

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
Forestry Products Lab – Madison, WI
December 17, 2003

Members Present:

Fred Souba, Paul DeLong, Mary Jean Huston, Jeff Stier, Rep. Mary Hubler, Sen. Roger Breske, Robert Rogers, Gene Schmit, Leon Church, Fred Clark, Byron Hawkins, Ken Ottman, Bill Ward, Bill Horvath, Rep. Donald Friske, Jim Heerey

Members Absent:

Sen. Russ Decker, Dennis Brown, Jon Geenen

Guests Present:

Mary Brown, Paul Pingrey, Earl Gustafson, Allison Hellman, Chris Risbrudt, Bob Mather, Colette Matthews, Larry Matthews, Roger Nacker, John Koning, Jr., Masood Akhtar, Eugene Roark, Darrell Zastrow, Steve Schmieding, Ann Heerey, Sue Paulson, Dan Wisniewski, Ken Genskow, Gunnar Bergersen, E.G. Nadeau, Dave Kluesner, Genny Fannucchi, Sterling Strathe

Welcome to the Forest Products Lab

Chairman Fred Souba called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Chris Risbrudt of the FPL welcomed all and presented an overview of the FPL that included information on their Advanced Housing Research Center, partnerships, Research Demo House, and bio-based products, all of which contribute to their ultimate goal of conserving the forest resource.

Council Priorities

After the September full Council meeting, members agreed to send their top priority issues to the Executive Committee for evaluation. Chairman Souba led a discussion of the resultant list of eleven issues, focusing on the short-term (less than one year) and/or long-term implications of each.

Finalize Short-term Priorities

In addition to certification, which is an established priority issue, four issues with short-term implications were selected for the Council to work on. Most of these overlap other issues and have long-term components as well.

DECISION ITEM:

- The Council will concentrate its immediate efforts on :
 - Invasive exotic species as an increasing threat
 - Fragmentation and parcelization of the forest
 - The need for more private forestry assistance
 - Encouraging the use of woody biomass to produce energy
 - Forest Certification

Frame Out the Selected Issues

A discussion ensued on how best to approach these issues. Some noted that the Council would be looked at to provide information to the Invasive Species Council established by Governor Doyle. Bill Horvath suggested that the Council divide into four task groups. Some of the members volunteered to lead them. These task groups would be permitted to seek out staff support from sources other than DNR.

DECISION ITEM:

- Five task groups will be established and led as follows:

- Invasive Exotic Species – Fred Clark
- Fragmentation and Parcelization – Mary Jean Huston
- Private Forestry Assistance – Bob Rogers
- Use of Woody Biomass – Bill Horvath with assistance from Bill Ward
- Certification – Paul DeLong with his DNR staff (group in place)

ACTION ITEMS:

- Council members interested in serving on one or more task group will contact the group leader.
- The DNR will establish a liaison and notify the leader of who has been selected.
- Task groups will meet before the next Council meeting to frame out their issues.
- Task groups will report the details of how they've framed out their issues at the next Council meeting.

Forest Certification Status

Paul Pingrey of the DNR gave an update on progress the DNR has made with certification assessments. It has hired SCS and NSF-ISR in partnership to assess its certification programs. It is on schedule and has received some preliminary reports from the auditors. The Department now needs to respond back before the final report can be issued. The auditors will be coming in March to share their findings with the Department, Council, and others interested in this initiative. The State will then make decisions whether to commit to certification of the State Forest Program and whether we should go forward with full assessment of the MFL and County Forest programs.

He also gave a very informative presentation covering the basics of certification, its origins and its current and future status. He noted that economic and social issues, such as illegal logging, fragmentation, invasive species and globalization, are moving certification forward, and that it is helpful as a public awareness tool. Certification can help differentiate Wisconsin products in business-to-business trading. David Refkin, Director of Sustainable Development at Time, Inc., has initiated a Certified Sustainable Forests (CSF) program that establishes certified sustainable fiber targets for paper suppliers to Time. For a non-integrated paper mill 65% of Time's fiber must come from sustainable sources by the end of 2004 increasing to 80%+ by the end of 2006. This could have a significant effect on Wisconsin's economy. Time belongs to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and plans to have an independent assessment system in place by 2005. These are the major factors moving certification ahead so rapidly.

ACTION ITEM:

- Paul DeLong will send out updated certification information before the March Council meeting.

State Forester's Report

Chief State Forester Paul DeLong gave his report and highlighted the following items.

He distributed copies of *Forest Management Guidelines*; a document compiled by his staff covering appropriate forest practices for cooperative consultants. It is based on Minnesota's guidelines, but goes beyond them, and is the only one of its kind in the country to include silvicultural guidelines. It also includes a chapter on aesthetics. There will be a formal distribution in January.

The Statewide Forest Plan is being drafted now and will be distributed for review and comment in January. It will then be finalized and taken to the Natural Resources Board for approval. Paul asked the Council to consider sponsoring a statewide conference, the purpose of which would be to bring together a range of interests associated with forest partners who can help to implement the Plan. The tentative dates are November 8th through 10th, 2004.

Paul highlighted some other items of interest:

- The Governors' Summit "Forest Industry Sustainability in the Great Lakes Region – What are the Changes and How Might they be Addressed?" will take place on February 11th and 12th. It is being hosted by the Great Lakes Forestry Alliance.

- Federal funding of \$2,000,000 was approved for Forest Legacy this year for the Holy Hills project. We've received just over \$500,000 for the Forest Landowner Enhancement Program. The program will be funded for this year and next, but future funding is in question.
- A review is being conducted of the Law Enforcement Program within Forestry.
- There is an internal DNR invasive exotic species team that has been established.
- The Healthy Forest Bill passed Congress and was signed by President Bush. It includes a Watershed Assistance Program for states, showing the relationship between forest management and quality of water.
- The year 2004 is the Forestry centennial. We should all use it as a tool to increase public understanding, appreciation and participation regarding forests.
- We are close to having a land deal in Milwaukee County with respect to the Council Grounds, which will be the site of a future Forestry Discovery Center.

DECISION ITEMS:

- The Council unanimously approved a motion to draft a resolution formally expressing its appreciation to the DNR for the quality of the document, *Forest Management Guidelines*.
- The Council approved a motion to support sponsorship of a statewide conference on forestry planned for November 2004. Chairman Souba, Byron Hawkins, Bob Rogers and Jeff Stier will serve on the Planning Committee.

Legislative Report

Representative Friske reported on the progress of the Speaker's Task Force on Forestry to inventory the health and quality of Wisconsin's forests. They've heard from the Divisions of Land and Forestry and the Board of Commissioners of Public Land. Testimony has been invited. The Division of Forestry has been asked to come in at the end to wrap it all up and give an inventory of the condition of Wisconsin's forests.

The Managed Forest Law changes have had a hearing in the Senate. They went through the Joint Finance Committee where they picked up an amendment. The MFL originally had a grant program whereby money generated from such sources as closed acreage fees and withdrawal tax went into a grant program for counties to buy public access easements and conservation land. That was amended out and the money granted back to the towns and counties. The Senate hasn't voted on whether to approve that yet.

Finalize Groundrules

Chairman Souba asked for comments from members on the revised operational guidelines that were distributed via email. There were none.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion was carried to approve the groundrules as amended.

Identify Issues for March 18, 2004 meeting

The anticipated certification report and the task group reports are expected to take up most of the next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- The Executive Committee will consider whether to send a congratulatory letter to those who have completed the Master Logger Certification Program.
- Council Members are to email (or mail) their thoughts on whether work on certification and the other priority issues should take precedence over a possible field visit for the June meeting, or whether it should be a two-day meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m. A tour of FPL's Research Demo House followed the meeting.