

**MACD State Council Meeting
February 23 & 24, 2017**

Treetops Resort

**Minutes
APPROVED**

Thursday, February 23rd

State Council Meeting Welcome

Art Pelon, MACD President called the meeting to order at 1:10pm. Pelon welcomed all to the meeting, including guests. State Council members present: Art Pelon, Jerry Miller, Howard Haulotte, Jack Herrick, Paul Schroeder, Chris Coda, Elaine Brown, John Mitchell, and Nancy Szikszay.

Approvals

State Council Agenda – additions/corrections Pelon

Motion by Miller, second by Schroeder to accept the agenda as written. AYES-CARRIED.

Consent Calendar Pelon

Motion by Haulotte, second by Mitchell to accept the consent calendar. AYES-CARRIED.

District Presentation Alpena/Montmorency CD

Aprille Williamson, Emily Sewell, and Kenny Parsons presented on the programs of the Alpena and Montmorency Conservation Districts.

Partner Reports

MDARD Johnson

Regional coordinators (RCs) provide quarterly visits to districts in their region. These meetings provide coaching to staff and board members along with a review of activities. MDARD-ESD management has created an evaluation form that scores elements of a successful conservation district. Initiated in FY16, ESD management tabulates a total regional score for use in the evaluation of RC performance.

State Council suggestions/questions:

- Who created the scoring numbers?
- Sectioning the evaluation into sub categories and sub scores, from a management point of view. (Categories of management, local community support, etc. support as dues paying member to MACD)
- Add a unique skills category, to document the unique skills and activities of the district. Challenge is to quantify what is important – such as local relationships.
- Training of elected directors – and points associated with it.

Johnson has completed the forms for the last two quarters. Feedback from CDs – some are upset because they do not are scoring well enough. Erik will take back our suggestions to MDARD management.

Other MDARD Business:

- Interviews for Shine's position are scheduled for March 1st, with five candidates selected.
- Currently have a district with an Open Meetings Act lawsuit in process.
- A southern district has encountered bad publicity over a timber cut, with an additional northern district also experiencing timber cut challenges.

Committees/Projects/Programs

Finance Committee Phalen/Committee Members

Financials: Phalen overviewed financial documents and budget amendments

Motion by Mitchell, support by Schroeder to amend the budget as noted. AYES-CARRIED.

FY16 Financial Audit: Currently in process. Phalen expects that the audit will be completed by the June State Council meeting.

Development Committee Miller

Events Management Contract. Miller provided an overview of the Keystone Solutions contract and requested the support of the Council. The goal of this contract is to free up staff time and to increase sponsorship revenue.

Motion by Mitchell, support by Schroeder to accept the contract as presented.

Comments: Szikszay noted to be careful, add-ons can easily occur. Schroeder agreed to a one year contract, allows for re-evaluation by the board after the initial contract term.

Pelon called for a vote – AYES-CARRIED.

FY17 Action Plan: The Development Committee does not currently have a chair. Phalen asked who else should be involved on this committee. Current members: Schroeder, Miller, Sandusky, Eldridge, and Phalen. Schroeder has talked with Jeff Auch about getting back involved and will further inquire with Auch about participation on this committee.

White Paper Committee Brown

Brown overviewed the final draft of the White Paper. The document is framed around the Water Strategy, with conservation districts moving the strategy forward. MDARD is listed for administration (measurements), with leadership held locally with directors and managers.

To receive funding, CDs must provide one or more of the following in alignment with the goals of the Water Strategy:

- new or enhanced programs for soil conservation and nutrient loss prevention, aligning to the goal: ensure safe drinking water and assure reduction in sediment and nutrient loading to Michigan's waters,
- improved forest management education and assistance, aligning to the goal: ensure safe drinking water and assure reduction in sediment and nutrient loading to Michigan's waters,
- reduced invasive species impacts including inland lakes impacts, aligning to goal: prevent introduction of new invasive species and control established populations, and
- programs that offer benefits such as avoided costs, and savings to landowners.

Brown asked the Council for approval in this change in concept.

Haulotte moved, support by Schroeder to approve the White Paper as written. AYES-CARRIED.

Professional Legislative Assistance: Phalen shared the Michigan Association of Counties Service Corporation proposal for legislative assistance, with an annual cost of \$24,000. Phalen noted that she has talked with MACSC and they are re-evaluating to provide support for just the funding proposal to bring down the cost.

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Meeting Recess _____ Pelon

Pelon called for meeting recess at 5:15pm

Friday, February 24th

Reconvene Meeting _____ Pelon

Pelon reconvened the meeting at 8:28 AM, welcoming guests, Diane Gray, NRCS and Ben Schram, MDARD.

Committees/Projects/Programs, continued

White Paper Committee _____ Brown

Pelon suggested the following to move forward the effort: Scheduling meetings with MFB, Office of the Great Lakes (OGL), NRCS, MDNR, and MDARD to share the White Paper and obtain their input and ask for their support.

Timeline:

- Meetings completed by March 24
- Special conference call meeting of State Council end of March
- Send out final White Paper with background document districts end of March
- Request for financial support by first of April

Commodity Groups are also important and will be brought into the process. Schram suggested Todd Johnson, Ogemaw CD Board member, Weyerhaeuser employee and President of MI Forest Products Council, Michigan Forest Association and Michigan Consulting Foresters Association.

Professional Legislative Assistance:

Schroeder suggested that we provide districts an overview of our funding goals and the process to achieve those goals, along with a request to bolster their dues support to allow MACD to engage in this contract. Szikszay suggested that we commit to a 9 month contract with a possibility of extending it when funds become available through our fundraising effort(s).

Howard motioned to support the full effort as negotiated by Phalen, support by Mitchell. AYES-CARRIED.

Pelon asked for a motion for the White Paper Committee to write a letter to CDs to support the MACSC lobby activities.

Discussion – Need to share the White Paper to garner their support. Need to define a time line.

Szikszay motioned, supported by Schroeder to send a letter to members requesting an additional \$200 in dues support at the time needed.

Discussion: Do not want to cap dollar level, do a nice ask and not specify the amount.

Friendly amendment – allow the Executive Committee the flexibly to determine wording – removing the dollar amount of \$200. AYES-CARRIED.

Brown asked to set a date and time for a conference call to discuss feedback from partners with State Council members.

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Haulotte motioned, second by Brown to have a council conference call at 3:00pm on March 30 to discuss White Paper status and next steps. AYES-CARRIED

Meeting with Partners:

Pelon would like the White Paper Committee involved in meetings with our partners. These people are the ones that need to explain it. Szikszay suggested that a MFB member should be in the room with MFB discussion. Nancy and Paul are members and willing to be present. Phalen to arrange an afternoon meeting with MFB and keep both apprised.

First Tier of Conversations:

- John Allen – Brown
- DNR – Pelon
- NRCS – Phalen

Second Tier of Conversations:

- MFB – Phalen
- MDARD – Phalen

Title of Proposal:

The Council approved by consensus on "Michigan Clean Water Initiative" as the title of the funding proposal.

Governance Committee Miller

- MACD Bylaws are in good shape, with a few edits needed to update district list and update on officer terms (resolution to end term limits).

Phalen noted that the endowment fund language should be updated. She is working on finding endowment fund best practices for non-profits that the Council can move forward on through a resolution process to update the bylaws. Mitchell will ask his community foundation on advice on parameters for an endowment fund. Phalen to collect advice and bring to the committee to frame a bylaw resolution.

- MACD Policies – 39 sections to the policy book. Discussion: some policies need to be updated, some consolidated. How to move forward? Miller suggested having a group review the book and select specific resolutions to address at the FY17 annual meeting.
- Annual Meeting Resolution Timeline. Section 11.2 – no changes needed. Miller noted that most are internal, with none of national significance. Miller noted that there were a few NACD national resolutions that were not approved at the committee level, including having NACD to work with NRCS on T-values. He would like this to be brought forward at MACD Annual to move it up through to the federal level, along with other resolutions related to CRP, etc. Miller to work with neighboring CDs to bring forward resolutions to address at MACD 2017 Annual Meeting.
- Officer Elections. Next officer election will take place at the 2017 meeting. The elections committee will need to be established to address. Nominations from the field have to be supported by three districts - 120 days prior to the annual meeting. Nominations from the elections committee do not need to be supported by three districts.

Requested of State Council members to provide names to Pelon for further discussion and selection at the June meeting.

MACD Training Program Phalen

- Summer Conference Planning is underway. Requested of the Council their preference for State Council meeting time frame. Council determined that the meeting be held on Sunday, with an open discussion and partner reports on Monday.

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- Director Training. Phalen provided an update – two new director/staff training sessions targeted for July.
- District Manager Retreat – Targeted for August.

Forestry Assistance Program Presentation Schram

Schram distributed copies of the FY2016 report. Presentation highlights:

- The private forestlands initiative covers both the QFP and FAP programs. 20 foresters covering 50 counties.
- \$9.8M in economic activity generated (referrals to private sector includes more than boards and cords). The challenge is to show decision makers all the tangible benefits of the program.
- Foresters also work to enroll properties in QFP. QFP fees paid to the private lands forest fund. This fund pays for FAP foresters, program staff, and QFP staff. Very important to get acres enrolled.

Two big program challenges:

1. Enrolling lands in QFP: Cap for QFP at 1.2 million acres. (The program obtains about .90 cents per acre enrolled). When capped, this will provide about \$1 million in funding. The program needs 2.4 million acres to fully pay for the program.

Current enrollment: Since transfer to MDARD, a steady increase in acreage. Just over 90,000 acres when it transferred. Now sits at around 330,000 acres.

Did see a drop in enrollment in FY16. Why? Not enough capacity in the private sector to keep up with the demand in plan writing. In some areas they are a year out in plan writing. Other bottle necks: financial assistance opportunities available to help in writing the plans: the Forest Stewardship Program and EQIP. FSP is fairly easy, EQIP is more involved.

2. FAP forester turnover. Salary and benefits are limited. Many forestry jobs available and with limits in salary and benefits it is hard to compete. Schram talks to foresters who are leaving to learn why: They love the job, but did not see room for growth. Some want to practice more field forestry that is available through FAP positions.

MDARD is working on the following to address the challenges:

- Relationships with the private sector are at an all-time high.
- New data collection tool to incorporate an online GIS mapping system. Allows for consistent record keeping across changes in staff, better documentation of work to showcase and tell the story at the state level and through local CDs.
 - Currently holding training with foresters.
 - DNR has been instrumental in creating this tool for FAP. System is a DNR system.
 - Data collected is not being drawn into the MAEAP database.
 - Schram working on the privacy parameters for this tool
 - Foresters will populate database with historical details of activities with landowners.
- Forester Training – providing quality training. Have established a training group within the FAP program to provide quality continuing education and new forestry orientation.

State Council Discussion:

What activities are underway to connect with absentee landowners?

- Wexford sending letters to landowners with zip codes outside of the counties
- Promoting FAP through outdoor shows, logging conference, small farms conference

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- USFS – survey: National Woodland Owner survey – to determine trends, etc. Michigan forestry partners are working together to pay for USFS to intensify survey efforts in MI. Will be adding state specific information to better tease out Michigan data.

Are there efforts to connect with loggers?

Michigan Association of Timberman is the main organization supporting loggers. FAP works to engage them at association level. Great Lakes Timber Producers Association is the other organization. Many in Lower Peninsula are not engaged in state organizations. Each district has to assemble a local advisory committee to help guide local programs. These committees include loggers. Schram wants foresters to use their committees to help in outreach. The more involved they are the better and more supportive they are of the program.

What can districts do that we are not doing?

Landowners do not know about the tax incentives available through QFP. QFP is a great legacy/estate planning tool. Keeping the taxable value capped upon transfer of ownership.

Where to direct someone who is interested?

Direct them to MDARD's QFP Office. Staff is great at talking with landowners to determine if the program is a good fit.

Partner Reports

NRCS

Diane Gray

Gray provided a comprehensive report of cost share program activities including EQIP, RCPP and CSP funding cycles and cutoff dates.

USDA is currently under a hiring freeze for new permanent, term and contract positions. No new hires until further direction from OPM. Freeze does not include pathways internship program. 39 current vacancies currently in MI. Freeze is due to an Executive Order.

Grand River RCPP proposal was approved in December, to be signed in July and begin implementation FY18. This is a five year project.

MDARD

Ben Schram for Kip Miller

- Conservation Programs Manager position, currently have 5 applicants selected for interviews.
- Miller is working with Albert Jones on two Phosphorus Initiative positions in WLEB that will be expiring during the summer months.
- Wayne Whitman is retiring from Right to Farm program and Kristin Esch is also leaving to take another position. RCs will cover the program workload during the transition to new staff.
- Safe Food Technicians have been hired in the Van Buren, Genesee, Grand Traverse, and Newaygo Conservation Districts.
- Sanilac and St. Clair are merging – public hearing March 22. Will be maintaining two offices.

Meeting Close

Pelon

Pelon called the meeting adjourned at 11:45am.