



FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2023

Member Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee

Mike Elenz, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association/Michigan Association of Timbermen

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

Rich Kobe (**Vice Chair**), Michigan State University

Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association

Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail Association

Advisors Present for the Forest Management Advisory

James Simino, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest

Andy Henricksen, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Present for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Sue Tangora, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Resources Division

Kim Korbecki, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Resources Division

Rachel Coale, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Resources Division

Welcome – Gary Melow, Chair

Gary Melow, **Chair**, kicked off the October 11, 2023 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting at 1:08 p.m. He welcomed the attendees to the October fall quarterly meeting and asked all for introductions.

FMAC Business

- Adoption of October 11, 2023 FMAC Meeting Agenda
- Adoption of July 12, 2023 FMAC Meeting Minutes
- Adoption of 2024 FMAC Meeting Dates

Chair Melow asked for discussion regarding the October 11, 2023 FMAC meeting agenda, the July 12, 2023 FMAC draft meeting minutes and the 2024 FMAC meeting dates; there was none.

Motion: Rich Kobe, **Vice Chair**, Michigan State University, moved to adopt all; supported by Mike Elenz. The October 11 agenda, July 12 meeting minutes and 2024 meeting schedule were all adopted unanimously.

Public Comment

None

State Forester's Report – Sue Tangora, Forest Health and Cooperative Programs Manager, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Resources Division, for Jeff Stampfly

a. **Legislative Updates:** [July 13, 2023](#), [August 10, 2023](#)

No discussion

1. Jeff Stampfly, Chief & State Forester, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Forest Resources Division (FRD), attended the National Association of State Foresters annual meeting last month. Most discussion revolved around the federal grants coming through. Jeff was appointed to a workgroup that will be looking at the formula used to determine state fire assistance and volunteer fire assistant grant monies to the states.
2. Timber Plan of Work (POW) – The FRD wrapped up fiscal year (FY) 2023 and it crossed into the next fiscal year on October 1. There has been a flurry of activity to close out the year. The timber POW for FY24 is looking pretty good.
3. Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) and the Infrastructure Reduction Act (IRA) – These new funding sources are bringing approximately \$10 million into FRD over the next 5 years. The FRD has been working on:
 - a. Forest Action Plan implementation and help for underserved communities.
 - b. Hiring an Urban & Community Forester – they added one last year as well who works out of the Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit.
 - Also adding an Urban & Community Forestry Unit Manager (stand-alone).
 - c. Hiring an IRA Coordinator with a grant for the United States Forest Service and MDNR’s Urban & Community Forestry funds. Many others were successful in getting funding as well.
 - d. Forest Stewardship Program – Received \$500,000 to help underserved private landowners that have owned property for only a short time and with less acreage.
 - They are working with the Forest Stewardship Council to determine where these funds will go.
 - e. Education – Andrea Stay was hired as the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator.
 - f. The Nature Awaits Program is working on getting every 4th grader to a state park.
 - g. Project Learning Tree (PLT) activities are taking place.
 - h. They are working on getting “Why Would Anyone Cut a Tree” to teachers to spread the word about the benefits of forestry.

Whether they will apply for additional funds remains to be seen. Sue went on to explain about the individual pots of funds that add up to the \$10 million dollar amount awarded.

4. Next year: In 2024 the MDNR will be holding a “Black Faces and Green Spaces” workshop. They are also bringing climate education into Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Project Wild, etc. All are working together to incorporate climate education.
5. The FRD will have an AmeriCorps member to assist the Division with PLT again next year.
6. Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) – FRD continues to work this program. Derek Cross is the GNA Specialist, making sure things are going well with all three national forests.
 - a. They have expanded Adopt-a-Forest to the Huron-Manistee National Forest.
 - b. A state worker for Adopt-a-Forest cleanup is doing half his work on state land and half on national land. Forest Health used GNA last year for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) treatments. It infected land adjacent to Forest Service land in the Ludington area. The FRD received funding to treat HWA within that buffer.
7. Vacancies continue to be an issue and there are delays in hiring when folks leave. The FRD just posted to hire a Forest Health Specialist.
 - a. Some FRD staff have been attending workshops and national conventions. While there, they are working on getting folks interested in coming to Michigan.
 - b. There will be a large gap in FRD with the Program Services Section Manager retiring. The FRD is working on filling this position soon.

Rich Kobe, Michigan State University (MSU), mentioned that MSU has scheduled a recruitment lunch and Shannon Lott, Natural Resources Deputy, MDNR, will be attending as a speaker and will be bringing a few other MDNR staff with her.

MDNR Forest Resources Division Public Information Campaign – Rachel Coale, MDNR

Rachel Coale gave a video presentation. They have developed sustainable forestry campaign materials. The current promotion is “The Wisdom of Trees”. That campaign will wrap up on November 22.

Rachel discussed the bullet points of the presentation. The focus was on environment, industry, and human connection. The target group is females from 18-40 and the demographics are Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Lansing areas.

The new advertisement focuses on all three areas. It will run through the middle of next week and then they will be collecting comments and data. There is a link on the website that sends visitors to the ‘call-to-action’ website which invites viewers to do things that will support forestry. Rich commented he would like people to embrace a conservation effort that is a bit broader. The call to action is a bit on the soft side. Gary asked Rachel to outline what’s happening over the next year. They will be collecting and analyzing the data and developing a plan for the next flight and determining when to share it. They are also continuing with some media on various MDNR platforms.

It was asked how they collect the data. It is platform-based, and they check the statistics of social media, the number of times those who visited clicked on the link, whether or not they stayed on the webpage and if there were results. With the softer campaigns, information was collected via a survey.

Rich suggested a bullet point to “Become a Forester” with links to MSU and Michigan Technological University websites. Rachel said they just developed websites specifically targeting forestry and fire careers. Rich would like to see some more bolder ‘calls to action’.

It was asked what happened with the Master’s in Forestry program at MSU. Rich suggested the FMAC send a note to the MSU Extension Director stating they would value more opportunities for the public to learn about forestry and would encourage MSU to build a program to accomplish that. Gary asked Rich to get some information together for the group to discuss at the next meeting. The FMAC is looking for ways people can engage more substantially.

Action Items/ Follow-up

None

Standing Discussion Items

Communications from the Field, MDNR

1. Forest Health: Balsam wooly adelgid is rearing its head again. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is the lead for responding to watch list species. Landowners are being very cooperative. They are looking for funding for landowners to treat their property. The MDNR is starting to formulate a plan to respond.
 - a. Spotted Lanternfly is in one spot in Oakland County. There was a response from the federal government in Monroe County at the border. They followed it and found it about seven miles south of Michigan in Ohio. It shouldn’t have a big impact on timber production but will be a nuisance. Information will be coming out directing folks to the website to report it. They will also be ramping up treatments in Southeast Michigan. They did conduct an application of pesticide where it was found in Oakland County.
 - b. Beech leaf disease is now present in up to seven counties. It is either spreading quickly or they are just catching up with detection. It will be moving quickly, and it is affecting FRD’s beech program. The FRD did treatment trials this year with phosphate. They are hoping to have at least one tool in the toolbox to address it soon.
 - c. HWA – They received a report that it was in Ann Arbor this summer at the Botanical Garden at University of Michigan. The MDNR worked with them and did outreach to their neighbors. There is

no concern it will spread from there since there are very few hemlocks in southeast Michigan. They have let folks know how to treat it if it's spotted on their trees.

2. The FRD is still sending folks for fire assignments but that is starting to wind down.
3. They are finishing the 2023 Plan of Work (POW).
4. They have been working on typical year-end tasks and wrapping up projects.
5. A few advisory councils have meetings coming up in the Upper Peninsula soon.
6. The MDNR has a new Director. The MDNR management team will be meeting in the Upper Peninsula with the new Director this year. They will be looking at the new mass timber building in Newberry as well as the new shooting range.

Timber Harvest Numbers, Forest Resources Division, MDNR

Sue looked at an outline timeline of the State Forest Management Plan. They are making some adjustments.

The timeline is now:

- a. Getting a draft out after the winter.
- b. They are currently looking through the information and working with the MDNR's Wildlife Division.
- c. Working on getting it into a format for public consumption.
- d. They should have draft pieces for editing in the next few weeks.
- e. The new target date for a draft to share is spring of 2024.

Public Outreach and Education

See above under "MDNR Forest Resources Division Public Information Campaign".

FMAC Member Program Updates

Kenny Wawsczyk, North Country Trail (NCT)

1. NCT wrapped up a few major projects in the Upper Peninsula.
2. They completed a couple of boardwalk projects.

They held their annual meeting (celebration). They brought in members from all eight states and members of the public in New York, as well as visited Vermont. Next year the annual meeting will be held in St. Ignace.

James Simino, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee

1. Staffing – they have increased staffing for the forest service. They were at 150 staff members and are now up to just over 200 in a wide variety of positions.
 - a. There were a lot of turnovers in the higher-grade positions, and they are finally making some progress in filling those positions.
 - Fire staffing continues to be problematic.
2. The timber target was down this year. They finished selling about 52,000 million board feet. This year they are looking at fuelwood again. During the covid outbreak they were giving free fuelwood permits.
3. Fuels was down this year - right at the height of the burning season their radios went down and without communication they couldn't get folks out to conduct prescribed burns. They worked through the issue, and it is now looking better.

Andy Henriksen, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

1. The NRCS received a lot of funding from various sources and there are a lot of new programs, initiatives, etc., taking place although they are still offering the same practices and programs as they always have. Landowners should be encouraged to get in touch.

Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association (MFA)

1. The MFA is holding its annual meeting next weekend in Manistique. They have good speakers lined up for the program.
2. From the forestry consulting standpoint, the big news is they are hearing that timber prices have dropped. Mike Elenz commented that state income has dropped 20%, and 38-40% of timber sales are going no-bid.

Rich Kobe, Michigan State University (MSU)

1. MSU is advertising a silviculture position because Mike Walters is retiring the first of December. They hope to fill his vacant position in the spring. Mike will still be around doing research.
2. Last Saturday the Baker Woodlot was inducted into the Old Growth Forest Network. About seventy people attended.
3. Rich attended an event at the Forestry Innovation Center in Escanaba. It was a good event with conversation with the industry. There were a few concerns that came up:
 - a. Forestry education – they are concerned about continuing to have foresters with boots on the ground and knowledge on how to manage.
 - b. Residuals – in general in the industry and how dealing with them can be an obstacle and can affect a sawmill if they have to pay for disposal.
 - c. Working in closer partnership with MSU and communicating about forestry issues.
 - d. Biomass not being considered an energy source came up and they have had a deeper conversation including biomass through MSU Extension, and faculty was asked if they could put together a FAQ sheet. There will be other opportunities for the universities to work with the sector. Rich commented he would be happy to be a conduit when they have to report on some of those issues. Gary would welcome the help and expertise. Gary commented they have been successful in the discussions about biomass being an energy source.

Mike Elenz, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association/Michigan Forest Association

1. Mike attended a timber sale where they were producing biomass and visited the Grayling Generation Mill.
2. They are having issues with the MDNR on extensions, and he has been discussing this issue with Jeff Stampfly, FRD Chief & State Forester.

Mike asked if the FMAC could make recommendations to the MDNR on funding and what sort of recommendations the FMAC could give to them. Chair Melow explained to Mike who is new to the group, the role of FMAC and what the FMAC is currently working on.

Michigan Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council (MTFPAC) Update – Gary Melow

The MTFPAC met in December and talked about budget, staffing, markets, pricing, timber sales and no bids. They also discussed the dip in the forest products economy and what it means. There is concern now that there may not be enough momentum to pull the market out of the economic decline. They also had conversation regarding disparity in the new cruising system vs. the old system and how the numbers are coming up right, or not right. They feel it might be something that can be worked out in time.

Chair Melow adjourned the October 11, 2023 FMAC meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Next Meeting Date

Meeting Date: January 17, 2024

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

Future Agenda Items

Review of FRD programs, how they are funded, etc.

Discussion on the Master Woodland Manager Program – Rich Kobe