

Meeting # 1 Summary

East Central Landscape Committee

April 28, 2004

**Kanabec History Center
Mora, Minnesota**

Meeting Participants:

Greg Bennett

Tim Anderson

Sean Petty

Eric Olson

Wayne Damerow

Hannah Dunevitz

Dave Johnson

Don Janes

Shelley Larson

Craig Prudhomme

Bob Pulford

Dennis Asmussen

Tim Edgeton

Steve Nelson

John Bathke

Dick Knoll

Staff:

Dave Miller

Lindberg Ekola

Welcome & Introductions, Review the Preliminary Meeting Schedule:

After the welcome and introductions, Lindberg distributed a preliminary meeting schedule. Staff put together the draft outline of all anticipated meetings for the EC landscape planning process. The schedule included a list of topics and/or actions to be addressed at each of the meetings.

On this schedule, a total of 10 meetings were proposed for the committee. The first meeting focused on distributing background information, identification of major issues, and setting the basic ground rules for the committee and the process. Meetings 2, 3 and 4 will provide the committee members with presentations on ecological, economic and social topics relating to forest resources in the landscape. Meetings 5, 6 and 7 are to focus on the development of the desired future conditions (vision) and goals and strategies. Meeting 8 will focus on coordination and implementation strategies. Meetings 9 and 10 allow for review of the draft plan as well as the review of comments received from the public.

The committee reviewed and commented on the preliminary meeting schedule. Staff will revise the meeting schedule based on the committee input and distribute it at the next meeting.

Discussion of Major Issues in the East Central Region

Discussion ensued on the major forest resource related issues in the East Central landscape.

Major issues raised in the discussion included:

- Oak wilt and other pests or diseases.
- Anoka sand plain, managing land use and cover is important, impacts on water resources.
- Aspen, low quality, converting back to conifer forests, how to help landowners.
- Forest health – what are the best approaches.
- Climate change.

- Invasive species.
- Wetland degradation.
- Wet soils – impacts of compaction.
- Agricultural land development.
- Prairie restoration, loss of work due to confusion with DNR and city fire marshalls over burning permits.
- Logger / private landowner interactions, economics of logging, market conditions, changing situations.
- Private lands are important in the East Central landscape, over 70 percent is privately owned, whereas landscapes to the north have more public lands.
- Change of forest type makes what kind of impacts on economics?
- Deer management – populations, predation, hunting.
- Wildlife population management relating to forestland management.

Staff distributed a worksheet for each of the committee members to complete at the meeting. The compiled results from the worksheet will be distributed at the next meeting.

Review of Previous Landscape Plans:

Dave Miller provided an overview of the previously prepared landscape plans for the other regions in the state. To date, plans have been approved for the Northeast, North Central, Southeast and West Central landscapes with the North landscape document being reviewed by the Council in the next month.

Dave reviewed the statutory framework in the Sustainable Forest Resources Act and aspects that the committee needed to address (no net loss; mix of species and age class; equal consideration to ecological, economic and social factors; biodiversity; collaboration, etc). He suggested that “scale”, the large amounts of land area that each of the landscapes in the state cover is one of the hardest things to address in the landscape planning process and that each landscape is substantially different. Each committee has approached their effort differently and Dave summarized some of the approaches each group took.

The committee discussed the following items in response to Dave’s presentation:

- Distribution of the draft plan document, how, to who, etc.
- Public review process, how are comments used. We should get formal responses from agencies and organizations.
- Outlook for landscape program, funding, sunset provisions for the sustainable forest legislation.
- Roles of local organizations – lake associations, landowner cooperatives, etc.
- Administrative opportunities for forestry management, Aitkin County example of hiring part time coordinator by three cooperatives.
- Forest legacy program, Upper St. Croix and Sherburne County have sites identified but not yet active.
- Great River Greenway project may have some ideas to help the EC effort.

Information Review:

Lindberg gave a brief overview of the background information documents that have already been prepared for the East Central landscape. The documents distributed to committee members at the meeting included:

- Social and Economic Trends and Implications (UMD)
- Current Conditions and Trends Assessment (MFRC staff)
- Census and Economic Data (MFRC staff)

Other materials will be distributed at meetings 2, 3, 4 and 5 as baseline information for the planning process.

Update on the Landscape Perspectives Report:

Lindberg described the Landscape Perspectives Report that was being prepared for the East Central landscape. He introduced Carrie Schesel, the contractor who is compiling the report. Staff anticipates completing the report in June.

To meet that deadline, Lindberg requested that all committee members provide staff with copies of plans, policy documents and ordinances that relate to forest management from agencies and organizations working in the region. Please contact Lindberg if questions.

Key Trends and Conclusions (Meetings 2, 3 and 4):

After the presentations and discussions at each of the next three committee meetings, the committee members will be asked to help identify and clarify the key trends and conclusions relating to the various topics (ecological, economic, social). The trends and conclusions will be summarized and incorporated into the East Central Landscape plan document.

Ground Rules for Decision Making:

The committee discussed and set some basic ground rules for its operation and decision making aspects. The basic intent of the ground rules is to help the committee, which represents a diverse range of interests and perspectives, find ways to work together to make collective decisions on developing the desired future conditions, goals and strategies for the East Central landscape.

The committee recognizes that the landscape planning process is voluntary and that the recommendations developed in the plan are advisory in nature. In addition, the basic intent of the landscape program is to build collaborative and cooperative relationships to better manage the forest resources in sustainable ways. It further recognizes that more specific decisions regarding forest management will need to and should be made by the appropriate entities including landowners, loggers, conservation and environmental organizations, local units of government, and state and federal agencies.

The following summarizes the committee's decisions on ground rules:

- **Committee Membership.** The committee discussed the composition of the membership and found that it was quite diverse. One geographical area missing on the committee was Wright County. Staff has made several inquiries for this area but without much success. Committee members will provide some suggested contacts. Staff will try to locate representatives from this area for the committee. The committee decided that composition of the committee should be finalized after the fourth meeting with those persons having volunteered to serve on the committee.
- **Meeting Structure:** The committee selected an informal meeting style with the MFRC staff facilitating the committee meetings.
- **Decision Making.** If a consensus can not be reached, the committee created four options as how to address the item where the simple majority vote of persons attending the meeting would decide the matter. The following are the four options:
 1. Make a decision on the matter at that given meeting.
 2. Move the item or matter to the next meeting so that the committee members and staff can do further research.
 3. Create a subcommittee to work on the item further and bring it back to the committee for further discussion.
 4. Determine that the item or matter is outside the scope of the East Central landscape process.

One last safety valve accepted by the committee would be to refer a decision to the Council's Landscape Committee or the Council. Ultimately, the Council is required to approve all landscape plans.

Next Meeting Data: Thursday, May 27, 2004 at Kanabec History Center starting at 9:00 am.