

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2020

CONFERENCE CALL ATTENDANCE

- Tracy Beckman– Lumberjack
- Katie Koch - USFS
- Pat Weber – ABC
- Gary Zimmer - WBCP
- Carissa Freeh – Pheasant Forever
- Eric Holm - WCFA
- Janet Brehm – DNR Wildlife
- Jon Steigerwaldt – RGS
- Mark Pfost – USFWS
- Jeremy Holtz – DNR Wildlife
- Randee Smith - Coordinator
- Callie Bertsch - ABC
- Rikki Ratch – DNR Wildlife
- Jaqi Christopher – DNR Wildlife



AGENDA

- Additions to Agenda- N/A
- Introductions
- MOU – recent additions
 - Randee sent out updated MOU
 - If you don't have a signed copy, let Randee know. She can get you one
- Steering Committee changes since last meeting – N/A
- WYFP updates – Holtz
 - Reminder that the annual spring meeting will have elections. Dan Eklund volunteered to serve in position again but willing to compete for it if someone is interested in running against him.
- Coordinator Report – Smith (Appendix A)
 - Started doing coordinator updates every month.
 - Coordinating with Aldo Leopold foundation and DNR Forestry to streamline outreach to eliminate duplicated efforts for contacting landowners
 - DNR has My WI Woods newsletter and is willing to let YFP add content to letter.

- YFP will be adding My WI Woods to the new webpage
 - DNR Forestry is giving YFP access to their landowner database – will be able to see details of what forestry site visits. This will allow us to find landowners interested in management plans, alder shearing or other young forest that we can help fund.
 - Looking to contact MFL landowners, instead of just unengaged ones. Will have to work more with DNR forestry to accomplish this. Will likely be closer to fall. Anticipate not needing to have a lot of site visits.
 - DNR Forestry will be doing media campaign in May or June.
 - Lumberjack has a grant for outreach. The goal will be focused on enrolling landowners into EQIP. Will be using billboards, ads, etc. The details are still being finalized.
 - SWOT Priority summary – Updating logo, mission, principals. (Appendix B)
 - Website updates
 - DJ Case – consulting program. WMI is no longer a partner so there was concern they wouldn't host website anymore. Domain has changed slightly. There will be a transition period from old domain to the new domain, so people who have it bookmarked can find the new webpage.
 - Originally, YFP was under the DNR website, but the agency was going through a web conversion and it was decided to break away from DNR and have self-hosted webpage.
 - Randee has done a great job so far and we are all proud!
- Subcommittee Reports
 - Outreach – Smith
 - WYFP Facebook page – Posting 3 times a week. Up to 177 followers and 162 likes.
 - Coordinating with UWSP on their ruffed grouse demonstration area at Treehaven. RGS granted money to create demo area with drummer funds, but not for all of the signs to educate about the habitat work. YFP is funding interpretive sign for clearcut section of demonstration areas with surplus funds from NRCS and DNR.
 - New brand/logo – pens, stickers, magnets for partnerships to distribute.
 - Personnel – Holtz
 - Janet Brehm – promoted to supervisor out of Peshtigo area. Looking to incorporate YF into work planning in Peshtigo area. Southern Marinette county has some invasive that need to be dealt with. Currently Merrill position is vacant and will hopefully be filled by early summer.
 - Funding/fund administration
 - RCPP – ABC still doesn't know about the new RCPP funding, but should know soon, potentially by the end of the week. Funding for the old RCPP is gone for landowners. Many landowners are being enrolled in EQIP

- instead. NFWFs are over. There are a few small grants out there and report acreage on. Have gone to all 3 NRCS states to enter into agreement to cover in the interim, similar to PF or RGS biologists. It basically would be an option to hold over until new RCPP comes through. Partners leveraged a large amount of match, so hopefully that bumped up the ranking.
- SFI and RGS grants – funds left at end of year in each. SFI was extended, hoping to use to print new brochures, but waiting for webpage to finalize.
 - Monitoring/research
 - Chris Roelandt's research will be in annual report and he will have info for us for next meeting
 - Partner updates
 - US FWS - Mark Pfost
 - Rusk and Taylor last week to meet with landowners. Ted and Gary don't have any landowners yet. Budget is a bit better than it has been in past years, so in better shape. Won't be able to use coop agreements in future, don't know details, but changes are happening to funding process.
 - Will need to be in contact with Randee to help set up contractors for landowners.
 - Probably will not have second round of contracting for this spring. Had 2 contractors able to finish this past week in Lincoln co, enough snowpack, but with warmer weather, alder didn't snap off easily.
 - DNR Wildlife – Jeremy Holtz
 - No word on hiring a Forest Habitat Specialist.
 - Jeremy is now the Northern District Rep on the DNR Ruffed Grouse Committee.
 - DNR Wildlife – Janet Brehm
 - Janet is on the planning committee for the Private Lands meeting in Northwest WI this year. Generally, NRCS, VPA and other DNR employees attend, along with most of the YFP cooperators. Will be held at CWES Aug 17-19th. Last year RGS helped organize and was more forestry based, this year will be more agricultural based.
 - DNR Wildlife – Rikki Ratsch
 - A few projects in Lincoln are done shearing and will be certifying those soon. Looking at perspective properties and reaching out to landowners to set up site visits.
 - WI County Forest Association– Gary Zimmer
 - All counties are still doing timber sales, its been a little slower with cutting live trees, but a lot of work being done for blow down. Good opportunity for unplanned YF habitat.

- New director – Rebecca Reopke. In throws of strategic plan review – all the counties update the strategic plan at the same time. This is a great opportunity to improve wildlife sections of plans – DNR and Greenfire working on this.
- ABC – Callie Bertsch
 - Committed to keeping ABC employed through fall. NRCS is switching to a new conservation program toolkit called “Conservation Desktop”. The old toolkit is going away this weekend. WI’s batch date is this weekend as well, so all new plans have been in new system.
 - It has an updating ranking system and any alder shearing must have written management plan – affects anyone in northwest part of the state. Some people will be denied this round due to not having plan. Options are to send landowners to Partners or create a plan for the property.
- ABC – Pat Weber
 - Accomplishments for 2019 Season:
 - 283 acres certified across 6 counties
 - 107 acres were forest stand improvement
 - 186 acres is alder shearing
 - Still 150 acres scheduled to be done in 2020
 - Did not have a hard frost in a lot of areas, but deep snow allowed some machines to get some work done. One contractor even cut it by hand. For the most part, shearing is done for the season unless we get another round of cold weather.
- Ruffed Grouse Society – Jon Steigerwaldt
 - Ruffed Grouse Symposium at Wildlife Society Meeting.
 - Good attendance. Good participation by partners. Overall success.
 - Will be putting out call for projects for Drummer Fund. Watch your emails. Will be funding projects for the coming summer.
- WI Bird Conservation Partnership – Gary Zimmer
 - Rebranded as a “partnership” instead of “initiative” new logo new charge, new brand!
- Lumberjack RC&D – Tracy Beckman
 - March 18 is WI Headwater Invasive Species Meeting at the Bradly townhall in Lincoln CO
 - Sustainable Forestry Conference – April 23rd in Florence
- Pheasants Forever – Carissa Freeh

- Attended Pheasant Fest in Minneapolis. Great opportunity, had thousands of people attend. Had a lot of WI landowners stop by the PF booth and several scheduled property visits with farm bill biologists.
 - There are 5 outreach events scheduled for this summer, mainly Ag related, but there is one forestry event in Richland Center. Turkey Federation and DNR are helping with the event.
 - Met with Golden Sands RC&D –Big Woods and Wildlife Program
 - PF is hiring a Precision Ag and Conservation Specialist out of Eau Claire. It is not the typical FBB position, instead focusing on integrating conservation, ag, technology and economics into farm operations. Currently open for applications.
- USFWS – Katie Koch
 - Upper MS and Greatlakes Joint Venture is revising Land Bird Conservation Strategy.
 - Michigan Forestry for Birds Initiative – partnership that wants to develop toolkit for foresters to integrate needs of several conservation priority species into forestry planning. Similar things have been developed out East. Project was ranked #1 for funding, so funding should be coming through quickly. Will be working closely with partners to develop toolkit. Has potential to be adapted to WI and other Midwest states.
 - Co-chair GWW Working group with Amber. Planning retreat for steering committee and chart proactive course forward. What are the partner needs we can support? More to come from that meeting in July
 - Partners are moving forward initiative in region 12 to integrate needs of high priority bird species in industrial forests. Lots of interest in bird conservation community to work with industrial forests.
 - Looking to adapt YFP model to help expand partnerships in other states.

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership Leadership

Executive Committee Members:

Jeremy Holtz, Facilitator
Dan Eklund
Jon Steigerwaldt

Steering Committee Members (and alternates):

USFS: Dan Eklund and Matthew St. Pierre
NRCS: Chris Borden
USFWS: Mark Pfof and Ted Koehler
WDNR Wildlife: Kent Van Horn
and Jeremy Holtz
WDNR Forestry: Kristin Lambert
WCFA: Eric Holm and Gary Zimmer
ABC: Shawn Graff and Callie Bertsch
RGS: Jon Steigerwaldt and Dan Hoff
Forestland Group: Shawn Hagan

WBCP: Gary Zimmer
WWF: Bob Ellingson and George Meyer
SAF: Tom Hittle
Lumberjack RC&D: Tracy Beckman
And Paul Mueller
LP: Michael Filtz and Chris Weber
PF: Carissah Freeh
NWTF: N/A

Subcommittee Members:

Personnel/workgroup:

Jeremy Holtz, Chair
Dan Eklund
Jon Steigerwaldt
Ranee Smith
Jacquelyn Christopher
Callie Bertsch
Pat Weber
Janet Brehm
Rikki Ratsch
Dan Hoff
Jared Elm

Fundraising:

Dan Eklund,
Chair Jeremy
Holtz
Jon Steigerwaldt
Ranee Smith

Outreach:

Ranee Smith, Chair
Jamie Nack
Chuck Fergus (website)
Gary Zimmer
Callie Bertsch
Amber Roth
Diane Gunderson
Tracy Beckman
Pat Weber

Monitoring/Research:

Kent Van Horn
Amber Roth
Christopher
Roelandt
Ranee Smith

WYFP Coordinator Report

Steering Committee Conference Call

March 12th, 2020

Update

- Coordinated with UWSP about their Ruffed Grouse demonstration area at Treehaven in Tomahawk, WI and potential funding from WYFP for educational signs
 - The Executive Committee decided to fund 1 larger interpretive sign and 4 markers for the aspen clearcut harvest type (one of three management strategies).
- Coordinated with Aldo Leopold Foundation and DNR forestry to determine how we can work more efficiently together
 - E-newsletter: WYFP can utilize My WI Woods (MWW) e-newsletter and will provide young forest related articles/quizzes/fun facts that can go out in it
 - Websites: MWW will mention WYFP on their page and WYFP will do same for MWW
 - Database: WYFP can utilize their Private Forest Landowners Database to know when landowners have completed a visit with a forester and looking for more information
 - Great way to keep track of landowners for all involved
- Created draft outreach materials for a grant Lumberjack received to assist in getting landowners signed up with NRCS EQIP
- Created SWOT priorities summary from survey distributed
- Branding: updated WYFP mission, vision, and brand principles with SWOT priorities
- New logo and created handouts (stickers, magnets, pens) for events
- Annual report: requested data and highlights from partners, summarized data, wrote articles, designed report
- Worked on updating brochures and handouts
- Continue working with landowners, checked in with foresters about complete site visits, and followed up with NRCS EQIP referrals
- Submitted Natural Resources Foundation woodcock field trip

Website

- The decision was made to separate from the Young Forest Initiative website
- Looked into website hosting options and payments plans and decided to go with Wix.com
- Bought the domain "www.wiyoungforest.org"
 - General information should be up in a month



Meetings/trainings

- State Forest Action Plan strategy workshop – Wisconsin Rapids on Jan. 7th
- WI Private Lands meeting – Plover on Jan. 9th
- DNR new forester training – Rhinelander on Jan. 13th
- Attended the DNR new forester training to learn how to use the Private Forestry Landowner Database (PFLD) – Rhinelander on Jan. 16th
- Skype trainings for the Private Forest Landowner database – Jan. 22nd, 29th and Feb 12th
- Lumberjack Council meeting – Keshena on Jan. 30th
- Best Practices for Speaking with Woodland Owners workshop – La Farge on Jan. 31st
- Timberland Invasives Partnership annual meeting – Keshena on Feb. 18th
- The Wildlife Society meeting ruffed grouse symposium – Wisconsin Rapids on Feb. 25th



MISSION

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP) seeks to achieve landscape-scale conservation in Wisconsin for high priority species by collaborating with like-minded partners, promoting and creating young forest habitat through active forest management, and providing technical and financial assistance to private forestland owners.

VISION

Sustainable wildlife populations through landscape-scale conservation.

TAGLINE

Creating wildlife habitat together!

BRAND PRINCIPLES

Ambition

Young Forest is a critical component of a healthy forest landscape.

Mandate

WYFP addresses the need for the continued availability of young forest habitat by using best management practices for species like the American Woodcock and Golden-winged Warbler.

Promise

Advocate and promote management for young forest habitat on public and private forestlands.

Values

- **COLLABORATION.** We promote cooperation and partnerships to effectively contribute to conservation efforts.
- **HEALTHY WILDLIFE POPULATIONS.** We strive to increase the quantity and quality of young forest to benefit populations of decreasing conservation priority species and foster important habitat for a wide array of other wildlife species.
- **LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY.** We foster sustainable habitat across the landscape in a manner that provides continued availability to wildlife.
- **ONE STOP SHOP.** We believe in simplifying resources for private landowners by providing a service to determine programs that fit individual needs and goals.
- **ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT.** We provide technical and financial assistance through our partners to increase active forest management by private landowners.
- **SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMIES.** We encourage management on forested lands that promotes the private consulting industry and a healthy timber industry.
- **IMPROVE OUTDOOR RECREATION.** We promote diverse forests which increases opportunities for residents and visitors to view and pursue wildlife in Wisconsin's Northwoods.



S.W.O.T. Analysis – The Priorities

<p><u>Strengths – internal, positive</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number/diversity of committed public/private partners 2. Strong collaborative efforts 3. Support and passion from partners 4. Ability to fund full time coordinator 5. Diversity of partner programs and abilities 6. Coordinator dedicated to efforts 	<p><u>Weaknesses – internal, negative</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need grants to operate, but uncertain sources 2. Landowner involvement 3. Brand awareness 4. Limited landowner support 5. Money tied to specific deliverables makes it hard to move in other directions if needed 6. Overlap with other organization efforts
<p><u>Opportunity – External, positive</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growing state/regional interest in forestry for birds 2. Groups with overlapping interests can collaborate 3. Other conservation organizations can make connections between their work and WYFP's 4. Declining bird populations/habitat 5. Renewed interest in wildlife habitat by landowners 6. Other forest habitats and larger landscapes to work in 	<p><u>Threats – external, negative</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decline in funds to support programs and staff 2. Declining timber/fiber markets 3. Run out of interested landowners in target area 4. Fragmentation/parcelization of properties 5. Public perceptions about forestry and clearcutting 6. Changes in WYFP leadership/staff

Items Valuable to WYFP

Extremely valuable	<p>Promoting young forest habitat Creating young forest habitat Continued availability of young forest habitat Healthy wildlife populations</p>
Extremely/very valuable	<p>Increasing active forest management Quantity of young forest habitat Collaboration Financial assistance for private forestland owners</p>
Very valuable	<p>Quality of young forest habitat Benefiting conservation priority species Technical assistance for private forestland owners Mosaic of habitat types Landscape-scale conservation</p>
Valuable	<p>Landscape connectivity Supporting local economies Being a one stop shop for helping private landowners Improving outdoor recreation</p>