

Meeting Minutes Wisconsin Council on Forestry

WI Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
Madison, WI
September 15, 2005

Members Present:

Bill Horvath, Bob Rogers, Rep. Mary Hubler, Jim Heerey, Ken Ottman, Paul DeLong, Leon Church, Troy Brown, Fred Souba, Mary Jean Huston

Members Absent:

Dennis Brown, Sen. Russ Decker, Sen. Roger Breske, Rep. Donald Friske, Michael Bolton, Jeff Stier, Fred Clark, Bill Ward

Guests Present:

Earl Gustafson, Gene Francisco, Peter Murray, Eunice Padley, Ryan Lynch, Darrell Zastrow, Mike Prouty, Kirsten Held, Mary Brown, Gary Radloff, Anne Archie, Patrick Walsh, Jim Rodd, Roger Nacker, Larry Matthews, Colette Matthews, Tim Eisele, Beth Pilouras, Gunnar Bergerson, Mark Heyde

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves. Chairman Souba announced the appointment of Michael Bolton of the United Steel Workers to the Council. He replaces Jon Geenen as the labor union representative.

Working Lands Initiative Briefing – Gary Radloff

The Working Lands Initiative is a one-year project initiated by DATCP Secretary Nilsestuen. Its goal is to preserve a critical mass of land vital to Wisconsin's economic viability by linking agriculture with forestry, tourism, and recreation to develop a strategic plan to ensure that business and housing growth happen in an environmentally friendly way. Time is critical for the development of this plan. The state has lost one-third of its farmland since the 1950's, and the population is expected to grow ten percent by 2025.

The Working Lands Steering Committee is made up of 28 members from government, the environmental community, and business. There is also an Interagency Team. Opportunities exist for public and private partnerships. The University of Wisconsin is looking at agriculture and forestry clusters and is doing economic modeling and analysis. GIS analysis is being utilized to identify critical points. The recommendations of the Council's Fragmentation and Parcelization Work Group complement this initiative, as do the Land Legacy and the State Forestry programs. The DNR's Allison Hellman is the liaison between the Council on Forestry and the Working Lands Steering Committee.

Desired outcomes of the Working Lands Initiative include:

- Determination of what critical mass is needed.
- Creation of broad support in business and among the public.
- An enhanced policy toolkit for local governments to use to make the best decisions possible when dealing with issues such as development and zoning.
- Partnership in the growing land trust movement.
- Involvement with work of other state agencies as they identify key lands and waters.
- Openness to innovation.
- Readiness to take advantage of opportunities for federal monies through the Farm Bill and future energy bills.
- Recommendations for the next Farm Bill.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Chairman Souba, with Bob Rogers and Bill Horvath, will draft a brief on behalf of the Council in its role as an advisory group, to the Working Lands Steering Committee informing them of the forestry issues that the Council feels are essential to consider in the development of the strategic plan. They will distribute the draft brief to the full Council for its comment and input.
- Council members will comment on the draft brief electronically before the end of October.
- Chair Souba will submit the finalized brief to the Working Lands Steering Committee for consideration at its November 2nd meeting.

Invasives Classification Briefing – Peter Murray and Eunice Padley

Peter gave a presentation on the organization and charge of the Governor's Council on Invasive Species. The Council was established in 2002 under State Statute 23.22, Act 109, and is specifically attached to the DNR. The Council's major duties are to:

- Develop a classification system for invasives.
- Recommend a procedure for awarding cost sharing grants.
- Study the impacts of vectors through which invasives come to the state (pet shops, internet, etc.).
- Conduct other studies as appropriate.

The act authorized the DNR to put a program together to promulgate a classification for identifying various types of invasive species and how they should be recognized. The Council asked the DNR Invasive Species Team to draft a classification. The Council has worked closely with them as it has with the Forest Invasive Species Leadership Team, chaired by Fred Clark. A Classification draft proposal will go before the Council on September 30th.

Eunice described the proposed Classification in detail, emphasizing that it is in a rough draft state. There would be four categories of invasive species as follows:

1. Prohibited. This is the most restrictive category, consisting of species that we don't want in the state. They are harmful to the environment, economy, or to human health and safety.
2. Restricted. Species in this category are already here, and the goal is to prevent their spread. They have low socioeconomic value and some beneficial uses.
3. Watch List. These species are invasive elsewhere, and would be monitored.
4. Nonrestricted. This category is for species recognized as invasive, but that we can't do much about. They are classified for educational purposes.

For each species put into these categories, there would a record of:

- Goals
- Activities
- Management Actions

Eunice explained that the Council's Research and Regulations Committees have been developing a process by which classifications would be applied. A set of criteria would be applied to each invasive species to determine which category it would fit into. There would be a scientific evaluation of invasiveness and an economic analysis of cost. After the Draft Classification is approved by the Invasive Species Council, it will be sent to the DNR to go through the Administrative Rules process, and to the Natural Resources Board for final approval.

Public education and voluntary prevention will be the most effective ways of dealing with invasives, especially on private land.

Wisconsinforestry.org Website – Kirsten Held

Kirsten described two outreach efforts which stemmed from the Year of Wisconsin Forestry declared by Governor Doyle in 2004. The first was a 30-second television spot about the benefits of forests which promoted the wisconsinforestry.org website. It ran for six months on a variety of cable stations on time donated by Charter and Time-Warner. Both are willing to sponsor it for another six months this year.

The other effort that emerged was the website itself, which is being redesigned in the hope that it will become established as the first source of forestry information for its users, who include teachers, students, recreation seekers, forest landowners, employees of the forest industry, the Council on Forestry, stakeholders groups and the general public. Kirsten is seeking input from the Council to use in this redesign effort. The site has a logical address and hopefully will be a gateway to information, leading users to other sites to get the specific information they seek. There is a page for the Council on Forestry with links to the members and task groups, and a page for its initiatives, with links to the Conference on Forestry and the Statewide Forest Plan. There is a Forestry Hall of Fame page, a News page, and a Calendar of Events. There is also a page entitled Caring for Wisconsin's Forests, and there may be additional pages entitled Working in Wisconsin's Forest and Playing in Wisconsin's Forest to cover the three realms of sustainable forestry. It could be a good vehicle to get information to MFL landowners. Chair Souba thanked Kirsten and Jeff Margenau for their outstanding work in developing the site.

The site has an external server. It is a statewide forestry tool, not a DNR product. As a DNR site, it can only link to other government sites. Therefore, a non-DNR owner is being sought.

ACTION ITEM:

- Council members will provide Kirsten with their input on the site within the next month.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Leon Church (seconded by Ken Ottman) that the Council on Forestry take over ownership of the wisconsinforestry.org website, provided that the DNR continues to provide staff support, passed unanimously.
- An update from Kirsten Held on the number of hits to the website and other pertinent information will be a regular agenda item at the Council's quarterly meetings.

Task Force on Research Needs – Bob Rogers

The Ad Hoc Task Force on Research Needs was formed at the June Council meeting. It consists of Bob Rogers and Jeff Stier with DNR staff Darrell Zastrow, Jerry Bartelt, and Karl Martin who were enlisted for their expertise. It met on August 31st to discuss the needs and priorities identified in the various initiatives started by the Council, the Governor's Conference on Forestry, and Governor Doyle's Conserve Wisconsin program. After gleaning the research needs in each area, it became apparent to the ad hoc group that there is enough work to necessitate the development of a plan for addressing it. Research needs need to be identified and ranked. Decisions need to be made on how the work will be accomplished, who will do it, and how it will get done. As the Governor's advisory body, the Council should inform him of these needs. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Task Force that the Chair of the Council on Forestry establish a task group on research issues within Wisconsin.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Bob Rogers (seconded by Leon Church), on behalf of the Ad Hoc Task Force on Research Needs, directing the Chair of the Council on Forestry to appoint a Task Force on Forestry Research in Wisconsin charged with the development of a strategic plan for addressing research needs was passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Chair Souba will appoint members to the Task Force after discussions with Jeff Stier and Bob Rogers.
- The Task Force will present a revised list of research needs and a plan of action for funding and allocation of funds for forestry research to the Council for consideration at its December meeting.

Updates on Statewide Plan Themes – Mark Heyde and Ryan Lynch

Ryan carries on Sarah Attwood's work as the new Forestry Division Associate Planner. He gave the Council an update on the outcomes of the August 11th meeting between the Conference on Forestry Implementation Steering Committee and the Theme Champions. A list serve was created to foster communications amongst the Champions and Steering Committee and to promote increased cooperation on

issues that are overlapping, with invasives being the predominant issue now. A newsletter is being started to reconnect with the participants of the 2004 Governor's Conference at its one-year anniversary in hope of reengaging them in the process. Progress reports were given for the implementation teams represented:

- Minimizing Recreational Use Conflict
The team is working with DNR to research compatibility issues of recreational uses of forest land.
- Enhancing Assistance to Wisconsin's Private Forest Landowners
Theme Champion John DuPlissis has sent a letter to Pat Leavenworth asking her to provide a permanent forestry representative for the Natural Resources Conservation Service Board.
- Managing the Impacts of Changes to Wisconsin's Land Use and Forest Ownership
A seminar on MFL uses for conservation groups is being planned tentatively for November 3rd.
- Minimizing the Threat of Invasive Exotic Species to Wisconsin's Forests
The Council on Forestry has approved the BMPs for Forestry. The team would like to involve the Departments of Transportation and Tourism in the BMP process.
- Conserving Wisconsin's Biological Diversity
The Nature Conservancy is creating a task group to look at how to address the biodiversity issue.
- Woody Biomass
The group is working issues of integration.
- Maintaining Wisconsin's Forest-based Economy
Earl Gustafson has accepted leadership of the team.

Mark Heyde explained that though the vision for the Statewide Forest Plan came out of DNR initially, the plan developed into a framework for all people interested in advancing forests and forestry in Wisconsin to work under, and it went to the Natural Resources Board from that perspective. The Division of Forestry and the DNR have a commitment to develop an action plan. Ryan is developing a process of interviewing other DNR programs to catalog what DNR is already working on. DNR will look at who they need to engage to help finalize the plan, which will ultimately go back to the NRB for approval.

USFS Membership – Anne Archie

Struck by the commonality of state and federal issues such as loss of open space, fragmentation, invasive species and forestry research after looking at the minutes from past Council meetings, Anne proposed representation by the United States Forest Service on the Council on Forestry. This would present opportunities to bring information to the table from State and Private Forestry. With over 1.5 million acres, the Forest Service owns some of Wisconsin's largest blocks of contiguous forest, and is part of the landscape. Forest certification, environmental credit trading, and fragmentation are big federal issues. An integrated effort would benefit the state by providing it with access to NFS/USFS research and USFS State and Private Forestry expertise.

There are currently 19 seats on the Council by statute. The U.S. Forest Service is not a statutory member of the Council. A change would require legislation.

DECISION ITEM:

- A motion by Mary Jean Huston (seconded by Ken Ottman) that the Council on Forestry seeks to add a seat to the Council to be filled by a U.S. Forest Service representative through a change in statute to Chapter 26.02 passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Rep. Hubler, with the help of the other Council members from the Legislature, will author a bill to enable a change to the statute.
- Rep. Hubler will distribute the bill electronically to the Council members when it becomes available.

State Forester's Report – Paul DeLong

Final FY '05-'07 Budget Impacts

Chief State Forester Paul DeLong reported on items of significance from the recently completed biennial budget process. The Governor did not make funding for the initiatives in Section 7 contingent on timber sales. Instead, the DNR will have to ask the legislature to appropriate funds from the Forestry Account to fund these programs through a 13.10 emergency funding request. The programs include:

- The Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program
- Biomass Grant Program
- Forestry Education Grant Program
- School Forest Transportation Program
- Master Logger Apprenticeship Grant Program Forestry Internships

There were changes to the Managed Forest Law relating to MFL planning responsibilities. The DNR asked for a veto of a date change for the initiation of the new rules contained in the budget bill, but there wasn't one. There is support from the Governor's office and in the legislature to change the date. The Department has requested, and Representative Friske has agreed to sponsor, legislation that would change the date from June 1st to July 2nd. This would mean that all owners who applied by July 1, 2005 would be treated under existing rules. As it stands, those folks fall under the new rules and will have to pay more as a result. There likely will be a joint hearing by the Assembly and Senate. Since all parties desire the change, they may be able to suspend the rules and move it quickly through the legislative process.

The tax freeze that was submitted as a separate bill by the legislature was left in. The Forestry Account is now frozen at a 2.6% maximum increase per year for three years. Next year, the mill tax will be less than .2 mils for the first time since it was first collected in 1931. Now the rate will float based on property values. With a lower collection rate, and property values up by 10%, the Forestry Account will only grow by 2.6% per year, not by the 7% projected amount that funding decisions were based on. To compensate for the reduced revenues, the ongoing Stewardship debt draw from the account was reduced from \$19.5 million per year to \$13.5 million per year. At the end of three years, if no legislation is passed affecting it, the mill tax rate will be fixed at the rate in place at the end on three years.

Conserve Wisconsin Initiative

The Conserve Wisconsin Initiative consists of three specific forestry and a fourth forestry-related issue:

- 1) The *National Forest Roadless Rule Petition* is part of an executive process, which does not directly involve the legislature.
- 2) The *Managed Forest Law Grant Program* was part of the budget process but removed by the legislature. It will be drafted into legislation and then put up for legislative deliberation.
- 3) The establishment of a *State Forest Legacy Program* that can be used as a cost share for the federal program will also be useful in doing our own state program. It will be drafted into legislation then put up for legislative deliberation.
- 4) The *Urban Environmental Renewal Effort*, which includes urban forestry, is a broad effort that will be refined over the next twelve months, and may result in legislation. It could also involve an executive order or policy change.

Other Issues

The Emerald Ash Borer has been found in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It may well be in other places, too. It is spread primarily through firewood, which is an issue being discussed in Wisconsin for possible action.

Paul distributed a U.S. Forest Service report from their Pacific Northwest research arm called *Forests on the Edge*. It looks at significant changes resulting from development of private forestland and is applicable to the situation here in Wisconsin.

ACTION ITEM:

- Paul will provide copies of *Forests on the Edge* to all members of the state legislature.

Legislative Update – Paul DeLong

Paul DeLong went over the update provided by Representative Friske in his absence.

- **LRB 3589**, the bill that changes the implementation date for the elimination of free management plans for MFL applicants from June 1 to July 1, 2005 also closes some existing loopholes. The bill is being prepared for formal legislative introduction and prioritized for expedited consideration.
- **AB 7**, Changes to Land Requirements of MFL Applicants and **AB 59**, Right to Forest are awaiting action.
- **AB 254**, Wisconsin Healthy Forest Initiative/Speakers Task Force Bill is up before Joint Finance the week of September 19th.
- **AB 316**, Extending County Forest Plans (from 10 to 15 years) is scheduled for consideration by the Senate the week of September 19th.

Representative Hubler added that there is a bill in drafting which will allow a member or employee of the USDA Forest Service to be appointed to the Council on Forestry under Section 16.247.

Agenda for December Meeting

The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday, December 15th in Madison. Proposed topics include:

- MFL and Private Landowners.
- Discussion of a proposed bill that would change the fencing law.
- Woody Biomass Task Force Report.
- Deer Population and Forestry in Wisconsin.
- Update from the Task Force on Research Needs.
- Forestry Museum on Lumbering and Logging.
- Status of Action on the Emerald Ash Borer.
- LEED Standards for Wood and Steel.
- Update on the Invasive Species Classification.
- Status Report on Initiatives Relative to Fire-related Issues (Wildland-Urban Interface, Cooperative Fire Protection).
- State Forester's Report.
- Legislative Update.
- Wisconsinforestry.org Website Update.

ACTION ITEM:

- If a recommendation for action on Emerald Ash Borer control is arrived at before the December meeting, Paul DeLong will circulate it to the Council members.
- The Council will draft a letter with their comments on the recommendation for action.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Mary Brown
WDNR