

# FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 14, 2021

## MEETING NOTES

In response to the COVID-19 emergency and pursuant to Ingham County Board of Commissioners Resolution #21-138, the April 14, 2021 meeting will be held in a virtual format.

Attendees via phone: Makhayla LaButte, Bill Botti via phone

### I. **Welcome** – Gary Melow, Chair

**Gary Melow**, Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Chair, thanked all for attending the second quarterly meeting of the year. The April 14 FMAC Meeting agenda was discussed, and it was decided to remove “Trillion Trees” as a topic on the agenda.

### II. **Consent Agenda**

- Adoption of April 14, 2021 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Meeting Agenda  
The April 14, 2021 FMAC meeting agenda was adopted unanimously with edits mentioned above.
- Adoption of January 13, 2021 FMAC Meeting Minutes – Chair Melow reviewed requested corrections to the January 13, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes, followed by editing requests by Jeff Stampfly, Chief and State Forester, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).  
**Motion:** Warren Suchofsky moved to adopt the January 13, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes as edited; seconded by Kenny Wawsczyk. The January 13, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes were adopted unanimously as edited.

### III. **Public Comment**

None

### IV. **Recommendation in Support of MAEAP**– Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass/Ben Schram, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)

This subject topic was moved to next FMAC meeting due to members not having enough time to review it.

### V. **PRT Update (commercial operations at southern nursery site)** – Jason Hartman, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

**Jason Hartman** commented this was a follow-up to the FMAC meeting in Brighton. It was asked that he define PRT: PRT Growing Services is currently leasing land from the MDNR, who also has a seedling contract with them. They are producing seedlings for other clients at the TIC as well. It was asked that Jason review what’s happening onsite. He showed a map of the Tree Improvement Center and discussed the layout of seed orchards and the nursery. Nursery expansion was also discussed as a likelihood.

Jason discussed that they had cleared other blocks in the past. They recently advertised another timber sale and was able to clear the remaining orchards. They keep seed sources available from the best performers. The partnership with MDNR and Michigan State University (MSU) works to improve genetics for reforestation and resistance

Jason discussed how the soils in Brighton aren’t very good and so they moved the beech to another site. They are producing stock for the eastern forest or to ship out west. Ninety percent of nurseries that PRT owns are in the west, but he doesn’t know of anything from the eastern states being grown in the west right now.

The MDNR pays them per 1000 seedlings and they pay for the space to operate their nursery. Conceivably when their lease comes due again in 5 years, they may award it to another vendor.

Expansion opportunities – Inventory system – and the current Tree Improvement Center - All the land in the cross hatching is in the Brighton Recreation area. Internally they could change who manages them. The MDNR lost 4 or 5 blocks due to the nursery there so there is a need for more space. They used to buy seeds on the open market and the open market availability is shrinking. They hope to develop those two parcels as a seed orchard at some point (50/30 acres, 70/50 acres). It will take a while to get there.

There is a lot of development around there, i.e. homes, and they are handling a lot of calls about a large timber sale that doesn't normally happen in that area.

## **VI. State Forester's Report – Jeff Stampfly, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)**

- a. Legislative Updates – [January 14, 2021](#), [February 11, 2021](#), [March 11, 2021](#). Packets containing these updates were provided to the FMAC; no discussion was needed.
- b. Jeff Stampfly, MDNR Forest Resources Division Chief and State Forester, announced that there are the normal things going on with grants. The Forest Resources Division (FRD) has a skeleton crew of an Incident Management Team (IMT) working at Ford Field. There has been 4 teams and they're on the fourth cycle. The State requests help from FEMA and then allows FRD to use its normal routine of assisting with fire. They are now looking at withdrawing its staff since they're getting into fire season. It has been a good experience for staff.
- c. So far this year there has been 115 fires. Staff participated in doing a fire assessment for the NE states due to a stage 1 drought.
- d. Personnel update: They are interviewing for fire officers and mid-level management and have been working several different people in the Assistant Chief position to expose people to that experience. Dave Lemmien is the current Acting Assistant Chief, plus there are three or four more Working out of Class (WOC) situations going on. The FRD is giving people exposure to a different career option. They are going to continue doing this for a bit longer, and then will work to permanently fill the vacant positions.
- e. Timber sale update:
  - The 2X4 markets are hot right now.
  - The hardwood market is struggling.
  - Several timber sales expired between January and June. Others are working through the normal process of sales extensions etc. There are still more that need to be evaluated.
  - The first sales under the new cruise protocol are out there now and they'll see how those go.
  - They have left room to bid a way down from what they normally do.
  - The current POS is just over 50,000 acres to do which will be a bit less.

It was asked if there has been any movement on getting someone to review stumpage data. It's been known for a long time that DNR stumpage data is difficult. Jeff said he's not sure what's going to come out of the last vegetative module. They are entering the last phase and one of the last is a reporting module. They need a better way to analyze what's coming out of the stumpage data. Gary Melow commented that the industry sees a need for more robust stump data. He asked if that's a concern that needs action and if the FMAC is the right group to assist or is there another group more suitable. He added if they want to carry it over to the Timber and Forest Products Advisory Committee that would be fine too. Jeff responded the yards are full, and there are labor issues and a whole combination of things. They try to address the timber sale supply part of it if they can.

## **VII. Action Items/ Follow-up**

None

Circulated minutes and MAEAP document.

## **VIII. Standing Discussion Items**

- Trails – Jeff gave the trails update earlier in the meeting.
- Paul gave kudos to Gaylord for assisting with a trail they want to do a timber sale on in a few years. The staff scouted out a better alternative. They also have a couple bridges going up.
- Motorized update: snowmobile season has come to an end. There was a report in Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) that addressed recently timbered areas where trees were removed right next to the trails and it has resulted in a lot of issues for PRD. It was suggested they may want to discuss this at a later date. One of the specs of the t-sale is that they leave the stumps, so they are visible above the snow. Stumps that are close to the ground are going to be the issue. He intends to work up a list of suggestions where this committee, the TFPAC and the Forest Service are all on the same page. Warren commented he noticed they were leaving trees along the trails system and it seemed to work well. He thinks the cost of grinding those stumps would be cost-prohibitive. Where possible they should leave two or three trees within the proven trail. Otherwise, if an operator comes along at midnight it's hard for them to see.

It was mentioned that some people are working with the Legislators regarding issues where state or federal land trails connect with private landowners, and most have documents saying people cannot run along their land. It's a hot topic right now.

- **Communications from the Field**

Jeff commented that they've had representation at the last two snowmobile workgroup meetings to discuss stumps along trails. At this point he isn't sure where it's going to end up. He's been a groomer and knows what happens when a groomer hits a stump. As Warren mentioned, when you leave trees along the road it's eventually going to be an issue.

- [Registered Forester Board](#)

There are currently 160 registered Foresters. The DNR is paying their secretary, or at least contributing to her welfare.

Jeff reported the DNR has over 50,000 acres in inventory, less after prepped. Cultivation and planting are starting up and it looks like it might be easier this year than last due to Covid.

- Timber Harvest Numbers – covered earlier by Jeff
- FMAC Member Program Updates
  - a. Makhayla LaButte (MUCC): The 'On the Ground' (OTG) program has been in the field since February. They started with small game work and built some brush piles from that. They are moving forward with seeing project partners pulling back because of COVID cases. They are doing their best to get habitat stuff done while COVID cases rise.
  - b. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging, reported they've looked at wood manufacturing. He has a meeting with a wood cooperative this afternoon. When they work with those Co-ops, they try to form a super Co-op. They like to get creative and look at a new way to merchandise forest products. They try to have sustainable communities as well as sustainable forests.
  - c. Ray Gurley reported the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is cranking. There has also been a couple of developments with Canadian National.
  - d. Leslie Auriemmo, Huron-Manistee, reported they are at an all-time high of 85 million forest feet. The State is taking some. They don't expect to go up to 100 million next year, but they do expect to maintain.
    - Forest Service people are in the field. They can only allow 25% in the office so are operating fully at this point. All other offices will be open fully to the public on May 1. They have seen a lot of recreation this year.
    - They conducted a mixed-use road analysis. They opened roads with street legal vehicles to off-road vehicles (ORV) and had a 30-day public comment period which has now closed. They are now analyzing the comments received to see if there are any roads that they don't

- want to open to ORVs. These are usually part state and part federal roads with different enforcements.
- e. Rich Kobe, Michigan State University, reported they are looking at skills and techniques needed for a forester and tech degree.
    - Recently there was an organization in the United Kingdom that ranks all kinds of academic programs globally. Michigan State University ranked top 10 in Agriculture and Forestry, and top 5 overall in North America.
    - Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass, reported that regarding biomass energy, not a lot has changed.
      - i. He is involved with the Governor's Council on Climate Solutions. There is one group with 115 members. Both energy and distribution will meet every Tuesday through the fall. There is a lot of attention right now on carbon credits.
  - f. Bill Botti didn't have an update to give but made a suggestion to have the climate plan as a standing agenda item for the FMAC meetings.

**IX. Next Meeting Date**

Meeting Date: July 14, 2021

Location: MUCC, 2012 Wood Street, Lansing

**X. Future Agenda Items**

Climate Plan (possibly)