

FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC) MEETING
Minutes
March 4, 2015

FMAC Members Present

Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Bill O'Neill, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass (via conference call)
Mr. Mark Rudniki (representing Dr. Terry Sharik), Michigan Technological University (MTU)
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (via conference call)
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council (via conference call)
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association
Ms. Rose Wilbur, Assistant (representing Ms. Kim Korbecki), MDNR

FMAC Members Absent:

Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University (MTU)
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University (MSU)
Mr. Stephen Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Ms. Leslie Auriemmo, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, Huron-Manistee (via conference call)

FMAC Advisors Absent:

Mr. Andy Henriksen, USDA Conservation District

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mr. Patrick Eagan, Citizen
Mr. Jim Boyd, US Forest Service, Ottawa
Mr. Charlie Becker, Plum Creek
Ms. Amy Eagle, MDNR (via conference call)
Ms. Linda Jackson, US Forest Service, Ottawa
Ms. Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator (MDNR)
Mr. Dan Kennedy, MDNR (via conference call)

I. Welcome

Chair Botti called the March 4, 2015 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He asked for introductions around the table and welcomed everyone.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of March 4, 2015 FMAC Meeting Agenda**
The FMAC adopted the March 4, 2015 FMAC meeting agenda, as presented.

- **Adoption of January 7, 2015 FMAC Meeting Minutes**
The FMAC adopted the January 7, 2015 FMAC meeting minutes with modifications submitted by Ms. Trotter.

MOTION: Mr. Suchovsky moved to adopt the January 7, 2014 FMAC meeting minutes, as amended; supported by **Mr. Manson**.

The January 7, 2015 FMAC meeting minutes were adopted unanimously, as amended.

- III. **Public Comment: Mr. Pat Eagan**, citizen and retired journalist, discussed his concerns with the Graymont issue as well as the Walther potato farm proposal. He is concerned that the MDNR is selling off large parcels of land without proper consideration. He believes there should be studies done below the director level to assist Director Keith Creagh (director), MDNR, in understanding the issues behind the decisions.

Mr. Melow questioned what specifically Mr. Eagan was looking for. **Mr. Eagan** noted evaluations need to be done and questions regarding land use need to be addressed. He stated that this is not deemed surplus land. Should it be deemed surplus land? Economic proposals are affecting land management policy. **Ms. Haughey**, as a representative to the director, commented that she would be willing to discuss this in depth with Mr. Eagan at a later time.

IV. **Graymont Resolution**

Mr. Roberson moved to adopt a Graymont resolution to Director Creagh ([attached](#)). The motion is an attempt to allow a 30-day public comment period on each change to the application process. He noted that there was a new application submitted before the last one has been ruled on. He added that a new application should reset the time clock 30 days for input. He pointed out that there have been (3) three new applications and a Chief's recommendation since the last NRC meeting. It is a moving target and time is needed to digest the applications. This is not a recommendation on the merits, just procedural. **Mr. Suchovsky** supported the motion.

Mr. Suchovsky added that it is a good idea to reset the clock. **Mr. O'Neill** stated that this is a complicated process. Graymont has heard from the public and the MDNR, and as a result Graymont is amending its application. There has been specific conversation that has caused a speedup in the revisions as they grow closer to a final application. **Mr. O'Neill** further noted that it is good to consider *how* we have a conversation with the public. We are using the website and the NRC to allow the public to comment. **Mr. O'Neill** added that **Mr. Roberson** brings up a good point; should there be a finite timeline to the application? **Mr. Roberson** added that what he is asking is if he were to go to an NRC meeting, would he know what the director is making a decision on? He believes the public needs to understand what is being ruled upon. **Ms. Trotter** questioned whether or not Graymont has submitted a new fee every time they have revised the application. **Mr. O'Neill** replied that he did not believe so, but he will have to check. **Ms. Jackson** noted that it should be a part of the original application.

A brief discussion was held on what the current policy is. **Mr. O'Neill** discussed the statute and current policy. He further discussed the history of the Graymont application and the level of detail requested on the application. **Chair Botti** noted that it is a complicated issue, but we do not want the MDNR to be seen as secretive. **Mr. O'Neill** pointed out that this does not fall under the authority of this committee. **Mr. Suchovsky** noted that he believed that Mr. Roberson's motion is a general procedural topic – an umbrella policy, something to be discussed for recommendation for policy for the future. **Mr. O'Neill** mentioned bringing in a real estate expert at a later time. **Mr. Melow** noted that we need to approach this from a systemic issue. He is uncomfortable voting on this current motion at this time, with little notice - a review period should be required. **Mr. Roberson** explained that what prompted this was a new application that was received on Friday. **Ms. Trotter** stated that she would support this recommendation as the public needs more time to review. This is a special case that has been moving, but she is comfortable with voting on it. **Mr. Melow** reiterated that he believes the FMAC

needs discussion as to why it is making this recommendation. **Mr. Roberson** noted that the Director will be ruling on this so he would like a vote on this today. He added that this is the right thing to do, not a violation of law.

VOTE: **Mr. Melow** and **Mr. Robbins** abstained. All others voted aye, with the exception of the USFS members who serve as advisors, not voting members of the FMAC.

MOTION: the Graymont resolution passed by majority vote.

Mr. Suchovsky suggested the FMAC invite MDNR staff to attend the next meeting to address this issue. It was decided a future agenda item will be set for land transaction applications, with Mr. Steve Sutton, MDNR, to present. **Mr. Roberson** noted the MDNR has done an exceptional job in soliciting public comment. **Ms. Trotter** agreed, but reiterated the FMAC needs to look at other land transaction items that are not as large as Graymont, at a future meeting. **Mr. Roberson** added that he would like **Mr. O'Neill** to ensure that this resolution is mentioned at the NRC meeting. **Mr. O'Neill** acquiesced.

V. USFS Update

Ms. Jackson and **Mr. Boyd** discussed background and qualifications. A handout was given regarding the Timber and Silviculture Program. **Ms. Auriemmo** discussed the consolidation of the dispatch center and other related items.

VI. Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) Update: **Mr. Kennedy** and **Ms. Eagle** provided an update regarding the NLEB. A handout was provided ([attached](#)) with information regarding NLEB. Recommendations were made that the bat be listed as threatened and not endangered. No decision has been made. **Chair Botti** requested clarification regarding the type of information that was required in order to submit a recommendation to support decision. **Mr. Kennedy** responded that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) want specific science and research to make its determination. **Ms. Eagle** commented that people commenting need to be specific on citing literature or research. **Ms. Auriemmo** noted that there will be a law suit no matter what decision is made. **Mr. Suchovsky** wanted to know how to incorporate over 60 years of knowledge and experience into a recommendation. **Ms. Eagle** replied that a person should note that they are a subject matter expert in the field based on their knowledge and experience. **Mr. Suchovsky** questioned funding source effect regarding lands. Discussion on federal nexus ensued. **Mr. Kennedy** stated that USFWS makes the decision regarding the federal nexus. This is all dependent upon the upcoming decision to be made by the USFWS on April 2, 2015.

VII. Hemlock Management – Mr. Charlie Becker, Plum Creek, provided a PowerPoint presentation ([attached](#)) discussing the Deer Wintering Complex (DWC) pilot project areas, Munge Creek and Huron Mountains. Plum Creek has sizeable ownership within DWCs. Plum Creek's goals are to foster cooperation and implement a plan. Within this project, a 70% conifer canopy is required for optimal snow intercept. A question and answer period with discussion regarding the project was held.

VIII. Discussion on Stewardship Contracting and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

Ms. Jackson and **Mr. Boyd** provided a handout ([attached](#)) regarding the GNA. Information regarding this program was provided to the group. Stewardship requires a contract with not-for-profit organizations. The GNA allows USFS and BLM to enter into cooperative agreements with states. **Ms. Auriemmo** questioned whether or not the State of Michigan has the authority to enter into the GNA Agreement. **Mr. O'Neill** stated that this is something that the MDNR needs to consider and it will look at it more closely after the exercise. There is an exercise to take place on March 16-18 in Wisconsin (sand table) to get clarification and provide direction on the program. **Mr. Suchovsky** noted that the MDNR should allow Stewardships. **Mr. O'Neill** stated that it is a tool, but there are both

successes and challenges with the program. A question and answer period with discussion regarding the program was held, along with possible benefits for the state.

IX. Standing Discussion Items

- **Timber Advisory Committee (TAC) Update**

Mr. Melow discussed biomass. Recommendations on energy policy and biomass were submitted to the Governor and Lansing. He believes it will serve as a platform on continuing conversation about the policy. Senate Bill 78 was vetoed, but a conversation was had to bring it back.

- **Legislative Update**

Mr. Suchovsky requested distribution of handouts for senate bills [16](#) and [39](#). He discussed legislative impact in terms of the roads. He noted that senate bill 39 discusses taxes. **Mr. O'Neill** stated that PILT can be discussed at a later time. He explained that there is a financial obligation, and questioned where the money would come from. He stated this could also be discussed at a future meeting. The road provision is problematic for the MDNR. Logging is often allowed on a road that was never intended for long-term use. **Mr. O'Neill** encouraged people to call the office of the author of the bill to discuss any input they may have.

- **FMAC Members' Program Updates**

- **Mr. Rudniki** reported he was hired for forest bio materials. He discussed working on the strategic plan for forest bio materials. He added that he has worked with a workshop for the policy. He was appointed Executive Director of his board. A proposal was submitted to the state legislature for base funding for the initiative.
- **Mr. Roberson** reported that the Sierra Club was not a part of the lawsuit against the wolves.
- **Mr. Manson** provided snowmobile and trail updates.
- **Mr. Robbins** mentioned numerous upcoming events.

X. Next Meeting Date

May 6, 2015

Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Lansing

XI. Agenda Items (for next meeting)

Land transaction application - Steve Sutton

Deer Management/Habitat

PILT information and payments

Discuss how we can be more proactive in making advisory recommendations (Marvin Roberson)

XII. Adjournment

Chair Botti adjourned the March 4, 2015 FMAC meeting at 3:50 p.m.