

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2019

Location: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Bldg., Springfield, IL

Attendees: Bill Gradle, Director (IFDC), Roy Bailey (Tree Farm), Mike Brunk (Urban Forestry Rep), Lydia Scott (Environmental Rep), Elliot Lagacy (IDOA), Jim Tresouthick (IDNR), Tom Gargrave (Acting State Forester-IDNR), Steve Felt (IL Tree Farm), Wade Conn ((NRCS), Ray Herman, AISWCD), Brendan Cain (F.S. Shawnee Nat Forest), Karla Gage (SIUC), Patti Cludray, Recorder (SIUC). By Phone: Rob Sproul (IAA), Terry Davis (AG at Large), Lauren Lurkin (Illinois Farm Bureau (FB)), Charles Myart (IFA).

Call to Order: 10:05 a.m. – IFDC Director, Bill Gradle, welcomed members and acknowledged caller Lauren Lurkin from the Illinois Farm Bureau (FB), who called in with a limited amount of time to address the IFDC members.

AGENDA ITEM:

Karla Gage introduces Lauren Lurkin to the Council

- Bill Gradle familiarizes Lauren with the Council; 29 members, forestry representatives from industry, environmental, urban, state and governmental agencies and reps from the general assembly and governor’s office. The FB does not have a slot on the Council, but all meetings are open to the public and if you are interested in forest resources you are welcome to attend. Conversation is open between Council and Lauren.
- Lauren thanks Council and Karla Gage for the invite to attend meeting and appreciates the flexibility to call in and speak. She introduces herself (6 years with FB; attorney specializing in environmental law; comes from a Geography and GIS background; with FB she serves as part of a team working with stakeholders, state/federal agencies, 95 counties are represented on the board with the State office being located in Bloomington, IL.) Provides Council with her phone number 309-530-0398 per Ray Herman’s request to call and talk with her later about Crawford Co. policy issue
- Conversation continues between council members and Lauren.
 - Lauren - FB shares many of the same concerns as the Council, water, herbicide drift, wants to be pro-active. Council members and Lauren discuss concerns on Dicamba and herbicide drift to forested land. Ray H. our farms are struggling economically, looking for ways to diversify income. Lauren – policy does support Forestry as another resource income on the farm. Lauren assures council that the FB is open to communication with the Council and is willing to report back to the FB Board and educate them on Forestry concerns and issues. Ray H., stresses that 40% of farmers could be adding income with forest harvests; most farmers do not realize the crop potential of their forests.
 - Lauren returns to Bill’s point of Council’s meetings being open; if the FB had a place on the board that would be great, but appreciates the fact that the Councils meetings are open and would like to attend meetings if at all possible. Notes that the FB should know more about Forestry and issues affecting the industry and she would pitch in where she could. She asks about meetings. Bill G., -- explains that the Council meets the 2nd Wednesday of odd months, with meetings typically beginning at 10:00 a.m and ending 2 – 3:00 p.m, noting that the meeting location changes, but promising to give Lauren as much notice as possible about where the meeting will be held. Lauren – tells the Council that she will attend as many meetings as possible; and, will plan to call in if can’t attend. The FB would look forward to hosting the next meeting of the IFDC on May 8, 2019; should that be approved by the Council.

- Bill G., thanks Lauren for her time and asks the Council if there are any further questions for Lauren before she has to go.
 - Karla G. to Lauren – notes that the Council has recently been discussing Workmen’s Comp issues in Forestry in Illinois. Wonders if the FB has looked into any WC issues such as high cost of coverage etc. Lauren L., -- is not sure, she will check if any of research has been done and get back to the Council with findings.
- Bill G., asks Council to introduce themselves; thanks everyone for their attendance and for joining us by phone today. Notes that the Council will need to adjourn today at 11:30 for lunch at the DNR Café, if someone has not ordered yet, they should do so.

AGENDA ITEM:

Minutes from the January 9, 2019 IFDC meeting. Copies of minutes were provided to the Council by Patti Cludray, Recorder.

- Council is given time to review the minutes. Patti C., -- asks for any additions or corrections. Ray Herman, notes a misspelling of his name. Patti will make this correction. Bill G., asks if there are any other noted corrections, none noted.
- **MOTION:** Ray Herman makes a Motion to approve the minutes as written; seconded by Elliot Lagacy; Motion Carries.

AGENDA ITEM:

Illinois Workman’s Compensation Issue Status: Discussion led by Rob Sproule and Jay Hayek.

- Rob informs council that only 1 bid was received for the preparation of a White Paper for the Council on the Workman’s Comp (WC) issue in IL. This report was from the Ancel Glink law firm in Chicago. Disappointed that more bids were not received. The bid was for \$18,000, which seems to be quite high. The Council discusses how to move forward; does the Council want to discuss this bid or do we want to solicit other bids.
- Lydia Scott agrees it is disappointing that there were not more bids she indicated that she sent the original RFP to Ancel Glink, noting that the RFP had no indication of an amount the Council was willing to pay for the White Paper. She suggests that if the Council decides to go forward with a new RFP that it include budget parameters for the cost of preparation of the paper. Question is raised, what do we hope to gain from this White Paper what is the real issue with WC in IL.
Discussion:
 - WC is a concern for many Forestry businesses, i.e. timber buyers, mills, etc, since the cost to these employers for WC coverage is 4 -5 times more than it costs in adjoining states. That makes it difficult for IL companies to compete.
 - This White Paper may be something to take to the legislature in support of discussion on WC reforms here in IL. Stan Curtis did provide a report on the WC issue facing Forestry Industry employers in IL this was published in the IFA quarterly.
 - We have lost many mills; since mills are gone independent contractors have to be hired. WC needs to be balanced, need appropriate costs to employers to give appropriate coverage to their employees.
 - Could the IFDC team with other organizations, Urban Forestry, Illinois Arborists on preparation of this White Paper. Rob – Well we really aren’t hearing the same WC concerns in Arboriculture businesses; this may be because they are rated differently in OSHA guidelines. This could be explored.
 - It is agreed that \$18,000 for the preparation of a White Paper is probably excessive; but, we need to understand why the cost of WC for Forest Industries is so excessive here in IL. We need to be more competitive with other states; Question: would the SAF have a vested interest in this issue here in IL, do we want to go down that road? Elliot L. - Should we

have someone come in to the next meeting to discuss how Workmen's Comp in IL.

Bill G., - Unfortunately, I think we are going to run out of time, funding for this Paper must be expended before the end of the fiscal year.

- Bottom line is if our Forestry Industry employers can't afford to pay the WC premiums to insure their employees, and IL will lose business to other states. Is it out of scope to think that our legislatures need more education about what Foresters really do and how they do it. Tom G., - The Tree-Trimming industry and Forest industry businesses are misconceived as the same thing. Mike B., - Legislation is what we are trying to influence here; we need to ask Legislators what it will take to do this. We are assuming that the White Paper will show that IL is high and overcompensating for the risk to Forestry employees. Elliot L. – Somewhere there must be a risk-management to justify the rates our businesses in IL are being required to pay. It is acknowledged that overall Tree-Trimming risks are much higher and Forest Industries need to be separated from Tree-Trimming. Forestry costs for WC in other states is proven to be less across the board. Lydia S., asks if this is really true. Does the Council have access to these numbers Ray H., - thinks it would be advisable to talk to those Forestry contractors in other states to find out what they are paying.

- **MOTION:** Elliot Lagacy makes a Motion to request the Council seek a 2nd round of bids for preparation of a White Paper addressing W.C. issues for Forest Industry here in IL; seconded by Ray Herman; Motion Carries.

- Bill G., calls for any further discussion; Do we want to set up another RFP.
 - Lydia S., - Should we set a limit for bid on this 2nd RFP of say \$5,000. Mike B., - Do we need to refine the RFP and who will put this together; is Rob willing to prepare the 2nd RFP? Elliot L., - Council members need to give Rob input on some criteria needed for this RFP. How soon should this RFP be ready to send out? Sooner the better, this will need to be sent out by the end of this month or no later than mid-April, for submission of bids prior to the May 8th meeting.
 - Rob S., Agrees to prepare the 2nd RFP; if there are small changes he will get this right back out to the Council for their review. Ray H., - would like Stan Curtis to be involved is concerned about his opinion of the RFP. Rob will reach out to Stan. Bill G., to Rob, please make sure that Steve Felts is in on that, stephen.felts@illinois.gov.
- Bill G., asks for any other discussion on WC or the new RFP. None.

AGENDA ITEM:

Oak Ecosystems (southern and northern IL); Jumping Worms and establishment of IL Invasive

Species Council: Reports were distributed to the Council and discussion is led by Lydia Scott.

- Jumping Worms. Members are directed to review the Memo to the Council prepared by Tricia Bethke, Forest Pest Coordinator. Lydia continues; There are 3 species of the Asian Earthworm called Jumping Worms and at this time it is not known how impactful they will be; however, it is thought that the worst infestations are in northern Illinois. Chris Evan, IL Extension Forester who is involved with the Cooperative Pest Survey has asked that he be contacted with information on infestations of the jumping worms. Karla G., notes that they have been reported in southern IL as well.
- IL Invasive Species Council (IIPSC). Rob, Chris and Karla will be contacts and represent the Council's interest in reestablishment of the IIPSC. There are some good protocols in place and USDA has asked the Council to consider adding aquatics. IL Environmental Council Director, Walling met with the IEC and IGIA staff to discuss reestablishment; will talk about other states about their invasive species concerns and see if their councils are actually having an impact on pest and disease control. It was noted that Illinois Green Industry Association (IGIA) would like

to have an associate as part of the IIPSC; The IGIA discussed the previously proposed makeup of the IIPSC (possibly 8 industry and 8 non-industry individuals); no decision was made on this; there will be further discussion, and no action was taken at that meeting.

- Oak Ecosystems: Members were directed to the report provided on the Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan (OERP) implementation coordination in northern IL, and the Let the Sunshine in partnership in southern UL(LSSI).
 - Jodi Shemp has done a great job. There is a lot of good work going on in the Shawnee. Bill G., Jodi recently emailed to see if the Council had funding available for production of a video; they were asked to come to the next meeting and present this to the Council. Lydia asks if the Council will be sending out an RFP to solicit requests for funding. Bill G., - not sure there is time to get back responses, before end of FY.
 - Brendan C., - There have been clusters identified on the Shawnee where restoration work should be done. State and private grants may be available to set us on the path to restoration and how to keep what we have and not fall back – fields program through the RCD.
 - Lydia S., - What is happening with the RCPP funding are any monies still available. Bill G. – there is still a 1 - 1.5 years left, however all funds left went through the granting process and all funds are obligated. If some of the grants fall through and money is left we still have time to spend out. If the Council wants to do another RCPP in a year they could. The original program was for 5 years; the Council could apply again a year from now.
- Bill asks if there is any further discussion or questions for Lydia. None noted. Thanks to Lydia for her report.

AGENDA ITEM:

STAR – Saving Tomorrows Agricultural Resources. Discussion let by Elliot Lagacy.

- Elliot reminds Council that at the January meeting of the IFDC, Steve Stierwalt presented information to the Council on the STAR program and at the Council's direction a committee was formed co-chaired by Elliot and Steve to see if the STAR program would be a beneficial incentive program for Forestry partners.
- The committee went over aspects of the STAR program and its potential for Forestry. It was the finding of the committee that there may be competing services out there that are already established and directed to Forestry partners. The Tree Farm, for example, is comparable to STAR in that it already recognizes and gives incentives for landowners who implement good management practices.
- In order for STAR to be applicable for Forestry landowners; a complete new form would need to be created. Question could there be a Forestry component on the current STAR form; concerning management of forest land adjacent to farmland; landowners could get points that way? Not sure STAR is by field, not by farm, it is not set up that way.
- Steve's intent was good, but it is the determination of the committee that we already have Tree Farm which is well established. Wade C., - STAR is concerned with cropland, fields, but as mentioned couldn't participants be asked how are you managing your adjacent forest lands? Steve Felts, Tree Farm requires they have an active FMP, and be participating to be certified.
- Council continues discussion of the STAR program and changes to the current form.
 - So is there a possibility that the current form could be changed, brining Forestry into the conversation. Addition of a question to the current form with the addition of extra points could be a good idea. In order for this to be considered as an option, landowners may want some kind of incentive. Steve F. - Is there any monetary compensation? Elliot L., - Not yet, but there is a potential if companies want a market premium.

- Ray H. – personally in strong support of STAR, if it serves to increase awareness that landowners need to manage their total property, field, pasture, wildlife and forests. Especially if we have an opportunity to get more money for our efforts.
- Mike B., our focus needs to be on the forest land; show farmers how they can increase the value of trees as a commodity, making it more valuable to them.
- Elliot L., - the current STAR program does not have the infrastructure to start a whole new Forestry focused program and distribute a new form. A first step may be to see if something could be added to the current form.
- Bill G. notes that it is 11:40 and that the Council should adjourn at this time for lunch; Rob Sproul is asked to call back-in at 12:20. The Council will resume its discussion of STAR at that time.

11:40 - MEETING ADJOURNED

LUNCH: The March 2019 meeting of the IFDC is adjourned for lunch at the DNR café. Lunch is provided by the IFDC.

12:25 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER - Conversation on the STAR program continues, Bill Gradle, Director, indicates that he would like a Motion on the STAR program.

- **MOTION.** Roy Bailey makes a Motion that the IFDC should contact the Champaign SWCD about the possibility of adding a Forestry related question on item 16 of the STAR questionnaire. Seconded by Karla Gage. Bill Gradle asks if there is any further discussion prior to vote.
 - Steve F. – Is the STAR form published somewhere. There is a link available to the form on the website. Ray H. There are 33 counties in IL and the only county that has a Forestry Committee is Crawford; they would be happy to help in support of the STAR program in IL.
 - If no further discussion the Motion is put to a vote. Motion carries. Elliot will draft a letter to STAR on the Council’s decision and will send it to Bill.

AGENDA ITEM

IDNR REPORT – This report is provided by Tom Gargrave, Acting State Forester.

- Tom reports on personnel. The Urban Forestry Manager position is still open and interviews are to be conducted at the end of the month. Dave Allen is back on a 75 day contract, his Dixon Springs Forester position is posted, if you know of any good candidates, please encourage them to apply. Amy is back on a 75 day contract and Suzanne is the Wood Utilization office manager now. There is an open Office Associate position available at Steven Forbes, interviews of qualified candidates should begin soon. Tom Wilson is on a 75 day contract as the Fire Project Manager, not sure what will happen with that position yet, but a request to fill the position is in the works.
- Tom reports on Timber Buying permits. Meeting was held, the liaison looked it over and tweaked it; issue is that we can’t manage timber without knowing what is going out. We must track timber outflow/species data. Other states are being polled to see what is being done in their states. Information is with DNR Director; DNR will say if it goes up the Hill or not. He will give us a report at the next meeting.
- Tom reports on Deer Culling. 7 Foresters are involved with the project, there are 2 weeks to go, and the staff are keeping up. Funding for the culling is coming out of the operating budget. On April 1 focus will be on fire; fire dependent ecosystems. Tom asks if there are any questions on anything he has reported on today.
 - Question is raised, Ray H., - Will contract be happening again for state owned lands for control of invasive species like honeysuckle, through spraying / burns; understands there are no monies for private landowners, but we are in fact covering costs. Hope the District Forester reaches out to private landowners to make spraying and burns an opportunity to

landowners, expressing concerns of a private landowner. Tom G., can see how this may be misconstrued, but they are not stopping all work on private land, however, the concentration is on public lands. Tom assures Ray he understands what an important role private landowners play in the management of Forestlands in Illinois. Ray H., - Primarily the resource is what it is all about, to Bill G., this is part of the IFDC charge to serve our partners, I pay 4% money and it isn't coming back.

- Stan F., -- Tom, do you foresee more being allowed in the State Parks? Tom G., - yes, we can do timber sales now, we are in the process of marking timber on 2 State parks. More forest management on public lands is desperately needed, we could stay busy just on public lands. This is not saying that we are pulling out of service to private landowners, but they are down on the list.
 - Questions, regarding timber sales from the State Parks. Does the revenue from sales of State Park timber go back to State Park? Tom G. – Yes, some does but not all of it, once the money is deposited it can be distributed and some can be put back in to the State Parks for Forest Management. Does some of it go to salaries? Tom, no. Ultimately, it may help; but it is not like taking 905 monies out of budget.
 - Ray H., I want to go back to the deer harvesting issue. Tom G. – Ray this is going to be conducted for 2 more weeks, we are committed. This is not the end; this is not the forum for this discussion, Tom indicated he will be available to talk with Ray later about this. Wants to add that the #1 priority right now is working to control Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
- Bill thanks Tom for his report and moves to next Agenda Item

AGENDA ITEM:

Illinois Forest Action Plan Update/Data Status (IFAP): Provided by Mike Brunk.

- The new Forest Inventory Analysis tables and data, etc are available. At the last meeting the Council indicated that they wanted Charles Warwick to be contacted regarding his willingness and the cost for him to incorporate the new information into the AON and the IFAP and in addition, tweak the document language to reference the new data/tables etc. If the Council approves to have Charles do this he will be provided with a high-lighted document. The USDA Forest Inventory leader can help with all the data needed to be loaded into the Plan. This is a critical need, which must be completed prior to FY 2020. So, it needs to be done before, June 30, 2019.
- Charles Warwick has indicated that he is available to do this for the Council; he will be able to add the new information and provide and edited document. Charles's previous editing for the entire FAP was under \$2,000, but at this time there is not an exact quote to bring to the Council as to what the new edits and insertions will cost. Paul D, and Mike B. would like to request that the Council approved an amount not to exceed, say \$5,000. Mike B., wants to get the IFAP back to Charles as soon as possible. Mike B., - we are not sure how many table will need to be replaced and then Charles will need to look through the document to catch any references to previous parts of the out-of-date information in the previous document. Mike will serve as Paul's back up on this, Paul is the Forester, and they make a good team. The goal is to have the document completed and ready for submission by the end of June.
- **MOTION.** Mike Brunk makes a Motion that the Council fund the final editing of the IFAP by Charles Warwick for an amount not to exceed \$5,000 dollars. With the goal to use FY 19 IFDC funding. Seconded by Ray Herman. Bill calls for further discussion, prior to vote. None indicated, Motion carries.
- Bill thanks Mike and Paul for their efforts and this report.

AGENDA ITEM:

Urban Committee Report: Report presented to Council by Rob Sproule.

- The Urban Committee (UC) met in February; and it was decided that the UC would switch to 4 in-person meetings a year. The face to face meeting will be in held in Bloomington, hoping this format will better serve needs of partners. This spring CRTI Urban Forestry Basic Training will be on April 9 and an optional second day focused on chainsaw basics will be on April 10 at Round Lake Public Works. The APWA in Carbondale, IL would like to expand its training for all public works employees. A 2 day program is proposed for October 2019.
- Discussions continue on how to move forward with increasing recognition of critical issues surrounding our urban trees; the true value of trees.
- Illinois Environmental Council is also looking at the Workmen's Comp Issue here in Illinois. Looking at research that is being conducted; hoping to bring a report on findings to the Council.
- The UC will be meeting in May in Urbana; Mike Brunk will host while there UC will be working on action items. Does the council have any questions?
 - Terry D., - Re/STAR program and applicability to forested lands did the Urban Committee look at CIs for Urban areas? Seems the STAR form could be a possible forum to gauge Carbon Inventory-the STAR participant could perhaps evaluate themselves for sustainability. How are the carbon sequestration numbers collected, by species?
 - Rob, - Not sure they are doing that; they are looking more at canopy with a canopy goal. This is not just about carbon maintenance, it is about overall tree care. Landowners may be wondering how to get credit for what is being done; there are credits that can be gotten for using natural species. Not sure that local credentialing programs are the right way to go.
- Bill thanks Rob for the presentation of the Urban Committee report.

AGENDA ITEM:

Proposal to Renew Agreement between the IFDC and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources:

Bill Gradle introduces this item and opens floor for Council discussion.

- Bill G., - It was Mike Mason that got funding back on track for the IFDC and now the funding is back up to \$118, 500. Three years ago, this amount was approved by the DNR and SIU was chosen to administer the funding for the position of the IFDC Director which was approved, advertised and filled. Now we are on hold, looking forward to a new agreement between the DNR and SIU for IFDC funding. We are hoping to advertise to fill the Director Position for the new fiscal year which begins, July 1, 2019. If there is something you want the IFDC Director to do, contact Jim and let him know. Discussion is opened to the Council.
- Tom G., The position description is pretty vague; there is really no description of duties. Mike B., may we tweak the job description? Karla G., - Jim would appreciate your input.
- Patti will let Jim know that the Council would like to see a draft of the position description as it is going to be re-submitted to SIU Human Resources.
- Bill G. asks if there is any further discussion on this topic or if there is any Other Business.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Jim T. - informs Council that Mayors of new approved Tree City USA designees have been notified of their cities approval. There will be a meeting of the NE Municipal Foresters in April. The meeting will be held on April 24th in Niles, IL. The Illinois Arborists Association will be holding its summer Conference, July 16 – 17, in Champaign, IL. If you are in need of Urban Strike Force training that will be in July as well.

- Bill G., to Wade C., just want to verify that RCPP applicants are moving forward now that the Farm Bill is in place. Wade confirms this is correct.
- Mike B. – Wants to let the Council know that the Under the Canopy publication is 1 week away from shipping. All the revisions are complete; and the publication has a different look from the last time. This is the 3rd edition.
 - This edition includes a section on homeowner tree selection and local tree care. It answers the most commonly asked questions of Arborists.
 - This is a very popular publication it is given out through our extension services, forestry district offices, Morton Arboretum, and the Botanical gardens. We are waiting on 10 cases; we have a list of 500 organizations; prior to proofing the list with calls and updated emails. We are excited that this edition of Under the Canopy will be sent out to some areas that have never had them before.
 - All county extension office will be getting copies of the publication. Through this new edition we are promoting lesser known trees and up and coming trees.
 - The IFDC made an investment of \$10,000 to help cover the cost of well-over \$150,000 for the printing and shipping of this edition.
- Bill thanks Mike for continuing to keep the Council informed and for doing such a good job. And asks if there is any further business. Elliot Lagacy indicates that if the Council is ready he will make a Motion to Adjourn.
- Question is raised if the IDNR has gone through Senate confirmations yet. When positions have been decided, is there a reason we can't get a meeting with the new directors at some point. Mike B., - Could we meet at the Capital? Jason Barrickman is an appointee to the Council; there are 4 other places on the Council that need to be filled. The Council should think about where new Council appointees should come from; natural resource committees, AG, conservation, budget, commission managers. It seems that more staffers have been coming to the IFDC meeting recently.
- Bill G – calls for any further discussion or business. None is noted.

MOTION: Elliot Lagacy makes Motion to adjourn; Lydia Scott seconds the motion. Motion carries.

The March 13, 2019 meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 1:55 p.m. The next meeting of the IFDC will be Wednesday, May 8th, at a location TBA. Bill will be working with Lauren Lurkin of the Farm Bureau, to determine the meeting location. Council members will be notified of the date by email.