

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
Forest Products Lab - Madison, WI
February 6, 2006

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Colette Matthews, Michael Bolton, Sen. Russ Decker, Dennis Brown

Guests Present:

Gunnar Bergerson, Earl Gustafson, Gene Roark, Roger Nacker, Mike Prouty, Mary Brown, Patrick Walsh, Lynn Wilson, Dave Kluesner, Darrell Zastrow, Jane Severt, Bob Mather, Gene Francisco, Trent Marty, Anne Archie, Paul Pingrey, Sterling Strathe, Tim Eisele, Blair Anderson, Chris Klahn, Jim Warren, Sherrie Gruder, Mark Heyde, Vicki Worden, Jerry Goshen, Terry Mace, Jean Higgins, Deb Kidd, Ann Heerey, Steve Schmieding, Bill Johnson, Melody Walker, Jane Cummings-Carlson, Rocky Dallum, Jeanne Higgins, Jerry Gleason, Bill Johnson

Welcome

Chairman Fred Souba called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

State's Green Building Initiative – Vicki Worden and Sherrie Gruder

Vicki Worden is with Green Building Initiative (GBI), a nonprofit out of Portland, Oregon founded in 2004 as an educational organization trying to bring green building practices to the mainstream. On the residential side, they use the National Association of Home Builders guidelines. On the commercial side, they use a product called Green Globes, a question-based, user friendly on-line tool. Users complete a questionnaire for each design stage and receive a report on each of seven areas of assessment, which include:

1. Project Management
2. Site
3. Energy
4. Water
5. Resources
6. Emissions, effluents and other impacts
7. Indoor Environment

A total of 1000 points are available, giving flexibility to the design team. Third party verification of forest certification is required. In order to become Green Globes certified, a site inspection is required after the construction process is completed. GBI is looking for a neutral two-rating systems policy that will allow the market to develop and use whichever option is most applicable to a particular building, site, and design team. They strive to be complementary to, rather than competitive with, LEED.

Sherrie Gruder, with the University of Wisconsin Extension, discussed the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standard initiated by the United States Green Building Council (USBG). It is in use in 50 states, and is the only consensus-based national standard. Its purpose is to define green building for the marketplace, to provide a roadmap for the construction industry to better enhance and protect the site, to conserve resources, energy, and water, and to create healthy indoor environments. Users are given a scorecard which contains a section for materials and resources credits. Two credits are available for use of regional materials, and two are available for use of recycled materials. A credit is available, though not required, for the use of certified wood if at least 50 percent of the wood is FSC certified. This certified wood credit is being reevaluated given the evolution of other certification systems in the last five years.

The USGBS organized a Wood Certification Stakeholders Summit in September of 2005 attended by representatives from each of the five certification systems, USGBC staff and members of the Materials and Resources Technical Advisory Group. A forthcoming report will help inform the Steering Committee on the wood certification issue.

Governor Doyle's Conserve Wisconsin Plan outlines setting in motion the commitment that the State building program be green certified, and specifically mentions LEED as a certification standard. An executive order is expected to be put in process soon.

A discussion followed, during which concerns were expressed by Council members that LEED may actually bias against wood because it gives steel a higher rating for its recyclable content. Lifecycle assessments on both materials are being done, but have not been completed yet. There was also concern that all forest certification systems accepted by the State of Wisconsin should be given equal credit, and that other valid green building standards should be considered.

ACTION ITEM:

- Chair Souba will draft a letter to the Governor expressing the Council's concerns and send it out to the Council to approve for mailing within the next two weeks.

Emerald Ash Borer Initiatives – Jane Cummings-Carlson and Melody Walker

Jane Cummings-Carlson outlined the DNR's role in Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) planning and preparation. EAB was found in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in September of 2005, and probably had been there for a couple of years before being discovered. Wisconsin is at high risk of infestation because of its high number of ash in urban areas, history of beetles intercepted at its ports, and the 715 million ash trees in its forests. The Milwaukee area is at very high risk. Over the past few years, the DNR has been trying to find the insect by doing surveys using detection trees and visual inspection for signs and symptoms. No EAB has been detected, but we have obtained valuable information about other pests and problems. Plans for 2006 include:

- Continuation of surveys
- Installation of detection trees at state parks because of the firewood risk
- Meeting with utilization partners
- Piloting a remote sensing project to refine knowledge of our ash inventory
- Development of silvicultural guidelines for woodland owners and forest managers
- Launching a major public information campaign
- Initiating a firewood management plan on state properties

Firewood management options range from no action to not allowing unapproved firewood on state property. DNR is planning to be aggressive and is specifically looking at addressing firewood on state properties. A Green Sheet outlining specific recommendations is in process, and will hopefully be approved by the Natural Resources Board in March.

Melody Walker of DATCP described a multi-agency plan of action for Wisconsin in anticipation of the detection of EAB. It is a written cooperative response (still in draft form) by state and federal officials utilizing joint authorities and resources and shared responsibility. Its goal is to prevent the introduction, establishment and spread of EAB in Wisconsin with science based actions which include coordinated survey, import restrictions, and public information. Responsibility for detection, regulation, control, and communication would be coordinated and based on agency authority. Potential detection sites of greatest concern are new construction using nursery stock, firewood, campgrounds, cottages, summer homes, and landscaping. An Administrative Rule, ATCP 21, Plant Pest Impact Controls and Quarantine, is in process, and is expected to be in place around July 1st. It states that no person may import a regulated host plant item into the state if the item originated from an EAB regulated area, move any regulated host plant item out of an EAB regulated area located in this state, or cut firewood of all non-coniferous species, ash chips or bark fragments greater than one inch in diameter. The following steps will be followed when EAB is detected:

- Quarantine the infected area
- Conduct a survey to determine the core of the infestation area
- Remove all ash trees within one-half mile radius of infested tree(s)

- Investigate method(s) of introduction
- Assess risk of spread
- Contract for tree removal
- Mobilize additional resources
- Coordinate communication
- Document and keep records of process

Disposition and/or use of potentially millions of ash trees is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

ACTION ITEM:

- Paul DeLong will share the Green Sheet addressing EAB management with Council members by the end of February.

Roadless Area Petition – Troy Brown and Jim Warren

In 1979, the USDA identified 21 inventoried roadless areas on the Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forests (CNNF) when they conducted a Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). Congress designated three of these areas as Wilderness, leaving eighteen roadless areas totaling about 69,000 acres. The Wisconsin Wilderness Act of 1984 states that areas not designated as Wilderness are to be managed for multiple use. Consequently, some of these eighteen areas have been managed to retain roadless characteristics, and some have not. In 2002, these areas along with some additional areas were evaluated for Wilderness consideration. This resulted in only seven roadless areas totaling about 49,000 acres, none of which are part of those identified during RARE II.

A new rule titled State Petitions for Inventoried Roadless Area Management became effective in 2005 that gives governors the opportunity to seek establishment of or changes to management requirements of National Forest System inventoried roadless areas within their states. Governors have until November 13th to submit petitions to the Secretary of the USDA. If accepted, state-specific rulemaking will be started that addresses proposed changes to the management requirements for roadless areas specified in the petition. Wisconsin will petition through the Governor’s Conserve Wisconsin Initiative for management of roadless areas in the CNNF. The DNR has been charged with gathering information and public input on the seven roadless areas as well as on the original eighteen acres identified as roadless during RARE II. The public input will help the Governor decide which areas to include in the petition. The information will be gathered during public open house forums and electronically via a WEB-based system during March and April. Recommendations based on the input received will be drafted for the Governor’s consideration, and it’s anticipated the Governor will submit the petition to the USDA Secretary in late spring or early summer.

DECISION ITEM:

- The Council will wait until after the March Council meeting, after some feedback has been received from the public hearings, to communicate its opinions to the Governor on what the state’s petition should or should not include.

State Forester's Report - Paul DeLong

Chief State Forester Paul DeLong distributed five publications to Council members. “Marketplace Matters”, a *Natural Resources Magazine* insert, examines the economic value of Wisconsin’s forests. “Status of the Logging Sector in Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula in 2003,” by Mark Rickenbach and Thomas Steele is a possible future agenda item. Paul would like to have Mark and/or Tom speak to the Council. “Every Root an Anchor” and “Wisconsin’s Champion Trees” are both books by Bruce Allison. The “Wisconsin Land Legacy Report” was a major undertaking by the Department.

Forest Certification Update

- **Corrective Action Requests (CARs) Status – Paul Pingrey**
Following certification of our State Forests, the FSC and SFI auditors issued a number of CARs for minor nonconformances. Improvements were initiated and all but one of the CARs (Master Plan Monitoring) has now been closed. Paul gave an update on actions taken for each CAR:

- *Lack of Stakeholder Input in Annual Planning*
 - ✓ NHAL Master Plan process.
 - ✓ Each state forest hosted public stakeholder meetings to gather input on annual operating plans.
 - ✓ Held focused issue-based input sessions.
 - ✓ Improved Web contents making information available before stakeholder meetings.
- *RECON Backlog*
 - ✓ Identified problem areas.
 - ✓ Established goal for RECON update every fifteen years (about 7% per year).
 - ✓ Success in the budget process in securing funding.
 - ✓ Efforts being made to reallocate employee time where needed most.
- *BMP and Road Maintenance (need greater attention to road maintenance)*
 - ✓ Developing a GIS road inventory database.
 - ✓ Will hold access road discussions as part of the master-planning process.
 - ✓ Creating standards for rutting and soil compaction.
 - ✓ BMP training for all staff.
- *Master Planning (Some plans over 30 years old.)*
 - ✓ Department working on new approach to master planning.
 - ✓ Reassured auditors that we are doing master plan amendments and seeking variances when necessary if a property has an old plan.
 - ✓ Working with Land Division on streamlined Master Plan to be implemented next year.
 - ✓ Began work on plans for Peshtigo River State Park.
- *Logger Training*
 - ✓ Require that timber producers be SFI/FISTA trained as a prerequisite to bidding on State Forest timber sales.
 - ✓ Changing and improving quality of FISTA training.
 - ✓ Working to extend requirement for training to all contractors on site.
 - ✓ Working with Master Logger Certification Program on providing scholarships.
- *Criteria and Indicators (weren't following own policy related to NHAL planning process)*
 - ✓ Decided not to support current policy, but instead to adopt certification standards and indicators.
- *Master Plan Monitoring*
 - ✓ Working with DNR Bureau of Finance to expand scope of fiscal audits.
 - ✓ Developing annual reports for our state forest programs.
 - ✓ Holding more stakeholder meetings.
 - ✓ Doing more with performance evaluations to assure monitoring tasks are completed.
- *High Conservation Forests (need to do better job of identifying)*
 - ✓ Getting public input on diversity of uses.

The County forests were issued CARs on most of the same issues, with the addition of a need for better relationships with tribal governments and compliance with DNR silviculture standards. The next step on public lands will be assessing the opportunity for certification of the rest of DNR-managed lands, which consist of state parks, fishing areas, wildlife areas and natural areas.

- Multi-landowner Pilot Project

We need to find a way, other than through the MFL, to get private landowners engaged in forest certification. A pilot project aimed at doing this is the Multi-owner Forest Stewardship Project. The idea behind it is to get people to work together on forest stewardship. It leverages group dynamics by getting external partners involved with private forestry assistance through coordinated planning and cooperative land management plan implementation. A combination of landowner fees and public funding will give support to NGOs who will do the work. One part of the plan provides an overview of the landscape in a small area, such as a township, with individual management schedules for the landowners involved. The other part uses a coordinated landowner approach, assuring a forester is hired to administer sales. There are pilots being developed in Door County, Baraboo Bluffs, and with Stora Enso.

State Lands Management Status

Paul DeLong reported that 2005 saw a 35% increase in forest reconnaissance work, a 28% increase in state forest timber sale work, and a 3% increase in timber sale work on other state lands over the five year average.

Implementing MFL Changes

The MFL changes that occurred as part of the budget process directed the Department to move away from preparing plans for private landowners as a given, and to move to a process whereby landowners would first attempt to have plans done by the private sector, by certified plan writers. The DNR can still write plans, charging the going rate, if a certified plan writer won't. The average plan costs between \$700 and \$800. Joint Finance voted to increase the WFLGP grant program by \$400,000 to help provide cost-sharing for landowners seeking a plan. The Certified Plan Writer Program went into effect in November, with over 50 plan writers now certified, and 40 going through training. Hopefully, Department time will be freed up for state lands inventory and timber sale work. The changes went into effect with the planning year starting July 1, 2005.

The Division's overtime shortfall was remedied in the budget, and it is now working to fill more than 50 vacancies.

Paul reminded Council members that Kirsten Held is looking for volunteers to serve as an informal sounding board regarding the wisconsinforestry.org website.

ACTION ITEM:

- Bill Horvath and Bill Ward will serve as the sounding board for the wisconsinforestry.org website, giving feedback to Kirsten Held.

Cooperative Area Forest Fire Program – Tent Marty, Blair Anderson, Chris Klahn

Wisconsin's Forest Fire Protection Program identifies three types of fire protection areas:

- 1) Intensive – in northern and west central part of state, defined in 1927, DNR is primary management.
- 2) Extensive – in forested central and southern parts of state, added in 1951, DNR manages in cooperation with local fire departments.
- 3) Cooperative – just under half of state, local fire departments manage. DNR assigned cooperative officers to conduct fire department training in 1955.

In 1996, the cooperative program was effectively discontinued due to other workload commitments. Wisconsin State Statute 26.11(1) gives DNR authority for statewide fire protection. It doesn't exercise that authority across the entire state. Today, towns are responsible for providing detection and suppression in the cooperative areas.

In 2000, there were many fires across the state because of the drought. In one evening near La Crosse, two separate fires burned 1,400 acres. The DNR was called to help, but had a very difficult time coordinating with the local fire departments because of the lack of an on-going relationship in the area. This incident spurred various people to get together to identify the following areas, which could help reestablish interaction between the DNR and local fire departments:

- 1) Training in safety, wild land tactics, ICS, and structural protection.
- 2) DNR Incident Support. There are nine incident management teams across the state. How do cooperators ask for support?
- 3) Grants - suppression equipment, Forest Fire Protection, and County Fire Association.
- 4) Equipment.
- 5) Communications.
- 6) Fire Prevention.
- 7) Law Enforcement to deal with causes of fires.
- 8) State Lands – how to handle, make arrangements and control costs for fire suppression.

The study recommended that ten permanent Cooperative Fire Officers be hired, and one Cooperative Fire Coordination person. Chris Klahn, as Cooperative Fire Management Specialist, fulfills that portion of the

recommendation. The other staffing aspects of the initiative remain unfulfilled due to a challenging state budget. However, the DNR continues to assess opportunities to advance recommendations in the study.

Legislative Update - Rep. Don Friske

Rep. Friske distributed his report to the Council, and summarized the status of active bills.

AB 7 – Changes to Property Qualifiers for Managed Forest Law, removing the requirement that a property owner have ten acres in a single township for the parcel to be in the MFL program, passed in the Assembly.

AB 59 – Right to Forest, prohibiting municipal governments from passing ordinances declaring sustainable forestry actions a nuisance, passed and was signed into law.

AB 254 – Wisconsin’s Healthy Forest Initiative, creating harvesting goals, emergency declaration authorization, and administrative oversight changes to the DNR Division of Forestry is awaiting a floor vote in the Senate.

AB 316 – Extension of County Forest Plan Length, adjusting county forest plan lengths from ten years to fifteen years, was signed into law in October.

AB 679 – Managed Forest Law Clean-up, changing the date to discontinue free DNR plan preparation for MFL applicants from June 1 to July 1, 2005, was signed into law in December.

AB – 686 – Worker’s Compensation Changes for Wisconsin Loggers, allowing loggers to create a self-insurance fund and creating a workers’ compensation rate based on risks of different logging operations is anticipated to go to the Committee on February 14 as amended.

AB 810 – Adding a member to the Council on Forestry, adding a non-voting member from the United States Forest Service, just passed Assembly.

SB 353 – Construction Standards for Certain Load Bearing Lumber, exempting lumber cut from a landowner’s property from certain inspection and stamping requirements and the Uniform Dwelling Code when certain conditions are met is anticipated to be in front of the Committee for a vote on February 14th.

LRB 410 – Changes to the MFL Yield Tax Calculation, allowing the tax to be based on the price the seller actually received is expected to have a hearing on February 14.

A Forest Legacy Easements bill is anticipated to be proposed, which will make more forest legacy easement purchases possible.

A hearing is also anticipated as soon as February 14 for a bill on an Agreement for a Land Bank that will allow the BCPL to sell lands to the DNR so that the DNR can manage them. It will also allow the BCPL to sell isolated lands, bank the money, and purchase land in areas where they can consolidate current holdings. Under the bill, BCPL cannot own more land than it currently owns.

Council Workgroup Updates

- Research – Jeff Stier

The Task Force on Forestry Research grouped research into the following eight areas of emphasis, with research needs grouped under appropriate areas, and refers to them collectively as the “Wisconsin 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

The Task Force asks that the Council accept the following five recommendations:

- 1) That the Wisconsin Council on Forestry support the Wisconsin Research Agenda and encourages 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 dollars per year of base funding for the 2007-2009 biennium to support forestry research that addresses needs identified in the Wisconsin Forestry Research Agenda.

- 3) That the Division of Forestry work with the UW-System to develop a cooperative grant program for forestry research supported with 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.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Bill Horvath (seconded by Leon Church) that the Council, in its advisory capacity, adopt the Report on Forestry Research in Wisconsin, as well as the recommendations contained in the report passed unanimously.
- Woody Biomass – Bill Horvath
The Task Force met on July 28th and on November 9th. It has continued to explore funding options for a Fuel for Schools Program, Integrated Resource Management of Family Forests, and a proposal for the driftless area that would increase woody biomass availability and increase forest sustainability while improving ruffed grouse and turkey habitat and reducing erosion. Bill described a proposed timber products commodity exchange. It would be Wisconsin-based and focus on pulp wood, lumber and hog wood. The Task Force has identified 30 components of its main project, a comprehensive piece of legislation dealing with woody biomass. It will include supply as well as demand. The Task Force made the following recommendations to the Council:
 - 1) That the Council support the proposal to create a Timber Product Commodity Exchange.
 - 2) That the Council support efforts to create a forestry sub-committee in the NRCS State Technical Committee.
 - 3) That the State of Wisconsin undertakes a concerted and deliberate effort to determine which facilities are best suited for utilizing wood for energy and issue a request for proposals to develop wood energy at appropriate state facilities.

DECISION ITEMS:

- A motion by Bill Horvath (seconded by Ken Ottman) that the Council endorse the recommendation of the Woody Biomass Task Force to continue development of a Great Lakes Wood Exchange passed unanimously.
- A motion by Bill Horvath (seconded by Jim Heerey) that the Council support efforts to create a forestry subcommittee in the NRCS State Technical Committee passed unanimously.
- A motion by Bill Horvath (seconded by Representative Hubler) that the Council recommend that the State of Wisconsin undertake a concentrated and deliberate effort to determine which facilities are best suited for utilizing wood for energy and issue a request for proposals to develop wood energy at appropriate State facilities passed unanimously. It will be in the form of a letter to the Chair of the Forestry Resources Committee, Secretary Bablitch, and others as appropriate.
- Invasives – Fred Clark
Fred reported on the progress the Task Group has made on each track in developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Invasive Species.
 - Track 1 – Forestry:** The Leadership Team met for the first time two weeks ago with an Advisory Committee made up of members from Plum Creek, The Nature Conservancy, the tribes, private woodland owners and other stakeholder groups. It will be supported by a staff team, which will draft standards. The Advisory Committee will review and refine the standards. It is hoped that this BMP will be adopted as part of the Master Logger Grant Program, part of the SFI, part of the MFL, and as a standard of practice on state land.
 - Track 2 – Recreational Use:** The group will hold a focus meeting in the spring.
 - Track 3 – Urban Forestry:** The Urban Forestry Council moved to endorse sponsoring the BMPs.
 - Track 4 – Right of Way:** This is the toughest audience to reach. The Task Group is letting the idea mature for now.

Dates for 2006 and Agenda for March Meeting – Fred Souba

The dates for the remaining 2006 Council meetings will be as follows:

March 8th

June 13th, following a June 12th tour in Wisconsin Rapids

September 13th

December 20th

Topics for the March meeting will include:

- 2007-09 DNR Budget
- Forestry Museum
- Woody Biomass Task Force Report
- State Forester's Report
- Legislative Update
- Impact of Deer on Forests
- Roadless Petition

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Submitted by:

Mary Brown
WDNR