

**FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC)  
Meeting Minutes**

February 19, 2020

**FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging  
Gary Melow, FMAC Chair, Michigan Biomass  
Ben Schram, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association  
Makhayla LaButte (for Amy Trotter), Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan  
Kim Korbecki, FMAC Assistant, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)  
Rich Kobe, Michigan State University

**FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT**

Shannon Rische, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee (for Leslie Auriemmo)

**PUBLIC PRESENT**

David Price, MDNR  
Jeff Stampfly, MDNR

- I. **Welcome** – Gary Melow, Chair  
**Chair Melow** called the February 19, 2020 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Introductions of members were made.
  
- II. **Consent Agenda**
  - **Adoption of February 19, 2020 Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Meeting Agenda**  
One amendment; item 8, fifth bullet, Right to Forest Act added. Agenda approved as amended.
  - **Adoption of October 2, 2019 FMAC Meeting Minutes**  
Discussion regarding page 2, paragraph 2, should read “the biochar manufacturing plant at Sawyer is up and running again.”  
**MOTION** to pass agenda and minutes, as amended was made by Mr. Suchovsky; both were passed unanimously with suggested corrections.
  
- III. **Public Comment**  
None
  
- IV. **Filling a Committee Vacancy - Committee**  
**Chair Melow** reported that Bill Manson has resigned from the Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC). He represented trail users, and Chair Melow wanted to discuss the need to find someone to represent that sector. **Mr. Jeff Stampfly**, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) stated all he has heard is that Mr. Manson had left and explained that the snowmobile and off-road vehicle (ORV) groups have sort of formed a co-group. Mr. Stampfly will work with Ms. Debbie Begalle, MDNR, to reach out to the trails groups and let them know the FMAC would like them represented and ask for nominations for a new member. Mr. Manson was also vice-chair of the FMAC; after some discussion the decision was made to address this position

at the next FMAC meeting. Dr. Kobe addressed other areas of interest that are not covered in the FMAC membership, such as land trust organizations, i.e. The Nature Conservancy. Mr. Suchovsky suggested having someone from the Michigan Association of Timbermen (MAT) again, who was once represented and has expressed interest in being a part of the FMAC again.

## V. Forest Resources Division Budget Review

Mr. Jeff Stampfly discussed that the Governor held the State-of-the-State and the MDNR gave a highlight. The Governor put forth her budget and the legislative side is now deciding. Highlights include:

1. Increase in Good Neighbor Authority of 1.8 million (the MDNR does work on forest service property). The increase will allow revenues from the forest service so it will be able to implement work.
2. \$1 million, one time, for forest fire equipment and \$300,000 ongoing. This includes the Forest Fire Experiment Station.
3. Forestry research - \$500,000 one-time FDF for Cedar Research Project.
4. \$5 million for a new district Customer Service Center in Newberry to be built out of mass timber funds.
5. \$2.5 million in FDF to continue the MDNR's work on forest infrastructure. The MDNR has been able to replace some bridges and there are more pegged to be done.

**Mr. Suchovsky** asked about the review of literature. **Mr. Stampfly** replied it is in the works. The MDNR is largely working through the logistics part of it. There were several things around that the MDNR knew had been done, so it wanted them to be aware of that. **Dr. Kobe** commented that it makes sense to do both literature and on the ground.

**Mr. Suchovsky** said he had heard they are putting limits on how FDF could be spent. The FDF comes from timber sales primarily on tax reverted lands, and he was curious if the total revenues the MDNR gets from those sales compare to the funds that get appropriated back to the department. **Chair Melow** responded he is certain there are allowable expenses the MDNR can allocate to those funds, i.e. certain administrative things, but the big intent was to protect the funds.

**Mr. Botti** mentioned that he noticed in the October minutes we approved that the governor vetoed PILT. **Mr. Melow** responded that those funds were restored.

**Dr. Kobe** asked if the MDNR has investigated mass timber bridges.

**Mr. Stampfly** responded not yet. There are two the MDNR built years ago that were stress laminated; it is a series of wood components that are bolted together. He knows of one in Schoolcraft County that was built 25 years ago, but most of the bridges the MDNR has been purchasing are coming in at \$250,000 to \$500,000. There are other sets of bridges that are portable; the MDNR puts the bridge in and pulls it back out once the work is done.

## VI. Chipping Follow-up – David Price, MDNR

**Mr. Price** reported that Forest Resources Division (FRD), MDNR, has given direction to all its units that where there are producers that have it in their contract a hard specification for requiring chipping, they will do a contract amendment to allow latitude for the district manager and the producer to provide some alternative means, on a case-by-case basis. He is not aware of a lot of asks for that to-date. Related to that, this is the second winter in a row we've had a wet fall, not cold temperatures and lowland conifers we cannot get to. We'll offer free extensions on those as

needed. The FRD wants to keep the sales with the producers rather than have them turn it back into them. **Chair Melow** asked about lop and scatter vs. chip and haul. **Mr. Price** responded it seems to work okay; the other option is to let the slash cure longer and also power trenchers. The primary sticky point is regeneration under SFI which is within two years unless there are site specific reasons where it can't be done. The FRD will have an opportunity, just as any other stakeholder, to advocate that that period of time is way too short. **Mr. Stampfly** added that the other factor that comes into play is other regeneration that is already there. **Chair Melow** commented that instead of one treatment to satisfy all sales, the FRD must go in and look at each sale.

Mr. Price mentioned that the chip specifications used to be unwavering; now FRD puts in there something like "...want it chipped but will reconsider if you can show us where it will fit into the objective of the stand...."

#### VII. Timber Sales; last year and this year's expectations – David Price, MDNR

**Mr. Price** reported that for fiscal year 20 state forest work, we're in year 2 of the length of the inventory cycle. Next year is a bigger inventory year so numbers should come up some. He also reported:

- Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) – nationally timber targets are going up.
- 75% was accomplished.
- Huron Manistee, Hiawatha, Ottawa – for Huron-Manistee the MDNR is trying to get 100% of asked; one-quarter will be accomplished through GNA: Hiawatha is at 75%, and in the Ottawa, we have about 1/5 of the work completed. The MDNR is putting up 83 million feet. **Chair Melow** asked how that is compared to where we started. **Mr. Price** responded that over the past 4 years, in 2016 GNA started slowly, then ramped up in fiscal year 17 (acres) and this past year there were over 6,500 acres prepared. Next year the MDNR will be at 8,300 acres prepared and are in the process of hiring more staff for GNA.
- The MDNR had over 100,000 cords over all three forests this past year and anticipate the same moving forwards. Mr. Price thinks by 2021 they will meet a steady number.
- GNA agreements are a ten-year agreement so even if it was removed from the farm bill, he thinks GNA will remain in play.
- Survey work, botany work, etc. will all be contracted, planting is contracted as well.

**Chair Melow** asked where the revenues go. **Mr. Price** responded that federal dollars are counted for 1/3 virtual pots; new pots will be established for new agreements. The legislature has no control over the revenues. They only pay us back for actual costs. **Mr. Stampfly** commented that this gets more wood in the markets, and gets treatments done that normally wouldn't be done, etc. It's going to also provide a funding source to do prescribed burning.

#### VIII. Right to Forest Act

**Mr. Schram** reported that back in 2002, then Governor Engler signed into law the Right to Forest Act. This spelled out in legislation that forestry is a valuable component to the state's economy and can be impacted by random urban encroachments. The law suggests that if a landowner accepts this act, basically, that their operations can't be shut down. In 2006, the FMAC was formed to advise on these practices. The law says the generally accepted process would be reviews annually.

The initial request was that the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) operate the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and gets scored on high, low, and medium risks.

There was a memorandum to the Natural Resources Commission from the FMAC at the time to spell out the general principles. The MDARD was to amend the generally accepted practices to include the MAEAP. Mr. Schram, Mr. Robbins and Mr. Suchovsky then got together to work through the book.

**Dr. Kobe** asked if MAEAP should be added to the list of other certifications. **Mr. Schram** responded yes and referred to page 17, 2.2. He would like to make the connection a little clearer, seeing as farmers that are enrolled in the program can say they are following the Right to Forest Act. Currently they work through the booklet with the landowner, identify their legal risks, and then when the landowner is ready to go, they request the certification.

**Dr. Kobe** stated it seems kind of circular; that GAFMPs in the Right to Forest Act are being referred to in MAEAP and wondered if it causes issues. **Mr. Schram** responded that in order to make it to the end and be verified, you must get your marks in all those blue boxes. Programs that fall into this category include:

- Farmstead system (fuel storage, etc.)
- Cropping system (managing nutrients, etc.)
- Livestock system (animal waste, animal feeding, etc.)
- Forest wetlands and habitat (impacts all land on ownership that is not in agricultural production.)

**Chair Melow** commented that this is cross-referenced; following MAEAP is clearly following the Right to Forest Act, and vice versa. He asked Mr. Schram where the group is with it now, and he responded they need to make edits to the existing package of generally accepted practices (GAFMP) and then it will move forward to the Natural Resources Commission.

**Mr. Botti** motioned for the FMAC group to move it forward to the NRC and request that MAEFP be listed with Generally Accepted Forestry Management Practices; seconded by **Mr. Suchovsky**. The group discussed where to integrate it, and Mr. Schram suggested maybe add it to the last paragraph on page 5, under “General Principles” where it lists other programs. Add MAEAP to the list of third-party certification programs under general principles. Mr. Suchovsky suggested placing it, in particular, under “wetlands”.

Mr. Botti was asked to amend his motion to read: “...add MAEAP forest wetlands and habitat assists to the list of third-party certification programs under general principles; so motioned and seconded by Mr. Suchovsky.” The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IX. State Forester’s Report – Jeff Stampfly MDNR**

Mr. Stampfly reported that he, Ms. Debbie Begalle, and Mr. Dan Laux attended the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) fire committee meeting in Orlando; state foresters are on various sub-committees. There was a good discussion and a lot of discussion regarding technology and fire. It’s really gotten to be more about technology. A subgroup of that is going to

be here in Michigan. They will be coming into Traverse City, visiting the fire experiment stations, etc.

- **Forest Action Plan**

**Mr. Price** stated as a reminder, the MDNR has had the Forest Action Plan (FAP) in place since 2010. It must be updated every ten years; Forest Resources Division (FRD) is in the process of updating it now. Basically, the plan is implemented to our five programs. At the end of 2019 we had a lot of input from stakeholder groups, to identify priority issues and what else should be addressed in the plan. The input process is now completed; Scott Jones is working on drafting the plan. He is about 75% completed drafting the plan. It's going to be fairly sustained. The Assessment is a story map, online that we've been developing for the past year. The ultimate deadline is to submit it in May, get to the forest service in June, outreach to stakeholders this spring, and hold stakeholder meetings in April, etc.

- **Climate Change**

Sprint team – when Governor Whitmer took office she issued a bunch of executive directives; number 12 dealt with climate change. Attached to it is a climate alliance, with now about 25 states participating, and she directed all department heads in the state to accelerate any new and existing carbon programs. In response, Director Eichinger formed, in 2020, some sprint teams that are working towards the Governor's directives.

The team is focused on two things: utilities of solar on state land and April to May solicit bids from companies that have large-scale energy. They will be meeting with townships the first weekend in March. **Mr. Price** reported on 600 acres in Groveland and a 200-300-acre site called 7-mile pit. Both DTE and Consumers are keen on solar these days. The MDNR is going to try to get a royalty rate and see how it goes.

The FRD hopes to get the RFP out in March, to include the California research board and involuntary carbon markets. There are all sorts of ways to manage timber differently. The MDNR does some different forest management already.

At the present time, the FRD is issuing an RFP for a proposal of how we can issue credits at Pigeon River Country. There are checks and balances, and auditing in place to keep things accurate.

- **Legislative Updates** – [October 10, 2019](#), [November 7, 2019](#), [December 10, 2019](#), [January 9, 2020](#)

Nothing forestry-related was covered in these updates.

- **Timber Advisory Council Update** – Gary Melow

**Chair Melow** stated there was not a lot to report. There have been some canceled meetings and phone calls, as well as attendance issues and scheduling conflicts. Other than receiving issues, there is nothing else to report.

A month-long effort to establish a dashboard of accomplishments, with the help of Dr. Larry Leefers, has been put together. They are now pausing to consider how to accomplish these goals. There is a face-to-face meeting scheduled in March or May. **Mr. Schram** commented that they are trying to figure out their place in this new administration. **Chair Melow** added the TAC needs action in recommendations; things were set up by Governor Snyder and the TAC

is not sure now who to respond to or get direction from. They have been sort of treading water the last eight or so months.

**X. Action Items Follow-up**

None

**XI. New Standing Items**

**Timber Harvest Numbers**

52,500 prepared across this fiscal year.

**XII. Standing Discussion Items**

- **Trails** - none

- **Communications from the Field**

The expectation is very little winter logging; with a lot of high water there could be extended weight restriction time.

- **FMAC Member Program Updates**

- Ms. Makhayla LaButte, MUCC reported she will probably be taking over attending the FMAC meetings for Ian Fitzgerald. Sarah Topp, also MUCC, has interest in public lands and is happy to attend the FMAC meetings as well, to learn more about a different area of management.
- **Shannon Rische**, Huron-Manistee, reported
  - a. They have increased the push to streamline their processes.
  - b. They completed an assessment on red pine as well as an environmental health assessment.
  - c. She reported that GNA has helped them to streamline their processes. Their targets have gone up to 64 million board feet.
  - d. They also have 24,000 acres of field treatments to accomplish.
  - e. They have a shared stewardship agreement with the MDNR and are hoping to have it in place in the spring.
  - f. They are hiring some but not at a pace they'd like to do.
- **Rich Kobe**, MSU, reported
  - a. On April 9 they will have a guest speaker for forest paths. It is the Distinguished Speaker series and the guest is Ms. Donna Cassese. The title of the presentation is "Almost anything made from petroleum can probably be made from wood." It will be at 4:00 in the auditorium in the engineering building. (This has been postponed due to MSU's response to the Novel Coronavirus.)
  - b. The stem mass timber building continues to generate interest.
  - c. The MIFBE (Michigan Forest Biomaterials Institute) and MDNR are holding a mass timber summit; MSU is hosting. It's on April 20 & 21. It will have tours of the building but is meant to be a practical session on identifying obstacles and how to move this market forward in the future. The second day is being held at Huntington Club, in the west tower of the Mass building.
  - d. There is a Carbon Specialist position open. They hope to have a candidate as early as next week; A Mass Timber Outreach Specialist position is just being advertised now. One research grant went to an assistant professor and a research specialist who are looking at oak regeneration and red pine. They noted antidotally that they are getting good regeneration in red pine stands; there could be some stuff happening underground.

- e. In the long-term, they may be thinking about converting cover classes, maybe convert some hardwoods into red pine. This relates back to funding recently received from the USDA.
- **Gary Melow**, Michigan Biomass, reported
  - a. On October 4 Hillman Power shut down and there was a fire in Cadillac Energy. This resulted in 1600 tons of wood with no place to go. There are 4 other facilities running; they don't have any particular strategies right now to find rates or subsidies, or other sources of a financial lifeline.
  - b. Due to last winter's cold, the Governor would like to do an assessment to see if we're doing our energy right; we were not affected by the weather impact, and their recommendation is to assemble a workgroup to discuss how to properly provide energy. They are looking at it as a toehold to move into a process to fully value what biomass energy does.
  - c. There's a piece of legislation targeting rural solar customers, and they will have to consider a bunch of stuff to determine rates.
- **Warren Suchovsky**, Suchovsky Logging, reported that last fall he was asked to be involved with the SFI program and to serve on a fiber task force. It's time to do their 5-year projection. They met in Washington about a month ago. It's an interesting project and he's learning a lot and seeing a different side to forestry.
- [Registered Forester Board](#)  
A little language in the house bill is coming in February. Mr. Botti mentioned that the day is coming when people will have to renew.

### XIII. Next Meeting Date

Meeting Date: April 15, 2020

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

### XIV. Future Agenda Items

Election of vice chair and other vacancies (who is represented and who needs to be)

Carbon Market Update (next available agenda)

**Chair Melow** adjourned the February 22, 2020 FMAC meeting at 3:59 p.m.