

Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Personnel & Finance Committee
June 5, 2005
DNR – 6th Floor Commissioner’s office conference room

P&F Committee members present: Al Sullivan - Chair, Mike Carroll, Shaun Hamilton, Paige Winebarger

Absent: Wayne Brandt

MFRC staff present: Dave Zumeta, Jenna Fletcher

Legislative Update/FY06 Budget

Dave Zumeta provided an overview of the possible outcomes of MFRC’s FY06 budget. Both the House and the Senate have passed omnibus environment and natural resources finance bills. The House bill calls for an annual reduction in MFRC operational funding of 29%, whereas the Senate bill and the Governor’s recommendation calls for no change (\$730,000 per year). There may be a slight reduction proposed by the Senate depending on whether or not the MFRC is asked to absorb a small portion of a \$14 million reduction that is to be spread across all environment and natural resource agencies.

Request from Minnesota Forestry Association to provide \$5,000 to support fall 2005 SFIA forum

A proposal from Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) was sent in advance and discussed. The committee wanted more information from MFA, including how its proposed forum would fit in a larger effort to examine the effectiveness of the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA). The committee also seeks to understand other organizations involved in work to evaluate the SFIA. In summary, the committees agreed that MFA should better frame the proposal and provide more specifics. Dave Zumeta will send a letter to Bruce Zumbahlen requesting the additional information.

FY05 Budget Expenditures

Jenna Fletcher reviewed MFRC’s expenditures through the end of May, and the projected total expenditures for the year. Dave Zumeta expects that MFRC will end the year \$5,000 -\$10,000 in the black.

Personnel Update

Dave Zumeta shared the status of the Landscape Planning Manager position. Dave Miller’s final day will be July 26th. Fifty individuals nationally applied for the new position, and seven are scheduled to be interviewed. Dave reported that, due to the uncertainty of MFRC’s budget, he has postponed the interviews for the seven candidates until after July 1st. Due to this delay, and the need for an effective handoff, Dave Miller, and likely Lindberg Ekola, will be hired on 45-day “emergency appointments.”

Review draft meeting agenda for July 27-28

The committee reviewed a draft agenda. The committee commented that they would like to see committee reports be sent in advance in writing. For the GEIS Report Card Study agenda item, Al Sullivan requests a crisp presentation, leaving ample time for Council members to discuss implications of the study results.

Next the committee discussed the Committee of the Whole discussion on the providing roadless area advice to Governor Pawlenty. Dave Zumeta suggested that the July meeting will be used to acquaint Council members with the issue, and anticipates that staff will be asked to present a recommendation to the Council at the September meeting, culminating in a vote during the November meeting. The Council should expect public input during the meetings due to the high level of interest in this topic.

The committee's next meeting will be August or September to review MFRC's FY06 proposed budget and workplan.

Paige Winebarger shared an article from the Economist and suggested that committee members should read it, since she feels sustainability should include recognition of the monetary value that ecosystem services provide.