

**FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (FMAC)
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 14, 2014**

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Ms. Kim Korbecki, FMAC Assistant, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Mr. Bill O'Neill, Chief, Forest Resources Division, MDNR
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University (MSU)
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA)
Mr. Stephen Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technical University (MTU)

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Art Jeffers, United States Forest Service (USFS), Huron-Manistee

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mr. Kevin Sayers, MDNR
Ms. Amy Clark Eagle, MDNR
Mr. Brad Garmon, Michigan Environmental Council
Mr. Mark Hymes, MUCC

I. Welcome

Chair Botti called the May 14, 2014 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed all present. Ms. Trotter introduced Mr. Mark Hymes, Intern, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC). Mr. Hymes gave a brief description of his background and experience.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of May 14, 2014 FMAC Meeting Agenda**
Items added: Biomaterials Update, Dr. Sharik; MDNR Budget Update, Mr. O'Neill. The May 14, 2014 FMAC meeting agenda was approved with adjustments.
- **Adoption of March 5, 2014 FMAC Meeting Minutes**
Chair Botti asked for discussion or corrections; there were none. The March 5, 2014 FMAC meeting minutes was adopted per the FMAC Bylaws 7-day rule.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Forest Certification Corrective Action (CAR) Response

Ms. Amy Clark Eagle, MDNR, gave a PowerPoint presentation (attached) to the FMAC.

Mr. O'Neill reported a year ago there was conversation across different groups regarding biodiversity. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (MDNR), Forest Resources Division (FRD) received a major Corrective Action Request (CAR) from a forest certification entity

indicating that FRD and the MDNR are inadequate in biodiversity. The FRD has worked to develop a new biodiversity program (program) to respond to the CAR. The MDNR is now in the process of sharing this new program with its customers for feedback (FMAC, Timber Advisory Council, the public, etc.)

The FRD received two CARs. The first was a major CAR from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) which asked it to develop and implement a plan of action (POA) that would address portions of the standard related to 'Representative Sample Areas.' The second CAR, which was a minor one, was issued by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and indicated that FRD failed to complete its Living Legacy Initiative (Initiative). The FRD was asked to address the part of the biodiversity standards that would have been addressed by the Initiative had it been completed.

The POA has been submitted and FRD has already begun implementing it. The FRD is expanding the set of Ecological Reference Areas (ERAs) so it is meeting the standards set by FSC, and it is also expanding the set of dedicated habitat areas. The new dedicated habitat areas will be for species dependent upon core interior forests.

There are 5 steps to the POA. Step 1 is to identify all rare and sensitive or vulnerable natural communities on certified state forest lands, and include these areas in the network of ERAs. Step 2 is to assess examples of rare and common natural communities on certified state forest lands, or other ownerships where the natural community will be protected (e.g., National Parks, Congressionally Designated Wilderness Areas, State natural areas, conservancy lands) and then identify the best representative examples for inclusion as ERAs. The FSC standard suggests approximately 5 examples per ecoregion, but clarifies that more or less may be appropriate. Step 3 is to identify a network of areas for species dependent upon core interior forest habitat on DNR-managed lands (state forest, wildlife areas, state parks or recreation areas). This step identifies places where DNR management is already maintaining core interior forest habitat. Steps 4 and 5 are internal MDNR and public review of the potential network of ERAs and Dedicated Habitat Areas and proposed management direction and approval of these areas, and implementation of the management direction by October 2014. There will also be an approval process through the MDNR's Director and Resource Bureau Management Team.

Management of ERAs is pretty limited but the MDNR does want to encourage management of these areas. There most likely will not be timber sales taking place in these communities. Other compatible activities may continue if it doesn't affect the area. Management of the new Dedicated Habitat Areas will continue as it is (including timber harvest), with a focus on maintaining canopy cover (i.e., an un-fragmented forest). There may be other designations that occur within a dedicated habitat area, i.e. an ERA or natural area, and those things will be managed accordingly. **Dr. Sharik** asked if restoration would be a part of this activity. **Ms. Eagle** responded the areas will be part of the larger forest management system and will be managed accordingly. **Dr. Sharik** suggested including this information as part of the language. **Ms. Eagle** commented some areas will potentially need restoration but the majority is there because it's doing well as is.

Mr. Suchovsky asked if what is being proposed will open the door for Michigan to consider stewardship contracting. **Mr. O'Neill** responded the MDNR would consider that but it isn't the method the MDNR currently uses. The issue isn't the method being used; the issue is how any method will be funded. **Mr. Melow** commented he could see some segments of the legislature deciding if it's going to cost to maintain certification to just do away with it. **Mr. O'Neill** responded the majority of the MDNR's biggest customers have to have forest certification to be able to compete.

Chair Botti asked if the MDNR was confident FSC will approve its approach. **Ms. Eagle** responded it is pretty confident this plan will work to address the standards well and it is a good framework from which the MDNR can work. She also commented the MDNR has received the Timber Advisory Council's endorsement on this plan.

Chair Botti asked what the FMAC could do to assist the MDNR in this. **Mr. O'Neill** responded the FMAC could handle it the way they see fit, including a formal endorsement such as the one the MDNR received from the TAC.

MOTION: Dr. Keathley moved to provide formal endorsement for the MDNR's Plan of Action for addressing the 2013 forest certification corrective action request relative to biodiversity; seconded by **Dr. Sharik**.

The motion to provide a formal endorsement passed unanimously.

V. **Belle Isle Update**

Mr. O'Neill introduced Mr. Kevin Sayers, Urban and Community Forester, MDNR. Mr. Sayers gave a PowerPoint presentation (attached) to the FMAC.

Mr. Sayers stated he would be discussing individual tree management and individual sites, as well as the work the FRD is doing on Belle Isle. He began with a brief explanation of the Urban and Community Forestry Program (program).

The mission of the program is: *To promote, facilitate and ensure the effective management of trees and forests where people live, work and play to maximize the multiple benefits they provide.* The program provides technical, education and financial assistance to local units of government, nonprofit organizations, schools, and community organizations. Nearly 80 percent of land in Michigan is categorized as urban, and these are the lands Mr. Sayers works with. Mr. Sayers works with partners on grant applications and over the last four or five years the program has received \$2-3 million per year for urban projects. He helps partners obtain funding for programs that meet MDNR's goals as well. The grants are one-to-one match most of the time, but occasionally it can be a two-to-one match.

Mr. Sayers moved on to his Belle Isle (Isle) presentation. He commented that his background pertains to hazard tree assessment. One of the biggest issues for MDNR's management of Belle Isle is what it can do to make it safe for the public.

In the fall of 2012, the MDNR discussed what expertise was needed on the Isle as related to trees. The current forest conditions were assessed and a plan was developed to deal with those conditions prior to the transition. The MDNR also estimated staffing and equipment needs. The condition found was an island in the state of mismanagement; big, dead trees on the edge of woodlots, interior trails littered with dead ash trees caused by the Emerald Ash Borer, broken trees with tops laying on top of picnic tables, etc. Staff came up with a prioritized map based on what was known about the use areas.

In the fall of 2013, FRD coordinated with the MDNR's Parks and Recreation Division and the city to go out and assess trees in priority areas of the park, and marked those trees that were too hazardous to leave. They also prepared for tree removal and coordinated on cleanup. It took staff two days, doing a 360° assessment of each tree, to complete the assessment. They marked 250 trees for removal. It took ten FRD staff over two months and 2 ½ weeks in hours, to remove all the hazardous trees. The MDNR then partnered with the Genesee Power Plant to grind all the wood

for electricity for SE Michigan. Some wood chips were left on the Island and will be used for mulch as needed.

The next steps for Belle Isle are:

- Repair Old Saw Mill (asked the Michigan Forest Products Council to partner on this project.
- Tree inventory, management and maintenance plans.
- Tree planting – are working with partners and will most likely begin planting this fall.
- Pruning work.
- Working on RFP to get more tree work done in the old zoo area.

The MDNR has committed to this project for the next 30 years. **Mr. O'Neill** commented that the MDNR's efforts go beyond Belle Isle. It is also involved with the Globe Building in Detroit; there will be a MDNR presence there. When asking how to have a social conversation about the importance of natural resources, referencing Belle Isle is one way to accomplish that.

VI. **Update on Snowmobile Association**

Mr. Manson reported there is still snow in some areas. It was a good and safe year with only 14 fatalities, which is down considering it was a big snow year. He believes the fact that people were spread out more because snow was everywhere in the state contributed to fatalities being down. Tourism picked up in the Upper Peninsula in March. **Dr. Sharik** asked what contributed to the fatalities. **Mr. Manson** replied most were from hitting stationary objects. Over fifty percent were alcohol related. The average yearly fatalities are 20-25 but that has lowered some since the snowmobile drunk driving laws now match regular vehicle laws.

Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) coordinates, organizes and lobbies. The trails are groomed by a total of 68 snowmobile clubs. It was a good year for the MSA working with the Legislature and upgrading current law. There are still some draft laws it is working on. One is determining the definition of a snowmobile. The MDNR's Law Enforcement Division says if the vehicle was not originally made as a snowmobile, it doesn't count as a snowmobile. This is causing problems for people who have converted other types of vehicles into a snowmobile.

The MSA needs to look at some different ways to fund the program. The Snowmobile Program has been a huge tourist draw for the state for many years and it has always paid its own way. There are about 210,000 sleds registered in the state right now. Michigan has world-class snowmobile trails and people come from all over the world to experience them. **Mr. Melow** asked if there are any conflicts relative to state forests and trails. **Mr. Manson** responded the biggest conflict is wheeled vehicles on the trails. He has discussed this with the MDNR Director but it gets into the issue of trails on different types of lands.

Mr. Manson provided the FMAC with a handout: *Facts and Myths About Snowmobiling and Winter Trails*. **Mr. O'Neill** stated Ms. Joyce Angel, MDNR, will give a presentation on how the MDNR works with the 68 snowmobile clubs and how it puts the program into action on the ground, etc. It is a good illustration of public and private cooperation.

VII. **Biomaterials Update**

Dr. Sharik reported a biomaterials steering committee was formed and it met in March. It started out with 60 people but that number has been narrowed down. The committee identified 5 areas to concentrate on. Its next step is to develop a strategic plan around the 5 identified areas. **Dr. Sharik**

has been working with Ms. Lori Thelen, Michigan Conservation District, to formulate a time and place to write the strategic plan. A lot of this depends on getting the right people in the room. Dr. Sharik provided a handout to the FMAC of the types of people and organizations that would be beneficial in this process.

There needs to be key people involved in the strategic planning initiative. The meetings will most likely be held in Lansing. Dr. Sharik would like to get Legislators involved. He is also looking for funding and sponsorships. Right now he needs assistance getting the correct people involved. He asked the FMAC to send him names of people that fit into the categories listed on his handout. **Mr. O'Neill** commented the committee may have to look broadly at the Legislator aspect of this. They are not going to get a Senator or Representative in the room, but they may be able to get some of their key staff involved. It would be good to identify key staff that deals with natural resources.

VIII. **How the FMAC can Assist with the Budget Process**

Mr. O'Neill provided a handout of contact information the FMAC and its organizations could use to support funding for the MDNR's Forest Resources Division's forestry and fire programs.

IX. **MDNR Budget Update**

Mr. O'Neill reported that \$4 million for fire and forestry was removed from the house budget; senate kept these funds in its budget. He requested the FMAC members contact their organization's members and express the importance of funding the fire and forestry programs. He provided contact information for those members to make contact if they would like to support MDNR's funding request.

X. **MDARD Update**

Mr. Shine provided a handout showing the breakdown of the Qualified Forest (QF) Program by county. He reported the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is pleased by the progress being made and there is still a lot of interest in the QF program. Consulting Foresters are booked solid. The Commercial Forest (CF) Program has extended its deadline for people to determine if they wish to switch to the QF program.

At this time, the budget is hung up between the house and the senate. If it gets sorted out, the MDARD will have the resources to add three additional foresters. As of right now, MDARD is doing as much with the program as the budget allows. If the budget is passed in MDARD's favor, it will interview for new foresters and once hired there will be 20 foresters total in the program.

With the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, federal assistance goes directly to the landowners. The MDARD receives no administrative funding or technical assistance. It is currently trying to assemble potential projects and the state agency Directors are putting together a coalition to look for potential projects, as well. This would cover a variety of forestry projects.

There have been amendments to the forest bill. The Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) was amended to incorporate forestry habitat. The MDARD is working on a MAEAP assessment tool for landowners to evaluate the value of their resources. Last Tuesday, the MAEAP Advisory Council approved a document submitted by MDARD. The MDARD looked at options for assessment tools and ended up using the tree farm forestry component and added a few questions for wetlands, etc.

Ms. Trotter asked how MDARD is engaged in the discussion regarding registered foresters.

Mr. Shine responded that he and Mr. Rich Harlow, MDARD) have had people available for questions and they have shared the importance of foresters being registered. The bill is now back at the senate and the Governor supports the bill. It most likely will pass.

Mr. Jeffers announced there is a new Forest Supervisor at USFS Huron-Manistee, Ms. Leslie Auriemmo. She is presently the forest supervisor in Tennessee at the Cherokee National Forest.

XI. **Standing Discussion Items**

- **Timber Advisory Committee Update**

None

- **Legislative Update**

The March, April and May, 2014 Department of Natural Resources Legislative Updates were provided to the FMAC.

XII. **Next Meeting Date**

July 16, 2014

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

2101 Wood Street, Lansing

XIII. **Agenda Items**

Snowmobile Trail Report – Joyce Angel, MDNR

Biomaterials Update – Terry Sharik

Discussion on Natural Resource Management (1/2 hour)

XIV. **Adjournment**

Chair Botti adjourned the May 14, 2014 FMAC meeting at 4:10 p.m.