

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP) Meeting at CNNF Headquarters in Park Falls, March 18, 2014.

A meeting was held on the WYFP between 10:00am and 3:00pm, at the Forest Service Headquarters in Park Falls. The meeting was facilitated by Amber Roth (Upper Great Lakes Young Forest Initiative). Others in attendance were Gary Zimmer (RGS), Dan Eklund (USFS), Jeremy Holtz (DNR), Eric Holms (CFA), Michael Stinebrink (NRCS), Mark Krupinski (NRCS), and Adrian Wydeven (DNR). Others attending by phone included George Meyer (WWF), Renae Poole (Indiana Univ. PA), Andrew Rothman (ABC), Joe Weiss (WCC), Gary VanVreede (USFWS), and Doug Fendry (PF).

George Meyer indicated that the YFP fit well into the mission of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF). In future meetings George expects Jerry Knuth chair of the Forest, Parks and Recreation Committee to be the rep for WWF.

Discussion was held on a private lands project coordinator for the YFP, and where to house the person.

Michael Stinebrink indicated NRCS in Rhinelander has space available. Jeremy Holtz said the NRCS office would be handy for him to work closely with the coordinator.

Amber Roth was exploring the hiring through Michigan Tech and Lumber Jack RC&D (<http://www.lumberjackrcd.org/>). She had gotten glowing recommendations on the RC&D, and it could provide better benefits than Michigan Tech. With \$50K, the job could be offered at \$39,800 per year. Plans would be to start with a 1 year contract.

Discussion was held on funding by agencies and different fiscal cycles. For Gary Zimmer, RGS start on Jan. 1 of each year, and would not have as much to donate now as might be available next year. Dan Eklund indicated he would get his FS budget next week for FY15. Mike Stinebrink indicated NRCS would have encumbered by end of September. Dan discussed how the "color" of funding varies by agencies and the need to work out the dynamics among agencies.

Amber Roth indicated she had received a letter by Jimmy Bramblett State Conservationist of USDA committing to \$15-\$20 support for YFP, and availability of office space at the Rhinelander office.

Andrew Roth indicated ABC was also interested in hiring the coordinator, and would be interested in having the position with ABC. At \$50K, ABC could provide a competitive benefit package as it has done with positions for foresters in MN and coordinator in PA. Andrew agreed to send information to Amber Roth, so that we could compare options.

Andrew suggested the position should be for 3-4 years. ABC could provide a match of \$15-20K to NRCS, and could search for additional funds. It would be easier to push through ABC as an employee. As an ABC employee the coordinator could work out of an NRCS office.

Andrew asked if the Lumberjack RC&D was part of the YFP, and was informed that not at this time. If we want to pursue hiring the position through Lumberjack, we should invite them to participate on the Steering Committee as has been done with the WHIP position. Andrew indicated hiring would be done with partners and would assist in interviews. ABC would also provide training and support.

Discussion was held on advantages of hiring through organization such as RC&D vs. USFS or DNR.

Further discussion was held on potential funding by the partners.

Eric Holmes said CFA could offer \$1-2K. The Board needs to approve this yet.

Dan E., said USFS would try to match NRCS at \$15-\$20 K.

Jeremy indicated that DNR currently had no funds to donate to the position but ½ of his time was devoted to YF management, and a portion of Adrian's time is dedicated to YFI.

Gary Zimmer indicated RGS had \$60K obligated to projects in WI. For this year, he believes RGS could free up \$3K for the YFP, but over the next 2-3 years may be able to commit \$15K-\$20K. He indicated RGS does not have office space for the position. RGS could be the financial holder for the YFP. He emphasized the coordinator position should represent the partnership and not any specific organization. Ideas of having a WYFP shirt was suggested.

Amber Roth indicated the WMI may be able to commit ~ \$5K. The WMI is very interested in participating and is waiting to see where there are holes to be filled. Currently Amber's time to help facilitate the process is being funded by WMI.

Gary VanVreede, indicated USFWS could donate \$1K to outreach efforts. Currently 3 biologists are assisting landowners and have about \$15K available for habitat work on private lands.

Doug Fendry suggested that business cards for the positions should list all participating organizations.

Summary of Funding contributions likely available:

NRCS --- \$15-\$20K

ABC----- \$15-\$20K

WCFA-----\$1-\$2K

USFS-----\$15-\$20K

RGS-----\$3K (perhaps up to \$15-20K over 2-3 years)

USFWS----\$1K (for outreach)

WMI-----\$5K (this needs to be confirmed with Scot Williamson yet)

Amber Roth suggested getting funds firmed up by the time of the WYFP Steering Committee meeting on April 10, 2014. Discussion was held on transferring of funds among agencies and organizations. Generally the NGOs have less bureaucratic restrictions than government agencies.

Michael Stinebrink indicated things were coming together at a reasonable rate. It would be good to get a coordinator started soon. The \$75K EQUIP can be spent this year on habitat projects and would need to be obligated by September 30. The coordinator can work with contract foresters, and certified foresters can write plans on land with timber sales where forest stewardship plans are available, but alder shearing work can be done without forest plans just on advice of wildlife biologists.

Discussion was held on training contract foresters on GWW BMPs. Amber pointed out that all certified plan writers heard about GWW BMPs at MFL training sessions. Jeremy also indicated his success working with contract foresters who often have terrific geographic knowledge of alder management possibilities.

Jeremy indicated he will be soon sending 2000 letters to landowners in Price County to encourage young forest management and expects to get a few 100 responses.

George Meyer asked about WWOA in the YFP, and was told Bill Horvath does represent WWOA, but was unable to attend today's meeting.

Qualifications and duties of the job were discussed. Renae at Indiana Univ. of PA (IUP) talked about working with Emily the Conservation Coordinator in PA. Renae indicated that she had helped with mailings. She said that organization was key to this type of position and major emphasis was on getting to know and develop relationships with people.

Andrew indicated some natural resource background would be necessary. He said he would talk to Jeff Larkin to learn more about IUP selection process.

Doug Fendry indicated that PF could potentially fund a YF Biologist when they get more chapters in northern WI.

Discussion was held on status of MOU.

Dan Eklund indicated he was still running it through USFS.

Adrian Wydeven indicated he had added DNR statues to the previous version but was not sure if all applicable statues were included. The modified version was still working its way through WDNR.

Amber Roth suggested to finalize MOU for the April 10 Steering Committee meeting.

Discussion was held on role and function of Steering Committee.

Some of the functions suggested for the Steering Committee were:

- Logistical details of hiring private lands coordinator: Pool funds and determine where to spend
- Decide on outreach efforts
- Develop strategies for continued funding
- Determine work that needs to be done by others.
- Provide general direction to the private lands coordinator

George Meyer indicated WWF did not need to be on the Steering Committee but would like to be involved in any subcommittee working on outreach.

Doug Fendry said PF did not need to be on the Steering Committee, but would like to be involved in any technical committee.

Andrew Rothman said he would represent ABC on the Steering Committee.

It was suggested that the steering committee act as an executive group. That it follow good business principles. The committee will need to develop a vision statement. It appeared 10 people have volunteered to serve on the steering committee. It was suggested to have the steering committee meet quarterly and the larger committee perhaps every 6 months.

Andrew Rothman asked if someone would be representing nongame birds to the group.

Adrian Wydeven indicated his position represented broader wildlife interest, but would ask around. Since the meeting Ryan Brady Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) coordinator with WDNR has agreed to participate in the YFP.

Dan Eklund nominated Jeremy Holtz to be the Steering Committee Chair and to coordinate YF projects until a private lands coordinator can be hired.

It was agreed that getting staffing arranged would be a major work item for the April 10 Steering Committee.

Dan Eklund suggested creating a matrix of habitat across public and private land. Andrew Rothman indicated this was very important and may want to frame as a dynamic landscape.

It was suggested the steering committee will want to empower the coordinator and will need to avoid micromanaging. Jeremy and Michael can serve as direct supervisors for daily activities and can act as a filter with the steering committee (including helping to decide which issues need to be brought to the SC's attention).

The steering committee will also need to look at other grant opportunities. Andrew Rothman offered to try to find funds including attempt to get more funding from

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Conservation Partners program. He will try to put a proposal together, and submit on behalf of the partnership.

Gary Zimmer indicated groups like RGS has more opportunity with hook& bullet groups, but ABC may be able to access groups that RGS can't.

ACTION ITEMS FOR FOLLOW-UP:

- 1) Everyone contributing \$\$ to private lands coordinator position--We need to firm up your offers for the April 10 Steering Committee. Please try to bring or send a letter to me that describes the details and conditions of your organization's offer. Also state the range of dates when your funds are available.
- 2) Andrew--Distribute PD from IUP position that has been our model in Pennsylvania. DONE. Let me know if you did not receive it the file and would like a copy.
- 3) Andrew--Send Amber benefits and costs for ABC employees to add to chart comparing private lands project coordinator hiring options.
- 4) Michael--He will chat with Tom Krapf so that Tom comes to the Steering Committee meeting prepared to discuss: a) how the \$15-20K funds from NRCS can be used? b) Is office space definitely available at NRCS? c) Are costs associated with a computer, IT support, phone, vehicle use/travel, included in the \$20K? or do we need to raise these funds? d) Of our other partner offers of funds, do we meet the match requirement required by NRCS? Can we use these funds for match for other fundraising activities or are they being used/reported by NRCS to meet other grant or match needs?
- 5) Amber--She will determine if there is a conference call option at the State Hwy Patrol office for the Steering Committee meeting. DONE: There is no phone line available for a conference call. We should explore using a mobile phone for this function. Jeremy, can you experiment with using your Wisline account in conjunction with a mobile phone to see if a conference call can be worked out? UPDATE: Jeremy has ordered a speaker phone that should work with a mobile phone.
- 6) Everyone who wants to be on the MOU--Please make sure you let Kurt Waterstradt know if you have revisions or if the current text is OK. Let him know either way. Kurt, can you send our an email to the group with an update on who has responded or who has not responded? Wisconsin Wildlife Federation should be added as a new partner, and George Meyer should be contacting you if he hasn't already.
- 7) Amber--She will update the meeting notes from the Feb 20 conference call with Doug's revisions and send the revised file to the group.
- 8) Steering Committee--Please send your ideas or models from other organizations/partnership for consideration as our tenets of Steering Committee function. Send them to me (Amber Roth) and I'll compile them for the SC meeting on April 10. We

should develop a role statement, description of the SC structure, and rules of operation. Attached is an example that I recently found while working on another project.

9) Andrew--He will talk to his development team at ABC about taking the lead on a NFWF Conservation Partners proposal. Deadline is April 17. Typical grant sizes are \$50,000 to \$200,000 over 1 or 2 years with a 1:1 non-federal match requirement. Our project does not align well with the identified topics of focus for our region but proposals on other topics are accepted. The RFP can be found at <http://www.nfwf.org/conservationpartners/Pages/spring2014rfp.aspx> Are there other RFP opportunities coming up that should be on our radar?

10) Adrian--He will generate meeting notes for the group. DONE

11) Amber--The next WYFP meeting will be determined by Doodle poll of our partners.

UPDATE on WYFP members: Todd Pond from Louisiana Pacific (Tomahawk office) will attend our next WYFP meeting as a forest industry representation.