

Montana Forest Council
November 15, 2023

Participants: Gordy Sanders/Zoe Leake/Christian Cahoon – Pyramid Mountain Lumber, Nadine Block – SFI, Coleen Michael/Tim McEntire/Justin Doble – Montana Logging Association, Floyd Quiram – Quiram Logging Inc., Brian Sugden – Sugden Forest Environmental, Korbyn Dub – Stimson Lumber Company, Caleb Gardner – Marks – Miller Post & Pole, Caleb Deitz – Flathead Ridge Ranch/American Forest Management, Zack Miller/Jacob Parent – Weyerhaeuser, Peter Kolb/Cindy Peterson/Alexis Smith – MSU Extension Forestry, Marc Vessar/Ashley Machus – MT DNRC, Tom Agens – PCA, Christine Johnson – Nine Mile Venture, Jeff Whitlock – FH Stoltze Land & Lumber, Cody Daiutolo – Thompson River Lumber, Brian Hobday – Green Diamon Resource

Guests: Ardrene Sarracino – MT Tree Farm System

Program Administrator: Julia Altemus

Chairman's Welcome: Gordy Sanders

Anti-Trust Statement: Gordy Sanders

June 21, 2023, Meeting Notes: Julia – no corrections

SFI 2022 Standards-Anticipated changes/Interpretations for 2024: Nadine Block, only interpretation that came out in 2023 as to do with certified sourcing section 5. Available on the SFI website. Nothing in the works now related to interpretations. However, there is a webinar on December 7 regarding the exploration of potential refinements to the EUD Forestation Regulations, became a final law in June 2023. It defines deforestation and degradation in the Standards. Low hanging fruit adding definitions and guidance. The EU impacts US sellers into Europe. At this point SFI is just considering. It may be an optional module that companies can use. There is a webinar and a survey. SFI is coordinating with PEFC. PEFC is also looking at modifications. SFI wants to be in line with whatever PEFC does. November 16 is a Conservation Impact Sounding Board meeting. One focus is a study that was done in Maine related to Climate Smart Forestry handbook and starting to get into SFI's next strategic direction through a conservation lens. SFI conference June 2024. SFI did a few workshops in 2022. Those workshops were designed to help the SICs. New workshops for 2024 are Fire Resilience and Awareness. Guidebook came out for SICs January 2023. There will be a webinar for SICs in January 2024. The objective (in the Forest Management Standard) 2 main parts: Fire resilience management practices and community awareness. Peter, is SFI looking at the stand level or the forest level? Nadine, the way the objective is both on SFI certified lands. The awareness is even broader, what the risks are. where the preventions are and post fire management. Salvage and reforestation. Peter believes this is a big topic. Creating stand diversity across the landscape has a huge impact on fire resilience. It is a great topic, but knowledge level and the scientific literature is lacking. Nadine agrees, it is a big topic. Why a 2.5-hour workshop. Just scratching the surface. Workshops will break out regionally. Could also lead to in-person

workshops. Gordy, who are the speakers? Nadine, working on speakers now. Peter, direct conversation on this topic at the stand level, then move to the landscape level which will include cross boundary work. Nadine will follow-up with Peter offline. Gordy asked if the strategic direction would lead to changes to the Standards? Nadine, they are finishing up their 2nd strategic planning cycle. Don't expect to accelerate changes to the Standards over the next five years.

Northwest SIC's MOU on Logger Training Update: Gordy, all the SICs signed off. Recognizing each SICs logger training program. No timeline.

Thinning/Stocking Educational Brochure: Peter/Cameron/Zack/David/Marc – Zack a few people contributed information to the brochure. David is going to review and provide a statement on wildlife. Is Marc and or Ashley able to put the final touches on it? They will take a first crack at it and get it out to everyone. Get it kicked out by the next meeting in February 2024. Zack will send it to Julia, and she will send it to the MFC members with a short timeline of 5 days to get suggestions back. Would like to have it ready to be able to have it available during spring logger training. After this brochure is done, the council will need to decide what educational brochure to tackle next.

Updates to MFC Brochures: Ashley Machus said that some of the contact information had changed, and links didn't work. She went through the 4 brochures we have and updated them. Gordy and Julia reviewed her updates and said they look great. The only content she updated had to with White Nose syndrome in bats wasn't in MT at the time of the writing of the bat brochure, but the syndrome is in MT now. The DNRC has been approached by NRCS and the MT Forest Stewardship Foundation to partner on educational brochures and where to house this information. This request was taken to some other groups and decided to launch a website to centralize landowner educational resources on the MTforestinfo.org. All publications would be linked back to the organization's website. Having all the resources in one place will help landowners make better decisions. Website will launch in 2024. Peter wanted to know if the DNRC has funding for people that would be developing content. Ashley, collaboration review is not compensated, but others that would develop content could be compensated. The DNRC may look to U of M Forestry for an intern to help. Zack, a lot of this is broken out through the SFI standards and go through metric by metric. Zack offered to help. Brian S, thanks to DNRC for getting all the documents and information together. Ashley needs clearer logos from MWPA, Pyramid, MLA, Stoltze.

Spring 2024 Training: Justin/Tim are doing updates to the videos. Don't have dates yet. Will do a Contracting 201 class in 2024. What's New in Logging? Scaling Workshop (haven't done one in 5 years) also offer a written safety program again, Loggers Expo again. MLA will have a training program by the February meeting. Zack wanted to know if it would make sense to have Bryce Maxell at the spring training to talk about G1G2 species because of the Biodiversity Standard? Tim, they did talk about it last year and decided to let the individual members present the information. Pyramid had Bryce talk to their contractors this year. Decided to present the information during contractor meetings.

Project Learning Tree/SFI: Cindy Peterson/Lexi Smith. They have a new FS liaison Beth Hargman a certified Project Learning Tree instructor from another state and has an interest in PLT. Had been getting funding from the FS in 5-year cycle grants. Don't have any money but expect to get some from the FS which helps to pay for booths when traveling around the state. Have quarterly meetings with Project Wet and Project Wild. Coordinate workshops. Cindy did a little work with Iowa State University Forestry students. Went out to Angela Wells property and talked about Tree Farm and private forestry. Did a forest inventory workshop and gave the information to Angela and her husband. Gordy wanted to know how PLT was going with SFI? Cindy said MT PLT doesn't have a lot of communication specific to SFI, just the PLT side of the program. Nadine, SFI in 2022 conference was held jointly with PLT. Will do this again. Going back to separate conferences. The national PLT staff are part of the SFI staff and try to coordinate with state coordinators and facilitators. Zack, is there a list of where PLT is being implemented in schools? Cindy said they do not have a list. Lexi, stewardship workshops for 2024, have 4 planned. Eureka, Frenchtown, Bozeman, Kalispell. Logger workshop in April. Gordy wanted to know how many people went through the workshops. Cindy said 190 workshops, 4452 people, 2883 ownerships, acres 1.365 million. 30 years' worth of workshops.

MFC Financial Report: Coleen said there is an increase in costs for database update. Costs for workshops are going up and we are trying to minimize costs.

Member and Partner Updates: **Brian Sugden**, resource to several SFI companies and does other environmental permitting and consulting. **Marc Vessar**, getting ready for the 2024 Field Reviews. Looking for participants. BMP working group meeting. No SMZ violations since the last meeting. Tracking HRAs 237 standard HRAs in 2023. Less than usual. (2022 was 363 and 2021 500). Sat down with the Missoula Conservation District regarding their jurisdiction they are taking on streams in Missoula County. Stream crossing needs a 310 permit. They are saying if going to log with the SMZ will have to have a 310 permit. They want a 50' jurisdiction on all streams in Missoula County. Gordy, this started in Flathead County, then Gallatin County and now moved to Missoula County. County Conservation Districts can create an ordinance. **Peter Kolb**, Stewardship program has been great for 30 years, but just got axed \$40K got cut to \$130K. Not sure why. He talked to Eric Warrington at DNRC. Not sure why yet. He has a meeting scheduled with Tom Watson at NRCS. They received a large increase in funding. He is hoping that some of the workshops can fall under their program and help with funding. NRCS needs to get more involved with MFC. He is in the middle of doing 2 pile burning workshops. 16 landowners in Bozeman went through the workshop. It's been too dry to burn. Spring Newsletter topic is Forest Resilience and Restoration. **Brian Hobday**, Green Diamond completed an internal audit this summer and will have an external audit in August of 2024. **Tim McEntire**, outreach to Great Falls to Worlds of Work around 2500 students and headed to the FFA convention to talk to students there as well. Also, at the AFRC merging leaders' program. **Cody Daiutolo**, in October had Forest Fest in conjunction with MSU Forestry Extension. **Zoe Leake**, for MT Tree Farm Systems is looking at dropping the 3rd party audit due to costs. Will this be a problem for folks that need certified wood. Gordy wanted to know if its state driven or national. Zoe said it's a national direction and they are going state by state. No deadline.

Angelo from IFG will be leading the discussion. **Jeff Whitlock**, Stoltze had a surveillance audit this year. Went well. **Korbyn Dub**, Stimson had an external audit this year, and the biodiversity information worked well. **Zachary Miller**, Weyerhaeuser had an internal audit in October. Went well. External audit next year in June. **Julia Altemus**, MWPA, a lot of federal and state issues for sure. EO Old Growth and Mature Forests and the Climate and Resilient Forests. For the Foundation had 14 applications, 9 to MSU Northern and 5 from U of M Forestry. **Caleb Deitz**, Flathead Ridge Ranch had an external audit this year. **Ardrene Sarracino**, MT Tree Farm looking for partners to provide workshops to their members. **Caleb Gardner**, Marks-Miller Post and Pole, most challenging year to find wood for the post yard. They received a Wood Products Assistance Grant, and they are able to make pressed fire logs from the mill residuals. **Jacob Parent**, Weyerhaeuser had employees attend the AFRC meeting in Missoula. **Christine Johnson**, The MWPA Foundation is always looking for donations to keep the program going. **Tom Agens**, PCA is partially restarted as the first of November. 2 of 4 digesters to support the machine. Looks like they will be curtailed in January to 30% but fully loaded with orders for 2024. **Gordy Sanders**, Pyramid had their surveillance audit in October and went very well. **Peter**, NRCS is proposing to be a conservation holder on private forest land. US tax dollars going into the program and federal government control of private forest lands. It's a proposed bill that has been introduced in congress. Missoula treatment plant planted 130 acres of poplars that they now want to get rid of.

Next Meeting: February 21, 2024 9:30 – 11:30

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