

Planning Process Participant Survey

Northeast Landscape Plan Revision

Minnesota Forest Resources Council



December 2014



Executive Summary

Under guidance from the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA, Minnesota Statute 89A) the Minnesota Forest Resources Council's Northeast Regional Landscape Committee created a comprehensive *Forest Resources Management Plan* for Northeast Minnesota, which was completed in 2003. In 2011, the Northeast Committee initiated revision of the original plan. This revision, titled *Northeast Landscape Forest Resources Plan*, was completed by the Northeast Planning Committee and approved by the Council in September 2014.

At the request of the Council's Landscape Committee, MFRC staff undertook an evaluation of participant views on the plan revision process in November and December 2014. Participants in the planning process were surveyed on the appropriateness of the number and frequency of planning meetings, adequacy of available resources, fairness of the decision-making process, length of participation, impact on personal knowledge of the region, usefulness of the technical supporting documents created, satisfaction with the plan's components, and overall satisfaction with the planning process and final plan. The results of this participant survey are intended to inform future plan revision processes in both Northeast Minnesota and other MFRC landscape regions.

Thirty-three of fifty-six (58.9%) of surveyed participants completed the survey. The results of each survey question are detailed in this report, including all comments provided by respondents. Survey respondents represented a diversity of interests and a wide range of years of experience participating in landscape committee functions, with many clustered at the ends of the range, their timelines coinciding with development of the first and second generation landscape plans.

Overall, respondent satisfaction with the final planning products was higher than the rate of satisfaction with the process used to create these products. Nearly 72% of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the final plan document. This contrasted with only 46% of respondents expressing satisfaction with the planning process. Throughout the survey, participants were given several opportunities to comment on various aspects of the planning process and products and to provide recommendations for future planning efforts; many provided detailed responses, which are summarized in Section 3 of this report.

The results of this survey may be used to streamline future efforts by the MFRC Landscape Program. Further, the observations and recommendations from participants suggest that adequately funding the MFRC to develop future landscape plans could help improve the delivery of pertinent information to planning committees, reduce overreliance on outside funding sources, and shorten the planning process.

Section 1

Introduction and Methods



Under guidance from the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA, Minnesota Statute 89A) the Minnesota Forest Resources Council's Northeast Regional Landscape Committee created a comprehensive *Forest Resources Management Plan* for Northeast Minnesota, which was completed in 2003. In 2011, the Northeast Committee initiated revision of the original plan. This revision, titled *Northeast Landscape Forest Resources Plan*, was completed by the Northeast Planning Committee and MFRC staff and approved by the Council in September 2014.

At the request of the Council, MFRC staff undertook an evaluation of participant views on the plan revision process and final products in November and December 2014. Participants in the planning process were surveyed on the appropriateness of the number and frequency of planning meetings, adequacy of available resources, fairness of the decision-making process, length of participation, impact on personal knowledge of the region, usefulness of the technical supporting documents created, satisfaction with the plan's components, and overall satisfaction with the planning process and final plan.

Surveys were completed online. Surveys were sent to 56 participants, which included persons who had attended at least one planning meeting since December 2011. This report contains the results of the survey. The feedback provided by participants is intended to help improve the plan revision processes for the other landscape regions.

Section 2

Results



Of the 56 participants surveyed, 33 responded for a response rate of 58.9%. The survey contained three parts: 1) background information on the participants, 2) evaluation of the planning process, and 3) evaluation of products. The questions for each part are presented below as they appeared in the survey, along with a summary of the responses received for each question and a brief explanation of the results. “N” refers to the number of responses for each question.

Part 1: Participant Background Information

Question 1. What interest did you represent during the Plan revision process? Please choose the interest that fits best.

Respondents represented a wide range of interests; nine of twelve listed interests were represented (excluding logging, consulting forestry, and recreation/tourism), and two other interests were listed as well (logger education; supplier). State agencies and environmental/conservation organizations had the most representatives among respondents.

Forest products industry	4
Logging	0
Consulting forestry	0
Private landowners	3
Environmental/Conservation organizations	6
Recreation/Tourism	0
Federal agency	3
Tribal agency	2
State agency	7
Regional or local agency	3
Research and higher education	2
Interested community member	1
Other (fill in)	2

n=33

Note: “Other” roles listed: Logger education; supplier; “SWCD” was written in by a respondent that had already listed “state agency” as his/her interest.

Question 2. How long have you been participating in MFRC regional landscape committee functions?

Length of respondent participation in regional landscape committee functions was bimodal – 39% of respondents had been involved in committee functions less than 3 years and 33% had

been involved more than 10 years. These timelines coincide with the second and first planning processes, respectively.

<1 year	2
1-3 years	11
3-5 years	3
5-10 years	6
>10 years	11

n=33

Question 3. Did you participate in the process to create the first generation of the Northeast Landscape Plan?

Only six respondents (18%) had participated in the first generation Northeast planning process, indicating that some of those involved for the longest amount of time with committee functions (see Question 2 above) were not involved with the original planning process itself.

Yes	6
No	27

n=33

Part 2: Participant Evaluation of the Planning Process

Question 4. Approximately how many of the Plan revision meetings did you attend (including subcommittee meetings and meetings that were held by conference call or video conference)?

Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across the spectrum of meeting attendance. As only 12.1% of respondents attended the greatest number of meetings (this would include Planning Subcommittee meetings), results indicate that most participants entered the process late, left early, attended initial planning meetings but not Subcommittee meetings toward the end, or attended sporadically throughout the process.

Number of planning meetings attended	Respondents
1 to 5	5
6 to 10	4
11 to 15	7
16 to 20	7
21 to 25	6
>26	4

n=33

Question 5. How appropriate was the total number of Plan revision meetings?

The majority (87.5%) of respondents felt that there were too many meetings. A few respondents (12.5%) felt that the number of meetings was ‘about right’ and no respondents felt that there were too few meetings.

Too few	0
About right	4
Too many	28

n=32

Question 6. How appropriate was the frequency of Plan revision meetings?

However, though most respondents felt there were too many meetings, many felt that the frequency of meetings was ‘about right’ (68.8%) with the remainder nearly split between feeling meeting frequency was too frequent (18.8%) or too infrequent (12.5%).

Too infrequent	4
About right	22
Too frequent	6

n=32

Question 7. Please indicate years when you attended meetings for the Plan revision process (mark all that apply).

Among the 33 respondents, meeting attendance peaked in 2013 (31), falling slightly by 2014 (26). It should be noted that a Subcommittee was created in March 2014 and contained a smaller group of participants from the initial Planning Committee; however, five Planning Committee meetings (including one conference call) were held in 2014.

2012	29
2013	31
2014	26

n=33

Question 8. If you ceased attending meetings at some point before the Plan was finalized, please indicate your reason(s) for ceasing to attend (mark all that apply).

Seven respondents ceased meeting attendance before the Plan was finalized; several listed multiple reasons for doing so. The most common answer was “Frustrated with process/length of process”. Cost to attend was not a reason for ceasing attendance for any respondent. “Other” reasons listed included: “only attended when my presence was requested/useful”; “Content grew beyond my knowledge base”; “interests were represented by others”; “It was frustrating to start without any background data and information to review”; “Change in position.”

No longer had time	2
Cost to attend was prohibitive	0
Frustrated with process/length of process	4
Change in personal or organizational priorities	2
Disagreed with Plan direction	1
Didn't find the process of interest or value	1
Other	5

n=7

Note: Some respondents listed multiple reasons for ceasing attendance.

Question 9. How would you rate the decision-making process used to develop the Plan?

Approximately half (51.5%) of respondents felt that the decision-making process was very or somewhat fair; 36.4% felt that the process was very or somewhat unfair, and 12.1% of respondents had no opinion or were unsure.

Very fair	5
Somewhat fair	12
Somewhat unfair	9
Very unfair	3
Not sure/no opinion	4

n=33

A comment box was supplied for this question. Eleven participants provided comments. [Note: The respondents' answers to Question 9 are noted in brackets at the end of their comments]:

- Mostly fair, but some decisions seemed to be made by insiders or side groups/interests [Somewhat fair]
- Problem was there was NO decision-making process until the last few months. Lots of discussions but no decisions [Somewhat fair]
- Once decision making processes were adequately defined later on (2/3 vote method was defined) [Somewhat fair]
- As it appeared to me, a new learner. [Very unfair]
- Process was too long. [Not sure/no opinion]
- Mostly it was unclear rather than unfair, but improved over the course of plan development [Somewhat unfair]
- Was not always clear how team discussions and decisions did or did not make it into various document drafts. [Somewhat fair]
- Nature Conservancy threw the whole process off track. [Somewhat unfair]
- The industry has the capacity to pay people to participate in this process, so they'll always be present. [Somewhat unfair]

- It was too fair, too much compromise and concession resulted in a plan that most consider "weak" [Very fair]
- Very confusing decision process; not clear how decisions were made for the majority of the planning process [Somewhat unfair]

Question 10. Were there adequate resources (data, maps, research, presentations, staffing, etc.) provided by the Council to support the planning process?

Approximately half (51.5%) of respondents felt that resources provided by the Council were adequate to support the planning process. 24.2% felt that the resources provided were more than adequate, 12.1% felt resources were not adequate, and 12.1% did not know.

More than adequate	8
Adequate	17
Not Adequate	4
Don't know	4

n=33

Participants were prompted to “Please briefly explain your response,” and a box was provided. Eleven participants provided responses. A common theme seemed to be an excess of information (5 comments), the applicability of which was unclear to respondents (4 comments). [Note: The respondents’ answers to Question 9 are noted in brackets at the end of their comments]:

- We spend WAY too much time gathering and presenting info that ultimately wasn't used in decision making. [More than adequate]
- MFRC staff had too many regional plans to work on at once... [Not adequate]
- Nothing to compare to, new learning experience for me. [Don't know]
- It seemed like decisions were made by the group but not recorded and incorporated into the next version so the review of info revealed the same comments. This got better towards the end. A dedicated staff to taking notes and making changes all the way through would have been good. [Not adequate]
- Process was so long maps changed. [Adequate]
- Some of this was information overload, at the expense of getting input and conversation from committee members [More than adequate]
- It was a deluge of detailed data, difficult to understand and difficult to see how it all applied, or if it applied. [More than adequate]
- There was too much information. Less but more focused information would have been better. [More than adequate]
- Good job in this regard. [Adequate]
- Preparatory documentation should have been shared before the very first meeting. [Not adequate]
- In some cases way too much data/maps/etc., but in many cases not the right or pertinent info [Adequate]

Question 11. What impact, if any, did your participation in the Plan revision process have on your knowledge of sustainable forestry issues?

A slight majority of participants (53.1%) expressed a minor increase in knowledge of sustainable forestry issues from their involvement in the planning process. 46.9% expressed a great or moderate increase in knowledge. Only two respondents (6.3%) expressed no increase in knowledge.

Great increase in knowledge	5
Moderate increase in knowledge	8
Minor increase in knowledge	17
No increase in knowledge	2
Relative knowledge increase*	2.5

n=32

*Note: Relative knowledge increase was calculated by weighting level of knowledge increase according to the following: Great increase=4; Moderate increase=3; Minor increase=2; No increase=1. The sum of the weighted totals was divided by the number of respondents for the question (non-response removed from total “n”).

Question 12. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the Plan revision process:

A slight majority of respondents (54.5%) were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the planning process; 45.5% were very or somewhat satisfied with the process.

Very satisfied	2
Somewhat satisfied	13
Somewhat dissatisfied	10
Very dissatisfied	8
Relative satisfaction*	2.27

n=33

*Note: Relative satisfaction was calculated by weighting the level of satisfaction according to the following: Very satisfied=4; Somewhat satisfied=3; Somewhat dissatisfied=2; Very dissatisfied=1. The sum of the weighted totals was divided by the number of respondents for this question (non-response removed from total “n”). The relative neutral midpoint is 2.5.

Question 13. Do you have any comments about the Plan revision process, including any recommendations for improving future Landscape Plan revision processes?

Twenty participants (60%) responded to this question. Their answers to Question 12 are included in the second column. Broadly, most comments reflected one of four themes: scope of the plan and the role of background information; decision-making process; participant dynamics; role of staff.

- **Scope of the plan and the role of background information** – Respondents expressed that there was too much background information and too much time spent on this phase of the process, suggesting that future processes focus on “key elements of the plan” and on fine-tuning the scope and content of the plan earlier on in the process. One respondent

suggested aligning plan revision timing with the release of key data updates, such as the Forest Inventory Analysis.

- **Decision-making process** – Respondents expressed a need for a clear decision-making process to be established at the beginning, the absence of which led to confusion over roles/ground rules later on; a few respondents mentioned that this improved toward the end of the process. Some respondents suggested dealing with contentious or controversial issues earlier in the process to avoid division later on.
- **Participant dynamics** – Some respondents expressed concern that certain groups (e.g. industry, The Nature Conservancy) had too much influence over the process, or that some interest groups needed more representation (e.g. landowners, recreational interests, other environmental groups). Several respondents expressed confusion or disappointment over the role of the University of Minnesota early in the process.
- **Staff role** – A couple respondents expressed a desire for more listening from staff regarding participant input; one of these respondents also recognized the hard work that staff put into a difficult process, including balancing diverse opinions. Other comments suggested stronger leadership from staff during meetings, with one respondent suggesting hiring professional facilitation. One respondent noted the need to “adequately fund MFRC staff to complete the process.”

Question 13 response	Question 12 response
Needed to go into the process with a clear understanding of what Plan would address and how decisions would be made. Spent far too much time (1.5 years) with people making information presentations and not nearly enough time reaching consensus or making decisions on what we would do. The last 3 months of the process were a great improvement over the previous meetings and accomplishments, only because TNC, Superior NF, and others refused to go forward until a more meaningful plan was developed.	Somewhat dissatisfied
We really didn't need all of the background info. Most members were already informed. Or maybe have briefer info sessions and more discussion about the info presented and it's relevancy to the plan. I would have preferred getting down to the business of writing the plan sooner and making revisions along the way. It also felt like if industry didn't like something, then they ruled the day, even though they were a small fraction of the participants and landowner base.	Somewhat satisfied
It seemed like the process went for a long time in "information gathering" mode, perhaps before some hard decisions were made about the scope and content of the plan. I wonder if focusing on some key issues and structure/content decisions at the outset would have reduced the number of purely informational meetings.	Somewhat dissatisfied
It sounded like there was a significant amount of time spent not getting at the heart of the matter-so the total time to revise the plan stretched out and then the last few months had the intensive work done to get some consensus, improve the plan and add/change/drop content. Also, identify explicit decision making processes and other ground rules early on.	Somewhat satisfied
Shorten timeframe. Line up revision with data set update schedule e.g. FIA	Very dissatisfied
Find more landowners to participate and recreational interest like Sugarloaf Cove.	Very satisfied

<p>We were derailed and severely handicapped by the Boreal group in the beginning, for the first year. The process was very unclear for a long time. We were hijacked by the industry interests - "Do it my way or I am leaving" attitude which held up progress many times and frustrated many other participants - They were bullies in the process and many times held up progress. More strength and control were needed through the whole time, but it improved greatly the last year. A much sharper vision of the process and end goal were needed from the beginning. There were way too many examples from other regions used. Our region people don't have any knowledge of the other plans so using them as examples was distracting and not helpful. There was way too much talk about the process - How long it takes or how technical it is etc. - Rather than just moving on. This group is all pros, we were in this process for a long time, so we did not need to be told over and over how hard it is etc. This, too, was distracting and very time consuming.</p>	Somewhat dissatisfied
<p>At most of the meetings I attended, we were the only environmental group represented. Perhaps there is a need to put more effort in obtaining interest from that sector. As an amateur, I often found the discussions among professionals enlightening and intimidating at once. If I am still around when the next one comes along, I will be more prepared to grasp not only the science, but the complicated politics of the forest stakeholders.</p>	Somewhat satisfied
<p>Obviously the boreal group involvement was confusing and somewhat distracting but out of MFRC control. The information from experts was good but in the end did not weigh heavily into the plan.</p>	Somewhat satisfied
<p>Complete the process in less than a year. When a plan review process takes longer than a year people lose interest and the plan loses its value. Planning is essential but perpetual planning is counter-productive.</p>	Somewhat dissatisfied
<p>Adequately fund MFRC Staff to complete the process, the efforts of UMN in the beginning were a very poor use of time and resources.</p>	Very satisfied
<p>This was certainly a difficult task to undertake, and it's clear that the staff worked very hard. The time needed to complete analyses between meetings was often underestimated, and staff wisely cancelled a few meetings rather than be unprepared. The staff did a good job of managing diverse opinions and grandstanding on positions. My most important comment is that the staff needs to do less talking and more listening, with a good process for recording participant input. I expect the staff will learn from all this, and the next round will go more smoothly!</p>	Somewhat satisfied
<p>Have a clear plan for process and a timeline. Stick with the key elements of a plan and get rid of extraneous information. There were many presentations, but much of it was only indirectly relevant. The plan and other information should be informed by the best science and not opinions of some stakeholders.</p>	Very dissatisfied
<p>One participant should not have had the ability to trash the work of all the others. Nature Conservancy attended plenty of meetings prior to claiming that the plan was inadequate.</p>	Somewhat dissatisfied
<p>Collected data and research should be systematically organized and shared with attendees prior to the first meeting. Staff should consider management policy issues and make recommendations prior to each meeting to kick start discussion and direction. All leadership does not need to originate with the participants.</p>	Very dissatisfied
<p>Way too much time invested in what turned out in the end to be a "mushy" product that is too inclusive to set a real direction for the forest. Should have been more emphasis on real decisions and discussion of controversial elements of the plan from the start. U of M process failed but should not have trusted a group of grad students and post docs to "lead"</p>	Very dissatisfied

<p>a somewhat controversial process. MFRC leadership and facilitation was not strong enough. Should have invested in professional consultant with expert facilitation skills maybe could have gotten it done in 8-10 meetings. Documents being created and sent around was absolute mess, very frustrating, >100 documents created and attempted shared, edited. Again, better facilitation and process management would have resulted in only critical documents and less dilution of peoples' ideas and energy</p>	
<p>These plans--and this landscape in particular--have some contentious issues amongst those taking part in the process. In the end some of the delays were due to dealing with that contention rather late in the process. Developing a decision process up front, identifying issues of contention and dealing with them earlier can help. Also with two plans completed I might suggest FRC more aggressively promote a process which reviews earlier plans for changes/updates the next time. That coupled with a clearer picture of what the plan will look like up front can help avoid the late format changes that delayed this plan. Anything that has general support with no apparent controversy should be resolved and moved past faster--another time sink was re-editing of already reviewed information.</p>	Somewhat dissatisfied
<p>Focused too narrowly</p>	Somewhat dissatisfied
<p>Strong start. Good intentions. Ultimately succumbed to outdated thinking / processes about how to best advance the agenda. When things get contentious, the reflex is to circle the wagons and create a small inter circle...that is what seemed to happen in this process. Increasingly, as time passed, I felt I had no idea what was going on, who was driving the process, how decisions were being made, and what my role was (if I even had one besides populating the process). It became frustrating and then worse. I was happy to step out when I did despite my early enthusiasm and excitement about the concept and process. My main regret is that the product will only reflect the perspectives of those who controlled the process and those who stuck around (maybe the same group).</p>	Very dissatisfied
<p>Decision process needs to be clear from the beginning. Facilitator needs to talk less and listen more, and make it clear how input is being used.</p>	Very dissatisfied

n=20

Part 3: Participant Evaluation of the Planning Products

Question 14. Several technical background documents were prepared to support the Plan revision process. Please rate the usefulness of each of these documents to that process.

Of the seven technical background documents prepared to support the planning process, respondents found the Resource Atlas/maps to be the most useful, followed by the Conditions and Trends Report and the NRRRI report on Native Plant Communities. Respondents found the Demographic Data Report and the Forest Policy Inventory to be the least useful compared to the other reports; these reports also had the highest rate of unawareness/non-response.

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Unaware of document	No response	Relative usefulness ('unaware' excluded)*
Resource Atlas (Maps)	14	17	0	1	1	2.45
Conditions and Trends Report	14	14	3	1	1	2.35
Demographic Data Report	10	11	8	2	2	2.07
Forest Policy Inventory	6	17	4	3	3	2.07
Geospatial Modeling of Native Plant Communities of Minnesota's Laurentian Mixed Forest (NRRI)	14	14	3	1	1	2.35
Northeast Minnesota Forestry Analysis (UMN - Bureau of Business and Economic Research)	8	21	3	0	1	2.16
Northeast Minnesota Forestry Analysis: 10-Year Projections (UMD - Bureau of Business and Economic Research)	9	21	2	0	1	2.22

n=33, less the non-response noted for each report.

*Note: Relative usefulness was calculated by weighting the usefulness assigned to each report according to the following: Very useful=3; Somewhat useful=2; Not useful=1. The sum of the weighted totals was divided by the number of respondents who were aware of each report (non-response and "unaware of document" responses removed from total "n").

Question 15. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following components of the final revised Plan.

Relative to other components of the plan, respondents were most satisfied with the background and supporting information component by a large margin. Respondents were least satisfied with the monitoring and evaluation component. With the exception of the monitoring and evaluation component, respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied with all components of the plan; average relative satisfaction was higher than the neutral midpoint (2.5) for these five of six components.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't Know	No response	Relative satisfaction ('don't know' excluded)*
Background and supporting information	9	20	1	0	2	1	3.27
Desired Future Conditions, Goals, Objectives	2	21	6	1	2	1	2.80
Vegetation Management Framework	4	17	4	2	4	2	2.85
Coordination and implementation	2	14	9	1	5	2	2.65
Monitoring and Evaluation	1	10	10	5	6	1	2.27
Recommendations to Partners	1	20	4	1	6	1	2.81

n=33, less the non-response noted for each report.

*Note: Relative satisfaction was calculated by weighting the level of satisfaction assigned to each plan section according to the following: Very satisfied=4; Somewhat satisfied=3; Somewhat dissatisfied=2; Very dissatisfied=1. The sum of the weighted totals was divided by the number of respondents who chose one of these four answers (non-response and "don't know" responses removed from total "n"). The relative neutral midpoint is 2.5.

Question 16. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the final revised Plan.

Overall, respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied with the final revised Plan: the majority of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the final product (71.9%); 28.1% were very or somewhat dissatisfied. The vast majority of respondents were closer to the midpoint in their responses (87.5% somewhat satisfied/dissatisfied) rather than at the extremes (12.5% very satisfied/dissatisfied).

Very satisfied	3
Somewhat satisfied	20
Somewhat dissatisfied	8
Very dissatisfied	1
Relative satisfaction*	2.78

n=32

*Note: Relative satisfaction was calculated by weighting the level of satisfaction assigned to the plan according to the following: Very satisfied=4; Somewhat satisfied=3; Somewhat dissatisfied=2; Very dissatisfied=1. The sum of the weighted totals was divided by the number of respondents who chose one of these four answers (non-response removed from total "n"). The relative neutral midpoint is 2.5.

Question 17. Do you have any comments about the Plan revision products, including any recommendations for improving future Landscape Plan revision products?

Eleven participants responded to this question. Their answers to Question 12 are included in the second column. Most comments related either to the presentation of information for developing the plan itself or to thoughts on the implementation of the plan.

- **Presentation of information** – These comments included: a) the observations that too much time was spent on information presentations when the Committee should have focused on consensus-building issues earlier and gotten to the plan-building phase sooner, rather than developing “the most useful parts of the plan... during very few meetings and under intense deadline pressure”; b) a need for further development of measurable goals as well as implementation and monitoring components.
- **Implementation committee** – A few comments reflected the hope that the Implementation Committee could further develop/prioritize some of the weaker components expressed above.
- **Future of plan implementation** - Respondents expressed positive and negative thoughts about the future of the plan. One respondent had no plans to be involved in future plan-related efforts due to disappointment with the planning process, and another expressed concern over the usefulness of plans generally, in light of political pressures; however, two respondents expressed the desire for the plan to be used by regional partners. One of these latter respondents had already used the plan.

I believe that Plan could have been much improved if the team was allowed to begin building and reviewing the plan much earlier in the process. Instead of spending time listening to information presentations (info that was ultimately not really used or necessary) we could have been putting more time into building a better plan. As it was, the most useful parts of the plan were developed during very few meetings and under intense deadline pressure. I still believe it is a good and useful plan and I hope it is used by all entities in the landscape. I just feel that it could have been so much better than it is if we had started plan development much earlier and left of many of the "information presentations"	Somewhat satisfied
Further work developing monitoring questions and protocols and figuring out how to crosswalk/adopt Native Plant Communities to as many management plans as possible is important... To improve future plan revision efforts, consider what activities will help people understand key issues and arrive at as much consensus as possible...cut out any 'fluff' meetings and make that pre-work reading. Establish ground rules early on including how decisions are made.	Somewhat satisfied
The 1st plan and the second plan are in reality a very small fraction of time in relation to forest management. When looking at the impacts of the 1st plan we can't really tell whether the plan made an impact. In the meantime agencies are making management decisions based on political pressures i.e. DNR's trust land management guidelines. And on the other end of the spectrum is the snails pace of management on USFS lands due to the constraints of NEPA and the federal decision-making processes.	Somewhat satisfied
The learning opportunity was a very valuable to me a landowner. More folks that are owners need to included in the process.	Very satisfied
Last used 2 days ago as a reference to the North Shore Forest Collaborative Executive	Somewhat

Committee meeting - It will be useful. It will be important to maintain and add reference materials.	satisfied
No	Very satisfied
Not happy with the way the process went at the very end. Feel I wasted a lot of time and energy attending meetings to reach consensus with all parties only to have one party trash it in the end. To pull together a small committee to re-visit everything was very disappointing. To be honest, I dropped out at that point and did not waste any more of my time reviewing the plan or the finished product. I won't be participating any future plan reacted activities.	Somewhat dissatisfied
Indicated very dissatisfied for items in 15 because I don't think it was necessary to spend time on them. Monitoring is very necessary to spend time on but without specific, measurable DFCs, Goals, Objectives, the monitoring plan can't be very good. Should spend less time on Analysis (most of us know what it is going to say and no big changes as a result) and focus on DFCs, Goals, Objectives. I know there can't be consensus, so find sticking points early, if there will be gridlock on some issues then you know you have no choice but to put out a very consensus based "soft" plan so do it fast instead of taking tons of time and end up with "soft" plan anyway.	Somewhat dissatisfied
I thought the plan ended up being a bit weak in the monitoring and specific suggested direction to partners areas. I believe this raises the importance of the implementation committee's work in addressing issues of contention or not fully resolved during the process.	Somewhat satisfied
I never saw the final revised plan.	Very dissatisfied
It is so general that I'm not sure how it will really guide anything. I hope the implementation committee can set some priorities for specific activities that can be implemented and monitored.	Somewhat dissatisfied

Section 3

Summary and Recommendations



Survey respondents represented a diversity of interests and a wide range of years of experience participating in landscape committee functions, with many clustered at the ends of the range, their timelines coinciding with development of the first and second generation landscape plans.

Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across the spectrum of meeting attendance, with only a small percentage remaining involved through the greatest number of meetings. This indicates that most participants entered the process late, left early, attended initial planning meetings but not Subcommittee meetings toward the end, or attended sporadically throughout the process. For those that did leave the process prior to 2014 – the year the plan was completed and the year of lowest respondent attendance – the most common reason given was that they were frustrated with the process and/or length of the process. A large majority of respondents felt that there were too many meetings, but also felt that the frequency of these meetings was about right.

Approximately one-half of the respondents felt that the decision-making process was very or somewhat fair, while the remainder felt the process was very or somewhat unfair (about one-third), or they had no opinion. In the comments, respondents expressed a lack of clarity over the decision-making process, which seemed to improve for some toward the end of the planning process. Others felt that certain interest groups had too much influence over the process.

Approximately one-half of respondents felt that the resources provided by the Council were adequate to support the planning process, while one-fourth of respondents felt that resources were more than adequate. In the comments, participants from this latter category stated that there was both an excess of information and unclear applicability for this information. However, nearly all participants felt they gained some amount of knowledge on sustainable forestry issues through their participation in the planning process, with the majority expressing a minor increase in knowledge and the average relative knowledge increase falling evenly between minor and moderate for all respondents.

Respondents found the technical background documents to be useful to varying degrees. The most useful document was the Resource Atlas (maps), followed by the Conditions and Trends Report and the NRRRI report on Native Plant Communities. Respondents found the Demographic Data Report and the Forest Policy Inventory to be the least useful compared to the other reports. A few respondents were unaware of certain documents or did not respond to the question, indicating that there needs to be more effort made to ensure that all documents are well-distributed during the planning process. In terms of the components of the final plan itself, with the exception of the monitoring and evaluation component respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied with all components of the final plan; they were most satisfied with the background and supporting information component.

Overall, respondent satisfaction with the final planning products was higher than the rate of satisfaction with the process used to create these products. Nearly 72% of respondents were very

or somewhat satisfied with the final plan document. This contrasted with only 46% of respondents expressing satisfaction with the planning process. Throughout the survey, participants were given several opportunities to comment on various aspects of the planning process and products and to provide recommendations for future planning efforts; many provided detailed responses.

Many respondents expressed concerns relating to excessive information with unclear relevance and to the length of the overall planning process. Suggestions for improving the utility of background information and focusing the process included narrowing the scope of information to better address key points relevant to the plan revision; collecting and distributing background information prior to initiation of the plan-writing process; and establishing and adhering to a timeline. As mentioned above, respondents also expressed concerns over the decision-making process and participant dynamics, including concerns over potentially unequal representation or undue influence from certain interest groups. Suggestions for improving these dynamics included clearly defining decision-making processes at the beginning of the planning process; ensuring that all interested parties are represented fairly; identifying and addressing points of contention early in the process; and defining a clear means of listening to, recording, and incorporating participant feedback and reducing/focusing the resulting follow-up documentation provided to participants.

Regarding future plan products, survey respondents suggested more thoroughly developing monitoring questions and protocols in the final plan. For example, one respondent suggested that more effort should be made on establishing how to “crosswalk” the Native Plant Communities framework presented in the landscape plan with the management plans of partners in the region. Another respondent suggested that the final plan document could have been much improved if the Planning Committee had been allowed to begin building and reviewing the plan components much earlier in the process instead of spending time listening to information presentations. In future landscape planning processes, allowing more focused time on developing monitoring questions earlier in the planning process may result in further development of measurable goals, meaningful implementation strategies, and final monitoring components.

The results of this survey may be used to streamline future efforts by the MFRC Landscape Program. Further, the observations and recommendations from participants suggest that adequately funding the MFRC to develop future landscape plans could help improve the delivery of pertinent information to planning committees, reduce overreliance on outside funding sources, and shorten the planning process.