

IFDC - MINUTES OF MEETING

Date and time: November 12, 2015: 10:00 a.m. -- 2:00 p.m.

Location: Southern Illinois University – Agricultural Sciences Learning Center: 3268 Pleasant Hill Rd, Carbondale, IL 62901

Participants: Bill Gradle (Director, IFDC), Stan Curtis (Forest Industry), Elliot Lagacy (IDOA), Wade Conn (NRCS), Chris Whittom (IDNR), Jim Zaczek (SIUC), Tom Wilson (IDNR), Mike McMahan (IFA), Stephanie Brown (IFA), Karla Gage (SIUC), Reinee Hildebrandt (IDNR) 11:10 a.m., Steve Ludwig (Arborist Association)-by phone.

Transcription: Patti Cludray

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome

- Meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Jim Zaczek.
- Roll call of those in attendance.
- Copies of Meeting Agenda, Previous Minutes (July 9, 2015) -no meeting held in September 2015.

Past Minutes

- July 2015 minutes reviewed.
- Stan Curtis made motion to approve minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Mike McMahan; Jim Zaczek called for any discussion- no corrections or additions. Motion Carried.

SIU -Illinois Forestry Development Council 2015 Budget Analysis

- Copy of the IFDC FY 2015 Financial Report were distributed to members, with details of expenditures from 09/02/14 through 08/10/15.
- Patti Cludray presented the budget numbers according to the SIUC accounting office for the SIUC – IFDC account as of November 1, 2015: \$198,835 starting budget - \$63,759 paid to date which should leave \$135,066* available. However currently there is an account deficit due to payments yet to be received from the State of Illinois.
 - It is noted that this amount* does not reflect special grant amounts that have been committed which have not been paid.
- Jim Zaczek notes that Bill Gradle, IFDC Director, has received a lay-off notice; unfortunately, SIUC has made a decision to lay-off/terminate all personnel who's salaries are through State grants. If money is released by the State then personnel can be re-hired, if they are still available to fill the positions.
- Stephanie Brown questions – should we be ready to spend the remainder of this budget.
- Bill was asked to give a report of grants to be paid.
 - \$41,674 was approved for 13 grants.
 - 3 projects were never completed (i.e. Jay Hayak – workshop not completed; Eric Holzmueller-not completed?; Urban Committee (UC) \$4,500 project never finished.
- Stephanie Brown reports concerning the UC project; the Urban Committee met last week – some of the

items that had financing attached could not be completed by the June 30th deadline so they could not be carried out.

- Jim Zaczek questioned, is there any way to carry over this funding.
- Tom Wilson answered, no there is no carryover. However, if the IFDC funding is released by the State it will be available to use by June 30, 2016,
- Stephanie Brown suggests a project that might be able to meet that timeline would be the printing of an Educational Program for wide distribution.
 - i.e. in packets given to landowners as an insert with their tax information.
 - i.e. a Forest Action Plan could be printed and mailed to landowners – this could be done very quickly and printed folders could be shared.
 - i.e. Selling Timber brochures – could also be printed for distribution.
- Jim Zaczek agrees, we need projects with a short turn around – so then the budget is released by the State they will be good to go.
 - Historical guideline of giving only 4 votes per member doesn't seem like enough;
 - How about ranking the proposal from 1 – 14? That way members can focus on proposals that most interest them. Only good doable projects should be considered, for example workshops.
 - Stephanie Brown agrees that workshops in May, for example, could be done, i.e. Oak awareness workshop

Update on State Budget and IDNR Issues

Tom Wilson opened discussion.

- No one really knows what is going on with the budget right now. Once budget is passed there will be no real obstacle to reimbursement.
- Kurt Bobsin, Regional Forester is retiring and unfortunately DNR will not be able to fill this position leaving Illinois with only one (1) Regional Forester until budget is approved.
- Regarding the Cost/Share – the money is there, however, it can't be accessed and bills can't be accepted right now. The money should be there when they are able to pay, but right now that is not an option.
- Bill Gradle asks about the Illinois Forestry Development Council member appointments.
 - Jim Zaczek notes that Karla Gage who is in attendance at today's meeting has completed a membership packet. Karla confirms that the packet is complete and she will be sending that in very soon.
 - Tom and Jim request that Bill send a list of appointees so they can be confirmed.
- DNR has a good volunteer fire crew. They had a great experience out west. The IL crew is part of the Midwest Wildfire Academy which in the past has been held in Missouri in May/June. IL may have the opportunity to bring this into IL, perhaps SIU. Asking Jim Zaczek to check with SIU about how they would like to be involved.
- Another positive, the Governor's office has agreed to support Forestry legislation. Usually money comes from the General Fund – Unfortunately that is why the State nurseries have lost their funding. Other funding sources, other than the General Fund are being explored such as:
 - Nurseries are considering charging for Nursery stock; Pollinator program is creating a lot of interest,

this would help with much needed funds; The hope is that in 2 -3 years the Nurseries will be self-sufficient.

- Stephanie Brown asks for clarifications that this will include both Nurseries, specifically Union County too? Tom: hopefully, but there are lots of issues to be considered.
- Stan Curtis asks, is there anyone stationed/working at Union County now? Tom: No, the water and electric have been turned off.

NOTE: 10:40(approx) Steve Ludwig joins meeting by phone. (after problems with phone on SIU end).

- Stephanie Brown comments, could an adaptive management strategy work; gave an example of the Sierra Club which is helping support Oak restoration; are there applicable groups to do workshops / help with Nurseries.
- Tom notes that the Nurseries are not the only ones with utility problems. All state offices are being affected. Turn off notices have been received; 10 million is owed for power bills etc.
- Stephanie reports that the Illinois Forestry Associate (IFA) has prepared a position statement offering its opinion on the closure of the State nurseries.
- Tom reports that Morton Arboretum is also a strong advocate for the Nurseries and they have powerful people on their side.

Status of Regional Conservation Partnership 2016 Final Proposal -Bill Gradle leads this discussion.

- Final proposal was due November 10, 2015.
 - IFDC report was submitted a week early. Report is windows based and Bill has a MAC but made due with alternative submission. Bill received confirmation that report was received however has not heard anything else yet.
- IFDC federal match has doubled which should strengthen our proposal. Asking for \$400,000 – practice application in Forestry. If our proposal is accepted then there will be a State allocation through NRCS-IL. 5 year time frame, there will be about 400K per year in extra equipment money available in Illinois for 37 counties. They are really trying to get the backlog cleared up.
- Bill notes, we won't know until January is our proposal is approved. Then will need to enter into an agreement which should be pretty straightforward.
- Steve Ellis – Whoever gets the equipment contract doesn't necessarily need to do what you want to do.
- Bill: we really need to be sure that the backlog is cleared up.
- Stephanie Brown adds that it is only right to take care of everyone who has gone through all the work.
- Final thoughts:
 - Bill, hopefully this isn't the only funding available. Tom Wilson confirms that other there are other sources for matching funds.
 - Committee members discuss speculate on aspects of proposal and what projects could benefit if proposal is accepted.

Committee Reports

Urban Committee Report – Steve Ludwig presenting.

- Current Projects:
 - IDNR trees project includes the labeling of trees at the state fairgrounds
 - Action Plan that was presented at the last meeting includes putting together a resource list to get work resources for volunteers.

NOTE: 11:35 Recording of the minutes is turned over to Jim Zaczek, while Patti Cludray excuses herself to make arrangements for / pick-up lunch.

- Continued support of IFA and certified arborists developing invasive species program by urban committee – foster a summit or large scale meeting bringing front-line people to that.
- The Action Plan document will be sent forward.
- At the IL Arborists Association meeting in October Steve provided approximately a 1 hour session for approx. 70 people about the Illinois Forestry Development Council which was very informative to the attendees. The sub-groups discussed the importance of education, community and more public service.
- There were questions about how to get appointees or nominations to serve on council. It was noted that there are many opportunities to participate on the Urban Committee.
- Bill Gradle asked Steve to forward Mr. Dilly's contact information to him.
- Renee adds that information about the brochure from Wisconsin; about how trees are important.
- The Urban Committee will meet again a week before the next IFDC meeting on January 14th.

Stewardship and Forest Legacy Report – Chris Whittom

- Forest Legacy: The same project as last year has been re-submitted (Riley Lake). Will try to do multiple properties as a package next year.
- Stewardship:
 - As liaison for the council Chris reports that the legal department a member of the IFDC will need to have a government email address for FOIA requests. If this is approved a council member will need to get an IL .gov email address. When conducting Council business – notes on government email.
 - Regarding Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) Section 1536 and Section 1537 – Question was asked where to get answers for questions submitted to JCAR?
- Bill asked about the status on revisions on Forest Action Plan; It is reported that Paul Diezman should know. Tom will be calling Paul to get an answer by the end of the month.
- Note regarding IFDC council voting. Of 29 members – 6 members are present.
 - Mike makes motion to serve as a committee as a whole. Stan Curtis seconds the motion.
- Further discussion commenced on a larger meeting (summit or forum, like 1999) of interested parties.
 - A round-table event – facilitated outcomes work to help guide the Council's work. Renee pointed out - Urban and Community Forestry incorporates large urban and rural communities. It is reported the Jen Behnken, Urban and Community Forestry – contract has not been renewed through SIUC, since the grant was dropped.

LUNCH

Lunch is provided by Stan Curtis, Carbondale Veneer. Thank you Stan.

NOTE: Recording of the minutes returned to Patti Cludray after lunch.

Discussion on Draft 2016 Request for Proposals Notice

FY 16 Request for Proposals (RFP) Document was distributed and discussed.

- Council approved work on the RFP however with the State budget issues this went nowhere.
- Chris Whittom: Reports getting a call from DNR at is was pointed out that the Council needs to be aware of an ethical point – specifically that of Council members submitting proposals for grant funding through the IFDC. An answer to this may be that a proposal review committee should be formed and made up of members who do not submit a proposal for consideration.
- This topic is open for Council discussion:
 - Tom Wilson: this could be the appropriate thing to do to avoid any conflicts of interest.
 - Stephanie Brown recognizes this could be a benefit for people on the review committee.
 - Tom notes that is true, however, many proposals are submitted for consideration without Council representation.
 - Stephanie Brown notes that as a council member who has presented proposals for consideration she appreciates the opportunity for presentation of proposals to the Council.
 - Wade Conn; at regularly scheduled meetings, as in the past, presentations of proposal are invited – starting in July.
 - Mike McMahan; so would the review committee make recommendations and puts those before the Council? Stephanie Brown feels that this may limit what the council can do.
 - Jim Zaczek questions; would it be better for proposals to go to the council whole as previous – as long as the Council member who has a proposal recuses themselves from voting.
 - Elliot Legacy notes; there are not a lot of places where people submitting proposals have the opportunity to formally present and be available for questions about their submissions.
 - Renee Hildebrandt; why can't we continue to use the points ranking system.
 - Mike McMahan notes that timing is a factor unique to the IFDC; waiting for approval is tough when it takes 2-3 months for a decision to be made.
 - Tom Wilson; We don't know if we will have any money for proposals, but if we do this year we can have new proposals due by May and a decision made by July so submitters would have more time to complete the work outlined in their proposal.
 - Bill Gradle; there are already previously submitted proposals already with projects to be completed by June 30, 2016.
 - Renee; perhaps a pre-proposal could be submitted and they could be ranked with points (based on Council set criteria)
 - Tom Wilson; to some extent that would work, however, they still get many proposals.
 - Stephanie Brown; understand that we need to stay within the central focus of the IFDC.
 - Jim Zaczek; and we don't want to limit the ability of concerned parties to speak to the Council.
 - Stephanie; how will the call for proposals be outreached; who will the notice go out to?
 - Tom Wilson; Partners; IDNR will also post on website.
 - Renee; should be sent to known partners and then posted to appropriate website(s).

- Elliot Legacy; It is posted to the IFDC website; Stephanie Brown, it should be on the IFDC website but don't think it should be an invitation to everyone.
 - Renee; so just put on IFDC website until the Council is told that is not an appropriate website.
- Tom Wilson suggests that right now a motion be made to deal with current year funding, based on the release of funds.
- Jim Zaczek; we also need to determine whether or not we say that a person submitting a proposal can serve on the proposal review committee.
- Wade Conn; and should there be a statement telling everyone who submits a proposal that they are going to be allowed to come to a meeting and present information on their submission.
- Tom Wilson; if this forum (presentation) is available to IFDC members it should be available to everyone submitting.
- Karla Gage; if there is not enough space in 2 pages then the form should be revised to give more space.
- Tom Wilson; it appears that it is agreed that everyone should be given a chance to speak.
- Stephanie Brown goes back to submission of the proposals and notes that in 2 pages it is hard to fit all of the proposal info – and that presenting to the Council is valuable.
- Renee; suggests making a 3rd page for a detailed budget.
- Mike McMahon notes that this year will be different from future years. However, lets plan for the future by 1)setting a date for submission 2) Setting up a date for presentations to the Council 3) Set date for presentation to the Council by the review committee. 3) Set a date for the Council to vote/rank the submission. If Council members will not be voting on their own proposals - could there be complications?
- Wade Conn agrees that it is important that we afford equal opportunity for all those submitting proposals to show up and present their proposal. Council is in agreement that this is the way it has been done in the past. Those submitting have typically been given the opportunity to go over their proposals and answer questions of the Council.
- Council considers the \$5,000 proposal limit:
 - Stephanie Brown questions if the Council will be sticking with the \$5,000 limit and suggests that there may be some value in keeping the limit as is but leaving it open in case there is extra money available that could be used on a proposal. Tom Wilson adds that he does not think there is a big deal about the amount. Stephanie wonders if the language should be changed in the proposal notice to relax the \$5,000 limit to make an exception.
 - Wade Conn expresses concern that if exceptions are allowed then the Council will be getting proposals requesting \$20,000. Bill Gradle reminds the Council that in the past we have exceeded the amount awarded as appropriate.
 - Tom Wilson and others express the opinion that a set number should be in the RFP notice and those applying for grants should stick to that. Bill Gradle adds that many of our grants are for less than they ask for anyway. Renee questions, then should the amount be increased to a more reasonable amount. Elliot Legacy questions do we want the Council focus to become a grant fee-through (sp). Renee Hildebrandt wonders if the Council really thinks they are going to be receiving a whole slew

of proposals compared to other years. As always proposals are defined by the Council's mission and function. Bill Gradle adds that he has had to remind people of that.

- Budget concerns related to the ability to distribute current IFDC budget for grants:
 - Elliot Lagacy states that he thinks they will pro-rate the budget. Tom Wilson does not agree, he thinks that whatever is in the budget will be there.
 - Stephanie Brown still believes it is a good idea to have shovel-ready projects ready to go and hit the ground running just in case budget is released.
- Discussion returns to current RFP document.
 - Chris Whittom suggests if you have a publication like the “folders” ready for 106 counties and it is going to cost a certain amount, you can't leave this amount as open-ended with no limit. The proposals need to have a limit.
 - Stephanie Brown believes that special request proposals should still be available. Jim Zaczek suggests that maximum awards will not exceed a set X amount, with preferential treatment (extra points) being given to proposals for \$5,000 and under. Karla Gage agrees that the proposals should be ranked on merit with extra points being given to the lower-cost proposals. Stephanie Brown adds that it still helps to have flexibility.
 - Tom Wilson makes a motion that the Council use Bill Gradle's drafted RFP notice document with revisions:
 - Regarding the partners timeline – suggest that people put in their proposals the Friday before the next Council meeting in January and that we stay at the \$5,000 limit. Delete the review committee and present proposals to the Council as a whole for consideration. Sitting Council members submitting a proposal vote as present but do not vote on their own proposal. The revised Request for Proposals should go out next week.
 - Mike McMahon 2nds this motion. I's have it and motion carries.

Call to Adjourn

- Next meeting of the FDC is to be held on Thursday, January 14, 2014 in Springfield, IL at the Lincoln Site if available.
- Jim Zaczek; Don't forget there will be a mini tour available of after SIUC Forestry plantations after meeting adjourns.
- Motion to adjourn by Elliot Lagacy, 2nd by Stan Curtis; I's have it, Motion Carried.
- The November meeting of the Forestry Development Council ended at 2:30 p.m.