

Interagency Information Cooperative (IIC)

Minutes of Stakeholders and Users Meeting – July 26, 2005 – Blandin Foundation, Grand Rapids, MN

Welcome: Jim Hoolihan, President, Blandin Foundation
Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy Director-Vital Forests/Vital Communities, Blandin Foundation

[Agenda begins]

Welcome and introduction to the IIC...Susan Stafford, Dean, College of Natural Resources

Introduction to tasks for IIC 2005 needs assessment ...Alan Ek, Director

Status of existing information and data including...Tom Burk, Technical Director

Types of information and data (see site map)

- (1) Natural resources including spatial data
- (2) Resource management
- (3) Cultural
- (4) Analysis tools including models

Changes since the IIC began

Resource conditions, interests, issues

Current data and information needs

Types of information and data as

- (1) Natural resources including spatial data
- (2) Resource management
- (3) Cultural
- (4) Analysis tools including models

Results of scientist / analyst meetings...Alan Ek

New priorities and process

Data and information need priorities
Reporting
Proposal development
Assistance mechanisms by the IIC

Next steps

[Agenda ends]

[Minutes begin]

Welcome and introduction to IIC...Susan Stafford

Welcome and introduction to tasks for IIC 2005 needs assessment ...Alan Ek, Director

The intent of revising the IIC is to strengthen the science and research base. The tasks considered since moving the IIC to the University include:

1. Convene scientists and analysts (completed, minutes available)
2. Convene IIC users and stakeholders (current meeting)
3. Gather ideas for directions and priorities
4. Discuss with officials and legislatures and draw up proposals

Question: How will IIC fit into the U of M's new expanded college (from merging the College of Natural Resources and the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science)? This move should enhance the strength of University capabilities and linkages to serve IIC interests...S. Stafford.

Review status of existing information and data including...Tom Burk, Technical Director

The types of information and data (see IIC web site map) as categorized by the IIC focus on:

1. Natural resources including spatial data
2. Resource management
3. Cultural resources
4. Analysis tools including models

There is a strong correlation between the 1997 needs assessment and the inventory of IIC links.

The 'Forest Information' category makes up majority of the IIC site, content wise.

Familiar links include:

FIA data

Forest inventory common format – a significant and challenging effort to come up with a standard for data. This is an effort/result produced through the IIC.

Physical resource data

Ecosystem classification system efforts/results

Cultural information

Land use classifications

Looking at the 1997 needs assessment, one thing missing is ANALYSIS TOOLS, although this doesn't mean they were not created.

Take Home Message: The approach was to include everything possible, thought important, a very broad approach. This is a reflection of when this effort started in that the Internet took off at this point (mid 1990s) to make info widely available. Agencies weren't actively involved...now agencies/individuals have major efforts to make info available to the public. And this is why it's important to see how the IIC fits best or can serve today. It started as a digital library. Now, we might identify niche areas and focus efforts on niches. E.g., what information is now being provided regularly by others? Given that, should we take the 'digital library' approach or focus on niche areas?

A lot of the IIC content is out of date due to the loss of funding and because agencies developed their own 'libraries.' Thus whatever route we take, we should also consider how we can justify it.

Discussion/Comments

Changes since the IIC began (conditions, interests, issues)

A lot has changed over 15 years in respect to data. In late 1980s, agencies were protecting data. In the late 1990s, it was all about making data available. This has been our pattern...so what are the conditions and interests now with the IIC compared to when the IIC first started?

- Growth of the Internet/WWW
- Spatial data – some easy and some difficult to collect
- New questions from society (development, protection, management)

How has it changed for users?

D. Heinzen: Still have the same objectives, but systems need to be efficient and dynamic to respond to new user needs (forest certification, resource trends, whose resource for what?).

W. Wold: On the certification side of things – we need to know trends and also how your land fits into the larger ecosystem. In the past, our information was tied to our lands. Documentation is also a big item.

J. Lemmerman: Change of ownership, smaller ownerships today.

P. Miles: FIA moving from strategic to land management focus. More emphasis on land management, retaining strategic focus but trying to make FIA a more useful tool for smaller areas. Also, there have been changes in how data is made available. Today we have more data requests and over 90 universities have used it. Finally, we are moving towards map data (spatially oriented).

H. Hoganson: For federal forests, higher timber prices and questions about the role of these forests. There are new silviculture options – tied with wildlife habitat interests. With higher prices, there are more economic opportunities to look at and there are new analysis tools to do so.

N. Moodie: Questions people bring to you...e.g., overharvest versus underharvest. We have more information on the resources...yet more questions, e.g., as stumpage prices go up. We also see changes in markets and utilization.

W. Wold: Markets are important and we've certified but the markets don't necessarily impact us – but they can open up the utilization of new species (e.g., substitution for aspen). This also gets back to wildlife impacts. Today you can't just slick it all off.

A. Streitz: Interested in spatial statistics. PCA wonders how peak flows have been affected by land use, e.g., for TMDLs. Didn't know about the IIC until yesterday.

J. Green: Needs to be useful to decision makers. So must be helpful to both professionals and decision makers. Can we do this at the same time?

S. Stafford: Trend toward integration, and on-the-ground issues.

T. Houghtaling: Have questions on production of biomass. What existing lands are feasible for this? Yet value remains for traditional forest products.

B. Halter-Glenn: Increasing demand from land use area, thus making questions more complex which is why analysis tools are becoming more important.

S. Stafford: This is about fitting biological, social, and physical layers at the same scale.

T. Burk: Common inventory format effort evolved from a concern about this.

J. Rickers: A lot of data is the same. Tools to acquire and analyze have changed. But data and our ability to integrate and coordinate the data haven't changed much.

T. Worthman: Didn't we attempt this with landscape plans?

T. Burk: Agencies put more effort into collecting, not analyzing. We're describing what's out there.

C. Turner: One need is a focus on common format – land use/land cover data.

N. Moodie: GIS data needed in real time (a quantum Leap!) – and this means more layers.

J. Green: Need to get at issues – parcelization, fragmentation.

J. Rickers: but we haven't changed in how we collect it...

J. Fletcher: It appears that we suffer from too little analysis.

D. Heinzen: Complicating the situation is the selling of more and more company land, changing utilization, and these changes have many implications.

T. Burk: Existing agencies have their focus; but NIPF interests are all over the map. Thus we need information to be accessible, easy to use, and informative about many questions.

P. Hoff: Priorities – for water basins and associated environmental reviews and permits. We want to have this data in front of decision makers. Climate change is another issue. Also trying to make data accessible. PCA has a big push to get more citizens to help with data collection.

A. Ek: There's a heavy emphasis evident here to bring things together and provide for commonality in data access and analysis tools.

Issues, Needs and Roles for the IIC (suggested by participants)

- ***Natural Resources Information***
 - a. A. Ek: Coarse land use/land cover data statewide every 3-5 years or more often. Forest cover, type, size, etc. statewide to useful management level...put a team together to figure out how to get it done.
 - b. A. Streitz: 1) Continue work to encourage common data formats, 2) Simplify Internet data access, and 3) Base land use decisions on proper evaluation of the value of surface water resources.
 - c. R. Kolka:
 - 1) Impact of alternate forest management or biodiversity and economy
Role: Vegetation databases and economic data and models
Need: Forest managers need more alternatives for managing their resource (not just even-aged management)
 - 2) Impacts of land use and land use change on water resources
Role: Data clearinghouse for both land use and water resource information
Need: Nonpoint pollution and TMDL issues.
 - d. Misc: Links to past and current weather data across state. MNDOT has the weather stations sprinkled liberally across state. Is this info available?
 - e. Misc: Collect information and provide data standards. Needs: Digital soils data! Still!!! Disturbance data, historical land cover and historical disturbance. Rare plant surveys.
 - f. J. Green: Land cover trends – spatial, age, patch size, composition. Land ownership trends – parcelization, turn over.
 - g. T. Burk: Evaluate currently available modeling tools for answering today's/tomorrow's natural resource management questions. E.g., how well does STEMS work for sorts of uneven and residual basal area management that will become increasingly common.
 - h. Misc: FIA (or equivalent) data needs to be made continually current and easily formed into reports – make a very user-friendly query system that any non-technical person can generate basic reports and maps from.
 - i. J. Lemmerman:
 - 1) Soils layer statewide. Role: provide access
 - 2) Wood products availability: Role: GIS layer of cover type and availability
 - j. J. Fletcher: Monitoring is so expensive and yet stipulated for more and more areas. There's a need (maybe way beyond IIC's capability) to encourage consistency in monitoring data to be able to compare / leverage. E.g., – MFRC's guideline monitoring and certification monitoring both produce public information.
 - k. S. Flynn: Facilitate sharing of data this is collected. Role: As a start, maintain a list of what is being collected, by whom, and for what purpose.
 - l. B. Milne: Forest certification – archeological, special concern species, special site, and natural heritage.
- ***Resource Management Information***

- a. A. Ek: Map of forest land sales annually and spatially
- b. J. Marshall: Agency management plans –especially countries. Should be posted and annually updated with an ‘annual report’ of accomplishments compared with the plan (public accountability)
- c. B. Halter-Glenn: Collaborative planning across ownerships. Not just communicating what each owner is going to do, but ability to plan to meet common objectives and describe conditions, etc.
 - Role & Need: Information on private lands. Means to share intent, objectives. Analysis tools to determine where they overlap. Analysis tools that show demand for products, rare resources, etc., and where based on existing conditions, potential, and descriptive conditions where these demands are best met.
- d. S. Stafford:
 - Role: Build a strategic overarching partnership to strengthen funding support. For example, MFI (Tim O’Hara) with MPCA (Andrew Streit and Paul Hoff) around, for example, watershed policy.
- e. H. Hoganson: Availability of NIPF lands for harvest.
- f. Misc: Issue: Coordination of landscape level planning across organizations/jurisdictions.
 - Need: From comments today, there is a definite need for this type of information sharing. It apparently aids in decision-making process.
 - Role: Hard to say - goes beyond outlet for information needs and coordination of agencies, personnel, common dataset, common form. If not IIC, then who?
- g. T. Houghtaling:
 - 1) SRWC crops such as hybrid poplars – impact on larger wood supply issues.
 - Role: Current data are not really available – a role is to change that.
 - Need: Need is to have a better idea for second rotation crop being regenerated after first harvest later this decade. Second harvest is in 2020-25.
 - 2) Forest residue availability for energy
 - Role: Make sure that data are available and in useful format.
 - Need: It would be nice to know what percentage of harvest residue in various geographic regions are collected and transported for energy and what percentage are not. Better yet – why some and not others.
- h. T. Weber:
 - Role: Gather more information about what is being done on NIPF land with regard to stewardship planning, conservation easements, and certification. For example, location of tracts, forest/cover types affected, special sites protected, source of certified wood, etc.
 - Need: Collection of data.
- i. H. Hoganson: Opportunities for marginal agricultural lands in natural resource perspectives.
- j. D. Steward: Land cover impact on water quality. Also forest fragmentation, development, pervious surfaces
 - Role: Overlay lake or stream watersheds on forest info. Track land cover changes by watershed.

Need: General public and local decision makers need better info on forest cover and its positive impact on water quality and drinking water.

- k. W. Wold:
 - 1) Direct access to management plans
 - Role: Provide links to plans/data geographically
 - Need: To attempt combination of plans on a landscape level.
 - 2) Sensitive info locations, i.e., burial mounds
 - Role: Restrict access of this type of info to IIC members?
 - Need: Need to know these locations in a timely manner; BEFORE harvest operations begin. On our own lands as well as private lands through PFM program.
 - 3) Readily available data on ecosystem structure (historical and current)
 - Need: So we can determine how we 'fit in' to the landscape component.
 - Role: Develop common format for showing spatial data and coordinate collection of data.
 - l. J. Marshall: NIPF lands are critical to our wood supply and landscape level forest health. Eli Sagor/Extension project on web-based tools should be linked to this site.
 - m. T. Burk: Compilation/analysis of publicly available management plans of organizations, agencies, etc. Distill essence of those using common set of criteria.
 - n. P. Hoff: Water quality
 - Need: Can IIC provide current data on timber harvesting activities within designated watershed? This would help environmental review permit decision. Basin planners TMDL (total max daily load) partnerships could better understand the water quality impacts, positive and negative of various practices in specific locations.
 - o. J. Green: Implementation of agency management plans including common formats and monitoring of outcomes.
- ***Cultural Information***
 - a. J. Fletcher: Need a better universal data source for land ownership change, in order to understand the scope of parcelization.
 - b. R. Kolka: Issue - invite/include tribal groups
 - Role: Facilitate their interaction or information gathering/sharing/utilizing.
 - Need: Tribal forest managers could provide some unique aspects to this information network.
 - c. J. Bathke: Issue: Education for NIPF
 - Role: Market the information, both data and analysis, to NIPFS and educators.
 - Need: To package in a way non-professionals can use.
 - d. T. Burk: Approaches for combining demographic and ownership data with natural resource data.
 - e. G. Bernu: Demands on forests are changing from timber to non-timber products and users. Pressures are being placed on large forest owners to provide multiple forest uses or sell the land. Role: Collect and monitor visions of forest users; develop trend lines over time based on long-term data.

- f. Misc: Need: To obtain improved coverage with ownership information. Role: Identify how counties store and provide access to their land records.
 - g. J. Lemmerman: Land use/land ownership information. Role: Provide data to users
 - h. B. Milne: Issue Trail systems. Role: Consolidate trail systems from all agency lands and provide means for regular updates
- **Analysis tools**
 - a. J. Marshall: For agencies to experiment with new, more robust models that will grow their confidence in appropriate harvest levels on their ownerships.
Goal – Improved allowable cut targets that can be defended / stand up to public scrutiny for example in certification.
 - b. G. Bernu: I believe we have plenty of data, but there is very little apparent trends or monitoring made available in a manner easily understood by the general public.
Role: Interpret long-term data and develop trends and present in an easy to understand manner (I can't interpret statistical methods to my commissioners and they probably don't care how we got there).
 - c. J. Green:
 - 1) Silvicultural treatments – outcome monitoring and adaptive management sharing.
 - 2) Plant and animal species response to vegetational treatments including risk thresholds.
 - d. Misc:
 - 1) There is a need for common reporting platforms in a number of different areas, i.e., landscape, level, GIS, stand level.
 - 2) Maximize sharing of data.
 - 3) IIC in consultation with stakeholders could advocate for a new series of common platforms.
 - 4) Perhaps develop tools per se that would be the first step in analysis
 - e. Misc: FIA needs to make their data more useful to land managers by taking plot data (say 1 plot per 3,000 acres) and combining it with remotely sensed data to produce estimates at the pixel (30m²) level.
 - f. Misc: Role: Be a repository for models.
Need: Simple landscape-level models that show effects of management actions. Spatial statistics tools/models.
 - g. J. Fletcher: Serve as more than a digital library. The info is generally available but the big gap (i.e., niche or opportunity) is to assist in analysis. Do so by providing analysis tools such as modeling work by TNC, at the University, etc., but also as a 'resource broker' that can help users apply similar modeling approaches.
 - h. J. Bathke: Continue to access more and more data from more and more sources (e.g., link to MPCA impaired waters). Role: Identify and include more sources.
 - i. S. Flynn:
 - Role: Compile and review tools currently being used. Post those tools that are good (by good we mean they are reliable, etc.)
 - Need: Review tools being used for: purpose, data needed, model, etc. reliability.

- j. B. Milne: Data collection tools
 - 1) Clearinghouse for what is being used. Availability --> any free things? What has already been developed? Hand-help field applications? One area of need is facilitating certification.
 - k. T. Burk: Facilitate linkage of FIA data and prediction/projection models relevant to the data.
 - l. J. Fletcher: Need good examples of integrated ecological-economic models in forest management decision-making.
- **Other Information**
 - a. T. Weber: As a group, stay focused on data gathering and dissemination. Do not collectively develop political or economic positions. Do not compile data with the 'secret' intention or personal objective of producing an economic, social, or political goal.' That will only create distrust and you will never be successful at pulling data together.
 - b. S. Stafford: Demographic census and land (parcel) sale data with land cover.
 - c. R. Kolka:
 - 1) Flexible to accept new technology and maintain databases ability to respond to new technology:
 - Role: Seek to investigate and incorporate new technology (ex. LIDAR)
 - Need: We will have an ever-increasing need to incorporate new technology to help answer questions
 - 2) Should this effort be more than a web site?
 - Role: Other training opportunities – get info to users hands
 - Need: Web site is great but you also need to make people aware of it and possibly other resources.
 - d. P. Hoff: Data Access. Role: Can IIC site and data be linked to MPCA Environmental Data Access Initiative site?
 - e. Misc: Biomass energy.
 - Role: Clearinghouse for research/pilot plant performance/plant performance.
 - Need: Significant
 - f. Misc: Need to be aware of efforts beyond state borders. Example – FIA is working with Canadian National Forest Inventory and Mexican Forest Inventory to produce a North American Forest Inventory database.
 - g. S. Flynn: Data in common format
 - Role: Initially, identify which datasets can be used together over what geographic area – e.g., an indicator (*) by the dataset. Eventually, put datasets in common format, projection, datum, scale, etc.
 - Need: Someone to plan and implement
 - h. Misc: Need to better gather and utilize wildlife information for cumulative impacts, EIS, etc. Role: IIC could determine what data is needed, then coordinate a gathering of it across agencies.
 - i. J. Rickers:
 - 1) Role: Bring land and/or data managers from various landholders together to discuss

opportunities for data consistency and common formatting. Need: Facilitation and environment to hold discussions related to data management across ownerships.

2) Role: Look at opportunities to acquire funding and staffing to coordinate updating of common data formats. Need: Source of coordination and funding to actively pursue some of these common data projects.

- j. J. Bathke: Forest Resources is thought of as traditional forest, i.e., forest interior – CHANGE CONCEPT – expand to include urban and community forest, wherever there are trees. Access data available from groups that approach from this point of view – like MNSTAC
- k. T. Burk: Use of web technologies to make available data/information more accessible/useful.
- l. B. Milne: Forest certification --> need access for land managers to legal requirements including
 - Global treaties
 - Federal acts
 - State statutes
 - Local ordinancesRole: Maintain updated 'legal registrar' that would provide land managers with relevant information.
Need: Forest certification programs require this.
- m. T. Houghtaling: Climate change impact on forests
 - Role: Not sure
 - Need: Can individual or collective FIA plot data, over decades of measurement, shed any light on global climate theories?
- n. J. Marshall: Web-based wood marketing. Consider efficiencies, fair prices. Requires knowledgeable landowners or advisors to them.
- o. Misc: IIC can help SFI/FSC certificate holders meet requirements for data collection, monitoring, and evaluation.

Wrap Up

Alan Ek: This input is extensive and detailed; it will be compiled, combined with that from earlier meetings, synthesized, and become the basis for IIC direction. Your considerable input is very much appreciated.

[Minutes end]