

# FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

## Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2023

### Roll Call

#### Members Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee

Mike Elenz, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association/Michigan Forest Association  
Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club  
Gary Melow, **Chair**, Michigan Biomass  
Rich Kobe, **Vice Chair**, Michigan State University  
Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association  
Kenny Wawczyk, North Country Trail Association  
Andrew Storer, Michigan Technological University, College of Forest Resources & Environmental Science

#### Advisors Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee

James Simino, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest  
Ben Schram, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

#### Present for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Kathleen Lavey, Communications Staff, FRD  
Rachel Coale, Communications Staff, FRD  
Dan Heckman, Forest Management Specialist, FRD

#### Support Staff Present for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Jeff Stampfly, Chief & State Forester, Forest Resources Division (FRD)  
Kim Korbecki, Executive Assistant, FRD

### Welcome

Gary Melow, Chair, welcomed everyone in attendance in person or virtually at the July 12, 2023 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. Chair Melow asked everyone for introductions and welcomed Mike Elenz, Forester of Gaylord, as the newest member of the FMAC.

### Consent Agenda

- Adoption of July 12, 2023 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Meeting Agenda
- Adoption of April 5, 2023 FMAC Meeting Minutes

Chair Melow asked for amendments to the July 12 FMAC meeting agenda and the April 5 FMAC meeting minutes; there were none. Chair Melow motioned adoption of both documents, seconded by Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association, and supported by Rich Kobe, Michigan State University. The July 12 FMAC meeting agenda and the April 5 FMAC meeting minutes were both adopted unanimously.

### Public Comment

None

**State Forest Management Plan Update** – Dan Heckman, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Forest Resources Division, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the FMAC regarding the update of the MDNR's State Forest Management Plan (plan) currently being rewritten to reflect the next 10 years. He

reported he has been meeting with various groups and stakeholders and doing engagement for the 2023 plan. He began this endeavor in 2019.

The PowerPoint presentation covered the planning team, which includes the modeling team, the writing team, and the engagement team. He also covered the content advisors and the previous team members that have been assisting.

They have worked to be sure the improvements are aligned well with other MDNR Division and Strategic Plans. It has given them the ability to look at long-term sustainability which is what is driving the short-term harvest levels. It is covering integrated forest cover type as well as wildlife habitat management and has combined them and integrated the results into the modeling effort. The featured species approach is still in place but has been supplemented with the habitat work they have been doing.

Climate change strategies have been integrated into the management goals and objectives. This approach ensures each management action helps in one of four ways: adaptation, resiliency, resistance, or mitigation. They have simplified the number of management areas (MAs). The size of the MAs has gone up, but the number has gone down. Therefore, there is less analysis and calculation necessary to implement the plan in each forest management unit. Most of the MAs are based on ecological subsection which helps to appropriate desired age class distributions can be identified to local conditions.

The biggest change to the new plan is the model they used to represent state forest management. They purchased the Woodstock Remsoft model and employed contracting services to create yield table information and model it. They will be implementing a harvest schedule for ten years.

The planning framework and process overview builds from the DNR mission, management principles, goals, strategies, and then management priorities. They settled on the term "management priorities" to describe the resources the DNR manages relevant to the state forest. Once the management priorities are established, they decided the scale and what metrics they will use to measure progress towards goals. They also established desired future conditions and just finished doing engagement with some stakeholder groups on this topic.

Management principles are a set of fundamental standards that serve as a basis for action. They are aligned with the Montreal process. The Montreal process was created in 1994 and is international set of standards for measuring forest sustainability. There are twelve countries that are members. This is consistent with the Forest Action Plan. The DNR has based its management principles on this. Dan ran through the DNR principles for the FMAC.

There are 65 management priorities in total. Each has a desired future condition that describes the condition that land managers are trying to obtain after a certain amount of time. The DNR has been asking for comments and, and comments received will be considered in the first draft.

The three main things being concentrated on in the model are forest conditions, forest products and wildlife habitat. Dan went on to discuss harvest levels and how each step in the process would be completed and covered next steps.

He reported that from May 31 to June 1 they met in Marquette and Roscommon, with a virtual option. They had 50 plus participants and received over 150 comments. Staff are currently figuring out what comments are actionable and will be posting a summary of how comments were incorporated on the web. In June they met with the 1836 tribes and are meeting with the 1842 treaty tribes soon. The upcoming schedule includes:

- July – finish incorporating stakeholder input and complete section 2 of the plan.
- August – finishing management area plans.
- September – focusing on implementation and monitoring of sections.
- October – internal review with release of the first draft, and a second round of stakeholder meetings.
- Incorporate changes into the plan and come up with a final product to be released.
- Release date hopefully will be in 2023.

Harvest numbers are slightly lower than in previous plans at around 48,000 prepared acres. They focused on long-term sustainability vs. sustainable management of the state forest. Rich Kobe asked how things in the new management plan is being done differently than in the last State Forest Management Plan. The response was they now have the data and model to do much more detailed harvest planning. Gary commented that the presentation was a very good way to show exactly how the timber process is supposed to operate. Mike Elenz asked if this would affect the carbon projects and the response was that it wouldn't.

**Sustainable Forestry Advertising Campaign Update** – Kathleen Lavey & Rachel Coale, MDNR

Kathleen Lavey, Forest Resources, MDNR, explained they took a soft approach because they were targeting those with the least amount of knowledge about forestry. They tested well in metro Detroit, so they expanded to all of southern Michigan in 2019. In 2021 they used the same materials and added some additional materials. They conducted new survey a few months ago with the target market being women (decision maker for the household). People are clear on benefits of the forest to wildlife. New people are interested in forest recreation and wellness and mental health in forests. People are still not aware enough of the FRD's sustainable wood project chain.

The new campaign is called The Wisdom of Trees. This ties together with how trees affect so many different areas of peoples' lives and provides so many products that people need.

Timetable: They are doing a location scout to Brighton tomorrow. They will be filming at Brighton Recreation Area and hope to have the new advertising spots on in early fall. The focus will be on Michigan population centers - Metro Detroit, Lansing, Flint, etc.

They have explored streaming television and it has done well, with good results from podcasts as well. They are always looking at digital media. Traditional media is more difficult to use because of legalized online gambling and the legalizing of marijuana campaigns being run.

They are going with chemistry, mental health boosts such as psychytree, treecology, and sustainable forestry. They are looking to make sure people are planting trees and are doing it the way the DNR plants trees. There will be four commercials that incorporates all the concepts and some that will discuss single concepts. They will survey again in a bit to see how they are doing. Covid created a new interest in the forest.

Ben Schram asked how this is funded and they responded it is from the FRD budget; FDF money. Bill O'Neill came up with it in 2016. Ben wondered if there are opportunities for others to seek out funding; Kathleen responded it is something they could discuss. Dan asked if there are plans to expand geographically into the northern two-thirds of the state. Kathleen responded they will be looking at that. The media plan is still in process. They might want to target the Grayling area in particular with all the issues that have occurred in that area recently. Dan said that based on his experiences, he would encourage them to expand the geographical area. Kathleen said they would definitely look into doing that.

Andrew Shorer commented he doesn't think the people in the Upper Peninsula have all the understanding they need on the forests either. As a university they do a lot of digital marketing and getting those snippets of information in front of people seems to be a powerful way to get information to younger people. In relation to the extent to which Michigan is coordinating and sharing information and best practices with other states, he asked if they are doing something similar with public education. Kathleen responded that they are doing something like that. One of the things the group does is discuss best practices. One of the topics next week is sharing information regarding climate change. The southern group of state foresters have done a campaign called "Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives". Her team isn't ready to do that, but they may be prepared to do it as a joint project in the future.

James asked how much contact they have had with the Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry. He suggested they should have a united front to get the same messaging out there. Kathleen said they do meet with the

outdoor recreation groups occasionally, and they have also talked with Pure Michigan about what's coming up. They are trying to collaborate and study what other folks are doing as well.

### **How to Improve Messaging to the Public Regarding the Benefits of Timber Sales – Committee Discussion**

Gary commented that Project Learning Tree is designed to get forestry education spread across other curriculums. That segways into messaging to the public regarding timber and logging. They discussed there being a lack of information for the public within their logging sites (it's being done on their trails, their pathways, etc.). He suggested an interpretive sign so they can inform the public of what is being done at the logging sites. He talked about it being part of a standard practice on timber sales where they know there is going to be public-facing and getting that information out to those locations ahead of time.

Mike Elenz commented that in the 1990s they were using signs on what was happening, but they are no longer doing that. Ben thinks a lot of times what's happening out there is sometimes getting grouped together (state vs. federal, et al), and the Conservation Districts are being asked to discuss this entity.

Gary asked how they could take advantage of the point of contact. Rachel Coale, MDNR-FRD, discussed the Kirtland's Warbler signs and the fact that they discussed valid reasons for clearcutting, specifically in that area for wildlife habitat. They have some durable, plastic signage going onsite explaining why the cut is being done and it includes contact information. Gary asked if they have been using printed materials and onsite pamphlets. Kathleen responded they had discussed doing a QR code to put on the site but that hasn't happened yet.

It was asked about points of distribution for printed materials. They send materials to the Gaylord office and the unit manager distributes them to the units to be posted onsite. The Society of American Foresters' green shields with numbers that correspond to a map you pick up was mentioned. They have an active permit for the roadside signs. If there was an opportunity with the MDNR or some other entity to help them maintain or tweak the signs, they may be able to leverage the infrastructure they already have in place.

Rachel commented there are already existing opportunities to share information on locations digitally. They have done mapping tours and there are also digital maps. She thinks before they begin sharing, they really need to think of what it is they are trying to share.

Gary said they have to figure out the what and then the how. He wondered what she would think of doing a communications outreach summit to get all the right people in the room for a day to discuss these things. There are a lot of opportunities for the industry to pitch in and carry the freight. He wondered what they would think about that idea. Kathleen thinks she would love to have the conversation with people in the industry. They would have to figure out what to do with the information. Rachel would be happy to work with key messages from those folks. She'd like to put it together with some of the information they have already collected to see where there are parallels.

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

- Legislative Updates: [April 13, 2023](#), [May 11, 2023](#), [June 8, 2023](#)  
Gary asked if there were any questions or comments on the three legislative updates that were provided to the FMAC; there were none.

Jeff Stampfly, Chief and State Forester, Forest Resources Division, MDNR, gave the following report:

1. There is no word on a new Director for the MDNR yet.
2. As of now, there is still no signed budget. The MDNR had several 'asks' that came out of the Legislature and he's expecting to see that in the budget.
3. They have had a very dry May & June. There were 239 fires as of July 9 for 349 acres burned including the 239-acre Wilderness Fire outside of Grayling.
  - a. Jeff extended his thanks to the Forest Service for their assistance with fires. They have the ability with extra funding to bring assets in from out of state to assist with fires.

- b. The MDNR is still getting requests from Canada for assistance with fires.
  - c. They have completed 90 prescribed burns for 674 acres.
4. With timber sale preparation, trenching, etc. they will probably be just short of 49,000 acres with Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) just shy of 4900 acres.
  5. Timber sale extensions – Billerud was shut down for quite a while, so they are having issues; Verso is also having issues. There are a large number of sales that need extensions. They are working through a process they used in 2008-2009 to figure out what sales will get extensions and which sales will not. The individual purchaser needs to contact the local unit manager to request an extension. The extensions will be individual sales related.
  6. Personnel challenges have been an ongoing process. They are not making great strides. There is another posting for Foresters out now that is open and continuous, but Newberry and the eastern upper peninsula are still hard to fill. There are challenges filling technicians and such that are related to fitness testing as well.
  7. The Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance is meeting next week in Milwaukee. Jeff is taking Tom Seablom, MDNR-FRD, with him, and Kathleen Lavey will be attending as well.
  8. August 15 will be the first stakeholder meeting for folks eligible for the bat HCP sign-on, so those landowners that meet the threshold can attend. It is being held in Marquette because most of the qualified landowners reside in that area.
  9. The MDNR-FRD trying to work on providing housing for some of the students they hire. They are looking at possibly doing that at the Pigeon River Country because there is housing already available there. They are also trying to figure out a way to work the fire side of student housing as well.
  10. They have begun doing forest health flights for the season.

**Action Items/ Follow-up**

None

**Standing Discussion Items**

**Communications from the Field, MDNR**

No further updates from the MDNR.

**FMAC Member Program Updates**

**Andrew Storer, Michigan Technological University, College of Forest Resources & Environmental Science**

1. They recently did a semi-public launch of the Mass Timber Institute. There will be another, larger public event to launch it down the road.
2. Andrew advised the committee to invite anyone that comes up their way to visit the Ford Center. There is a group interested in restoring the sawmill. A community group is interested in doing something with the natural sawmill, as well as others.
3. Enrollment at the university is looking good.
4. Andrew’s recommendation was for the FMAC to look to replace him on this group with someone more connected to their forestry department. Chair Melow accepted his recommendation.

**Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail Association**

1. Kenny appreciated the discussion on messaging to the public on timber harvests. He is glad they will continue this discussion.
2. They have a couple of large scale reroutes in the UP.
3. The non-motorized advisory workgroup talks about trails and on the larger scale of trails in general, and the conflict of what is using the trail (off-road vehicle, all-terrain vehicle, horse, person, etc.) and they all have the same issues and common goals. They are looking for a couple reroutes in the central Upper Peninsula and the western upper peninsula. They are working with ORV groups, and he thinks it’s important to work with those groups.



### **Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club**

1. Brushing and trimming will begin soon.
2. There is a big mess with spongy moss again this year. Trees are rapidly dying.
3. They have had feedback from northern lower Michigan. Wheeled motorized vehicles did a lot of damage last year and there has been no communication from the MDNR or the Forest Service on how they are going to repair some of the damage. He hopes the 'powers that be' will look for a way to fix it.
4. They have sent out notice on equipment grants.

### **Bill Botti**

Bill mentioned the Bat HCP program and commented it could be an issue if the northern long-eared bat and another bat that is found more in southern Michigan would come in to play and it becomes listed. Jeff thinks the conservation plan lists it. They went after the bigger ones first but if the impact gets bigger, he's not sure what it will take to enroll in that program because it's still being written.

### **Ben Schram, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development**

1. There are 860,000 acres currently enrolled in the Qualified Forestry Program.
2. The budget that is in the Legislature looks good for his program.
3. Ben reported that his program struggles with keeping conservation foresters around as well. His department has been looking at other strategies, i.e., less positions and a higher grant level or cutting positions down more and using state employees. Rich asked about the MSU Extension being able to work with MDARD and they agreed to get the discussion started again.

### **Rich Kobe, Michigan State University**

1. A large contingent from Michigan went to Finland. The trip was in two parts – trade & study mission. The last day was a workshop using climate change as a leverage point and looking for solutions across the value chain. They discussed what needs to be put in place now to extend the carbon benefits of mass timber. Rich felt the trip was very successful and they'll see some collaborations coming out of it. Michigan had the largest and best organized contingent. Rich believes there are some things they can learn.
2. Based on prior conversations and the idea between human health and forest health, there is a new person starting this year that is doing this type of work. There will be expertise at MSU you can tap into.
3. A regional consortium 9 Midwest climate adaptation center, funded by USGS, completely focused on climate change adaptation for climate change managers. Researchers can apply for funding for concerns that climate change managers have. If there are ideas or gaps of knowledge, that is a perfect opportunity to pair up with someone at MSU to get assistance.

### **James Simino, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee**

1. James reported that as a forest this year and based on shortfalls in the heritage program, they had to cut their targets for the year.
2. Staffing updates – they have done a good job of hiring lower grade level positions. The higher-level positions are still being worked on to fill as a region.

### **Mike Elenz, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association**

Mike thinks it's going to take a while for everything to recover but reported the forest industry is still suffering.

### **Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass**

Gary reported the House & Senate both submitted bills to remove biomass from renewable energy. They need to address this, so they are working with all the stakeholders, forest products, loggers, DNR, EGLE, etc. about it being an educational process. He's hoping they can right that, and get the language changed. Over the summer they will have workgroups and come September the lawmaking will begin. It's part of a seven-bill package in the Senate; in the House there are 3 bills in that package. The ALC and the Michigan Railroad Association are working with them on this.

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

The MTFPAC is moving along as usual.

**Next Meeting Date**

Meeting Date: October 11, 2023

Location: Michigan United Conservation Clubs, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing

**Future Agenda Items**

Public Outreach & Education (standing item)