

FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 4, 2015

Meeting Minutes

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA)
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Stephen Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD)
Mr. Bill O'Neill, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Gary Melow, Vice Chair, Michigan Biomass
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Dr. Rich Kobe, Michigan State University

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Ms. Pam Repp, USFS, Huron-Manistee (representing Ms. Leslie Auriemmo, USFS, Huron-Manistee)

FMAC ADVISORS ABSENT

Mr. Andy Henriksen, USDA Conservation District

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mr. Jason Stephens, MDNR
Ms. Sarah Topp, MUCC
Mr. Mike Smalligan, MDNR
Mr. David Price, MDNR
Mr. Roger Mech, MDNR

I. Welcome – Bill Botti, Chair (Michigan Forest Association)

Chair Botti called the November 4, 2015 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. He asked each person to introduce themselves.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of November 4, 2015 FMAC Meeting Agenda**

Mr. O'Neill asked that the following item be removed from the agenda: "*How to Become More Proactive and Less Responsive*", under "*IX. Standing Discussion Items.*" The November 4, 2015 FMAC meeting agenda was approved as edited.

- **Adoption of September 9, 2015 FMAC Meeting Minutes**

Chair Botti asked for discussion. The September 9, 2015 FMAC meeting minutes were adopted unanimously, as presented.

- **Adoption of 2016 FMAC Meeting Schedule**

Chair Botti asked for discussion. **Mr. O'Neill** suggested the FMAC meet face-to-face four times a year like the Timber Advisory Council (TAC), and conduct periodic conference calls as well. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented that the FMAC needs to keep up the importance of the meetings and avoid lack of continuity. **Mr. O'Neill** agreed the FMAC needs to keep continuity and plans to present proposed meeting dates and times at the next meeting for vote by the committee. The FMAC agreed to the January 6, 2016 meeting date on the proposed meeting schedule presented at this meeting, and will vote to adopt or deny

Mr. O'Neill's proposed 2016 meeting schedule at that time.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Debriefing of Governor's 2015 Forest Products Summit

Mr. O'Neill reported that the Forest Products Summit (summit) that was held October 28, 2015 was a big success. Participants were updated on progress since the last summit in 2013 -- an increase in the economic contribution of the forest products industry, to \$17.8 billion and 87,000 jobs, with a goal of \$20 billion within 5 years. A few highlights were presentations on: 1) workforce development issues, emphasizing a need for skilled trades such as in the welding industry, and the difficulty in finding workers; 2) Lands Panel - role and management of state forests and private forests; 3) Ms. Kathleen Atkinson, U.S. Forest Service, Eastern Regional Forester and Director Creagh signed the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) master agreement which provides MDNR opportunities to work with the U.S. Forest Service; 4) Mr. Kelly Shotbolt, President of ARAUCO North American (ARAUCO), presented a company profile and described the new mill coming to Grayling in late 2016 which will be the single largest continuous particleboard press in North America, and one of the highest capacity presses in the world. ARAUCO is investing \$325 million, creating 250 full-time jobs which will pay \$50,000 per year. ARAUCO decided to invest in Michigan because it's cooperative, well informed, open and transparent, and helpful. ARAUCO utilizes softwood such as jack pine, red pine, spruce, and fir. ARAUCO's biggest buyer is Ikea. Presentations, videos, and meeting materials for the summit can be viewed [here](#).

Mr. Suchovsky asked how this new mill impacts Weyerhaeuser. **Mr. O'Neill** responded there is no competition because Weyerhaeuser uses 70% hardwood. ARAUCO's mill will create synergy rather than competition and will stimulate even more harvests. **Mr. Shine** commented ARAUCO's startup may create competition in logging crews. ARAUCO purchased state land, and the sale will be completed at the next NRC meeting on November 5. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that the local residents are happy about ARAUCO's investment, although there are some environmental concerns such as the Au Sable Watershed and roads. **Mr. O'Neill** concluded that the MDNR will make sure all issues are considered during its conversations with ARAUCO.

Chair Botti stated the summit was very upbeat and informative, explaining not only the progress made but how it was achieved. **Mr. Robbins** commented that Michigan Forest Association (MFA) had a big role in that progress of the forest economy. **Mr. Shine** agreed it was a good summit because it caused people to focus and outlined what has been accomplished as a group.

V. Forest Stewardship Update

Mr. Mike Smalligan, MDNR, presented the [attached PowerPoint](#) on the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP).

The FSP's core purpose is to help landowners manage, protect and enjoy their forest. It was established by the 1990 Farm Bill. The MDNR manages 4 million acres of state forests and stewardship programs create benefits for private lands. There are 20.3 million acres of forest land. Michigan's forest owners include 38% public and 62% private, which includes 400,000 family owners with an average size of 23 acres.

Michigan has 125 consulting foresters who work directly for the landowner; 125 industry foresters who work for local products companies; and 35 government foresters.

Many of MDNR's daily activities directly benefit private forest land such as forest health, fire protection, forest management and training.

Private forest land programs include: 1) Commercial Forest (CF) -- active since 1925, provides lower property taxes for active forestry; 2) Urban & Community Forestry -- forestry where 75% of the population live; 3) Forest Legacy -- easements to protect rare forests; and 4) Forest Stewardship -- manage, protect and enjoy forests. The FSP is active in all 83 counties, Wayne County being the last added, with a school forest at Frost Middle School in Livonia.

Mr. Smalligan wants to focus more on schools which is a good investment for the future, coinciding with workforce development. He encourages exposing students at a young age to natural resources by getting schools interested. Another important initiative is the School Forest Bus Fund which will help get kids to their school forests or to nearby public or private forests.

Grant projects include: 1) training foresters to enhance the management of private forest land which is a partnership with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to train public and private foresters; 2) landscape stewardship plans through The Nature Conservancy, Huron Pines, and The Stewardship Network; and 3) reducing runoff in the Dead River Watershed-Superior Watershed partnership planting 2,500 trees in Marquette.

Mr. Manson asked how MDNR gets information to urban schools. **Mr. O'Neill** replied that MDNR has a Project Learning Tree coordinator who works with schools, the soil conservation district foresters, and the Michigan Forest Association (MFA). He added the MDNR can do a better job and that's why Forest Resources Division (FRD) has asked for more funding for its media campaign. **Mr. Manson** asked Mr. Smalligan for a list of school forests. **Mr. Smalligan** responded that he is working on a list and will forward it to him.

Mr. Robbins asked how to educate urban kids about natural resources. Suggestions included interviews, articles, and press releases. **Mr. Smalligan** stated MFA plans to have its annual meeting in Novi, which is a great strategy to attract urban youth. **Mr. Suchovsky** added that another opportunity to educate and inform would be to attend high school career days.

Mr. Smalligan added that in August, more than 120 Detroit high school students who are employed by The Greening of Detroit to maintain trees in the city, took a 2-day field trip to the RAM Center to learn about sustainable forest management. This event was a partnership between the DNR, Michigan Sustainable Forestry Initiative, The Greening of Detroit, and Michigan Association of Timbermen.

Chair Botti asked Mr. Smalligan if there is any field checking done on forest stewardship management plans. He asked this because he had an incident where a landowner asked him to review a plan that was written by a biologist. **Mr. Smalligan** replied that FSPs are reviewed by MDNR service foresters but there is no capacity to check accuracy of information. There is a 98% approval rating on plans. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that the FSP is designed to train plan writers and verify them to be on a list. He added there is very good compliance. The MDNR makes sure the private forest management program is important. There are 2 million acres of CF in the UP, all nonindustrial private forests. From a forester's perspective, the MDNR wants private landowners to have a management plan.

Mr. Suchovsky commented the most important things about the management plan are: 1) did the plan writer capture the landowner's objective? Some plans have more than landowners want or need); and 2) when the plan is written, no one follows up to see the status.

Mr. Suchovsky invited Mr. Smalligan to attend a WUP Citizens Advisory Council meeting to educate the general public on private lands programs.

VI. Spruce Budworm Plan Assessment Update

Mr. Roger Mech, MDNR, presented the [attached PowerPoint](#) on the spruce budworm (SBW).

The last outbreak in Michigan was in the late '60s through early '80s, defoliating 519,000 acres, 67% balsam fir and 42% of white spruce was killed. 2014 was the beginning of the current regional budworm epidemic.

State forestland is made up of 323,494 acres (16,275 stands) of white spruce/balsam fir, with age range of 70-89 years. The MDNR's response to the SBW includes: June-press releases and emails; July-aerial and ground surveys, inventory analysis; August-compile final list of high-risk stands; and 2015 SBW project plans, data, and maps to field units. The MDNR's strategy is to work with management units to identify stands at risk; impacts will occur gradually over the next decade, so staff will focus on stand value and risk to ensure efficient use of limited resources. The MDNR will continue working with private, industrial and local government landowners.

Mr. Mech reported the good news is that SBW is understood because it has been around awhile with an established cycle. The MDNR is braced for the possibility of heavy defoliation in the Upper Peninsula, although it is not as likely in the Lower Peninsula. Spruce budworm actually prefers balsam fir. Michigan does not see extensive forests of pure spruce type, so it presents challenges, but the MDNR knows how to prioritize the resource. The SBW is not like oak wilt; it's gradual, so the time factor is an advantage to being more cost-effective and efficient.

Mr. Mech thanked Mr. Jason Stephens, MDNR, for his work on inventory data of spruce and fir on state land. Now there are lists of what's at risk and where to start. Mr. Brian Maki, MDNR, created a spatial database that produces maps.

Chair Botti asked if markets to harvest trees are at risk. **Mr. Mech** responded that mills are taking timber and **Mr. O'Neill** added that in the northern two-thirds of the state there are no unsold timber sales, and not many spruce salvage sales, so the MDNR hopes to do better there.

VII. Forest Certification Audit Update

Mr. David Price, MDNR, distributed the [attached Summary Report](#) for the 2015 MDNR Forest Certification Audit. This is the second decade of forest certification. **Mr. Price** reported that auditors are not finding much oversight during field tours at this point. The audit covered Atlanta, Gaylord, Traverse City and Gladwin forest management units, and the Lansing office during the week of September 28.

Result: A recommendation by both Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) auditors for continued certification of the state forest under both forest management standards. The MDNR is working with auditors to clarify and refine preliminary findings over the next month.

Mr. Robbins asked Mr. Price if he has heard of a new FSC ERA/HCV criterion whereby wetlands cannot be ERAs. **Mr. Price** responded he had not, and **Mr. Robbins** said he'd follow-up with an article. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that ARAUCO is looking for FSC certified wood. **Mr. Manson** said FSC called him for comments during the audit.

Ms. Trotter asked how the MUCC would work with the MDNR and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) on volunteer habitat creation projects on United State Forest Service land. **Mr. Price** explained that when the MDNR establishes program income through GNA, it will be able to use money on work in national forests. A portion of the receipts from the timber sales will reimburse the state for its costs to do the work, with remaining funds available to conduct additional restoration activities on the forest.

Ms. Repp, Huron-Manistee National Forest, said they work with many partners through the stewardship program and welcome volunteers. **Ms. Trotter** will work with **Ms. Repp** to explore project opportunities.

VIII. Forester Registration Update

Mr. O'Neill reported that the DNR is planning to work with the forestry community to draft a proposal within the next few months. The Governor asked Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) to look at licensing regimes and what added value they brought to the state. Some foresters thought the program had value. The Governor will not be eliminating this program. **Mr. O'Neill** said there is a need for legislation to indicate where the program is lodged and who will administer it. The MDNR has a few registered foresters, mostly working on private lands. There are 500 foresters in the state, 225 that are registered foresters.

Ms. Trotter said MUCC supports forester registration from a consumer protection standpoint.

IX. Standing Discussion Items

• Timber Advisory Committee Update

Mr. O'Neill briefed the committee earlier regarding the forest products summit. **Ms. Trotter** said the 4-part video of the summit is on MUCC's YouTube channel. **Mr. O'Neill** thanked Ms. Trotter and the MUCC for providing their equipment and operating the livestream video feed at the summit.

• Legislative Update

Ms. Trotter reported that SB 244, SB 245, and SB 246 are on the way to Governor's desk. Also, HB 4239 is on its way to the Governor's desk. This bill eliminates the safety zone for archery hunters; allows more hunting near structures in buffer zones; and provides unique opportunities for hunters.

• FMAC Member Program Updates

- **Mr. Robbins** reported that the Michigan Forest Products Council presented Director Keith Creagh, MDNR, with the Tuebor Award at the Forest Products Summit. He is working with **Mr. O'Neill** on road access, and timber restoration on federal and state land. Michigan being viewed as a state to do business in is a move in the right direction.
- **Mr. Manson** reported that grants have been sent out to clubs. One pending issue is with the trail from Munising to Pictured Rocks on H-58. Alger County Road Commission sent MSA a bill for \$28,000 for road damage. They are at a standstill on paying it. If not resolved, the road commission will ban snowmobiles from the area, and the county will lose business for closure of this quarter-mile trail.
- **Ms. Repp** reported she is new to Michigan and sees good opportunities here. **Ms. Auriemmo** asked her to share that she is working on a special project agreement for GNA, and the District level is identifying potential projects.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** reported that in early summer he attended a meeting in Wisconsin at which the Forest Guild reported on a project they were conducting on the impact of regulation on logging in Wisconsin. The project will investigate the economic and ecological impacts of a broad range of restrictions on forestry, including practices designed to prevent or control invasive species, measures designed to protect or enhance populations of rare species, and forest practices designed to maintain forest productivity. He is concerned with logging truck capacity, e.g., he gets a few cords

hailed, then does not see the trucker for a month; cannot find drivers. There is a need to train people to operate equipment.

- **Mr. Shine** recognized Mr. Suchovsky for being the first Michigan landowner to achieve the Forest, Wetlands and Habitat System verification under MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program). He also reported a Best Management Practices audit was conducted by Steigerwaldt. The Qualified Forest Program has had a busy year with new amendments, over 340,000 acres entered total.
- **Mr. Jason Stephens**, DNR, reported he was sitting in on the FMAC meeting to learn about stakeholder involvement, as part of his enrollment in the Quality of Life Leadership Academy.
- **Ms. Sarah Topp**, MUCC (AmeriCorps volunteer), is coordinating on-the-ground programs with 8 projects out of 20 started. She is involved with 14 state land habitat restoration projects. **Ms. Trotter** commented that MUCC is always looking for partners. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that AmeriCorps volunteers provide needed services while gaining valuable work experience. Currently, FRD has 3 AmeriCorps volunteers, and next year plans on getting 10.

X. Next Meeting Date

January 6, 2016

Location: MUCC

XI. Future Agenda Items

Update on the MDNR's new and Improved Website – Jeff Schmidt/Beth Clute, DNR (future meeting)

Legislative Update – Trevor VanDyke, Legislative and Legal Affairs, DNR (January meeting)

Urban and Community Forestry Update – Kevin Sayers, DNR (January meeting)

Update on Forester Registration – Bill O'Neill, DNR

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:57pm