

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership – Steering Committee Meeting  
April 10, 2014, Highway Patrol in Wausau, WI.

Meeting Minutes:

Amber Roth (Upper Great Lakes Young Forest Initiative) facilitated the meeting, and Jeremy Holtz (DNR) acted as chairperson until there was an opportunity for nominating and voting. Others attending included Dan Eklund (USFS-CNNF), Gary Zimmer (RGS), Kurt Waterstradt (USFWS), Tom Krapf (NRCS), Greg Rebman (NRCS), Pat Ruble (WMI), Adrian Wydeven (DNR), and Eric Holm (WI County Forest Association) by phone, and were joined at end of meeting by David Younkman (ABC).

The group agreed to nominate Jeremy as chair for the steering committee and was unanimously voted in by those attending.

**A. Discussion on draft “terms of reference”** (less formal version of bylaws) prepared by Jeremy Holtz.

Tom Krapf indicated that NRCS wants to serve as a technical representative on the steering committee but not as a voting member.

It was recommended that no agency or organization would have more than one vote in the steering committee. Although in general the hope is to avoid voting and strive for consensus.

The chair is intended to be an elected position to serve for 2 years. The committee selected Jeremy to serve as the chair and added Amber Roth and Dan Eklund as members of the executive committee for 1-year terms.

The partnership is not intended to belong to anyone entity. The partnership would not be able to acquire funds as an entity, but would advise on dispensation of funds. Entities within the partnership would be the recipients of grants and would hold for the partnership until advised on the dispensation of the funds.

Other aspects of the Terms of Reference were discussed, and the committee by consensus agreed to accept the terms with modification discussed at the meeting. The updated version of the terms is enclosed with these minutes.

**B. Discussion on Possible Subcommittees.**

Need for a personnel subcommittee was discussed for hiring a private lands coordinator. The committee agreed to a title of “Habitat Specialist for the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership”. Jeremy will be sending out 6000 letters to landowners with potential young forest products and will need a person in place soon. The subcommittee would prepare a PD for the habitat specialist, recruit, and hire the person, as well as making sure adequate funding was in place.

### **C. Discussion was held on funding and work needs.**

Tom Krapf said we should be prepared to submit a proposal for the next NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) RFP which would provide funds to increase cost-share funding for young forest habitat practices. However, it would not provide funds for the Habitat Specialist position.

Pat asked about LCC and availability of funds for our interests. Dan mentioned that LCC has a large pot of money that he is encouraging the LCC to direct toward conservation implementation and not just research.

Amber mentioned requesting funding through LCC for the recent RFP. The proposed project will use LIDAR to identify ESH given that FIA is restricted to areas defined as forestland. The hope is to identify a better tool and procedure for mapping ESH and tracking habitat implementation successes.

Jeremy indicated that he expects to be hearing from 250 to 300 new landowners in the near future, and has funds through May through ABC for consulting foresters, and has \$4K beyond that, but expects greater needs for foresters in the near future. The smaller funding offers from WCFA, WMI, and RGS (\$2-3K each) could be used to pay consulting foresters if the ABC funds run out.

Dan pointed out that others in the partnership may need to assist on site visits in the near future.

Tom discussed the \$75K of EQIP that they plan to spend in Northern Wisconsin on forest habitat. Greg indicated they can spend funds under 3 situations 1) Forest Stewardships, 2) MFL, and 3) Wildlife Habitat Plans recommended by wildlife biologists for management not involving timber harvests. The Wildlife Habitat Plans should include 1) current habitat conditions, 2) current habitat needs and concerns, and 3) a proposal for the work needed to improve habitat quantity and quality and the desired outcome. Training will be provided for biologists and foresters later in spring.

Cost of habitat work was discussed and potential acres that could be impacted. Several potential contractors were discussed in reference to brush management and appeared that generally run at \$300/acre. This will result in approximately 250 acres treated.

### **D. Discussion on where to place habitat specialist**

Discussion was held on advantages of using RC&D at their office in Rhinelander versus having the position through ABC and at NRCS office in Rhinelander. After much weighing of strengths and weaknesses of organizations, the committee agreed to go with ABC position placed in NRCS office in Rhinelander. The committee will request of ABC to send a letter to State Conservationist Jimmy Bramblett with NRCS to offer a

partnership position, request office space, request computer use & network access, and request vehicle usage at the Rhinelander office.

David Younkman with ABC joined the meeting in the afternoon by phone because Andrew Rothman was unable to attend. David indicated continued commitment by ABC to the YF conservation efforts and to providing a position to work out of the NRCS office in WI and to assist the YFP in the state. David said ABC would post the position and interview candidates with help from others in the partnership.

#### **E. Discussion on PD and hiring of Habitat Specialist**

The Habitat Specialists skills along with general natural resource background would include people and organizational skills.

The Habitat Specialist is expected to be supervised on a day to day basis by Jeremy Holtz and Michael Stinebrink, but broadly through ABC where he/she would send time sheets.

Jeremy will contact ABC on how they want to handle the interview and assume it would be a mix of ABC staff and members of the partnership. Jeremy, Dan and Kurt offered to assist with interviews. It was decided that the interview committee should not be too large as it would intimidate the applicants. It was recommended that the committee be limited to three people; Andrew, Jeremy, and Michael would make the most sense.

#### **F. Discussion of metrics/ goals on effectiveness of YF conservation**

Jeremy suggested landowner contacts; currently has contacts across 17 counties.

Dan suggested Year 2 and Year 2 goals, by acres treated, timber harvest/openings work/brush shearing

Gary could include workshops and public presentations by Habitat Coordinator

More discussion on metrics will be planned for next meeting.

#### **G. MOU Discussion.**

Deadline to finalize the MOU is May1.

Adrian will work with DNR to move through administration and legal.

Eric will talk to Jane Severt to see if County Forest Administration is satisfied with the MOU.

Gary Zimmer will talk to Nancy Bozek with WWOA to see if they are satisfied with their role in the MOU.

## **H. Other Items and Next Meeting.**

Amber reported 3 new members to the partnership including:

Ryan Brady of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI)

Todd Pond of Louisiana Pacific (Tomahawk office)

Shawn Hagan of Forestland Group (TIMO; largest private landowner in Northern WI)

Once the MOU is finalized a news release on the partnership will be prepared by Jeremy Holtz, with DNR media folks.

The next meeting will be held in 3-4 weeks, but might be by conference call. A date will be finalized after partner members are polled through Doodle. Items for agenda will include,

- PD for Habitat Specialist
- Partnership metrics
- Logo
- Next funding cycles (RCPP and others)