

## Deer Winter Complex/UP Habitat Workgroup Meeting

Tuesday, September 12, 2017

River Rock Lanes and Banquet Center, Ishpeming

### Attendees:

Jake Walcisak, Stu Boren, Warren Suchovsky, J.R. Richardson, Bernie Hubbard, George Lindquist, Tony Demboski, Jeff Joseph, Matt Watkeys, Jeff Stampfly, Terry Minzey, Stacy Haughey, Don Mankee, Bob Doepker, and Stu Boren

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Lindquist let the group know that the Graymont land swap included receiving land in the Harlow Lake area DWC. He was concerned about the oversight of the area. Would PRD be in charge? Mr. Minzey believes the 23 acre parcel will be in State Forest lands. Either way, WLD will speak up about our goals and interests for the area.

Mr. Demboski presented \$12,400 to the Group. He solicited monies from the various sportsmen groups: 4400 Straits Area Sportsmen; \$1,000 UPWT, Alger County; \$500 Michigan Bear Hunters; \$2,500 UPWT, Dickinson County; \$1,500 Michigan Hunting Dog; \$1,500 UPSA; \$2,000 Wildlife Unlimited Iron County; \$4,000 UPWT, Delta County. Last year MUCC contributed \$2,000.

### PHASE 2 UPDATE

Mr. Boren and Mr. Walcisak are working on Phase 2 in the Western 6 counties. This effort will require data sharing and spatial GIS maps showing the areas with dominant forest cover type. We can create a variety of specific maps using the GIS spatial analysis. Mr. Minzey suggested using soil survey and habitat maps identifying areas to increase and re-establish deer yards. Mr. Richardson asked if we could target the 42 landowners in Gogebic who have over 9K acres to attend our meetings to impress upon them the importance of their efforts. Mr. Boren said that we can now target these individuals with a site visit from the Conservation Districts. This might springboard into updating older plans. Mr. Demboski asked if we could issue a press release in conjunction with a Phase 2 letter. There was the initial 5K outreach mailing we could now create a focused and targeted letter to the 396 landowners who have over 76K in the Western 6 counties. Mr. Suchovsky asked if we could capture absentee owners or owners involved with an organization such as UPWT. We do not have that information, yet, we could obtain that from the consulting foresters.

Mr. Minzey and Mr. Doepker discussed re-establishment of historic deer yards. Why would deer move back into a historic DWC? Why or why not? Biologists can determine if an area could be re-established based upon why the deer moved, increase in snow, hunting pressure, logging, etc. There is the need to analyze the history of the area and prioritize the re-establishments.

More outreach can be created through the different types of management plans as each plan has its own checklist. We can incorporate DWC language. Ms. Begalle and Mr. Smalligan are adding DWC language to the Forest Stewardship plan checklist to be reviewed during the approval process. Other cooperators have agreed to include DWC language to their checklists. DWC language will be included on the Deer Camp survey cards. We are trying to ensure we connect with targeted landowners for outreach and educational opportunities.

### DWC CONIFER PLANTING GRANT

This will be a large scale DWC site specific planting grant from 2018-2020 starting in the Western UP

- This starts with landowners who have plans and the support/involvement of the Conservation District.
- We would conduct site visits, inspections and compile the acres, what is to be planted, and what is to be scarified.
- The information compiled would allow us to line up stock and contractors to plant and/or scarify.

Mr. Minzey said there is a 2 year time frame for grant completion due at the end of July. This year we had 3 applicants from the UP with the likelihood of 1 being funded. He suggests start the plan writing now and fine tune next year. Mr. Boren said the logistics of getting this together depend on analyzing the Forest Stewardship plans. We can use that with the information garnered from the Conservation Districts, consulting foresters, and Gary Willis and crunch the data. We can visit sites and get a handle on the amount of acres we are going to plant/scarify. Mr. Watkeys said this grant seems to expand on a similar grant the Marquette CD is working on now. We could also look at plans that have been completed within the last 5 to 10 years and look at the regeneration.

What information do we have from the DNR monitoring efforts on under-planting projects? There is no monitoring protocol or requirement in the grants. Success depends on the soils, canopy, and what level of thinning was needed? We know what was planted and are lacking adequate information for where the boundaries and specific locations are found. The DNR has had a sporadic monitoring effort. We have shown more success on private land than State land due to being more selective and better site locations. Success also depends on what the objectives were and what cover types we would like to see regenerate.

### WEYERHAEUSER/MENGE CREEK SCARIFICATION TOUR

Mr. Joseph spoke about the tour which had folks from the Forest Service, tribal members, DNR and other foresters were in attendance to see the various projects that have occurred on over 4K acres to date in hemlock stands. The b.a. in these sites is 130 sf where we normally cut in the 70/80 range. In 2014, post-harvest, 300 acres of hemlock stands were scarified with grant monies. On this tour, we could see some hemlock regeneration (thousands of seedlings) with a small amount of oak and white

pine. The goal was 70% canopy closure and did not see regeneration in higher percentages of closure.

Scarification occurred on existing skid trails, would they be used when the stands are re-entered? Not necessarily, but how do we ensure the monitoring efforts continue into the future with retirements of key people and adequate points and plots? We should establish the history, documentation, progress, and set up protocols at some interval. Who would do this, how funded, and could we get an agreement with Weyerhaeuser and the DNR in place to monitor the project? Mr. Joseph could attach photos and documents to the GIS stand information. We need something in place now in order to continue future monitoring with the next company who will own the land. Mr. Suchovsky added that we could use this data to see what worked or did not and use that for projects on other lands. Mr. Boren said we should try to pursue an agreement between the State and Weyerhaeuser, set up some protocols and map sampling intensities, and figure who would do the work and how it would be funded.

### CONSERVATION DISTRICT INPUT AND GRANT APPLICATION

Mr. Watkeys will coordinate a meeting with the UP CD foresters and will include members of the Workgroup. He will send the necessary information for next year's grant to get a start on what we are looking for and who to target to get an idea of acres and plantings. Who will be writing the grant? This grant will fit into the CD workload as the primary goal is to have boots on the ground through the site visits and have people sign up for the various programs and other grants that are available. NRCS can provide cohesive leadership to these groups and provide information on finding. Mr. Watkeys will have this meeting the morning of the CD meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Ford center in Alberta. Mr. Hubbard said Michigan Association Timbermen staff could be tapped to help write the grants. Mr. Suchovsky said perhaps MSU Extension could help as well.

### UPDATE ON CWD AND DEER MOVEMENT STUDY

Mr. Minzey said the NRC requested a seminar in Lansing early October presented by international experts. This will provide information to the NRC in order to make sound recommendations. This seminar will be available via live streaming.

The DNR is moving forward with the deer movement study. There is the potential for some push back from SCI to use the monies to test more animals rather than study movement. Mr. Minzey moved some monies that were not utilized this fiscal year to fund the beginning of this project to repair/build traps and build sleds to move the traps. The study will start in January in the 3 DWC priority areas. The benefits of the study will provide data based on biology not political boundaries. We can show what areas to monitor, where the disease has the best area to move to. We can use this information in the future to re-design the DMUs for better management.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The DNR was in partnership with the Ottawa for Early Successional/Young Forest management projects. With the retirement of Mr. Charles, we are unsure if they will backfill his position. Mr. Suchovsky asked if there were any more GNA opportunities. Not yet as a program requirement is to generate monies before much more can be accomplished. As for the Stewardship program – the Ottawa is doing well while the Hiawatha is struggling. Ms. Haughey will bring up these issues with the USFS during their one-on-one meetings. She will also discuss how to help them and create more partnership opportunities. Especially on ideas how to partnership on trail issues in light of the complications between the USFS and the local community on the Nahma project. Mr. Minzey would also like to partner with them on grouse/deer habitat projects.

Mr. Hammill said funding looks good for 2018. WLD will contribute \$10K for positions and meeting rooms and FRD \$5K.

We need to have a data sharing agreement in place with the DNR in order to access landowner information. Mr. Donovan and Ms. Tangora are working on the project and Mr. Stampfly will follow up.

AGENDA Item for next meeting – Graymont Harlow

It was agreed upon to hold the meetings quarterly Tuesdays or Thursdays seem to work best. Next meeting to be held Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup> at River Rock.