

**Guideline Implementation Monitoring Technical Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 13, 1999**

In attendance: Mike Phillips, Rick Dahlman, Tom Martinson, Alan Jones, Terry Weber, Dave Parent, Charlie Blinn, Clarence Turner, Kent Jacobson, Pat Emerson, and Harry Fisher.

Absent: Barb Liukkonen, Dick Rossman, Bob Morrow, Jim Jones, Tim Quincer, Theresa Wagner, and Betsy Daub.

The meeting of the guideline implementation monitoring technical committee was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Mike Phillips. Introductions were made.

The committee discussed the absence of the environmental community representatives at the table. Mike Phillips stated that he had contacted Betsy Daub to see if she or another from Audubon would be able to make the meetings. Betsy, who had been nominated but had never agreed to participate, indicated that she is committed to other work activities at this time and does not think she will be able to attend any of the meetings. Mike also has exchanged voice mails with Barb Liukkonen who has had prior commitments for the days identified for committee meetings. Barb indicated to Mike that she will likely only be able to make one of the remaining scheduled meetings. Mike left a voice message for Tom Duffus from TNC to see if he might be available to contribute to the committee. At the time of the May 13 meeting, Tom had not returned the call. Other options will be to see if Jim Erkle would be available. There was general agreement among committee members that it is important to have the involvement of the environmental community in designing the protocols for implementation monitoring if we are to obtain broad acceptance of the products produced and to receive the needed credibility for the process.

Mike Phillips provided the following handouts:

1. Agenda for May 13, 1999 meeting.
2. SFRA legislation as amended 4/12/99.
3. Contract for monitoring design system.
4. Copies of the general guidelines, roads, and timber harvesting chapters of the guidebook.
5. MFRP monitoring task group meeting minutes from May 10, 1999 (provided by Terry Weber).

Rick Dahlman provided the following handouts:

6. 1997 BMP audit worksheet (blank).
7. 1997 BMP audit worksheet (example from field audit).
8. Summary of practices not followed from 1997 and the effectiveness of the alternative practices applied.

Mike Phillips led the committee through a review of some of the language contained in the proposed SFRA. Mike noted that, if adopted, changes to SFRA will require the Council to update the guidelines by June 30, 2003 and that the riparian and seasonal pond guidelines will undergo peer review by December 31, 1999. Kent Jacobson noted that the seasonal pond guidelines were proposed by the wildlife technical team and not the riparian technical team. However, the proposed language links the two resources.

The committee also reviewed the language related to monitoring, including a specific requirement to monitor riparian areas and report to the legislature by February 2001. Mike suggested that the monitoring technical committee might provide some recommendations to the MFRC guideline monitoring committee on accomplishing that requirement, possibly by identifying additional information for riparian areas that could be collected during monitoring. Kent questioned whether that recommendation fell within the responsibilities of the monitoring technical committee. Mike stated that there were three parts to the proposed language on monitoring riparian areas:

- Monitor the extent and condition of riparian forests. Chris Edgar and the DNR Resource Assessment unit will likely take the lead in addressing this issue.
- Monitor the extent to which management occurs within riparian management zones. This aspect may be addressed from the aerial photography work.
- Monitor use and effectiveness of timber harvesting and forest management guidelines in riparian areas. This is where Mike thinks the monitoring teams will be able to assist the DNR and the MFRC in collecting this information.

Mike Phillips reiterated the goal and objectives of the monitoring program. The goal is to develop a monitoring program that

evaluates use of the timber harvesting and forest management guidelines by each of the land ownership categories in Minnesota. The objectives of monitoring are to : 1) collect the information needed for the MFRC to determine if the landowner implementation goals established by the MFRC are being met, 2) identify necessary modifications to the timber harvesting and forest management guidelines, and 3) obtain adequate monitoring data to target future education efforts.

Rick Dahlman provided an overview of the BMP monitoring process. He discussed the site selection process and how individual practices were rated in the field. Kent Jacobson asked if there was a list of practices which were rarely evaluated or for which the ratings rarely changed Kent suggested that we might want to consider eliminating these practices from the review. Rick agreed to provide that list to the committee at the May 25, 1999 committee meeting.

Following Rick's presentation, Mike requested that committee members state their views on both the positive and negative aspects of the BMP monitoring program The purpose of this exercise is identify if there are aspects of the existing program that can be incorporated into the monitoring program being developed.

Rick Dahlman:

- \$ measure what we can.
- \$ shift away from the type of rating we have done in the BMP worksheets (i.e., effectiveness ratings).
- \$ will need to rate same types of practices.
- \$ need to collect comments and summarize them appropriately, possibly by coding groups of comments.

Harry Fisher:

- \$ hard to evaluate the monitoring program until the committee defines what is meant by A site@

Tom Martinson:

- \$ likes the integrated team approach to monitoring.

Alan Jones:

- \$ wants to focus on the human element in the monitoring process.
- \$ data is only as good as the team composition.
- \$ integrated nature of the teams is good, but we need to work hard to ensure that the appropriate people stay involved in monitoring. Important to keep the loggers involved.

Terry Weber:

- \$ whatever tool we build needs to address the goals and objectives of the program.

Dave Parent:

- \$ need to efficiently gather information.
- \$ BMP worksheet was too voluminous (i.e., too many practices to rate on the same checklist).
- \$ tailor checklist to the type of site and forest management activities that the monitoring teams will encounter.

Charlie Blinn:

- \$ format for the checklist okay.
- \$ effectiveness ratings are not the best way to rate the sites.
- \$ some of the practices may not be easy to judge by a number.

Clarence Turner:

- \$ build in adaptability in the checklist and change as appropriate as the process moves along and as the field monitoring dictates.
- \$ will not have room or time to include all of the guidelines.
- \$ remove subjectivity from the process and make the evaluations as mechanical as possible.

Kent Jacobson:

- \$ look at the resource and see if there is a problem and ask if the recommended practices are needed. See if there was an effect, evaluate the number of wetlands on site, and follow impact back to the practice and quantify the problem.

Pat Emerson:

- \$ wants the group to think outside the box.
- \$ wants the group to consider other approaches besides the BMP process and not just automatically assume that the existing BMP process will form the basis of the new monitoring effort.
- \$ need to remove the human element of subjective judgements from the process as much as possible (i.e., make the process as objective as possible).
- \$ need to rethink the BMP approach of focussing primarily on specialists as monitoring team members- that's appropriate if the monitoring will include value judgements, but isn't necessarily the right approach for this process.
- \$ customize guideline list to the type of sites being monitored.

Mike Phillips:

- \$ likes the integrated nature of the monitoring teams.
- \$ eliminate subjectivity.
- \$ eliminate judgements about effectiveness as currently designed.

The committee reconvened after lunch for a conference call with Alan Ek to discuss the proposed design for the monitoring system. Alan described the the program to date. He indicated that the primary sampling units would likely be some number of sections, less than a whole township. There will probably be 30 of these primary sampling units located around the forested area of the state. These sampling units will be flown annually and aerial photographs taken. Points would be selected along the transects and all forest management activities within a specified radius of the points would be added to the pool of sites from which the sites for monitoring would be randomly selected. All sites selected will be field-checked to ensure that the forest management activity occurred within the time frame for monitoring. Those sites fitting within the time frame will be added to the potential pool of monitoring sites and the others will be eliminated. Alan suggested that we may select as many as 8 harvesting sites/township/year. Alan also suggested that these primary sampling units will mostly be permanent. He indicated that the primary sampling units will be the same from year to year with some percentage of the units dropped/year and replaced with new randomly selected primary sampling units. This came as a surprise to many members of the committee who had the expectation that all sampling units would be randomly chosen every year.

There is a need to cross lots of ownerships to ensure that we get a representative sample of sites from each ownership. We also need to select adequate numbers of sites to cushion for those sites where permission is not granted to monitor. Alan was asked how we ensure that the sampling design will provide for enough sites to adequately represent all ownerships. Alan's view is that we seem to have fairly close compliance with BMPs among ownerships and, therefore, if the same relationship holds with the new guidelines, it may be difficult to monitor enough sites with the MFRC's resource limitations to obtain statistically meaningful differences in compliance between ownerships.

Alan was asked his view of monitoring sites by entire harvest area or by individual cutting block. He remarked that the monitoring may depend on the individual conditions of the cutting blocks and suggested that we might want to monitor all of the cutting blocks with the same physical characteristics. Or we could review all of the cutting blocks or so many out of each timber sale. Alan stated that however we monitor, we need to be thorough in the site description. He said that he did not think that the BMP process captured all of the necessary site information.

Alan was asked how we will handle stratification of the sites by landscape. He said that landscape would be accounted for through post-stratification by aggregating the appropriate sites.

The question was asked about revisits of sites, in particular, how many sites should be revisited. Alan did not have a specific number in mind, but he remarked that we need to base the revisits on the timing for the particular site factors we want to look at. Mike Phillips stated that the revisits was an aspect of monitoring that the MFRC guideline implementation monitoring committee wants to tie in with effectiveness monitoring. Mike suggested two examples for this type of monitoring would be regeneration surveys and changes in surface soil bulk densities in haul roads and skid trails over time. Others remarked that it would be difficult for the monitoring teams to evaluate the effectiveness on specific species of wildlife at the site over time.

Pat Emerson asked Alan if there is a minimum or maximum size for a site. Alan indicated that the average size harvesting site in the state is in the 20 - 30 acre range. Dave Parent stated that we need to be sensitive to the conditions in southeastern Minnesota where the average site is much smaller. Kent Jacobson wants the process to be sensitive to the wildlife designs of industry where larger blocks are sometimes cut to meet specific wildlife needs. Alan said that all sizes of sites will be used in the monitoring.

Alan expressed his view that we will fly the primary sampling units by late June and that he has been in contact with Bill Befort to put this need on the Resource Assessment radar screen. Mike stated he would contact Bill Befort and Dave Heinzen directly to ensure that this project is completed.

Following the discussions with Alan Ek the committee discussed, in our usual low key and genteel manner, the definition of site and how to apply guidelines to a timber harvest containing multiple cutting blocks. Kent's view is that we need to look at the periphery or outside edge of the harvest area to identify which of the guidelines apply. Harry Fisher thinks we need to take into account the entire harvest area. Mike Phillips pointed out that some of the guidelines were specifically written to be applied to the harvest unit or cutting block. Kent suggested that we may be making a bigger problem out of this than we need to and suggested

we work through the individual guidelines and see what difficulties we encounter. Mike was then asked to state once more how he sees the guidelines being evaluated. His view is that we will look at the periphery of the harvest unit for the guidelines that apply and also look at the guidelines that apply to and within the individual cutting blocks.

Harry again asked us to define the site. Dave Parent suggested a definition of site that was proposed in the Partnership's monitoring task force minutes from their May 10, 1999 meeting. By this definition site includes areas where harvest activities were implemented and adjacent areas that were taken into consideration when determining the actual harvest unit. The committee agreed that this definition had much to recommend it and that at this point the committee will use it as a working definition for developing the monitoring program.

Mike Phillips then brought the discussion around to the need to determine which of the guidelines will be monitored. How to develop the appropriate means of accomplishing this task was discussed by the committee. Mike reviewed some questions that could be ones that would need to be answered to provide some of the background site information. These were:

\$ Did the landowner obtain professional assistance and who provided it?

\$ Did the landowner have a written management plan or contract?

\$ Did the landowner attend a guideline training session?

\$ Did the logger attend a guideline training session?

\$ What are the landowner's goals and objectives for management?

\$ What is the resident status of the landowner, i.e., local or absentee?

Pat Emerson suggested that there are a lot of questions that could be added to the list. Mike agreed and remarked that this was not intended to be an all inclusive list.

Mike Phillips then suggested that however we evaluate individual guidelines it was time to look at the guidelines and ask two questions:

\$ Is the guideline measurable (both planning and operational)?

\$ What is the measure?

The committee then discussed how we should evaluate the individual guidelines. Kent suggested that one way would be to do it by topical area. Others felt that since the Integration Team had integrated the guidelines by forest management activity, that would be the appropriate way to evaluate the individual guidelines. Mike went around the table and requested that committee members provide their opinion as to which approach to use.

Kent Jacobson: by topical area.

Pat Emerson: by forest management activity. This allows the landowner, resource manager, and logger to get credit for providing multiple benefits (e.g., buffers around cultural resources are also credited to wildlife benefits).

Mike Phillips: by forest management activity.

Dave Parent: by topical area.

Tom Martinson: by topical area.

Harry Fisher: work within the framework designed by the Integration Team (i.e., by forest management activity).

Rick Dahlman: by forest management activity.

Terry Weber: did not have a preference at this point. First needs to know how the system will fit in with the goals and objectives of monitoring.

Charlie Blinn: by forest management activity. Does not want to reaggregate guidelines.

Clarence Turner: Does not matter as long as the emphasis is on the outcome.

The decision was made that we would evaluate the guidelines by forest management activity.

Mike then identified small groups made up of two or more committee members each that would evaluate the guidelines based on the two questions noted above. Specific sections were distributed to the appropriate committee members. Each committee member was asked to complete the assignment by the next monitoring committee meeting and to provide the analysis to Mike Phillips prior to the next meeting if the committee member cannot make the meeting. The sections of the guidelines to be reviewed by committee members are:

General Guidelines:

\$ Planning and filter strips (pg. 7 - 25): Al, Pat, and Harry

\$ Managing riparian areas (pg. 26 - 65): Charlie and Clarence

\$ Operational activities (pg. 67 - 78): Al, Pat, and Harry

Forest Roads:

\$ Upland forest roads (pg. 12 - 31): Rick and Kent

\$ Wetland forest roads (pg. 32-47): Dave and Tom

Timber harvesting (pg 12 - 40): Mike and Terry

The next meeting of the guideline implementation monitoring technical committee will be May 25, 1999. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.