



Forest Management Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Live Location: MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing

Date: October 13, 2021

Roll call

Present for the Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC or Committee):

Gary Melow (Chair), Michigan Biomass (virtual)

Makhayla LaButte, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan (MUCC)

Rich Kobe, Michigan State University (MSU) (virtual)

Paul Jernberg, Trailriders Snowmobile Club

Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association

Andrew Storer, Michigan Technological University (virtual)

Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging (via phone)

Leslie Auriemmo, United States Department of Agriculture (USDS), Huron-Manistee (virtual)

Andy Henriksen, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation District (virtual)

Present for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR or department)

Staff

Jeff Stampfly, Chief, Forest Resources Division

Kim Korbecki, Executive Assistant to Forest Resources Division

Kathleen Lavey, Communications Representative, MDNR

Meeting

Opening Comments:

Chair Gary Melow called the October 13, 2021 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. He thanked all for attending.

Consent Agenda – Adoption of October 13, 2021 FMAC Meeting Agenda

Chair Melow asked for additions or amendments to the October 13, 2021 FMAC meeting agenda.

Mr. Jeff Stampfly, Chief, Forest Resources Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), commented that the MDNR recently asked its staff to update the Bylaws of its councils and committees that are not required by statute to meet the requirements of the Opens Meeting Act. He and his assistant are working on updating the FMAC Bylaws, but it was not ready to present at this meeting. The updated Bylaws will be sent to the committee members with a copy of this meeting's minutes, to give its members time to review prior to the next meeting. The Bylaws will then be presented for adoption, as amended, at the next FMAC meeting. Chair Melow removed 'Adoption of Amended FMAC Bylaws' from the meeting agenda. Adoption of the October 13, 2021 FMAC meeting agenda was supported and adopted unanimously as amended.

Adoption of July 14, 2021 FMAC Meeting Minutes

Chair Melow asked for comments or corrections to the July 14, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes. Mr. Bill Botti commented on page 2, under 'Public Comments' the sentence "Mr. Botti commented he hired a student from the University of Michigan to do a study on oak regeneration" should be changed to "Mr. Botti commented that

when he worked for the MDNR, they hired a student from the University of Michigan to do a study on oak regeneration.” Ms. Korbecki reported there were also several changes sent to her via email that were made prior to this meeting. A motion was made to support adoption of the amended July 14, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes; the motion was supported. The July 14, 2021 FMAC meeting minutes, as amended, were adopted unanimously.

Adoption of 2022 FMAC Meeting Dates

Chair Melow opened the floor for discussion regarding the proposed 2022 FMAC meeting dates. There were no concerns. Mr. Botti motioned to support adoption of the 2022 FMAC meeting dates as presented, supported by Ms. Makhayla LaButte. The 2022 FMAC meeting dates were adopted unanimously.

Public Comments

None

State Foresters’ Report – Jeff Stampfly, MDNR

Legislative Updates – [July 15, 2021](#), [August 12, 2021](#) – No comments or discussion.

- a. Forest Resources Division (FRD) is wrapping up its fiscal year.
- b. Timber Sales should reach 50,000 acres of state forest land prepped this year.
- c. The Good Neighbor Authority timber sale acres should reach 6,500 acres.
- d. Timber sale from State Game Areas should be approximately 1,500 acres.
- e. The FRD still has some resources out west and an engine in Montana. Most staff have returned.
- f. The FRD had 272 fires for 2,338 acres and completed 57 prescribed burns for 5,100 acres.
- g. The National Association of State Foresters met in person for the first time in years in Pittsburgh. Approximately 30 state foresters attended in person with the rest attending virtually. Topics covered included the federal budget and reconciliation project infrastructure. Western fire is always a large conversation and was discussed as well.
- h. Mr. Stampfly received word from the Forest Service that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has 48 projects funded, with Michigan receiving 16 projects for \$1.6 million worth of work.

Action Items / Follow-up Items

Chair Melow stated the FMAC had been asked to approve the addition of the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) to the MDNR’s Best Management Practices. He stated the document has been drafted and circulated to the FMAC members, and everyone should have had an opportunity to review it. This document would be signed by Chair Melow on behalf of the committee and would then go to the Director of the MDNR.

Chair Melow gave a brief overview of the MAEAP. There are several programs within the MDNR that require sustainable practices. Mr. Ben Schram, from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, wanted the opportunity to add the MAEAP to this group to qualify for those programs. The MAEAP would be added to the Generally Accepted Forestry Management Practices (GAFMPS).

Mr. Botti wondered if there was a written list of requirements for the MAEAP program. Mr. Stampfly responded that this group, under the Right to Forestry Act, gets to recommend allowable practices. Mr. Schram was trying to get the MAEAP recognized as an acceptable practice under the Right to Forestry Act. Chair Melow didn’t feel further discussion was needed. He commented if anyone had further questions regarding what the MAEAP is, updating the document with a link to the website would be sufficient. He suggested they run a thread to the MDNR programs and say it’s acceptable.

It was asked if the MAEAP would have to go in front of the Natural Resources Commission for final approval. Mr. Stampfly wasn't sure. If the contention is the MAEAP be equated to a third-party program, perhaps, but he didn't take it that way. He thought there was some silvicultural practices that needed to be vetted through the MDNR. Chair Melow recommended the FMAC suggest the MDNR investigate it and consider the flexibility of MAEAP and add it to the list as presented. Mr. Stampfly agreed that would open the door for the MDNR to be able to look at it.

Ms. LaButte reported that in 2011 it was changed from a Commission authority to a DNR authority, so it would be presented to Director Eichinger. Mr. Stampfly requested they write the letter to the Director, and it will probably start a discussion between him and Ms. Shannon Lott, Natural Resources Deputy, MDNR, before moving forward to the Director.

Mr. Botti moved to revise the document as recommended per the discussion and update the letter to send to the MDNR Director, with copies to Mr. Stampfly and Ms. Lott. Motion was supported by Ms. LaButte. There was brief discussion, and all were in favor. It was passed unanimously.

Standing Discussion Items

- a. Trails - Mr. Jernberg reported the Huron-Manistee National Forest has opened its numbered roads to off-road vehicle (ORV) traffic, effective October 1. They will be managing the issues that arise from doing that moving forward. In Baldwin this is greatly going to increase their law enforcement capabilities. There is some meshing between the Forest Service and MDNR rules that would be helpful going forward. The Forest Service is imposing a speed limit on its roads. Ms. Leslie Auriemmo responded the Forest Service was trying to be consistent with what the State is doing. There are no speed limits supported at this time other than the normal speed limit on the roads. Mr. Jernberg replied that the U.S. Forest Service pamphlet states the speed limit is 25 mph. He believes it's a good idea because it eliminates some of the rutting or tearing that happens to the forest floor.

Mr. Stampfly commented that he isn't aware of speed limits on general state forest roads. Mr. Jernberg thinks they are using or paralleling the County speed limits. He has heard under certain conditions, the MDNR Conservation Officers can now issue citations. Mr. Stampfly replied they are working with the Law Enforcement Division to increase patrols on Huron-Manistee roads. Ms. Auriemmo agreed that they are trying to increase law enforcement in these areas. Mr. Jernberg commented he has seen where numbered forest roads intersect with private property and that will present a problem when the private landowner must come up with some sort of sign to notify riders that they are on land they shouldn't be on. Ms. Auriemmo reported this is only on forest roads that are open to motor vehicle traffic and they only opened the roads that was dual with the state and county. The only thing the Forest Service did was make things consistent. They have not opened any trails or anything else like that.

Mr. Stampfly commented he isn't sure how much the MDNR Parks and Recreation Division would be involved with that. If it butts up against state forest and it is state forest road but not a designated trail the MDNR wouldn't have much to do with that. Mr. Jernberg commented the map shows several forest service roads that are open and the time of the year they are open. That map is out there, now. Mr. Stampfly replied there are other places where state forest roads that are not part of a designated trail intersects with forest roads. Mr. Jernberg commented the general confusion is when the Forest Service put out its release, the Governor had already opened most state forest roads to traffic.

- b. Communications from the Field – Everyone has been working hard to try to get things done for the end of the year. There’s been Covid protocol changes. Staff has been told they would be back in the offices by the end of the month, but most believe it won’t be by the end of October. It has been pretty much normal business being conducted in the field.
- c. Registered Forester Board – Mr. Botti reported they have 170 registered foresters. There is a committee that came up with a publication. One of the issues that the Legislature was looking at was the fee structure. It was claimed by some other state agency that the fee was not enough to pay for the cost of administration. It’s been substantially increased. It looks as if it’s going to be adequate to cover the costs to run the program.

FMAC Member Updates

- a. Leslie Auriemmo
 - Reported the Forest Service hit 86 million board feet sold, an all-time high for Huron-Manistee. They are in the top 5 producing national forests in the United States. Three of the top five came from the Great Lakes states.
 - They had the brittle fire. They are doing a salvage operation and doing sales from that.
 - The OHV thing was a big thing that came out recently.
 - They are expecting money in fuels next year with the infrastructure bill. They have completed some projects for that. If the bill passes, they expect to see some funding.
 - The vaccine mandate for federal employees is causing a lot of distress. Those that refuse to get vaccinated can’t get a medical accommodation and will be fired. It’s distressing to a lot of people.
- b. Andrew Storer
 - Michigan Technical University has a Forest Management Plan opportunity through the equipment program. The single plan is now being split into two phases of planning to give them more flexibility.
 - Training is coming out right now. They are still on the front end of getting information out to staff. People who are technical service providers will have training coming up shortly. He thinks it will line up better with the commercial forest program, etc.
- c. Makhayla LaButte
 - Michigan United Conservation Clubs’ (MUCC) On the Ground Program is wrapping up its habitat improvement program. She recognized MDNR staff for that program this year. Dave Forstat and one other MDNR staff person were honored. The MDNR put out a press release recognizing the efforts the MDNR has made with MUCC.
 - They are wrapping up their season in Kalkaska with a grant recipient in the Pere Marquette Forest and planting about 100 trees
 - They are reaching out to the MDNR’s Wildlife Division for projects for next year
 - They have a new list of passed legislation on the MUCC website.
- d. Paul Jernberg
 - The Southern Mason Lake, Osceola County area was hit by a severe hailstorm and windstorm just after Labor Day. He thanked the MDNR’s Forest Resources and Parks and Recreation divisions, as well as the U.S. Forest Service for their efforts in cleanup. They hope to have most of the trails open by the first of November.
- e. Gary Melow
 - Michigan Biomass – plants have been dispatched up and have been running a lot during the summer. It’s been exceedingly warm. They are looking to continue to run through the winter. Grayling has been called on to run at maximum load for six months. This is putting pressure on the fuel supply.

- Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council (TFPAC) update – there is not a lot of new information to report. They are continuing to regroup. There has been a lot of focus and discussion regarding the sale of forest carbon credits. There are concerns from the industry that it may have an impact on how the state is managing the state forest system. It should be status quo. Mr. Stampfly added they are working toward presenting a PowerPoint to Ms. Lott regarding the Council's goals. They are meeting with her at the end of the month. Chair Melow added they are presenting on how they want to move forward with the MDNR. Mr. Stampfly reported there are additional milestones coming with the carbon credits. Inventory has been complete, and they are looking at what those values are.

Chair Melow commented there is a voluntary market. You have experts who are able to quantify carbon storage in wood, forest resources and durable goods. There is a marketplace for corporations and other entities to use forest-based carbon credits to offset their emissions. It makes the emissions carbon neutral. Money changes hands; the State of Michigan has signed a contract with DTE Energy for about \$10 million over 10 years. The project is in the Pigeon River Country area.

Mr. Stampfly asked Chair Melow how the TFPAC felt about the Microsoft TEAMS option for having hybrid meetings. Chair Melow responded he believes it's the new future. There are incredible benefits. He commented the FMAC members had been in this meeting for not even 1.5 hours and there are members that live far from Lansing. He believes virtual meetings need to remain an option so those who want to can attend the meeting virtually. Chair Melow prefers face-to-face meetings but there's a place for the technology. It's a good fill-in, but it doesn't substitute for face-to-face meetings. Mr. Botti suggested maybe making it an option for some people, especially like Dr. Storer and Mr. Suchovsky. He suggested allowing people that live beyond a certain distance to attend virtually would be acceptable. Mr. Stampfly responded that if people are going to attend via a conference call, they could do so face-to-face with TEAMS instead. He wasn't suggesting never meeting face-to-face, but it gives people a pretty good way to participate, especially when someone cannot be there in person. Chair Melow agreed that a virtual meeting is better than a conference call.

The October 13, 2021 FMAC meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Next Meeting Date

Meeting Date: January 12, 2022

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