

# MFRC Landscape Advisory Committee

Time: Dec 15, 2022 10:00 AM

Location: Zoom Meeting

## Attendance

Members present: Jim Manolis (chair), Janet Erdman, Ashlee Lehner, Deb Theisen,  
Members absent: Craig Engwall, Deb Theisen, Kim Berns-Melhus, Rick Horton, Keith Karnes,  
Doug Tillma  
Alternates present: none  
Staff present: Jaimé Thibodeaux, Eric Schenck  
Guests: Kathleen Preece, James Aasen, Sawyer Scherer, Bob Tomlinson, Jen Wahls,  
John Bathke

## Welcome and Landscape Advisory Committee (LAC) Charter Overview

Jaimé started the meeting with a review of the LAC charter. She also provided a graphical representation of how council members, landscape chairs, and other committees all relate to each other and a quick briefing on subjects that are needed prior to discussion or decision. Jim noted that the LAC provides strategic direction while getting guidance from regional chairs. Eric added that MFRC is in a rebuilding phase, and with this rebuilding there is increased attention to private lands, climate change, and focus on coordination of implementation. The regional committees are being asked to do more. MFRC is looking at what the budget and other needs of the program and committees are to support these efforts.

## MFRC and Regional Chair Updates

### Staff updates

Jaimé offered an update on the successful meeting of the North Central committee and thanked council members for their attendance. She also noted that she is working with Eric and Jim on re-visiting the landscape program 5-year plan, initial conversations of metrics, and program resource needs.

Eric provided staff hiring updates with the Research Scientist and the Policy positions for MFRC. In the past few years MFRC has had significant funds via salary savings. In the coming year as staff positions are filled the budget will look very different. We are closely reviewing the budget to see how we can support our new efforts in the regional landscape program and see what resources we can provide.

## **Regional Landscape Chair Reports**

Jen Wahls (Southeast) -the committee is doing a lot of work with One Watershed One Plans. The next meeting is tomorrow (December 15<sup>th</sup>).

Sawyer Scherer (North Central)-The committee had a good meeting on Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. The leadership team is working on meeting schedule with a potential summer tour. The committee also needs to look to see if they are making progress on their plan. The plan has dozens of goals and the committee will need to think about priorities and key metrics to monitor.

James Aasen (Northern) – They have a meeting scheduled for March and James is getting the ball rolling on the Northern Plan update. He is also working on several different regional forestry workshops including seed collection and Women Woodland Owners that include many of the Northern Committee members.

John Bathke (Northeastern) – The committee has been a bit dormant and recovering from the hiatus of COVID is slow. Their next meeting scheduled for Jan 11<sup>th</sup>. John noted that the Arrowhead Collaborative is still going. John also noted that several agency leaders have retired, and the committee is working on incorporating the new leaders.

Bob Tomlinson (East Central) -The committee is in the process of re-invigorating itself. They are in need to get it restarted again since the finalization of the updated plan.

## **Private Lands Working Group -Summary and Next Steps**

Jaimé went over the history of how the Private Lands Working Group came to be in existence. Several council members have been reviewing recommendations and issues heard during that September meeting and generating potential actions for the Council. The first proposed action is to write a letter to DNR Commissioner Strommen on the need to reconvene the Forest Stewardship Committee and offer an MFRC representative.

All agreed Jaimé should reach-out to DNR private lands program managers (Gary Michael and Doug Tillma) prior to submitting a letter to the council for approval. Jaimé will reach-out to Gary and Doug and will work with Eric to begin drafting a short letter. The letter should be available for council review at the January 17<sup>th</sup> council meeting. It was also suggested MFRC ask for the committee charter to review member roles.

## Planning for the Northern Landscape Plan Update

Jaimé started the discussion noting the current plan was written in 2004 with an addendum 2010. This landscape is extremely remote and arduous to travel. As a result, much of the information on native plant communities, sites of biodiversity and high value conservation forests and were not available during either of these plan efforts. The plan is also missing information on emerging issues such as invasive species, climate change, and the connection between forests and clean water. As directed by the SFRA, the committee has reviewed the plan and been recommended the council provide the support for an update. This request is several years old.

Jaimé outlined a possible schedule created by her Eric, and James for the remainder of fiscal year 2023. This effort would involve government contracts to take advantage of MFRC salary savings available this fiscal year. Contracts would be for the creation of updated data and maps but will not be as detailed as the North Central and East Central plans. James would also like to see an analysis of TPO reports to determine the quantity of cords are coming from private lands.

Eric and Jaimé will work with James on a “needs” assessment for the planning process, what can be contracted out and what the budget will be for FY23 and FY24 to move forward with completion of a plan update. Contracting options discussed: inter-governmental agreements (SWCD), Minnesota Analysis and Development (MAD), IIC, and annual plan contracts (<\$5k). It was also suggested that MFRC include FIA data analysis during this process.

Products hoped to be obtained by the end of FY23:

- Analysis and mapping of valuable topics
- Draft headings for what will go into the new plan
- Assessment of harvest by land ownership

LAC members were supportive of moving forward with a Northern Plan update, with guidance that some careful attention is needed in how to create and what to include in a new and streamlined plan.

## Next meeting potential agenda topics

1. Tracking of management activities and coordination with other agencies -TNC
2. Plant source materials and the Minnesota Tree Improvement Cooperative
3. Items identified as LAC tasks/issues by the Private Lands Working Group