

**Forest Stewardship State Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**January 26, 2010**  
**Alpine Lodge, Gaylord, MI**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Gerald Grossman, Grossman Forestry; Jerry Lambert, Forest Resource Service; Dean Solomon, MSU Extension ; Amy Spray, MUCC; Gib King, USFWS; Scott Heather, DNRE, FMD; David Price, DNRE, FMD; Warren Suchovsky, Landowner; Keith R. Martell III, Martell Forestry Inc.; Andy Henriksen, NRCS; Dale Allen, USDA, FSA; Lori Phalen, MACD; John Van Dyke, Landowner; Tom Stone, DNRE, FMD; Bill Cook, MSU Extension; Debra Huff, DNRE, FMD; Christine Hall, TNC; Kathleen Ryan, USDA-NRCS Area RC&D Coordinator; Marshall Gilbert, New Page; Kerry Wieber, DNRE FMD; Scott Stewart, USDA FS, Forest Legacy program.

**INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS:**

Mr. Grossman called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Introductions were made. Mr. Grossman asked if there were any members interested in the Chair position, as he has held it for a number of years. With no responders, Mr. Grossman indicated that he would be willing to continue serving in this capacity. He asked that the minutes from July be amended to include that the same request was made at that time. A motion to accept was made, and approved.

**FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT UPDATE** David Price, DNRE, FMD

David briefly described the assessment process so far. The deadline for the completion of the Assessment, which is set by the Farm Bill, is June 2010. So it is a tight deadline. The ranking process to determine the priority of the GIS layers is complete. The planners are moving on to the modeling process now and the FSP Advisory Committee will be asked to help to define the strategies that would be most important to use to address our highest priorities. This will be used for the Cooperative programs, and also for state lands. Information sheets will be available on the DNRE website for the Advisory Committee at: [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002\\_44009---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_44009---,00.html)

**FOREST LEGACY UPDATE** Kerry Wieber, DNRE, FMD

Kerry reported that there was no funding for FY10 for Michigan Legacy, but that the remainder of the Northern Project was funded under the 09 grant. The national allocation for Forest Legacy has risen. Scott Stewart, from the FS office in Newtown Square, PA, updated the committee on the Legacy program. Mr. Grossman brought up how we are addressing the protection of forests and how do we set our priorities? Some counties already have a lot of protected areas. Wieber responded that we don't get any applications from Southern MI, where working forest land is scarce. She added that the State makes PILT (payments in lieu of taxes) on the land once it is acquired, so that it is not accurate to say that there is no longer revenue coming in once the state acquires it. For example, the state will make over \$48,000 in PILT payments to the county on current applicant land, which would exceed developed tax revenue and does not include the municipal expenses of school buses, fire control or roads. In addition, the Crisp Point property, if approved, will ensure that the Snowmobile trail #8, which is of economic importance to the area, will not be disabled. Hall added that applying to the Legacy program is an individual's property right ( to do what they wish with the property).

Grossman indicated overall support of the proposed projects, but wonders how the State will find the resources to manage them. Lambert indicates that we are missing opportunities to preserve threatened forest land because of the hard and fast rule that public access be a firm requirement. Wieber responded that the DNRE has made that a state requirement, and we cannot accept applications without the willingness to provide at least foot access for hunting and fishing. Stewart said that while it is not a national requirement of the Legacy program, the most successful states in receiving funds are those who

do have public access as part of their projects. Lambert added that NW Michigan is under extreme development pressure right now and we may be losing opportunities.

Wieer mentioned the role of consulting foresters and Legacy. She said the program will encourage people to contact their consulting forester, but the application is made by the landowner, and the agreement is with the landowner only. Thus, she will not be directly contacting the consulting forester for the property, unless directed to do so by the landowner. Since a management plan is required, she sees potential for poorly managed properties who apply to be referred to a consulting forester and to be put under better management.

Martell said the costs of owning forest land is not keeping pace with the taxes ( timber prices are not rising fast enough). We must use programs for people to be able to derive an income from their property.

#### **DNR UPDATE** Scott Heather, DNRE, FMD

Scott described the new transition of the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The Director will be Becky Humphries, who will move to Constitution Hall. There will be three administrations or bureaus. They are: Resource Management, Stewardship, and Environmental Protection. There will be a regional system with regional directors across the state, with the lines being drawn into four ecosystem regions defined by the Great Lakes watersheds. They are the Lake Erie region, the Lake Huron region, the Lake Michigan region and the Upper Peninsula. Each region will have at least 1 Citizens Advisory Council. The Natural Resource Commission will set policy for fish and wildlife programs and advise the Director. The Governor will name the Director. Other boards and commissions are Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Michigan Historical Commission, Waterways Commission, Natural Resources Trust Fund Board, and the Michigan Environmental Science Boards. Certain offices have been established to report to the Director. They are a policy office, a media & communications office, a marketing & education office, an administrative office, and the Office of the Great Lakes.

Scott explained how the cooperative forestry programs took a 75% cut from the General Fund this year, and we had to determine how to get critical work done. We used some FSP money to help fund the salaries of the Service Foresters to help get the job done. Since that was not enough to fund their salaries full time, the Service Foresters must do some timber sale work so they can get paid out of those accounts. In the UP, the service foresters will work 2 days per week on private forest land assistance, and in the LP, they have 1 day per week.

On the tax programs, like the Commercial Forest program, some attempts are being made to incorporate Law Enforcement Division into the investigation of a violation of the CFA or the QFP laws, instead of the Service Forester doing it.

FMD has requested input on the Commercial forest program. Some of the administrative rules are not in line with what we do, and we have been given permission to adjust these rules. One requirement is to hold public meetings – can we modify that to include a few counties, instead of single counties.

Comments about the QFP, that the interest is not there, most likely due to the Recapture tax. Suchovsky said that some of the forestry organizations have contacted Rep. Booer's office about this. It is a serious detriment. Spray said that her office has had conversations with Sen. VanWoerkems office in this regard.

#### **FSP UPDATE** Debra Huff, DNRE FMD

Huff shared the budget for grants for plan writing for the past ten years, and compared it to this year's budget. With a big cut in available dollars, the Outreach and Education grants have been discontinued, but plan writing grants are still available. All funds for plan writing grants are being allocated. We won't know what next year's budget is until we get the budget advice. We are working at applying for Competitive Redesign grants for next year. The grant applications the State Forester turned in for FY10 were not selected for funding for Michigan. The first step in that process is to have the State Forester approve the application, then it moves on to the national assessment. We will put in for another grant this

year, if the State Forester approves it. Huff asked the consultants who are writing Tree Farm plans, to make them into Forest Stewardship plans, because this is one of the elements used to allocate grant money to Michigan's Forest Stewardship program, and is passed on in plan writing grants. Huff also asked that NRCS continue to work with the DNR as we strive to provide some level of technical assistance to private forest owners.

Training sessions will be offered this year for both landowners and for plan writers. Part of the Redesign grant for Intergenerational Transfer is to provide training to landowners and to potential trainers, for helping families identify how best to keep their forest land in the family and as working forest land. The first pilot session of this training will be on February 6, 2010, in Charlotte. The next session will be a Train-the\_trainer session held on February 18, 2010, in the Lansing area. This will be taught by Clint Bentz, who is one of the originators of the Ties to the Land program, upon which this effort is based. More information about these programs can be obtained from Georgia Peterson, MSU Extension at [petersong1@mi.gov](mailto:petersong1@mi.gov)

In addition, the FSP program will partner with Extension in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota to offer training sessions for landowners based on the book "Woodland Steward". A few sessions may be offered in the state if there is sufficient interest. Huff handed out a few of the books for members to look at.

The Forest Service performed a formal review of the Forest Stewardship program in July 2009, and Michigan received a very good review. That can be found on the website at: [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002\\_44009---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_44009---,00.html)

#### **BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** Dale Allen, Farm Services Agency

Already, 13 million has been allocated to Michigan. He gave an overview of this program, which was authorized under the Energy Title of the 2008 Farm Bill. We are in Phase 1 now. Several facilities are already approved and aggregators are providing materials to those facilities. Much information is available on the website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/energy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/energy) FSA signed up the first facility for biomass conversion in L'Anse on 9/16/09. Comments: Do we need a standard for the level of harvesting that is sustainable on the landscape? Now that a forest stewardship plan is not required, the foresters are cut out of the process and it is possible that a logger without any forestry knowledge would just say that their practices were sustainable.

#### **INDIVIDUAL PARTNER REPORTS**

**MSU EXTENSION** Dean Solomon and Bill Cook. Training on Family Forest Succession (Intergenerational Transfer) is ready for 2/6/10, 2/18/10, and 3/8/10. On 2/17/10 there will be a Woody Biomass meeting in Grayling to address what we need to do in terms of the wood energy message? In cooperation with Michigan Tech and Extension. Also to address issues with the proposed cellulosic ethanol facility. As a statewide program, it will also include a cement plant in Alpena (because they use wood energy). MSUE and the Experiment Station are trying to provide information to corporations and businesses – focused on the supply side.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm