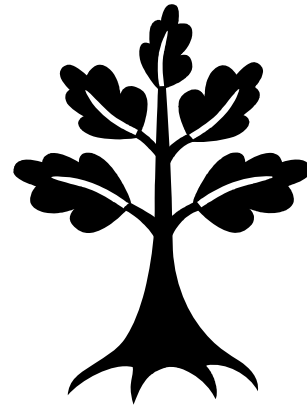


**Wisconsin's Forest Sustainability Framework
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2007**



Forest Products Lab
Room 500
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

In attendance:

John DuPlissis, Gordy Mouw, Mark Heyde, Lisa McKinnon, Stefan Bergmann, Nick Miller, Bill Klase, Vern Everson, Jonathon Gilbert, Gene Roark, Darrell Zastrow, Richard Hauer, Mark Rickenbach, Amy Peterson

Presenters:

Paul DeLong—DNR, Jane Cummings-Carlson—DNR, Sally Dahir—DNR

Absent:

Jane Severt, Gene Francisco, Mike Prouty, Lynn Wilson

Meeting was brought together at 9:10am by Bill Klase, facilitator, introductions were made and logistical meeting information was provided.

Welcome

DeLong addressed the group and welcomed and thanked all for coming together to work on this effort. He provided some background and the presented his thoughts on the Committee's task: Essentially, we've never thought of what a criteria and indicator framework could mean at a statewide level. This type of framework can assess changes over time that can then lead to discussion, policy change, funding issues and can focus where we should collectively put our funding energies. The good news is that we're not starting from scratch; we are building off the regional Northeastern Area Base 18. Once this framework is in place for Wisconsin it will help us to make determinations on what is important and where we need to focus. It's a daunting, yet enjoyable task and success will be to take out the "noise" and come down to what we need to focus on. That's the context from my perspective and why I really appreciate your efforts here today.

Mark Rickenbach joined the meeting.

Background

Mark Heyde built upon DeLong's comments. It's difficult to manage and hard to monitor the implementation of the Statewide Forest Plan (SFP). This effort will create a monitoring framework to address trends and issues in the SFP and then to feed into the next Forest Assessment. Looking back as a forester in the late 70's and 80's we strived for sustained yield, a regulated forest, and multiple uses, and if we had that, life was

good. Now we're called to look at what we do with forests more comprehensively. If we can identify a set of key items and look at the trends the data tells us that will give us an idea of sustainable management. We hope to report out and ultimately show we're on a track to sustainability. Will we ever know that for sure? Probably not, but it's what we need to strive for. As Paul said we have the ability to build on other efforts and so I think of this as a gap analysis of the NA Base 18. So are these good enough for Wisconsin, or should we be measuring something else?

Rickenbach stated that Fred Souba passed on his regrets for not being able to come and welcome the group, and also wanted to thank the group for their efforts. Just a few things to remember in this process: We're looking at this is a statewide scale, so it's very broad, not site specific. We should try to use existing data, but don't let that limit us, we can site new data for the future and it may cost "x" and forward that on to the Council for their contemplation. Rickenbach stated that the Committee is not the final arbitrator in the process. We're here to provide a recommendation to the Council and they will take this and run with it. That's why there is the December final presentation to the Council.

DeLong excused himself from the meeting.

Public Process

Will the public have an opportunity for input in the process?

Rickenbach stated yes they will. We're trying to have this wrapped up by July so that we can send the framework out to some particular individuals to review it, and also allow time for the public to provide input.

Peterson elaborated on the public process. It is open now on the website at council.wisconsinforestry.org Please visit the site if you haven't already. All of the background information that you have in your binders is posted on the web, along with meeting agenda's and minutes, so please utilize the website for that information if you need to. There is a section on the website where the public can comment and provide input to the process right now. As those come in they will be brought to the Committee for consideration. There has been a press release and mass email sent out. Please feel free to pass the website onto folks that you feel can provide input to this process. There is also a separate tribal process that we're putting together with a couple of meetings in April or May. Essentially that will be to update the tribes on the project and gather their input; also for the Committee's consideration.

Klase stated that this is an open public meeting and the public has an opportunity to come and comment. We have provided structure to that, hearing public comments at the end of each criterion and then at the end of the meeting. The group was fine with that structure.

Roles

Klase reviewed roles of facilitator and then the Committee. Those sheets are found in the packet you were sent. Klase, as facilitator, will keep the group on task and on time and will ensure that all participants have a chance to provide their opinion. Role of the

committee members includes taking ownership of this process, read the material ahead of time so that you're prepared for the meeting. Respect each others opinion. Offer opposing viewpoints, and listen to what people are saying and digest it. Also take the information from this process back to the organizations you represent. The group will strive for consensus, may they may not always reach it. The group reviewed the voting procedure that will be used. (Detailed in your information packet.)

Substitutes

Klase stated that part of embracing the process, is making every effort to come to meetings. If by chance someone can't make a meeting how does the group feel about substitutes? The group was wary on slowing the process down with substitutes that don't know what's going on with the project.

>>>DECISION ITEM:

Substitutes will be allowed if the person missing the meeting brings the substitute up to speed on the process so that they can participate. The substitute will not have voting rights.

Sally Dahir joined the meeting and introduced herself as a technical expert working with Jane Cummings-Carlson and Vern Everson at the DNR.

Future Meetings

Rickenbach stated that a time crunch may come with future meetings. Therefore we'll set a time limit for each criterion so that we don't go on and on. We can evaluate the limit and adjust as the group feels necessary. Also, as we work through these we may run into indicators and wonder, well, does this go with this criterion or that one. So it maybe of benefit to start a list of ones that are important and we can pull those back into the process as needed.

Klase reviewed the criterion schedule for the upcoming meetings. They include: C3 today, C2, 4, and 5 in April, C1 in June, and C6 and 7 in July.

Mouw initiated that it may be a good idea to check back in at the next meeting on the work that was previously completed. That allows people to think and process information between meetings and bring those thoughts back to the group.

>>>DECISION ITEM:

The group decided that it would be of value to incorporate time in the next meeting to review minutes and progress thus far. The group can determine if there will be additional meetings needed to complete the process.

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Rickenbach will send minutes out for review prior to posting them on the website. The list of Committee members and their contact information was handed out. Peterson will also provide a list of technical experts.

BREAK

Criterion 3 Overview and Discussions

Jane Cummings-Carlson, Forest Health Coordinator with the DNR was asked to frame criterion 3 and review the information she provided on the Technical Expert Fact Sheet.

The group debated the definition of “health”. Cummings-Carlson focused it down to the indicator, looking at damaging agents, insects and disease, and drought. Gilbert thought should be a much broader focus. Miller stated that you can measure something directly or indirectly and he read this more as a management criterion. One can actually measure the degree on the landscape in different ways, for example rather than looking at the absence of wildfire, one can look at where fire is present on the landscape whether wildfire or prescribed burns. So rather than measuring things indirectly by the absence of that criterion we can maybe get at it more directly. MacKinnon looked at not only the agents that act on the forest, but fragmentation and development of the forest also. Where in this is the cultural connection to the forest? DuPlissis stated that we may want to change the terms, maybe “health” isn’t the correct term. I’m uncomfortable calling it ecosystem health.

Heyde stated in terms of our process, we asked technical experts to take a look at the indicator, and what I’m hearing you say is that this indicator might be ok, but we need to look at it in a much broader context and maybe call for other indicators to fill in the gaps.

Heyde stated that the criteria come from the Montreal process and none have these have changed, it’s the wording that was agreed upon internationally. The Northeast 20 states selected a subset 18 indicators of Montreal 67 and that’s what we’re using today. At some point we want to maintain ability to role this up. We are more interested in getting things that work for Wisconsin, but don’t necessarily want to throw this framework away either.

Cummings-Carlson moved forward with an overview of her perspective of looking at the metrics and providing an opinion on whether they are adequate for monitoring change in Wisconsin’s forests. Essentially Cummings-Carlson feels there is a good system across the spectrum for this criterion. Her recommendations included the following:

- Crown dieback and transparency are excellent metrics for detecting developing forest health issues. Add crown dieback and transparency to the metrics. The FIA program and forest assessment on state lands already include this measurement.
- Expand early detection plot network for invasive species.
- Install air pollution impact plots.
- Intensify the FIA plot network
- Number of wildfires per year
- Causes of wildfires per year
- Value of damage lost from wildfire
- Number of structures lost to wildfire per year
- Dollars spent fighting wildfires per year

Cummings-Carlson also addressed ozone damage stating that there are 31 plots in state. They are related to FHM but are on separate network. As in all the data sets, the issue is

the intensity of the plot network. It would be great to quadruple the intensity of the network plots, which would increase our chances of finding things early. Everson gave an indication of cost. The DNR doubles the FIA intensity in Wisconsin and that's about \$500,000. FHM plots are more expensive, around \$1,000 per plot, whereas FIA is \$800 per plot. In general, Cummings-Carlson feels confident that we aren't missing the big issues, but we may be missing subtle changes that can't be captured by the surveys.

Dahir stated that there are 183 weather stations in Wisconsin that have daily weather data that is easy to download and look at trends. There are 6-7 major weather centers that have easy to access data. Cummings-Carlson stated that when there is drought stress in the state the pest outbreaks become worse and we use the drought data to explain why the outbreaks are occurring. She also feels that using the Palmer Drought Index is adequate to detect state trends.

Discussions focused primarily over the Forest Inventory Assessment (FIA) and Forest Health Management (FHM) plots, and how data is collected. There are both national and state efforts to monitor forest health. The state as a part of its work is now completing risk maps that will be updated every five years. Also, forest health is documented in the Forest Health Highlights newsletter and through the DNR Annual Report.

Duplissis asked about invasives and animal damage. Everson stated FIA did start doing invasive plant inventories and are in the second year now. They started looking at woody plants in the winter and now this year they are implementing that in the growing season. So in five years they'll have a full data set. Cummings-Carlson added that there are a number of focused invasive plant surveys including the state forest invasive plant surveys.

Klase, asked where do we want to go with the gaps? Roark stated they need to take the gaps to the Council. Zastrow stated that the list of gaps will grow and we'll need to talk about prioritizing the list and focus on where we would enhance those gaps; this maybe a discussion that would come at the end of the process. Cost information will also be needed to prioritize and evaluate monitoring to fill the gaps.

Rickenbach stated that the metrics of insects and diseases and plants and animals needs to be broken up into subsets. We have good information on insects and disease, but plants and animals should be separated out. We're trying to measure too many things in one metric. Duplissis thought wildfire was too narrow, what about flood, tornado, etc that should be included. Abiotics would be captured. Do we want to track wildfire on a statewide scale? Does it have a big enough impact? Do we want to track climate change separately? Acreage can come into play here, how large of acreage do we consider large enough to make a difference on a statewide scale?

Cummings-Carlson and Dahir excused themselves from the meeting.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

After lunch the group discussed the descriptions of 67 indicators from the National Report. The group worked through the list to evaluate what could be added to round out Criterion 3.

Animal Damage

Habitat type classification, mid story and understory could show herbivory much better than a tree that will live 150 years. With that data we would see the changes in the understory faster; maybe it could be incorporated into the invasive plant survey. Zastrow brought up the continuous forest inventory on state lands. The issue of vegetation sampling was looked at closely, but the costs and the ability to get to statistically valid data was too high.

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Zastrow will ask Joe Kovach with the DNR to provide the dollar information on vegetation sampling in regard to the continuous forest inventory on state lands.

The group thought that browse surveys blended with deer management units could result in conclusion that “x” density will lead to “y” amount of browsing. That information would be great.

Invasive Plants

A common database with standard survey methods in combination with FIA would be the best route to go. A common database that’s accessible to everyone. It is a measuring system and there are protocols that are being developed for a common survey approach, using a standard operation by location.

Heyde stated that the summary on the national level used tree data because that is what they had. Our Wisconsin data sets are pretty close to national.

Gilbert stated he liked the idea of bringing data in other forms of vegetation other than just trees. The cost may be prohibitive, but money and statistics are going to be problems in most any data we look at. The number of plots will be an issue too, but we need to raise this up because it’s important put the ball in the Council’s court.

Air pollution

Cummings-Carlson did mention air pollutants and that is indicator #16 on the national handout. Hauer stated that it’s being measured but not at a level that’s statistical. Maybe we should recommend increasing plot intensity.

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Zastrow will also ask Cummings-Carlson if ozone is the proxy that needs to be used and at what plot intensity it needs to be measured.

Disease and Insects

Currently the DNR is completing risk maps and impact maps that are a reflection of both the data in plots and a more intensified survey.

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Zastrow will send risk maps to Peterson to be posted on the web.

The risk maps and the Forest Health Highlights Report are good documents we should utilize.

Duplissis and Hauer leave at 2:05

Fire

The group debated whether fire should be lumped in an abiotic category, or a catastrophic events category containing items like ice storms, blowdowns, etc. Heyde asked what the definition of a catastrophic event is and when is it reportable and tracked?

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Miller will tap into TNC fire staff and will bring back information on modeling exercises that look at historic natural range of variation of landscapes.

Rickenbach stated that acres burned doesn't tell the whole story, intensity has a mark here and we need to know something about the area burned too.

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Peterson will find what information the fire reports hold.

Drought

If we look at climate change as a whole, what else do we need to measure? Precipitation, temperature, the number of days below freezing?

>>>ACTION ITEM:

Rickenbach will talk with David Ladenoff to get a list of what we should look for.

Draft framework for Criterion 3

C3: Maintenance of Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality

7. Area of forest land affected by potentially damaging agents

- 7.1 Tree mortality and damage (FIA with addition of crown dieback and transparency. Expansion to all FIA plots.)
- 7.2 Catastrophic events (Existing event reporting with supplementary information from FIA.)
- 7.3 Climate data (use existing data)
- 7.4 Disease and Insects (Risk maps and Forest Health Report)
- 7.5 Animal Damage (Develop density relation to herbivory.)
- 7.6 Invasive Plants (Common database with standard survey methods in combination with FIA.)
- 7.7 Area and percent of forest land with diminished biological components indicative of changes in fundamental ecological processes. (Measure under-story and mid-story plants. Use existing fire event reporting.)
- 7.8 Area and percent of forest land subjected to levels of specific air pollutants that may cause negative impacts on forest ecosystems. (Cummings-Carlson to inform which pollutant would be best to monitor.)

Klase asked if the group was at the point where they could make a decision on the draft. Gilbert commented that quite a few people were gone and that it might be of benefit to clean it up, send it out, and re-visit it at the next meeting.

The group overall felt the process they went through today worked. They thought that getting a modified version of the National Report that correlated the numbering system would be helpful.

Heyde stated that he appreciates all the varied perspectives and that people are really wrestling with this; that's a good thing.

Rickenbach commented that maybe C3 was harder because there were only 4 metrics and they needed to come up with more. And he thanked the group for all their hard work.

Meeting is adjourned at ??? (Did anyone catch what time we were done?) proxy