

**Minutes of Harvest Classification Committee**  
**Meeting #1, March 22, 2006**  
**Nutting Hall 204**

*Attendance: Bob Wagner, Bob Seymour, Jeremy Wilson, Mike Saunders, Kenny Fergusson, Laura Kenefic, Doug Denico*

The committee defined the purpose of the proposed Harvest Classification System (HCS):

**Purpose:** *Develop a method for classifying forest harvests that will improve communications among forest resource professionals.*

Potential other benefits include:

- 1) Facilitate projections of future dynamics of Maine's forests
- 2) Facilitate habitat classification of Maine's forests
- 3) Improved interpretation of MFS harvest reports

The committee further defined the desirable attributes of a Harvest Classification System (HCS) that would be desirable:

**Attributes:**

1. Simple
2. Easy to use
3. Objective (i.e., does not include "values" or "predictions" of future)
4. Descriptive (i.e., does not include intention of harvest prescription)
5. Avoids use of classical silvicultural terminology, which include intentions and generate public perceptions of "good" or "bad" harvesting
6. Captures key characteristics of harvest for projecting stand dynamics (?)
7. Used shortly after harvest while evidence is still visible
8. Useful to practicing foresters
9. Should be able to use FIA data to classify harvest (?)

The committee spent most of the time identifying the key variables that would need to be included in a HCS:

**Scale of measurement** – The committee felt that the HCS should describe the harvest effects at:

- The scale of a forest stand, and
- To trees >4 inches DBH

**Key Variables:**

- Preharvest forest type (H, S, SH, HS) and list top 3 species
- Residual stand composition (H, S, SH, HS) and list top 3 species
- Pattern of harvest - Dispersed vs. Aggregated (strip or patch or other)

- [Other thoughts = Uniform vs. gap vs. strip (linear, grouped or uniform OR aggregated or dispersed in terms of either residuals or removals) ]
- Ending BA (<5, 5-30, 30-50, 50-70, 70-100, 100+)
- % Removal w/trails (0-25, 25-50, 50-75, 75-90, 90-100)
- % Trails (5-10, 10-20, 20+)
- Removal from upper, middle, lower 1/3 of DBH distribution
  - [or all DBH class (mean diameter change, above vs. below)]
- Species or species groups selected for by the harvest? (Yes or No?)
  - If Yes: Residual stand shift to Hardwood or Softwood
- Tree regeneration >4.5' tall abundant = present or absent
- Tree regeneration <4.5' tall abundant = present or absent
- Other ideas: Quality or vigor of residual stand?

**Next steps:**

Wagner, Seymour, and Saunders to:

- Organize categories into a reasonable format and develop a draft classification approach using the above key variables
- Categorize stands from PEF study in a spreadsheet (see how archival types are classified)

The next meeting will be **April 11, 1-5 pm** on the UMaine campus to review progress made to further develop the above ideas.

Once the committee has a feasible classification scheme, we will develop a plan to field test it and expand the circle of reviewers.

*Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM*

**Charter of the “Maine Forest Harvesting Description and Classification Task Force”  
Adopted by Unanimous Vote at the March 21, 2006 MESAF ExCom meeting  
Robert S. Seymour, MESAF Chair**

**Preamble:**

At the Fall, 2005 Annual Meeting, MESAF members urged the Executive Committee to draft a white paper on the subject of forest harvesting. Over the course of the meeting, it became obvious that many widely used terms, particularly “partial cutting” and related practices, are often so ambiguous so as to lack any meaningful interpretation among professionals. In general, it was believed that such a white paper would be helpful to the membership in communicating about this complex topic, as well as serve the Maine Forest Service in their legislatively mandated role of tracking trends in forest harvesting across the State of Maine.

**Charge:**

The Forest Practices Committee shall attempt to devise a system for describing and classifying all forest harvesting activities in the State of Maine. The ideal outcome would be a decision tree, similar to a dichotomous key for identifying botanical organisms, that allows any harvest to be clearly and unambiguously described to another professional forester. To the extent possible, this harvest classification system should:

- ✓ Use established mensurational criteria and silvicultural terminology to the extent possible. [References here shall be to the Helms’ Dictionary of Forestry published in 1998 and the document “Silvicultural Terminology” prepared by the Silvicultural Instructors’ Subgroup of SAF Working Group D2, dated 1994.]
- ✓ Be as *descriptive* as possible based on objective, observable criteria, not *prescriptive*, in the sense that one would need to know the forester’s or landowner’s intent.
- ✓ Apply to harvests immediately after their completion, in the sense that long-term stand-development resulting from the treatment does not influence how they are described and classified.

The Committee should consider publishing the system as a peer-reviewed article in the Northern Journal of Applied Forestry.

**Timetable:**

The Committee should have a draft available for discussion and critical review from the MESAF membership for the Spring Meeting (June 8, 2006) where it will be partially “field tested.” The committee will report to the membership at the Fall Meeting in October, after which the draft will be posted on the MESAF website for an extended comment period (until Dec. 1) by all members. A final version of the white paper should be completed by the end of 2006, and submitted for publication.

**Membership:**

Bob Wagner (Chair), Jeremy Wilson, Laura Kenefic, Kenny Ferguson, Doug Denico, Mike Saunders, and Bob Seymour (MESAF chair) *ex officio*.