

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2017

Location: Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois.

Attendees: Bill Gradle, Director (IFDC), Ray Herman (AISWCD), Stan Curtis (IL Forestry Industry), Elliot Lagacy (IDOA), Wade Conn (NRCS), Patrick O'Connell (Chicago Tribune, guest), Chris Whittom (IDNR), Lydia Scott (Morton Arboretum-nm), Wade Conn (NRCS), Tom Wilson (IDNR), Rob Sproule (IL Arborist Association), (IAA Oakpark), Tom Gargrave (IDNR, guest), Jim Zaczek (SIUC-by phone), Patrick Evans (IL Finance Authority-by phone), Mike McMahan (IFA-by phone), Patti Cludray, Recorder (SIUC)

Call to Order: 11:00 – The May 11th meeting of the IFDC was called to order and members were welcomed and asked to introduce themselves by Director, Bill Gradle.

- Bill distributed today's meeting agenda and the minutes of the IFDC meeting held on March 9, 2017. Minutes were reviewed and discussed by committee members.
- Bill offered the thanks of the IFDC to Lydia Scott and the staff of Morton Arboretum for a great tour.
- Bill brought to the attention of the IFDC that Jake Hill, Senator Barrickman's Legislative Aide who attended the March 9th meeting of the Council could not attend the meeting today as it is his last day in his position as Aide.. Bill will be working to get new legislative representation on the council in the future.
- Patti Cludray opened the discussion of the previous minutes as distributed. Minutes were reviewed and discussed by IFDC members.
 - A misspelling was noted on the first page of the minutes – the word budge will be corrected to budget. There were no further corrections or discussion.
- **MOTION:** Tom Wilson, made a motion to approve minutes with correction; motion seconded by Rob Sproule, Motion carries.

AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion of Forest Action Plan (FAP) Final Draft: Discussion led by Bill Gradle.

- Message from Paul, he has been incorporating the changes that were sent to him, however, it has been indicated that more changes need to be made so the revisions to the document are not complete.
- Discussion among members present: Tom Wilson, we know for sure that some of the urban forestry items need to be fleshed out. Bill G., question to Tom; how quick do we need to have the council vote on the document. Tom, as soon as possible, really hoped it would be ready by now. Bill G., we need to have all of the amendments sent to Paul for inclusion, if they have not been sent already. Bill G., suggests that discussion on the FAP be tabled until the next meeting or suggests that the Council call a special meeting to discuss the FAP. Need to relay this to Paul, so he will have all suggested revision in place by that time. If no further discussion on this item, without Paul here, we will move on and come back to this later if the members see fit.

IDNR Report: Points of discussion presented by Tom Wilson.

- Tom is hopeful that budget progress is being made. It looks like the Urban grants are going to be sent to Morton and hopeful that the Volunteer Forest Assistance grant is a go. David Johnson, now has a 75 day contract to work on CRP. Since Jeff Harris has resigned that position is also considered a priority re-hire. We do not have an announcement date yet, but the wheels are turning. We are also going to be allowed to fill Kurt Bobsin's position as a district forester instead of a regional. Beyond that there is not many new / replacement hires in the works.

- Nursery legislation is moving forward, which is a real positive. Question is anything happening with the wrongful tree act. Chris W., yes it is still out there but no movement. Very recently there was a large confiscation of illegally harvested ginseng, this is being sold and the proceeds will be given back to the agency for education programs. The 4% fee is up significantly; in 1 month there have been \$100,000 in receipts.
 - Discussion of 4% fee. Stan C., offers this for consideration, volume is down but prices are up. Would be interested in seeing where this revenue is coming from. Our logs seem to be going to out-of-state producers. Ray H., is there any reallocation of some of this funding back to the districts? Tom W., this is all hinging on the Capitol Bill.
- Ray H., Is aerial spraying of invasive species like bush honeysuckle being considered? Tom W., yes, research is showing 70 – 90% kill. And the price is good, running \$45 to \$120 an acre which is less than half of the cost of manual application. Also, it does not appear that the understory being affected.
 - Further discussion of aerial spraying. Tom W., we are looking at Giant Cane to see if that will be affected. Jim, does any of your research suggest how cane will respond to treatment? Jim Z., since cane is a grass perhaps there would be issues. Tom W., so spraying Gyophosphate in Nov on Giant Cane could have adverse effects? Jim Z, it will likely kill Giant Cane. Tom W., so, other treatments should really be considered.
- Tom W., Going forward with more timber harvests. Legislation is looking at our State Parks as well. Question, will State Park harvests cause any problems, Tom W., it will really depend on how the land was purchased.
- RX burn. Tom W., the Trail of Tears (TOT) burns looks really good and most are very happy. The Director is pleased and thinks this was a good example of proper use of fire. The TOT model was so effective that is in going to be used in other areas as well.
- Discussion of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) here in IL.
 - Ray H., to Tom W., the CRP effort is fairly heavy for our District Foresters here in IL, could techs do some of the CRP workload? Tom W, would love to have Tech's do that, it is crazy to pay our District Foresters to do this kind of clerical – our Districts are just too big and not enough staff.
 - Ray H., have you considered using volunteers to do some of the work. I am sure we have a number of people, perhaps even retirees, or tree care groups who would be willing to help with some of that work. Tom W., FSA would need to approve the use of volunteers. There are a number of agencies that I am sure would be interested in helping such as: IFA, Tree Farm, Walnut Council, just to name a few. Tom W., I can ask about this and get back to you.
- Discussion of Nursery Pollinator Program.
 - Tom W., A lot of pollinator stuff is going out, however, with the budget issues they've had they did not plant as much as they would have, but, they are now close to normal operation and are gearing up since they are off the potential lay-off list. Stan C., will production get back to normal? Tom W., as long and as much as the budget will allow for collection. Milkweed, seed for example, is something could use help with.
 - Bill G., couple of questions: will Nursery bill allow them to sell to private nurseries making enough for them to become self-sustaining and enter into the Midwest Sates pollinator program? Tom W., progress is being made.
 - Tom G., Going back to the need for Pollinator program - milkweed. If anyone would like to help with harvest please pack seed in cardboard boxes to alleviate mold issues. Question, will there be problems with weeds getting in what is harvested. Tom G., not really, when seed is hand-picked there isn't much of a problem with weeds.

Committee Reports:

Stewardship/Legacy: Discussion topics presented/led by Chris Whittom

- Legacy - There have been no inquiries coming in, so there is no action or items to report there. Paul D. has been using grant monies associated with Legacy.
- Stewardship – Have not pulled together a Nat. Committee.
 - Administrative Rules (AR) – Cost-share 1536-1537 has been adopted 3/31/2017. Plant outline was reviewed and clarifications were asked for. Clarification of word usage of recommendation versus requirement. Chris has made some cleanup and changes to the bill to make wording clearer. Bill will go through the 1st notice, then second notice.
 - Wade C., questions, so what does that really mean. Chris W., well, the AR were sent to all consultants for review and only 2 of them had questions. Was kind of surprised that not more consultants were excited about the new rules being adopted. As these were a total rewrite, not just a review. Actually they were sent to the District Foresters first and waited to send to the consulting Foresters. Wade C., well maybe from their point of view, having no cost-share budget, attributed to their lack of enthusiasm. Chris W., did get feed-back from someone that adoption of the bill didn't mean much since there is no money. Bill G., to Chris W. Regarding 1537, what has to be in the Forest Action Plan (FAP): does it have to wait for the clarification before it is approved? Chris W., no it has been adopted/approved and is in place. Chris reports that he made the clarifications/changes in a timely manner to clarify the wording in question. Wade C., questions, so are you still going back and forth with legislation? Chris W., yes to some extent. The Joint Council on Administrative Rules (JCAR) will look over the bills and send him any questions they may have.
 - Wade C., so 1537 could change wording a bit, right? Ray H., for clarification, who are the reviewers? Chris W., JCAR and State Reps watch over bills that have wording issues.
 - Discussion about certification of Tree Farmers. Ray H., questions, who puts the name of Tree Farmers forward. District Foresters (DF), over the years have made long-term recommendations (20 – 50 years) across the state. However, there were only 2 families put forth recently. DF have reported that they just don't have time to certify and send in recommendations for 20 – 50 year Tree Farmers. Tom W., yes, DFs have been historically involved. It is agreed that this is an important process and perhaps someone else could submit names for consideration, however, help would be needed from DFs.

LUNCH – Break at 11:55. Bill G. thanks Morton Arboretum and Lydia for providing lunch for the Council today. Suggests those on phone-conference hang-up and join back in to teleconference line at 12:30. Meeting resumes at 12:35.

Committee Reports – Continued

Urban Report: Discussion topics presented/led by Rob Sproule

- Urban Committee (UC) is doing well and had their regularly scheduled meeting last week. Rob passes out annual accomplishments of the UC to go with the IFDC Annual Report.;
- UC discussed the Forest Action Plan (FAP) and will be working with Tom and Paul to get that accomplished.
- Continuing to draft a charter document to define the UC scope of work. This document will be brought to the IFDC at the next meeting. This document will be helpful, moving forward with recruitment of new members. This document proposes shifting from individual person duties to position duties.

- Posted documents: Documents are posted to the IFDC website and anyone can receive posted documents; they are available forever and open to the public. Bill G., adds, if you have something you want posted to the IFDC website, please contact Jay Hayek.
- Ray H. asks, who is on the UC. This group is made up of about 25 members representing IL State, Urban and Community Forestry, Chicago Wilderness, Open Land, Private and Public concerns. Some members are, Rob Sproule, UC Chair, Mike Brunk, Beth Corrigan and Lydia Scott (Morton Arboretum), Reinee Hildebrandt, Steve Ludwig, just to name a few. Not all members show up to every meeting.
- The UC has statewide scope. With the charter document that is in development we are hoping to open our membership up to a more diverse (outside of Chicago). Ray H., I know that Crawford County would like to be more involved with the UC. Lydia, responds to Ray, we would love to know what the Tree Farm is working on. We are always looking for contacts outside of the Chicagoland area.
- The UC typically meets on the Thursday before the IFDC meeting. Bill G., the next regular meeting of the IFDC will be on July 13th, however, we may meet sooner to tie up the FAP. Ray H., is there a regular meeting of the Legacy Committee. Chris W., the Legacy committee normally only meets when trying to get Legacy proposals into program.

Discussion on the top 5 Items the Council needs to include in its Plan of Work and budget for FY 2018:

Group discussion led by Bill Gradle. This was added to the agenda to help Bill, as IFDC Director to have items of focus for the next fiscal year. Council members make suggestions.

- The top item should be that the FAP be complete and submitted; and, then we really need the IFDC Plan of Work completed. Wade C., thinks it would be good to have an actual dedicated meeting to discuss the FAP and make the Plan of Work. A brainstorming session. Bill G., is there still any interest in including a Forestry Summit in the plan. Rob S., the UC is looking at bringing options about a Forestry Summit to the table. Tom W., goes back to the idea of having a special meeting, asking the Council if they think a special meeting is a good idea? Wade C., reiterates that he thinks the Council should work a dedicated meeting into the IFDC schedule.
- Rob S., looking at the budget part of this agenda item; who picks the \$125,000 per year budget number and identifies where the money comes from. Tom W., this is historically done as a State budget appropriation. Rob S., is there any chance to change that if we write an FAP showing that we need more money? Bill G., the budget is written up a year in advance.
- Ray H., going back to the 5 items; his suggestion would include: 1. The Forestry Summit as top priority, 2. the IFA needs to go to the next step, promoting cooperation between different Forestry factions, large and small, to address common Forestry issues. 3. A key group of focus still should be the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) in the rural segment. We must figure out how to make the IFB cognizant of forest resources. If we could get them to lobby on behalf of forestry issues that would really help.
 - Question raised, have we asked for a member(s) of the IFB to have a seat on the council? Stan C., we used to have an IFB member on the council. Bill G., Ray you know what needs to be done, we need to get the IFB to change their policies to reflect forestry more favorably and that may be more difficult than it sounds. Tom W., thinks that the farming community is beginning to understand more about their forest lands and the tax program. There are avenues in place to reach out to those communities and their partners thought things like workshops and questionnaires.
- Ray H., # 4 priority item should be working on figuring out how to bring forest products back to IL.
 - Stan C., the big problem is the IL Workman's comp rate, MO's Workman's comp rate is 1/3 of what it is here in IL. Everyone knows this is a real problem, but nothing is being done. The reality for business is that it is only 90 miles over the state line where the rate is so much lower. Bill G., will follow-up with the Senator on this point. Tom W., potentially this is a really tough topic. Rob S., should the Council be involved with this, is it our responsibility? Bill G., thinks it

is all about how the problem is approached and addressed. Wade C., we need to address why this is important in a non-political way. Rob S., perhaps this item should be included in our Annual Report. Ray H., shouldn't we have legislative representation on the Council. Bill G., the legislature is aware of the IFDC, we send an annual report each year. Rob S., reminds members that this was discussed at the last meeting; we can't lobby but we must figure out the best way to get the word out there. Ray H., are we going to include this discussion at the next meeting? Bill G., lets plan on completing the Plan of Work at the next meeting.

- Bill asks, if there is any input of items for the Plan of Work from members on the phone. Pat Evans comments that he wishes he could better understand the cycle and production of timber so he can give lenders this type of information.
 - Bill G., tells Pat that he will try to get some information to him. Pat, thanks Bill and adds that could add value and understanding for lenders. Wade C., reminds Pat that if he or anyone else has questions or needs explanations about topics of discussion, they are welcome to talk to IFDC members and ask questions. Ray H., suggests that Jay Hayek may be a good go-to person for this type of information. Chris W. is the person who may be best to provide JCAR information.

Update on the Council's RCPP Project on Improving Oak-Hickory Forest Type. Presented by Bill Gradle.

- The first sign up and 2 cutoffs have been made. NRCS will fund 37 applications for \$757,898 in year one. Remember there are 4 areas. The 37 applicants did not include the NW corner of the state. This area was included in the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) this year. The funding used to go to WI however this year it is being rotated, meaning that IL and IA shared the \$160,000 in funding. This transition to other funding saved the RCPP money. The EQUIP program almost 1 million is going to Oak History Restoration.
- Discussion by council members.
 - Stan C., what is the district breakdown? Bill G., there were 4 applications approved from the western districts; 23 application from the southernmost regions; 10 from other districts in the state. Stan C., was there one from Union County? Bill G., yes there was one approved in Union County for \$170,000.
 - Ray H., If 5 – 6 practices will there be cost-share? Bill G., thinks 5, but most applications will have 4 [Tree/Shrub establishment and forest stand improvement, Brush removal, RX burn, Herbaceous Weed Control]
 - NRCS wanted follow up on ranking criteria; some questions were raised; as, why did the ranking seem to favor exotics control over timber stand improvement?
 - First, it is noted that the 37 chosen for funding were the top 37, not sure where the applications from the NW fell. Wade C., Council can tweak the criteria.
 - Tom W., The complaint seems to be that lousy stands got a higher priority. Wade C., is not sure that is the case. They all get equal points for timber stand improvement and invasive control. Chris W., all complaints that came in were filed. Wade C., Ranking is in place for a reason, all went through the ranking process to keep equal. Bill G., there were over 400 received and 243 were ranked. Ray H., has heard that the 2nd round of applications were not ranked at all. Bill G., we could have funded more in year 1, but just did not have the horsepower to get all done. 1.3 million stays here and this can be used over the next 5 years. This can be looked at like a line of credit/ and is guaranteed as much as possible.
 - Tom W., the reality is that the applications at the bottom of the list, may not warrant any funding. Another good thing that happens with the awarded funds, if the contract is canceled, then the money comes back to the program. The applicants may have a variable contract line. Stan C., so many could be done in 2 -3 year contracts? Well, the intent is to do as much front load as possible. Patti, questions, who makes sure the work is complete. The District Foresters certify the work is done.

Old Business / Other Business: Group

- Bill Gradle handed out the Illinois Farm Bureau's forestry policy statement for the councils review
Presented to add clarification of comments made in relation to agenda topic: ...Top 5 items to be included in the Plan of Work..- need to get the IFB to change their policies to reflect forestry more favorably.
- Tom W. Reminded members that Ethics Training must be completed. Will send Bill a link for training to pass along to council membership.
- Ray H. took the floor to present a motion regarding *preparation of a letter of resolution re: consulting foresters*; however, Tom Wilson respectfully interrupted Ray asking him to resend his motion, due to improper parliamentary procedure – citing that the council cannot vote on any item that has not first been added to the meeting Agenda. Ray H., asked, if the motion can be added to the minutes and then tabled until the next meeting. Tom W., added, no it would not matter, it is moot. Because this is an open meeting the council cannot vote. Ray H. resends the motion. *Mention of proposed motion is made in the minutes for clarification, only.*
 - Ray H. is advised that the proper way to present this item for consideration as a motion before the council will be to send it to Bill Gradle for inclusion in the next meeting's Agenda. Further, the council must have a minimum of 72 hours prior to meeting to review the Agenda and make a determination, to attend meeting/to act accordingly.
- Lydia S., Reminds council that the Morton Arboretum will be hosting the Oak Summit on August 24th.
 - There will be 24 scientists focusing on current Oak research.
 - A survey was sent out to land-managers asking them for questions and concerns the scientists in attendance will address. Questions are being compiled and will be given to scientists,
 - IFDC council members are invited to attend; land-owners and managers have been invited.
 - The scientists will be from the various mid-west agencies/institutions – SIU will be represented.
- Jim Z., left meeting (via phone) at 1:35 due to another obligation.
- Bill G., asks Council if there is any additional old/new or other business? Reminds members that the next meeting of the IFDC will be held on July 13, 2017.
 - Question is raised if the Council members want to wrap up the FAP and the Plan of Work then or at a special meeting in June? Members discuss need for a special meeting and possible dates/meeting place.
 - Members agree that a special meeting is warranted to finalize the FAP and IFDC Plan of Work and will be held on June 15, 2017 in Springfield, IL. Bill G., will contact IFDC members with final meeting details, time and agenda.
- The July 13th meeting of the IFDC will be held in Champaign, IL regardless of what happens at the special meeting in June.

MOTION is made by Elliot Lagacy to Adjourn, it is seconded by Ray Herman. Vote is cast, all are in favor, the Motion carries. The May meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 2:05 pm. The next meeting of the IFDC will be held in Champaign, IL on July 13, 2017.