

Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership
2015 Annual Report
Submitted by Chair Dick Moore

1. Significant Activities

Highlights:

*The MFRP concluded its partnership with the University of Minnesota in the development of the Great Lakes Silviculture Prescription Library. The project created an online platform where forest managers from Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario, and Wisconsin can exchange silviculture prescriptions. The project is ongoing, showcasing innovation and fostering adoption of practices that increase forest resilience and productivity.

* The MFRP has committed to keeping the recommendations of the 2014 Study of the Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry in focus in 2016 and beyond.

* The MFRP welcomed a new board member: The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association.

- a) MFRP completed the year in a particularly financially sound position, with a balance of over \$13,000 at year's end 2015.
- b) MFRP kept the study of the *Competitiveness of Minnesota's Forest Products Industry* 'off the shelf' by committing its April meeting to a first quarter report of implementation of the recommendations..
- c) A one-day retreat of the MFRP Executive Committee was held during which the MFRP mission statement was updated and the MFRP was committed to exploring the updating of the GEIS/addressing concerns of harvest levels.
- d) A new member was added to the MFRP Board of Directors: the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association.
- e) A grant request to the Weyerhaeuser Forest Foundation was prepared for expanding on the Workforce Development recommendation of the Competitiveness Study. The grant was not funded, but work began on implementing the recommendation with the cooperation of the Minnesota Logger Education Program and UPM Blandin.
- f) Nomination of the MFRP to the NE Loggers Association Forestry Service Award was made but not successful. The NELA encourage submission of a nomination of award in 2016.
- g) MFRP Executive Director met with a small group listening session with DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr, upon invitation of the Commissioner, to discuss current forestry concerns in the state.
- h) The MFRP was able to freeze assessments for 2016 at the 2015 level because of prudent budgeting and conservative expenditures during 2015.

2. MFRP hosted programs on a variety of forest ownership and management interests including:

Dan Stark, Wolf Biologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Wolf Recovery, Conservation, and Management in Minnesota

Tim Beyer, DNR Forest Certification Program Consultant: The Forest Certification Stew: What's going in, coming out, and how is it going to taste?

Anna Dirkswager, Biomass Consultant, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, provided an in-depth review of the newly formed, statewide, Minnesota Wood Energy Team. She explained available funding through the program and urged MFRP members to consider eligible applicants.

Eli Sagor, Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative Manager & Associate Extension Professor – U of M, Updates on the Silviculture Library and SFEC

Report of the Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry: First Quarter Report Card

SFIA: *Craig Halla /Dave Zumeta*

Bio-Energy: *Bud Stone*

Workforce Development: *Kathleen Preece/Heather Rand*

Environmental Review: *Dave Zumeta*

Timber Availability: *Kent Jacobson*

Transportation: *Ray Higgins/Dave Zumeta*

Cost of Energy: *Matt Radzak/Dave Zumeta*

Wayne Brandt, Minnesota Forest Industries, provided a review of the 2015 legislative session, noting that it had convened January 4 and adjourned May 18 with still unfinished business.

Craig Engwall, Executive Director of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, informed the MFRP board and its guests of the MDHA's membership (20,000 members and 62 chapters), and project activities, noting especially the Pineland Sands issue pertaining to purchase of Potlatch lands. These lands have some of the highest deer densities in the state.

Amber Ellering, Forest Analyst with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, provided an update on the northern long-eared bat and its listing as 'threatened' through the Endangered Species Act. She discussed the 4D ruling that allows for forest management exemptions. She noted that the ruling was not comprehensive for all activities but that it was a 'good start.'

Alan Ek, University of Minnesota, discussed findings of the LCCMR Rapid Forest Inventory Project, summarizing that it focused on how to make forest inventory more efficient.

• **Mike Schrage**, Wildlife Biologist- Fond du Lac Resource Management Division, presented: Restoring Omashkoozoog (Elk) to Eastern Minnesota

• **Rachel Peterson**, Executive Director, Minnesota Logger Education Program, presented: The Minnesota Logger Education Program: A Look Ahead

• **Meadow Kouffeld-Hansen**, Minnesota and Western Upper Peninsula Regional Biologist RGS and American Woodcock Society presented: Ruffed Grouse and Forest Management 2015-2016

• **Amanda Bilek**, Government Affairs Manager, Great Plains Institute, presented: Bio-economy Production Incentive Program and Eligibility of Forest Materials

• **Mark Jacobs**, Aitkin County Land Commissioner, presented: Long-eared Bat – What Preliminary Surveys Are Showing

3. Partnership Activities Requiring Future Efforts

• Carry forward the recommendations/opportunities of the 2014 recommendations of the Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry by serving as convener, catalyst, and recorder of steps toward that end.

* Continue enhanced efforts to submit grant applications in support of forest management.

* Explore the updating of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement with the intent to address issues of harvest levels and to contribute toward expansion of forest industry in Minnesota.

• Develop projects/plans in cooperation with Partners to carry forward the Workforce Development recommendations of the 2014 Competitiveness Study.