

FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC or COMMITTEE) MEETING

May 11, 2011 – 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Botti (Chair), Michigan Forest Association
Ms. Lynne M. Boyd, Chief, Forest Management Division, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Mr. William (Bill) Manson, Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association
Mr. Desmond (Des) Jones, Michigan Tree Farm
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Ms. Susan Holben (representing Dr. Donna LaCourt), Michigan Employment Development Corporation
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass
Ms. Lauri Elbing, The Nature Conservancy
Dr. Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Tech University (via conference call)

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Barry Paulson, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Huron-Manistee

PUBLIC ATTENDEES / GUESTS

Mr. Ronald Murray, DNR

I. **Welcome** – Chair Botti

Chair Botti welcomed all those in attendance, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. **Action Items**

- **Adoption of May 11, 2011 FMAC Meeting Agenda**

Chair Botti asked the FMAC if there were any corrections to the May 11, 2011 FMAC Agenda. **Chair Botti** added Prosilva to the agenda.

MOTION: Ms. Boyd moved to approve the May 11, 2011 FMAC Meeting Agenda; supported by **Mr. Jones**.

Motion to approve the May 11, 2011 FMAC Meeting Agenda was passed unanimously.

- **Adoption of March 9, 2011 FMAC Meeting Minutes**

Chair Botti asked the FMAC if there were any edits to the March 9, 2011 FMAC Meeting Minutes. Ms. Korbecki provided a handout of corrections to be made that were presented to her by Mr. Paulson.

MOTION: Mr. Suchovsky moved to adopt the March 9, 2011 FMAC Meeting Minutes with corrections; supported by **Ms. Elbing**.

Motion to adopt the March 9, 2011 FMAC Meeting Minutes, as corrected, passed unanimously.

III. **Invasive Species** – Mr. Ron Murray, DNR

Chair Botti introduced Mr. Murray.

Mr. Murray reported that invasive species are species in locations they are not wanted. They invade the native ecosystem, are aggressive, and tend to take over. They do not let the native

species compete very well. They are typically imported from somewhere else so have no natural enemies here. A lot of the pests in Michigan, although not all, are invasive species.

Mr. Murray explained why the DNR cares about these species. Invasives displace something that is valuable to us. The invasives tend to develop high population levels. This is something the DNR needs to take seriously. Michigan has great resources, such as water, woods, and clean air. The forest protects these resources. Michigan's resources are used for recreation and some citizens make a living from the forests. Invasive species are threatening our natural resources. **Mr. Murray** introduced some of the most serious invasives to the FMAC.

- **Annosum Root Rot**

This is a root disease that attacks red pine trees and kills them. The identifying factor is that the tree turns red in the summer. There are several ways to report this if spotted. Michigan State University and the DNR have various ways to report this. There is a forest health database that is close to being completed so citizens will be able to report using that method. It will not be long before there is an application for androids and I-phones to report forest health issues, also.

Invasives are multiplying very quickly. We get a problematic invasive species introduced into the United States every two years. There are many problems reported in Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as Michigan.

Mr. Suchovsky commented he had attended a session in Wisconsin and this species has been identified approximately 50 miles from the Upper Peninsula border. He made a suggestion to form a group to look at how timber machines can be cleaned more thoroughly so as to not spread the species. He stated this issue needs to be looked at more closely and taken more seriously. **Mr. Murray** stated that Borax treatment of stumps is about 90% successful as a treatment.

- **Asian Longhorned Beetle**

Mr. Murray reported that Michigan does not have this species here yet. It infests maple trees and other hardwoods. It loves red maple; it builds up in red maple and is extremely bad when it goes after sugar maple. This species could be present for 10 or more years before the trees show any symptoms. The interior of a tree that is infected looks like a honeycomb. It would be impossible to get solid wood product from these trees. This species started in New York, and has been found in Ontario, Chicago (which took an aggressive approach and apparently wiped out the local population), New Jersey, and there is a newer infestation in Worcester, Massachusetts, that covers about 100 square miles. In the woods, this species is not like Emerald Ash Borer which stays on the tree until it is dead and then moves on; this species likes to travel and spreads quickly through a forest. An identifying factor is big holes in the tree, usually with sawdust exuding from it onto the bark and ground nearby; if this is seen report it immediately. The DNR does not want to find this species too late.

Mr. Suchovsky asked how this species is moved; **Mr. Murray** responded that parts of dead trees should not be moved around; it should be burned where it is. There is a whole list of invasive species that can be, and typically are moved around on firewood.

Chair Botti asked what the DNR's strategy is if this species is discovered in Michigan. **Mr. Murray** responded there is not a firm strategy yet, but most likely the DNR would remove maple and hardwood for quite a large area around where the species is found. The United States Forest Service is talking about taking a tour to look at this species in Massachusetts. The state of Michigan (state) would have the authority to go on private lands to manage this

species if it gets classified as a regulatory pest. It does not have to be found in Michigan prior to being classified. The DNR does do visual inspections regularly. The United States Department of Agriculture has declared this as a regulatory pest. The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) conducts surveys every year, and will decide if this species is found. There is not a good trap for this species as of yet.

- **Beech Bark Disease**

Mr. Murray described this species as a scale insect that feeds on the sap of the inner bark of the trees. The damage allows one of two *Neonectria* fungus species to establish itself inside the tree. The tree looks like it has been whitewashed, but it is actually a sort of wooly substance. It typically kills a lot of beech trees where there is a good concentration of them. Beech undergrowth will develop into beech thicket that will never develop into anything at all.

Mr. Melow asked if there are other mortalities on beech trees that also cause thickets;

Mr. Murray responded there are none. **Mr. Murray** stated the infected beech trees also tend to break off, and the *Neonectria* fungus contributes some to the breakage. There is a lot of liability in campgrounds due to this breakage. There is a lot of Beech Bark Disease along the lakeshore and it could move inland if a lot of beech is present. Wind can also carry this smaller species.

- **Emerald Ash Borer**

Mr. Murray reported that Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is still present in Michigan. He described it as a green beetle that attacks ash trees. The tree thins out and dies rather quickly. An identifying factor is D-shaped exit holes and serpentine galleries. This cuts off nourishment to the trees. Trees can get 1000s of these pests in them. Woodpeckers reduce the populations but are not effective in stopping it. EAB covers the Lower Peninsula but not every stand is infected. The DNR is using federal funding to help landowners remove infected stands. Great Lakes Restoration funding is being used to assist in the Upper Peninsula. The Slow Ash Mortality (SLAM) project is researching different ways to slow the spread of EAB. Wood can be moved from level 1 to 2 and 3 zones, but wood cannot be moved from a level 3 zone to a lower level zone. Most EAB was present before the Mackinac Bridge checkpoint was put into place. Most of the EAB spread was from people carrying firewood. There is some evidence that it spread to areas on the East Coast from firewood leaving Michigan.

- **Forest Tent Caterpillar**

Mr. Murray stated there were a lot of these pests last year. They did not create much damage to the trees, but collected a lot of attention. The fly comes in and attacks the caterpillars and the population eventually goes down. This particular species goes in cycles.

- **Gypsy Moth**

Mr. Murray reported this species came into Michigan, but the DNR did not spray everywhere, only in some places. Some predators have now attacked them. It has become naturalized and is no longer the natural disaster that it used to be. The use of BT has been pretty effective where it is really needed. This species can be difficult to get rid of.

- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid**

Mr. Murray reported this was found in the Harbor Springs area. As soon as the DNR found it, and forest health staff person was there the next day. The MDA was very aggressive with this species. It is a crawler the size of the head of a pin, so is easily carried and blown around. It makes a wooly mass that spreads around, sticks to birds, etc., and is easily carried to other trees. It also sticks to firewood. Surveying can be difficult but can be done anytime of the year. The lower parts of the state are being surveyed this year as some Hemlock Woolly was found. Surveying is done for three years after the species is found.

- **Jack Pine Bud Worm**

Mr. Murray reported this species is cyclical and comes and goes. The state is at a low period right now. Only four counties were infested, and this is a native species.

- **Oak Wilt**

Mr. Murray stated this does a lot of damage in the forests. You will see bronze colored leaves falling early in late summer or early fall; the leaves will be half green. There is a distinct margin between the green and bronze. The beetles pick up spores from the pads and then transfer the spores to oaks that have been wounded thereby infecting those trees. There is black under-bark and if you push on the bark it cracks open. The beetles fly into a hole of a new tree and inject the disease in there. Root grafting is also a spreading point; infected tree to uninfected tree. It has been found that you can pull stumps around the infected trees and it stops the spreading, but this means is expensive. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was used in several counties in the Lower Peninsula (trenching). Quite a few of oak epicenters were removed. Work is also being done in counties in the Upper Peninsula.

To avoid spreading Oak Wilt, do not move wood or damaged trees between April 15 and July 15. Do not trim shade trees, do not do right-of-ways, etc. during this time period. The DNR reaches out to communities, providing information to these cities and utility companies. The DNR especially discusses this with utility companies regarding doing this type of work on state lands.

- **Sirex Noctilio**

Mr. Murray reported this species attacks pine trees. In our area, it usually attacks stressed pine trees. The DNR has not seen much of this in Michigan. The DNR is keeping an eye on it in cooperation with the MDA.

- **Spruce Budworm**

Mr. Murray reported this is a native species that is around and on the rise. The DNR expects to see more of it this year. It attacks balsam fir and spruce, typically in low-lying areas. Severe mortality of balsam and spruce on wetter sites where those species are very significant proportion of the cover type might result in raising the water table thus impacting future regeneration. It also shows browned-out areas in mid-summer detected by aerial surveys.

- **Thousand Cankers Disease of Walnuts**

Mr. Murray reported this disease has been found in Tennessee. It attacks walnut trees; black walnut trees are especially susceptible. The DNR is looking for it in Michigan and expects to possibly find it in southern Michigan. There does not appear to be any natural resistance; once it shows up it goes, but the DNR does not know much about it at this point. The National Walnut Council is putting a lot of time into it. There can be thousands of tiny cankers on one tree.

- **Tree Declines**

Mr. Murray reported there does not appear to be a cause for the decline of certain trees. The DNR is seeing declines in aspen, hickory, and maple in the Western Upper Peninsula. This is being studied by Michigan Technical University. There also is a decline of white pine in the Grayling area. A big factor in declines and some pests is drought. During droughts, stressed trees are weakened and more susceptible.

- **Basic Plants**

Mr. Murray reported there are currently four projects funded by ARRA. The DNR will be doing treatments this summer, if it receives funding. The DNR would like to follow the treatments for three to five years to see the results, and determine if the funds were spent wisely.

- **Knapweed**

Mr. Murray reported that Michigan State University is raising beetles that might get rid of it. He stated the Michigan Forest Health Report can be found on the DNR website under *Forest, Lands and Water*, and then *Forest Health*.

Mr. Melow commented that Mr. Murray presented great information and thanked him for presenting it to the FMAC. He commented the FMAC is charged with making recommendations on forest health. He asked, besides Mr. Suchovsky taking information back to his user group, what can the FMAC do to help, i.e. policy, recommendations, funding, etc.

Mr. Murray responded the DNR can always use more resources, i.e. Technicians to Botanists to Pathologists. Almost all of these species have a pathology aspect to it. **Ms. Boyd** stated the DNR's Forest Health Program consists of three people. Almost all the funding comes from the Forest Development Fund (FDF). There are no General Fund monies going into this. The forest health staff works hard to obtain grants. For the DNR it is a year-to-year budget. Each year the DNR does not know what projects it can actually take on. It is important to get the message of forest resources and its economic value, and the loss that can be created by these pests.

Mr. Melow commented that education is part of it. He asked how much is being spent to fight these pests, what is the required costs, and are there appropriations that can be spent. He also asked if it is the role of the FMAC to advise the DNR on this subject. Mr. Murray stated that invasives cost more the longer they are present, so early detection and rapid response is very important. Things that will assist with this are keeping people aware, talking about it, getting the message out, training which the DNR is willing to do, etc. **Mr. Manson** asked if there are pictures of these invasives on the DNR website so that the groups represented in the FMAC can get the message out to those they represent. **Ms. Trotter** asked how MDA funds this type of thing. The MDA uses funding through APHIS, working on projects that are important to the greater national good.

Mr. Suchovsky brought up recommendations from the FMAC. He asked as the DNR looks at the trust funding getting near its cap, is it something that can be considered to fund more activity in forest health issues. **Ms. Boyd** responded that the trust fund is constitutionally protected, and therefore it would have to be voted on. The cap will be reached this month, and the funds will then go into the Park Endowment Fund. The DNR can spend 50% of these funds on state parks. The Natural Resources Trust Fund (trust fund) will live off interest earned after that. The DNR had a record year last year giving out grants; it will be much less this year. The trust fund was not constitutionally protected until the 1980s, when it was overwhelmingly passed by the citizens to protect these funds.

Dr. Gale asked if there is a way to tie resources to a fee in some way to develop a pot that would be aimed at invasive species. She suggested partnering with the forest service. She commented that invasive species would be timely and important, and citizens might expect that if a small percentage is tied to a recreation fee, especially as the invasives will be affecting many areas of recreation. **Ms. Boyd** responded that is unlikely. The legislature has not shown much support in fee related issues. **Ms. Trotter** stated that the off-road vehicle groups have been trying to get fee increases for years without much success, and she agrees with Ms. Boyd. In regard to partnering, **Mr. Paulson** stated the forest service does a lot of cooperative work right now through State and Private.

Mr. Melow suggested the FMAC craft a message to build support for eradication of invasive species, and look at mechanisms it can construct to get funding so the FMAC can be more aggressive. **Ms. Elbing** commented it takes money to spread the word, but it seems there are places with a built-in audience, i.e. the recreation passport, hunting and fishing licenses, etc. Perhaps the DNR could distribute information in this way. **Ms. Boyd** stated it takes a lot of DNR divisions agreeing, and the DNR also does not want to give a media overload.

Mr. Suchovsky commented that a lot of trailheads have displays with "most wanted" lists. **Ms. Boyd** stated she has seen some information at campground kiosks, also. The DNR has a whole recreation arm of trail users that it is not getting through to. They are the people out there with eyes and ears. It would probably be a less expensive way to get information we already have available out to their groups through newsletters, etc. **Mr. Melow** stated there are a lot of ways to educate and communicate, but it comes back to resources to attack this particular subject. **Chair Botti** commented it would be a good opportunity to issue a press release to make citizens more aware of this issue. **Ms. Boyd** responded a press release was issued when the forest health document went out.

Ms. Boyd stated there is a lot of value in this committee making recommendations to the DNR. **Mr. Melow** commented that the DNR needs more resources to be more aggressive. The FMAC needs to find a way to get the decision makers to understand this is an important issue that needs to be addressed. The FMAC may need to recommend the need for Pathologists, make clear the resource and economic impacts on the state, and indicate that the FMAC believes this issue is important enough to address.

Mr. Suchovsky asked if we are integrating our efforts across boundaries as well as we could, i.e. MSU Extension, etc., and how has losing trees impacted the people of the state.

Mr. Melow stated the FMAC should take a bold step and suggest that resources need to be allocated for this issue. The FMAC should explain to the DNR why this is so important. Each represented group could testify before their individual Legislator regarding the seriousness of this issue and the need for the DNR to receive assistance. **Ms. Boyd** commented that having background material to use in whatever form they would like to present it will be helpful to get a bill written.

Ms. Elbing wondered about a calendar to be able to make more timely recommendations.

Ms. Boyd responded she thought it is too late for the 2012 budget. The 2013 budget is just a concept at this time. If the FMAC provided information to the DNR by the fall, it would be soon enough for it to be considered. **Mr. Melow** suggested the FMAC begin to craft recommendations to be completed by fall to move to Director Stokes, and beyond. **Ms. Boyd** stated that recommendations can be made in resolution or letter form. **Mr. Melow** commented the FMAC would need to do research in order to draft a recommendation. **Dr. Gale** suggested using the forest inventory. A suggestion was made to use the Forest Products Council or the stumpage report. **Dr. Gale** stated she will follow-up and work with Chair Botti to come up with a document for the FMAC to review at its next meeting. She also stated that she thinks marketing is very important.

Chair Botti thanked Mr. Murray for his presentation. He stated he would work with Dr. Gale as the beginning of Mr. Melow's suggestions. **Mr. Melow** added that when you take all the invasives in its entirety, and the volume of things the DNR has to work on, 90% of people have no idea this is happening. He suggested working into the language of the document that preventative measures are needed. **Ms. Trotter** stated we need a comprehensive forest policy for Michigan.

IV. Standing Discussion Items

- **Legislative Updates**

Ms. Boyd reported the April 7 and March 10 reports were included in the FMAC meeting packets. A new report will be out on May 12. Bills that are current and will affect the DNR are HB 4015; this bill is about the DNR rehiring retired fire officers. The DNR lost 38 staff to early-outs. It would like to rehire the retirees at \$11.00 per hour with full training, to be on-call

during the fire season. A hearing was being held this morning, but Ms. Boyd has not heard the results as of yet. The DNR is not taking positions on bills right now, but it did help write the language on this particular bill. It was passed unanimously in the House, but has not been placed on the Senate schedule yet.

SB 248 (Casperson) prohibits the DNR the ability to buy lands. A draft substitute bill is being worked on to include DNR issues. This bill is problematic for the DNR. There are some lands in holdings that are very advantageous and are supported by user groups, but the DNR would have to sell off land in order to buy new.

The budget bill is going through committee right now, and hopefully will be settled by next month.

- **NRC Budget Reports**

Ms. Boyd reported the NRC is changing the format of these reports, so nothing is available at this time.

- **Improving Public Involvement Process**

No discussion

- **DNR Issues**

Ms. Boyd reported the DNR has proposed closing 23 campgrounds that do not come close to making what it costs to manage. The Forest Management Division did a thorough analysis on this with Director Stokes' support. Once it went public, the Legislature expressed concern regarding closure of these campgrounds. A suggestion was made to move \$300,000 out of the fire program funding and move it into recreation funding; the fire program funding would be replaced with FDF funds. The DNR made a business case that these campgrounds are no longer needed. However, all 23 campgrounds will be offered to local units of government for management. The Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) has a pilot program that will manage six of these campgrounds (including Lime Island) if the local units do not want them. So far the response has been 10 "no thank you" and five "we would like to...but." This means that a handful of local units of government will run some campgrounds, Parks and Recreation will manage a few state forest campgrounds, and the future of the remaining campgrounds will be determined at a later date. The DNR will be working with one-year use permits to see if it is going to work. The DNR's objective is to do long-term leases with local units of government.

Ms. Elbing asked what the impact will be on the fire program; **Ms. Boyd** responded there will not be an impact on the fire program, but the FDF will be losing money; the impact is more on state forest management. **Ms. Trotter** asked if the \$300,000 is based on reality. **Ms. Boyd** answered it is; that is what it cost last year to run the campgrounds, while the DNR took in perhaps \$60,000 in revenue from the campgrounds. If it goes through as first proposed, there will be 110 state forest campgrounds throughout the state. If campgrounds are closed, all wells, etc. will be capped and it will become part of the state forest system. Dispersed camping will still be allowed in these areas. **Ms. Boyd** stated that most likely the Director's Order to close the 23 campgrounds will not be signed at the May 12 Natural Resources Commission meeting. If the supplemental bill passes, the DNR will be keeping the campgrounds open and work in partnership with local units of government and PRD.

- **Biodiversity Conservation Update**

Ms. Boyd stated Director Stokes has committed to no net loss of timber harvest. The DNR is still working on how it will get that done, and working on the regional plans if they need to be updated,

V. **Pro Silva**

Chair Botti stated this is a European organization similar to our American Society of American Foresters. Europe has been known for high levels of silviculture for centuries. Its silviculture

often relies on artificial regeneration. The organization wants to know how to make it more natural. Two members of Pro Silva are coming to the United States in September. They are going to drive a few days through the state of Washington, and then will visit Michigan. They are interested in silviculture research stations they can look at in Michigan. Ford Forestry Center and Michigan Tech has studies going back to the 1950s. The Forest Service at Dukes has studies going back to the 1930s. A tour has been set up. Once they arrive in Escanaba, a tour of a tree farm close by will try to be arranged. The next day they will travel to Dukes to visit that site, stay overnight in Alberta and visit that research area in the morning. They will then travel back to Escanaba that night. On the way down from Alberta to Escanaba, Chair Botti would like to work in a place to visit where we are using silvicultural treatments. Chair Botti would like to call Mr. Jim Ferris, DNR, to set this group up; SAF and Tree Farm should also be involved. **Ms. Elbing** suggested that Two Hearted River participate, also. **Chair Botti** requested the FMAC let him know who all would like to be involved. The dates are September 24, 25 and 26.

VI. Bylaws

Chair Botti asked the FMAC to write down concerns they perceive in the bylaws to discuss at the next meeting.

VII. Next Meeting

July 13, 2011

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

VIII. Agenda Items

Standing Items

Bylaw Review; is the FMAC meeting its obligations

Reforestation; Genetics

Wildlife Strategic Plan (for future meeting)

Strategy or Policy of Forests in Michigan (something for the FMAC to discuss at future meetings)

Update on Mining Activities

FMAC Resolution on Priorities – Bill Botti / Peg Gale

IX. Adjournment

Chair Botti adjourned the May 11 FMAC meeting at 4:02 p.m.