

Notes & Recommendations
Seasonality Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday March 30, 2017 (9:30am-1:30am)

Attendees: Andrew Pronga, Scott Koerner, Patrick Smith, Ken Price, Steve Kariainen

The Subcommittee began by identifying the items they felt contributed the most to restricting harvesting or forcing it to be more 'seasonal' than it needs to be AND fit within the 'top 8' recommendations from the WFPS committee members. We then discussed potential 'action' items we could recommend for implementation to improve on the current condition that exists. The following is a list of our discussion and recommended implementation/action.

Oak Wilt Restrictions:

Discussion:

- Oak wilt continues to significantly impact the harvesting 'window' for many sales within the state of WI. (Forest Guild report listed it as one of the highest restricting guidelines)
- New guidelines have been established and allow much more flexibility.
- Subcommittee felt there was no need to revise or re-study.
- Current issue is that many foresters in the state (DNR, County, Cooperating, Industry, Logging) do not understand the new options within the guidelines and therefore do not utilize them to maximize harvest capabilities.

Recommendation:

- Request that the DNR provide training to all DNR foresters, by January 1, 2018, on the CHANGES to the Oak Wilt restrictions and support their implementation. DNR also to make training available to Cooperating Foresters.
- Request that WCFA provide training to all County foresters, by January 1, 2018, on the CHANGES to the Oak Wilt restrictions and support their implementation.
- Request that FISTA and WOAA provide similar training for Loggers and Landowners.

Rutting:

Discussion:

- There is no doubt that the potential for rutting limits harvesting activity.
- There is probably some overlap here with 'prescriptions' in the timber harvest plans where plans hope to prevent rutting by dictating 'frozen ground only' or type of equipment to be used.

- Some discussion was held on the definition of a 'rut' and if it was consistent in all areas of the state.
- Some discussion was held on potential new science that may exist on the benefits of some ground disturbance for regeneration. Question arose as to whether or not current rutting standards are in alignment with this science or does this need to be researched further with new local studies.

Recommendation:

- Recommend that research is performed (by University or other) into the Ecological effects of rutting and develop new guidelines and rutting definition based on the most recent science. (Perhaps based on soil types).

Prescription Writing:

Discussion:

- Everyone agreed that sometimes prescriptions are too specific which limits flexibility in performing harvests. Either they are purely date driven or they may specify specific type of equipment use or ground condition (i.e. 'frozen' – when firm or dry would also work).
- Subcommittee was not sure of all the documents that are used as resources when foresters are writing the original prescription for a timber harvest. However; it was discussed that these should be in alignment with current science and state guidelines as well as avoid being overly specific on requirements.

Recommendation:

1. Review (DNR ?) the resources that are most commonly used when writing timber harvest prescriptions and Revise them where appropriate to align with most current guidelines and science - AS WELL AS modify them to avoid being too specific. (i.e. – must make sure these documents do not dictate 'frozen' ground – when 'firm' or 'dry' would also be suitable). It is very important to modify these resources – otherwise – it will be very difficult to drive change.
2. Similar to 'Oak Wilt' recommendation - after the Review/Revise from step 1 is complete – then re-train DNR, County and Cooperating Foresters on the changes and the need for flexibility in prescription writing.

NHI Restrictions:

Discussion:

- NHI covers a very broad range of potential restrictions – many of which we are not certain if they should even exist anymore - since they may be from 75+ years ago and be out dated.
- Many people do not understand the true requirements of an NHI hit. Many times harvests are limited because foresters do not understand the policy/guidelines (i.e. Just because a hit exists – does not mean the harvest is limited. Guidelines allow for you to determine if the 'hit' truly

exists and then – if it does – will the harvest actually impact the ‘hit’. In many cases it does not and the harvest can move forward – but many foresters do not understand this).

- Subcommittee was not sure if every sale/harvest within the state required an NHI search or if it was only in pre-determined areas. This could have factored into a recommendation – but we were not sure.
- While the initial review is performed from a public database – once a ‘hit’ is found – only a DNR forester can perform the additional review – which limits the efficiency of the process and can delay harvest operations.
- When guidelines are developed there needs to be mechanism to ensure that recommendation impacts are understood for all key stakeholders. Examples were given where Forestry was not at the table when guidelines were implemented which caused unrealistic or unwarranted impacts to Forest Management.

Recommendation:

- Again – an education (training/communication) is needed on the procedures for compliance in regard to NHI (ie. If hit exists – still have option to determine if ‘hit’ exists and then have additional option to determine if harvest will impact ‘hit’). We did not specifically ID who provides this training but most likely similar to ‘Oak Wilt’ where it is combination of State, County and FISTA.
- Request new legislation that mandates a review and update of the NHI & Archeological database. (purpose here was to remove outdated items. Example at the meeting was the ‘glass lizard’ that was seen almost 100 years ago – therefore NHI hit still exists - is that really warranted?)
- Request new legislation that would allow access to the NHI and Archaeological/Historical databases by Cooperating Foresters.
- Request that a DNR Forester or other forestry professional be assigned as part of the ‘team’ that develops guidelines for NHI hits.

Weight Restrictions:

Discussion:

- There were many examples and ideas provided where weight restrictions limit the efficiency of timber harvests in the state (lower weight than MI, counties with lower weights, many lighter weight bridges adding distance to routes) – however these were not directly related to ‘seasonality’ therefore no recommendations were generated for these items.
- Subcommittee did note some inconsistencies among townships and counties as to when the road postings were put on and taken off. It was noted that there has been a fair amount of science applied by the State in this area over the past several years with the use of ‘frost tubes’ and that some of the township or county inconsistencies might be improved with more alignment with the State practice.

Recommendation:

Weight Restriction (continued):

Recommendations:

- Develop science based guidelines & share/communicate to townships and counties to provide more consistent practice (or more practical implementation based on current year weather condition) for posting or removing postings for roads.

EAB Restrictions:

Discussion:

- EAB is spreading through the state and as it does – it is limiting the harvesting and transport of pulpwood due to lengthy date limitations for hauling Ash (April-Oct).
- Currently – there are some counties that are almost entirely surrounded by EAB that have not been Quarantined. (Waupaca, Waushara, Green Lake). It is inevitable that EAB will be in these counties in the very near future so there is no apparent advantage to keeping them as non-quarantined counties.
- As EAB spreads through the remainder of the state (which it will – just a matter of time) there could be very significant implications to wood transportation and negative impact on Industry – if a more widespread approach for Quarantine of counties is not adapted – OR – a modification to the current hauling restrictions is made.

Recommendation:

- Request that DATCP implement EAB Quarantine to Waupaca, Waushara and Green Lake counties.
- Request that EAB transport restrictions are reviewed and modified so that Ash/HW can be hauled from a Quarantined county to a Quarantined County AND pass through non-Quarantined counties with allowance for emergency or refueling stops only in the non-quarantined county.
- Request that a Cost/Benefit study is performed that evaluates the benefit of not-Quarantining the entire state at this time – vs the potential costs. (ie. a case study could be done to ID the costs associated with the current county by county approach where EAB is found on opposite ends of major transport corridors – with a non-quarantined county in the middle of that corridor (i.e. Hwy 13, I-29, etc.)