

MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

Landscape Advisory Committee

10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Tuesday, November 9, 2021

<https://umn.zoom.us/j/93224647223> | (651) 372-8299 | Meeting ID: 932 2464 7223

Members present: James Manolis, Craig Engwall, Rick Horton, Connie Cummins, Janet Erdman, Deb Theisen, Kim Berns-Melhus

Absent: Keith Karnes, Forrest Boe,

Staff present: Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

Guests: John Bathke, Rich Courtemanche, Bob Tomlinson

MFRC Update (Eric Schenck)

Eric welcomed Regional Committee Chairs and brought attention to the need to reconnect the Landscape Advisory Committee with our regional landscape committees. Staffing vacancies have made this challenging but we are taking steps towards filling those positions.

Status of IIC Landscape Metrics Project (Eric Schenck)

(e.g. [Northeast Landscape / Minnesota Forest Resources Council \(mn.gov\)](#))

Other Priority Metrics (Land Ownership, Forest Cover Types, Carbon, etc.)

Eric provided a brief overview of the Forest Metrics Project and shared the dashboard interface via the MFRC website. He stated that feedback from the regional committees is needed to ensure that these dashboards contain useful information.

Discussion yielded the following:

- Request for “accomplishment reporting” such as reporting of strategies, practices on the land, how much, and where.
- Data on how is the forest changing, such as age class and species composition changes and how these affect other species.
- This should be kept simple and should avoid duplicating what other agencies are doing.
- This should be presented to the committees and let them determine how they want to use it.
- Request to see ownership and cover types.
- Be careful of parsing it out too much. What data is needed will be dependent upon different agencies and how they want to use it. More is better.
- Integration of Lidar and agency inventory integration to get stand-level data. Priority areas that need some treatment of some kind.
- To maintain this data/dashboard, we would need a contract with the IIC to keep up with new annual information. Also, the dashboards themselves are housed on UMN server and we will need to find a place to house them in the future.

Tree Planting Report, Nursery Tour, Draft Nursery Report (Eric Schenck)

To determine a tree planting baseline, Ashlee Lehner obtained tree planting information from institutions and compiled it for this report.

Discussion yielded the following:

- Should MFRC be engaging in this work, or make recommendations around who should be doing this and how (regional, county, etc.).
- Report should be presented to full Council for feedback.
- Agencies are going to use their plans and do what they do. The way that this group could move the needle is on private land.
- Could we as a community of forestry managers put together an annual report that shows comprehensively across ownerships, how many trees are planted/how many acres are planted up, and what are they being planted with. This used to be done on a regular basis. There are ways to gather this information on private lands through the SWCD and tree sales information, etc. Someone should be able to answer the question of how many trees are being planted annually in the state of Minnesota should a legislator ask.
- There should be a conversation with the SWCDs about how they are gathering the information and how we can incorporate that with information from the DNR or other entities.
- Counties track tree planting. Other information such as age class distribution is way more important than tree planting data. Natural generation with harvest, etc. Good silviculture brings up free trees. Natural and artificial regeneration. There are a lot of reforestation efforts that are not planting.
- Clarification that this metric is associated with the climate effort. The question is what are we monitoring for?
- There is a need for species info.

November 18, 1:00–3:00 pm Regional Landscape Forum w/ NE, NC & EC Chairs

Possible Topics:

Regional Committee Chair Insights & Comments for Council

Regional Landscape Program Vision

Turning MFRC Strategic Plan LAC Goals, Objectives & Strategies into Actions

Clear role for MFRC “Director of Forest Planning & Coordination”

Eric presented the upcoming Council meeting agenda item which presents an opportunity for the full Council to engage in conversation about the regional landscape program. Committee chairs from the regions around Cloquet have been invited to participate. There is a need to get on the same page before new Landscape Program staff is hired. He asked for input on how to structure this for the most effective outcome.

Discussion yielded the following:

- Request to invite all of the regional committee chairs. Eric will reach out to other regional chairs.
- Desire for the LAC to bring some leadership from the Council to the regions. There was talk of the regions have representation on the LAC. This was something that was passed in a motion on the committee when Darla was chair.

- What should the committees be doing? There has been planning and information, but there hasn't been work on the ground. Investigate whether there is work on the ground that the committees could be doing.
- Regional committee planning brings together people from the different entities. Through this collaboration, there is discovery that the other entities are already doing some of the work. If the program isn't revived, there is danger of losing the cross-boundary coordination.
- If there is effort into planning, having the collaborative implementation strategy is essential.
- Important to figure out how to bring people together to implement a plan.
- If there isn't implementation of the regional plan other than haphazard, there isn't a point.
- Is there an opportunity to set time and effort priorities within each region and across the program as a whole?
- Could there be identification of flagship projects within the regions that get more emphasis and funding?
- There is a need for a person to lead the effort or the programs die on the vine. The overarching need is to get a staff person.
- Reemphasis on maintaining a network of people, trust-based relationships.
- Eric circled back to the agenda item of how to structure the two-hour session of the upcoming Council meeting devoted to regional landscape program.
- This should not be a free-for-all open discussion.
- Avoid focus on the history or past. Look forward and maybe do things that are not being done now.
- Need to open the lines of communication between regional committees and the Council.
- Landscape committees need to look at the existing plans on public land, integrate them, and figure out how private lands play different roles within that landscape. The new staffer could get engaged in the public land management efforts and make sure that the local landscape plan is considered during the planning process.
- There was a suggestion that the Landscape Program Manager be involved in the planning processes of public entities to make sure the voice of the regional committees are included. The planning processes are so different between entities. It makes sense for the larger entities to start the process and then bring others in along the way.
- There was a question if it is the regional landscape committees' role to help engage with private lands in the planning process. Different regions have different compositions (of private ownership) which changes the goals.
- It is critically important to have private landowners in the loop.
- There was a brief discussion about tribal engagement. There hasn't been much engagement and there is uncertainty whether the tribes are interested.

Eric and Jim agreed to work together to use the input gathered to come up with structure for the discussion at the November Council meeting.

EC Regional Landscape Committee Communication Request (Eric Schenck)

The East Central committee asked for assistance with a communications project. With no in-house capacity this could be accomplished via a state contract. It would make sense to reach out to the regional committees to see if they have any communication needs that could be included under the

contract. It would be best to gather this information before searching for a contractor and creating the scope of work for the contract.

It is very likely that each committee has needs albeit unique to each committee.

The committee expressed concern over the coordination of this idea and perhaps it should wait until the program has staff.

Eric will make some calls to the committee chairs to see if there is interest. Since there is a request from one committee, he wants to broaden the potential and not leave other regions out. This is an opportunity to integrate the regions with the website and produce a useful product.

Meeting adjourned.