

MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

Landscape Advisory Committee

1:00 – 3:00 pm, Wednesday, April 13, 2022

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://umn.zoom.us/j/91099586795>

Present: Jim Manolis – *Chair*, Forrest Boe, Janet Erdman, Keith Karnes, Craig Engwall, Deb Theisen, Rick Horton, Kim Berns-Melhus, Kathleen Preece

Absent: Connie Cummins,

Staff present: Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

Guests present: Susan Maki - Office of School Trust

The meeting started with introductions as Susan Maki was new to the group.

Jim began with an overview of the agenda. His regular schedule has changed and now conflicts with this set meeting time. He is hoping to move the meeting to the morning. Sadie will reach out to the group to coordinate this. Jim also expressed a desire to get agendas for these meetings out early and to improve the quality of the meetings. He asked for feedback from the group. Hearing none, he shared a list of priority meeting objectives that he produced utilizing the committee charter and the strategic plan (see agenda). He invited the committee to provide input on this topic.

Eric brought attention to the committee page on the MFRC website and pointed out the information that can be easily accessed there.

Jim then moved to a list of priorities he has selected for the Landscape Coordinator soon to be hired (see agenda).

Eric shared that he is looking at a new grant agreement with the UMN that could include work on some of the priorities for the Landscape Coordinator, especially expansion of the dashboard metrics.

Jim asked if anything was missing from the list. One member suggested that a priority for the Coordinator would be to gain an understanding of Tribal Treaty Rights where applicable.

Eric made the point that in the past, a large amount of time was spent by the Coordinator on planning and logistics around meetings as well as traveling to those meetings. He suggested that post-pandemic, much of this work can be done virtually, for efficiency's sake. Forrest added that this is a high-level position and the new coordinator should not fall back into the role of meeting planner. The committees should be able to handle that work. Sadie has been tasked to reach out to the committee for more input on this topic.

Jim brought forward the proposed action plans for the recently passed biomass resolution. More discussion is needed around the Tribal Treaty Rights as they apply to the biomass resolution.

Keith spoke to the group about his concerns with the biomass resolution and the associated action and communication plan Objective C which speaks to the acknowledgement of Tribal Treaty Rights. Keith stressed the point that the Treaty Rights are second only to the US Constitution, and the Tribes are sovereign nations. Keith hopes that this objective can be rewritten in a way that ensures the Tribal Treaty Rights will be honored in a meaningful way. The Tribes have their own perspective of forest management and need to be consulted by the Council for all forest management topics that affect tribal lands.

Jim followed up with an expression of a desire to have more ecological and cultural discussion of topics within the Council. There was a suggestion for a Tribal Treaty refresher presentation to the Council.

Eric added that if there are tribal needs in regard to biomass and residuals, they should be brought forward as sideboards to accommodate tribal rights and cultural interests.

A point was made that if the guidelines do not include the Tribal Treaty Rights, this should be looked at. This is where the Council, working with Keith, could have impact with the Tribes.

Keith shared in the chat, "Gold Standard FMG book, "Rationale for Guidelines", the first chapter in this is Cultural Resources....25 good pages to start the conversation."

Eric drew attention to the portion of the resolution action plan that calls for evaluation of sources of sustainable biomass. As an example, Eric ran through a rough calculation of how much biomass is out there, created by consultant Kent Jacobson. He then talked about statewide growth and mortality trends demonstrated by FIA data and suggested that it might make sense to evaluate these trends on a regional scale.

There was a suggestion to evaluate statewide first, then break it down to regional, and to bring in an unbiased expert to avoid an appearance of steering the process.

Janet presented the ideas she and Kathleen have for drawing attention to the private forest landowner group. They hope to engage this group and promote discussion around solutions to the problems this group faces. They are looking for a renewed commitment by agencies and organizations to provide assistance and funds. Eric has outlined three visions: outreach in the form of a statewide communication plan, support landscape scale management programs by building well integrated tools, and build a well-integrated and coordinated financial assistance delivery system. Janet and Kathleen are asking the LAC to help them develop a succinct ask of the Council to assist with the implementation of some of the ideas and suggestions that have come out of studies of private forest landowner groups.

Rick drew attention to the private landowner manual offered by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee.

Forrest confirmed the need for more state private forest management assistance. Forrest described "[A System Framework for Minnesota's Family-owned Forests: Report and Recommendations by the PFM System Planning Team, a project subcommittee of the Minnesota Forest Stewardship Committee](#)", created to tackle PFM work in the state. The report was created in 2015 by a large group of stakeholders. He suggested the group that created the report present to the Council and inform them what work has already been done.

Eric suggested another strategy to speak to the Wisconsin "My Wisconsin Woods" creators. Rick drew attention to the important strategy utilized by Wisconsin in which engaged landowners and those who are not were parsed out.

Kim presented on the BWCA/State of MN/Office of the School Trust/ US Forest Service Land Exchange and Heritage Forest Projects. She explained that when the BWCA was established, 83,000 acres of School Trust lands were locked within the BWCA making it impossible for the OSTL and DNR to manage the lands. The DNR and OSTL are chartered with managing the lands for the benefit of schools. Kim explained how The Conservation Fund will purchase 53,000 acres of Potlach lands and then exchange with the State for equal acres within the BWCA. Next, with federal funding, the Forest Service will purchase those parcels from the Conservation Fund. The remaining 30,000 acres locked within the BWCA will be exchanged through an agreement with the USFS and the State of Minnesota with which the Conservation Fund is not involved.

Eric shared that Matt Russell will be presenting the draft of the Forest Carbon Strategic Plan scoping document at the RAC meeting next week. Council members are welcome; however Matt will also be presenting to the Council at the May meeting.

Eric suggested that the Carbon Strategic Plan presents important implications for the landscape program such as communication of the carbon topics to the landscape committees and how do they fit into the scope of the existing management plans.

Forrest urged the committee to give thought to topics for discussion and consider reducing the number of topics so to provide sufficient time for thorough discussions of important topics.

Meeting adjourned.