MFRC Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2002

In attendance: Dave Parent (chair), Bob Oswold, Shawn Perich, Rich Holm, Dave Sterr, and Mike Phillips (staff).

Absent: Roger Scherer, and Greg Damlo.

Guests: Clarence Turner, George Deegan, Bill Befort, Dave Heinzen, Dave Zumeta, and Rick Dahlman.

Dave Parent convened the meeting of the Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee (GIMC) at 9:45 a.m. and introductions were made.

The following documents were provided prior to or at the GIMC meeting:

1. Agenda.
2. Table titled "Status of 2002 Monitoring Site Confirmation and Documentation".
3. Table titled "Deleted Sites".
4. A report by Bill Befort and George Deegan titled "Change Analysis Applications in DNR Resource Monitoring".

Update on 2001 monitoring report

- ?? Data entry for 2001 data was difficult due to problems with the database program and with problems in interpreting the entries in the on-site evaluation form. Data entry was completed in February 2002.
- ?? Rick Dahlman indicated that workload issues for the DOF statistician and biometrician, Dr. Chen, resulted in delays in the analysis of the 2001 monitoring data. Also, problems with limited staff and funding have created problems in completing the analysis and write-up.
- ?? Approximately 35 tables have been produced for the 2001 data to date. This represents from 75-80% of the data tables reported in the 2000 monitoring report. There are additional areas of analysis that the DNR would like to undertake but will be delayed until other priorities (e.g. 2002 calibration workshop, identifying all 2002 monitoring sites, checking all landowner questions) are completed.
- ?? Mike Phillips asked when the report would be done for 2002. Rick D. indicated that it could take from 4 to 6 months to complete given existing workloads. Dave Parent considers the 6 month time frame to be unacceptable and that getting the report completed needs to be a priority for the commissioner's office.
- ?? Dave P. identified two areas of concern related to not having the monitoring report completed in a timely manner. First, this information is used to develop the curriculum for much of the guideline training for loggers and resource professionals. Second, the credibility of a voluntary monitoring program is evaluated on the timely availability of the monitoring information.

?? Dave Zumeta suggested that increased workloads for the monitoring program within the Division of Forestry (DOF) could be problematic given the probability of layoffs facing the DOF.

?? Mike P. suggested that the MFRC consider recommending to the DNR that we not undertake implementation monitoring for 2003. Since we do not seem to have the number of FTE's committed to sustaining an annual monitoring program, we might want to consider deferring implementation monitoring to get ourselves caught up with all the needs of the program.

?? Dave P. queried all present GIMC members to express their perspective on deferring implementation monitoring for 2003. All GIMC members present supported not monitoring in 2003 and using the time to catch up, refine the process and procedures for monitoring, and begin implementing monitoring again in 2004. Since this is a DNR program, the motion would be an action item by the Council that recommends to the DNR that monitoring for 2003 not be conducted in order to allow Council and DNR staff to update the implementation monitoring program and undertake a more through analysis of the baseline data.

?? A question was raised by Dave P. as to what effect this delay would have on the riparian monitoring report. Mike P. indicated that the riparian report was the one identified in statute as being required by February 1 of each year. Mike suggested that the committee might recommend that the legislation be changed to allow riparian reporting every other year. It was suggested that Clarence Turner could then use the freed up time to work with Resource Assessment in refining the methodology for riparian assessments. Dave H. indicated that the two programs (implementation monitoring and riparian monitoring) could move forward separately; that they are not necessarily tied together and can be evaluated separately.

?? Dave Z. also suggested that rather than cut back on the program, we could look at getting additional resources. Specifically, we are looking at $20,000 in funding from the USFS, State and Private Forestry to support monitoring of NIPF sites.

?? Shawn Perich was concerned that the recommendation to not undertake monitoring for one year not be viewed as an opportunity for cutting the monitoring budget and using the savings for other program priorities. GIMC members agreed that the resolution of the MFRC to the DNR include the caveat that the cost savings from not undertaking the monitoring program be dedicated to the activities of the monitoring program.

?? Dave Z. and Mike P. will develop the specific motion that will be offered for discussion at the April 23, 2002 MFRC meeting. It is anticipated that the motion will be an action item for the June 25, 2002 MFRC meeting. If possible, this motion will be sent to GIMC members for comment prior to the council meeting.

?? Dave P. asked that we provide a specific listing of the activities that we will undertake for 2003 in lieu of standard monitoring. Mike P. indicated that Dick Rossman, Rick Dahlman, and he would identify those activities and get the talking points to Dave to discuss at the April 23 council meeting.

?? Related to monitoring, Rich Holm indicated that he is concerned that DNR field foresters are not specifying what they want for erosion control for roads and skid

trails. He wants the DNR to be specific in the language as it applies to individual sales. Mike P. will discuss this issue with Mike Carroll.

Overview of 2002 implementation monitoring program

?? Implementation monitoring contract will be selected on April 9.
?? Calibration workshop will be held on April 22-26, 2002.
?? Dave Z. discussed the status of the contract for 2002. It has been approved by the DNR Commissioner's Office and is over for review at the Department of Administration. We are waiting for approval by the Department of Administration before we can move forward on the 2002 program. It may take another week to 10 days to obtain the waiver.
?? Rick indicated that the DNR has identified 148 potential monitoring sites. Of these, 84 are confirmed and all of the documentation appropriate to these sites has been received. There are 46 sites where we have not received the background information from the landowners and 21 sites that have been dropped from the sample pool for a variety of reasons. The focus now is on getting the appropriate information from the 46 sites, obtaining permission from the landowners to have their harvest monitored, or drop the site because it may not be a timer harvest (e.g., land clearing for pasture).
?? Rick was asked why so many NIPF sites were rejected and why few industry sites are confirmed. Rick indicated that some of the companies have not responded as yet and we have not received the information for those sites. Seventeen sites were private landowners, and seven of these declined to participate. There are also a number of private landowner sites where we found the activity was a land use change (e.g., platted for housing, clearing for mine spoil).
?? Dave P. suggested it would be useful to forward the information on deleted sites to the MFRC landscape committees as an example of land use conversion in forested areas. Dave Z. asked about the feasibility of this methodology to evaluate land use change. Dave H. said that one of the original objectives of the monitoring program using satellite imagery was to try and estimate land use change. But the time frame was too short to do the job adequately, and so the project focused on two objectives (i.e., riparian harvest and total harvest). Estimating land use change should be a program priority in the future.
?? The question was raised as to whether 200 randomly selected change detections will produce 120 monitoring sites. Bill Befort suggested that for the next round of monitoring, we will identify an initial pool of 250 sites randomly selected change detections.

Issues related to implementation monitoring.

?? There was a general discussion as to the difficulties encountered in getting the landowner questionnaires filled out and obtaining the background site information. The difficulties are not just confined to NIPF landowners, but we have had problems this year in getting information from all landowner categories.

?? Mike P. and Rick D. reviewed continuing problems with the computer program and the development of a new database program. The DNR's MIS Bureau is working to develop a new database program that will meet our needs.
?? Rick D. reviewed the upcoming calibration workshop.
?? Rick expressed appreciation to the reservations for their timely responses in providing site documentation.
?? Rick reviewed our expectations for the contractor as to the quality of the field evaluations. Mike P. reviewed some of the hassles that were encountered in the interpretation of some of the collected and written on the on-site evaluation forms.
?? Mike P and Rick D. discussed the problem of the contractor not contacting some landowners before going on the property to monitor the site. They indicated that some landowners were concerned enough to state they will reconsider their involvement if they are not contacted ahead of time for the upcoming field season. Mike & Rick have build into the on-site evaluation forms contact information that will need to be obtained to receive payment.
?? There was a general discussion of the problem of not getting individual reports of results back to the landowners. There was agreement among GIMC members that we should be writing an individual report for each site monitored in a timely manner. However, as in previous discussion, there is not the time and resources to write up individual reports. We need to seek support and funding for writing the individual reports to landowners.

Changes to Site Selection Methodology for 2002

?? Rick D. gave a brief overview of the changes to the methodology of identifying sites in 2002 using satellite imagery in combination with aerial photography. The aerial photography was used to evaluate site detection capabilities and to see if satellite imagery was at least as good as the aerial photography in detecting disturbance.
?? Resource Assessment is confident that the use of satellite imagery to detect potential monitoring sites is at least as good and probably better that the use of aerial photography. Dave H. indicated that the satellite imagery picked up more disturbances than were found in the evaluations of aerial photography. Dave P. wants us to move forward and continue to improve the methodology for detecting sites.
?? Part of the verification process for satellite imagery is to compare its detection capabilities with aerial photography. This was accomplished with the use of 1x6 mile strips that were flown and photographed at 1:10,000 resolution. Since Resource Assessment was able to demonstrate that the satellite imagery was at least as good as aerial photography, Rick D. suggested that we do not need to evaluate this comparison for the next round of monitoring. Dave P. wanted to know if Resource Assessment was comfortable in dropping the 1x6 mile strips. Mike P. asked if we should do a second year of strips to confirm the findings from the first year. Dave H. said it is a matter of finance and if we are willing to commit the funds to accomplish the review. Dave P. stated he was concerned that we be able to confirm our efforts from the first year. Clarence Turner suggested

that it would be appropriate to do one additional year of 1x6 mile strips to ensure that the first year results were not an anomaly. George Deegan suggested that we could undertake the evaluation, but maybe with a reduced number of strips (e.g., 40 versus 80 strips). It is likely that we will undertake this evaluation at some level for one more year.

Riparian Monitoring Report Discussion

?? Clarence T. reviewed his responsibilities for writing the riparian monitoring report based on the work by Resource Assessment.

?? Clarence T. identified three things that will need to be included in the report. The first is an estimate of statewide harvest and harvest within the riparian area based on estimates provided by Resource Assessment. This estimate will put in the context of other estimates made in the past so that if can be interpreted correctly. Second, the methodology will be included so that the reader has confidence that the estimate is correct. Clarence T's goal for the report is to provide enough detail so that the readers will understand what is being presented, but not so much detail that they won't read the document. This will be done by simplifying the discussion in the text and confining the detailed discussion on methodology to the appendix. The third part will be an evaluation of the methods, including recommendations for future improvements.

?? Clarence T. express his concern that he does not know what the estimates provided will be used for. Dave H. feels the estimate will be viewed as information and that the hope is that the public will fell comfortable with the information provided, that they will get a good idea of what is going on in the riparian forest.

?? There was general discussion on how the data for the riparian assessment could be used.

?? Clarence T. indicated that his goal is to have the final report ready for the April 23, 2002 Council meeting.

?? Mike P. asked Bill Befort if he could estimate the time and resources that would be needed to confidently determine the degree of land conversion going on in forested riparian areas. Bill said he couldn't provide an estimate at this time. There are many different kinds of land conversions and not all are easily detected. There was a general discussion on potential ways of evaluating the land conversion issues.

?? There was discussion as to when the riparian report should be due. Do we need to recommend a change to the February 1 annual deadline for the report? There is not too much concern that the report is produced by the end of February to mid March of each year rather than February 1. Mike P. suggested that we need to develop a complete flow chart of the monitoring process so that we can set realistic deadlines and identify resources required to meet the deadlines or work to change the statutory deadlines. Then we can present the chart to the DNR Commissioner's office.

Proposal for Forest Service Funding for NIPF site Evaluations

?? Dave Z. reviewed a proposal to the USFS, State and Private Forestry for funding to cover the cost of monitoring NIPF lands. A portion of the funding would be used for one-on-one contacts with NIPF landowners to provide feedback on the results for the guideline monitoring of their timber harvests. Dave Z. believes we have a very good chance of having this proposal funded.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm