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Forestry BMP Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

February 4, 2009
UWSP-DUC, Stevens Point

Committee Members Present:

Jim Olive, FISTA; Matt Dallman, TNC; Dean Pelkey, PCA; Gary Edinger, RAW; Steve Kariainen, SFI SIC; Tim Tollefson, New Page Corp; Ken Adamovich, WAL; Jane Severt, WCFA; Earl Gustafson, WI Paper Council; Mike Gehrke, WWOA; Kent Mikkelson, Thilmany Procurement Group; Aaron Caylor, GLTPA; Teri Heyer, USDA Forest Service;

DNR Staff Present:

Carmen Wagner, Darrell Zastrow. Rebecca Gass

Presentations:

All the presentations from the meeting will be available on the DNR's Forestry BMP web-pages at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Usesof/bmp/advisory/>

Update on BMP Monitoring: Carmen Wagner

BMP monitoring was completed on non-industrial private forestland (NIPF) from September 8 through November 18. For monitoring, information was gathered on cutting notices, timber sales offered by partners, and MFL cutting notices to identify monitoring opportunities on private lands. Duplicated were identified and removed. The remaining sales were randomly numbered for selection for BMP monitoring.

Over 625 timber sales were office-checked. Then staff contacted nearly 250 landowners and worked with foresters to determine eligibility, eventually visiting nearly 60 sites. This compares with 350 sites visited in 2002. Nearly 60% dropped out in the office checks meaning that maps and tools to determine eligibility are better. Of the remaining sales, approximately 80% dropped out with landowner permission – many reasons why landowners did not allow access. Overall 10% met eligibility criteria and granted permission for BMP monitoring.

Timber sales were monitored in 5 new counties this year and a total of 52 sales were monitored to obtain statistically valid information. Positive results this year included increasing logger and private/industrial participation in part due to SFI credits being received. The new worksheet format was also well received.

To date, the initial analysis completed and will be presented today. The statistical analysis is underway. Landowner surveys were completed by staff from UW-Madison's Forestry and Wildlife Ecology Dept. Those results will be presented at a later meeting. They also assisted with data entry from the BMP worksheets.

A number of challenges include that monitoring teams did not get information early enough, some teams had to monitor during several time periods rather than one week, and some NIPF sales did not have timber sale maps or contracts. There was discussion regarding opportunities to further connect professional assistance to these private landowners that have not had assistance in the past. Some DNR publications regarding landowner assistance will be included in the letters to landowners with the BMP monitoring reports.

Other challenges include the cost of monitoring this year. Nearly \$7000 was requested for reimbursement as compared to < \$2000 in 2006. This does not include some mileage, lodging and meal costs that could be covered by group expenses. This is likely a reflection of the difficult economic times.

Team leaders provided the following recommendations after completing the monitoring season:

- Divide training workshop to ½ day introduction for new team members and a field day into the second day for everyone
- Drop teams down to 4 members, but require alternates and keep teams at a minimum of 4 people.
- Add stream crossing as an eligibility criteria

Advisory discussed all of these recommendations. Generally Advisory agreed with the separation of the workshop. The 4 person model definitely needs a wide array of backgrounds (critical experience) but the potential savings are real and in reality, this < 6 person team occurs often due to complex individual schedules. Possibly continue with 6 person team where 2 of the participants are alternates (but still include critical credentials). The group generally agreed on this approach to reduce the size of the team with the same spectrum of expertise. Regarding the proposed stream crossing criteria as an alternative eligibility criteria, the management of this stream crossing would be monitored and really a part of the timber sale. Advisory approved the stream crossing proposal which includes skid trails and roads.

Initial Results – see presentation for details. Sales ranged from 2-125 acres in size. Clearcuts were discussed as a term that may trouble some people but confirmed as a generally accepted silviculture systems discussion as a viable system and selection systems should replace the word “selective”.

Statewide Forest Assessment: Rebecca Gass

Informational item on the state forest assessment utilizing Wisconsin’s Forest Sustainability framework. By using the sustainability framework, it is a way to define sustainability. Our approach is to use this as a report card on sustainability. Discussion for the group included questions relating this system to performance based certification programs that are performance based like SFI and FSC.

Carmen Wagner - presentation/discussion of the assessment criteria, indicators and metrics for conserving soil and water resources (possibly attach presentation). Carmen discussed the following criteria:

- Criteria 9. Soil quality on forestland

- Criteria 10. Area of forestland adjacent to surface water and forestland by watershed
- Criteria 11. Water quality in forested areas

Other Forestry-Related Items: Carmen Wagner

The implementation plan for Wisconsin's Biomass Harvesting Guidelines is currently open for comment until February 23, 2009. Information on the plan and the guidelines is available at: <http://council.wisconsinforestry.org/biomass/>

The Office of Forest Sciences and Wetlands Section submitted a grant application to the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) to map and inventory ephemeral ponds. The proposal was ranked as a "medium". This proposal will likely not get funded however the wetlands group in WDNR may look for alternative funding for this project. The focus of this project would be to better classify ephemeral habitats and their relative importance in the landscape. This project was supported by state forests and county forests.

A stream crossing workshop is being held on April 21 - 23, 2009 in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. The workshop is designed to improve your ability to assess, design and install culverts. This is a hands-on training that includes classroom lectures, field exercises and design projects. The fee is \$100 and includes selected meals, breaks and a workshop binder. This workshop is being offered by The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service, University of Wisconsin - Extension, Wisconsin DOT and Wisconsin DNR. Registration information is available at: <https://uwebe.encampus.com/default.aspx>

DNR staff are working with the Forest Service and staff from other states on a ATV Trail Maintenance Project. The focus is to look at ATV trail concerns and develop guidance on how to maintain trails. Training materials and a handbook will be some of the products with this project.

Reviewing BMPs for Water Quality: Carmen Wagner

During this presentation, the committee:

- Discussed the process for reviewing BMPs for Water Quality
- Reviewed the topics that have come up for review evaluation and discussed why reviewing these topics may be helpful
- Determined which topics to proceed for review
- Reviewed the next steps.

One of the first questions was should we consider calling these BMPS for soil and water quality? This would be possible depending on what we decided upon. This will be discussed in more detail at upcoming meetings and with the subcommittee.

Timeline: Note that some steps have already been completed.

- December 2008 – January 2009
 - Solicit input from Advisory Committee and other stakeholders
 - Summarize concerns
- February 2009
 - Advisory Committee determines which areas to focus review
- April 2009

- Advisory Committee reviews concerns and determines which concerns to forward to experts for review and which concerns can simply be forwarded to subcommittee
- May 2009
 - Expert review of issues
- June 2009
 - Advisory Committee reviews recommendations from experts
 - Determine direction of BMPs
 - Form a subcommittee to review BMP language
- July 2009 – September 2009
 - Subcommittee meets
- October 2009
 - Subcommittee recommendations presented to Advisory Committee
- November 2009 – December 2009
 - Public review and comment on BMPs
- January 2010
 - Advisory Committee reviews public comments
 - Make final recommendations on BMPs
 - Forwards to Chief State Forester
 - Present to Council on Forestry

The following topics were identified as potentially needing review. IT should be noted that this does not mean that the BMP needs to be changed. This is the first time in 14 years that we are reviewing the BMPs.

Issues under consideration and Advisory Decision:

1) Erosion prone sites – Biomass Harvesting Guidelines (BHG) concern, typically distinguished by soil and slope. BMP = winch logs up steep slopes but we do not get into protecting erosion prone sites and protecting the forest floor.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

2) Fine Woody Debris in RMZs – BHGs limit removal of FWD on sensitive sites. BMP= minimize soil exposure and compaction to protect ground vegetation.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

3) RMZs and Dry Washes – BHG concern currently not addressed in BMPs. Dry wash may be a non-navigable stream, may be found in the headwater of the stream and typically are part of the transition of a dry wash to non navigable to intermittent to navigable.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

4) Filter Strips – BHG concern currently not addressed in BMPs. Filter strips would provide a strip for infiltration to occur.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

5) Infrastructure Caps - BHG concern currently not addressed in BMPs. More infrastructure area for roads and landings may be needed for biomass harvesting operations. BMP = limiting the development of new roads and skid trails.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

6) RMZ Categories – BMP concern. Category currently based on navigability.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

7) RMZ Considerations – BMP concern. BMP may be modified when it will provide equal or greater protection or when there will be no impact on water quality. Does not provide any further guidance. Possible discussion of flexibility and considerations with different scenarios.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

8) Regional BMP Concerns – Landscapes that have historic challenges such as the clay plain.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

9) Drainage Structures – BMP concern. Other designs for diversion structures are available than what is mentioned in BMP manual.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

10) Sediment Control – BMP concern. Other options for sediment controls are available than what is mentioned in BMP manual.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

11) Excessive Rutting – BMP concern. BMPs do not define this and the FMG references a 6" depth.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

12) Frozen Roads – BMP concern. BMP = In wetlands forest management activities should occur on frozen ground. Discussion could be enhanced.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

13) Wetland crossings and Slash. BMPs state that upland slash should be kept out of the wetland and at the same time corduroy/slash is encouraged.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

14) RMZ & Wetland Slash – BMP concern. BMP = Do not move slash into RMZs and wetlands – causes confusion for practitioners and monitoring teams.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

15) Planning BMPs – BMP concern. In planning chapter there is a checklist but in later Timber Harvesting and Wetlands chapters references planning BMPs.

Further consideration by BMP Advisory? Yes

Carmen will provide additional information on these issues in the form of a brief for the April Advisory Committee meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

- April 15, 2008 location TBD
- June 10, 2008 location TBD