

Young Forest Partnership meeting 2/20/14.

This meeting was held by conference call, because a severe snow storm was hitting portions of Wisconsin.

Amber Roth facilitated the meeting with help from Dan Eklund (USFS), Jeremy Holtz (WDNR), and Adrian Wydeven (WDNR). Adrian also kept notes/minutes on the meeting.

Amber discussed the purpose of the meeting, which included discussing where we are, and determine gaps we need to fill. We want to get more details and specific list of resources available.

Three new people on the call today included:

Matt Dahlman with Nature Conservancy

Alex Wrobel from Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission

Joe Weiss from Wisconsin Conservation Congress (Washburn Co. delegate)

Michael Stinebrink announced that NRCS has \$15,000 - \$20,000 available for a match to start a position for a coordinator. It will need a match from a partner, with nonfederal money. Greg Rebman with NRCS said this could be like partnership positions with Pheasants Forever (PF), and similar to a Farm Bill Biologist position.

Doug Fendry said PF might be able to do part of the match. Discussion followed on how much money would be needed to support a conservation coordinator. Jeff Larkin indicated that with travel support, office supplies, & all benefits would be ~ \$55,000- \$60,000. The hope was to hire someone with some level of experience. It was generally agreed we should target for a least \$50,000 for the position.

Adrian P. Wydeven with WDNR indicated they will coordinate YFI work throughout the state; with assistance from Jeremy Holtz in northcentral Wisconsin; Scott Walter on upland bird concerns; Bob Nack for coordinating with DMAP program; Brad Hutnik for addressing forestry issues; Drew Feldkirchner for addressing concerns on endangered, threatened and Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and wildlife biologists across the state. DNR is exploring the possibility of hiring a Limited Term Employee (LTE) to act as a conservation coordinator to contact and track all landowners that cooperate in the YFI. Such a position could go in a DNR office in Northern Wisconsin with phone, office, and computer facilities, but may also consider having this person in an office of a coordinator such as NRCS. WDNR will assist in writing for grants to secure funds, track any grants received, and write up accomplishment reports for any grants used. WDNR is working on producing a video promoting YFI on private land and will also produce news releases, newsletter articles, and magazine articles promoting young forest conservation.

Bob Nack discussed the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) that he will coordinate. This will be the initial roll out year for the program which could involve both private and public lands. Deer will be used as a hook to encourage landowners to

manage their land broadly for wildlife. In the first year he hopes to get one contractor per county in the state, using DNR wildlife biologists who will write plans for landowners. Bob is requesting to fund up to 7 positions at ~ \$35,000 each in the future to assist the program.

Brad Hutnik discussed some forestry concerns, suggested using concept of YF in desired future conditions of landscapes. We should strive at better age class distribution and balance forest types. He indicated there is a lot of opportunity to work with partners including oak management in SW WI. It will be important to set targets that can be communicated with foresters working on private and public lands across the state. Foresters are doing a lot of this work already but need more information on targets and goals.

Discussion occurred on the need of coordinator vs foresters and wildlife biologists. Most agreed that a coordinator who kept track of all landowners and coordinated between landowners, and foresters or biologists.

Emily the coordinator for Pennsylvania came on to discuss her role. She is the initial contact for landowners and tracks each one through the process. She sets landowners up with the foresters or biologists. She talked about the team concept used in PA.

Doug Fendry discussed current PF efforts on private land management. Currently PF has 4 partnership positions in WI working with NRCS. Positions are currently in Appleton, Eau Claire, Portage, and Dodgeville. PF is looking to create chapters in Merrill, Wausau, Shawano, Amery, Menomonie, River Falls, and Eau Claire.

Kurt Waterstradt discussed the Partners program in USFWS. For this year they plan to have \$10,000 to \$15,000 for projects. In the past they have worked with RGS and individual partners.

Dan Eklund with USFS indicated the FS Stewardship Program will have \$10,000 for project off the National Forest but close to the boundaries to complement landscape management on National Forest lands.

Jeff Larkin with American Bird Conservancy (ABC, Andrew Rothman will be regular rep for ABC). The ABC has several partnerships including projects in MD, PA and MN, and could add WI as a cooperator. ABC can help in grant writing, coordination, and generation of funds. ABC won't take over the show but willing to get hands dirty.

Gary Zimmer of Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) indicated that they have put over \$1 Million into forest management. The Drummer funds in 2014 is supporting \$62,000 in projects for which they need 3/1 matching funds. This year they are generating 16 projects with DNR for 100s acres, many for machine shrub management in alder. RGS has been involved in young forest management for over 25 years. Gary mentioned that a sister organization, the Woodcock Society was formed last week to address woodcock concerns in portion of US south of ruffed grouse range.

Rick Horton of National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) indicated they have many chapters across the state. Focal landscapes in WI and UP MI are brood habitat, wildlife openings, and winter foods. Aspen regeneration is less of a focus but will support efforts. NWTF is especially interested in working in SW WI.

Eric Holmes of the WI County Forest Association (WCFA) indicated that counties don't have funds to donate, but can develop demo areas, and have worked with Jeremy Holtz and Chuck McCullough developing these. Eric indicated he can communicate through WCFA to encourage YF management on county forest lands. Counties are also cooperating with alder management with assistance from RGS. Jeremy Holtz pointed out that counties can provide in kind services with significant acreage. Aspen sales on county lands have been used as match for ABC grants.

Joe Weiss, WCC, explained the role of WCC as a citizen body who advises the WI NRB on wildlife, fish, and natural resources issues. Each county had 5 representatives that are voted in by county residents and represent people's concerns on rules and regulation affecting wildlife. WCC is involved in outreach and education on wildlife issues and can help promote young forest management. Joe pointed out that the Coverts project funded by RGS and taught through UW-Ext. was especially good at promoting sound forest management for wildlife. We may want to invite Jamie Nack to participate in YFP.

Amber and Kurt discussed the draft MOU. All were urged to send Kurt their organization's input for the MOU. Kurt will develop a draft for the group.

Amber discussed plans for developing a steering committee. She asked all groups to submit names of their representatives. The initial meeting should be held soon and will include discussion of structure for the steering committee. She asked folks to start thinking on developing a strategic vision for the overall YFP. The full group will try to meet later in March and the Steering Committee will meet shortly thereafter.

All were asked to look over MOU and submit recommendations to Kurt, and think about where we might find \$30,000 to match NRCS.