

Policy Information Committee Goal, Strategies, and Action Items for MFRC Strategic Plan

Updated at the 10/22/2020 PIC Meeting

Goal:

Reauthorize, amend as needed, and fully fund the Sustainable Forest Resources Act. Establish strategic relationships with the Governor and Legislature. Effectively advance MFRC policy analysis, recommendations, and strategies consistent with MFRC's policy priorities (2017-2020 Strategic Plan) and linked to MFRC's Climate Change Report.

Strategy #1:

Seek support from the full Council to take positions on policy issues which meet a set criteria— affecting sustainable forestry statewide, of current salience, and with the potential for political traction.

Strategy #2:

Establish MFRC policy priorities on contemporary sustainable forestry issues, consistent with the SFRA purpose and the MFRC strategic plan.

Action 2A: Search for a model decision-tree (or develop one if none exist) to assist the PIC with identification and prioritization of policy issues; if possible, the decision-tree will also clarify what work products are undertaken.

Action 2B: Bring forward a list of Council-identified issues each October for the Committee to consider and prioritize (Proactive)

Action 2C: Have a process to proactively identify and refer to the Committee pertinent policies slated for introduction into the legislative session; engage early in order to impact on select policy issues during the session

Action 2D: Using SFIA as an example, engage in coalition building by bringing key stakeholders and program administrators together to identify program policy and/or funding issues.

Action 2E: Using the Wisconsin letter as an example of high-level policy agenda, consider similar approach for Minnesota Climate Change agenda.

Action 2F: Strike a balance between staff initiative and Council-directive; use transparency, communication, and accountability to allow for a degree of leadership on certain issues by qualified staff persons

Strategy #3:

Fill the policy analyst position in support of the MFRC's mission.

Action 3A: Provide Personnel and Finance Committee with input on position duties, position description (or work plan) and assist in the recruitment of applicants.

Action 3B: Be ready to hire, consider temporary/work out of class position, perhaps combined responsibilities with landscape coordinator position (focus on skill set).

Strategy: #4

Update both PIC and MFRC meeting protocols and procedures via their respective charters to facilitate responsive and more impactful action.

Action 4A: Establish clear protocols/procedures regarding quorum and voting requirements for Policy and Information Committee to submit policy recommendations to Council, and for Council to pass policy recommendations via resolution.

Action 4B: Consider developing a process by which MFRC opinions could be documented and acted upon in a variety of formats; e.g. majority and minority, or similar pro/con positions, as well as consensus positions that establish common ground.

Action 4C: Consider “informative” position or higher-level consensus position.

Strategy #5:

Empower and equip Council members with tools to actively promote MFRC's work at legislative sessions and within other policy settings.

Action 5A: Conditional upon receiving the full support and assistance of individual Council members, build “face-to-face” relationships with the Governor, Members of the MN Legislature, the MN Congressional delegation, and their staff using the MFRC Biennial Report, RAC Climate Report, and SFRA’s “Sunset Clause” as talking points.

Action 5B: In coordination with the Landscape Advisory Committee, engage Regional Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs in establishing strategic relationships with Governor, Legislature, Congressional delegation and stakeholders at the local (district) level.

Action 5C: Work with the Communications Committee to develop a strategy to maintain “constant contact” with individuals and organizations that are key to policy-related portion of MFRC’s mission. The Communications Committee will lead this effort once established.

Action 5D: Work with Council representatives and stakeholder partners to explore the establishment of a bipartisan, bicameral Forest Legislative Caucus.

Action 5E: Schedule an annual “day-on-the-hill” for Council members, Regional Committee chairs, and their stakeholders to assist them in meeting with Legislators.

Strategy #6:

Soliciting policy concerns and recommendations from stakeholders to support the accomplishment of MFRC goal.

Action 6A: Conditional upon receiving the full support and assistance of individual Council members, build “face-to-face” relationships with key stakeholder group leaders

through regular Zoom meetings, internet forums, and attendance at stakeholder meetings. Consider annual “Zoom” forums with stakeholder leaders before legislative sessions to identify/vet policy concerns and recommendations, with care not to create unrealistic expectations.

Action 6C: Encourage input from Council members representing their stakeholder issues/interests, and encourage stakeholder participation in Council and Committee meetings.