MFRC guidelines.

Don Arnosti recommended consideration of urban management during the next guideline revision process. Dave Zumeta responded that he was recently invited to address the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee Board. The Board focuses on urban and community forests and he strongly urged them to look at our guidelines for woody biomass harvest. Don added that MFRC guidelines were developed in consideration of natural forests. The current guidelines have not been evaluated, and the science has not been brought forward, with respect to application in a settled urban or rural area.

Landscape Planning and Coordination

Lindberg Ekola distributed two packets: a *Landscape Committee Meeting Summary* and a *Regional Committee Update*. He suggested a joint Landscape/Site-level committee meeting sometime in 2009. Lindberg provided updates on several opportunity area projects and committee activities, noting that the Landscape Program is quite busy.

Information Management

Calder reported that the Information Management Committee (IMC) met at the end of October. The committee has been tracking and advising on issues related to forest parcelization, forest inventory, and woody biomass. Recommendations regarding biomass have been acted upon and the IMC is shifting to a focus on carbon sequestration while still tracking biomass. The IMC also discussed Forest Service wildfire funding and impacts to its various branches. Dave Zumeta added that the wildfire funding issue may be an action item at an upcoming Council meeting.

Wayne suggested that the MFRC may want to do something sooner rather than later with respect to influencing current discussions of the next federal Administration. Dave Parent suggested we consider collaborating with the Great Lakes Forestry Alliance on a resolution. Al suggested the Council adopt a position and communicate it to others. Information will be presented to the Council at the February meeting, with an action item likely to follow at the March meeting.

Written Communication to the MFRC

The letter from Matt Kramer in the Governor's office was the only written communication.

Committee of the Whole: Carbon flows associated with the proposed Minnesota Power Laskin Woody Biomass Facility

Alan Ek reported on his involvement with an assessment of carbon flows for planning involved with a biomass facility close to Hoyt Lakes. The effort was an attempt to provide useful information for planning an environmental review of the facility and resulting implications, particularly for the carbon footprint. He reviewed the rationale for the assessment. Alan introduced Grant Domke, a Research Associate at UMN, who was involved with the project.

Grant described the organization of the study, which included an analysis over a 100-year time horizon. Life cycle analysis has been established as a standard for assessing carbon flows. Grant reviewed the data inputs and outputs from the analysis. He characterized the study area, which included approximately 9.2 million acres of timberland. The study developed an age class projection model breaking forestland into age classes (acreage and volume), proportion of harvest residues and harvest levels by forest type. Carbon flows were estimated over a 100-year planning horizon by determining how the forest was growing (with C sequestration data based largely on published literature), looking at biomass decay rate, harvesting efficiency, transportation networks and fuel usage, and the Laskin biomass utilization (i.e., how much power is needed to run the facility).

Grant reviewed the Laskin facility specifications and the study's estimated carbon inputs and outputs over the 100-year planning period. Results from the research indicated that (1) 85% of the biomass used is emitted as CO₂ by the end of the 100-year planning period (an additional 5-10% is emitted in the 20 years following); (2) complete biomass decay requires 250-350 years; (3) the presence of trace greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide could substantially lower the net carbon footprint of the Laskin energy plant; and (4) early thinning could substantially increase roundwood and associated residual biomass yield.

Frank Frederickson, Minnesota Power (MP), commended the study team for the work they did on the report and provided a summary of MP plans for using the study results. MP currently reports direct CO₂ emissions for biomass facilities as approximately 1.3 tons of CO₂ per MWh (without co-gen). Based on the analysis, MP intends to promote the use of the 20-year post-plant assumption and report 0.07 tonnes of CO₂ per MWh for in-forest residue fuel supply. He noted that the separation of the short versus long term decay was important as it is reasonable to credit the facility with the CO₂ created from decomposition activity that will occur within 20 years following plant operations, but not in 250-350 years.

Frank listed some additional research needs, including: continued research on the carbon lifecycles of the forest to further define the impacts of trace gases and measures of CO₂ emissions for other types of biomass fuels (e.g., mill residues, non-merchantable roundwood and forest thinnings).

Grant commented that the report is available on the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources website (under staff papers). Don stated that he appreciated MP's willingness to share study results. Alan noted that the study would likely be over at MPCA for discussion soon.

Forest Management/Woody Biomass Harvesting Guideline training and Continuing Education Task Force report outcomes

Louise Levy distributed and reviewed a summary of 2008 Sustainable Forestry Education Cooperative and MN Logger Education Program training activities. She reported that 615 individuals participated in biomass harvesting guidelines. The next training for the 2-day forest management guideline training session is scheduled for 2009. At that time, she anticipates they will roll out a new pool of trained instructors. There has been a very positive response to the online training for woody biomass harvesting guidelines, which has been graded for continuing education credits. To date, 32 individuals have taken the training. Discussion regarding online training and continued use of field training ensued. Dave Chura stated that online work would be followed up by field trips. Benefits of online training include audio clips, visuals, and tests to check knowledge before moving on to another topic. A nice thing about the online training is that it is on-demand and you can also check knowledge (versus in classroom).

Dave stated that the "Train-the-Trainer" effort has been a 2-tiered initiative to (1) find additional guideline trainers and (2) make sure they have the knowledge required to deliver training. He added that they are revising the entire forest management guideline-training program and it will include the biomass guidelines so they will no longer require stand-alone training.

Dave Zumeta commended MLEP and SFEC for initiating the online training and moving forward with the generational shift. Bruce Cox added that he appreciates the availability of online training and the opportunity to get folks into the woods more quickly where they can then follow-up on the training.

Louise reviewed highlights of the task force report on forestry continuing education. The final report is available on the SFEC and MLEP websites. She provided some background on the project, which was funded by the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative in order to audit the LogSafe, MLEP and SFEC continuing education programs. The conclusion was that all three programs have provided value and a net loss would occur if any of the three were eliminated. However, there were recommendations for improvement and a 2-phase transition was suggested. In phase 1, continuing education activities would continue to be organized and conducted by separate entities, one for loggers and one for foresters. In phase 2, a dual integrated model, in which key providers of logger and forester continuing education would have an integrated common administration with respect to overall continuing education planning, governance, and program delivery. The task force recommended LogSafe (which is run by the Department of Administration) contract out some of their safety training to MLEP. MLEP would then be responsible for tracking the training and providing information to the DoA. The DoA is supportive of this recommendation and is moving forward to provide the training this spring through MLEP.

Louise reported that the three top recommendations for SFEC from the report were that (1) SFEC should be structured under the UMN Department of Forest Resources (as opposed to the current location directly under the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences; (2) staffing and funding needed to be augmented; and (3) a formal advisory board should be created. Louise stated that she will be retiring and SFEC will need to hire a new coordinator in the next 6 months. A boost in the staffing level was recommended (to include 1+ FTE and full-time administrative support). She stated that a legislative request for appropriations has been created for both MLEP and SFEC. They are also independently approaching the Blandin VF/VC Initiative with requests for a matching grant.

Al commented on the difficulty of finding financial support for these programs. Louise added that among research cooperatives across the country, those that don't have financial support from a host institution generally don't survive.

2009 MFRC Legislative Initiative

Wayne introduced a funding initiative for the MFRC Landscape Program, noting that the Council has discussed needs within the Landscape Program several times this past year and he called attention to a resolution passed by the Council in May 2008, which supported a legislative initiative to increase Landscape Program funding. Wayne then acknowledged the difficulties facing the state budget and noted that just maintaining existing funding levels will be difficult. However, he commented that the Council has a good record of demonstrating value.

Wayne stated that the Landscape Program is not looking to the legislature as the sole funding source. The regional committees have been and are applying for a number of funding opportunities. The strategic approach is to show the value that the program has had and to demonstrate how the things we propose to do will have the same value. The committees are also hoping that some of their on-the-ground projects will meet the criteria for Outdoor Heritage Funds. In addition, the landscape committees can provide the infrastructure needed to work with local people in order to move the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group's (MCCAG) recommendation for increasing the acreage of forestland to reduce greenhouse gases forward. Wayne distributed a spreadsheet that listed some of the concrete activities of the landscape committees and commented that it will be difficult to advance this funding request in light of the state budget.

Discussion regarding regional landscape plan implementation projects and potential proposals to the LOHC ensued. Gene Merriam noted that the resolution passed in May and proposals to the LOHC are two distinct things. Al commented that the Council would need to approve any submission from the Landscape Program to the LOHC. Dave Zumeta clarified that the Council will not be applying for funds and that the regional projects will have separate fiscal agents. Al responded that the Council should make a formal decision if committees will be involved.

2009 LCCMR Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan forestry recommendations

Dave Zumeta introduced Jean Coleman, from CR Planning, who was the contractor to the Institute on the Environment for the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan (SCPP).

Jean commented that she, along with many other people, has spent the last 2 or 3 years working on the SCPP. The plan was developed in 2 phases, the first of which considered current conditions and drivers of change. The second phase involved developing recommendations for proposed actions to better protect natural resources in Minnesota.

Jean reviewed the identified drivers of resource change (e.g., development, demographics, habitat fragmentation, hydrological modification, etc.). She reviewed key issue areas identified in phase 1 and recommendations from phase 2. Jean reviewed some of the habitat and land use recommendations, including: protection of priority land habitats; research on land and aquatic habitats; habitat and landscape conservation education; policy tool assessment for land protection; and support for sustainable practices on working forested lands. Energy recommendations were organized under goals (e.g., the first goal was alternative energy promotion). Jean noted the need to invest in farm and forest preservation to protect future energy sources. We also need to invest in perennial biofuels and demonstration at the landscape level.

Jim Jones stated that he oversees the protection of burial sites across the state and has worked to educate people about Minnesota's heritage. He doesn't see Minnesota's heritage addressed in the SCPP and it concerns him. There is a need to educate people about the resources that are already in the ground...the people who were here. Cultural resources were considered when we developed the forest management guidelines. Jean responded there is an opportunity to put that on the table for additional consideration. Susan Thornton added that this is part of the reason she wanted a dialogue with the MFRC. The SCPP contents were based on trust fund language. By definition, "other natural resources" was defined as those facilities in the outdoor recreation system; however, the team is making a list of additional elements to be addressed.

Shawn Perich commented that the forestry recommendations seem focused on immediate trends and not on silvicultural specifics such as pine restoration. Jean responded that there is language regarding invasive species, species composition, and best management practices. Dave Zumeta also noted that promotion of cooperative landscape level management (i.e. the Council's landscape plans) was recommended.

Gene Merriam commented that a lot of the recommendations appear to be more aspirational than actionable (e.g., restore and protect shallow lakes). Jean responded that there are more specific recommendations in the full report. Susan Schmidt asked whether any cost-benefit or prioritization analyses were conducted. Jean responded that cost-benefit analyses are provided in the appendices.

Bruce Cox stated that the recommendation regarding the use of best management practices reads as if we haven't been doing anything sustainable to date. Wayne Brandt agreed, noting that the recommendation that doesn't include a reference to what has been done and can be misinterpreted. Jean responded it was their intention to recognize the good work already in place

within the introduction but she recognized that, perhaps, the recommendations are not clearly connected to specifics that are already happening. Al added that the magnitude of this project didn't necessarily provide opportunity to get into the fine details. Dave Zumeta also noted the difficult time constraints.

Al thanked Jean for coming and presenting the plan.

Open Discussion with Susan Thornton about LCCMR priorities relative to forestry

Al Sullivan introduced Susan Thornton the new LCCMR Executive Director, commenting that this is an opportunity to get better acquainted with Susan and the LCCMR.

Susan introduced Shelley Shreffler, the LCCMR Assistant Director. Susan reviewed LCCMR membership and responsibilities. The LCCMR recommends to the legislature natural resources projects to be funded by the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF). The ETF receives 40% of net proceeds from the lottery and 5.5% of the market value is available to spend every year.

Susan stated that she appreciates the dialogue with MFRC members and the discussion on the SCPP. She asked MFRC members to provide formal or informal feedback on whether there were elements missing in the plan or priorities regarding the recommendations. The LCCMR is using the SCPP as a guiding document; they are not adopting it and consider it a living document. She noted a significant outcome has been the relationships developed through the process.

Susan discussed potential directions for ETF expenditures in consideration of the new constitutional amendment and other funding sources. She envisions some of the new funding taking acquisition pressures off the ETF and she hopes to refocus on innovative projects and research. She asked the Council to serve as a technical advisory group to the LCCMR regarding issues or research needs.

Don asked whether the LCCMR would support unfunded needs such as landscape planning and continuing education. Susan responded that, as a staff person, she hopes that will be the case; however, the first challenge is to get the issues in front of the LCCMR before they make those funding decisions. She encouraged the MFRC to provide something in written form to her in advance of their upcoming RFP to be posted in January.

Wayne thanked Susan and Shelley for attending the meeting today. He noted that an important issue to consider is the MCCAG recommendation to reforest one million acres. Currently, that recommendation is not actionable but it can be done. There needs to be an evaluation on how and where to reforest. Wayne suggested that the Council ought to be challenged with that analysis in 2009. Wayne hopes that the LCCMR would be interested in funding that analysis in order to inform legislators on how to act on MCCAG recommendations. Shelley encouraged MFRC members to forward any other needs that came out of the MCCAG.

Don reiterated the need for funding to educate loggers and suggested addition support for a Department of Ecological Resources program that is involved with the use of fire as a management practice. Al suggested that there are certainly opportunities for the LCCMR to fund projects other than acquisition. He noted that while there are some critical issues, if we lose the capability to educate loggers, a lot of what has been accomplished would be moot. Dave Zumeta suggested that it would be helpful to present the Council's priority policy issues to the LCCMR. He noted that the Council has never requested LCCMR or LCMR money and there is value in maintaining that relationship.

Shawn Perich commented that Minnesota is quite good at planning but we fall short with an agenda to accomplish plans. He suggested tangible progress must be made quickly or we will lose public support.

John Rajala added that investments in productivity and quality would give the forest industry the ability to provide future environmental benefits.

Dave Epperly noted that he sees duplication in the SCPP report and suggested greater cooperation is needed. Susan responded that the Institute on the Environment was asked not to conduct original research for the SCPP, but to pull from available material. She acknowledged the report may seem duplicative, but noted that the document may get attention from folks who wouldn't otherwise look to the Council.

Public Communications to the MFRC

None.

MFRC Member Comments

Jim stated that the Indian Affairs Council will be re-appointing Bob Lintelmann to the Council, but Jim will also be attending more of the meetings. He noted concern that tribes are left out of discussions regarding natural resources and suggested greater consideration of the way in which tribal communities use resources.

John Rajala moved to adjourn the meeting. Wayne Brandt seconded. The meeting was adjourned.