

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
The Waters of Minocqua – Minocqua, Wisconsin
December 13, 2011

Members Present:

Matt Dallman, Paul DeLong, Jim Hoppe, Jim Kerkman, Jane Severt, Paul Strong, Virgil Waugh, Kimberly Quast, Mark Sherman, Mark Rickenbach, Dick Wedepohl

Members Absent:

Troy Brown, Randy Champeau, Rep. Jeffrey Mursau, Henry Schienebeck

Guests Present:

Mary Brown, Gunnar Bergersen, Sara Bredesen, Bill Klase, Carmen Hardin, Richard Krawze, Tom Talbot, Steven Guthrie, Bob Berns, Sen. Jim Holperin, Terry Coplien, Hank Wozniel, John Gozdzialski

Welcome and Introductions

Jane Severt introduced herself and called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. She announced that Henry Schienebeck, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA), had been appointed as the new Chair of the Council, succeeding Fred Souba, and that he had appointed her to the position of Vice-chair. Henry, who is out of the state, asked Jane to Chair the meeting in his absence. The members and guests introduced themselves. Jane welcomed the new members to the Council. Paul DeLong announced that Mark Sherman had been appointed to represent large industrial landowners.

Review of Council Operating Procedures – Jane Severt and Paul DeLong

Paul DeLong said that this first meeting of the newly appointed Council was a good time to revisit the operating procedures. Paul gave a brief history of the Council. Originally, there was a group called the Forest Productivity Council. In 2002, under Governor McCallum, a statute created the legislative Council on Forestry, which designates 20 members by category. Governor Doyle made the first appointments to that Council in 2003, at which time the operating procedures were developed. Paul distributed copies of the *Wisconsin Council on Forestry Operational Guidelines*, which he asked everyone to take home and review in preparation for the next Council meeting, which Chair Schienebeck would be setting up soon after January 1st. Jane said that it would give the new members a good idea of the Council's purpose, why it was formed, and its goals and responsibilities.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Paul DeLong will distribute an electronic copy of the *Wisconsin Council on Forestry Operational Guidelines* for the Council members not in attendance to review.
- Council members will review the *Guidelines* in preparation for discussion at the next Council meeting.

Report on the Council's 2011 Legislative Tour – Jane Severt

Jane said that historically, Legislative tours had been conducted regularly to give Legislators an awareness and an understanding of forestry issues that the forestry community is faced with daily. Former Council Chair Souba had appointed a subcommittee consisting of Jane, Henry Schienebeck, Earl Gustafson of the Paper Council, and Troy Brown to work with John DuPlissis from the University of Wisconsin toward the goal of hosting a Legislative Tour in the fall of 2011. Because the timing was right, it was agreed that the subcommittee should move ahead despite changes in the Council. A Legislative Forestry Tour was held on November 7th on the grounds of Kretz Lumber in Langlade County. Jane shared the highlights of the tour with a PowerPoint presentation.

Four Legislators, Senator Jim Holperin and Representatives Jeffrey Mursau, Tom Tiffany, and Karl Van Roy were in attendance, along with ten others. The tour began at "The Shack" on the on the Kretz Lumber property, where topics of discussion included:

- The current state of the Paper and Lumber Industries.
- How converter mills play in.

- The need to promote manufacturing as a viable career choice in schools.
- The challenges of obtaining capital for expansions,
- Regulatory reasons that facilities are not locating here.
- The short supply of logs.
- The depressed housing market's negative impact on lumber mills.
- Hardwood lumber and international markets.
- Transportation issues that make those markets hard to access.
- Issues with DNR staff in certain parts of the state.

The next stop was a tour of the Kretz facilities, where the group heard about forest certification and the demand for it that they see at Kretz. They continued with a visit to an active logging site, where legislators had a chance to talk to Tim Jacobs, who runs Tim Jacobs Logging, about issues he faces in daily operations. Steve Jackson, Langlade County Forest Administrator, provided an overview of Langlade Forest operations, highlighting County Forest certification and the challenges presented by the increasing recreational use of County Forest Land. There was also discussion on proposed legislation for changes to Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program including PILT payments to towns for MFL lands. There are inconsistencies between payments to local municipalities for state land acquisitions under stewardship, MFL payments, and county forest land payments.

All agreed that the tour was time well spent. The legislators got a lot of information and seemed very interested. Sen. Holperin found it very thorough. Jane said that the Council subcommittee would like to see tours conducted on an annual basis to keep the Legislature abreast of current forestry issues. They are discussing whether they should be held at a consistent time each year or tied in with relevant events, such as the Logging Congress being held in Oshkosh in 2012. Jane invites participation and suggestions from the Council.

Status of Council Initiatives – Paul DeLong

Paul brought the group up to date on some projects the Council worked on in the past that are still ongoing. The Council will continue to work on them.

Biomass Harvesting Guidelines

The issue of Biomass Harvesting Guidelines (BHG) first came up as the result of a Corrective Action Request during a Forest Certification Audit, when the need for a quantitative way to measure fine and coarse woody debris while harvesting biomass was identified. In 2008, the BHG Advisory Committee developed the *Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidelines*. They were adopted by the Council, which accepted a phased implementation plan in 2009. After implementation began, questions remained that spurred research, some still ongoing, as well as a commitment to revisit the BHGs in 2012. Paul introduced Carmen Hardin, a Forest Hydrologist who worked with the Council BHG Task Force to develop the Guidelines.

Carmen distributed copies of the PowerPoint presentation she had delivered while updating the Council on the Guidelines at its March 2011 meeting: [Update on Wisconsin's Forestland Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidelines.pdf](#). She proceeded to give an update of what has happened since March: [BHG Update 12.13.11.pdf](#). Jim Hoppe noted that socioeconomic impacts seem to be the largest concern. The Soils Subcommittee worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a list of soils, which is now one of the key factors of the Guidelines. The NRCS is updating the soil surveys, which has resulted in 25 soils being added to, and 19 being removed from the BHG list in 25 counties: [Changes to 2011 List of Soil Map Units Limited by BHGs.pdf](#). After looking at issues presented by those using the BHGs, the Subcommittee developed further guidance on soil complexes, which are comprised of two or more soil types, often only one of which would preclude the harvest of biomass. When the Subcommittee has approved the language to include in the BHG field manual, it will be provided to the Council for review.

At the Council's last meeting, Silviculturalist Eunice Padley suggested that because three research studies which would provide much needed information on wildlife and nutrients wouldn't be complete by March 2012, the Council might be better served by revisiting the BHGs in 2013, instead of 2012 as originally planned. As it stands, only one project is expected to be done before spring, and results from the rest may not be available until fall 2012 or later. Paul noted that since Eunice recently left the DNR, and Forest Ecologist Joe Kovach recently passed away, interpreting the research results would be difficult, though the Division plans to conduct interviews for both positions shortly. Paul Strong offered to look into the possibility of providing scientists from the USDA office in St.

Paul or the Northern Research Station in Rhinelander to fill the gap in the interim. Carmen will return to the next Council meeting for a decision on when it will revisit the BHGs.

DECISION ITEMS:

- Carmen Hardin will return to the Council's next meeting with an issue brief outlining the advantages and disadvantages of revisiting the BHGs in 2012 versus 2013.
- The Council will decide at its next meeting whether or not to hold off revisiting the BHGs until more results of the research are available.
- The Council will discuss how to incorporate socioeconomic issues into the next set of guidelines when it revisits the BHGs in 2012 or 2013.

ACTION ITEM:

- Paul Strong will ask Eric Gustafson at the USDA in Rhinelander if any of the scientists there can provide support temporarily to support this work.

Forest Research Priorities

In 2005, the Council appointed a Task Force on Forestry Research in Wisconsin chaired by Jeff Stier, then the Council UW representative. It was charged with developing a strategy for addressing research needs and a plan of action for funding new forestry research. In December 2005 it produced a report entitled, *Report of the Council on Forestry Task Force on Forestry Research in Wisconsin*, which Paul distributed to the members present. It grouped research into eight areas of emphasis referred to as the "Wisconsin Forestry Research Agenda":

1. Sustainable Management Certification for Wisconsin's State, County, and Private Forests
2. Conserving Wisconsin's Biological Diversity
3. Enhancing Wisconsin's Urban Forests
4. Managing the Impacts of Changes in Wisconsin's Land Use and Forest Ownership
5. Enhancing Assistance to Wisconsin Private Forest Landowners
6. Minimizing the Threat of Invasive Exotic Species to Wisconsin's Forests
7. Maintaining Wisconsin's Forest-Based Economy
8. Minimizing Recreational Use Conflicts in Wisconsin Forests

In February 2006, the Council accepted the report's five recommendations:

1. That the Council on Forestry support the Wisconsin Forestry Research Agenda and encourage forest scientists to direct their efforts to developing new knowledge in the eight areas of emphasis.
2. That the Division of Forestry develop an initiative for \$200,000 per year of base funding for the 2007-2009 biennium to support forestry research that addresses needs identified in the research agenda.
3. That the Division of Forestry work with the UW-System to develop a cooperative grant program for forestry research supported with WI-DNR funds.
4. That the Department of Natural Resources prepare a biennial report to the Council on all forestry research in Wisconsin and how it addresses the areas of emphasis in the research agenda.
5. That the Division of Forestry include a process for assessing and prioritizing forestry research needs when developing future statewide forest plans, and develop biennial updates and revisions of the research agenda.

Paul DeLong initiated a discussion about the Council's role in research priorities. Mark Rickenbach said that if the Council can influence colleges' priorities, it should be conversing with them. Even though most college research funding comes from federal sources such as McIntire-Stennis and the Hatch Account, it is used for projects that benefit the state. Paul thought it would be beneficial to look back at how many of the topics in the Research Agenda were picked up on by colleges and others doing forestry research, as suggested in Recommendation #4 (above) from the Task Force's report. Jane said that Chair Schienebeck would like all of the members bring some items that they consider priorities for research to the next meeting, keeping in mind that they should be relevant, as fewer resources are now available for research.

DECISION ITEM:

- Forest Research Priorities will be an agenda item for the next Council meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Paul DeLong will prepare a brief summary of what forestry research has been done in the state after consulting with Dr. Karl Martin, DNR Bureau of Science Services.

- Council members will be prepared to identify their priority items for forestry research at the next meeting.

Council Role in Statewide Forest Strategy

Paul explained that the 2008 Farm Bill required the DNR to submit a Statewide Forest Assessment, and Statewide Forest Strategy to the Forest Service by June 18, 2010 to continue to qualify for State and Private Forestry funds. The DNR examined its niche, and asked other members of the forestry community to identify theirs. The Council, in response, took the nine strategy categories and 48 action ideas discussed at its December 2010 meeting, and made a short list of action ideas that it felt it could play a role in. He distributed a chronological list of the work the Council had done to date on the Strategy: [Council on Forestry Role and Involvement in Developing the Statewide Forest Assessment & Strategy and Council Action Plan.pdf](#)

Jim Hoppe explained that at its March meeting, the Council formed the Subcommittee on Statewide Forest Strategy. Chaired by Jim, it included current Council members Troy Brown, Matt Dallman, and Henry Schienebeck, and representatives of different stakeholder groups. The Subcommittee prepared a report recommending specific action items for implementation from the action ideas on the Council's short list: [Report of the Council on Forestry Subcommittee on Statewide Forest Strategy.pdf](#). Two common themes that emerged from most of the action ideas were forest economics, and the recognition that a viable forest products industry is critical to the sustainability of Wisconsin's forests. Private forest management and the sustainability of private forest management are areas that generated a lot of action ideas. Jim said that the Council hadn't met since the report was prepared and distributed copies to the members. He hopes the information it contains will help the full Council rank priorities. Jane asked members to look through the report and note anything that stands out as a priority for the Council as a whole to work on. Paul said that choices should be made based on what the Council is in the best position to do.

ACTION ITEM:

- Paul DeLong will send Council members links to the Statewide Forest Strategy and all background documents including the Sustainability Framework, Statewide Forest Assessment, and Division of Forestry Strategic Direction.

State Forester's Report – Paul DeLong

Administration Priorities

Paul identified the top priorities of both the Administration and the DNR:

1. Jobs – As referenced by Gov. Walker at the Economic Summit, jobs are the top focus.
2. Regulatory Streamlining – We need to improve timeliness and efficiency in our regulatory programs. In Forestry, this means examining and streamlining MFL administration processes.
3. Customer Service – We are trying to help people get through processes, such as permitting, by making those processes easier to navigate, faster, and more efficient.

He reported that Act 21 had revised the Administrative Rule process. Before a rule change can be initiated now, a scoping statement must be submitted and approved by the Governor. The Legislature ultimately reviews all rules.

Division Strategic Direction – Operations Plan

To implement the Strategic Direction that it finalized in May, the Division of Forestry needed to determine how best to allocate its resources to accomplish the objectives that were identified. Staff began developing an Operations Plan. A draft was distributed for comments, which are now being analyzed. The Plan specifies what classes of staff, what type of equipment, and how many of each will be needed at each location to achieve the Division's goals. Consequently, some staff will be moving, some will be doing different work, and some will need to do both. Paul noted that some changes are being made based on comments received, and that the Plan will go out at the end of next week.

Development of a Business Plan

In the course of developing the Strategic Direction, concerns were voiced by forestry stakeholders. Henry Schienebeck wrote to Paul on behalf of Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) to communicate concerns about the contents of the document's eight intent statements, which broadly describe what the Division is trying to accomplish in specific areas. They perceived a possible inability to affect specific outcomes. Henry and Paul got together and discussed the Division's workplanning process, which is used to achieve specific, measurable outcomes in all program areas. It was evident that a process, or "Business Plan", was needed to clearly define the outcomes in each program area (e.g., timber harvest levels in the State Lands program) important to GLTPA and

other stakeholder groups. It would lay out exactly what steps need to be taken and what needs to be acquired, such as equipment or staff, to get to those outcomes. Paul recommends that a plan be broken down into pieces, with people interested in particular components of the program working together on those. He hopes a process for developing the Business Plan will be in place by the end of the year.

Update on NW Storm Recovery

Northwestern Wisconsin suffered three severe storms with winds in excess of 100 miles per hour between July 1st and August 1st. More than 130,000 acres were estimated to be effected, about 60% privately owned, with between 1.5 and 2 million cord equivalents down. DNR was designated by Executive Order to lead the inter-agency response. Paul distributed a summary of the response effort: [Northwest WI Storm Recovery Project.pdf](#). Much work has been done since July 1st between the initial emergency response, getting sales established and clearing rights-of-way. The Governor met with Forestry interests in August, and then with local unites of government to see what role the state could play in expanding the marketplace. During September and October, the National Guard worked to clear roads and roadways of logs and other debris.

Kim Quast brought a concern to Paul's attention from a forestry consultant who had complained about the length of time it took for action to commence after the occurrence of the events. Paul said that a number of factors were responsible. It was difficult to identify the extent of the area affected, and where the damage was initially because of the magnitude of the storms. The DNR also was involved in clearing access for emergency vehicles, and was coordinating the work of the many involved over a six-county area.

ACTION ITEM:

- John Gozdziwski, DNR Northern Region Director, will extract specific facts from the weekly updates given during the response, and send them to Sara Bredeson of *The Country Today*.

Identification of Priority Issues – All

Jane Severt said that since Chair Schienebeck was not present, no decisions on priorities would be made until the Council's next meeting. However, she did want the members to voice any issues that they felt should be considered.

Generate Preliminary List of Options

The following were offered as potential Council Priority items:

1. **MFL** – Dick Wedepohl handed out copies of the Council's 2010 *Report to the Legislature Regarding a Legislative Council Study on the Managed Forest Law*, and a document outlining the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association's position on a bill introduced by Sen. Dale Schultz: [Position Statement on SB 161 Related to the Managed Forest Law.pdf](#). WWOA has been working with Sen. Schultz on this bill and with Rep. Mursau on AB 402, also relating to MFL, and hopes the Council will continue to monitor them both. He feels that the Legislative Council Study finished abruptly, and would like to see more issues addressed.
2. **Deer** – Kim Quast said that Wisconsin Consulting Foresters feels that Wisconsin needs to have all the tools necessary to manage the deer herd. Jane added that deer continue to be an issue, and that the Council's primary focus is on their impact on forests. She'd like the Council's position paper on deer redistributed.
3. **Parcelization** – To give members a better understanding of this issue, Kim Quast would like someone to brief the Council at its next meeting.
4. **Silvicultural Guidelines** – Mark Sherman is concerned about the inflexibility of the Handbook.
5. **Report of the Council on Forestry Task Force on Forestry Research in Wisconsin** – Matt Dallman would like all members to review and come prepared to discuss at the Council's next meeting.
6. **Pulp and Paper Industry** – Jim Hoppe feels that the cost of raw materials is the core problem, and that we need to find a way to make fiber more accessible to mills.
7. **Strategic Direction Process** – Paul Strong suggests the Council revisit how it came to the topics it chose.
8. **Positioning Forests for the Future** – Mark Rickenbach feels the Council should provide guidance on this.
9. **Keeping Forest Management and the Timber Industry Viable and Strong** – Jim Kerkman's priority.
10. **Affordable Raw Material** – Dick Krawse of Pine River Lumber said this was a serious problem for the forest industry. Mark Sherman said that we need to get more stumpage on the market.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Paul will distribute the Council's 2008 position paper on deer for the benefit of members new to the Council.

- Council members will review the *Report of the Council on Forestry Task Force on Forestry Research in Wisconsin* before the next Council meeting.

Process for Evaluating and Selecting Priorities

Jane Severt said that Chair Schienebeck would like members to list their priority issues so they can be shared and worked through, and priorities set at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM:

- All Council members will send Chair Schienebeck their priority issues for the next Council meeting and be prepared to discuss.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda – Jane Severt

Chair Schienebeck will identify possible dates for a meeting before March, and have Mary Brown send a Doodle Poll to Council members to gauge their availability. Possible agenda items include:

- The USFS Business Model: how it works to influences the wood market – Paul Strong
- MFL
- Parcelization Briefing
- Council Priority Issues
- State Forester’s Report – Paul DeLong
- Council Operational Guidelines
- Revisiting the BHGs (decision item) – Carmen Hardin
- Forest Research Priorities

ACTION ITEM:

- Mary Brown will send a Doodle Poll to Council members to respond to with possible dates for its next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Submitted by:
Mary Brown, WDNR