

MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL
Personnel & Finance Committee
1:00 – 3:00 pm, Tuesday, February 1, 2022 - Zoom
NOTES

Members present: Pete Aube- Chair, Forrest Boe, Rick Horton, Mike Kilgore

Members absent: Jim Manolis, Kim Berns-Melhus

Staff present: Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

Guests: None

Introductory Remarks and Roll Call – Pete Aube

Pete opened the meeting by mentioning his appreciation that two resolutions were passed at the recent Council meeting and that he sent those resolutions to the Governor and the Legislature. He plans to either testify or add the resolutions to the appropriate legislative committee agendas.

FY22 Budget Status

Eric reported that the budget has not changed much since the last report. The Council will have \$200-250k in salary savings to spend on productive projects. These funds will carry over to FY23.

Status of FY22 P&F Approved Contracts and Agreements

Eric thanked Mike for coordinating the RAC to meet with DNR staff on the topic of the Climate Action Framework and the 2023 carbon report that the Legislature has asked the DNR to develop.

He then announced that the Governor's Climate Change Action Framework was released today and there will be invite-only stakeholder group input opportunities as well as a comment period. There was discussion of who has been invited to the stakeholder input sessions and coordination of those on the Council that have been invited.

Eric reported on the status of the contract with MAD for updating PDs for vacant positions and posting of those positions. He shared the requirements listed in the draft PD for the Director of Forest Planning and Coordination position. There was discussion around the requirements for the position and timeline for posting. Filling the vacant position could take another 3 – 4 months.

Eric then provided an update on the Communications Specialist position, formerly held by Clare Boerigter, under the UMN Joint Powers agreement. There are no current candidates for this role. Ultimately the U

makes the choice, but the group discussed the needs that might inform the U in finding someone to fill the role.

Considering the amount of time it will take to hire and onboard, the group discussed a possible need for other options in the interim such as Work Out of Class Assignments or grad students looking for gap funding.

For the next agenda item regarding possible new forest carbon projects, Eric stated that he continues to look for ways to track and assess forest carbon at statewide or stand-level. In addition to looking at some of the Forest Service assessments, he has reached out to DNR staffers for suggestions as to how to create a universal way to monitor and track forest carbon.

There was a discussion of the need to dive deeper into long-lived forest products and to gather facts and data.

Eric asked if there should be an assessment of the demand for an all-lands, stand-level, enhanced forest inventory, and what are the needs and aspects desired for this type of inventory which includes private ownership? The committee spent a fair amount of time on this topic and deeming it important, decided to add it to the next Landscape Advisory Committee agenda and then the next Council meeting to see what the members think about an all-lands approach to inventory information.

Status of Interagency Information Cooperative (IIC)

Eric asked if the IIC is still available as a vehicle to get money into a project. There is a “vehicle” in place, but it would depend on the project, if it is an IIC project, and if it makes sense to bring the group back to play a useful role. Pete pointed out that according to the Statute, all of the charges of the IIC apply to the previous discussion around gathering all-lands inventory and information in a way that is non-DNR-controlled. Mike stated that in the beginning of the MFRC, he hired a full-time staffer to manage this work which included a “wall-to-wall” inventory. There was discussion of the potential need for a similar staff person to oversee this type of work and to revitalize the work of the IIC.

Proposed Action on Resolutions

These resolutions have been sent to the Governor and appropriate commissioners, as well as to members of the Council. Pete stated that these resolutions will be on the record at appropriate legislative committee meetings and hearings. Eric stated that we do have L'Etoile du Nord Vault Room at the Capitol reserved for 2 hours after the March 15 Council meeting. He hopes to use this time to draw attention to the resolutions.

There was further discussion around which key people should receive copies of the resolutions, and which legislators would make good champions for the resolutions and related policy decisions.

Meeting adjourned.