

**FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC)
MEETING MINUTES
January 3, 2018**

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Botti
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Bill Manson (Vice Chair), Michigan Snowmobile Association
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Mr. Gary Melow (Chair), Michigan Biomass
Dr. Richard Kobe, Michigan State University
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University (MTU)
Mr. Ben Schram, Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Ms. Debbie Begalle, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Ms. Kim Korbecki (Assistant), MDNR

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Ms. Leslie Auriemma, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee

PUBLIC PRESENT

Dr. Mark Rudnicki, MTU
Ms. Shannon Hanna, MDNR

I. Welcome

Chair Melow called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

II. Consent Agenda

• **Adoption of January 3 Agenda**

Agenda was adopted as presented, unanimously.

• **Adoption of November 1, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Begalle had edits to present to Ms. Korbecki.

MOTION: Mr. Suchovsky moved to adopt the November 1 meeting minutes, as edited; supported by **Mr. Robbins**. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. State Forester's Report

• **Legislative Update**

- a. Public Act (PA) 288 Road inventory; The MDNR Director approved the Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) at the December Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting.
 - Roads are open in the northern Lower Peninsula unless posted closed.
 - The MDNR did not get signs made in time, so as soon as the ground is thawed the signs will be installed.

- Interested people have been instructed to see the map on the MDNR website for open/closed roads.
- Some changes: added closures to DeWard Tract (changed from opened to closed); and closed a couple roads around the Big Oaks Equestrian Area.
- The Upper Peninsula (UP) and southern Lower Peninsula (SLP) teams are already working on inventory of those roads and hope to be finished by the beginning of next year if not before.
- Roads are mostly open in the UP, and the MDNR doesn't predict much as far as changes; same with the SLP. Process will go the same as the NLP.

The NRC doesn't deal with land or forestry issues that often. John Walters was recently appointed to the commission, with Vicki Pontz appointed as new Chair.

- b. Forest Health Specialist in Forest Resources Division (FRD) – there is a vacancy in the UP to fill Bob Heyd's position due to his retirement. Roger Mech, MDNR Forest Health Specialist, also retired in December 2017. They have started the interview process to fill on position. Interviews were held right before Christmas and we should have an announcement on a new specialist soon.
- c. New FRD Assistant Chief – Shannon Hanna was hired as FRD's new Assistant Chief. She has a degree in both wildlife and forestry; Bachelor's in wildlife and a Master's in forest health. She's excited to be a part of FRD and will be out on the road visiting facilities and meeting staff. Once the transition is complete, Ms. Begalle will be able to once again focus on onsite issues. Until then, FRD will operate as it has been while not having an Assistant Chief on staff. Ms. Hanna is happy to assist and can be reached at hannas@michigan.gov.
- d. The FRD is working on its 2017 Accomplishment Report. They hope to have it released much earlier than last year.
- e. The FRD will participate in joint Professional Development Training with the Wildlife Division. These divisions co-manage a lot of land, so this is a good opportunity to train together.
- f. Timber sales – Ms. Begalle will have numbers to share soon. The backlog is still high. The FRD is putting up over 60,000 acres. Mr. Suchovsky asked about how many acres were not put up due to pests; 2,000 to 3,000 acres. Ms. Tangora will provide a forest health update at the April FMAC meeting.
- g. Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) – GNA volumes continue to increase every year. The DNR is up to 3,000 acres this year; in two years it will be closer to 5,000 for the Hiawatha National Forest. We expect it will continue to go up and then will plateau.
 - The FRD hired additional staff and is looking at contracting as well as using some by our own staff.
 - The United States Forest Service counts timber as income when the wood is off the site; the DNR counts it as income when the sale is made.
 - **Ms. Auriemma** commented the goal is by 2020 to increase 25% of its target. Right now, staffing etc. is up in the air due to the new administration wanting to downsize government yet produce more timber. Ms. Begalle and Ms. Auriemma agreed the MDNR and USFS has a good working relationship.

V. Timber Advisory Council (TAC) Update

Ms. Begalle reported the TAC is working on its goals. Several the council members were unable to attend the December meeting, so they decided to get a facilitator to assist at the next meeting. Gud Marketing also gave an update presentation on marketing and utilization and Donna LaCourt presented on economic development.

Chair Melow asked about the economic data Dr. Leefers had been working on. He responded they are beginning to further condense their information to a county level to get more specific information on where jobs reside. It's easier for counties to track their own progress.

V. Action Items

None

VI. Action Item Follow-up

None

VII. New Standing Items

None

VIII. Standing Discussion Items

1. Trails – covered in the State Forester report.

- **Ms. Begalle** reported there was a bridge that needed to be replaced related to logging activity on private lands, and areas that are too wet. **Mr. Manson** commented the wet trails are freezing over now and they are continuing to have bridge issues. **Ms. Begalle** stated that last fall there was a large push to inspect FRD bridges which caused issues. There was a lot of snow everywhere although lacking in central Michigan, the banana belt etc. We had some washouts and a bridge where timber had split. We secured an I-beam that will go in next week. **Mr. Suchovsky** mentioned he had noticed the DNR has been putting in a lot of multi-recreational trails and wondered how they were being used. **Ms. Begalle** responded that many are Michigan Department of Transportation trails.

2. Communications from the Field - Invasive species grants were awarded and will be announced in a couple weeks. There is \$5 million in general funds, with \$3.5 million going toward grants and the rest to staff for invasive programs. Some will be used for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, some for firewood, etc. **Mr. Robbins** suggested invasive species education; money for printing pamphlets to assist people in identifying invasives. He mentioned that John Bedford from Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has funding for printed materials for educational purposes.

3. FMAC Member Program Updates

- a. **Bill Botti** – requested a nursery update at a future FMAC meeting. **Ms. Begalle** stated FRD has been growing at Wyman for decades. An analysis was completed last year and showed there are issues on survivability on seedlings. They did a thorough examination and decided to no longer grow soft pines, so are now buying containerized seedlings that are doing well. There is still about two years' worth of seedlings sitting in the nursery and the DNR will still grow some oak if beech bark resistance trees take off.

There are other nurseries so the DNR will no longer be competing in that market. It will do some exchanges with the USFS on seedlings.

b. **Leslie Auriemma**

- USFS is functioning still under a continuing resolution; hopefully congress can make decision by January 17. Recreation is increasing but the budget is going down. They will be doing a recreation site analysis to look at what sites aren't used as much and what other partnerships they can work with. Most funds are just maintenance; there is no funding for enhancements so the USFS is looking for different ways to handle
- Are conducting fire module work out of Wellston, getting ready for a long fire season nationwide. They feel the need to get ahead of the game in terms of handling fuel. There is a group of about 6 employees that go around the state helping with fires. **Ms. Begalle** added the DNR has a crew in California working on incidents as they come up. The DNR is combining crews with the forest service.

c. **Scott Robbins** reported there is a meeting coming up to work on Best Management Practice revisions. **Mr. Price** commented the Commercial Forest Program has negative things in the western UP. A face-to-face meeting will be arranged to work on this.

d. **Bill Manson** - the trails are getting going and there is heavy traffic in all the snowmobile areas. It's a pretty good start of the season. It's starting to build a snow base. A lot of snowmobiles are being rented out. There's been a total of five fatalities.

e. **Ms. Trotter** reported that Chronic Wasting Disease is taking up a lot of time. She's looking forward to a report at NRC meeting from the task force.

f. **Mr. Melow** reported, as anticipated, they received an unfavorable ruling on November 21. They want to lower the rate by 30 or 40 percent; \$55 per megawatts hours. Every party involved has filed an appeal. Everything is against the laws; solar people have filed an appeal. The commission has 30 days to respond but they are not anticipating a favorable outcome there. They filed a suit to issue a stay. It's still in limbo, but they are working to introduce new legislation.

g. **Mr. Bowman** reported a celebration for Mr. Tidwell, recently retired forest service chief, on January 22 at 4:00 p.m. at 147 Communications Art Building.

h. **Dr. Sharik** reported SAF accreditation of forestry at MTU.

- Wildlife position was filled with a person strong in genetics.
- MTU is in the process of hiring a genetics person; they'll be interviewing in January. MTU has one of the larger genetics program in the country.
- Michigan Forest Biomaterials Initiative – Dr. Rudnicki spent two weeks in Finland. The objective was to attend Bioeconomy Investment Summit. They discussed what they (Finland) are doing with forest biomaterials. The summit was hosted by Finland and Sweden. The demand for renewable resources is not going away. The summit was inspiring and Dr. Rudnicki learned a lot. He's working on bringing some of those companies to visit or to partner with.
- There are a lot of administrative changes happening at MTU. The president is retiring June 2018; four out of five deans are retiring mid-summer, including Dr. Sharik.

i. **Ben Schram**

- The deer wintering complex mapping effort was successful. This will be very helpful to landowners. There will be extensive field days and meetings, that will include the county conservation districts.
- Received a note that tree pruning practices were amended to treat oak wilt and there is a chance to receive funding. There may be some opportunity in the future for landowners to partner with contractors, etc. for treatment. There have been no funding opportunities for landowners in the past.

j. **Warren Suchovsky**

- Suggested bringing in Mike Walters for an update on what he's doing.
- Suggested the FMAC look at the conflicts that arise between snowmobile trails and harvesting specifications. **Ms. Begalle** stated she would have a staff person look at the specifications.
- There were one or two logging and recreation area meetings this year. Dennis Nezich, MDNR, was involved.

IX. Next Meeting Date

April 4, 2018, 1:00 p.m. Constitution Hall, 525 West Allegan, Lansing

X. Future Agenda Items

Roloff Experiment – Update on Project/overview – Jason Hartman
County Forest Economics – Larry Leefers (MSU) or Jagdish Poudel (MDNR)
Forest Health Update – Sue Tangora

XI. Adjournment

Chair Melow adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.