

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership –Steering Committee Meeting May 8, 2014, 0900-1200 by Conference Call.

Persons on call included: Amber Roth (Upper Great Lakes Young Forest Initiative), Jeremy Holtz (Chr., WDNR), Andrew Rothman (ABC), Dan Eklund (USFS), Kurt Waterstradt (USFWS), Pat Ruble (WMI), Eric Holmes (WI Co. For. Association), Gary Zimmer (RGS), Shawn Hagan (Forestland Group), Todd Pond (Louisiana-Pacific), Michael Stinebrink (NRCS), Greg Rebman (NRCS), and Adrian Wydeven (WDNR)

Minutes from the meeting held on April 10, 2014 in Wausau were approved.

A. WDNR Representative of Steering Committee.

Jeremy had been contacted by Carol Nielsen from WDNR Bureau of Forestry. They would like two reps on the steering committee, 1 private lands and 1 public lands. The group agreed this would work well, but WDNR will need to recognize in any voting, the agency would get only 1 vote.

B. Griffin Group website.

Amber discussed that a web page had been created for the WYFP. A few have already joined but Adrian & Dan had problems accessing the site. The site was down for one day, which may have been when they attempted access. Amber will send out an email with clear instructions on how to join and said to contact her if others have problems.

C. Discussion with WBCI Steering Committee

Amber met the steering committee of WBCI. Concerns expressed on guidelines being used for implementing young forest management including concerns about using a shotgun approach, lack of landscape-scale planning, and impacts on old growth. Amber explained the approach being used including use of focal areas, BMPS, etc.

Jeremy pointed out that we are using a targeted approach in appropriate townships and landscapes.

Amber indicated Kent Van Horn mentioned a report done 12 years ago on processes for forest management that would address WBCI concerns. He will try to locate the report for the group.

Discussion was held on ways to better explain and provide outreach on YFI, with emphasis on aspen and alder and not trying to convert types such as northern hardwoods, or any old growth forest.

D. Status of MOU

Kurt indicated that we seemed to be getting close on the MOU for the YFP. He has not heard from WWF. WDNR is still trying to get briefing with Land Division and Forestry Division. Bill Horvath will not represent WWOA and Kurt will follow up with Nancy Bozek to see who will represent them. Pat indicated he would start a draft news release on the partnership and distribute to steering committee. Gary Zimmer will release it though RGS but other partners are encouraged to do so too.

E. Young Forest Video

Jeremy discussed latest work on YF Video being funded by RGS and other funds. Shooting will be done by Matt Ahrens and Mary Farmiloe with DNR. Plans have changed a few times to get landowners when available and hope to include family members. Filming for video is planned for 6/20-6/22. It is expected to be done by 7/4. Scot Walter is heading up this effort for WDNR. A 16-minute video is planned. The intent is not to provide a lot of technical information, but general information to encourage landowners to consider young forest conservation. Filming will be done in NC WI from locations within about 1 hour from Rhinelander.

F. Status of DNR Landowner Mailings.

Jeremy discussed 5500 letters sent out to landowners in Price and adjacent counties in NC WI. So far ~ 550 landowners responded causing Jeremy to crash his email and voice mail. Jeremy discussed some of the dilemmas trying to deal with all of these responses. This has created great opportunities but difficulties trying to contact all of these people. Customer Services is helping him address these with email responses and call backs. Those with land eligible for forestry work are going to NRCS for EQUIP or local DNR foresters. Forestry may provide an LTE forester to assist with contacts and landowner visits. Forestry is very interested in trying engage new landowners.

Others indicated willingness to assist.

Kurt indicated FWS could assist with landowner contacts.

NRCS is handling some but takes about 2 hours each to apply for EQUIP and may require 6-10 hours each if involve landsite visits by wildlife biologist or forester.

Dan, Adrian, and Amber indicated willingness to assist in contacts and site visits.

Andrew indicated ABC forester at Duluth might be available for some site visits.

It apparently will require joint efforts by DNR wildlife biologists and foresters, LTE foresters, consultant foresters and others within the partnership to make contacts, identify viable projects, and get landowners lined up with appropriate programs until a Habitat Coordinator can be hired.

G. Update on ABC Hiring Habitat Specialist (Habitat Coordinator) and Funding Agreements

Andrew explained that ABC has been meeting with NRCS to discuss position. The group agreed to change title to "Habitat Coordinator". Developing plans for deliverables. ABC hoped to advertise by next week. ABC is working out details of deliverables with NRCS. ABC will need to fund raises for 20-22% of the match for the position.

Dan Eklund indicated FS is working on their agreement for funds to go to ABC. The grant is written broadly to simplify reporting process. FS funds can't be used as a match to NRCS.

H. Review PD for Habitat Coordinator

Andrew listed some of the things expected of the position;

- Be a coordinator

- Follow up with landowners
- Coordinated among programs and be very familiar with the NRCS tool kit
- Well trained in BMPs for GWW to be able to help foresters
- Be able to assist with plan writing

The 3rd draft of the PD is being sent around.

Kurt indicated the position should function as a Farm Biologist

I. Partnership metrics for measuring success.

Dan headed up a discussion on potential metrics to measure success of the YFP.

It was suggested that some combinations of acre goals and landowner contacts was suggested. Acreage goals could include areas directly treated such as shrub grinding, areas planned for timber harvest, and landowner acreage impacted.

Jeremy expects to contact ~ 400 contacts with tech assistance, get management with ~ 250-300, and expects > with MFL plans.

Andrew asked about including workshops, education efforts, outreach and biological monitoring as part of metrics.

Adrian & Andrew agreed to work on some potential metrics.

J. Grants and Funding Opportunities

Andrew reported that ABC was not asked to submit a full proposal from NFWF as our project was not in their area of focus for this round of funding.

Jeremy discussed Northwest Sands and Driftless Forest Network as groups to work with more closely.

Adrian talked about the Lake Superior Restoration Partnership that is providing funding to landowners in the Lake Superior watershed for habitat work for GWW, Kirtland's warbler, and sharp-tailed grouse.

Dan talked a little more about the Restoration Partnership being funded by NRCS and FS, with emphasis on forestry and water quality issue, but some funds for private land management of the focus species, indicating \$400K would be available over the next year.

Michael indicated NRCS would fund \$200K in FY 2014 and \$900K in FY 2015 in the Restoration Partnership.

Michael indicated that NRCS is still sorting out how much funding will be available through the new Farm Bill.

Greg Rebman announced he would retire on May 30, and Michael Stinebrink would be the NRCS rep to the Steering Committee.

Notes approved by Steering Committee on 16 June 2014.