

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2019

Location: Holiday Inn Convention Center, Tinley Park, IL

Attendees: Eric Holzmüller (Director-IFDC), Tom Gargrave (IDNR), (SIU), Jay Hayek (IFDC-Chair, UofI), Dave Gillespie (SAF), Elliot Lagacy (IDOA), Mike Brunk (Gov. Appointee), Rob Sproule (IAA); Lydia Scott (Enviro Rep), Dennis Wilson (USDA Forest Service), Steve Felt ((IL Tree Farms/IL Walnut Council) By Phone: Jacob Stuckey (Illinois Finance Authority); Kim Watson, Nathan Reitz (IL Rep), Patrick Windhorst (IL Rep), and Patti Cludray-IFDC Secretary (SIUC).

Call to Order: 10:15 a.m. – Jay Hayek, IFDC Chair welcomed members, and guests.

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the September 11, 2019– Meeting Agenda, the Lunch Pre-Order Menu and Minutes of Sept.11 2019 meeting of the IFDC were presented to members by IFDC Secretary, Patti Cludray.

- Council is given time to review the minutes. Jay H. asks if there are any additions or corrections to the July meeting minutes.
- Request is made that future minutes should include page numbers. *Patti Cludray noted this request and future IFDC minutes will include page numbering.*
- **MOTION:** Rob Sproul makes a motion to approve minutes as written; motion is seconded by Tom Gargrave; Jay H. calls for any further discussion.
 - Request is made that approval of the minutes be tabled until all have had a chance to review more carefully
 - Vote on approval of minutes is tabled.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report. Eric Holzmüller, IFDC Director provides this report

- The official agreement between SIU and IDNR for funding of the IFDC is in place.
- There is no official budget to distribute yet the accountant is currently working making sure all budget details are correct, and hopefully a budget will be available for Council member review at the January meeting of the IFDC.
- Eric indicates that the NRCS meeting he recently attended and the So IL Conservation workshop he participated in on behalf of the IFDC were both very good and well attended.
 - The NRCS meeting included participants from MO, IA, IL and KY, and topics such as Central States Forest Soils were discussed. The workshop was well attended with about 75 participants, and some very good speakers.
- Jay asks for any discussion or questions, none noted. Jay thanks Eric for this report.

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update: Eric Holzmüller, IFDC Director opens this discussion.

- There are still a few vacancies on the Council. Members discuss the vacancies and possible candidates.
- It is noted that new IFDC appointees have not received their official notice of appointment.
 - Tom G. requests that Eric send him an email on behalf of the IFDC addressing the appointee(s) being recommended for the appointed positions. This will make the request more formal, and Tom will take that up the Chain. .
- It is asked if a proxy should be included with the official request for appointment.
 - Thought is this is not needed, typically if a member cannot be present, they can appoint a designated proxy to serve in their place; this proxy could change. Council should be notified prior to beginning of the meeting who the proxy is representing.

- Jay asks if there is any further discussion or questions for Eric. None noted. Jay thanks Eric for this report.

AGENDA ITEM: Update on the Report from Ancel Glink on the Workmen’s Comp Request for

Proposals: Eric Holzmueller, IFDC Director provided this update..

- No further response from Ancel Glink or any other response to Request for Proposals.
- IFDC members have open discussions of Workmen’s Comp issues for Forest Industry in IL.
 - The logging industry rates in IL are very high, currently for every \$100 in salary dollars employers pay \$43.36 for Workmen’s Comp insurance. Surrounding states pay much less, examples are given: IN \$13.74 per \$100; IA \$26.77 per \$100; MO \$39.28 per \$100, for consideration.
 - IL has higher rates, because of more claims which equals a higher payout.
 - Rates in IL have come down, 10 years ago the rate in IL was \$75.00 per \$100. Many IL loggers, and other Forest Industry’s closed, downsized to family operations or left IL altogether.
- Question to Rob Sproule; would he be comfortable taking this issue to the IAA to see if they are having like issues there? Rob will explore this and get back to the Council. Lydia S., suggests that perhaps others like the APWA could advocate as well.
- Jay asks if there is any further discussion on this agenda item. None noted.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Issues Update: Discussion is open to Group.

- Tom G. A couple of issues did not make it into the current session: One was the Timber Sale Reports – Harvest Notice. Currently there is no requirement for the logger to indicate what species is being removed from the woods. So, in IL we have no way of knowing what is being removed. Some legal ends need to be tied up, then we will try to get this into the Timber Buyers License Act. The DNR Legislative Liaison is assisting with details. Tom indicates important reasons for moving forward with this.
 - Would allow DNR to collect the 4% fee more accurately; would allow more accurate tracking of timber; this will take a comprehensive combined effort.
- Eric questions don’t loggers already need to be compliant with the Forest Products Transportation Act, which requires a Bill of Landing. Yes, the Bill of Landing requires sawyers to indicate the number of logs being carried, but currently not the species.
 - The updated Timber Buyers License Act will ask for volume by species. This will be tertiary to capture the volume/species at the beginning of the process.
- Jay asks if there are any other updates to report.
 - Wrongful Tree Cutting Act was being looked at regarding DNR responsibilities. Chris W. had been looking into this. Tom was told yesterday that DNR recommendations were accepted and that changes will be made to the Act that will pull responsibilities away from the DNR organization, releasing them and putting responsibility on private industry to provide required data and service.
 - Jay asks is this still possible for the current legislative session? Administrative rules are still being tweaked in the House. Tom, indicates yes this is a done deal. Good news for the IDNR.

AGENDA ITEM

Illinois Forestry Development Council Small Grant Program Update – This discussion is led by IFDC Director, Eric Holzmueller.

- Eric passed out a copies of the previous IFDC Small Grant program RFP’s out to the members for review; *Jay H. asks Eric to please make sure these are sent out as email attachments for the review of members who are not here today.*
- The Council budget includes \$60,000 to run the administration areas of the Council business; that leaves approximately \$60,000 available for small grants.

- In the past the Illinois Forestry Development Council has given out small grants, under \$5,000; 2012 and 2013 the parameters of the RFP for granting of monies was pretty open; in 2014 the RFP was more specific to the Forest Action Plan. It would be nice to get proposals which were focused on strategic action items again. Eric opens this for discussion and consideration of the Council members.
 - Mike B. – Chris W. looked into the legality of the “small grants” at \$5,000 or less they should run through the system with no problems. However, there is a new finance system and it would be preferred if the IFDC would write a formal grant program; still funded through the IFDC, but would be a formal IDNR grant program. The Council could still earmark a portion of their budget funding for certain projects (i.e. a newsletter, which was previously discussed at an IFDC meeting).
 - Jay H. – We can’t lose focus of our grant program which is to align our grants with the goals and objectives of the Forest Action Plan (FAP).
 - Eric H. – What would it take to set up a formal grant program? Mike B., would need to take this on, and it would take a little time. There are templates to follow, but this is something that would need to be developed specially for the IFDC.
 - When looking into this it must be kept in mind that we cannot roll money over from one fiscal year to the next. Any money not spent goes back into the IDNR budget, the IFDC does not get any extra money for the following FY.
 - Elliot – expresses concern. Is this in the Council’s wheelhouse? Will we be locked into getting pre-approvals for awarding of grants, will it take out of the Council’s control?
 - The goal of these grant proposals should be bettering forestry development. The Council is diverse enough to be sure to control this without assistance.
 - Another question is, do we want to dedicate the entire \$60,000 to Small Grants Program, because sometimes things come up that the Council needs to support (i.e. update/printing of the BMP manual, printing of the Silviculture manual).
 - Do we want to allow some of this budget money for the support of other organizations, i.e. the IFA?
 - Question is raised, is the Council required to use the formal grant program? If not, at this time the Council still has the authority to spend money as needed, and to allow money for other needs, organizations, etc.
 - Suggestion is made, that if Mike is willing to check into this, and if we are going to be required to go through the formal grants program, perhaps we can expedite this through the formal grant program for this fiscal year.
 - Elliott – There is typically a lot of red-tape.
 - Mike B., indicates he is willing to do that and that he will look into the formal grant template and send it to Eric H. for review of the grant program language and project language.
 - Could we have an open-ended RFP – open as long as there is money available; keeping in mind money must be spent prior to the end of the fiscal year.
 - Eric questions, are we hoping to get this in place for this budget year’s funding? This is a larger issue, because monies need to be spent out by June 30, 2020.
 - Rob S. - for this grant program are we going to re-visit the Summit critical issues?
 - Jay H. – being realistic the Council has money that needs to be spent now; we should go forward with creating and getting out an RFP, then we can review and discuss the implementation of a formal grant program for the next fiscal year.
 - Council discussion includes the need to reserve some of the available FY 20 funding for projects.
- It is the decision of the Council to proceed with the development of the RFP and at the next meeting any other projects which need funding this year will be discussed.

MOTION: Motion is made that prior to the January IFDC meeting the small grant RFP will be completed and sent out with proposals due back by December 31, 2019. Proposals are open but should have an

emphasis on items from the FAP and a maximum grant amount of \$4,999.00; deliverable by June 30th 2020. Motion seconded by Dave Gillespie.

- Jay calls for any discussion on the Motion.
 - We should favor the proposals promoting action items as outlined as challenges in the FAP; and recognized as critical needs at the Summit.
 - It is agreed that the Council should proceed, and get the RFP out as soon as possible requiring receipt of 1st round of proposals by December 31st giving to the end of January for any additions, prior to Council's first review of proposals at the January meeting.
 - Jay and Eric should be given the authority to finalize the RFP and advertise as soon as possible.
- Return to Motion: Jay calls for any further discussion. None noted. Motion is voted on and carries.

MOTION – Follow up Motion is made by Lydia Scott. Mike Brunk, should begin working on strategies to develop a formal IFDC grant through IDNR formal grant program. For the granting of future IFDC monies – with a report to the Council by the January IFDC meeting. Motion seconded by Dave Gillespie. Jay asks for further discussion. None noted. Motion carries.

- Eric will send out a fresh copy of the FAP, by email. Eric and Jay will work to finish the RFP as directed by the Council and Jay will post the RFP and the Project Application Form on the IFDC website and will send out by email.

AGENDA ITEM: Natural Resources Conservation Service -- Regional Conservation Partnership Program "Improving Oak – Hickory Forests" This discussion led by Eric Holzmueller.

Eric passed out a letter dated Oct 31, 2019 from the USDA regarding the IFDC application for renewal of the RCPP which was submitted.

- This letter indicates we were not accepted for renewal as you can see we now have two options: 1. Apply for the FY 2019 RCPP (new proposal) competition which is currently open and closes December 3rd or 2. Consider reapplying for the RCPP renewals, next year 2020 (sometime in July 2020) or 3. Do nothing with the RCPP and walk away.
- Lydia S. questions is there some reason we would not want to reapply? Council discusses these options.
- Elliott L. - it doesn't seem like a good idea to push for the FY 2019 RCPP competition. Waiting to apply for the 2021 in July seems like a better idea, when RCPP has new fiscal funding.
 - Of note: No one in Illinois who reapplied for RCPP at this time received it. Eric H. – So does the Council agree that waiting to reapply for Renewal by the July 2020 deadline seems to be the best course of action?
 - Lydia S. -the group that Morton is working with indicate that re-applying is not a clean process so the sooner we start the better.
- Tom G - Southern Illinois is a very energetic area there are great projects here, getting projects funded can be tougher in other areas. Perhaps focus for RCPP should be in So. IL.
- RCPP Improving Oak / Hickory Forests in IL is still major concern. Steve F - we are looking at White Oaks age class 120/140 over 24" in diameter. Oaks across all species in all areas are dying or dead and we do not have a handle on why this is happening; this is very discouraging. This is a hot topic. Rapid White Oak mortality is being looked at Dr Fred Miller and is still on the radar as a major forest health issue. Questions are could this be herbicide draft, age related problems, or root rot. Honestly, we do not have it narrowed down yet. We are looking at 37 years reporting on white oak. Question are being raised, is it responsible to replant White Oak without knowing what is going on?
 - Jay the NWTF is onboard. NWTF Foresters are coming in under the White Oak initiative.
 - Mike B. are we fueling the fire with re-planting until we figure out what is going on. Is there an advantage to taking specimens. Steve F. - Soil samples have been taken and analyzed. Some were thinking this could be Oak Wilt, but the tests came back negative.

- Council should consider the possibility of coordinating IFDC- RCPP proposal with the Shawnee RCPP; this may look better. Granting agency may like the southern IL collaboration, it has national interest.
- Would Dr. Miller be willing to come in and talk to the Council about White Oak mortality?
 - Council agrees having Fred come in is a good idea. Tom G. will reach out to Dr. Miller and invite him to attend an upcoming IFDC meeting.
- Jay H. – if there is no further discussion, the Council will move to the next agenda item. Thanks to Eric for this update.

AGENDA ITEM - Urban Committee Report: Rob Sproul provides this report.

The urban committee met on October 3rd in Champaign Illinois it was great to get the committee back together again. There were good discussions and lots of good ideas.

- The committee discussed Mike Brunk’s new appointment and his vision for Urban Forestry, moving forward.
- Committee discussed program grants in partnership with Morton Arboretum, going forward
- The Urban Forestry Basic Training, will be held October 9th and 10th at John A Logan College. This is expanding and we would really like to go National.
- Hoping to move forward with the IAA and the Chicago trees initiative
- Also, committee is working with Mike to revisit the IFAP language during 2020 making it clearer and easier to relate to when applying for funding. Mike will also be looking at the Urban Action Plan for the next 10 years. It is the hope of the Urban Committee to have an updated Urban Action Plan to bring to the council for review in 2020. Thank you.
- Jay thanks Rob for this update and the Council will look forward to his next report.

AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Program Report (including Legacy) Chris Whitom is not in attendance. Report is tabled.

AGENDA ITEM: IDNR / Urban & Community Forestry Report. This combined report provided by Tom Gargrave and Mike Brunk. A summary of the IDNR Division of Forest Resources accomplishments of SFY 2019 and goals for SFY 2020 was passed out to council members.

- DNR is still hoping to bring three people back on 75 day contracts; Tom Wilson and two District Foresters.
- Interviews for the Sparta position are being conducted through the end of the month. The Fairfield office position is open and posting is coming soon. Other positions are posted as well, including the State Forester. Candidates for the State Forester position are being graded we hope to see this position filled in January 2020.
- DNR is working on the Strategic Plan. Part of the focus is to look at administrative realignment it’s very necessary and needed. Tom reports, we do have director Callahan’s ear and support.
- Mike Brunk met with Trees Forever to re-establish that partnership. Director Callahan was not really aware of this partnership and was unfamiliar with some of our other partners and was interested in finding out more.
- State Forest harvests are continuing. The Trail of Tears harvest is coming up and others are coming in the near future (i e Spoon River). Will follow up with Public Relation reports to show how the harvests are being accepted by the public.
 - Lydia S., indicates that the Illinois Environmental Council has received some protests, namely from the Sierra Club. Their concerns/objections are that the harvests are being conducted for profit and not for conservation and health concerns. We need to keep them informed and make sure they have a clear picture, of what is being done and why. It is hoped that having Jen Walling (sp) speak with people in the Environmental Council to help alleviate their concerns.

- Tom G. - We need advocacy, hopefully understanding canopy initiation on State Forests will help us continue with the program. We welcome input and the opportunity to address public concern. Mike B., - should we invite them to meet with the Council so they could better understand what is being done and address their objections? Actually, Lisa Helmig has been working on that.

11:45-Caterer arrives with Lunch. It is decided that Tom G. will continue with report after lunch.

11:45 a.m. - MEETING ADJOURNED

- **LUNCH:** The November 2019 meeting of the IFDC is adjourned for lunch. Catered lunch through the Holiday Inn Convention Center is provided by IFDC.
- **12:30 p.m. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Continued: AGENDA ITEM: IDNR / Urban & Community Forestry Report

- Tom G, the DNR is also still working on Ash Harvest; it is going well.
- The Midwest Fire Academy was once again a success. 150 students went through the training last week and,
- Chainsaw safety training is still being offered at state parks
- There were 31 fire department grants (VFA) given out.
- The DNR Chronic Waste rifle training was just completed, and we will have 8 State Foresters out for five to seven weeks beginning in January.
- Mike B., looking at the goals set forth there are still some that are not complete.
 - The State Nursery is looking at stepping up with number of container trees this summer;
 - Fire Ops, would like to help 50 additional fire departments with grants.
- Would like to bring the Council's attention back to the idea and importance of IFDC funding for a newsletter. In Illinois only about 500,000 acres are managed of the approximately 3.84 million acres of forested land. That half-million Acres are comprised of 10,000 landowners. We have no connection with those landowners. If we did a biannual IFDC newsletter I think we could come up with a brief way to educate our landowners. The land owners are willing they just do not know what is out there; what are their resources. The IDNR can't do this and would like the Council to seriously consider producing a biannual newsletter, perhaps even in partnership with other groups, ie Tree Farm or IFA. We really have no way to contact these individuals and it may take collaborative efforts to educate our private State landowners. This topic is discussed by the Council members.
 - Elliot L - the Illinois Steward used to be supported by the IFDC. Mike Jeffers did the photos for that publication.
 - Dave G. - an electronic newsletter would allow people to opt in and out of receiving the newsletter. Electronic newsletters are much cheaper to produce. Subscribers could pay extra if they wanted to receive a paper copy.
 - Eric H, would it be possible to utilize these other newsletters for example the IFA newsletter, for articles. The toughest part has always been getting people to contribute articles, photos, etc.
 - Tom G. agrees and, there are some good newsletters in the IDNR, but really not sure how an IFDC newsletter could benefit from those.
 - The council should prioritize getting forestry information out there to our land owners. Paul D is supposed to be working on an article about harvesting that may be a good addition.
 - Mike B. a quarterly newsletter may be ideal. Elliot L. – the IFDC Annual Report, could be used as the final newsletter of the year.
 - Elliot the annual report could be the final newsletter.
 - Tom G., an IFDC newsletter is long overdue; a newsletter could present opportunities for getting information and education out to our landowners.

- Jay H., suggests that the Council members consider the suggestion of an IFDC newsletter until the next meeting when it will be added to the Agenda for consideration. Thanks to Tom and Mike for the IDNR Report.

AGENDA ITEM: Other Business New/Old

Lydia Scott is asked if she has Oak Ecosystems or Invasive Species Council (ISC) updates.

- Since Jodi Shemp retired, Mike Bailey has taken over, he is coordinating the Let the Sunshine in program.
- Work is ongoing on an educational website looking at providing information on why landowners Oak trees are turning brown.
- Also working on the Healthy Hedges campaign in Champaign, which looks at removing invasive species on property. They would like a piece on what a healthy habitat looks like, so work is being done on a time lapse web piece.
- There are 12 workshops planned for 2020 at Morton Arboretum, including Fire management; management of core ecosystem areas.
- Working on an Oak Ecosystem recovery page. Focus has really been on targeting those areas which are at greatest risk.
- The Invasive Species Council's structure is being finalized. Identified 30 people across the state with individual expertise in various invasive species areas. The structure of the ISC will be similar to the councils in NY and OH in assessment of invasive species/ all broad invasive species are included. Information will be presented to the Director in December. It is hoped we will get this up and running in 2020.
- Jay H. asks, will there be paid positions on the ISC, if so, that would be good.
- Lydia, right now the IL ISC needs to be approved by Statute and formalized. There is no plans for introducing funding for positions at this time. That can come later.
- Jay thanks Lydia for these updates. Asks if there are any questions, or if there is any other old or new business.

Rob Sproul – IFDC Summit.

- At the last Summit there was discussion about whether or not the Council would like to do another Summit in the future. Thoughts were that a Winter Summit would be better received. The question is does the Council want to look at the possibility of holding another Summit, Winter 2020?
- If the Council does want to plan for another Summit, then we should include that in our budget planning for the next fiscal year, and on future IFDC meeting agenda's.
- Eric H. is asked to put a discussion of a possible IFDC Summit, winter 2020 on the next meeting Agenda.
- Jay thanks Rob and asks if there are any questions, or if there is any further business.

Mike B. – A summary of the Urban and Community Forest Program over the next fiscal year will be given to the Feds as an annual report.

Lydia S. – Asks if a meeting location or date has been decided on for the next IFDC meeting.

- Eric H. - IFDC meetings are currently being held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, does anyone have a suggestion for a meeting location in January.
- Jay H. indicates that if there is no further business he will call for a Motion to Adjourn.
- Mike B. please give the Council's compliments to the IAA for the gift of the portfolios and for providing the meeting room for the IFDC meeting today.

MOTION to ADJOURN: Rob Sproul makes Motion to adjourn; Elliot Lagacy seconds the motion. Jay asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

The November 6, 2019 meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 1:45 p.m. The next meeting of the IFDC will be Wednesday, January 8, 2020, at a location to be determined. We periodically like to showcase other areas in the State, so be thinking about suggestions for meeting locations and send those to Jay. Keep Eric included in the conversation so the meeting location can be sent to the Council members.