

# MFRC Landscape Advisory Committee

Time: Feb 8, 2023 10:00 AM

Location: Zoom Meeting

## Attendance

Members present: Jim Manolis (chair -2<sup>nd</sup> half), Janet Erdman, Ashlee Lehner, Kim Berns-Melhus (1<sup>st</sup> half), Keith Karnes, Doug Tillma

Members absent: Craig Engwall, Deb Theisen, Rick Horton,

Alternates present: none

Staff present: Jaimé Thibodeaux, Eric Schenck

Guests: Kathleen Preece, John Bathke, Zach Gutknecht, James Aasen

## MFRC and Regional Landscape Program Updates

- Jaimé noted she has begun scheduling regional landscape chair leadership meetings every other month to facilitate information sharing between regional chairs. Moving forward the LAC meetings will be jointly held with the regional chairs every alternating meeting. This change will be on a trial basis and evolve if needed.
- Eric noted that MFRC is on the last month of the biennium, and we are filling staff positions. He also noted the carbon baseline and carbon lifecycle study proposals are being reviewed by the P&F committees. Getting these in line has helped us get an overall sense of our remaining budget.
- Jaimé also provided a high-level overview of activities occurring within each region. Highlights include efforts to re-start the East Central and West Central regions.
- The group discussed regional chairs providing input to MFRC on the regional committee websites and information for MFRC newsletters.

## Private Lands Working Group -Forming a Committee

### Update on the Private Lands Working Group Activities

Jaimé provided an update on the private lands working group (PLWG). The PLWG sent a letter (see attached) to DNR's private forest management program coordinators (Gary Michael, Doug Tillma, and John Carlson) outlining MFRC recommendations for private forest management improvements. These recommendations were discussed at a meeting between DNR and the PLWG. DNR determined five of these recommendations/issues were appropriate to bring forward to the Forest Stewardship Committee:

1. Create additional opportunities for one-on-one technical assistance between landowners and forestry professionals, and in-person programs that promote education and connections among landowners. Explore ways to increase follow-through with landowners on implementation of stewardship plans.
2. Create streamlined plans for small woodland owners, <20 acres.
3. Ensure adequate system capacity to service family forest landowners.
4. Provide outreach and education on carbon and climate change in relation to timber harvest.

Jaimé let a group exercise to gather input from the Landscape Advisory Committee and regional chairs on these five issues using a whiteboard type software. See attached “brainstorming exercise”.

Eric also announced the supported motion from the council to form an MFRC Private Lands Committee. All present at the LAC were supportive of the formation of a private lands committee.

### **MFRC Private Lands Committee**

#### **Role within the council and role with external partners and communication pathways**

The group discussed how the Private Lands Committee (PLC) would communicate with the LAC and the two committees could work together. Janet noted that the PLC could assist the LAC and regional committees on matters related to family forests. The PLC could investigate issues, inform other MFRC committees, provide recommendations, and assist in determining the appropriate conduit for council resolutions. Janet suggested the PLC stay connected to the LAC by providing reports at LAC meetings.

Janet and Patty Theilen will discuss the addition of a new subcommittee focusing on private lands to determine DNR representation, communication, and other needs.

### **Committee structure and budget**

Consensus was that the PLC should be a stand-alone committee. As a stand-alone they have greater ability communicate with external partners and potentially develop a broader scope outside of the regional landscape committees on topics such as policy recommendations. It was unknown if a budget is needed and will not be known until the committee develops further.

### **Next Steps**

Jaimé will send out a meeting poll for the PLWG to review and discuss the resolution and charter drafted by Janet and Kathleen.

## **Northern Landscape Update -Proposal from Koochiching Co SWCD**

James Aasen provided an overview of a proposal from Koochiching SWCD to re-invigorate the Northern Committee and coordinate an update of the Northern landscape plan. See the attached document. All members were supportive of the proposal.

### **Next steps**

Due to the timeline the group agreed this will need to get this through the Policy and Finance committee as soon as possible. Eric noted he will expedite their review via an email process.

### **Next meeting (April 12<sup>th</sup>) agenda topics**

1. LAC Program Budget
2. Landscape Program Metrics

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Letter sent to DNR  
Private Lands Brainstorm Exercise  
Koochiching SWCD proposal

January 24, 2023

Gary Michael and the MN DNR Private Forestry Team  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Items that will be taken to  
the Forest Stewardship  
Committee for discussion

Dear Mr. Michael and the MN DNR Private Forestry Team:

In 2020, the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) declared a renewed commitment to private forest landowners in its strategic plan. As a result of that renewed commitment, on Sept. 19, 2022, the Council coordinated a meeting of a Private Lands Working Group that included over 12 key organizations who interact with private family forest owners. The meeting's purpose was to prompt discussion on solutions related to including and engaging private forest landowners in sustainably managing Minnesota's forests. Your willingness to participate as well as present an update was valued, as we recognize your leadership role in private forest management.

Background information, a panel discussion, and other presentations provided at that meeting prompted vigorous discussion on the challenges, successes, and issues surrounding private forest management. We believe the issues and recommendations that came from that meeting are valuable and are worthy of continuing to remain in the forefront of discussions, planning, and activities related to private lands management.

Some time ago, former DNR Forestry Commissioner and Council member Forrest Boe suggested that the Council look at the "System Framework for Minnesota's Family-Owned Forests." It was acknowledged that the Forest Stewardship Committee created this charter several years ago and that much had been accomplished. The Council believes this crucial framework is still relevant for private land efforts and can serve as a foundation to continued work by the Council, and others, in regard to a renewed commitment to private forest landowners.

By sharing with you the issues and recommendations brought forth at September's meeting, it is hoped that the Forest Stewardship Committee will consider the suggestions brought forth at that meeting and use them in its deliberation in providing updates to the System Framework.

The Private Lands Working Group Ad Hoc Committee identified these topics as priorities:

- Create additional opportunities for one-on-one technical assistance between landowners and forestry professionals, and in-person programs that promote education and connections among landowners.
- Set up a system for follow-through with landowners to implement Woodland Stewardship Plans.
- Create a statewide landowner marketing plan, such as Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE), that focuses on sustainable forest management and its benefits. Consider methods of reaching landowners, for example, creating or enhancing an existing statewide database.

Other important topics:

- Determine and implement a method to increase landowner awareness of cost share programs.
- Create a standardized, streamlined management plan for landowners with smaller parcels, <20 acres.
- Ensure adequate system capacity for service to family forest landowners by encouraging a consistent baseline for DNR PFM staffing and ensure local service networks have the capacity to meet landowner needs.
- Create opportunities for outreach and education focused on carbon and climate change in relation to forest management and timber harvest.

To update you on the status of where the Council has prioritized private lands, at our January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting we discussed the formation of a Private Lands Committee. The resolution and charter to form this committee are forthcoming.

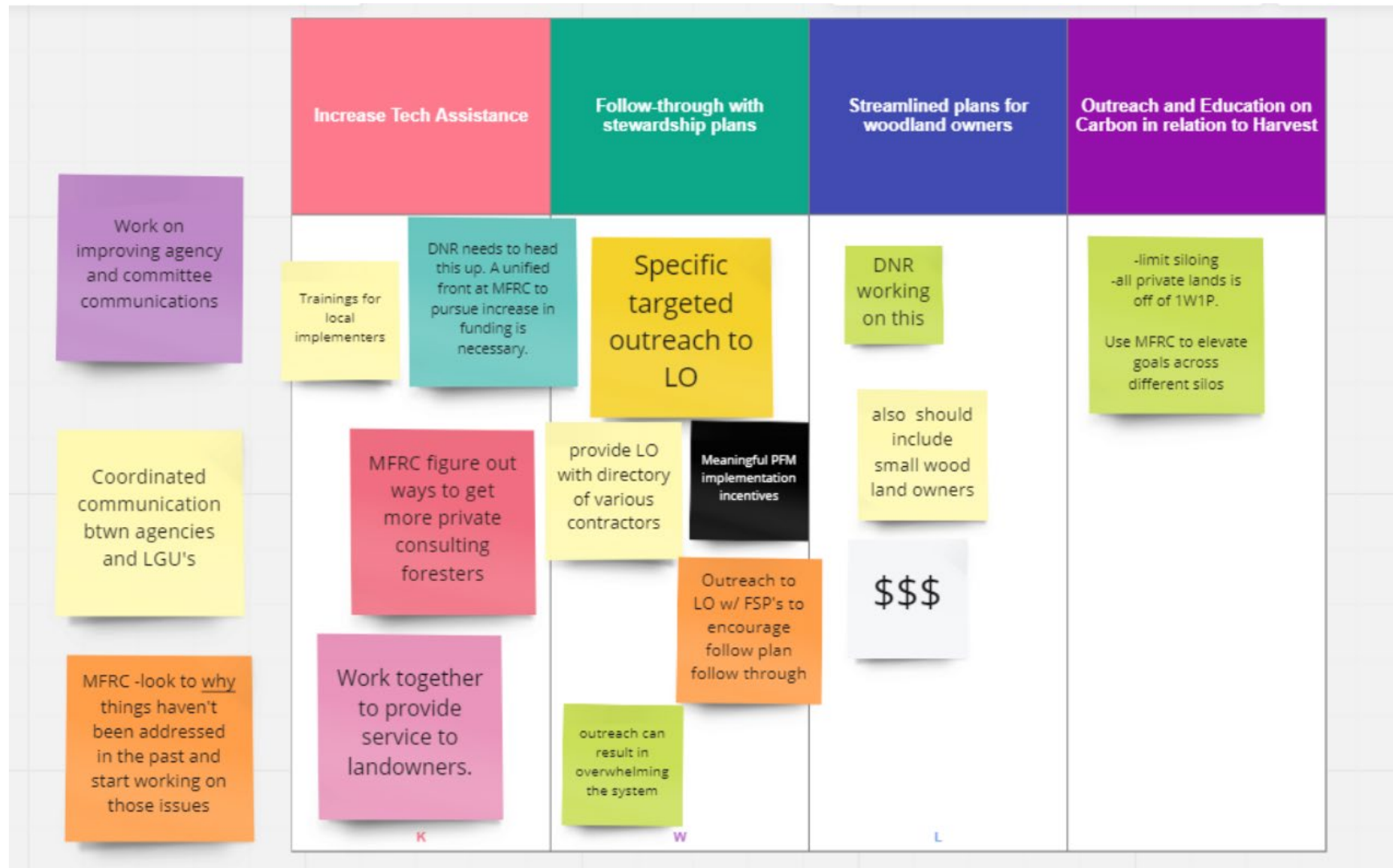
The energy surrounding private forest management displayed at September's meeting is encouraging. We thank you for including MFRC staff member Jaimé Thibodeaux on the Forest Stewardship Committee. We appreciate the ongoing updates from the MN DNR private forestry team and encourage you to continue keeping the Council apprised of ongoing efforts and challenges surrounding sustainable management of private forestlands in Minnesota.

Thank you,

The Private Forest Working Group Ad Hoc Committee  
Kathleen Preece, Janet Erdman, Mike Kilgore, Rick Horton, Eric Schenck, Jaime Thibodeaux

cc: Doug Tillma, John Carlson

## Brainstorm Exercise



# Northern Landscape Plan Update Facilitation and Committee Coordination Budget Proposal

## Overview

The Northern Regional Landscape Committee, under the mandates of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (Minn. Stat. 89A.06), is responsible for long-range, landscape-scale, strategic planning and coordination of forest resources in Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and northern Beltrami Counties of Minnesota. As described by statute, regional landscape committees follow a locally led, open and public process that considers the unique conditions and needs of each landscape, and that seeks to balance ecological, economic, and social values in establishing landscape-level forest resource goals and objectives.

In addition to providing the framework guiding landscape-level forest resource planning, the Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) is responsible for appointing regional committee chairs and is required by statute to include in its budget sufficient resources for regional landscape committees to carry out their missions and purposes.

The first edition Northern Landscape Forest Resource Management Plan was approved on May 25, 2004. In 2020, the Northern Regional Landscape Committee notified MFRC of its decision to update its 2004 plan. The purpose of the Northern Landscape Plan Update and Coordination Project is to adequately fund the plan update and coordination work of the Northern Landscape Committee from March 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025.

The Koochiching County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is the intergovernmental agency that will be administratively responsible for completing this project. The Koochiching County SWCD's Forest Resource Specialist is the MFRC appointed chair for the Northern Regional Landscape Committee and will be the project manager.

The project will be completed in two phases. The first project phase (March 1 – June 30, 2023), will complete the preliminary scoping and coordination process which includes formulating plan update teams, coordinating team and committee meetings, assembling planning related data and information, identifying issues for future consideration as plan goals/objectives, and completing a phase I report. In supporting the phase I work of this project, MFRC may contract with other entities or partners or Koochiching SWCD subcontract tasks beyond the capacity and ability of the SWCD in order to accomplish specific planning steps such as data gathering and analysis, GIS mapping, and plan writing. Beginning on July 1, 2023, Phase II of the project will complete the Northern Regional Landscape Plan update and will support regional committee/plan coordination work of the Koochiching County SWCD through to June 30, 2024.

The Phase I and 2 project budgets identified here will reimburse Koochiching County SWCD on an approved cost basis. This budget includes reimbursement of SWCD staff hourly rate charges, travel reimbursement for SWCD and other planning committee members, meeting costs (i.e., facility fees, food/beverage services, etc.), technical services contracted by the SWCD, and incidental costs pre-approved by MFRC.

Koochiching County SWCD will provide MFRC with monthly reports on the Phase I and 2 planning and coordination process, and a full quarterly report with an itemized invoice and Northern Regional Landscape Plan Phase I and 2 work products.

## Phase 1 Tasks and Cost Estimates

Phase 1 SWCD Coordination and Project Management		
<i>Task or Expense</i>	<i>Hours @SWCD Avg. Billing Rate</i>	<i>Total Estimated Cost</i>
Coordination and Prep for 3 Stakeholder Meetings and 1 Public Open house	48 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,556
Stakeholder Engagement and Committee Revitalization	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Tribal Engagement and Coordination	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Update Document Development, Project Reporting, and Grant Admin.	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Contractor Coordination and Planning Review	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Total Costs		\$11,076

Phase I Plan Scoping, Contracting Services, and Meeting Expenses		
<i>Task or Expense</i>	<i>Rate or Item</i>	<i>Total Estimated Cost</i>
Mileage reimbursement for SWCD and other committee members	.655/Mile (current Federal mileage rate)	\$2000
Meeting Room Expenses	4 Meetings/\$250	\$1,000
Meal Costs	4 Meetings/\$500	\$2,000
Miscellaneous Expenses		\$1,000
Data Gathering and Analysis Subcontracting Services	40 Hours@\$100.00	\$4,000
GIS Mapping Subcontracting Services	25 Hours@\$100.00	\$2,500
Total Costs		\$12,500
Total Phase 1 Budget Cost		\$23,576

## Phase I Deliverables

- March Monthly Report
- April Monthly Report
- May Monthly Report
- June Monthly Report
- Phase I Scoping Report
- Updated Committee Roster
- 1 Public Open House for Update Community Review



## Phase 2 Tasks and Cost Estimates

Phase 2 SWCD Coordination and Project Management		
<i>Task or Expense</i>	<i>Hours @SWCD Avg. Billing Rate</i>	<i>Total Estimated Cost</i>
Coordination and Prep for 5 Planning Meetings and 1 Public Open house	96 Hours/\$53.25	\$5,112
Stakeholder Engagement and Planning Coordination	80 Hours/\$53.25	\$4,260
Tribal Engagement and Coordination	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Update Document Development and Project Reporting	40 Hours/\$53.25	\$2,130
Work with Plan Writer	120 Hours/\$53.25	\$6,390
MFRC Plan Presentation for Approval	24 Hours/\$53.25	\$1,278
Total Costs		\$21,300

Phase 2 Plan Development, Contracting Services, and Meeting Expenses		
<i>Task or Expense</i>	<i>Rate or Item</i>	<i>Total Estimated Cost</i>
Mileage reimbursement for SWCD and other committee members	.655/Mile (current Federal milage rate)	\$3000
Meeting Room Expenses	6 Meetings/\$250	\$1,500
Meal Costs	6 Meetings/\$500	\$3,000
Miscellaneous Expenses		\$2,000
Plan Writing Subcontracting Services		\$10,000
GIS Mapping Subcontracting Services	25 Hours@\$100.00	\$2,500
Total Costs		\$22,000
Total Phase 2 Budget Cost		\$43,300

### Deliverables

- Monthly Reports
- Draft Regional Landscape Plan
- Presentation to MFRC or LAC
- Updated Committee Roster
- 1 Public Open House for Update Community Review