

Meeting Minutes

Wisconsin Council on Forestry
Risser Justice Center -- Madison, WI
September 26, 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, Dennis Brown, Jon Geenen, Bill Ward, Bill Horvath, Rep. Donald Friske

Guests Present:

Gov. Jim Doyle, Sec. Scott Hassett, Mary Brown, Paul Pingrey, Earl Gustafson, Dan Meyer, Allison Hellman, Tim Mulhern, Chris Risbrudt, Rebecca Smith, Bob Mather, Colette, Matthews, Roger Nacker, Mike Prouty, John Koning, Jr., Masood Akhtar, Eugene Roark, Darrell Zastrow, Trent Marty, Robert Manwell, Patrick Walsh, Laurel Steffes, Kevin McSweeney

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Fred Souba called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves; Chairman Souba noted their common passion for forestry. He announced that he had appointed Mary Jean Huston to the position of Vice Chair and Jeffrey Stier to the position of Secretary

DNR Secretary Scott Hassett - The Importance of Forestry in the DNR

Secretary Hassett stressed the importance of forestry to the state's economy, environment, and quality of life, and that we must work to ensure that our forests are here to continue to provide the full range of benefits to future generations. To do this, we need to be proactive, as with the issue of forest certification.

He feels that the concerns of the recent past over forestry's importance at the DNR have been effectively addressed by the organizational changes completed last year. He emphasized the necessity of working hand-in-hand with other Department programs, and ensured that Forestry Account funds would be used to advance the forestry mission. He thanked the Council for advancing the cause of sustainable forestry in Wisconsin.

Paul DeLong agreed to provide the Council with copies of the Forestry Account Audit.

State Forester's Report

Chief State Forester Paul DeLong gave his report; a copy is attached as part of the meeting minutes.

Forest Certification

Paul gave a presentation on forest certification, which covered the history, ecological and economic impacts of sustainable forestry, and various certification programs. He pointed out the upward growth in certified forests and products, and that the United Kingdom currently surpasses us in this respect. He offered the Stora Enso/Time Warner case study, in which Time Warner wanted to offer certified products for PR reasons. The Governor has asked us to make recommendations so we will know how to best handle these situations in the future. Going through a certification assessment will help us to do that, providing information on cost, how to interact effectively, and on what opportunities exist. The assessments are expected to be done between February and May, and will likely be done by SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative).

Other Major Issues Affecting Forestry

Paul touched on a number of issues that could be future discussion items, including

- The Statewide Forest Plan, which is due out by the end of the year

- Master Planning
- The Forest Legacy Program
- Education, including LEAF and the School Forest Program
- The Managed Forest Law
- Ways to use the Centennial of the Forestry Program to educate the public
- Milwaukee's Forest Discovery Center
- Wild land/urban interface in fire-prone areas
- Law Enforcement Program review
- Fall fire season
- Air resources, i.e. availability of planes and BMP monitoring
- Invasive exotics, the number one threat to forests

Governor Jim Doyle's Comments to the Council

Governor Doyle expressed his appreciation to the Council members for accepting their seats. He believes our forests to be "at the heart of Wisconsin," being extremely important economically, ecologically, and socially. The great northern forest is one of the greatest natural resources in the world, and we have to be very careful about how we preserve this resource. The forests and all that come from them are absolutely essential to the economic health of Wisconsin. There are pressures on the forest by paper company holdings. We need to work toward sustainable forests to compete in the global economy. He is trying to bring an international printing institute that does research for the printing industry here. His vision, what he believes the people of Wisconsin want, is a great forest with economic benefits.

Forest Certification: How do we proceed?

Chairman Souba led a discussion that touched on a range of certification issues including the dangers of moving ahead too rapidly, the need for more technical assistance, the need to raise consumer awareness, getting the Master Logger Program up and running in Wisconsin, the trickle-down effect from State to counties to non-industrial forests, and the need to find a process to identify opportunities. It was concluded that the Council is premature in discussing this. It needs to know what the drivers are, what is happening with certification in the other Lake States, what systems exist, the similarities and differences between them, and cost information. Data is needed.

DECISION ITEM:

- The Council decided to delay further discussion on this issue until it receives background information and the results of the assessment due this spring from Paul DeLong and his DNR staff.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Paul DeLong's staff will compile a package of background material, including case studies, and distribute hard copies to the Council as soon as they can.
- Council members will email (or mail) any additional questions they have to Paul after receiving packages.
- Paul will provide Council members with a list of Council members and their email addresses.

Council Operations and Ground Rules

Chairman Souba distributed a draft copy of the Operational Guidelines, noting that Sections I and II were taken directly from the statutes. A discussion of the provisions ensued.

Member Participation

Members should try to attend all meetings. If that is not possible, a representative may attend, but may not vote. Only members may vote.

Executive Committee

An executive committee will be established. It will work on setting the agendas, which will include the State Forester's Report and follow-up from the previous meeting as regular agenda items.

Decision Making

The Council will strive for full consensus in decision making. Options in the event of a tie were considered. Since there are nineteen members, the Chair's vote would break the tie.

- DECISION ITEM:
When full consensus cannot be reached a one-half plus one quorum will be used.

Meeting Frequency and Location

The Council will meet every quarter or on call of the Chair or of the majority at locations designated by the chair or by the majority.

- DECISION ITEM:
The Council will meet in Madison on the third Thursday of the third month of each calendar quarter unless it specifies otherwise, beginning in 2004 with the March 18th meeting.

Other Items

Meeting summaries and audience participation were discussed. The current guidelines call for a draft summary within fifteen days of the meeting, with Council members having another fifteen days to review and provide input before the final version is distributed within the next ten days.

- DECISION ITEMS:
A draft meeting summary will be sent to the Executive Committee for review and approval. It will approve a final version within 30 days of the meeting. Copies will be sent via e-mail to those members and interested parties who have it, and by mail to those who do not.
- A new provision will allow audience participation at the discretion of the Chair. Speakers should stand and identify themselves, and stay on the subject of the agenda item being discussed.

Process for Identifying Council Priorities

Chairman Souba led a discussion of how to bring issues to the Council and how to prioritize these issues. It was suggested that the State Forester set priorities. Paul DeLong felt that the draft Statewide Plan would be a good place to start when it comes out. The 2000 Forest Assessment would be a good source as well. He will send this out to the Council. The number of issues obtained from these sources is likely to number over 50, so there will have to be a mechanism for prioritization. The Executive Committee will fine-tune this process and inform the Council about it at the next meeting.

- ACTION ITEM:
Paul will send the full list of issues out to the members, who will each send their top five or so issues to the Executive Committee before the next meeting.
- DECISION ITEM:
The Council agreed on a new provision that will make Representative Friske's Legislative Update a standard agenda item.

Next Meeting and Adjourn

The Council will meet on Wednesday, December 17th in Madison at 9:30 a.m. Agenda items will include:

- State Foresters Report
- Legislative Update
- Forest Certification
- Priority issues
- Any issues agreed on by all

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.