

Montana Forest Council Meeting
November 12, 2014
Triple W Equipment, Missoula

Welcome

Jim Kranz – *Plum Creek*, Keith Olson – *Montana Logging Association*, Gary Ellingson – *NW Management*, Julia Altemus – *Montana Wood Products Association*, Rich Lane – *Willis Ent.*, Nate Schwab – *ABR, Inc.*, Lorin Hicks – *Plum Creek*, Bob Lee – *Consulting Biologist*, Paul McKenzie – *F.H. Stoltze*, Gordy Sanders – *Pyramid Mountain Lumber*, Dylan Brown – *Pyramid Mountain Lumber*, Peter Kolb – *MSU Extension*, Steve Kloetzel – *The Nature Conservancy*, John Hansen – *Montana Logging Association*, Allan Cox – *Montana Natural Heritage Program*, Bryan Lorengo – *Montana Logging Association*, Bruce Rowland – *Stimson*, Dean Skaja – *Motion Industries*, Bryce Maxell, *Montana Natural Heritage Program*.

Notes: Melissa Hayes, *Montana Wood Products Association*

Antitrust Statement

Minutes approval

Keith made a motion to approve the minutes; Gordy seconded. Minutes approved.

Updates and News

- Congratulations to the Montana Forest Restoration Committee, Stoltze, and Pyramid who were given an SFI award in Montreal in Sept. It is great recognition for Montana and all those involved in these efforts. Robert Bonnie accepted the award for the MFRC and Dylan Brown attended for Pyramid.
- MFC and SFI companies sponsored a gift certificate that was presented to the Tree Farmer of the Year. Through the generosity of Triple W, a \$600 gift certificate was given at a cost of only \$300. That \$300 was covered by the SFI companies. Duke and Naomi Hoiland were named Tree Farmer of the Year. Their tree farm has been in the family for 3 generations.
- Jim was asked to participate in an interview of some of the SIC groups around the country. They asked basic questions about the MFC and activities it has been involved in. They are looking to promote the goals and objectives of the grassroots groups. Jim will forward the information from those interviews as soon as it is available.

Opportunity: Plum Creek Lectures

Plum Creek maintains an endowment that funds a lecture series at the University of Montana. Lorin along with Andrew Larson coordinate the series, which focuses on natural resource issues and aim to bring in distinguished lecturers to speak on the lecture topic. The next lecture series will focus on forest certification and will begin on Wed., March 25. The series will have a keynote and panel discussions. Potential lecturers or keynote include Michael Green, a Vancouver architect using wood for skyscrapers, Mike Covey from Potlatch because of their dual certification, an auditor, and a box store representative to discuss selling certified products. There will be SAF credits as well as the potential for ALP credit.

Forestry Mini College

The forestry mini college that was scheduled for Nov 15, is cancelled, but they are looking to reschedule and possibly look for a different fit/format. A minimum of 60 people are needed to run the program and only 50 people signed up for the November session.

SFI Standard Revision

New SFI standards were approved on Nov. 5. There are still edits being done, although it's nothing substantial. The standards will officially be launched on Jan. 5 with a press release. Hard copies will be mailed and the standards will also be available on the website. Participants have all of 2015 to implement the changes. The forester's forum will have an auditor discussing how they look at the standards. **Action item:** discuss the standards at the next meeting, when the standards are out.

Bat Research Project

The project was driven by the white nose syndrome in bats. It is a fungus impacting 11 species of cave-dwelling bats, and in some cases has caused an 80% decline in population. It can be spread through migrating bats or cave explorers that bring the fungus on their shoes. The symptoms can directly cause health problems and death, but mostly the fungus interrupts hibernation, waking the bats up. Once they wake up they are using critical energy reserves that they are not able to replenish. The fungus is making it's way West, and will most likely impact Montana bats in the near future. The Northern Long-eared bat is being proposed for ESA listing based on the impacts of white nose syndrome, although that listing could also impact management activities in and around bat habitat. Public comment ended in August and a decision should be made by April. There is a chance that timber management could receive an exemption, as it does not directly impact the bats or spread the fungus. Since not much is known about forest bats (those that live in trees and rocks outcroppings), Plum Creek launched a pilot study to look at forest bats, and where they roost and hibernate in managed forests. They installed 2 acoustic stations on Plum Creek lands and began collecting data in June. The data collected was very valuable and Plum Creek is looking into additional funding to continue their research. There is an opportunity for the committee to engage in and support this project., and it would be interested in being a supporter of an SFI Conservation Grant. Also, much of the funding requires either a non-profit or a governmental agency to house the funding, so there is an opportunity for other partners to step in.

Montana Natural Heritage Program Funding

Website: <http://mtnhp.org>

Allan Cox has presented to this group before and appreciates the relationship developing with industry. At a previous meeting Allan presented on the services of the MNHP, so today's program will be in less detail. The MNHP recently hired a botanist, Andrea Pipp, who has 30+ years of experience. The MNHP is housed through the State Library, which contracts with The University of Montana. Because the program is housed at the university, they are able to leverage state funding with university funding and can also take on different projects and make the program stronger. The work of the MNHP is statutorily defined and they have to be compatible with what other states are doing and report to a national database. But, in order to fully fund the program they also take on other projects, resulting in less work/focus able to be done on the core mission. The MNHP has a funding proposal in the Governor's budget asking for a \$75,000 increase to account for inflation. That request will go into HB 2 and will be heard in the education subcommittee. It would be most helpful to have testimonies at that first hearing, which will most likely be in early Jan. It would be valuable to have a letter of support from this group and any others. Plum Creek has supplied letters in the past. Both Melissa and Julia can give testimony and support.

2015 Spring Logger Training

Keith provided a draft calendar for March-May 2015. Between now and the winter quarterly meeting, the schedule will be finalized, so contact Keith with any suggestions or revisions.

Member and Partner Updates

Plum Creek –Chain of custody audit in Dec. and next year have a full-blown lands audit to prepare for.

NW Management – Foresters Forum around the first week of Feb. Landowner conference in April. Participated as SFI auditor on 2 projects.

Willis – hosted an open house on Sept 12 – had a good turnout and expect that annually. Doing education and outreach. Also monitoring 2 harvest sites.

Stimson – a few meetings with foresters on new SFI revisions. As far as audits – inland fee lands for 2015.

Stoltze – Surveillance audits and others went fine.

Pyramid – Also had a surveillance audit – had an opportunity for improvement on labeling use but otherwise fine. Dylan went to the SFI national convention. Biodiversity was one of the larger discussion topics and what needs to be done to meet those standards. A lot of discussion on indigenous peoples and there is a lot of difference in those issues in Canada and the NW vs. this area.

UM Extension – also attend national SAF conference and Peter received an award. Met with new Director of SAF, who looking for input. Told him that SAF has to include private landowners and loggers and not just foresters. There is a new extension director and associate director. They are getting an overview of this program next year – but they don't have much forestry background and it's not on the radar. Many positions are not being filled within extension forestry. Legislative listening session for forested landowners – are there issues coming up that landowners need to weigh in on? If so, let Pete know. If not, this might be one of the first sessions in a while where there is not a landowner listening session. But, without a listening session, many new legislators are not familiar with the issues.

The Nature Conservancy (W. Montana) – Also passed SFI surveillance audit. Despite Glacier Loon lawsuit, TNC is still logging on lands in the Lolo, but need some clarification on that decision. Changing the maps in W MT. in Aug. to reflect the 27,000 acres sold to the FS. New project in the Clearwater Blackfoot, where TNC would acquire the rest of the Plum Creek acreage in that drainage - 117,000 acres. This one will be different than Legacy lands. There is more time to decide what to do with those lands, about a decade. Want to do different listening sessions and meetings. Won't close on the lands until Jan.

MLA – everyone is out working in the woods, dealing with the weather changes. During wood products week, went out with Sen. Walsh and talked about BMPs and he heard the concerns. Had a good day and he asked a lot of good questions.

Next meeting:

Wed., March 4

Topics for the Next meeting:

New SFI standards discussion