

# DCR FOREST FUTURES ADVISORY GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS (AGS)

Doyle Conservation Center  
325 Lindell Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453  
Meeting #1 – June 9, 2009, 1:45 – 5:15 PM

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Members present:** Whit Beals, Jay Belanger, Bill Boles, Mary Booth, Ted Cady, Dicken Crane, Alexandra Dawson, Nan Finkenaur, Dave Gafney, Fred Heyes, Claudia Hurley, Becky Kalagher, Michael Kellett, Cathy Kristofferson, James McCaffrey, Heidi Ricci, Mike Ryan, Carrie Saldo, Peggy Sloan, Bill Van Doren, Jane Winn. **Members Absent:** Nathan L'Etoile, Jim Sherman.

**DCR/EEA Staff:** Stephanie Cooper. **As Observers:** Anne Feisinger, Bob O'Connor.

**Facilitators:** Bill Logue, John Goodrich.

**Observers Present:** Lisa Vernegaard (Chair TSC).

### Welcome and Introductions

The facilitators welcomed Advisory Group of Stakeholders (AGS) members. The meeting agenda and documents were briefly reviewed.<sup>1</sup> Bill Logue explained the role of the AGS is to engage in dialogue to surface issues and values for the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) who will make recommendations to Commissioner Sullivan, the Stewardship Council and EEA. Stephanie Cooper, Chief of Staff for DCR thanked the group members on behalf of Commissioner Sullivan and DCR. Ms. Cooper discussed DCR's reasons for launching this visioning process. She highlighted that forests are critically important resources for all residents of Massachusetts, and DCR seeks to ensure their current and future vitality. In doing so, she stated that the Department wants to ensure it respects and provides the different benefits of forests the public values – from habitat diversity to recreation to renewable forest products – while recognizing that science and conditions are constantly changing and evolving. For all of these reasons, DCR has determined that it is appropriate and timely to engage the public and stakeholders in developing a renewed vision for Massachusetts forest lands.

Following this each AGS member introduced themselves and explained who their constituency is and how they are involved in forest issues. Bill Logue noted that the last two members one to speak to sportsmen's interests and the other to historical cultural interests are being confirmed.

Bill Logue stated that the process would be iterative with opportunities for input at several points. In addition, there will be several public forums including one on June 23 in Leominster and another July 14 in the Berkshires. At several points the TSC and AGS will meet jointly. He encouraged the group to listen carefully to each other, seek commonality wherever possible and articulate any differences clearly for the TSC, DCR and others in order to increase transparency and more informed decision-making. The group agreed to the proposed ground rules with one minor clarification on speaking for themselves or their organizations views not for others at the table.

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<sup>1</sup>The agenda and documents are available on the DCR website under the "Past Meeting Schedule and Materials Link" at: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/forestryvp.htm>. The documents are listed at the end of this summary. Additional information about the process and upcoming meetings is available on the same webpage.

## **Articulation of Values**

AGS members listed their priority values and concerns related to the forests. These were charted and later group members each received three “dots” to put next to the top priorities. These have been grouped and organized below. Categories are overlapping and many items easily bridge to or could be placed in another category. The listing and dot process was not intended to be all inclusive or an absolute ranking. Rather the process was used to highlight issues and to help determine how to best use the group’s time during the process. The number of dots is placed in brackets.

## **VALUES**

### **Wilderness, wildlife and healthy ecosystems (and aesthetics) (12 total)**

- (11) Wilderness, wildlife and healthy ecosystems (and aesthetics)
- (1) Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems

### **Public forests and Resource Protection (10 total)**

- (6) Protection of public forests from overcutting, particularly biomass
- (2) Water resources and critical habitat
- (1) Keeping forest lands as forests
- (1) Preservation and improvement of resource
- No economic imperative to log state forest lands
- Smaller state parks in Eastern MA and larger un-fragmented blocks in Western MA

### **Recreation, Tourism and Public Use/Appreciation (10 total)**

- (3) Recreational
- (3) Quiet enjoyment and non-intrusive recreational experience (Art. 97 of Mass. Const.)
- (2) Public access
- (2) Use lands for recreation and enjoyment
- (2) Cultural services as opposed to provisioning services
- Use by a public that protects the resources
- Scenic beauty – protection of it, but not at expense of environmental protection
- Facilitate access for use and learning

### **Economic development based on forest resources (7 total)**

- (4) Economic development based on forest resources whether recreational or wood products
- (2) Economic values
- (2) Sustainable use of forest resources: reality is import a big percentage of forest products used in state, so there is an economic imperative
- (1) Use of forest products in MA impacts forests all over the world: only 7% of what we use comes from MA
- Role supporting the community
- Derive pleasure from locally produced wood products

### **Clear communication accountability, science based decisions (7 total)**

- (4) Commitment to cut through rhetoric, reality-based approach to climate change and how ecosystems should be managed
- (2) Should focus on DCR policies – what went wrong/what do right?
- (1) Anger re: decisions that have been made – the “mess” – there are Parks that should be reserves and areas that shouldn’t have timber management

- Good working relationships with DCR
- BMPs should be the low bar, not the high bar

#### **Climate change (4 total)**

- (4) Climate change – role of state land for adaptation, to sequester carbon and with large blocks of land

#### **Other Values and Concerns (1 total)**

- (1) Adequate resources for agency to do its job

#### **Other issues/questions/interests/comments raised during values discussion:**

- Would like a cost analysis re: timber management – either do it better or work with private landowners on how to do on private lands
- Accountability and transparency
- EEA: possibility of siting windpower on state lands: state lands set aside for conservation.
- Questions about using already disturbed lands
- This process as a substitution for other processes?
- Clarification/compliance with state laws
- Scientific surveys
- Optimize management for species, not just identify them – may mean more reserves
- What's overall plan that leads to a large cut in a particular area?
- Can do simple things that don't need more resources
- Need to help rural towns that depend on jobs and lose tax base, but the urban areas need every bit of park land they can get
- All stakeholders should be able to tell TSC how they feel before TSC hears an explanation from DCR so can question them and learn better
- Sustainability is used different ways – FSC issues on state lands need to be addressed – the wrong thing for state forests because industrial scale logging is incompatible with environmental goals
- There may be a better process than FSC? Better to obtain wood products from certified lands – products from outside MA not likely certified
- There weren't many vernal pools earlier when the landscape was cleared more
- Forest stewardship

#### **Discussion and Preparation for June 23 Joint Meeting with TSC**

In the discussion of values a number of topics were mentioned including such issues as the need to look at wider ecological values, best management practices (BMPs), the economics of forestry, benefits (e.g., defraying costs) and consequences (e.g., potential ecological and aesthetic harm) of cutting on state lands, shifting of cutting to private and international forests if cutting is severely limited on state lands, pressures for biomass harvesting on state lands, DCR practices which negatively impact private lands and the perception of forestry, and concerns around green certification. Members also expressed the desire to articulate to the TSC their concerns with past DCR practices which caused them to become involved in the issue and the process. During the discussion the group shared ideas and concerns in a respectful and positive manner by clarifying their perceptions and feelings and seeking to understand others.

Many members expressed serious concern with the proposed format for the first joint meeting with the TSC where the plan was for DCR to present extensively to both groups. AGS members felt strongly that the TSC needs to hear their concerns with DCR past practices as a means of understanding what they feel is

important for the TSC to focus on in making recommendations. After discussion with the facilitators and TSC Chair Lisa Vernegaard, a plan was developed for several AGS members to present to the TSC at the outset of the meeting for one hour, followed by brief DCR presentations and question and discussion. The topics and presenters were identified (below) and it was agreed that the presenters would seek input from others but would explicitly not be trying to speak for the group as a whole. AGS and DCR presentations / briefing materials will be shared in advance to use meeting time effectively.

Topic	Presenter
<b>Introduction and Scope Concern</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why AGS wants to be heard</li> <li>• Concerns of AGS about scope and focus of TSC work; desire for focus on DCR lands</li> </ul>	Facilitators
<b>Values</b>	Heidi Ricci – coordinating Group members: Jay McCaffrey, Bill Boles, Mike Kellett
<b>CONCERNS</b>	
<b>Legal Mandates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differing interpretations of DCR mandates</li> <li>• Conflicts among statutory mandates</li> </ul>	Dave Gafney
<b>Past Practices and Accountability</b>	Claudia Hurley, Jane Winn
<b>Effect of Past Practices on Private Land Owners and Perception of Forestry</b>	Dicken Crane, Fred Heyes, Bill Van Doren
<b>Biomass/Biofuels/Energy Issues</b>	Mary Booth/Heidi Ricci
<b>Protection Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlighting Complexity</li> <li>• Reserves</li> </ul>	Mike Ryan and Mike Kellett

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### Meeting Materials

The following materials were distributed to AGS members and observers at or before the meeting:

- Meeting Agenda
- Revised Framing Questions – revision June 3, 2009
- Ecosystem Services – revision June 3, 2009