

Missouri Forest Resources Advisory Council

Wednesday, June 4, 2014

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Welcome & Self-Introductions – Kelly Smith, MoFRAC Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and the following were in attendance:

Baldwin, Donna – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Ball, Bob – Missouri Chapter of Walnut Council
Becker, Anastasia – Mo. Dept. of Agriculture
Best, Steve, Mark Twain Nat'l Forest
Boeckmann, Kurt – Mo. Dept. of Nat. Resources
Brookshire, Brian – Mo. Forest Products Assoc.
Brown, Marvin, Forest & Woodland Assoc. of Mo.
Brown, Mike – USDA APHIS PPQ
Brundage, Scott – The Walnut Council
Brunk, Gene – Mo Community Forestry Council
Burk, John – Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation
Dorst, Hank – Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council
Fitzgerald, Jane – American Bird Conservancy
Flader, Susan – L-A-D Foundation
Garrett, Gene – MU Center for Agroforestry
Gartner, Justine – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Gelnar, Dwaine – Nat. Res. Cons. Service

Hoffmann, Mike – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Jones, Shelby – Mo. Consulting Foresters Assoc.
Jones, Matt – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Landewe, Rebecca – The Nature Conservancy
Lovelace, Wayne – Mo. Nurseryman's Assoc.
McGuire, Bill – Bill McGuire Conservation LLC
Merritt, Rick – Missouri Tree Farm Committee
Palm, Harlan – Missouri Chapter Walnut Council
Potter, Lisa – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Schweiss, Brian – Mo. Dept. of Conservation
Smith, Kelly - Missouri Farm Bureau
Stafford, Tony – Mo. Dept. of Agriculture
Stelzer, Hank – MU Dept. of Forestry
Thurman, Steve – US Army Ft. Leonard Wood
Tuttle, John – Mo. Society of American Foresters
Van Sambeek, Jerry – USFS Northern Res Station
Westin, Steve – Mo. Dept. of Conservation

Review and Approve the March 5, 2014 Minutes – Hank Dorst, MoFRAC Secretary, asked if anyone had changes to the meeting minutes. Lisa Potter made a slight change to dollar amounts on the Farm Bill report; Hank captured her changes. With no further changes noted, Gene Brunk made a motion to accept the minutes as changed. Scott Brundage seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Richard Fordyce – Director, Missouri Department of Agriculture, was introduced and welcomed. Mr. Fordyce noted he has been Director for a little more than 5 months now. He has quite a bit of experience in the agriculture industry, with his area of expertise in northern Missouri agriculture (corn, soybeans, cattle). Mr. Fordyce added that he is not real familiar with forest industry in the state other than knowing where we rank in dollar amounts generated, and that is staggering. He met with Brian Brookshire of MFPA a couple times and values that relationship. In MDA's Plant Industries Division, a lot of forest health monitoring is done, and is taken very seriously. This work is in cooperation with MDC. Issues that have come up include the hardwood check off. Mr. Fordyce is trying to get a better understanding and talk about concerns from an industry standpoint. He serves on the United Soybean Board and works often with international marketing where he has made several contacts. They are ramping up the Agriculture Business International Marketing Division, and they are here to help people. He understands the importance of forestry industry and is here to get a better understanding about this group and what it's about. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend today.

Prescribed Fire and Bird Habitat – Jane Fitzgerald, American Bird Conservancy, gave a presentation focused on how forests and woodland communities in the Ozarks developed and changed over time, based on her understanding of work derived from multiple disciplines...ornithology, ecology, forestry and fire science. Jane is the Coordinator of the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture (CHJV), one of many public-private partnerships across North America dedicated to stabilizing or reversing the declines of bird species deemed in need of conservation attention.

Jane noted there are numerous species of “grass-shrubland” breeding bird species that have declined dramatically in recent decades and are the focus of conservation attention in the CHJV region. These species are associated with habitats with grassy understories and varying amounts of shrub cover; some are associated with the scattered trees within the systems, typically in an open canopy condition. The native habitat types the CHJV is interested in providing for the bird species of interest are all fire-driven. Fire had been on the landscape for hundreds and thousands of years. Analyses of fire scars on tree rings of old trees recovered from the Current River Hills are of Missouri indicate that even when native American populations were at relatively low densities, fires burned roughly 10-20% of the Ozarks in any given year. There are other studies that suggest relatively frequent and widespread fires occurred across the Ozarks as a whole.

Fires burned un-evenly across a landscape both in terms of time and scope. Topographic variation results in differences in relative moisture, with for example, south-facing slopes typically being drier and north-eastern slopes, especially in lower landscape positions, being moister. Flat areas can burn more because they typically have few elements that stop the spread of the fire. Geology and soil types also have an influence (some soils hold more moisture, and bedrock and soil types also influence the plant communities, with some being more flammable than others). More frequent and intensive fires resulted in more open community types, but within a given landscape, different community types can intermingle... you can get a diversity of plants and wildlife in these landscapes as a result. And even at smaller scales, variation occurs with some patches being more open and some less. In addition to structuring community types within and across landscapes, fire frequency and intensity also affected age structure in forest and woodland stands. In areas with more frequent and/or intense fires, trees tend to recruit in cohorts during fire-free intervals, while areas with less frequent or intense fires had a greater diversity of age classes.

The widespread cutting of forests in the early 1900s and subsequent fire suppression efforts have left the forests and woodlands across the Ozarks with a different composition and age structure than before the logging. For example, a 160% increase in black oak and scarlet oak in the Current River Hills subsection was due to replacement of shortleaf pine after the initial logging and widespread fire suppression. Oaks were the dominant genus throughout the Ozark Highlands and although they still are today, there has been a major reduction in their dominance and distribution since the historical surveys, along with loss of open oak ecosystems. (*From: Regime Shifts and Weakened Environmental Gradients in Open Oak and Pine Ecosystems. Brice B. Hanberry, Dan C. Dey, Hong S. He; PLoS ONE 7(7): e41337. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0041337*)

Age structure also was affected and today, 62 % of all forest area in MO is 40 to 80 years old; 63% of oak is in that age class. Lack of age class diversity also results in lack of forest structural diversity, with negative effects on wildlife, timber, carbon, climate change, forest health, and recreation. Oak decline, a result of the aging black/red oak cohort, is now a serious problem. An MDC website suggests the following as means to address oak decline:

Short-Term Response

1. Remove hazardous trees from high-use areas such as yards, roads and rights-of-way.
2. Survey your land and determine the severity of the problem, then contact a professional forester.
3. Develop a plan that will meet your specific goals and objectives for the areas most heavily damaged by oak decline.
4. *Use carefully timed prescribed burns to encourage oak and pine regeneration, which reduces competition from shade-tolerant species, and also reduces hazardous fuel-loading.*

Long-Term Strategy for Missouri

1. Increase the diversity of forest stands to reduce the dominance of one or two tree species.

2. Encourage growth among the younger and most vigorous individuals in a stand by thinning out the weakened, diseased trees.
3. *In multi-aged stands, encourage long-lived and drought-tolerant species such as shortleaf pine and white oak.*
4. Two-aged stands provide the best opportunity to manage mixed-species systems economically.

From: <http://xplor.mdc.mo.gov/your-property/your-trees-and-woods/tree-diseases-and-pests/oak-decline-missouri>

Data Jane got from Forest Service research scientist Steve Shifley suggests that in the black and scarlet oaks mortality and removals are close to growth. Jane challenged the group to think about what could/should be done in stands after oak decline plays out... attempt to regenerate even-aged stands with the same species composition and have a similar problem in another 80 years, or diversify by encouraging longer-lived and more disease-resistant shortleaf pine and white oak on appropriate sites? She asked "Is burning needed, from a forest health and timber standpoint? Maybe the answer is yes." Further east in the central hardwoods region, people are experimenting with prescribed fire to help get advanced reproduction as cutting alone doesn't seem to be doing the trick.

Luckily new modeling approaches and increased computing power are allowing researchers to better quantify how forests and wildlife communities will change over time under combined scenarios of management, succession, and climate change. The information from those analyses might be helpful to those interested in forests and forest products in terms of developing markets that have the best opportunity to be sustained over time.

Kelly thanked Jane for her presentation, and asked John Burk if he had anything to add. John noted that good forest management, particularly on private land, is whatever that landowner says it is. It's our job as resource professionals to tease out their goals and provide advice or encourage use of a forester.

Scott Brundage commented that those of us in forest management do a lot of burning on CRP warm season grasses. He thinks that fire in pine has merit, but there are certain areas that should be off limits to burning: well stocked high quality hardwood stands (over 50 BA and 10 acres.) Would be happy to put to a definition to what stands should not be burned. John agreed, but noted that it's up to the landowner and their objectives. Scott agreed, but could let landowner know the tradeoff and alternatives so they can make an informed decision.

Shelby Jones added that one fire through a good white oak stand can ruin the bottom log for any high quality product, and represents a considerable loss of revenue to the landowner. His problem is often the people prescribing fire don't know what a high quality lumber tree is. Does not believe we can change the market conditions and demand to shortleaf pine. We have to consider the economics of this thing. Jane responded that she is not advocating conversion to shortleaf pine.

Rebecca Landewe noted there is an economics factor that is hard to measure – tourism. She asked about the goal for 10 MM acres, do you have measures on how to obtain that goal? Jane noted that the goal came from a modeling exercise that used FIA data to tie different species of birds to habitat. Looks at current conditions and what it would be like if you restore it.

Mike Hoffmann added that the slides indicated that fire controls the stand age structure, but in reality it's increased sunlight that controls the age structure. A lot of natural events have a role in it as well (wind events, etc). Jane agreed.

Brian Brookshire noted that industry has been vocal about the prescribed burn program of the USFS, but what's important for this group to consider is the discussion has to do with black/scarlet oak aging until it's declining. The reason is lack of management. It should have been managed and sometimes people seem surprised that we end up with a declining forest. Using fire as a potential solution to that is the wrong approach. This group can develop strategies to advocate to agencies so we don't end up with this in the future... be an advocate for management.

Hank Dorst noted the public lands may not be managed to the level you like, but they have not been unmanaged. One of the problems is for 25 years they managed some of the acres through clearcut and did nothing on others. As we look to the future, it's becoming questionable whether we can carry the red oak group through sawtimber size (climate change). Some are questioning the viability of the white oak group as well. Both groups are likely to be under increased stress from drought, blow down, ice storms, etc. Focus is on increasing shortleaf pine in its historic range, not converting to pine out of the native pine range. Another thing we've overlooked is the usefulness of fire as a regeneration tool.

John Tuttle added that fire is a good tool used in the right place. Look at the best combination of tools to reach your objectives, think about a restoration plan. What do you have, what do you want, how do you get there? Many people don't do that.

Kelly thanked Jane and John for bringing this discussion to the meeting. He also thanked everyone for being courteous in light of the different views.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative – Marvin Brown thanked everyone for the opportunity to talk today about the SFI partnership program to expand SFI in selected states around the country. Marvin reported that he was asked to lead the project in Missouri. He added that where forest certification has become prominent, research has shown a definite improvement in forest management and water quality. That's a big impact.

However, in Missouri, a lot of the smaller family companies would have to invest a lot for "not so much" in return. Therefore, the goal is to get agencies on board, and perhaps some of the larger private groups and landowners. Marvin noted he is seeking MoFRAC's support and encourages MDC to become certified. As requested at the last meeting, Marvin prepared a draft resolution for MoFRAC to adopt, and sent that out in advance of today's meeting.

Scott Brundage asked John Tuttle what MDC would have to do to be certified and would it be a financial burden? John noted that, based on a recent gap analysis, MDC would not have to change a lot of what they already do, mostly internal record keeping. Estimate is \$15,000 for annual audits and every three years, a larger, more detailed audit at \$25,000-30,000. Scott asked what we get back for that? John noted that we are proving to the citizens we are doing the right thing and would be an example for others. It may also increase the market (supply and demand) for certified wood. It's a leadership thing and there is a lot of value in that. He added that it will ultimately be the decision of our MDC's Administration.

Discussion ensued among the group about the various perspectives of the member groups. Gene Brunk noted that the MCFC supports, and Brian stated that MFPA supports. Brian noted that it dovetails into the other educational programs we have. Marvin thanked everyone for their comments.

Gene Brunk made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Scott Brundage. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Amendment 1 - Keep Missouri Farming – Kelly Smith, Mo Farm Bureau, gave a brief presentation on this amendment. He noted the issue will be on the ballot in August when Missouri voters will be offered

the chance to vote for a constitutional amendment that will permanently protect the rights of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices. Amendment 1 will make farming and ranching a right in Missouri, similar in scope and protection to the speech and religion rights already in place. This amendment is critical to ensure the long-term future of agriculture in Missouri. It will create a regulatory certainty necessary for agriculture to remain viable and help guarantee that families can continue to farm and ranch in Missouri.

This amendment will discourage out of state interest groups that bankroll the passage of initiatives that impose costly and unnecessary restriction on segments of agriculture in Missouri. These same interest groups have successfully pushed restriction on livestock production in states such as Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio, and others.

Kelly answered a few questions about the amendment and made clarifications. Additional comments were made. Kelly distributed an informational brochure. For more information, please see www.keepmissourifarming.org

Forestry Stewardship Program – Brian Schweiss, MDC, gave a program update on Forestry Division's private land outreach. This included updates on Call Before You cut where over the last three fiscal years over 1500 landowners have been reached out to, owning 166,416 acres. Missouri Tree Farm must determine if they want to be a certified or recognition state. There are 555 certified Tree Farms at this time. Other highlights included the MO Woods App, Green Horizons newsletter, and information about the Missouri Forestkeepers Network and the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri.

Forest Legacy Program - Steve Westin, MDC Forestry Program Supervisor and Forest Legacy Program Coordinator for Missouri, gave a short presentation to the group which reviewed the purpose and other fundamentals of the Forest Legacy program, as well as some specifics about Forest Legacy in Missouri. The presentation also covered the role of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) in carrying out the Forest Legacy Program. MoFRAC functions as the SFSCC in Missouri. Finally, Steve presented the group with the idea of, and reasons for, forming the Missouri Forest Legacy Committee (FLC). The proposed language authorizing the formation of the FLC presented to MoFRAC for a vote was as follows:

*The Missouri State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) hereby authorizes the Missouri "**Forest Legacy Committee**", chaired by an official of the Missouri Department of Conservation / Forestry Division, to administer the duties of the SFSCC that apply to the Forest Legacy Program. The Chair of the Forest Legacy Committee shall regularly communicate with the SFSCC regarding the work of the Forest Legacy Committee, and matters of the Forest Legacy Program in Missouri.*

Discussion ensued, and the original authorizing language was modified as follows:

*The Missouri Forest Resources Advisory Committee (MoFRAC), acting in its capacity as the Missouri State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC,) hereby authorizes the Missouri "**Forest Legacy Committee**", chaired by an official of the Missouri Department of Conservation / Forestry Division, to administer the duties of the SFSCC that apply to the Forest Legacy Program. The Chair of the Forest Legacy Committee shall regularly communicate with MoFRAC regarding the work of the Forest Legacy Committee, and matters of the Forest Legacy Program in Missouri.*

Bob Ball made a motion to accept the language as modified; Jerry Van Sambeek seconded the motion. All the members voted to in favor with the exception of Kelly Smith on behalf of Farm Bureau. The motion was approved.

DNR Watershed Based Planning and Soil & Water Program Practices Related to

Forestry – Jennifer Hoggatt, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, presented on the *Our Missouri Waters* effort. The overall goal of Our Missouri Waters is to identify and understand water resource concerns in a watershed, work with all partners to identify priorities and workable solutions, then strategically focus resources toward those priorities.

Jennifer shared success stories from the pilot phase of Our Missouri Waters, which wrapped up at the end of 2013, and she shared the watersheds the Department is focusing on for 2014. Those focus watersheds are: Spring River, Sac, Niangua, Independence-Sugar, Lower Missouri – Crooked, Lower Missouri – Moreau, Lower Grand, North Fork Salt, South Fork Salt, Salt, Lower Missouri, Meramec, Big, Upper Mississippi – Cape Girardeau.

Kurt Boeckmann, also with Department of Natural Resources, discussed the Soil and Water Sales Tax that funds the Soil and Water Conservation Program within DNR. Proceeds are equally divided between Missouri State parks and the Soil and Water Conservation Program. Missouri is the only state to have a retail sales tax specifically dedicated to soil conservation. It is re-approved every 10 years, most recently in 2006. Kurt discussed different practices that are available related to livestock exclusion, timber harvest planning, riparian forest buffers and BMP's for logging practices. Woodland erosion funds provide 75% cost share for practices to install exclusion fencing, plant trees, and for timber harvest planning and restoration of skid trails.

Kelly thanked Kurt and Jennifer for presenting their information today.

Partner Updates, Meetings, and Events

- Natural Resources Conservation Service - Dwaine Gelmar reported that the Secretary has several openings on the forest resource coordinating committee. The deadline for submitting nominations is June 15th. In addition, they are in the midst of a regional conservation partnership project, a collaboration between USDA and state agencies and other entities, that brings technical assistance and financial assistance that can be leveraged to help funds go further. Three different pots of money: the critical conservation area, a national component, and a state component. The pre-proposals must be in to Washington DC by July 14th.
- US Department of Agriculture APHIS- Mike Brown reported that the EAB statewide quarantine went into place last fall. In addition, there have been new detections this year in St. Charles and Clay Counties.
- Missouri Society of American Foresters – John Tuttle noted they had a good meeting in May at Hammons Products Co. in Stockton. They will meet again in the fall at Ozark Underground Laboratory.
- Missouri Department of Agriculture - Tony Stafford reported the AgriTourism Conference will be held July 13-15 in Kansas City; another Governor's Conference on Agriculture will be held December 18-20 at TanTarA. Anastasia Becker also reported that MDA and other agencies are part of the Missouri Invasive Pest Council, which has a finalized draft of a pest plan. Will get out to stakeholders and public for comments, then the final plan will be forwarded to the directors of Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources for signature. They have been putting out a lot of traps – gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, and walnut twig beetle traps. Also putting out biological control agents in the KC area close to the EAB find.
- US Forest Service - Steve Best reported they held a congressional field tour in April; very successful. Received approval for the categorical exclusion for forest restoration work on certain high risk areas on Mark Twain National Forest, allowing work without the full environmental

impact statement typically required. The governor had to submit the request to the Secretary of Agriculture in Washington, DC.

- Center for Agroforestry – Gene reported that Shibu Jose could not be here today – biomass for energy being presented at MU today, he needed to be there. Good news – this year USDA identified the top 10 research areas, and the Center ranked 7th. Some senators teamed up and argued that we need dollars, and USDA created a \$1.5 MM line item for agroforestry research nationally, so the Center competed very favorably. Will renew the technology transfer program.
- MDC – John Tuttle reported we were successful in getting a competitive grant for the Trees Work program - \$400,000 over a three year period. We are partnering with MU on oak decline research; the Missouri Forest Management Guidelines is in the final stages of layout and will be published soon; deer management meetings going on around the state.
- Pioneer Forest – Susan Flader noted they have escaped the red oak decline, but not some white oak mortality. Will be interested in what can be done about it.
- Hank Dorst – KUMR has a show called Energy Matters which this morning had guest Peter Becker, on the phone from Rhode Island, who was very complimentary of the Missouri forestry community and pointed out that the MU boiler procurement contract is a model for the nation.

Next MoFRAC Meeting – Kelly reminded members that the next meeting will be held September 3, 2014 at 9:00 am at the Farm Bureau Headquarters.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.