

# MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

## Policy Committee

Thursday, February 24, 2022 - 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

### NOTES

**Members Present:** Craig Engwall, Bob Owens, Rick Horton, Jim Manolis, Katie Fernholz, Keith Karnes, Mike Kilgore, Kim Berns Melhus, Brendan Jordan

**Absent:** Pete Aube

**Staff present:** Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

**Guests present:** Molly Jansen, Aaron Vande Linde

#### **MFRC Update (Eric Schenck)**

Eric announced that the Forest Planning and Coordination Administrator position has been posted.

#### **Res 2022-1 Action & Communications Strategy**

Eric presented the draft Action & Communications Strategy that he and Brandon developed. The document takes Objectives from the resolution itself and then presents potential Actions & Communications for each Objective.

There was a discussion of the science-based component and how to bring that in. Ideas include an expert committee, expert panel, or an expert facilitator/liaison. It was noted that NIACS is the local expertise for forest carbon science. There was an expressed need for the carbon accounting, scale, and different scenarios.

The committee discussed concerns around lack of information and lack of consensus around the science which obscures the path forward. Suggested strategies included the establishment of better/worse agreements, development of an action based on identification of the areas that need work (disagreements and uncertainties), recommendations to go bold and change the system rather than make small changes that could be harmful, and *'Identify "no regrets" strategies where the Council is reasonably sure that markets for wood align with carbon and sustainability objectives. Identify areas where there is uncertainty and disagreement, and recommend steps to conduct additional research to resolve uncertainty.'*

## **March 15 State Capitol Event-Strategy & Communications**

Regarding the March 15 State Capitol Event, Eric asked what messaging the Council should present to the Governor. The goal of this event to take the opportunity to bring forward solid recommendations regarding the Governor's climate action framework.

There was concern expressed about taking the Governor's limited time without something big to present, and a caution against wearing out our welcome.

There was a suggestion to spend 20 minutes utilizing Council members to sell the services of the Council and use the other 10 asking for funding.

## **Gov Walz Climate Action Plan**

Craig asked for an update of who will be participating in any of the Climate Action workgroups. Craig Engwall, Rick Horton, Eric Schenck, and Pete Aube will participate, as well as representatives from TNC, and Dovetail Partners.

## **TCF & State Trust Land BWCA Swap**

Kim has agreed to present on the TCF & State Trust Land BWCA Swap topic at future meetings; both this committee as well as to the full Council. She shared that this is likely the biggest and most significant land exchange in the history of the state. There are about 80,000 acres of Office of School Trust, State of Minnesota land, trapped within the Boundary Waters and The Conservation Fund is leading an exchange that will help solve this 60+ year-old problem.

## **TNC 1 Million Acre Proposal**

Jim stated that he hopes to bring a presentation of the TNC 1 Million Acre Proposal to the full council at the May meeting. He could present a brief version at the next Policy Committee meeting.

## **Res 2022-2 Action & Communications Strategy**

Eric presented a draft Actions and Communications Strategy for Resolution 2022-2, and opened the discussion by asking if this is the approach the group would like to take to bring this resolution to actual implementation. Perhaps a group of Council members could lead the development of an action and communication strategy.

The idea of a fact sheet was revisited and there was a suggestion that someone from the DNR/state nursery and private nurseries should be engaged because although this is important, there is an issue of the balance between private nurseries and state nurseries. Another point was that assisted migration should play a bigger role in the Recommendations.

Eric clarified that the bigger question is whether the Council should pass resolutions then move on, or should the Council follow through with additional work to help see the resolutions become realized? He stated that this document could be seen as a strategy to identify if there is still work to be done related to this resolution, and if there is, a small group could brainstorm to come up with a communication strategy. Jim agreed to take a lead role and Craig, Keith, and Bob offered support.

A suggestion was made that the person in the Landscape program role could work on a grassroots level identifying where seedlings would be warranted.

Eric announced that Ed Potter has returned to work via a post-retirement option. He is the point person for the nursery upgrade, etc. and he contributes to the annual nursery report to the legislature. This report, which includes current information about the nursery, might be useful to build arguments and strengthen recommendations. He also shared that he has made some contacts regarding the nursery issue and offered his assistance to Jim and the team. He then asked for general direction for the most important things that could be brought to this effort.

One committee member noted that someone in the Policy Analyst position would be helpful on this project. Eric shared that the next position to be filled will be the Forest Scientist position, followed by the Policy Analyst, which will take longer because it needs a review for a pay-grade increase.

Meeting adjourned.