



# FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2022

## **Attending for the Forest Management Advisory Committee (Committee or FMAC)**

Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club

Gary Melow (**Chair**), Michigan Biomass

Kristina Kennedy, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan

Rich Kobe, Michigan State University

Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association

Andrew Storer (virtual), Michigan Technological University, School of Forestry

Ben Schram (virtual), Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD)

Kenny Wawsczyk (virtual), North Country Trail Association

## **Attending as an FMAC Advisor**

John Kazmierski (virtual), United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest

John Bauer (virtual), United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

## **Attending for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Department or MDNR)**

Jeff Stampfly, MDNR

Kim Korbecki, MDNR

## **Minutes**

### **Welcome**

Gary Melow, Chair, called the April 13, 2022 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC or Committee) to order at 1:05 p.m.

### **Consent Agenda & Adoption of January 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Melow asked for approval and adoption of the April 13 FMAC meeting agenda and the January 12 FMAC meeting minutes. Bill Botti moved to adopt both documents, as presented; supported by Paul Jernberg. The FMAC adopted the April 13 FMAC meeting agenda and January 12, 2022 FMAC meeting minutes unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **State Forester's Report – Jeff Stampfly, MDNR**

Jeff Stampfly, Chief & State Forester, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Forest Resources Division, gave the following report:

1. Mr. Stampfly reported the request by the FMAC to have the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) added to the Forest Resources Division's (FRD) Best Management Practices, is still moving through the process but is now close to approval by Dan Eichinger, Director, MDNR.
2. Infrastructure Bill Funding – Michigan is receiving a significant amount of this funding (over \$1 million). Mr. Stampfly reported the following details and how the funding will be dispersed.
  - a. It was enacted originally as a series of resolutions, but funds could not be dispersed until a federal budget was passed.

- b. Now that the budget is in place, the United States (U.S.) Forest Service is working with the National Association of State Foresters to get the funds distributed.
  - c. The intent of the funding is to further implementation of Forest Action Plan (FAP) goals, and to that end Cooperative Forestry and Fire are reviewing the FAP to determine where best to utilize the funding.
  - d. The U.S. Forest Service, both state and private, is trying to arrange a meeting with the MDNR to discuss this funding. There are also other grant opportunities coming out as a part of the Infrastructure Bill. Fire Departments and other entities are also eligible for this money. They would like to discuss a strategy to go after additional monies, and to put together partnerships to help with whatever and wherever they need environmental protection throughout the state.
3. The FRD sent three dozers to assist in Texas and they have now returned.
  4. Legislative Updates – [January 13, 2022](#). The legislative updates were made available to the Committee members. No further discussion took place.

### Action Items/ Follow-up

None

### Standing Discussion Items

1. **Trails**

Mr. Stampfly reported that FRD has been working with the Parks & Recreation Division (PRD) on equestrian issues.
2. Kenny Wawsczyk commented there has been timber sales in the Northern Lower Peninsula along the North Country Trail, where they have had good communications with FRD staff. They have been letting North Country Trail staff know when they are going to be out there, and they have volunteers that go out and check the trail, as well. He mentioned they would like to have the same kind of communication with all DNR staff as they have with people like Lucas Merrick, out of the Gaylord Management Unit.
3. Paul Jernberg reported that lower Michigan did not have a good snowmobile season due to poor snow conditions. His club was down over 9,000 miles in grooming. Much of their club mileage was on national forest land.
  - a. Off-road vehicle (ORV) traffic on snowmobile trails was causing the trail to become rutted, the base mixing with dirt, and there was insufficient snow to groom out the ruts. Once weight restrictions are off, they will partner with the Cadillac Club and take photos for the Forest Service to try and produce a solution.
  - b. There is great interest in 4-wheelers in the Baldwin area and they may have over three hundred people in one group coming up. Mr. Botti asked how they intend to pay for it.
    - Mr. Jernberg responded that it is a Forest Service issue and PRD has ORV grants. He does not think they will have a solution by the end of the summer.
    - Mr. Stampfly reported that on state forest land PRD has two types of grants to maintain multi-use trails: ORV Restoration & ORV Maintenance. The number of ORVs using the trails continues to climb every year.
    - Mr. Jernberg said they may try to get local Road Commissions to help. John Kazmierski, Huron-Manistee National Forest, commented that it has been a major issue this winter, and it stems from a decision made last summer to open all those trails to ORVs. There is a combination of things that may be used to find a solution, including whether they want to keep certain roads open to ORVs and whether the Forest Service can maintain the roads. They will begin looking at this after September when the trails are closed to ORVs and continue until after the snow season is over. The trail usage wreaks havoc on the equipment as well as being costly. Mr. Jernberg thinks taking a better look at the type of soil these trails are running on may be beneficial.

## **Communications from the Field**

1. The DNR has heard from industry and have had numerous comments centered around oak wilt.
2. State of Michigan mandatory remote work may end the first of May. Most staff are applying for a remote work agreement. The current plan is that the Customer Service Centers (CSCs) will be open five days a week.
3. Mr. Jernberg asked about spongy moth (formerly gypsy moth). Mr. Stampfly replied he has not heard much yet. He commented there is usually a buildup of moth populations over a year or two and then biological control agents begin to impact moth populations and they subsequently decline.

## **Registered Forester Board – update by Bill Botti**

1. A lot of effort has been put into finances. That is one of the reasons the Legislature moved on the licensing regulation because the registration money was not covering costs. Mr. Botti attended a committee hearing where they were going to finalize canceling the Forester Registration, and he commented that the information they provided as the estimated money required was too high.
  - a. They received a quote of around \$30,000 per year, when it was supposed to be \$3,000. Current financial reports will emphasize this. Mr. Botti suspects the cost should come down.
  - b. It was asked what the registration fee is now: It is \$200 per year now and was previously \$80 per year.
  - c. They now have around 160 Registered Foresters.
    - Chair Melow asked if ‘Renewals’ are documented in even years. Mr. Botti responded it is a two-year registration. The continuing education requirement is one credit per month.
    - It was asked if there is a move to get more foresters to register. Mr. Botti responded there is no special movement, but they will defend getting more to register. It is the only way they can justify that the State recognizes forestry as a profession.

## **Timber Harvest Numbers – Jeff Stampfly, MDNR**

1. The plan was to do 50,000 acres and during the winter months they do inventory. Timber markets remain strong. There have been several conversations involving oak wilt sale specifications.
2. The sale of Verso is complete. The report is they will be converting two paper machines to produce a “box board.”
3. Shannon Lott, MDNR Natural Resources Deputy, is attending an industry summit out west.
4. A delegation from Finland is visiting MDNR-FRD the week of May 16.

## **FMAC Member Program Updates**

### **Andrew Storer – Michigan Technological University**

1. Michigan Tech is preparing for a visit from the Finish delegation. They will be visiting the spin zone (smart zone) and other various places, including timber sale sites in the afternoon. Dr. Storer understands the Finnish Ambassador is supposed to be with the group.
2. They are wrapping up Lecturer hires and will share the information once they know who the successful candidates are.
3. They still have plenty of snow on the ground in the Marquette area.
4. They are getting ready for a forestry course that is available over 12 weeks in the summer. Activities will take place in both research and education.
5. Graduation is a week from Saturday. There are forty-three students graduating. The job market is strong.
6. They are at the critical phase in recruiting before involuntary deposits are due.
7. There has been a lot of interest in the different things they do at Michigan Tech.

### **John Kazmierski – USFS Huron-Manistee**

1. There have been numerous turnovers in the Huron-Manistee. There has been turnover in Natural Resources Staff Officers specifically. The four leading positions are all turning over.
  - a. The Region is going through a lot of hiring. The Infrastructure Bill and other things Congress has been doing is allowing for public lands organizations to build up staffing.
  - b. The Fire Organization is increasing its capacity by hiring two new positions, one of which is a Dozer Operator.
2. Fire management has been quiet compared to fiscal year 21. As a result of the Brittle Fire, they have revised their “go-no-go” decision process. Mr. Kazmierski thanked the MDNR for its assistance on the fire last year. The partnership with the MDNR and local Volunteer Fire Departments has really shown how building those relationships over time has paid off. They appreciate the MDNR resuming prescribed burns expeditiously after the fire.
3. Gina Owens, new Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region, visited the forests. Paul Rogers and Lee Osterland (both MDNR-FRD staff) took her group around and spent time in the field. They looked at Kirtland’s Warbler habitat and discussed issues, and they looked at how the Brittle fire consumed six hundred acres. They are also looking at ways to collaborate.
  - a. Ms. Owens also looked at recreation projects. She emphasized continuing to build strong relationships with other entities.
4. The hybrid work environment is something new employees are embracing.
5. They are seeing challenges with speed limits on roads without snowmobile use. They have been looking at this issue with Pure Michigan and discussing how they can market responsible recreation.
6. In timber production they have achieved 246 million board feet. The Good Neighbor Authority Program (GNA) achieved twenty-three percent. They have completed a total of 9100 acres across three national forests.
7. Mr. Kazmierski reported that the bridge project by the North Country Trail has been going well and thanked all those involved.
  - a. They are interested in doing more GNA projects. They have been shuffling staff around to be able to train their employees and are looking at the Forest Plans to adjust.
8. They are aging out of red pine and want to treat it before it is unavailable to the mills. This is a priority for them.
9. They have emerging issues in community fire protection and landscape scale. It is critical to get fuel breaks in where they have prescribed fires taking place.
10. Huron-Manistee will be rolling out “[Recreation Reimagined](#).” They will roll it out into broad categories and will have groups that tackle the issues.
11. They are also dealing with river management.

### **John Bauer – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services**

1. This year the new thing is the Technical Service Providers (TSP) are updating a design and implementation. The TSPs are available to the public to assist with developing a Forest Management Plan.
2. He is excited that between the two counties where he is located, there are about 4,000 hardwood trees and 12,000 conifers being planted.
3. They have multiple Forest Management Plans coming into the county and will be implementing more plans in the future.

### **Ben Schram – Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)**

1. MDARD received a grant through the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Program. This was a product of the Farm Bill.
2. They are now working on “Climate Action and Reforestation in Northern Michigan.” There are multiple partners working on it. They will be planting five to six million trees on private land. As a partnership,

they can find one or two contractors in the region to collaborate with the landowners. They are still trying to figure out the rules of the game.

- a. Dr. Kobe asked about their interface with landowners. The response was that it will be manufactured through MDARD. An alternative funding arrangement, where the landowners set aside funds and MDARD tells them how to spend the money, will be maintained. Landowners contracting with MDARD will have MSU doing backhand monitoring.
3. Mr. Schram thanked Mr. Stampfly and the leadership of FRD for attending their recent spring Society of American Foresters' conference. They also had MDNR Foresters that participated. They would like to see more Foresters attend in the future.

#### **Kenny Wawsczyk** – North Country Trail

Mr. Wawsczyk had no additional updates to share but asked about the dates people can trim for oak wilt. There is a ban on cutting between April 15 and July 15. Mr. Stampfly thought there was a recent press release on that topic.

#### **Kristina Kennedy** – Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan (MUCC)

1. Ms. Kennedy is coordinating the "On-the-Ground" (OTG) Program through MUCC. The program just started in February.
  - a. They kicked off the OTG Junior Program this week in Reese, in SE Michigan. They are working on planting grass with a High School there.
  - b. They have other events that are in the planning stages.
    - They will be doing an Arbor Day program in St. Johns, planting 250 mast-producing trees.
    - They have a shrub planting project for the Potterville State Game Area.
    - In May, they will be partnering with the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance to plant 2,400 jack pines.
  - c. They are partnering with the Land Conservancy and putting on a workshop on April 27. There will be discussions on oak wilt, and they will be distributing seven hundred oak seedlings to landowners.
    - Mr. Melow asked if this is the same as the White Oak Initiative that distillers were involved with. Mr. Stampfly said he thinks it is the same. The money comes from the American Forest Foundation. Along with the tree planting, there will be educational and outreach activities to help unleash this program on Michigan.

#### **Rich Kobe** – Michigan State University

1. Michigan State University (MSU) continues to grow in student numbers. They are now up above 90 in their Forestry program. They have more than doubled over the last couple of years. About twenty students are graduating this year.
2. They are rolling out a hybrid online master's program; it is online to get students in the field.
  - a. It is targeted toward working professionals that want to switch careers. They can continue to work and have guided instruction online.
  - b. They will have a few days of tree identification and will then collaborate with a local Forester for field work. They will also do a Capstone project in person.
  - c. The program will be in-person at the beginning and end of the program. Dr. Kobe thinks this will produce high-quality Foresters.
  - d. MSU has not been able to advertise this due to the lack of a major code to charge it to. Dr. Kobe asked all present at the meeting to let people who have a degree in biology or another related area, know about this program. This information will give them the ability to get the Master level credentials.
3. There has been activity with the GNOME position. It is an agreement between MSU and the MDNR. The focus is on resilience and figuring out genetic basis for resistance. It is amazing what can be done in GNOMICS. The MDNR is interested in participating, and it already has members of MICHCOTIP as well

as Forest Service people involved. They are losing tree species and can do something about it with the cooperation of stakeholders.

- a. There is another position in collaboration with the Department of Public Health, which will have access to forests and green space with the focus on there being equitable access to green spaces.
  - b. They are hiring a Forest Policy position. They have someone coming in from California with a good background in Policy.
  - c. The Forest Carbon and Climate Program is also adding a new hire.
4. Mass Timber STEM building (STEM Teaching & Learning Facility) – The Associated General Contractors of America named the facility the most significant construction project for 2021. Ms. Sandra Lupien is doing a fantastic job at this.
- a. A suggestion was made for the FMAC to hold one of its meetings at the MSU STEM building.
  - b. Currently there is a delegation of more than fifty people who were at the Mass Timber Conference.
  - c. Dr. Kobe thanked the MDNR for making an initial investment. Michigan will have a higher representation at the conference than any other state.

#### **Bill Botti – Michigan Forest Association**

1. Mr. Botti mentioned Summer Camp at MUCC. He commented it is nice to see MUCC is continuing to have an interest in bringing kids along in forestry.
2. Mr Botti provided the Annual Report from the Board of Foresters. They have had good support from the MDNR. Brenda Haskill, MDNR, serves as its secretary.
3. The Michigan Forest Association is having its 50-year anniversary celebration in August. It is August 13-14, in the Grayling area. There is going to be a tour of old Higgins Lake Nursery and other locations. Chair Melow requested Mr. Botti to provide additional information at the July FMAC meeting.

#### **Paul Jernberg – passed**

#### **Gary Melow – Michigan Biomass**

1. Members continue to struggle to get fuel in the door due to trucking shortages and it became an issue for biomass about 3 months ago. They are looking for more affordable fuel. They are looking at federal infrastructure opportunities and are interested nationally in working with specific federal forests to accomplish their management goals.
2. They are working on the federal level with the EPA to establish pathways for renewable fuel standards. They are getting closer to making that happen with this administration. Michigan Biomass is working not only to educate them but also on legislation that would provide funding and mandates for the EPA to act.
3. They are participating with a Biomass Energy Economic Study, that MSU is conducting. It involves twenty states in the northeast, as well as California, Georgia, and Virginia. They do not have much data on where fuel types come from geographically yet and are looking forward to participating in the process.
4. Chair Melow was at a conference last month and shared information from a Research Forester out of Missoula, Montana who did an economic study on bioenergy projects and the non-market values they provide.

#### **Michigan Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council Update – Gary Melow**

Chair Melow provided a copy of the Timber & Forest Products Advisory Council (Council) comments on the draft climate report. There is emphasis on managing residuals.

Chair Melow adjourned the April 13, 2022 FMAC meeting at 3:10 p.m.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

July 13, 2022

Tentative: Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Learning and Teaching Facility at MSU

**Future Agenda Items**

Michigan Forest Association 50 Year Anniversary Celebration (Informational) – Bill Botti