

Meeting # 2 Summary

East Central Landscape Committee

May 27, 2004

Kanabec History Center
Mora, Minnesota

Meeting Participants:

Pam Perry

Tom Schmidt

Hannah Dunevitz

Teresa Bearce

Robert Nelson

Paul Larson

Joan Galli

Shelley Larson

Don Janes

Tim Edgeton

Tim Anderson

Steve Nelson

Jan Manley

Bob Pulford

Joe Wood

John O'Reilly

Dick Knoll

Staff:

Lindberg Ekola

Welcome & Introductions:

The meeting started with each person introducing themselves and their affiliation or organization they represent to the full group.

Revised Meeting Schedule:

Lindberg distributed the revised meeting schedule. The schedule was revised to include the changes requested by the committee made at the April meeting. It included the meeting dates and locations for all meetings throughout the East Central planning process.

Lindberg also reviewed the meeting schedule in more detail. He reaffirmed and updated the committee on some of general comments about the organization of the meeting schedule. The first meeting was intended to provide the committee with more detailed background information and a review of previously prepared plans. Meetings 2, 3, and 4 are to focus on the sustainable forestry concepts – ecological, social and economic. The meetings are proposed to be more *technical* in nature. Key information for each topic is to be presented by members of the committee or other topic experts. For the remaining meetings, the committee would be serving more of an *advisory* capacity to the Council and local partners by developing and refining the policy framework for the East Central landscape plan (desired future conditions, goals and strategies, etc.).

The revised schedule lists the speakers anticipated for each meeting. Other speakers can be brought in as the committee desires. The committee accepted the revised meeting schedule.

Bob P. urged the group and staff to continue to consider how we can increase communication with the public and how we can build a commitment to implement the plan once it is completed. Lindberg introduced some approaches for both and suggested that we continue this conversation as we move through the planning process.

Presentation: Ecological Overview of the East Central Landscape

Hannah Dunvitz, Regional Plant Ecologist from the MN DNR – Natural Heritage & Nongame Research Program gave an ecological overview of the East Central landscape.

Hannah's power point presentation covered the following topics:

- Geology.
- Topography.
- Soils.
- Ecological provinces, subsections and land types.
- Presettlement vegetation and present day land cover.
- Watersheds.
- Wetlands (NWI).
- Native plant communities (county biological survey).
- Rare plants.
- Nongame animals

She also provided a summary of the three major ecological areas in the landscape and their characteristics:

- Mille Lacs uplands.
- Anoka sand plain.
- Big Woods

Hannah concluded her presentation with a listing of key ecological issues and some of the major ongoing conservation efforts in the landscape.

Members of the committee requested that copies of the presentation be provided in the next agenda packet.

Follow Up Discussion

The committee discussed a number of items in response to Hannah's presentation. Shelley asked about the definitions relating to what resources were considered high quality. Joe asked about rare features. Hannah described the general approaches used including the size of the tract for forest and prairie landscapes. (Note: readers of the summary – more detail can be found on the MN DNR web site and in the document, "Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota"). Paul asked about the impacts of climate and described the location of the 40 degree mean annual temperature line that divides the East Central landscape.

Results from Worksheet # 1 – Major Issues and Assets

Staff tabulated the results from the worksheet completed by the committee members at the April meeting. Lindberg reviewed the summarized results and highlighted the issues and assets that received more frequent responses from committee members.

Staff will continue to compile and organize the inventory of issue and asset statements for consideration by the committee at their upcoming meetings.

Mapping Exercise

Lindberg asked the committee to divide into three smaller groups to identify and delineate the various ecological areas in the East Central landscape that they thought were important. The groups were also asked to review and discuss some general questions regarding the East Central landscape. The following is a brief summary of the follow up discussion (maps were marked up by each team):

The “A” Team – Steve, Joe, Hannah, Bob P., Dick

- Created 6 general areas covering the landscape including the prairie, hardwood forest, aspen-birch-pine forest, St. Croix drainage, Anoka sand plain, and the Big Woods.
- Focused on vegetation patterns for this exercise.
- We need management strategies for each area.
- Natural corridors and development corridors – we need to consider both.
- On the question “where to grow trees” – let’s take better care of the ones we already have.

Team “B” – Joan, Tom, Paul, Tim

- Created 9 general areas covering the landscape including the ag lands, Mille Lacs shoreline forest, Rum River corridor, Kettle River corridor, the Banning State Park old growth forest, Gandy white pines (St. Croix corridor), Twin Lakes white pines, Anoka sand plain, and the Big Woods.
- Identified the 40 degree mean annual temperature line and its correlation to vegetation patterns – below this line, generally better ag production and above poorer conditions..
- Where are natural plant communities possible?

“C” Team – Jan, Teresa, Tim, Shelley, Pam, Bob N

- Created 5 general areas covering the landscape including the Mille Lacs (potential for large tracts), mixed ag/woodland, Mississippi flatlands, Anoka sand plains, and the Big Woods.
- We need to consider land values in the process.
- There are three general rates of development going on in the region from very fast to
- We have trees throughout the landscape – need to manage them for pulp, lumber, habitat, recreation, multiple uses, etc.
- Don’t forget the small tracts of valuable forestland.
- Potential strategies – forest legacy program, invite legislators to meetings or an open house, watershed approaches, look for opportunities to protect forests, etc.

Bob P asked how the results from this exercise will be used? Lindberg suggested that the policy areas and inventory or issues and assets could become the basis for the topics or categories for the desired future conditions and goals. This input is intended to be a primary source for the creation and development of the policy framework to be established in the East Central landscape plan.

Updates from Committee Members

Lindberg introduced this item from the agenda. It was suggested that this be a standing item on the agenda as a way for committee members to share information about new or evolving forestry related projects, programs, practices in the region. The intent is to have the committee start the process of sharing within the region on a periodic basis new initiatives.

The committee accepted the standing item on the agenda. Staff will add it to the upcoming committee meeting agendas.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, June 24, 2004 at MN DNR Area Office in Cambridge starting at 9:00 am.