

TIMBER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Conference Call

March 20, 2020
10:00 am-3:00 pm

Meeting Notes

Introduction – J.R. Richardson

Attendees: JR Richardson, Jerry Grossman, Gary Melow, Donna LaCourt (MDARD), Larry Leefers, Mike McCuiston, Nick Monkevich, Rich Bowman, Ben Schram (MDARD), Tim Biewer, Scott Robbins (MFPC), David Price (MDNR), Keith Kintigh (MDNR), Deb Begalle (MDNR)

Deb received a plaque from the TAC thanking her for her service to the TAC. It was very much appreciated.

Finn Visit – Donna LaCourt

Over the next couple of months, the State will work virtually on its next steps. Also, it will identify collaboration. There is a Research business (from Finland) that may be interested in coming to the U.S.

MDNR Update (including budget) – Deb Begalle

1. The DNR is currently in preparation for Covid-19 situations. Many staff are teleworking, but they are still processing timber sales as well as keeping track of the forest industry.
2. Jeff Stampfly will be acting Chief for Forest Resources Division. Another person will be named acting Assistant Chief.

Carbon Credit Pilot Project / Solar Farms on State Land – David Price

1. **Carbon Credits.** California is most robust plus has a volunteer market.
 - a. Offset omissions. DNR is exploring, using Pigeon River Country (PRC) State Forest as a “pilot.”
 - b. RFP is out and had a call with interested parties. Companies will look at inventory data and plans and submit proposals for selling carbon credits on the PRC. The companies will provide proposals for analysis and brokerage, at no cost to the DNR.
 - c. Focus on managed vs unmanaged lands. Jerry Grossman suggested some kind of robust public/stakeholder input process and cautioned narrowing to companies will provide at no cost. Gary Melow commented that many analyses don’t account for energy recovery. Jerry was concerned that carbon sequestration will be the main factor vs. other values.
 - d. What is the goal? Explore options to meet Executive Order 2019-12 by the Governor to reduce carbon pollution and promote clean energy.
 - e. Rich Bowman (TNC) is in the process of selling credits to the California market. It wasn’t the goal to max carbon revenue but to sell residual carbon based on how they wanted to manage...being certified, etc. It took over a year.

- f. There was a question by Larry about other pilot projects in PRC. That was related to the revisions being made for the Regional State Forest Management plans.
- g. Solar- Focusing on 2 sites that are essentially brownfields and have transmissions lines close by for an RFP later this month. Groveland Mine (Upper Peninsula) and 7-mile pit (Northern Lower Peninsula.) The DNR attended township meetings and there was support for solar. Zoning would need to be modified in those townships. The DNR would lease state forest land to a developer. Onsite visits will be in April and May.

Bat HCP Update – Keith Kintigh

1. 45-day public comment period for 2 chapters (4 & 5) of the Lake States Bat HCP. Started Monday, March 16
2. Bat species over 80%+ decline. Most Indiana bats, little brown, tricolor (100% decline), Northern long-eared bat (NLEB).
3. Is on the threatened endangered species list. NLEB is still protected as threatened and 4d rule is still in effect. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is reevaluating the listing.
4. Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for incidental take. If it's not covered with HCP, you need to get a permit on a case-by-case basis to the USFWS.
5. Covered activities... timber management, road & trail management, and prescribed fire.
6. HCP length would be 50 years.
7. Over 9 million acres of state lands, 32 million acres of private land over the 3 states.
8. There are 8 chapters in HCP. Three chapters are still left for review by the steering committee.
9. Next steps...comments reviewed by the DNR, edits, and then to the USFWS.
10. HCP will be published on the Federal Register later this year or early next year for public comment.

Keith went over specific objectives found in the draft plan. A 150' buffer (no cut) around roost trees and protection of the roost tree year-around. Protection of known hibernacula (111 sites). In Michigan we have 94 known roost trees, some identified 25 years ago. There is high fidelity of roost trees.

Keith is available for questions. He is also presenting at the Forest Management Advisory Committee. There is a link for comments on the DNR website. There will be future opportunities for public comment on the HCP. Chapter 6 will cover private landowner permits.

Economic Contribution Analysis Study – Larry Leefers

Larry sent a PDF as reference. Analysis and report will include NE states (USFS Region 9 area). April 1 the regional report will be available and the state reports at the end of April. Maple syrup was added which Michigan didn't include previously. Numbers have changed slightly from past reports because of newer acceptable standards. Now people will be able to compare each state.

TAC Business:

- a. Bylaw Changes and Appointments - *Move ahead for Director's appointment of Glenn Mroz and Julie Penrose. Passed.*
- b. 2020 Calls and Face-to-face Meetings – *May 22 is the next face-to-face meeting.*
- c. Council Membership Size... *Change to 13 members from 11. Quorum is 7. Passed.*

- d. Possible Council Name Change - *Michigan Timber & Forest Products Advisory Council*-passed.
- e. Face-to-Face Meeting Agenda-*send items to JR/committee. Future Items so far:*
 - *RSFMP Rewrite Update; Discuss Role of the TAC in the Modeling Process*
 - *Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Update*
 - *Chip Market / Site Preparation Analysis*
 - *Mobile Map Cruise Implementation*
- f. Election of Officers and Term Reviews- *After new appointments.*