

Montana Forest Council Meeting
March 4, 2015 | 9a – 12p | Triple W

Attendance: Jim Kranz – *Plum Creek*, Julia Altemus – *Montana Wood Products Association*, Paul McKenzie – *F.H Stoltze*, Keith Olson – *Montana Logging Association*, Rich Lane – *Willis Enterprises*, Jim Birchfield – *The University of Montana*, Roger Ziesak - *DNRC*, Dylan Brown – *Pyramid Mountain Lumber*, Bruce Rowland - *Stimson*, Gary Ellingson – *NW Management*, Peter Kolb – *MSU Extension*.

Notes: Melissa Hayes, *Montana Wood Products Association*

Antitrust statement read

Approval of minutes from the Nov. meeting

Paul made a motion to approve; Gary seconded – minutes passed.

Wood Products Week – UM Lecture Update

Lorin Hicks from Plum Creek and Andrew Larson from U of M are working on this lecture series. Looked at various dates and decided to do it in the fall and tie in with Forest Products Week, which is Oct. 18-24. The lecture will be Friday of that week, October 23. Thought about focusing on certification, but the lecture has broadened to The Future of Wood, which will look at green building, wood energy, and new products and certification.

On a similar topic, the BANR Project, a partnership with Cool Planet Energy Systems will hold its conference here in Missoula on Oct. 14-16. Jim will share this with Lorin and Andrew to possibly tie these two opportunities together. That Thurs, there will be a field trip that will be open to the public.

SFI Update

As of Jan. 1, there are new revised SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules. It is available online at <http://www.sfiprogram.org/sfi-standard/guide-to-2015-2019-standards/> or you can order a hard copy for \$35. The document Major Enhancements to the SFI Standards highlights the difference between the old standard and the new standard. That document is available at:

<http://www.sfiprogram.org/files/pdf/major-enhancements-2015-2019/>

The rules are broken out into 3 main standards:

- **Forest Management Standard** – applies for forest lands that are owned under the program.
- **Fiber Sourcing Standard** – if you don't own land, but are procuring from other ownerships.
- **Chain of Custody Standard**

Other Changes to the Standard to note: Montana is in good shape and has been progressive enough that we have already addressed some of the changes.

- Guidance on training – concluded that the states can still create their own definition of training. In the old standard, talked about training but not continuing education. But, in Montana, we have implemented continuing education protocols for a long time. Now that the new standard requires that, we already meet that requirement. The % requirement for training asks for close to 100% of supply from trained loggers. There is some wiggle room in that standard, and the key will be demonstrating how we are trying to get as much wood from trained suppliers and possible and how we are trying to grow and improve that number. Would it be possible to explore the Forest Stewardship program qualifying under the SFI training standard, because it is also the same program that loggers go through? The standard is really focused on the logger

that did the work, but there could be an opportunity to bridge those programs. Also opportunities to connect University graduate students with these programs. Another issue that came up is reporting. Under the standard, if you are on your way to be trained, it can be counted as "trained" in terms of reporting requirements, but have to be able to explain that to your auditor and that would be handled at the participant level, not the state level.

- Another aspect of the new standard that is different from the old is the idea of risk assessment. As a participant, you want to put together an assessment and have a policy in place. Would it be helpful for Peter to write up a summary of forest succession in the Northern Rockies that a company could keep in case an auditor questions forest conversion? Peter will write a short 1-2 page summary and submit it to this group for review.
- Choice of whether you want to be audited under the old or new rules for this year. If you don't quite meet the new rules, the auditor will ID that as a transition and you will have until the end of the year to fix those issues. If you are under a recertification, you have to be under the new audit.
- Biological diversity is more present in the new standard. Trainings can strengthen that component. Companies can look at what is being done on your own lands, or how biodiversity is being promoted on procured land. Is information being given to suppliers and contractors.
- Under the new standard, you can also do non-timber forest products under your chain of custody such as mushrooms, boughs, etc.

2015 Logger Training

Keith passed out an updated calendar. You can find information at:

http://www.logging.org/mla_calendar/index.php. Bryan developed a new program on Shop Maintenance that will cover safety issues. John Manz has a millennial program that Gordy recommended and BBER also has a program that they are putting together – but curriculums are not yet finalized. Peter also had an idea about an applied forestry workshop. Stewardship program has been around for 25 years and a lot of landowners have questions about their big trees, so thought to approach the topic of thinning mature stands of trees. Advanced Tree Selection – thinning older stands and genetic considerations. Also the Congressional Timber Taskforce will take place on May 15 in Polson, in conjunction with the MLA Convention.

MLA database to keep track of training programs began in 1994. That database will be moved to a different server this summer and will make the database for more compatible with updated Microsoft programs. The Extension office also has to go through the process, so maybe some sharing of resources would be possible.

MFC Budget Summary

The materials packet contained an estimate of 2015-2015 Revenue as well as a layout of 2014 Actual Expenses to inform what expenses are expected in 2015.

Montana Natural Heritage Program Update

Last meeting, Allan was here to talk about the program and funding challenges. MFC was glad to support the program at the legislature. Jim wrote a letter to the committee of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee for Education and Julia testified in person in support, and brought multiple letters of support. The Library did not make the ask for additional funding and the \$75,000 did not get added to HB 2 budget bill. Sen. Hamlett put in a last minute ask that did not pass. Julia will continue to work on this in the second half of the session. If they don't get this money, then the Program is forced to take outside contracts that detract from the overall mission.

The Heritage Program developed a new web application called Species Snapshot. You can find it here: <http://mtnhp.org/speciessnapshot/>. It's a great resource for quick data.

Bat Study Update

Interest in setting up more acoustic monitoring stations, particularly on SFI ownerships. It would bring in more interest and opportunities for financial support as well as a broader range of data. Looking to get grant money for much of this program, but would ask landowners to help cover the cost of setting up the station. Hope to coordinate with the Montana Heritage Program. Will be looking for an SFI conservation grant, which is due in the fall. The additional acoustic stations need to be out in April or May to catch the bat activity. This project could also work toward the research component required by the SFI standard.

There is a waiver for the long-eared bat, which is taking public comment. They will probably still list the bat, but hopefully forest management activities will not be impacted.

Webinar & other technology ideas

Gordy was talking to Jim about making trainings available via a webinar format. Would be a benefit to the participants, but may not benefit the loggers. Someone may be in the field during a webinar, but if there was something that could be done at home on your own time, and then have a quiz at the end for accountability and participation. Looking at different available modules/programs would be a good start. There are also some topics that may be too difficult for a computer-based program. But, things like SFI Standards could be a good webinar topic. Also the time investment would be significant for creating any of these webinar programs. Extension forestry has also looked into moving to web-based trainings. You Tube is very helpful with training-style videos. Extension is now doing 5 You Tube videos that do not focus on a person talking, but actually show the information. For the purposes of ALPS, there could be a quiz that you download after the You Tube video, if you want credit for that course. It would be filled out, signed, dated and mailed in. That would also be beneficial to someone that is trying to maintain their training, but for whatever reason were unable to make a needed class. The one-on-one is key to these trainings, so that will not change, but there could be supplemental things that are done over computer trainings.

Other Tech Updates

- SFI is looking for stories to put on their Facebook page.
- SFI has created a template discussing SFI implementation committees – that can be customized for your individual committee. So, we can use that template or just update the tri-fold that already exists.

Member & Partner Updates

- **DNRC (Roger Ziesak) –**
 - Update of the **BMP book**. The completed book will be printed, about 1,000 copies. After those advanced copies are handed out, an RFP will be out for an additional 12,000 copies. That amount will last about a decade. The printing is being paid for through a grant received a few years ago. Goal to have those done prior to the May BMP workshops. Changed the booklet to be more about forestry BMPs than water quality. Julia has offered to put it on the MWPA website. Once the printer's proof is approved, Roger will send that to Julia to post.
 - Finished the **2014 BMP field reviews/audits**. The full report is being developed and should be available within the next week or two. Hard copies will not be produced, so it will only be available electronically. Until then, Roger has Executive Summaries available.
 - **HRA** – the state has only taken over one HRA, and maybe 2-3 within the last 12-18 months. Minor change is that on the application and contract will have a box for SMZ law responsibility. {Related: one of the SFI expectations is that the wood has been sourced consistent with the State's BMPs}. It is designed to get people to ask what an SMZ is, not to transfer responsibility or create a written notification. Roger will ensure that it does not. It is the responsibility of the landowner.
 - **SMZ Violations** – one violation that was found and the penalty was paid. The DNRC publishes an Annual report that deals with regulations, that include numbers of SMZ violations.
- **Stimson** – surveillance audit this July and going with new standard.
- **Stoltz** – is also going with the new standard.
- **Extension Forestry** – mini college went well. It happened 2 weeks ago and most people liked it in the winter. Peter is on the advisory board of HICOS out of Colorado State University. Peter got a grant to do chainsaw safety trainings – and it was a success. So, they would like to expand that arena, and is a potential source of funding for MLA training. They also cover a large area and WY and CO don't have anything like MLA, and were intrigued by that model. In East Texas there is not much training as well, but they are looking to increase that.
- **Pyramid** – also going with the new standard.
- **Willis** – recently mailed a letter and copy of the BMP/SMZ summaries to all companies that sold pulp logs to Willis with a thank you and encouragement to do training. There will be an open house in Sept. at the Bonner plant.
- **Gary Elligson** - Forest Landowner Conference in April – Things that Live in the Forest. You can find more information or register for the conference here: <http://www.consulting-foresters.com/?id=events>. Another workshop called Ties to the Land. Open to any forest landowner, rancher, property owner. Held it last year and was well-attended. Sponsored by the Forest Stewardship Foundation.
- **Plum Creek** – audits in Aug. & Dec. and will also be to the new standard.

SFI - SIC Report – due March 13.

Next Meeting: Wed., June 24.