

MEETING SUMMARY
FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC) MEETING
October 21, 2009
Michigan United Conservation Club of Michigan
2101 Wood Street, Lansing
1:00-4:00 p.m.

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Thomas (Tom) Barnes, Chair, Michigan Association of Timbermen
Ms. Lynne M. Boyd, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Dr. Donna LaCourt, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Frank Ruswick, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University
Mr. William (Bill) Botti, Vice Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Thomas Dunn, American Motorcycle Association, District 14
Dr. Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Technical University (via teleconference)
Ms. Julie Stoneman, Heart of the Lakes (representing Dr. Katie Kahl via teleconference)
Mr. Stephen Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture
Mr. Desmond (Des) Jones, Michigan Tree Farm System
Ms. Kim Korbecki, FMAC Assistant, DNR

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Barry Paulson, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, Huron-Manistee
Mr. Andy Henriksen, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Joel Blohm, Great Northern Lumber of Michigan
Ms. Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan (MUCC)
Mr. William (Bill) Manson, Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association
Mr. Marvin (Marv) Roberson, Sierra Club

PUBLIC ATTENDEES / GUESTS

Ms. Judy McReavy, Roscommon County
Ms. Cara Boucher, State Forester, DNR
Mr. Anthony Weatherspoon, DNR
Mr. Robert McReavy, Roscommon County
Mr. Jim Radabaugh, DNR
Mr. Ron Easterly, Roscommon County
Mr. Bill Sterrett, DNR
Mr. Ed Nellist, Roscommon County Commissioner
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass, Ithaca

I. WELCOME

Chair Barnes called the Forest Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. He thanked everyone for joining the meeting, advised a quorum was present, and welcomed the visitors.

II. ACTION ITEMS

- **Adoption of October 21, 2009 FMAC Meeting Agenda**
Chair Barnes asked if there were any additions the FMAC members would like to make; added Resource Assessment Plan and the FMAC role.

MOTION: **Mr. Suchovsky** moved to adopt the October 21, 2009 FMAC Meeting Agenda, as amended; supported by **Dr. Keathley**.
The October 21, 2009 FMAC Meeting Agenda was adopted unanimously.

- **Adoption of June 17, 2009 FMAC Meeting Summary**

Chair Barnes quoted the seven-day rule on the meeting minutes (as stated in the Bylaws.) Since there had been no corrections within the seven day period, the June 17, 2009 FMAC Meeting Summary was adopted.

- **Review of July 22, 2009 Special FMAC Meeting Summary (Review of Bills)**

Chair Barnes stated the July 22 FMAC Special Meeting dealt with pending House and Senate Bills. They covered such things as off-road vehicle use, handicapped hunters, land transactions for a golf course, and the consolidation of State of Michigan departments. **Chair Barnes** reported he was working on a draft letter to Director Rebecca Humphries, DNR, to notify her of the FMAC's official opinion on these Bills.

Chair Barnes thanked the FMAC members who were able to attend the special meeting and asked if there were any questions. There were none. **Chair Barnes** stated the meeting was a good one, and he felt this is a role the FMAC needs to fulfill (giving opinions on bills), in its advisory role to the DNR.

Chair Barnes requested a motion to place the letter to Director Humphries on file.

MOTION: **Mr. Suchovsky** moved to place the letter to Director Humphries on file; supported by **Dr. Keathley**.
Motion to place the letter to Director on file was adopted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Barnes opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Ron Easterly, Roscommon County, stated he drove around the Roscommon area and the debris being left behind from logging is getting worse. He reported two-to-three feet high debris stacked around, and remarked it will take years for the debris to break down. He alleged it is getting to the point that it is no longer suitable for animals or tourists. **Mr. Easterly** commented that Roscommon is a tourist area, and things were going well in the area until loggers began buying thousands of acres. He stated the area grew from a pine forest into more of an oak forest, and oaks can live eighty to three hundred years. He said he has watched logging techniques all over the country, and Michigan is by far the worse.

He reported there are areas near town where selective cutting has occurred. He alleged that soon there will be no forest at all, and if a fire breaks out it will destroy homes. He has pleaded with the loggers to stay away from homes. He stated the loggers have cut trees between home, damaging private landowner's trees. The loggers are only saving a few select trees beyond the buffer zones. He reported that years ago the loggers did 10-acre plots, and now it is hundreds of acres in one sweep. He said he has seen aerial photos and they have logged over forty square miles, only leaving forty acres of old trees. He requested the FMAC visit the area to see it themselves.

Mr. Suchovsky stated he visited Roscommon in June, went up in an airplane, and reviewed pictures which he shared with Ms. Boucher; he wanted the public visitors to know he has visited the area. He commented it is a difficult issue. The Michigan Chapter of American Foresters held a conference in which many experts from different disciplines shared information. The Journal of forestry recently ran

an article regarding Southeast Michigan and dealing with oak. He went on to say that people have moved into forests, and the management of these lands is not conducive of oak management. He stated there are some things that can be done, but it is not something that can be accomplished easily and only with everyone working together.

Vice Chair Botti stated Mr. Easterly's complaint is the presence of tops and branches left on the ground. He reported the FMAC would be discussing biomass later in the meeting, and biomass is one of the reasons loggers are being careful not to clean up too much at this time.

Mr. Robert McReavy, Roscommon County, stated there is a difference between leaving logger waste on the ground, and making piles six feet deep that will last for twenty years. He thanked Mr. Suchovsky for his visit. **Mr. McReavy** commented it is an issue of public participation. He wants a reevaluation of this area; an evaluation was done three or four years ago. He said trees are being marked without the citizens being notified that it was going to be done. The public wants more explanation and answers to their questions. **Chair Barnes** stated he would respond to Mr. McReavy's concerns.

Chair Barnes stated if a contract talks about spreading out debris, rather than leaving it in one area then the logger is in violation of their contract. Many loggers have three-year contracts, and could come in anytime during that period to chip the piles. Research has shown the best way to regenerate oak is to have slash out there so deer cannot get to it; oak is a difficult species to regenerate and manage. He stated the FMAC will look into this situation and see what it can do. He also recommended the citizens of Roscommon discuss this further with their Legislators.

Chair Barnes commented the DNR could deal with any contract violations.

Mr. Ed Nellist, Roscommon County Commissioner, asked who has input in the contract; just the forester who is dealing with the bidders? He stated by doing this the DNR is forgetting a certain part of the community. This is public land, and all should be involved. **Chair Barnes** responded he understands the concern that too much debris is being left, but others would say there is too much being taken. **Mr. Nellist** stated the DNR needs to look at not mining all the resources because of woody biomass. **Chair Barnes** responded the DNR does a decent job of looking at the many different factors involved.

Ms. Boucher stated contracts are developed by the local forester, and then reviewed by management unit staff and a timber sale specialist. Until a few years ago, contracts were very standard; now they are tweaked according to individual situations. She reported there are different specs related to slash, depending on the objectives; she has a list of the specifications she can share. **Mr. Nellist** responded specs are targeting certain types of people, but not the whole population. **Ms. Boucher** stated Compartment Reviews are held to get comments from citizens; the technical parts are done within the DNR.

Mrs. Judy McReavy, Roscommon County, stated they have been complaining for about six years, between deer and forest issues. She said the DNR should do what it can with the loggers, but it should also keep in mind that the citizens of Roscommon are humans who want to enjoy the forest; the forest is the property of the entire state. She stated loggers seem to think trees are designed for their use only. She has been asking the DNR for six years to take into consideration the people who use the forest for things other than making money. **Chair Barnes** responded the loggers are following a prescription. **Mr. McReavy** stated he thinks the DNR should give the people more consideration. **Chair Barnes** responded there is roughly forty-to-fifty thousand acres harvested per year, which is not a lot. Michigan is not cutting excessively. Some areas may see more activity than others. The DNR sends out press releases announcing the management unit open houses, and the compartment reviews are posted on the website; citizens with concerns should attend these

meetings. **Chair Barnes** commented loggers are just trying to coexist with others, and he reiterated that the DNR does a good job.

Mr. Easterly stated the techniques have changed because of the way loggers want to do the work, alleging they are mowing trees down to the size of a finger. Roscommon is a recreation area; businesses are suffering because hunters can no longer hunt in the area, and recreation can no longer take place. **Chair Barnes** stated the FMAC does not have the authority to tell the DNR where stands will be cut; it can only advise. But contract specs come down to what the DNR is setting up. If a contract holder is out of compliance, the DNR will hold the contract holder's money so it is not in the logger's best interest to destroy the land. **Mr. Easterly** stated there have been petitions signed with over 8,000 names, asking the DNR to stop clearcutting; the land belongs to the people, not the DNR. **Chair Barnes** responded he will check to see who attended the last compartment review in the Roscommon area.

Mr. McReavy said he understands the value of cutting, but the problem Roscommon has is that the social and economic part is not being considered, and it has hurt their economy. He commented there is a need for the public and the DNR to meet so the DNR can listen to their concerns. The public frustration in that area is that there are piles of brush that people cannot get through. He stated he attended this FMAC meeting to ask for relief for the tourism industry, hunters, campers, etc. **Ms. Boucher** will provide the specs and the closing documents after clearcutting is completed.

Chair Barnes thanked the public attendees for their comments.

IV. STANDING DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Legislative Update**

Ms. Boyd stated the legislative update is in the FMAC's meeting packet. **Chair Barnes** asked if there were questions or comments; there was none.

- **NRC Budget Reports – 2010 Budget Review**

Ms. Boyd stated the final 2009 NRC budget report is in the FMAC's meeting packet; as of yet there is no 2010 budget. Governor Granholm signed the DNR budget last week, so if the other state department budgets are not settled by next week, the DNR does not face a shutdown. She then went over highlights of the deficits for 2010.

- ♦ FDF: has the biggest shortage, \$6.4 million deficit in which Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM) has a little over \$4 million. **Ms. Boyd** reported the FMFM management team would be meeting tomorrow (October 22) to create a spend plan for a balanced budget. Between revenue and fund balance, FMFM expects to have about \$28 million in revenue, while the Legislature has appropriated \$32 million.
- ♦ Division: The Division has been affected by the general fund; \$300,000 has been cut in the cooperative resource program, and \$100,000 in the recreation program. Foresters have been directed to stop working on private lands. The recreation program has only \$100,000 left in the general fund. The DNR did an evaluation, seeking public input, for the campgrounds. There will be a report coming out soon listing how many campgrounds FMFM can keep operating.

Chair Barnes asked if there were comments or questions. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if Forest Development Funds (FDF) were spent on divisions other than FMFM; **Ms. Boyd** responded FDF funds are spent on forest management and the fire program. She stated there has been around \$3.6 million cuts in forest management, and \$1.2 million cuts in the fire program. This means FMFM will have less staff on the ground. The division has also held six or seven fire vacancies; FMFM currently has seventy-two fire staff on the ground, but that will most likely drop. There is other staff in the division that is qualified to pick up the slack during the fire season. There also may be some staff FMFM can draw on with the DNR/DEQ merger. The DNR will also be

providing less support to local fire departments. **Ms. Boyd** reported that one hundred staff minimum is what is recommended to do the job effectively.

- **Improving Public Involvement Process**

Chair Barnes stated Compartment Reviews are not well attended. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented that he was talking with a DNR staff member and he mentioned the DNR needs to something about public participation in the compartment reviews. The DNR staff is questioning if we are accomplishing what they are supposed to, or if they need to look at a different process because of low attendance by citizens. **Vice Chair Botti** stated that public comments are more for the open houses, not the compartment reviews. **Chair Barnes** stated the biggest thing to clarify is there are two processes; the open house collects public comments, and the compartment reviews is not to take suggestions or make changes. The compartment review is when they have already taken public comment into consideration, and they are writing the management prescription.

- **Emerging DNR Issues**

Ms. Boyd reported that there is no Executive Order (Order) at this time regarding streamlining state government. Governor Granholm announced she was setting up a committee to look at downsizing from eighteen to eight state departments. The DNR has absorbed about half of History, Arts and Libraries. By Executive Order, effective January 17, 2010, the DNR and DEQ will be merged. The DNR transition leader is Ms. Mindy Koch, and the DEQ transition leader is Mr. Jim Seigle. The Order dramatically changes things for both Departments, especially in light of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC). The NRC used to be able to set policy, but can no longer contact Legislators, respond to press, etc. It has been much modified as to what they can do.

Ms. Boyd reported the Agriculture Commission (Commission) is limited; the Commission will now be appointed by the Governor. The Order lays out an ambitious list of things to do before January 17, i.e. consolidate DNR/DEQ offices by then. **Mr. Ruswick** commented the transition managers have to report to the Governor by December 31. Some things will be accomplished by January 17, but other long-term things will not.

Chair Barnes asked if this is something the FMAC wants to speak to; **Ms. Boyd** responded the FMAC is not appointed by the Governor. It advises Director Humphries, so will probably remain intact. **Mr. Ruswick** added in terms of ways to do business, there is some expectation that different ways of dealing with tasks before us will evolve.

Ms. Boyd reported the Snowmobile Advisory Committee was eliminated, and will be part of a new Trails Advisory Committee, which will have the ability to set up subgroups to advise it. There will be action through the NRC to abolish the off-road vehicle advisory board. **Mr. Dunn** stated his recommendation is to be watchful and wait and see, to not jump the gun and begin writing letters.

Chair Barnes asked if there were any other comments or questions; there were none.

- **FMAC and the Resource Assessment Plan** (addition to agenda)

Ms. Boucher reported the Resource Assessment Plan (Plan) is a project from the 2008 Farm Bill. Congress directed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to work with states for resource assessment. The intent was to bring together a whole range of planning activities that the United States Forest Service (USFS) does, as well as a whole range of other agencies within the USFS. People have been struggling on how to carry this out. Over the last year, a number of states have done pilot programs, as the DNR has done, and the DNR has needed to pull together stakeholders to discuss this; the DNR team has been working on this. A decision was made to hold a workshop to share where the DNR is, and where it is going. The FMAC is invited to attend.

The meeting is scheduled for November 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Michigan Department of Transportation Terminal, Aero Auditorium, 2700 East Airport Service Drive, at Capital City Airport. Ms. Boucher will send out the agenda.

Mr. Paulson asked if there is a deadline for the assessment; **Ms. Boucher** responded it is due June 2010. Any state and private grant money will not be available without a completed assessment. **Ms. Boyd** stated it might be a good idea to have someone as lead for the FMAC, in a workgroup that focuses on this effort. **Chair Barnes** concurred with Ms. Boyd. He commented that if anyone from the FMAC was interested in participating, to let him or Ms. Boyd know.

- **Biodiversity Conservation – History and Process**

Ms. Boyd stated this process is looking at three ecoregions, and providing recommendations for lands across all ownerships. Recommendations have been submitted to the ecoteams, and are coming out for public review within a month. The Western Upper Peninsula team presented its recommendations to the ecoteam, which is similar to the Northern Lower Peninsula team's recommendations. Right now about two hundred acres have been recommended for BSAs; of those acres, about fifty-five to sixty-five are private land, some conservation land, and some USFS private ownership. About fifty percent is already designated as high value. The recommendation will go for public comment, and then to the state assessment team (Public Advisory Team.)

Ms. Boyd reported this is a 1992 statute. No lands have been dedicated at this point; the DNR still has a long way to go. **Chair Barnes** stated he would like to see a breakout of state ownership, with a summary of what the DNR puts into its presentations. He reported the Eastern Upper Peninsula is halfway through its provided information. It has asked stakeholders to use their voices during the public comment meeting. The participation of private landowners in Biodiversity Conservation is strictly voluntary. The same is true for nonindustrial private landowners. **Ms. Boyd** stated some of the private landowners will voluntarily comply with these standards. **Dr. Gale** asked where people can participate, and suggested setting up a web link or letting the FMAC know how to participate, in some manner. **Chair Barnes** asked Ms. Boyd to set up an e-mail address, or a link so that the FMAC can participate. **Ms. Boyd** responded the FMAC will be specifically asked to participate.

Chair Barnes stated he thought it might be worthwhile for the FMAC to participate, but had concern because he is not sure what the management process is going to be. He commented that the outcome should be recommendations to the DNR. When looking at the management process and who is going to manage, he would like to have a working group. He suggested Ms. Amy Clark Eagle lead the working group, and then it will report back to the FMAC as a whole.

- **Woody Biomass Update**

Ms. Boucher stated the draft of the Michigan Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidance is in the packet provided to the FMAC. She reported the FMAC has been involved in varying degrees. The FMAC and others have reviewed it; comments have been collected. She stated she would like the FMAC to make recommendations.

Ms. Boucher reported the document is very similar to what it is in other states. There have been great discussions in the workgroup. The workgroup discussed sites where there is jack pine; the suggestion was to retain some, but not nearly as much as the DNR does now. It recommended that in two years they review the situation, and update as necessary.

Chair Barnes asked Ms. Boucher when she would like comments from the FMAC; she responded by November 30. She stated it needs to be looked at as a group; are we satisfied with what has been developed. She wants the FMAC to look at it like an open review. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if

we need to provide recommendations; **Chair Barnes** responded he thinks that is what will be expected.

- **Deer Management Update**

Chair Barnes reported they are on the third revision of recommendations for the deer advisory team (team.) The team has until October 26 to enter its concerns. At this point, the team is looking at presenting its recommendations at the November NRC meeting.

V. DNR MARKETING AND UTILIZATION PROGRAM AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Chair Barnes turned the meeting over to Mr. Weatherspoon.

Mr. Weatherspoon provided a PowerPoint presentation for the FMAC. Some highlights from the PowerPoint are:

- ♦ The program enables sustainable management plans and ways to enforce it.
- ♦ Efficient use of raw material.
- ♦ The DNR gives technical assistance to the industry to assist communities to be healthy, and to add value to its Michigan's resources.
- ♦ There are many agencies and stakeholders involved in the DNR's efforts to get the best it can from Michigan's resources.
- ♦ Identity of critical needs and opportunities.
- ♦ Education for new staff.
- ♦ Development of a database.
- ♦ Development of a website, using grant money.
- ♦ Inventory on portions of forest land on an annual basis, with a report every five years.
- ♦ Biannual surveys.
- ♦ Timber contract reports regarding woody biomass.
- ♦ Collaboration of different agencies, starting with Emerald Ash Borer.
- ♦ The state has dual forest certification with FSC and SFI.
- ♦ More facilities are looking at using woody biomass for boilers.
- ♦ Expertise and sharing.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Weatherspoon, and opened the floor to questions and comments.

Mr. Suchovsky commented that with the reorganization of state government, more people need to be involved as to how we make better use of this resource (woody biomass.) **Dr. LaCourt** stated the MEDC secured \$1.47 million in federal monies. About a third of these funds will be going into assessment, and there will be some primary data collection. This will be key to getting information into a user-friendly form so investors, existing foresters, etc., will be able to view the same base data.

Mr. Suchovsky broached the subject of forest resources on state-owned lands. He questioned if there is too much debris being left in the forests, and if this is something the FMAC needs to look at. He suggested a utilization specialist. **Ms. Boyd** stated she does not think it is a utilization question. The DNR has a critical role to get the industry the data so they can build their portfolios. **Dr. LaCourt** stated she would advocate that this role continues in the DNR. There must be someone in the DNR who is a liaison to the USFS. She commented that the DNR has a big state forest base; twenty-one percent is our state's timber. She hopes with a statewide assessment, the DNR will get a base to work from, and find ways to tap unutilized forests. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented that the FMAC needs to look at what the DNR needs to do differently.

Chair Barnes stated that the FMAC needs to look at the expansion of what its role is. Someone within the DNR can track changes and make recommendations. The FMAC needs to look at diameters, and what it can offer.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Weatherspoon for his presentation.

VI. ORV / SNOWMOBILE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT: IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT – NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Ms. Boyd introduced Mr. Radabaugh, Recreation and Trails Section Manager and State Trails Coordinator.

Mr. Radabaugh reported a joint meeting of the off-road advisory board and the snowmobile advisory committee was held in August. Having this meeting has been a topic of discussion for a long time. Recreation is increasingly being spoken of as an economic development tool. On state forest lands there is about 8,000 miles of designated trails, as well as an additional 4,000 miles on USFS and private lands.

Regarding topics related to forest contracts, there are four themes the DNR has noticed:

- ♦ Timely communication, i.e., communication from contractors to the DNR to the trail user, particularly those holding trail events.
- ♦ Notice of closure or reroute of trails.
- ♦ Conditions before and after a harvest, i.e. trail tread.
- ♦ Conditions from management unit to management unit.

Mr. Radabaugh stated that he is bringing these issues to the FMAC because it has been a very active summer. His goal is to have a conversation as to how the DNR can look at conditions related to forest trail use. **Ms. Boyd** said, as an example, an equestrian group was riding where it had been clear-cut, but they had no idea they were going into a clear-cut area. The DNR needs to figure out how to get the best information out in a timely manner, and it needs better ways to prevent problems before they occur. Sometimes the DNR does not get notification that a logger will begin work until the day they start. Therefore, there is no time for the DNR to notify an event of the conditions.

Ms. Boyd asked the FMAC for suggestions.

Chair Barnes stated if a logger gets a call from a mill and it has a big order, the logger will drop by and make a purchase. On trails that need protection, there must be a deadline for the loggers to get paperwork submitted regarding when they will be cutting. **Ms. Boyd** stated that her impression was the DNR usually gets notification less than five day before work will begin. **Mr. Sterrett** reported there is a three day requirement so trails will not have to be relocated again. **Ms. Boyd** stated that there needs to be some changes internally. **Mr. Sterrett** commented the DNR can try to explain to the loggers there is a trail where they are cutting, and they must put signs on each end of the trail.

Chair Barnes commented that when an event was going on, they used arrows with a name and number on it so disturbances were avoided. He commented he doesn't think there is a way, at this time, to get information out to event members in time. He stated that he will follow-up with DNR staff to get specifics, and notify them they will be on the trail. **Mr. Ruswick** asked what capabilities are required to host a planned event, and how to find out; **Ms. Boyd** responded that a call should be made to the local Recreation Specialist. She stated the DNR needs to think of a way to put the burden on both sides. Communication lacks on what we can do, and what the procedure is. The DNR needs to work on getting word out to users, and figure out a way to work better together. **Mr. Ruswick** commented that personal communication is expensive, and suggested looking at an automated method, a place for users to go for information.

Chair Barnes stated he would like to see a workgroup form on this issue to work with the DNR and key stakeholders, and to provide recommendations to Director Humphries. He will send out an invitation to the FMAC members to see who is interested in being in the workgroup. Some suggestions were Mr. Dunn, Mr. Manson and Chair Barnes.

VII. NEXT MEET DATE / AGENDA ITEMS

Meeting Date: December 16, 2009

Location: MUCC, Lansing

Agenda Items:

Standing Discussion Items

Establishing Minimum Bids for State Timber Sales

Timber Management Pilot Projects: Update and Review Contract Specifications

Update on Progression of Consolidation of DNR / DEQ

Approval of 2010 Meeting Dates

Chair Barnes asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: **Mr. Dunn** moved to adjourn the October 21, 2009 Forest Management Advisory Committee Meeting; supported by **Mr. Shine**.
Motion to adjourn the Forest Management Advisory Committee passed unanimously.

Chair Barnes adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.