

# Family Forest Landowner Committee

Time: June 28, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

## Attendance

Members present: Janet Erdman (chair), Kathleen Preece, Mike Kilgore, Pete Aube  
Members absent: Rick Horton  
Alternates present: Gary Michael (for Patty Thielen)  
Staff present: Jaime Thibodeaux, Eric Schenck  
Guests: John Bathke, Brian Huberty, Anna Stockstad, Jennifer Corcoran, Sawyer Scherer, Linda Kingery, James Aasen

## Membership

We welcomed new members:

- Gary Michael, MN DNR, alternate appointed by Patty Thielen
- Pete Aube, chair MFRC
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## Date Change

The December 27, 2023, 8:30 a.m., Family Forest Landowners meeting is changed to December 14, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

## Information regarding private forest certification

*Sawyer Scherer, Forest Ecologist, UPM Blandin Paper*

UPM Blandin is experiencing pressures to increase the percentage of certified forests within their supply chain. One example of this is that UPM has set a goal to achieve 100% sourcing from certified forests by 2030. The gap is in private lands. While other companies may not have 100% goals, Sawyer suspects that other companies may have interest in this. It is his hope that MFRC will consider this a topic for discussion.

There are several reasons family forest landowners are not interested in certifying their forests, but a big reason is there is not a conspicuous benefit to the landowner. There was considerable discussion on possibilities to increase the amount of certified family forest land.

- Right now, certification options include FSC, SFI, and American Tree Farm. In Minnesota, American Tree Farm is an option to becoming certified for family forest landowners, though there is a low level of participation.
- Here are some examples where an entity has recruited landowners and managed forest certification on their behalf.
  - Aitkin County has a small group of landowners who maintain certification, but it is onerous.
  - Wisconsin DNR has a group certificate that certifies landowners.

- Germany and Austria have state-run SFC certificates, though in Europe, private landowners are part of a regional landownership group. They pay into this and get land management planning and timber harvesting benefits.

What's the incentive to landowners? It is a struggle to talk about incentives. Perhaps this may eventually become an issue with access to markets, however, right now this is about the mills needing to provide evidence of responsible forest management to their shareholders and consumers.

Can there be a chain of custody certification after-the-fact? Is this a viable option for UPM Blandin? SFI certification has a certificate called "fiber sourcing." It's between chain of custody and forest management and would require a procurement organization.

Other options were discussed, including if the Council's regional landscape program can allow blanket certification? It was decided this may be an option worth exploring.

This issue has been passed to Rick Horton, Policy Committee, and it will be reviewed to determine if further action is taken.

Sawyer concluded with the following:

1. FSC Community and Family Forest Workshop, July 18-20, 2023, Minneapolis
2. North Central Landscape Committee tour, including the seed orchard and DNR state nursery, July 31, 2023

## **Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Lidar Derived Forest Inventory for Private Lands**

*Jennifer Corcoran, Remote Sensing Scientist, MN DNR*

Jennifer gave an overview of this project that in the end will provide statewide stand level forest inventory on all lands. She shared that there's been outreach to private landowners in the Camp Ripley area on the lidar project and the need for field plots. Currently they have a map of proposed plots on private lands. Landowner outreach was very successful. Letters were sent and SWCD followed up with phone calls. Engagement with landowners was very valuable.

Next steps:

- Include continuing forest inventory engagement on other land ownerships:
  - Private lands, recruiting for a coordinator.
  - County and city/municipal forest lands, partnerships growing.
  - Tribal Nation, consultation ongoing and open.
- Collect PBI plots on private lands with a contract bid for CRSL plots to go out in July.
- Share and host data: platforms are needed, different tools for different business needs.
- Collaboration, programmatic design, planning, research, and recommendations for a long-term maintenance plan

Jennifer requested to be on the agenda at all regional landscape meetings.

## Pilot Project Update

**Coordinated Family Forest Landowner Education-Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Watershed--**  
*Jaime/Eric, MFRC*

There is a biweekly standing meeting for the steering committee of the MFRC-funded landowner outreach and engagement project in the Upper Mississippi Headwaters Watershed. The first round of meetings will get us roughly through the summer; we can assess meeting frequency needed thereafter.

Focus group members:

- Eli Sagor – organizer
- Jaime Thibodeaux
- Eric Schenck
- Gary Michael
- Arnit Pradhananga
- Keith Karnes
- Callie Bertsch
- David Roerick

## Next meeting

Date and Time: August 23, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

Zoom meeting

ATTACHMENTS None