

FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 6, 2016
DRAFT MINUTES

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Ms. Sarah Topp, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (representing Amy Trotter)
Mr. Gary Melow, Vice Chair, Michigan Biomass
Mr. Bill O'Neill, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club (via conference call)
Dr. Rich Kobe, Michigan State University
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Steve Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
Ms. Kim Korbecki, FMAC Assistant, MDNR

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

None

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Ms. Leslie Auriemmo, USFS Huron-Manistee (via conference call)

FMAC ADVISORS ABSENT

Mr. Andy Henriksen, USDA Conservation District

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mr. Trevor VanDyke, MDNR
Mr. Eric Ellis, Ruffed Grouse Society
Mr. Kevin Sayers, MDNR

I. Welcome

Chair Botti called the January 6, 2016 FMAC meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

II. Action Items

• **Adoption of January 6, 2016 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Meeting Agenda**

Mr. O'Neill requested adding an update on changes within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). **The January 6, 2016 Forest Management Advisory (FMAC) Committee Agenda was adopted unanimously, as revised.**

• **Adoption of November 4, 2015 FMAC Meeting Minutes**

Mr. O'Neill noted there were changes that needed to be made to some financial information pertaining to the 2015 Governor's Forest Product Summit update and he would submit that information to Ms. Korbecki.

MOTION: Mr. Suchovsky moved to adopt the November 14, 2015 FMAC Meeting Minutes, as revised; supported by **Mr. Melow**. **The November 4, 2015 FMAC Meeting Minutes were adopted unanimously, as revised.**

- **Discussion and Adoption of 2016 FMAC Meeting Schedule**

Mr. O'Neill proposed quarterly, face-to-face meetings, rather than meeting every other month, with conference calls in between meetings scheduled as needed. This would reduce the face-to-face meeting from six to four per year. He discussed adding the use of technology such as Go-to-Meetings to improve the experience for those unable to attend the meetings in person. Discussion ensued.

Motion: Mr. Robbins moved to adopt quarterly meetings with Go-to-Meeting capabilities. **Mr. Suchovsky** moved to adopt the 2016 FMAC Meeting Schedule as presented.

The FMAC then discussed locations of meetings. **Mr. Melow** suggested planning ahead on meeting locations and scheduling them to coincide with field trips of interest to the FMAC and in relation to agenda topics.

The 2016 FMAC Meeting Schedule was adopted as presented with discussion of meeting locations based on FMAC interest and agenda items to take place at future meetings.

III. Public Comment

Mr. O'Neill gave an update on recent changes that have taken place within the MDNR.

Director Dan Wyant, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), resigned. Director Keith Creagh, MDNR, has been appointed as Director of DEQ. As a result of this reassignment, Dr. Bill Moritz, MDNR's Natural Resources Deputy, has been assigned as Director and Mr. O'Neill, MDNR's Chief and State Forester of the Forest Resources Division (FRD), has been appointed as Natural Resources Deputy. Ms. Debbie Begalle, FRD's Assistant Chief, has been appointed as acting Chief for FRD.

IV. Discussion and Election of FMAC Chair and Vice Chair (2-year term)

Mr. Suchovsky nominated Mr. Melow as Chair.

Motion: Mr. Suchovsky moved to close nominations for Chair; supported by **Dr. Sharik**. Discussion ensued and Mr. Melow accepted the nomination for Chair. Since Mr. Melow was the only nomination for Chair, the appointment was made without voting. Mr. Melow will serve as Chair for a two-year term; 2016-2018.

Mr. Suchovsky nominated Mr. Manson as Vice Chair; supported by **Dr. Sharik**.

Mr. Manson nominated Mr. Suchovsky as Vice Chair; **Mr. Suchovsky** declined the nomination.

Motion: Mr. Robbins moved to close the nominations for Vice Chair; supported by **Dr. Sharik**. **Mr. Manson** was nominated unanimously as Vice Chair. Mr. Manson will serve as Vice Chair for a two-year term; 2016-2018.

- I. Legislative Update** – Trevor VanDyke, Legislative and Legal Affairs (MDNR) November and December NRC Legislative Update reports (attached – [Nov. 2015](#) and [Dec. 2015](#)) were provided with the FMAC packets.

Mr. VanDyke reported on the following legislation:

- [Senate Bill 39](#) – Public Land Strategy Update. This is currently before the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Director Creagh has continued to work with the bill sponsors and interested members of the senate. Mr. VanDyke believes there may be some movement on this bill.
- [House Bill 5128](#) - addresses the issue of retired state employees to contract with the state to conduct wildfire suppression without losing their pension. This bill addresses this issue and is limited in nature to just fire suppression. It was introduced years ago by Representative Foster where it passed the House but unfortunately did not get adopted by the Senate.

Senate Bills [651](#), [652](#) and [653](#) – legislation went through a few years ago that allowed for individuals in the Commercial Forest Program to transition to the Qualified Forest Program without penalty. That ended September 2015. Now the legislature is looking at eliminating the September deadline and allowing the transition to continue. They will be taking up these bills in the next week or so.

II. Urban and Community Forestry Update – Kevin Sayers (MDNR)
Mr. Sayers, MDNR, gave the [attached presentation](#) on Urban and Community Forestry.

There have been a lot of challenges such as reduced life span of tree in urban areas; loss of trees; limited rooting space; structural damage; utilities; storms and climate change; insects; invasive species; funding; and maintenance. There needs to be additional work on pruning more trees. The return on investment is good though. Healthy trees live in healthy communities and have a positive effect on mental and physical health. Urban and community forests also act as a venue to educate the public on a variety of forest issues. It's also a bridge to many forestry topics, such as school forests, [Firewise](#), and community fire protection plans. It's also another platform for building awareness. There are many opportunities, such as working with universities, Arbor Day, Project Learning Tree, etc.

The goals of the program are to create national reports and guides to be shared by the forest service and other states, and to create vibrant, attractive and healthy communities.

III. Registered Forester Update – Bill O'Neill, MDNR

Mr. O'Neill reported there is a committee that is working on developing a registered forest program and has a proposal it will be putting forth to the forestry community to see how it is accepted. The committee will be taking comments on the proposal. It is a challenge because there are not a lot of foresters and it needs to be kept at a modest fee. It will be an interesting conversation as the committee goes across the state to introduce the proposal.

The MDNR was asked by the Governor to administer the program and Mr. O'Neill will be able to provide more specific information at the next FMAC meeting. The lead person on the program is Ms. Brenda Haskill. If the FMAC would like additional information, they may contact her.

IV. Standing Discussion Items

- **Timber Advisory Committee Update**

Mr. Melow reported the Timber Advisory Council (TAC) is organizing for the year. It had its first conference call yesterday and received updates from Mr. O'Neill and others. There

was also an update on the UP Habitat Workgroup, and harvest figures. The MDNR prepared 60,000 acres (roughly 1 million cords) in 2015 and is looking at preparing 61,000 this year, 1,000 of which will be a result of spruce budworm. The TAC also received an update on the Qualified Forest Bill and how Good Neighbor Authority is progressing. **Mr. O'Neill** reported that Plum Creek and Weyerhaeuser will be merging.

- **Legislative Update**

The legislative update was given by Mr. VanDyke (see *Legislative Update* on page 3).

- **FMAC Member Program Updates**

- **MDARD - Mr. Shine** reported he sent a [report](#) on the accounting of the QF program to Ms. Korbecki and Mr. O'Neill. Ms. Korbecki was asked to send a copy of the report to the FMAC. There were 299,098 acres total from transfer, which tripled the total amount. Mr. Shine reviewed with the FMAC the numbers on the report. The MDARD staff is feeling good about how the program has turned out.
- **Ms. Topp**, MUCC, reported that MUCC has scheduled chainsaw training. Its first habitat project will be January 30 and will be hinge cutting in the Grayling State Forest. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that a lot of the volunteer projects MUCC conducts is nice training and isn't always available.
- **Dr. Kobe** reported that MSU has been reaching out to urban populations and sustainability in forestry, and working with city forestry. They have also received the state Christmas tree and are going to mill it and make Christmas ornaments out of it. They will perhaps give these out as gifts next year. The tree is coming down tomorrow morning. They are trying to do a video documentary to put out before the next Silver Bells in the City. They will not be selling the ornaments. They are working with SFI to determine what they are going to do.

MSU is busy interviewing for new faculty. They have three candidates for a forest pathologist, forest economics and policy position, a new dean and a few other positions.

- **Michigan Snowmobile Association - Mr. Manson** reported there has been some riding in the northern Lower Peninsula but that will end at the end of the week when warmer temperatures are expected. Wisconsin just closed all of its trails again. Munising got about 23 inches but in the long-range forecast it will be the end of January or early February before we get more snow. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked about the closed trail around Pictured Rocks. **Mr. Manson** reported that the Alger County Road Commission reached an agreement with Munising Visitor Bureau and they have agreed to fix the road and the trail will be reopened.

Mr. Manson stated the Michigan Snowmobile Association is having its annual meeting in Novi this year.

- **Dr. Sharik** reported that MTU is advertising for a forest biomaterials faculty position. They are also looking for a remote sensing faculty position. They are interested in making Michigan more competitive in the forest biomaterials area. The biomaterials board has about 10 people on it and they are working on making it a nonprofit, which would change it to the Michigan Biomaterials Institute. They are also still trying to get

funding for Project REFORGE. They need to keep on it and become more competitive. Part of the funding from the state is predicated on getting funding elsewhere.

MTU had 32 forestry graduates this year, for an average of 30 per year. **Dr. Kobe** added that MSU's enrollment is going up as well; it is at the mid-to-upper 60s for undergraduate enrollment.

- **Michigan Biomass - Mr. Melow** reported that Hillman Power was able to negotiate a contract with Consumers Energy and can operate for another 17 months. Energy policy will be one of the four items for the legislature when they return next week. The Public Service Commission has taken a look at the PURPA law and a technical advisory committee is to do a report by April 8.

There are changes at the Public Service Commission. It is engaged with the legislature to get language for the energy bills. They are having some success getting the processes set up. Things are dire for the industry in California right now.

- **MFPC - Mr. Robbins** reported that he and Mr. Suchovsky are working on an SFI training schedule and classes, and he needs someone to work with him on biodiversity. There is also critical skills development, with a new plant that may need loggers in the UP. A lot of opportunity may be available for young people.

Road access is still a big issue that MFPC is dealing with.

V. Next Meeting Date:

April 6, 2016
Michigan United Conservation Clubs
2101 Wood Street, Lansing

VI. Adjournment

Chair Botti adjourned the January 6, 2016 Forest Management Advisory Committee meeting at 4:15 p.m.