

Governor's Council on Forestry Minutes

Packaging Corp of America Training Center, Tomahawk WI

Friday, February 5 2016

Council Members Present: Kim Quast, Richard Wedepohl, Jim Hoppe, Henry Schienebeck, Jane Severt, Paul Strong, Troy Brown, Jim Kerkman, Senator Tom Tiffany, Representative Jeffrey Mursau, Matt Dallman, Tom Hittle, Paul DeLong

Council Members Absent: Virgil Waugh, Mark Rickenbach, Bruce Allison

Guests: Rebecca Diebel, Kelsey Pickart, Fred Souba, Bob Peterson, Gretchen Marshall, Julie Ballweg, Carmen Hardin, Nancy Bozek, Paul Kienitz, Ken Price, Don Peterson, Paul Keonig, Kent Bryce, Ron Ekstein, Jessie Augustyn, Doug Hill, Ron Gropp, Laurel Sukup, Shelley Heilman

Chair Schienebeck called the meeting to order at 9:10 am with introductions of Council members and guests present.

Meeting Minutes

Update on the DNR Economic Considerations Chapter of the Silviculture Handbook: Julie Ballweg, Forest Economist, DNR - Forestry

In November, 2014 an Ad Hoc team was selected and met in January 2015 to review the economic aspects of forest management in Wisconsin to provide integrated management scope in terms of Economic Rotation Age. They produced a draft for the Silviculture Handbook and sent it to the Silviculture Guidance Team (SGT) in July, revised it in August 2015, and went for public comment in October. The Ad Hoc team reviewed the public comments in November and SGT approved the responses in January of this year. Julie shared with the Council the responses that were received during the public comment period and how they were addressed in the revised report. Chair Schienenbeck explained that during the comment period, he misunderstood the process in which the document was developed and wanted to share that he appreciated that the chapter was developed by asking partners to come together to help draft the chapter from the start.

The revised Chapter will be used as an aid for value chain workshops, workshops for new WDNR foresters, to update cover type chapters, develop tools for foresters, and can be revisited and updated in the future.

Council members discussed the chapter and commented on the following:

- Members showed lots of support for workshops and the Chapter.
- Concern about how landowners interpret the chapter.
- It was agreed that the chapter should not be used as a "stand alone" guide but a tool to help foresters.
- Felt that it was important to be clear that this is guidance and not law
- Would like to see follow up to keep this in front of staff.
- Discussion on whether there is a model to use for rotation age that takes into consideration the three legs of sustainability.

- There was a lot of appreciation for the work of the Ad Hoc Team.

The handbook will be finalized by WDNR and published.

Update on the Wisconsin Forest Practices Study – Fred Souba (WFPS Project Manager, Provision Forestry)

The Wisconsin Forest Practices Study is a two year ongoing effort to obtain reliable information to guide decisions and policy development for investment in forest-based manufacturing in Wisconsin and ensure the social and ecological benefits of forests remain viable for future generations

With a \$600,000 grant to GLTPA and WCFA, the project is to focus on addressing what the availability of wood fiber is now and in the future, what are the forestry-related factors that enhance or reduce competitiveness of forest-based manufacturing in Wisconsin, and what are the economic and ecological consequences of forestry policies, regulations and guidelines in terms of costs and benefits.

Project Status:

- Wisconsin Wood Supply Assessment (Steven Prisley – Virginia Tech): baseline assessment will be complete in February 2016 and modeling scenarios will be complete in May 2016.
- Wood Supply Chain Component Cost Analysis (Forrest Gibeault – Steigerwaldt Land Services, Inc.): COMPLETE
- An Analysis of: Single Tree Selection Order-of-Removal (OOR) Procedures in Northern Hardwood Forests and Rotation Lengths in Red Pine Plantations and Aspen Forests (Forrest Gibeault – Steigerwaldt Land Services, Inc.): will be complete in February 2016.
- Economic and Ecological Effects of Forest Practices and Harvesting Restrictions on Wisconsin's Forest Resources and Economy (Zander Evans- Forest Guild): will be complete in February 2016.
- The Scale and Cost of Seasonal Harvesting Restrictions in Wisconsin (Michael Demchik – UW Stevens Point): will be complete in February 2016.

To date, there is \$92,000 left that can be used for future projects.

Next Steps and Timeline

In order to “help guide decisions and policy development for investment in forest-based manufacturing industries in Wisconsin, while ensuring that social and ecological benefits provided by Wisconsin's forest remain viable for future generations”, next steps will consist of WFPS project committees convening to review and discuss their recommendations by the end of March, 2016. They will then prepare a final list of recommendations to be taken to the COF this spring. At the council, members will review, approve, and appoint an Implementation Committee(s) Lead (ICL) who will solicit COF members and non-members. The ICL will prepare actions and communicate the plan for each recommendation. By May, 2016 this will then be taken back to the COF for approval and implementation will begin with periodic progress updates for the Chair/Vice-Chair of COF.

Note:

The WFPS Results could be shared at upcoming meetings such as the GLTPA Spring Celebration April 11th (Island Resort and Casino Harris, MI), NCASI Northern Regional meeting May 4th and 5th Wausau, WI, and at the upcoming national SAF meeting in Madison in November.

Decision:

At the March 29th Council meeting, the results of the research will be presented to the Council. This will be the primary focus of the Council meeting.

Forestry Education Summit (Don Peterson, SRI)

Don and other partners put on an education summit as a follow up to the topic at the Governor's Forestry Economic Summit. The participants discussed what is working and what is not working with forestry education within the state. Aspects they identified as not working were: not enough sharing between groups, need a clear partner resource to understand who's doing what, foresters need to target younger audience for careers, and a lack of workforce development.

It was noted that the Wisconsin Wood Action Team will assist industry and tech schools in workforce development for forest industry sectors.

The Council discussed general needs they see in forestry communication, education and marketing.

Decision:

Don Peterson and Gretchen Marshall volunteered to lead an effort to reach out to the Department of Tourism and other organizations to see what resources would be available to help market and brand forestry. They will use this information to propose a plan for future work and bring that back to the Council.

WI Consulting Foresters Green Tier Agreement – WCF and DNR signing of Green Tier Agreement

Paul DeLong gave an overview of the Green Tier program and the benefits to companies and organizations that enter the program. Kim Quast talked about what the agreement means to the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) and praised the work done by Don Peterson in developing the agreement. Kim explained that the benefit of the program to the WCF is to recognize the efforts of the WCF members in the work they do that it is above and beyond the standard for the industry.

The Wisconsin DNR and WCF signed the Green Tier Agreement.

Proposal to relocate the Division of Forestry Headquarters – Council Discussion – Rebecca Diebel, DNR-Forestry

The state budget requires the Department to submit a proposal for moving the forestry headquarters to a northern location and submitting it as part of the Department's 2017-2019 budget. The division was seeking dialogue with the Council to discuss criteria to use in developing options for the proposed move. Components that must be included in the proposal are:

1. Costs of relocating
2. Timeline for implementing relocation
3. List of options for northern locations in the state

The timeline for developing the proposal is as follows:

Feb-April 2016– conduct analysis of options, seek input, use Request for Information (RFI) from towns/counties that are interested

May 2016 – determine the preferred options and draft timeline for the proposal

July 2016- Gather input on preferred options from staff and the Council

August 2016 - Secretary reviews and approves plan to submit as part of the budget in September 2016

Winter/Spring 2017: Governor proposes a budget and the Legislature debates budget

Rebecca provided a map of where current positions are located around the state. Staff locations are generally assigned based on whether they have statewide responsibilities or if their position is associated with work in a specific geographic area of the state. Staff located in Madison at the State Natural Resources Building all have statewide responsibilities, however, some staff with statewide responsibilities are in offices in several other outstate communities.

The Council discussed a variety of questions in small groups and then shared their comments as a large group. Rebecca will collate the comments and send it back to the Council. The division will use the comments as guidance as the criteria for developing the proposal.

Legislators' Report (Rep. Mursau and Sen. Tiffany)

The Forestry legislation package has passed through the Joint Committee on Finance and is now under consideration by each chamber.

Council members shared a variety of opinions on several topics within the legislation, including:

- Material change to the terms of the order – what constitutes a change and who makes this decision
- Five years of experience engaged in the full-time profession of managing forests – who evaluates this and how is this managed; affects amount of people who can do this work in the future
- Minimum acreage requirement – different effects in different parts of Wisconsin
- Differences between Council on Forestry recommendations and the legislation
- If something wrong happens will people be deterred from entering MFL program
- Consequences of reduced public access
- Explanation for the inclusion of language on variance to the state forest master plans

The Department will likely need to go through a rule making process for a number of items that need to be defined.

State Forester's Report (Paul DeLong)

1) NLEB 4(d) rule – (Handout will be e-mailed)

Less acreage is affected by the new rule than the interim rule. When this process began prior to the listing, the interim guidance being used by federal agencies was that there should be no tree harvest from April to October for trees 3" and greater. Wisconsin worked in close coordination with other states on solutions to protect NLEB while managing lands and has continued to work to better understand NLEB habitat. We advocated heavily for the strategy to focus on known locations rather than "potential" habitat (i.e., all of Wisconsin's trees >3"). This approach was made possible because of the NHC inventory work and the NHI Database and their equivalents in other states. A handout map with counties that have documented hibernacula and maternity roosts will be sent via email. The number of known roosts should not be expected to increase in the future because finding the roosts is very time-intensive work and the field season is very short (19 roost areas documented from two years of intensive field work). Further, it will likely become more and more difficult to find any NLEB in the summer, at all, as white-nose continues to progress in Wisconsin. We have been able to help landowners near hibernacula design sales to avoid take. Wisconsin is working with Minnesota and Michigan on the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). A short brief on the plan to develop the HCP will be sent out shortly.

2) Verso Bankruptcy

We are extending the payment period to the state to work through fiscal issues. This only applies to those holding state sales that were not paid by Verso in the 20 days leading up to the bankruptcy filing.

3) Annosum Root Rot Guidelines (Report to be e-mailed).

We plan to postpone the review of annosum root rot guidelines until fall 2016. Generally, pushing back the review of the guidelines will allow time to complete a survey on the implementation of current guidelines, obtain results from a project regarding spore capture (Glen Stanosz), and receive products from a multi-state/country working group that is evaluating annosum guidelines.

4) Fire Towers

An assessment was made to DNR fire towers and it has been decided they are no longer safe for staff to work in and are too expensive to repair. Discussion around what to do with the fire towers as they are decommissioned is happening and private land owners can decide what happens to towers on their land. The DNR will remove the towers if necessary and others are being used for broadband purposes. The department will be increasing aerial detection to help mitigate the loss of the towers.

5) DNR Alignment

Look for results of the Department's Alignment results later this month. We will be engaging with externals about changes and Council members been invited to the Secretary's Forestry Roundtable on February 25th to contribute and provide input. As well, you are invited to talk with the Forestry Leadership Team the morning of February 25th.

6) GNA Update

The DNR has over half of the silvicultural prescriptions written and approved and is now working on timber sale establishment. The timber sale bid announcements for ~9 sale areas will be announced the beginning of March and sold in April. It is estimated there are 14,077 cords and 1,095 MBF in these nine sales. The totals for hardwood on the 9 sales planned to advertise and sell are:

- East: 3 sales, Aspen 280 cords, Mixed Hardwood 130 cords
- West: 6 sales, (several were salvage harvests), Aspen 3825, Mixed hardwood 4810 cords and 242MBF of mixed hardwood logs

We're starting to put out bids for consultant work and will be contracting with consultants for over 1300 acres of sale establishment. We have 3 signed MOAs with Oconto, Sawyer, and Florence counties and two contracts in place with Oconto and Sawyer. We will be contracting with counties on over 600 acres. The CNNF and DNR will start to develop the next Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) in March. Of concern, the limitations on road work under GNA was not successfully resolved in the federal budget passed in December. Work on it continues.

Next Meeting is March 29th – UW Stevens Point