

## **MFC**

**February 24, 2016**

**Attendance:** Dylan Brown/Gordy Sanders – Pyramid Mountain Lumber, Paul McKenzie – FH Stoltze Land & Lumber, Peter Kolb – MSU Extension Forestry, Bruce Rowland – Stimson Lumber, Roger Ziesak – DNRC Forestry Division, Bryan Lorengo – MLA, Gary Ellingson – Northwest Management, Chris Childers – Ponderay Newsprint Company, Allen Chrisman – Montana Tree Farm

**Guest:** Nate Schwab – Tetra Tech

**Administrator:** Julia Altemus

**Chairman Welcome:** Dylan Brown

**Anti-Trust Statement:** Dylan referred to the anti-trust statement in the packet.

**November 10, 2015 Minutes:** Approved as presented

**Bat Study Update/Grant Application:** Nate Schwab, a grant application went to SFI last year, but in the end, the request was not funded. He may put in a request this year, but not sure yet. Nate passed around a copy of the request and information about the projects that were funded. Peter noticed that many of the projects that were funded had university participation. Peter suggested that if they do put in a request again to partner with his program. Nate replied that offer was a great idea. Paul wanted to know how the grant denial would affect their program. Nate said they are okay for another year. Paul suggested a continued conversation regarding how to keep the study going. The study is showing that bats are not necessarily using trees for hibernation, but are using rocky outcroppings. Have almost 100 days of roosting data off of Plum Creek lands. Wrapping up monitoring in May and will produce a report that will be available in August. No one else is collecting information for managed forests. They will be sharing results with the Montana Natural Heritage Program. All the collected data is useful for management applications. Final **4(d) ruling** was released last week. The USFWS listed the NLEB as threatened with the interim 4(d) rule on April 2, 2015. The Service issued a final 4(d) rule January 14, 2016 and became effective February 16, 2016. Proposed take prohibited, incidental take not prohibited outside WNS zone (150 mile buffer). Within the WNS zone – no alteration of hibernacula, no tree removal within .25 mile of hibernacula entrance, no removal of known maternity roosts during maternity period (June 1 – July 31). Four groups have filed a notice of intent to sue that the USFWS didn't take enough measures to protect the bat. WNS only affects hibernating bats. Does not affect migratory bats. Montana has 3 bat species that are hibernating bats.

**Spring 2016 Logger Training:** In addition to the training program that was approved last meeting, there is a MLA Trucking Workshop in Kalispell scheduled for

March 25, Deer Lodge April 1 and Big Timber April 12. The 1<sup>st</sup> Aid/CPR class in Sanders County has been dropped. Bruce relayed that David Brummer is the co-chair of the Washington SIC and the chair wants to revise their logging training MOU and will be contacting MT about potentially changing the MOU. Bruce and David did not believe that Idaho and Montana would be favorable to the change, but be aware the inquiry is forthcoming.

**2016 Forestry Mini-College:** Peter Kolb, the Forestry Mini College is February 27. They have 102 people signed up to date. 90% have signed up online. Spring offering draws more people than the fall.

**2016 Spring SIC Regional Meeting:** May 5<sup>th</sup> is scheduled in Seattle. A notice will be going out soon. The annual conference is at Clearwater Beach Florida on September 27 – 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Member and Partner Updates:**

- Peter Kolb, MSU is business as usual. He is pretty busy because of two biofuels grants. Biofuels is a non-starter because it doesn't pay for itself until gas is at \$4.00 per gallon. The NARA project ends in the next couple of months and the Cool Planet, grant to study biofuels, decided to put their effort into bio-char. With regard to U of M, there are several proposals to shut down or sell the Bandy Ranch and Lubrecht except for the logging. The committee is suggesting that the Bandy Ranch not be sold or shut down. They are going to go ahead and do some logging this year even though they didn't get a Forests in Focus grant. Lubrecht does make money and will cost more to shut it down than to keep it running. Peter is suggesting an Advisory Board to oversee the management of facility. These recommendations will go on to Provost Perry Brown and he will have to decide their fate. There is a dean search under way, hope to have the new person on board soon. If we think Lubrecht and Bandy are valuable we need to let the interim dean know. Peter is offering a Forest Stewardship workshop this summer. He is working on finalizing the newsletter/calendar. On behalf of the MFOA, Mike Christiansen is the new chairman. MFOA has a new website up and working with Tree Farm, MLA and MWPA on the Forestry Forum for legislators on December 6 at the Colonial Inn in Helena.
- Allen Chrisman – MT Tree Farm, is the incoming chair in January of 2017. Update on certification, Montana TF decided to remain certified and signed a MOU with the National TF program in January of 2016. They will begin to be assessed \$10 per Tree Farmer beginning 2019 to offset the costs. National TF will be assessed by Pricewaterhouse Coopers in 2017. The 2015 Tree Farmer of the Year was Dick Fichtler of the Bitterroot. They sent four steering committee members to the National Leadership Conference in Seattle February 10-12. They are putting together a proposal for membership dues to present to the steering committee in March. Allen would like to know what Montana's timber industry and MFC needs from MT

TF to continue forward our good relationship. Angela Mallon is working on a MOU with the DNRC and MT Tree Farm to maintain the database. Tree Farm is looking to offset about \$4-5,000 annually starting in 2017. Paul said one of the simple things to bridge the gap would be a letter from MT Tree Farm indicating who is a certified tree farmer which has tremendous benefit to SFI mills in MT. Currently there is no readily available proof that can be offered from a Tree Farmer to a SFI company. An SFI member must pay an annual fee of \$500 in order to query the national data base.

- Chris Childers – Ponderay Newsprint, had an audit last year under the new Standards. It went well.
- Gary Ellingson – Northwest Management, landowner training April 15-16 in Helena. Information is coming out soon. Also a “Ties to the Land” workshop in Helena in April. Company is expanding and hiring new staff.
- Bruce Rowland – Stimson Lumber, preparing for 2015 annual report. Will have a surveillance audit on western operations this summer. Halfway through fire salvage operations. They had about 11,000 acres that were affected by the fire. Markets have been tough.
- Paul McKenzie – FH Stoltze Land & Lumber, got through an audit last fall and working on the 2015 report. They have a new forester. They closed their conservation easement outside the city of Whitefish that will be set aside for timber management in the future.
- Gordy Sanders – Pyramid Mountain Lumber, working on filing annual report for 2015. They will have a full audit this year under the new Standards probably in the fall. They will need to hire a new forester.
- Roger Ziesak – DNRC, this is audit year. The general schedule is to compile audits site information by the end of April. The teams will have a calibration day in June and then the sites will be announced. Plan to have audits wrapped up by mid-August. Roger will compile an executive summary and a full report by late fall. Report has to go to the EQC early November and will go to each legislator for the new session. HRA: FY 2012 had 1407 active sales, 2013 - 1144, 2014 - 1568, 2015 - 1615. Takeovers for failure to treat slash are for FY 2012 - 14, 2013 - 10, 2014 - 0, 2015 - 4. Last 4 months of 2016 have taken over 4. Even in bad markets, there are a very small percentage of takeovers compared to active sales. People are following through on their commitment to remove the slash and complete the sale. Have no pending SMZ violations in FY 2016. Gordy would like to see data back 15 years. Roger said he would provide.

**Other:** Dylan is leaving Pyramid, so he will be stepping down as MFC chair as well. Gordy offered to serve as interim until a permanent chair steps forward.

**Next Meeting:** Gordy will work with Julia on a date in June.