



# FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2022

## **ROLL CALL**

### **Present for Forest Management Advisory Committee**

Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club  
Gary Melow (**Chair**), Michigan Biomass  
Kristina Kennedy, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan  
Rich Kobe, Michigan State University  
Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail Association  
Andrew Storer (virtual), Michigan Technological University, School of Forestry

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

Jason Stephens, MDNR  
Rachel Coale, MDNR  
Kathleen Lavey, MDNR

### **FMAC Advisors Present**

James Simino (virtual) USDA Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest

## **Welcome**

Gary Melow, Chair, (Michigan Biomass) welcomed all to the July 13, 2022, Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC or Committee) meeting. He asked for round-robin introductions and welcomed new attendee, James Simino, United States Forest Service (USFS), Huron-Manistee National Forest, to his first FMAC meeting.

## **Adoption of July 13 Consent Agenda and April 13 Meeting Minutes**

- a. Adoption of July 13, 2022, FMAC meeting agenda
- b. Adoption of April 13, 2022, FMAC meeting minutes

Chair Melow asked for adoption of the July 13, 2022 FMAC meeting agenda and the April 13, 2022 FMAC meeting minutes. No discussion was needed; all were in support of both the agenda and meeting minutes. The July 13 FMAC meeting agenda and the April 13 FMAC meeting minutes were both adopted unanimously.

## **Public Comment**

There were no public attendees.

## **Marketing Update**

Kathleen Lavey and Rachel Coale, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), attended to give an update on marketing for the Forest Resources Division (FRD). Below are the highlights:

The goal of having a campaign is to make complex topics understandable, connecting people to nature (forest management, climate change, prescribed burning, invasive species).

1. Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Flint, and Detroit are the major markets being targeted.
2. Topics being covered include a fire prevention campaign, tree identification, and other compelling topics.
3. Various written word and interactive digital data platforms are also part of the overall strategy.
4. Metrics for success include public surveys; subscribership levels; feedback; engagement statistics; public action; and understanding.

### **Group Discussion:**

1. Kenny Wawsczyk asked about whether the marketing might take on education of forest management in the northern forest where the trails are. Kathleen talked about some of FRD's public information signs ("what's going on here?"), as well as work with MDNR's Parks and Recreation Division on the trail between Hartwick Pines and North Higgins Lake. Kathleen and Rachel Coale, FRD, will connect with Kenny about partnering with the North Country Trail Association to get messaging out to trail users.
2. Gary asked whether messaging beyond the wildlife habitat aspects might be on the horizon.
3. Andrew Storer echoed Kenny's note that more focus in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula should be considered. There is an influx of new populations of folks living in Michigan and working remotely in other places that need to be informed about forest management. Gary seconded the need to inform people about the economic aspects brought into the state, as well as the quality of life.

## **State Forester's Report and Legislative Updates**

1. Legislative reports were presented with no discussion needed.
2. With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), grant funded position opportunities may arise, with a priority on adding capacity within FRD's Forest Health Section.
3. Wildland fire update:
  - a. There was a fire earlier this month in the Creighton Swamp, near Shingleton.
  - b. In May, the Blue Lakes Fire occurred in Montmorency County. It burned into the area of the Big Wild carbon project, but no impacts are expected.
  - c. Western fire is heating up, with the MDNR providing some limited assistance thus far.
4. Budget update: the 2023 budget is awaiting the Governor's signature; it may include some ongoing wildland fire funding.
5. Vacancy update: The MDNR is working hard to fill vacancies. District Forest Supervisors in the eastern Upper Peninsula and western Lower Peninsula were filled in April. Inventory and Planning Specialists were permanently filled in three Districts. Much more activity is expected in the weeks ahead.
6. Beech Leaf Disease: A press release was put out confirming Beech Leaf Disease in Southeast Michigan. More occurrences will likely be confirmed soon, and the spread is appearing to be quicker than anticipated. Potential impacts on the resource are still being assessed, especially as it relates to areas impacted by Beech Bark Disease and where restoration efforts are underway.

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

None

## Standing Discussion Items

1. Communications from the Field  
None
2. Timber Harvest Numbers – Jason Stephens, MDNR  
Harvest numbers: For Fiscal Year 2022 (ending in September 2022) FRD is on track to prepare timber sales on over 50,000 acres of state forest, almost 8,500 acres of USFS timber under the Good Neighbor Authority, and more than 1,100 acres on State Game Areas in Southern Michigan. Comparable harvest levels are anticipated in 2023.
  - a. Salvage timber sales were set up on state forest land impacted by both the Blue Lakes fire, as well as the tornado in Gaylord.
  - b. Interest in timber sales is strong, with few no bid sales and relatively high percentages of over minimum bids on most sales.

## FMAC Member Program Updates

1. Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail Association
  - a. Their initial maintenance push is complete.
  - b. They are doing some major projects; three separate projects are being worked on by youth crews in the Porcupine Mountains, Marquette, and Baraga.
2. Kristina Kennedy, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
  - a. On the ground projects: there are about ten since the last meeting with a variety of efforts.
    - I. Hunter Access Program efforts are focusing on limited mobility opportunities for hunters.
    - II. They have discussed an issue brought forward by the Dublin Heights Sports Club where a member is concerned about the number of illegal deer stands in USFS lands; James Simino, USFS, suggested she work through the district on issues with law enforcement capacity. Kristina and James will work on a way to partner in the near future.
3. Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club
  - a. Summer maintenance is winding down.
  - b. ORV trail damage is growing exponentially. They need to follow-up on how to handle grading costs with increased fuel costs.
4. Rich Kobe, Michigan State University
  - a. Jeremy Johnson is the new Forest Geneticist.
  - b. Kathryn Maloney is the new Forest Carbon Professor.
  - c. They are getting good enrollment in their hybrid master's program.
5. Andrew Storer, Michigan Technological University (MTU)
  - a. As of July 1, he has been the interim provost at MTU.
  - b. The interim Dean at CFR is David Flashpolder.
  - c. Enrollment for fall is strong (+2%).
  - d. He has accepted an invitation to join the Michigan Forest Biomaterials Board.
  - e. Summer camp is ongoing right now.
  - f. A request came in for an ORV trail in Ford Forest. They are working on a review to research impact concerns.
  - g. Otter River Cabin reversion has been completed and it should be in the hands of the State now.
6. James Simino, United State Forest Service, Huron-Manistee
  - a. Timber sales have been strong.
  - b. Hiring – there has been a big focus on converting seasonal to permanent seasonal.
7. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass
  - a. There is not a lot of news on the biomass front.
  - b. Contract prices fixed decades ago have really limited opportunities.
  - c. The Michigan Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council has not been overly active.
  - d. They are still looking at how the Governor's Climate Plan fits in with Forestry.

**Tour of MSU STEM Building** - hosted by Rich Kobe

**Next Meeting Date**

Meeting Date: October 12, 2022

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

**Future Agenda Items**

None