

Council on Forestry Meeting
Best Western Hotel & Conference Center
5253 Harding Avenue, Plover, Wisconsin
February 6, 2014

Council Members Present: Henry Schienebeck (Council Chair), Jane Severt (Council Vice-Chair), Troy Brown, Matt Dallman, Paul DeLong, Tom Hittle, Jim Kerkman, Kim Quast, Richard Wedepohl, Rep. Jeff Mursau, Sen. Tom Tiffany

Council Members Absent: Rep. Fred Clark, Bruce Allison, Virgil Waugh, Paul Strong, and Mark Rickenbach, Jim Hoppe

Guests Present: Gary Knuth, Darrell Zastrow, Allison Hellman, Fred Souba, Scott Bowe (for Mark Rickenbach), Matt St. Pierre (for Paul Strong), Nancy Bozek, Don Peterson, Jerry Mich, Scott Sawle, George Meyer (+2), Gordy Mouw, Tim Gary, Earl Gustafson, and Don Nelson (for Jim Hoppe)

Chair Schienebeck called the meeting to order at 9:05 am with introductions of Council members and guests present.

Meeting Minutes

MFL (Finalizing Council Actions)

Kim Quast

1) Stakeholder Feedback – On January 13, 2014 Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) voted not to support the proposals suggested by the subcommittee of the Council on Forestry to reduce per acre tax rates on closed Managed Forest Law (MFL) lands. The majority of the WTA Board believes the current rates are reasonable rates for the purposes of the MFL.

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation recommends the Council approve some portion of the MFL closed acreage fee be used by the DNR for improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, public access enhancements and other recreational uses on DNR and County Forest lands. They also suggest statutory language indicate the sum be in addition to current funds expended by the DNR and respective counties for this type of purpose.

2) Fiscal Analysis on Forestry Account –



Forestry Account
Impact.xlsx

3) Fiscal Analysis to Towns and Counties -



MFL Taxes Collected
and Distributed by Mur

Action Item(s):

- *Paul will send out an updated revenue and expenditure report to the Council with the most recent fiscal year data.*
- *The Fiscal Bureau will run an analysis by county to see how each municipality would be affected by the proposed distributions given the following scenarios:*
 - *If the rate was reduced, what is the break-even point?*
 - *If the rate remained the same (.85 and 6.41), what would happen to the numbers based on the distribution?*

Renewal of Beagle Clubs MFL Contracts

George Meyer

George addressed the Council as a representative from Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) on behalf of three non-profit Beagle Training and Trialing Sports Clubs. The clubs are being told they will no longer be able to participate in the MFL program if proposed changes become law. WWF requested the Council suggest the following amendment to the proposed MFL statutory changes as the Assembly Forestry Committee deliberates on the proposed legislation:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a non-profit dog training and trialing facility with a Managed Forest Law contract on _____, 2014 shall have their contract renewed if the facility meets all provisions of the Managed Forest Law.”

Representative Mursau informed the Council of his intent to move the bill forward. The Council although supportive of this change expressed concern this may encourage other clubs to challenge the MFL statutory changes.

MFL Updates from Tuesday’s testimony

Rep. Jane Severt and Tom Hittle

Jane and Tom shared a copy of the testimony given to the Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry on February 4, 2014 regarding 2013 Assembly Bill 700. See document attached.



MFL Testimony
02_04_2014 second di

The following differences between the proposed Council revisions and the draft legislation were addressed within the testimony:

- The Council’s recommendations contained an exemption for large properties from having to ensure public access (Section 50) given the inherent possibility that over large acreages managed for timber production a small amount of land may have limited access suitable primarily to forest management activities. This exception takes into account the large acreage of publically accessible lands associated with these large properties and the revision (Section 48) that excludes large properties from the repeal of the prohibition on leasing. Council task team leader Tom Hittle noted that he believed this exemption recommendation is not contained within the draft bill and respectfully suggested it be added.

- The proposed legislation also includes a specific definition for a “large property” (Section 15) which would eliminate some of the established MFL treatments of this type of property we believe have historically worked well for the department and the landowner. A refinement of the definition of a large property was not analyzed by the Council as to possible consequences and we respectfully ask that this definition be modified to allow for a determination of large property status suitable to the department and landowner subject to the specific property and landowner objectives.
- The Council revisions included recommendations for developing an electronic process which would allow for increased efficiencies and better communication with landowners on their forest management plans. It has been communicated to the Council by the department that this can be accomplished without law revisions.
- The Council task team also asked for confirmation that Section 104 allows for the voluntary withdrawal of a part of a parcel for the purpose of building a human residence, consistent with the intent of the recommendation made by the Council.
- There also are questions as to if these changes are meant to be effective for lands already enrolled under the MFL or only for new enrollments following passage of this legislation. Again, the task team asked that this be clarified for the revisions where applicable.

Legislative Updates

Tiffany – Surveyor Bill update-DNR and WCFA are putting a lot of time into reviewing and commenting on the proposed legislation.

Action Item(s):

- *Senator Tiffany will forward the interview he received from a Surveyor to Jane and Paul for review.*

Farm Bill – Paul DeLong

On January 29, 2014 the House passed the Farm Bill and the Senate followed suit on February 4th. It is expected that President Obama will also sign the bill.

Forestry Economic Summit – Don Peterson & Allison Hellman

Allison gave an overview of the results from the survey given to Summit participants. The survey was sent to 119 individuals and 48% of recipients responded.

There were a total of 80+ possible action items or theme’s taken from December 2013 Governor’s Forestry Economic Summit. Allison and Don reviewed the various themes and suggested to the Council the following areas of focus:

- Workforce Development
- Land Management
 - Public Land

- Legislation
- MFL
- Industry Assistance/Support
 - Exports
 - Domestic Markets
 - Technical Assistance
 - Transportation
- Education

Action Item(s):

- *A small group of Council members (Troy Brown, Henry Schienebeck, Tom Hittle, and Jim Kerkman) will review and refine the current list of action items. The refined items will then be further refined by the Council at the March meeting. Allison Hellman will support the work of this group.*

Wisconsin's Forestry Practices Study(WFPS) _____ Fred Souba

Matt Dallman will serve as Chair of the Council on Forestry Research Subcommittee. Troy Brown, Senator Tom Tiffany, Mark Rickenbach, and Richard Wedepohl will serve on the committee. Staffing and support are being provided by Fred Souba (ProVision Forestry), Al Lucier (NCASI), and Darrell Zastrow (WDNR).

The goal of the Subcommittee is to provide technical assistance on behalf of the Council, serve as liaison between the study and Council, and assist in interpreting study results and in developing recommendations.

The grant for conducting WFPS was awarded to GLTPA/WCFA. In the event of a disagreement between the Council and GLTPA/WCFA, the latter has the final decision making authority.

Fred presented the 2013 Wisconsin Forest Practice Study Request for Proposal Process flow Chart and mentioned we are currently in the first phase of the process which is to “the subcommittee reviews, improves and endorses RFP.”

MOTION

Jim Kerkman made a motion to endorse and accept the Request for Proposal process (flow chart) presented and to proceed with the RFP process. Kim Quast seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Action Item(s):

- *Fred will work with Darrell to add members of Wisconsin's Joint Committee on Finance and Assembly and Senate Forestry Committee to the listserv automatic email list so they receive automatic notifications pertaining to Wisconsin's Forest Practices Study.*

A draft Wisconsin Council on Forestry Conflict of Interest Policy was presented and reviewed by Council members.

MOTION

Jim Kerkman made a motion to accept the Conflict of Interest Policy. Jane Severt Seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Budget

The Federal Government passed the first full funding bill since 2009 as it relates to U.S. Forest Service funding. It will be roughly similar to last year without sequester. In addition to core funding, Wisconsin is scheduled to receive Forest Legacy funding of \$4.5 million to complete the Lyme project.

Action Item(s):

- *Paul DeLong will send an electronic link to the annual report for the Council to review. If you would like a hard copy, please get in touch with Terrisa Mulder.*

NRCS/Forest Service Partnership

NRCS/U.S. Forest Service announced today a multi-year partnership to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet across the nation. The project, called the Chiefs' Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership, will invest \$30 million in 13 areas across the country this year to help mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality, and supply and improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species. The Wisconsin – Lake Superior Landscape Restoration Partnership Project is one of the 13 projects that will receive funding from this program.

Future Agenda Item(s)

- Matt St. Pierre and Paul Strong will attend a future meeting and discuss the Good Neighbor program as well as provide an update on the Lake Superior project.

Next Meeting, March 25, 2014 (Madison)

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Terrisa Mulder

Adjourned @ 3:31PM