

**FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
September 4, 2013
Marquette Operations Service Center**

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. William (Bill) Manson, Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association (via conference call)
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club (via conference call)
Mr. Steve Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Mr. Bill O'Neill, Chief, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Ms. Rose Wilbur (substituting for Kim Korbecki), FMAC Assistant, MDNR
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass
Dr. Donna LaCourt, Michigan Employment Development Corporation
Ms. Lauri Elbing, The Nature Conservancy (via conference call)

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Ms. Jo Reyer, for Mr. Barry Paulson, United States Forest Service (USFS), Huron-Manistee

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mr. Dennis Nezich, DNR
Ms. Kerry Wieber, DNR
Ms. Deb Begalle, DNR

I. Welcome

Chair Botti called the September 4, 2013 Forest Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He asked each person to introduce themselves.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of September 4, 2013 FMAC Meeting Agenda**
Motion: Mr. Suchovsky motioned to adopt the September 4 FMAC Agenda; seconded by **Mr. Robbins**.
Motion to adopt the September 4, 2013 FMAC Meeting Agenda passed unanimously.
- **Adoption of June 26, 2013 FMAC Meeting Minutes**
Chair Botti noted that there is a 7-day rule for objections to be made to the minutes before they are automatically passed.
Approval of the June 26, 2013 FMAC Meeting Minutes passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. PILT / Forest Legacy Program/Land Strategy

Ms. Kerry Wieber gave a PowerPoint presentation on Managed Public Land Strategy. The history of public land management, value of DNR-managed lands, strategies, investments, engagement process and related information was provided. **Mr. Robbins**

commented that the acreage numbers were a little less than they should be. **Ms. Wieber** responded that it did not include federal land. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that is necessary to communicate and to strategize to the Governor and the leaders to ensure they understand this information.

Mr. Suchovsky commented on the importance of this as well. A discussion on consolidated ownership was held. **Ms. Wieber** commented that this would be reviewed. A discussion on boundaries was held. **Ms. Trotter** asked about public lands, economics, taxes and PILT. A discussion on this subject was held. **Mr. Robbins** discussed a study that showed the areas of high quality of life in relation to most available natural resources. **Mr. Melow** mentioned that the legislature did not appropriately fund PILT. **Mr. O'Neill** will get clarification on the legislative adoption process to follow.

Motion: **Mr. Shine** made a motion that **Chair Botti** prepare a letter to the Director to support the Land Strategy (once it has been reviewed entirely along with the adoption process) to encourage approval by legislature; seconded by **Mr. Suchovsky**. All were in favor.

Motion for Chair Botti to prepare letter of support passed unanimously.

Mr. O'Neill noted that we will send all PowerPoint presentations to members.

Ms. Wieber also gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding PILT Information – tax reverted, purchased lands and commercial forest lands. Tax reverted land acquired on foreclosure of taxes. Assessed values are now on current tax year. PA 603 and 604 require full and timely payments to local units of government, and the state is subject to penalties for delinquent payments. **Ms. Wieber** noted the PILT process has improved, but not entirely corrected.

Mr. Suchovsky mentioned trust fund money. **Mr. Shine** questioned the process for Road and Bridge funds. **Mr. O'Neill** provided discussion and explanation of the process, including distinguishing between county roads and state roads. **Mr. Suchovsky** questioned how the *Doctrine of Adverse Possession* comes into play. **Chair Botti** noted that this should be added as a future special agenda item. **Ms. Reyer** discussed the federal PILT money and Secure Federal Schools Program. She added that this program looks as though it is coming to an end.

Ms. Wieber also gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Forest Legacy Program. **Dr. Sharik** requested to know the national ranking. **Ms. Wieber** will check on this and provide the information to committee. She discussed the top ten objectives of the program. Quite a bit of the state is in the Forest Legacy Program. **Ms. Trotter** requested to know if this would be under the commercial forest rules for antlerless requirements. **Ms. Wieber** confirmed that it should be. Fee acquisition and simple ownership were described and discussed. **Chair Botti** requested to know if there are minimum requirements regarding easements. **Ms. Wieber** noted that there must be a public non-motorized access. **Mr. O'Neill** mentioned that we are the national leader. Accolades were given to **Ms. Wieber** for her work in Forest Legacy.

V. Qualified Forest Program

Mr. Shine gave an update on the Qualified Forest Program and the Forestry Assistance Program. He provided a brochure for the Forestry Assistance Program. A map was provided of the regions. **Dr. Sharik** asked what the delineation of the regions was. **Mr. Shine** discussed the aggregation of counties based on an alignment that made sense due to land. He added that they are working hard to be complimentary and to encourage people to get into the Qualified Forest Program to get the tax break. They are trying diligently to get integrated into the community. He added that relationship building is difficult. Training of our young foresters is necessary.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that we would make our training programs available foresters. **Chair Botti** mentioned that there is a lot of enthusiasm with this program.

Mr. Shine noted that the Qualified Forest Program deadline was September 1. However, those under the old program still have an additional year to convert. The new Qualified Forest Program will replace the old Qualified Forest Program. Owners under the old program must convert to the new program. If they exit the program, there is no penalty because the law changed. However, the taxable value will change.

Dr. Sharik asked Mr. Shine to help him understand why a consulting forester mentioned that transfer of the program has been hugely costly to him in both time and money. **Mr. Shine** explained that there is no fee to convert. If the consulting forester is not registered as a qualified forester, then that could be a cost. A discussion on the requirements of registering and/or qualifying was held. **Mr. O'Neill** discussed the process and possible upcoming changes. He will provide additional stats at the next meeting. **Ms. Trotter** mentioned she has offered to hold a meeting at her office for outreach on October 2.

VI. Regional Forest Planning Process

Ms. Begalle, MDNR, gave an update on the Regional Forest Planning Process. They received 186 comments and submissions on the public comments. They have been categorized and revisions have been made. She mentioned that there was a great deal of comment on aspen management. After doing more analysis, management areas were revised, reducing the rotation ages. They are in the process of doing some lowland harvest productions. She added that this year, limiting factors were analyzed to give us an idea of what is manageable in regard to acres. There was no mention of climate change, but they will monitor that date. Chapter 5 was a special resource area and it was decided to take that and place it with the management area. Public will be provided the updated information by mid-October. The timeframe to finalize is projected for December or January. **Chair Botti** mentioned that it was curious that our target area of aspen is the same. **Ms. Begalle** replied that one would not see a big change in a ten-year program. A discussion was held on climate change and the effect on various species. Further discussion on invasive species was added. **Mr. O'Neill** offered to provide more information if needed. He further discussed the timeframe and the future of the regional forest planning process and land use.

VII. Update on Wetlands (Bill 163), from DEQ & DNR on interface of bill with Forestry

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that this is a carry-over from last month. Discussion on the bill was held. Revisions are expected. This item will remain on the agenda for updates.

VIII. Forest Products Summit: 6 Priorities

Mr. O'Neill provided an update on the Forest Products Summit. The six priorities were discussed. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if there would be a biology-related person on the committee. **Mr. O'Neill** responded that at this time it would be difficult to answer, as expertise may need to be brought in.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that the U.S. Forest Service is drafting a committee to have a conversation with us to try to establish mutual goals. Ms. Korbecki is arranging that meeting at this time. **Mr. Melow** mentioned that on September 11, the United States Department of Agriculture is having a press conference regarding this.

Mr. O'Neill discussed that there is an opportunity to increase exports. Finally, he mentioned the final priority as a need for value-added services.

Mr. O'Neill will get a draft of minutes.

IX. 2013 Fall SAF

Dr. Sharik discussed the 2013 Fall SAF conference being held in Traverse City at the Great Wolf Lodge. An information sheet was passed out to the committee. The objective is to define the role of each organization with a vested interest in regard to biomaterials statewide.

Dr. Sharik has a list of at least 50 different groups from different agencies. The conference will include landowners, industry, academia, legislators, and key private industry people. This is an opportunity for those groups to tell the educational and research sectors what they need to do to contribute to a statewide initiative on biomaterials. It is important that people come to the table to make this happen. **Dr. Sharik** also discussed sponsorship. There is a \$95 registration fee.

X. Standing Discussion Items

- **Timber Advisory Committee Update** – Refer to Packet
- **Legislative Update** – **Mr. O'Neill** mentioned that as a committee it may be a good idea to highlight our existence and the work that the committee does – suggest annual letter to the Governor.

Note: **Mr. Melow** mentioned that there is a National Bioenergy Conference on October 17 and 18 in Grayling, Michigan. The general public cannot be accommodated at this particular conference.

XI. Next Meeting Date

Meeting Date: November 6, 2013
Location: MUCC, Lansing

XII. Agenda Items

Doctrine of Adverse Possession

XIII. Adjournment. The September 4, 2013 FMAC meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.