

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
Forest Products Lab – Madison, WI
October 14, 2010

Members Present:

Bill Horvath, Ken Ottman, Paul DeLong, Jim Hoppe, Bob Rogers, Jane Severt, Casey Eggleston representing Matt Dallman, Paul Strong, Troy Brown, Fred Souba, Jim Carlson representing Kimberly Quast, Rep. Fred Clark, Rep. Donald Friske

Members Absent:

Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, Dennis Brown, Matt Dallman, Michael Bolton, Sen. Bob Jauch, Kimberly Quast, Leon Church

Guests Present:

Bob Mather, Mary Brown, Rebecca Gass, Gunnar Bergersen, Sara Bredesen, Al Shea, Bob Manwell, Jane Cummings Carlson, Connie Chaney, Henry Schienebeck, Carol Nielsen, Earl Gustafson

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Fred Souba called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He welcomed DNR Deputy Secretary Al Shea to the meeting. He announced that Paul Strong had been appointed to the Council representing the Forest Service, and that Kimberly Quast had been appointed to represent consulting foresters. He welcomed Jim Carlson to the meeting, explaining that Jim would be filling in for Kimberly today in her absence. The members and other guests introduced themselves.

Legislative Issues – Rep. Fred Clark and Rep. Donald Friske

Rep. Clark reported that the MFL Legislative Study Committee is the main focus of the Legislature now. Rep. Friske announced that with his approaching retirement from the Legislature, this would be the last Council meeting he would attend as a member. Chair Souba was joined by other members of the Council in thanking Rep. Friske for the proactive approach he used in his work at the Legislature and on the Council, and for all the work he has done to promote sustainable forestry in the state of Wisconsin.

MFL Legislative Council Study Update

The MFL Legislative Council Study Committee is made up of 16 members representing a variety of interests. They include Fred Souba of NewPage Corporation, Bill Horvath representing family forest owners, Mark Rickenbach from the University of Wisconsin, and Rick Stadelman of the Wisconsin Towns Association. Members hope for at least two more appointments. The Committee has met three times, and is beginning work on some of the tough issues.

At the last meeting, growth of the MFL Program to accommodate the sale of carbon credits for ecosystem services was discussed. Nothing currently stops an enrollee from selling carbon credits to a third party, but the Program doesn't accommodate it in any way, although it does have a very good structure in place to account for carbon-based growth and yield, and carbon renewables. The Committee feels MFL should facilitate the new revenue stream as long as the primary objective of the Program, to support the forest economy, is still being met. Specific language will be considered at the next Committee meeting, scheduled to take place on December 1st.

The Committee has appointed a subcommittee to work on issues relating to public access. It will be looking at the current distribution of closed acreage fees at its December meeting, and is optimistic that it will come to a consensus on a package of reforms. Right now, all of the fees, which are intended to be used for public access, go into the Forestry Account, where they wind up being used by the Legislature for other purposes. From discussions so far, Rep. Clark has gotten the sense that the Committee feels leaving some or all of the fees collected with local units of government should be considered, with the understanding that some of the money is to be used to purchase access at the local level. It will also be looking at where rates for closed fees should be set. It will consider a bill that attempts to reduce the size and number of large blocks of land that are closed, and may consider whether it makes sense to eliminate the prohibition on leasing. The Committee may be looking at

enhanced conflict resolution between enrollees and the DNR, but will first need to discuss whether this should be a peer review process, or is one that has legal standing. Testimony is being taken on the tax structure of the program and implications for local units of government. Counties and towns have seen a continually shrinking land base on which to levy their taxes. A second subcommittee will begin work on revenue and local zoning issues in the next couple of weeks.

Both subcommittees will come back to the Committee in December with some solid proposals. Under the most optimistic scenario, a Legislative Council bill based on the work of the Committee would be introduced into the next legislature and signed into law in 2011 or early 2012 and effect largely new entries into the MFL Program.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Bob Rogers (seconded by Rep. Fred Clark) that the Council enter into its minutes the appreciation of its members as a Council for the work that Rep. Donald Friske has done on the Council and the positive contribution he has made passed unanimously.

Statewide Forest Strategy Implementation – Rebecca Gass, Fred Souba, Paul DeLong

Paul introduced Division of Forestry Planner, Rebecca Gass, and expressed thanks to all those who took the time as individuals to provide feedback on the first draft of the Division of Forestry Strategic Direction, which was distributed for comment after the June Council meeting. At its last meeting in June, the Council began the effort of identifying aspects of the Statewide Forest Strategy that it considers priority items to be addressed in the next few years. It agreed to discuss specific actions related to those priority strategies at today's meeting.

Provide DNR Feedback on their Draft Strategic Direction

Rebecca outlined the process used in developing the Strategic Direction and gave an overview of the comments received on the first draft. The Division began by going through the Statewide Forest Strategy item by item, asking if it had a role in each, and if so, what that role was. It felt that it did indeed have a role in all of the strategies. Next, it looked at possible actions that the Division could play a role in and whether it should play a role or not. This resulted in the first draft of the Strategic Direction, which is very similar to the Statewide Forest Strategy, except that there are possible actions listed that are specific to the Division. For the next month, the Division is considering comments it received and defining its own role. It will then produce a full draft of the Strategic Direction by mid-December. That draft will outline the difficult choices the Division faces in allocating limited resources to fulfill various roles. Council input will be solicited again at that time. The final Division Strategic Direction is expected to be ready this winter.

Comments on the Strategic Direction were received from 35 distinct partner groups. Some were in the format of replies to a questionnaire that the Division developed to allow for quick, easy responses. It asked whether or not the Division had a role in specific strategies and actions, and whether each was high or low priority. There were also some written responses, and a full-day discussion with the Forest Stewardship Committee, similar to the one with the Council on Forestry during its June meeting. There were only one or two responses to the question, "Should the action be implemented intensively or be limited in some way?", which is difficult to answer. Good, specific responses were received to the question, "Which actions will you or your organization work on over the next five years?". The overall context of the comments received was that DNR has a lot to accomplish with limited resources, so we need to look at new ways of getting things done. Rebecca quoted one comment which summed it up eloquently, saying that "sticking with core mission activities is important at a time of reduced budget and staff; it may be that some of what the DNR Division of Forestry now considers its core missions and activities are not the same as what these were 20 to 40 years ago, given the redefinition of sustainable forestry" and that "to undertake new initiatives, it may be necessary to utilize existing infrastructure and expertise in new and creative ways – greater social capacity and understanding, bridge interest groups, and work with local and regional partnerships." Public comments on the Division Strategic Direction may be submitted at any time.

Refine Role(s) for Council in Strategy Implementation

Paul led a discussion among the Council members in an effort to clarify the Council's role or "niche" in implementing the strategies it identified at its June meeting as priority items to be address over the next few years. He began by asking members to think about areas of Council expertise, success stories, what it has done, what it is well-positioned to do, and what its strengths are. Rep. Friske recalled a wood basket survey undertaken and published by the Council years ago that resulted in Louisiana Pacific leaving Colorado and moving to Tomahawk.

He said that the Council has the ability to take on complex issues involving many stakeholders and spend time on them, unlike the Legislature, which is very compressed and has a limited time to look at things. He emphasized that the Council needs to have a more defined advisory role with the Division of Forestry and with the Legislature. Troy Brown agreed, and noted that the Council's recommendations tend to carry clout. Drawing from these and other observations and attributes that arose during the discussion, Paul articulated the following "criteria" to address the Council niche, and use in prioritizing actions:

The Council on Forestry –

- ⇒ Has the ability to take complex issues and spend the time to assess them.
- ⇒ Can advise the DNR and Legislature. It can actively influence and "advocate".
- ⇒ Can speak with a collective voice when necessary.
- ⇒ Serves as a forum for bringing concerns and issues to the table.
- ⇒ Is adept at leading balanced groups to evaluate/address issues and/or policies, as it did during the development of the Best Management Practices for Invasive Species.
- ⇒ Is a convener on forest issues and ideas. For example, the Governor's Conference on Forestry.
- ⇒ Deals with "major" current and future topics.
- ⇒ Has the ability to raise awareness outside of forestry about issues, and influence public opinion.
- ⇒ Can influence the priorities of the Governor and other agencies (beyond DNR).
- ⇒ Is a constant review body.
- ⇒ Has no specific, narrow agenda.
- ⇒ Can address accountability in the Administration and the Legislature.
- ⇒ Can anticipate, rather than just react, to issues, pressures, and the like, and get in front of issues.

Process for Council Decision-making Regarding New Initiatives

Paul distributed a list of the priority Strategies identified by Council members at the June meeting for members to refer to while working to identify specific actions to be taken by the Council on each of them. He said that it would be great to be able to finalize this process and the Council on Forestry Biennial Report at the December Council meeting so that the Council in the new administration can be given an agenda for consideration. Paul facilitated as the members discussed their role, and what actions should be taken in regards to each Strategy. Possible actions for the Council on Forestry that resulted are summarized briefly below by Strategy:

Collaboration and Partnerships – *Develop collaborations and partnerships to engage all forestry stakeholders.*

1. Discuss how to implement. Based on Council membership, this is how it operates.
2. Apply as Council looks at each issue (e.g. research - with educational community, local government).

Landowner Coordination – *Increase the functional size of forest blocks by encouraging coordination of management of clusters of forest ownerships.*

1. Discuss issues around coordination to advise the Governor and Legislature, and develop a strategy. Decide what size forest should be focused on.
2. Study activity in other areas of the country with cooperatives and other coordination methods.
3. Encourage coordination by sharing information on its benefits with the public.
4. Discuss further to gain a better understanding of the issue before deciding on specific Council actions.

Private Land Sustainability – *Increase acreage of privately owned forests managed based on generally accepted forest management practices and encourage a tax structure that favors well managed forests.*

1. Address how to share information that will gain support of local governments for private forestry.
2. Work to control misconceptions local governments have about the value of keeping forests in forests.
3. Assess results of Legislative Council Study and determine Council role in promoting issues or outcomes.
4. Host webinars to share results of Legislative Council Study on MFL and raise awareness of results.
5. Determine whether there is a next step in private land certification. Focus on non-MFL landowners to increase the amount of certified forests.

Parcelization – *Reduce the rate of ownership parcelization of small forest blocks (i.e. less than 500 acres).*

1. Advocate that available resources, such Stewardship funds, be put toward reducing parcelization.
2. Keep economic benefits of forests up front to raise awareness of benefits of keeping forests as forests.

3. Explore alternative incentives that could be used to favor large parcels. Then provide recommendations.

Planning – *Strengthen collaborative and large-scale planning at the town, county, state and federal levels.*

1. Focus on parcelization.
2. Focus on transportation issues that can be addressed with multiple levels of government.
3. Make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on providing incentives to reduce parcelization.
4. Encourage public land managers to plan at large scale by providing support.
5. Create a forum to promote understanding by the general public of the benefits of large blocks of forest.

Climate – *Ensure that climate policy reflects the potential contributions that forest conservation and sustainable management can make to achieving substantial net reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.*

1. Bring a range of climate change experts to the Council so it can be better informed on the issue. Also get information on mitigation and adaptation.
2. Form subcommittees on specific topic areas.
3. Use some venue, such as the Governor's Conference on Forestry, to convene a diversity of groups and individuals to converse about climate change issues and forests.
4. Develop an issue paper and other materials for the Legislature, which will be discussing mitigation.
5. Provide education and understanding to stakeholders, possibly through a conference format.
6. Play an informational role on adaptation and mitigation to help Wisconsin gain from those measures.

Energy – *Collect information and develop policy to ensure efficient and sustainable use of our forest resources in regards to energy production.*

1. Follow up on evaluating the Biomass Harvesting Guidelines (BHG).
2. Request research on the limited science identified with BHG and evaluate the results.
3. Promote the energy use avoidance benefit provided by urban forests.
4. Educate, through a public forum, on the benefits of burning wood.
5. Advocate for new markets, being careful how markets transpire. Protect existing markets.
6. Look at urban wood waste issues and ways to address better utilization of our wood resource.

Forest Value – *Invest in forest conservation to contribute to a strong economy and provide clean water and air, wildlife, and other ecosystem services.*

1. Raise awareness about why investing in forest conservation is important through an educational forum.
2. Make public investment in available data. Make sure it is up to date. Support prompt reporting of data.
3. Formulate questions to be further evaluated and share with institutions that collect and analyze data to guide their work. Help institutions know what data their stakeholders want or need.
4. Ask Urban Forestry Council to educate and inform the Council on Forestry on the benefits of urban forests. Possibly have a joint meeting and/or form a partnership with the Urban Forestry Council.
5. Make public announcements on important issues, possibly through press releases. Announce major accomplishments by different organizations at meeting metrics or other bench marks.

Deer – *Encourage the forestry community to be engaged in deer management issues with an understanding of the long-term significance of deer impacts on sustainable forestry. Increase scientific knowledge needed to understand the economic, ecological and social impacts of various deer populations (and associated herbivory) on forests.*

1. Raise awareness of private landowners, especially absentee ones, about what they can do.
2. Go hunting.
3. Address the issue specifically in regard to forestry. Inform debate. Be persistent. Share monetary value.
4. Be more aggressive if issue with regeneration and meeting certification standards arises.
5. Have Council present at the state level when there are debates or public forums on deer management.

The Council will continue and finalize the decision-making process at its December meeting.

ACTION ITEM:

- Chair Souba will rephrase the list of possible actions for the Council on Forestry above, and distribute the finalized list to Council members well in advance of the December meeting.

DECISION ITEM:

- The Council will finalize specific recommendations in regard to its priority strategies at the December Council meeting.

Forest Management Guidelines Revision Update – Carol Nielsen

Carol last gave an update to the Council at its December 2009 meeting, shortly after the revision process got underway. She said that between 70 and 80 people responded to the survey that was conducted between December and March. The Subject Matter Experts made revisions to the Guidelines based on those responses. Because twenty experts were involved, it took some time for them to come to agreement on the changes. Review documents were developed with a graphic designer between June and August. The 2011 Draft Forest Management Guidelines (FMG) is now out and is online for review. Carol said that the most significant change is that the BMPs for Water Quality and for Invasive Species are sprinkled throughout the draft wherever they apply. She distributed a summary of the major proposed updates, and pointed out the most significant ones, which follow in order of their occurrence:

Purpose

- Reference to BMPs for Invasive Species under requirements for Cooperating Foresters added.

Chapter 1 – Wisconsin’s Forests: A Quick Overview

- Information on carbon storage and certification added.

Chapter 2 – Generally Accepted Silvicultural Principles

- Table 2-1: Generally Accepted Regeneration Methods by Forest Cover Type added.

Chapter 5 – Riparian Areas and Wetlands

- Entire chapter updated, and includes new BMPs for Water Quality.

Chapter 8 – Invasive Plants, Insects, and Diseases

- This new chapter was added, and includes new BMPs for Invasive Species.

Chapter 12 – Forest Road Construction and Maintenance

- Entire chapter updated, and including new BMPs for Water Quality.

Chapter 13 – Timber Harvesting

- New information on understanding harvesting equipment and systems added.

Chapter 15 – Reforestations and Aforestation

- Original Chapter 13 – Mechanical Site Preparation and Chapter 15 – Reforestation combined.

Appendix A – Tree Marking and Retention Guidelines

- Tree marking guidelines updated and green tree retention guidelines added.

Appendix C – Forest Certification Systems

- New appendix added. (John DuPlissis worked on.)

Written feedback will be accepted via email, US mail, or preferably, through the online survey tool provided through October 21st. After the Guidance Team is done incorporating the feedback, the FMG will be presented to the Forestry Leadership Team. It will next be the topic at three or four public meetings. After any additional changes resulting from those meetings are made, the final draft will be presented to the Natural Resources Board for approval. Publishing is targeted for spring of 2011. PDF versions will be available online and on CD. A printed version will also be available, punched to fit into a three-ring binder. A grant from the US Forest Service State and Private Forestry will fund printing of between 2,500 and 3,000 copies.

Annosum Root Rot Update – Jane Cummings Carlson

Jane explained that Kyoko Scanlon, DNR State Forest Pathologist, was originally scheduled to deliver this presentation to the Council, but was unable to due to a conflict with the new meeting date. She has developed a plan to deal with Annosum Root Rot.

Annosum Root Rot is caused by a fungus, and is one of the most damaging diseases to intensely managed conifer plantations. It is found in many temperate parts of the world. In the United States, it is most common in the south. In Wisconsin, it was first found in 1993 in Adams County, and it is currently found in 21 central and southern counties. The disease most commonly infects Red pine plantations in Wisconsin, and is often mistaken for Red Pine Pocket Mortality because of the similar appearance of the infected stands. A group of infected trees

form an “infection pocket”, with a few dead trees at the center and dying ones around the perimeter. One hallmark of the disease is the presence of a fruit body resembling popcorn on stumps or on bases of adjacent trees.

At the beginning of the infection cycle, spores are produced, usually in the fall, infecting a freshly cut stump, or sometimes, a fresh wound. They travel through the root system to infect healthy trees, moving slowly through a stand, probably at about a meter a year. They are perennial and can reproduce in temperatures from 40 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Spores can stay in the soil for forty to sixty years. At this time, prevention is less costly and more effective than efforts to eradicate the disease.

There has been progress in the management of the disease in Wisconsin. After a red pine plantation in Sauk County was clear-cut after being found to be infected with Annosum Root Rot, Kyoko planted the site with various species of trees to test their susceptibility. She has also been doing regeneration studies and inoculating trees. Efforts have been put into statewide surveys and lab tests to detect the disease. Grant funds were received from the Forest Service to study spore dispersal and flow patterns. In 2007, the Annosum Root Rot Committee formed. This group of representatives from DNR, county forests, industry, GLTPA, WWOA, UW, and the Forest Service is trying to develop guidelines to determine when it is appropriate to apply a protective material to stands being thinned, based on factors that would influence the risk of infection.

Where the disease is not present, two tools are available to prevent the disease. Sporex is a granular material that will prevent germination of spores when applied to stumps within 24 hours of cutting. Cellu-Treat is a water-soluble fungicide, which is much easier to apply. It must also be used within 24 hours of cutting. Efforts are underway to get more people to equip their harvesters with application attachments, which can cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000. Kyoko organized a pesticide applicator training on the Menominee in April with a number of other agencies, including DATCP, UW, and FISTA consisting of a day-long classroom training and certificate test focused on loggers. A number of counties have taken a leadership role, some requiring treatment during thinning. The Annosum Root Rot Committee has developed a risk analysis, which will help focus where we should definitely be treating. The Division of Forestry will be discussing whether state-managed land should be required to treat conifer plantations and considering possible options at its next Forestry Operation Team meeting.

State Foresters Report – Paul DeLong

Update Regarding Division Alignment Processes

The Draft Strategic Direction will go out for comment in December. It is important to the alignment process because of what it suggests in terms of where the Division’s resources are allocated and what adjustments will be needed to fully implement the final strategic direction. When approved, the Division will have a better idea of what resource alignment will look like. It will also be better informed when it knows what the Department Budget looks like for FY ’11-13. Paul will know more by December, and will be able to discuss the alignment in more detail then.

FY ’11-13 State Budget Update

Paul passed around a summary of highlights from the DNR Biennial Budget that was approved by the NRB at its September meeting. The Department request was for roughly \$18 million, with a net increase of 1.75 FTE at the end of the biennium. All funds requested by the Division of Forestry, with the exception of those for Fire Department reimbursement, are for costs that must be met. If it doesn’t get the funding for an item, it will have to cut a program for the amount requested for that item. The Division is now engaged in budget reduction processes. It doesn’t yet know specific levels of reductions, but Paul will let the Council know when they are known. The Division currently has about 65 vacancies. Though some are now being filled, over 50 vacancies will remain at the end of the year.

Biennial Council Report – Identify Items and Possible Statutory Change:

Paul proposed preparing a draft *2009-2010 Biennial Report of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry*, sending it out to Council members for review well in advance of the December meeting, and hopefully having the Council take action on it at that meeting so that it could be finalized before December 31st. The members concurred. The items addressed by the Council during this biennium that will be detailed in the report include:

- Statewide Forest Assessment, Strategy, and Implementation
- Final Report and Recommendations of the Forestry Invasives Leadership Team

- MFL Legislative Council Study
- Woody Biomass in Wisconsin Update
- Forest Certification Implementation
- County Forest Certification
- Fire Program Assessment
- Forest Management Guidelines Revision
- Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Revision
- Technical Assistance
- Forest Health Issues

Paul said that he would like to request a statutory modification which would strike the ten required elements of the report and replace them with items that the Council actually worked on during the biennium. A discussion ensued. Chair Souba said that a report on the condition of the state's resources is necessary and that the Council is the appropriate body to produce it, however he agreed with Paul in that the report of Council activities should be a separate document, and suggested that it be distributed at the same time as a supplement. He added that the Council might want to examine the reporting requirements for the ten required elements to determine if any changes need to be made statutorily as far as reporting time frames to ensure the report conveys relevant information its users. Ken Ottman suggested the Council could involve a graphic artist in producing an eye-catching, easy to read, eight page supplement containing color graphics, describing Council accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities. Paul suggested surveying members on options of what should be included in the Biennial Report and with what frequency. All present were in agreement.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Paul DeLong will send a draft of the *2009-2010 Biennial Report of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry* to Council members well in advance of the December Council meeting.
- Council members will review the draft report and be prepared to take action on it at December meeting.
- Paul DeLong will send Council members a survey of options of what should be included in future Council reports and how often it should be included.

DECISION ITEM:

- The Council will take action on the *2009-2010 Biennial Report of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry* at its December meeting.

December Meeting Agenda

The Council will meet in Madison on December 14th. Agenda items will include:

- Council's role in implementing the Statewide Forest Strategy (decision item)
- Division Strategic Direction
- Wisconsin Council on Forestry Biennial Report (decision item)
- State Forester's Report
- Legislative Issues, with MFL Legislative Study Committee Update
- Biomass Harvest Guidelines Status Update
- Forest Exploration Center Update

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Submitted by:
Mary Brown, WDNR