

Governor's Council on Forestry

September 15th, 2016
Best Western Crandon
9075 E Pioneer St, Crandon, WI 54520

Guests Present: Jessie Augustyn, Darcie Howard, Fred Souba, Ron Eckstein, Rebecca Diebel, Kelsey Pickart, John Neilson, Matt St. Pierre, Danielle Jones, Dave Ziolkowski, Don Peterson, David Dhaseleer

Council Members Present: Henry Schienebeck, Jane Severt, Ken Price, Representative Nick Milroy, Jim Hoppe, Senator Janet Bewley, Tom Hittle, Jim Kerkman, Troy Brown, Representative Jeff Mursau

Council Members Absent: Paul DeLong, Paul Strong, Richard Whedephol, Mark Rickenbach, Senator Tom Tiffany

Chair Schienebeck called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM

Debrief of Tour

Jane Severt

Jane shared a brief overview of the Council Tour that took place on Thursday, September 14th in Florence and Marquette Counties. The council met with county representatives and private sector employees to explore the impacts on deer browsing and techniques that are currently used to increase regeneration. Council members shared their concerns for the economic and social impact that excess deer browse may cause if the problem persists. Jane shared her appreciation for those who were able to attend the tour and stressed the importance of finding a way to connect with hunters and landowners to come to a common ground on what an appropriate deer population looks like. Ron Eckstein shared information on deer feeding habits that provided some insight into why populations are so disproportionate around the state. He also commented on a few studies that have been done regarding deer hunter expectations and how those expectations play a role in managing the deer population. Council members were in agreement that public education could go a long way and working together with deer hunters would be critical in making a change.

Action Item: Kelsey will send the current Deer Position paper to Council Members to take back to local organizations for input. They will submit any feedback they receive to Kelsey by October 7th. The updated paper will be discussed at the next meeting on November 15th.

Communication Committee Update

Jane Severt

Jane shared information from the North American Forest Partnership which is a diverse national group that has already raised 2 million dollars for their initiative. The group is currently discussing what they would like to communicate to the general public regarding sustainable forest management. Jane felt it would be a good time to get involved with the group to contribute to their message development planning. The council was in agreement that more information may be needed before joining the partnership.

Action Item: Jane will gather more information about the North American Forest Partnership and bring it to the meeting on November 15th.

Council Budget Priorities

Rebecca Diebel

Rebecca explained to the Council that now is the time to submit any budget initiatives for legislative review.

Approved Motion: The Council on Forestry would like to restore efforts to increase funding for forest education

Chair Schienebeck expressed his interest in having a budget for any research initiatives the Council may want to explore. Janet and Jeff stressed the importance that someone speaks with legislators about the importance of forestry and the things the Council is asking for. Discussion also included asking for staff for the council to administer things that are needed. This led to the question on where funding for the Council on Forestry comes from and it was clarified that funding comes from the Division of Forestry. Members felt money would be best suited for research and that many research opportunities surrounding deer browse and communication were clear. It was also mentioned that explaining specifically how research money would be used would help the case to acquire funding.

Approved Motion: The Council will continue to move forward with a budget request for Council operations. Further discussion will take place at the November 15th meeting.

LUNCH

Tax Law Dispute Resolution Process Administrative Services and Project Update – Dave Dhaseleer and Tom Hittle

Dave Dhaseleer of Steigerwaldt Land Services, Inc. provided an update on the Tax Law Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) Administrative Services and Project. He explained the responsibility of Steigerwaldt will be to resolve forestry related disputes, facilitate communication between parties, enforce a fair and credible process of resolution, provide consistent outcomes, and facilitate ownership and trust. Steigerwaldt has already conducted public outreach and participated in meetings with WDNR, as well as solicited applications for Mediator and Expert positions. Each position is subject to background checks and approval from the Council on Forestry Chair, Vice Chair, and Chief State Forester. Dave told the Council that the DRP will go live on October 1, 2016 and periodic reports will be provided for the Council on Forestry.

Budget Initiatives Cont.

Rebecca Diebel

Approved Motion: The Council will include stewardship in the proposed budget initiative for communications.

**Troy did not agree with the motion due to personal beliefs

Don Peterson expressed his desire to include the Master Logger training in the next budget proposal. Funding would be used to build the current program and provide credibility for loggers. His hope is that the Council can ask for 75% of the original funding they received.

Approved Motion: Include the Master Logger program in the Council's budget initiatives.

Representative Milroy proposed a budget initiative to support the MFL Program. Members of the council discussed the current incentives and how they could be altered to increase participation.

Action Item: Rebecca will find the exact figures of incentives for MFL enrollment and this will be discussed further at the November 15th meeting.

Action Item: The Council will discuss budget initiatives further at the next meeting on November 15th.

Legislator Report

Council Representatives and Senators

Representative Mursau has been asked to participate on the UW Steven's Point Advisory Board as well as the Rural School Advisory Council. He is also working to improve rural rescue squad response quality.

State Forester Report

Rebecca Diebel (on behalf of Paul DeLong)

Darrell Zastrow will be the acting Division Administrator following Paul's departure from the Department on September 30th. The position will be filled as quickly as possible following an open recruitment in search of candidates throughout the country.

A final proposal on the Forestry Headquarters location will go to Governor Scott Walker with the Department's budget initiatives shortly. A comprehensive expense analysis has been done by the Division and public comment has been collected. No suggested edits were submitted.

Northern Long Eared Bat HCP Update:

Northern Long-eared bat:

- Defenders of Wildlife has filed suit against the FWS challenging the threatened listing and the 4d rule for NLEB
- FWS will not designate critical habitat for NLEB.

Little Brown Bat:

- FWS plans to see the status review through to a listing decision and expects to publish a recommendation in the foreseeable future.

Tri-colored Bat:

- The FWS had ended their internal status review and didn't plan to restart the process until it is petitioned to do so.
- In mid-June The Center for Biological Diversity and the Defenders of Wildlife petitioned the FWS to consider federal protection for the tricolored bat.

Final MFL Guidance has been prepared and edited following a public comment period. It is not yet ready to be distributed widely, but is planned to be released later this month.

The Division of Forestry is continuing to work on clean up following the devastating storms the state experienced this summer. Critical rebuilding is in progress but it will like be over a decade before things are cleaned up.

Through Good Neighbor Authority, 25 million board feet of lumber will be cut and 112 million board feet is expected out of Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest in 2016.

The Nature Conservancy and US Forest Service have just signed a stewardship agreement.

Adjourn at 2:00 PM