

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
Forest Products Lab – Madison, WI
September 11, 2007

Members Present:

Bill Horvath, Ken Ottman, Leon Church, Jim Heerey, Paul DeLong, Fred Souba, Jeff Stier, Tim Gary representing Rep. Don Friske, Jim Hoppe, Bob Rogers, Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, Fred Clark

Members Absent:

Dennis Brown, Michael Bolton, Rep. Mary Hubler, Troy Brown, Rep. Don Friske, Mary Jean Huston, Rep. Bob Jauch

Guests Present:

Jeanne Higgins, Mary Brown, Bob Manwell, Tim Eisele, Gunnar Bergersen, Roger Nacker, Steve Schmieding, Terry Mace, Earl Gustafson, Sec. Matthew Frank, Kirsten Held, Tia Nelson, Ann Forest Burns, Allison Hellman, Rebecca Gass, Deb Kidd, Dave Ladd, Jane Severt, Sara Bredesen, Brett Hulsey, Gerry Mich, Joel Nilsestuen, Sue Paulson, Rebecca Wallace, Bill Johnson, Randy Romanski, Carmen Wagner, Gene Roark, Chris Risbrudt, Jim Rodd

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Fred Souba called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He welcomed new Council member Senator Kathleen Vinehout. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Milwaukee Forestry Center Planning – Kirsten Held

The DNR hopes to break ground on a Forestry Education Center in Milwaukee County in 2011. Through exhibits, programming and meeting space, it will tell the story of sustainable forestry in Wisconsin. It will emphasize the social, cultural, ecological, and economic importance of Wisconsin's forests, and try to help reconnect Wisconsin's largest urban population to the forest resource. The target audiences will be residents, visitors, and K through 12 students and school groups.

A focus group conducted by the DNR in 1992 showed that the urban population of Southeastern Wisconsin was disconnected from the forest resource. Dan Meyer, then Chair of the Governor's Council on Forestry, and Gene Francisco, former Chief State Forester, got the idea for a Forestry Education Center as a way to reach this population after visiting the Forestry Discovery Center in Indiana. They were impressed by how it reached out to the urban population of nearby Louisville to tell the story of forestry in their area. Not long after that, officials from Milwaukee County asked DNR to take over management of the Milwaukee County Grounds in Wauwatosa, a green space, and make it a forest. As a compromise, Gene proposed that the state buy a large section of it and turn it into an educational center. The proposal was accepted, but the purchase and the development of inter-governmental agreements took years. The DNR land consists of 68 acres, of which 50 are wooded, and is situated less than a mile from the County Zoo. The intention is for the Education Center to be a partnership project involving DNR, Milwaukee County, the City of Milwaukee, the City of Wauwatosa, the neighborhood, conservation groups, education groups, and Milwaukee County Zoo.

Development of an interpretive plan, the foundation of everything else that will take place, is getting underway now. Kirsten distributed hard copies of an online survey form soliciting ideas for items to include in the plan, which was distributed earlier to Council members and others. All ideas that have come in thus far have been compiled. She emphasized the importance of getting any further ideas in this week. The next step will be to hire a consultant to form a 501(c)3 nonprofit to guide the project, to plan exhibits, to hire an architect, and to hire a fundraiser to pay for implementation. This will not be a DNR center. Rather, it will be run and directed by the nonprofit. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District owns the adjacent

property, and is constructing a 100-year flood basin, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2010. We will wait until its completion to break ground on the Education Center.

ACTION ITEM:

- Kirsten Held will copy the Council on the Request for Proposals for a consultant when it goes out.

Discussion with DNR Secretary Matthew Frank

Chief State Forester Paul DeLong introduced recently appointed DNR Secretary Matt Frank, who had the opportunity to get a firsthand look at some forestry issues while participating in the Governor's Northern Tour. Secretary Frank believes that the forest is one of our state's greatest resources. He feels the Council is a great place to look at issues on a statewide basis, and gave his commitment to working with the Council on them. He is excited about the future, and feels that this is a historic time for Wisconsin, which has always been a leader in the nation on conservation and environmental initiatives.

Bio-energy and biomass are high priority issues for him, providing Wisconsin the opportunity to become an international leader because of its resources. Our forests provide enormous potential for lessening our dependence on fossil fuels, and create opportunities for economic green growth. We must ensure that we move forward in a sustainable manner.

Getting the Stewardship Program reauthorized for another ten years is also a top priority for him. A major budget decision needs to be made. Land costs much more now. At current funding levels, we will lose enormous opportunities in the future. Stewardship is vital to the future of our state, our forests, and the preservation of our resources for future generations.

He believes that we need a good strong prevention program for aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. The DNR can play a major role, and needs to make sure it is working well with other agencies in this effort.

Secretary Frank believes that staff need to feel valued, appreciated, and respected, and that is the tone he will set at the DNR. He believes we are here to serve the people of Wisconsin, and that the resources belong to them, not to the DNR. The DNR is accountable to the Governor, the Legislature, and to the public.

Governor's Global Warming Task Force and BCPL Land Bank Authority Update – Tia Nelson

Governor's Global Warming Task Force

Governor Doyle issued an executive order creating the Global Warming Task Force in an effort to establish Wisconsin as a leader on the issue of climate change and to help grow the economy. The Task Force has 29 members, who have divided into workgroups by sector:

- Energy
- Supply and Demand
- Industry
- Transportation
- Forestry and Agriculture

Tia is Co-chair of the Forestry and Agriculture Workgroup, and focused her discussion on its work.

Currently Executive Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Public Land (BCPL), Tia served as the Director of Climate Change Programs at the Nature Conservancy for ten years, where she worked on the design and implementation of carbon sequestration projects. To initiate discussion in the Forestry and Agriculture Workgroup, Tia drafted a "strawman" proposal outlining possible tasks for the group. Next, the group looked at a list of policies by sector that other states are considering which have the potential to enhance carbon sinks. This list was prepared by World Resources Institute (WRI), which is under contract with the State to assist in the deliberations of the workgroups. The group then looked closely at the policies on this master list, dismissing some and adding some, and developed a working list for its own use. Brief policy summaries will be produced assessing potential costs, benefits, and barriers of the policies on the refined list. The group will be getting assistance from Winrock International in determining costs and

benefits. A set of recommendations from the Workgroup is due to the Governor by the end of the year, but a little more time may be requested to complete analytical work.

BCPL Land Bank Authority

Tia updated the Council on progress made in land transactions since the BCPL was granted Land Bank Authority. The BCPL completed over \$2 million of transactions in the last fiscal year, using Stewardship funds in partnership with the DNR. The transactions consisted largely of sales to DNR and purchases of private land. Natural areas that were not productive from a timber standpoint were disposed of, and replaced with productive timber land. Tia distributed a summary listing details of each transaction.

Woody Biomass

Accept Task Force Final Report – Bill Horvath

As agreed at the June Council meeting, Bill distributed the Final Report of the Woody Biomass Task Force to the Council for review before its meeting today. The Council took out some legislative items, and the Task Force made some additions to it, including an appendix on the Great Lakes Commodities Exchange. The Task Force voted unanimously to accept the modified report at its last meeting. Bill announced that he'd subsequently dismissed all members of his Task Force. Chair Souba thanked Bill personally for all his work on the Task Force over the last few years, and commended all of the members for their commitment, dedication, and passion.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Bill Horvath (seconded by Bob Rogers) that the Council accept the Final Report of the Woody Biomass Task Force and place it on file passed unanimously.

Finalize Legislative Recommendations – Fred Souba

In June, Chair Souba appointed a task group composed of himself, Bill Horvath, Ken Ottman, Jim Hoppe, and the DNR's Allison Hellman to refine the language of the seven sections of woody biomass legislation that the Council selected at its March meeting. The group made some changes, and produced a document entitled "Council on Forestry Recommended Policy through Legislation to Encourage the Production and Utilization of Woody Biomass". They distributed it to the Council for review prior to today's meeting, where a discussion ensued on some of its contents.

Bill Horvath said that his task force recommended banning all wood from landfills. He spoke with landfill administrators in Dane, Wood, and Marathon Counties, and found that they wanted it banned. The administrator from Marathon County told him that enough good wood was sent to the landfill to build houses with. Ken Ottman was concerned that a ban would increase costs to counties and communities. It is difficult to utilize wood in economically feasible ways. There is not sufficient technology in place yet. Leon Church expressed support for a phased-in approach, to which Bill agreed.

Concerning the inclusion of the term "woody biomass" in the property owner objectives of the MFL statute, Fred Clark thought it would be better if it were referenced as part of a whole range of forest products. Jeff Stier thought the intended emphasis was on the contribution of woody biomass to renewable energy, rather than on woody biomass as a single product.

Bill Johnson of Johnson Timber Corporation expressed concern that the paper and other wood products industries could be hurt inadvertently by subsidies being given to burgeoning energy industries for things that existing industries have to buy on the open market. He asked that the potential impacts to them be taken into account when planning incentives.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Bob Rogers (seconded by Jeff Stier) that the Council accept the Recommended Policy through Legislation to Encourage the Production and Utilization of Woody Biomass passed unanimously.

Next Steps - Biomass Harvest Guidelines – Allison Hellman

Chair Souba announced that Jim Hoppe is taking on the role of Chair of the Woody Biomass Task Force and will be soliciting new members to work with him on the two tasks it was charged with at the June Council meeting: harvesting and transportation issues relative to woody biomass, and outreach education specific to woody biomass. Chair Souba had asked Paul DeLong to ask staff to prepare materials for the Council to look at on these issues. Allison Hellman and Darrell Zastrow prepared an issue brief entitled “Forestland Biomass Harvesting Guidelines”, which was distributed to Council members. Allison went over the highlights. She cited our dependence on foreign fuel, increased public policy media attention, and increased fuel prices as forces driving interest in biomass harvesting guidelines. The recent certification audit is anticipated to create a need for them as well. She asked the Council to consider sponsoring the guidelines, which would entail a Council group reviewing draft materials and possibly seeking the funds, estimated at around \$38,000, to support the process. The hope is to use the existing Minnesota guidelines as a template. The Forestry Division would form a technical committee to decide what adaptations need to be made for it to work for Wisconsin. This would happen in October. Then language would be drafted, the draft materials would be reviewed internally and by the Council, and stakeholder input would be gathered. The target date for completion and adoption of the Guidelines by the Council is June 2009. Only the Natural Resources Board holds the authority to update the Forestry Management Guidelines. Therefore, if a decision is made to update them to include the Biomass Harvesting Guidelines, a public involvement process will be required.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Leon Church (seconded by Jim Heerey) that the Council accept the recommendation that it sponsor the development of Forestland Biomass Harvesting Guidelines for Wisconsin’s forests and that the Minnesota Forestland Biomass Harvest Guidelines be used as a template passed unanimously.

Creation of GLTPA – Ann Forest Burns

After Gene Francisco left the post in July, Ann was named Executive Director of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association. Now a resident of Rhinelander, she recently moved from Seattle. She is a certified forester, has practiced as a forestry attorney in Washington and Oregon, was a professor of Forest Policy and Law, has worked in logging, and served in the Oregon Legislature. GLTPA is a nonprofit agency created at the January 1, 2007 merger of the Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin (TPA), the Wisconsin Professional Loggers Association (WPLA), and the Forest Industry Safety Training Alliance (FISTA). Its mission is to lead the forest products industry in sustainable forest management through advocacy, professionalism, service to members, and through education and training. It has over 800 members now, over half of which are loggers or log truckers. The remainder are independent contractors, manufacturers, sawmills, pulp mills, and affiliated businesses.

GLTPA is organized into six regions across Wisconsin and Michigan, and has a committee structure. The Communication Committee produces *TPA Magazine*. The Transportation Committee is working on the issue of truck weights and competition with other states. The main concern of the Insurance Committee now is that the Wisconsin Workers Compensation Insurance contribution employers are required to make is too great a cost for them, while at the same time, not enough workers are covered by it. There are Legislative Committees in both Michigan and Wisconsin. Items on the legislative agenda for Wisconsin include:

- Affordable Workers Compensation Insurance
- Improved competitiveness for trucking in Wisconsin relative to the forest products industry.
- Streamlining of public forest timber sale policy to meet changing markets.
- Promotion of woody biomass use for energy, while keeping markets open to compete.

GLTPA stands ready to assist the Council in its communication needs, and to be a source of information.

Council Biennial Report – Rebecca Gass

Rebecca Gass, Forestry Planner, invited Council discussion of the comments and edits that she’d received from members, highlighted on the draft Biennial Report that she had distributed to them. She asked if there were any additional comments or edits. There was some discussion about the wording and location of the

need for more technical assistance in the report. Bill Horvath said he would like to see it stated more clearly that the DNR needs more technical assistance. Tim Gary, representing Rep. Friske, is in favor of the wording used in the report to convey the need because it is nonspecific, and therefore non-limiting. Other than a few minor corrections, none of substance, no changes to the draft report were deemed necessary. The final Biennial Report will be posted to the wisconsinforestry.org website, and submitted to the Governor and the Legislature.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Ken Ottman (seconded by Bill Horvath) that the Council accept the Wisconsin Council on Forestry Biennial Report passed unanimously.

State Forester's Report – Paul DeLong

Paul decided to delay his discussion of the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget until the December Council meeting to allow Jeff Stier sufficient time to present his report on research progress.

Research Progress – Jeff Stier

The Task Force on Forestry Research brought a report to the Council in December, 2005 asking the Council to accept five recommendations, which it did at its February, 2006 meeting. One of these recommendations called for the Division of Forestry to work with the UW to develop a cooperative grant program for forestry research supported with DNR funds. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) has agreed to work with DNR to target a pilot project to see if it would work. The project would involve DNR in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and monitoring processes. CALs has agreed to fund it with between \$35,000 and \$40,000 of the UW's McIntire-Stennis appropriation. This project would be a major step forward in getting the University and the DNR working collaboratively and focusing the research. Jeff asked the Council whether it would endorse the pilot project, and if so, which of the following three proposed research projects it would like to see explored:

1. Quantifying the Environmental Services of Forest Ecosystems
2. Economics and Applied Silvicultural Practices in the Presence of Invasive Plant Species
3. Wisconsin's Role in the Certified Wood Market

The discussion that ensued made it clear that there was strong support from the Council for both Projects 2 and 3. Bill Horvath expressed support for Project 3, because there are still a vast number of areas uncertified. Jim Heerey favored Project 2, pointing out the immediate need for methods to control invasive species. Chair Souba felt both projects were appropriate. Jeff said that both could be put in the Request for Proposals, but there would not be a ranking. Projects normally receive funding for three years. The strongest proposal would receive funding this year. The remaining one would get funded next year. Bob Rogers proposed putting both forward.

DECISION ITEMS:

- A motion by Jeff Stier (seconded by Jim Heerey) that the Council endorse the Research Task Force proceeding with the proposed Division of Forestry and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) collaborative pilot project passed unanimously.
- A motion by Bob Rogers (seconded by Paul DeLong) that the Council recommend to CALs that the two topical areas for research be items 2: *Economics and Applied Silvicultural Practices in the Presence of Invasive Plant Species* and 3: *Wisconsin's Role in the Certified Wood Market* passed unanimously.

Legislative Issues – Tim Gary

The budget is the primary focus of the Legislature right now, as the two chambers have not yet come to a budget agreement. All proposals are sitting in front of the Conference Committee. Tim summarized the Governor's budget proposals pertaining to forestry and actions that have taken place on them so far:

Invasive Species Introduction Penalties – Forfeiture of up to \$200 for unintentional introductions and between \$1,000 and \$5,000 with potential prison time for intentional introductions. ➤The Legislature did not modify this proposal.

Stewardship Program Reauthorization – The current authorization expires in 2010. The Governor proposed \$105 million yearly bonding of finances for the program from 2010-11 to 2020. Of that, \$45 million a year is for land acquisition, which would increase to \$79 million. Counties would be allowed to use the fund for acquisition of parks or forests. ➤The Senate did not modify the Governor’s proposals, but the Assembly reduced the amount of bonding for the program to \$25 million a year, having it begin instead in 2007-08, and still extending to 2020. It would only allow counties to use the fund for acquiring county forest lands, unless the DNR asks for county assistance on a particular project. The Assembly would require the DNR to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Program by January 1, 2009, and would require a legislative audit of the Stewardship Program by July 1, 2009.

Land Management – Authorize DNR to contract with conservation organizations that are non-profits to help it with land management activities. ➤The Legislature had no amendments.

Karner Blue Butterfly –\$20,000 from the Fish and Wildlife Fund for the Habitat Conservation Plan. ➤The Joint Finance Committee (JFC) took it instead from the Forestry Account because the Forestry Division manages the Karner Blue Program and has significant expertise in the area.

ATVs –\$184,000 from the ATV Account to evaluate ATV trails on northern State Forest properties. ➤The Senate added \$400,000 to that amount for development of ATV trails in the NHAL State Forest. The Assembly deleted the provision.

MFL Closed Acreage Grant Program – Administer \$1 million of closed acreage fees for land acquisition or easements approved for outdoor recreational activities included in the open designation of MFL participant properties. ➤The JFC amended the Governor’s proposal to \$200,000 for acquisitions required open for hunting, fishing and trapping during open seasons. The Assembly deleted the program and appropriated all closed acreage fees back to the counties and municipalities of origin in a 20/80 split between the two.

Forest Fire Response – \$736,200 for detection and suppression of wildfires, inspections and repair of fire towers, master lease payments for base station radio tower repeaters, and emergency LTE firefighters, support, training and equipment for the spring fire season. ➤The Legislature had no amendments.

Invasive Species Control –\$160,000, with up to \$60,000 required for local group projects through the Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP). ➤JFC wants a minimum of \$60,000 to be used for WFLGP projects.

Parks and Southern Forest Operations – \$484,000 proposed. ➤The Assembly deleted the provision, and allowed JFC to provide funding of \$135,000 for staff, utilities and supplies, with \$349,000 more to be provided for 2008-09.

Biomass Grants – Move authority to award grants from DNR to the Department of Commerce. Increase authorization to \$30 million. ➤The Senate earmarked \$5 million for the first Wisconsin pulp and paper mill to be free of natural gas and coal. The Assembly deleted the provision moving authority to Commerce, and would provide a \$5 million grant and a \$2 million loan to the first natural gas and coal free mill.

Managed Forest Law Leasing – Prohibit leasing of MFL lands for outdoor recreation activities.

Timber Sale Contracts – The Governor created an appropriation for DNR to contract with cooperating foresters to assist in setting timber harvests on State lands falling within master plans and allowable harvests.

County Forest Association Grant – JFC amended the budget to allow counties in the program to apply for a grant to cover up to 50% of their dues to WCFA under the County Forest Administrator Grant Program.

Kickapoo Valley Reserve Aids in Lieu of Taxes – The Assembly made an amendment to provide \$76,400 from the Forestry Account for aids in lieu of property taxes related to the value of improvements to the Visitor Center in the Town of Stark.

Highway Weight Limitations – JFC passed an amendment that would apply the penalties created for violation of road weight limits by six-axle forestry trucks to all forestry trucks.

In other legislation, the Assembly Committee on Forestry and the entire State Legislature passed AB 414, extending the Michigan Border Permit for forestry trucks on US 2 in Bayfield County. It was signed into law as Act 16 on July 17th. The Committee on Forestry held hearings on three Administrative Rules proposed by the DNR:

- CR 07-011, Contracting for Timber Sales on State Land and Educational Requirements of Cooperating Foresters, was passed.
- CR 07-012, Referral of Private Timber Sale Requests to Cooperating Foresters. Jurisdiction was retained. It is hoped that an adjustment will be made in the handbook based on comments by cooperating foresters. No objection to the rule is expected.

- CR 07-024, Annual Forest Crop Law and Managed Forest Law Yield Tax Rate Adjustments, was passed.

Next Meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting will take place on December 18th in Madison. Possible agenda items include:

- A look at data on deer numbers after two years of using current hunting structure
- John DuPlissis's report on enhancing assistance to private landowners
- Carbon sequestration, possibly with Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX) representative Steve Ruddell
- Urban Forestry Council Action Plan
- Legislative Update
- State Forester's Report
 - Budget
 - Update on State Forest Lands Timber Harvest

Paul Delong mentioned that CCX representatives would be coming to the next Governor's Task Force on Global Warming meeting on September 19th from 11:00 to 12:00 at the Pyle Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Submitted by:

Mary Brown
WDNR