

FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES (draft)

April 17, 2024

Members Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee

Mike Elenz, Michigan Association of Timbermen
Sarah Scheitz, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan
Rich Kobe, **Vice Chair**, Michigan State University
Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club
Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail Association

Members Present for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Jeff Stampfly, Chief & State Forester, Forest Resources Division
Kim Korbecki, Forest Resources Division

Advisors Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee

Andy Henriksen, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Sierra Dawkins (for James Simino), USFS, Huron-Manistee National Forest

Public Present

None

Welcome

Rich Kobe, Vice Chair, called the April 17 FMAC meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. He welcomed all in attendance.

FMAC Business

Adoption of April 17, 2024 Forest Management Advisory Committee Agenda and January 17, 2024 FMAC Meeting Minutes

Rich Kobe, Michigan State University and Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC or Committee) Vice Chair presented the April 17, 2024 FMAC meeting agenda and the January 17, 2024 FMAC meeting minutes for adoption. Rich asked if there were comments or concerns. There were none. The April 17, 2024 meeting agenda and January 17 meeting minutes were both adopted unanimously.

State Forester's Report – Jeff Stampfly, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Resources Division

1. Jeff Stampfly, Chief and State Forester, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Forest Resources Division (FRD), mentioned Rachel Coale and Kathleen Lavey, both communications staff for FRD. They had joined the January FMAC meeting to discuss communications and signage. Jeff reported that Rachel has since left the FRD to take a position with another agency.
2. Staff are working on the notifications for herbicide operations. There were a lot of questions while spraying last year. They normally mark the application site with signage and post a phone number to call. Based on comments from the FMAC regarding signing areas of activity (harvesting) in general, they are trying to find a more effective way of informing folks who come across their activities. They are hoping to use a sign with a QR code that will take individuals to a website containing FRD's normal practices, along with a contact number. Depending on the success of this, they may be able to use it to inform the public of their general activities when they come across them in the woods. With Rachel's departure this effort has slowed some.

3. State Forester Information
 - a. Jeff is a member of the State Forester's Fire Committee. They are looking at the quality of data that goes into the formulas that determine grant money awarded to states and volunteer fire departments. The committee will be meeting again at the end of the month in Lexington.
 - b. Jeff met with the Great Lakes Timbermen Professionals Association last week at its Spring Celebration event. They had a lot of questions about cruise protocols and timber sale extensions.
 - c. The timber markets seem to be turning around a bit. Jeff has noticed an uptick in the number of logging trucks on the road. Timber sale bids have improved a little. In general, there seems to be a little more optimism in the industry.
4. The FRD's operations are running along like normal. They anticipated a severe fire season given the early start, but it will really depend on the weather as they move through May. It is starting to green up now downstate and overall they are down slightly in the number of fires and acreage burned.
5. They continue to hire staff and there has been a lot of personnel transactions without a lot of net gain. This is largely due to transfers and promotions.
6. Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has been found as far north as Antrim County.
7. The State Forest Management Plan is close to coming out for public review. It went for internal review around the first of the month and will be out for public review in May or June.
 - a. They have met with the Timber Producers' group a few times to review it.
 - b. The projected harvest is slightly under 50,000 acres annually for the next 10 years.
 - c. Prior to the rewrite, there were four regional state forest management plans and an overall state forest management plan. These are being combined into one plan, which is why the new plan is quite large.

Rich brought up the campaign FRD is working on to have some kind of 'call to action' or link or referral for folks that are interested in assisting. He asked for an update. Rich had talked with Kathleen and Rachel about this campaign previously, but with Rachel leaving it will most likely be put on hold for a bit. The media campaign is ongoing and is up and running right now. The campaign may move it a little bit further north, perhaps to the Gaylord and Marquette areas.

8. There is a lot of activity in fire prevention with spring fire season coming. Smokey's 80th birthday is this year.

The Woodland Master's Program, discussed at the January FMAC meeting was mentioned and Rich, Kathleen and Rachel have discussed it. It will be hosted on the MSU Extension's website and will link to the Woodland Master's Program, but this will be on hold until Rachel's position is filled.

Legislative Updates

Paul asked about HB 4021 – Definition of a Peace Officer – Jeff said they will expand the program so seasonal deputies can cover off-road vehicles as well.

Kenny asked about HB 5428 – Recreation Passport – The proposal is to change Recreation Passport to an "opt out" versus an "opt in" for participation. They are hoping to establish this as a law by June and expecting to take the next step on April 23.

Action Items/Follow-up

None

Standing Discussion Items

1. Communications from the Field – There are a few things going on in the forest industry that makes FRD think timber markets may pick up a bit, but it's anecdotal, nothing concrete.
2. Bid numbers were down throughout the winter. They picked up a bit for one month.

- a. Depending on the situation, many timber sales are being extended free of charge. This is largely due to market conditions or poor winter logging conditions. A lot of the sales are set to expire at the end of June.
3. Timber sale preparation – the FRD mainly does forest inventory in the winter. With a lack of snow and cold weather, it was difficult to look at compartments that are best accessed in the winter. Any sale preparation requiring winter conditions would also be challenged.
4. The western states may have some problems this year due to the lack of snowfall in the northern tier of the country.

FMAC Member Updates

1. Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club

- a. There was very little snowmobile activity in the upper peninsula.
- b. The condition of the trails is not getting any better. At the March meeting in Sault Ste. Marie the MDNR announced they were going to make \$5000 available to each club that needs it to buy gravel. Several clubs in western Michigan have reached out to the Manistee National Forest to see if they can work with the Road Commissions which would reduce the acquisition and delivery costs. The Parks & Recreation Division is making it available with no extra paperwork.
 - MDNR Law Enforcement Division attended the meeting. They said they were aware of the damage being done to the roads and if it isn't brought under control soon, it may do away with a lot of the ORV areas.
- c. This year was a bad year. They haven't seen the final permits numbers, but next year's budget is dependent on how many permits were sold this year.

2. Kenny Wawczyk, North Country Trail Association (NCT)

- a. The NCT is getting ready to start spring maintenance.
- b. They are heading to the U.P. for the start of a 4-mile reroute south of Munising.
- c. Kenny gave a shout out to the FRD's Gaylord Management Unit for keeping the clubs apprised of harvests taking place near the trails and for rerouting certain sections, so they follow a boundary rather than going through it.

3. Sarah Scheitz, Michigan United Conservation Club

- a. The On the Ground volunteer program is getting busy.
- b. MUCC conducted a few mass tree plantings.

4. Mike Elenz, Michigan Association of Timbermen (MAT)

- a. The MAT had a meeting last week in Harrisville.
- b. They will be having a meeting in Frankenmuth April 25-27.
- c. They will be at the Capital May 7 & 8.

Sierra and Andy passed.

Paul Jernberg motioned to adjourn the April 17 FMAC meeting at 1:47 p.m., supported by Mike Elenz. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. Rich adjourned the April 17, 2024 FMAC meeting at 1:47 p.m.

Next Meeting Date

July 17, 2024, Michigan United Conservation Club, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing