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Fiscal Year
2019
Report

Illinois Forestry Development Council

The Council shall study and evaluate the forest resources and the forest industries of Illinois.

Report from the Director...

As required by the Illinois Forestry Development Act (525 ILCS 15), the Illinois Forestry Development Council (the Council) submits this report outlining its activities and analysis of Illinois' forest resources.



The Council met six times over the course of FY-2019. All meetings are open to the public. The Council meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the odd months. Locations are varied across the State. Those locations are selected by the Council and posted in advance to the Councils' website: <http://www.ifdc.nres.illinois.edu/>. The website is hosted by the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. The webmaster is Jay Hayek.

The Council, as lead organization, continues to follow through and provide leadership for its project, "Improving Oak-Hickory forest type." This project is funded through the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through their Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) using Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) funding. Over the last three years, the project has brought \$2.1M into the State to allow forest landowners to implement their forest management plans by installing much needed conservation practices to allow the mighty Oak to reclaim its habitat. Our thanks to NRCS for providing this much needed funding and the technical assistance to plan, design, and ensure proper installation of these practices. Additionally, we would like to thank those partners that provide the resources to leverage the funding to ensure the project was competitive to be approved.

During Fiscal Year 2019, the Council was busy following up on recommendations and strategies that came out of the Illinois Forestry Summit held in June 2018: 1- Reestablishing the Invasive Species Council, 2- Revising the workman's compensation system for forest industries, and 3- Ensuring forestry technical assistance is available at State and Federal levels.

Included in this report is the Council Roster of Appointees and those slots directed by statute. Both the Executive and Legislative branches have open positions to fill.

Illinois forests provide a number of environmental benefits to citizens of this great State; clean air, clean water, improved soil health, and wildlife habitat. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve the Council as Director over these past 5 years. I will be leaving the Council shortly and wish you all the best in keeping the forest resources in Illinois at a high level. The Council also wishes the best to two recently retired champions of forestry from the IL Department of Natural Resources, Tom Wilson, and Reinee Hildebrandt.

Sincerely,

Bill Gradle, Director

Illinois Forestry Development Council

June 2019

IFDC Web Site
ifdc.nres.illinois.edu/

Critical Successes of IFDC

During fiscal Year 2019, the Council worked on many issues that affect the Forest Resources of the State covering technical and financial assistance to private forest landowners and municipal/urban forestry interest and communities.

Accomplishments

- Following up on the issues/recommendations/and strategies gleaned from last year's Forestry Summit was a priority for the Council early in the fiscal year. A **Strategic Plan** was developed and from that, an **Annual Plan of Work** was developed and helped prioritize Council efforts and funding.
- The Federal Farm Bill (FB) was an issue for the Council as we worked with Congressman Rodney Davis to level the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** playing field for private forest landowners. The previous FB directed 60% of EQIP funding to be directed from each State towards livestock concerns. 5% of EQIP was directed towards wildlife concerns. This left private forest landowners to compete for the remaining 35% of available funding, which was difficult to compete against row-crop agriculture. While the Council understands the funding needs to go to the greatest conservation need, the Council also believes that each respective State Conservationist can make that decision, not some staffer on the Hill! The new FB directs 50% of EQIP towards livestock and 10% towards wildlife. Though not what we had in mind, it is a small step for forestry. Our thanks to Congressman Davis as we ask him to continue the fight!
- Working with the Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Council discussed the idea of utilizing the **S.T.A.R.**, **Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources** evaluation program and expand it to include forestry. A committee studied this issue and it was decided by the committee and approved by the Council that in its present form, STAR, does not cover the adjacent woodland fields and that the current Tree Farm System may be a better option. However, if a forestry question can be added to the current STAR questionnaire, this program may have some value.
- **Urban Forestry Grant Review:** No grants were received by the Council to review.
- Council Members and Alternates completed the required **Ethics and Sexual Harassment training** required by the State.
- The Council provided the following grants to improve our forest resource in both rural and urban settings:
 1. City of Urbana for the revision and **printing of "Under the Canopy"** one of the most useful tools for homeowners and cities for tree selection. \$10,000.
 2. The Morton Arboretum for another **printing of the "Invasive Species Guide."** One of the most comprehensive references on this subject. \$7500.
 3. The **Illinois Forest Action Plan** Edit. Updated data for Illinois Forests prompted this update/edit. \$5,000.
 4. **White Paper on Workman's Compensation laws** for Illinois and adjacent States. \$5,000.
- Addressing one of the threats outlined in the Illinois Forest Action Plan, the Council applied for and was successful in securing a successful **RCP project, "Improving Oak-Hickory Forest type."** In its 3rd year of funding, 59 applications were selected for contract development worth \$774,092. The project has been very successful, but only covers 37 counties! Unfortunately, we are now out of funding. The project will run for two more years. There may be some contracts that are not completed. NRCS, may throw additional funding our way, not likely, but possible.



Critical Successes of IFDC

Recommendations to the Illinois General Assembly

1. Forest Industries and Mills have disappeared.

Illinois grows some great hardwood timber; Oak, Walnut, Black Cherry. Unfortunately, our Workman's Compensation laws have driven our mills, jobs, tax revenue, and that great timber to adjacent States. Even China imports our timber!

Recommendation: Revamp Illinois Workman's Compensation system so that Illinois can compete w/ our neighbors for jobs, jobs, jobs, and keep our wood industry strong.

2. Forestry Funding

Illinois has failed to generate or legislate permanent funding for forest and natural resources conservation. Threats to forestlands outlined in the Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP) are the result of this shortcoming. Decline of Oak-Hickory forest type, the decline of overall forest health, is on the backs of private forest landowners and our communities. There is a lack of technical and financial "boots on the ground," the resources needed to plan and install sound forest management practices.

Recommendation: Increase Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Division budget by \$6.0M for 8 additional field foresters and 3 additional urban foresters. Direct \$1M to a statewide forestry practices cost-share program. Direct an additional \$1M to the Mason County Nursery for labor and infrastructure. And work with the Council and partners to reinstate the Invasive Species Council to address forest health issues.

3. Request to testify at a legislative hearing.

The Council has a wealth of knowledge on the forestry issues in Illinois.

Recommendation: Please request the Council to testify/provide information on any issue regarding forestry in the State.

Urban Committee Report

The IFDC Urban and Community Forestry Committee, chaired by Robert Sproule, is an assembly of Individuals who share a common mission to advance Illinoisans' commitment to the health, care, and future of all urban and community forests in Illinois.

In 2018, the committee continued to expand and build its membership as we worked to identify projects in the future. In 2019, the committee has committed to working with State and local communities to identify trees as valuable assets of green infrastructure and pledged to their protection and replacement. In addition, the committee is working with the American Public Works Association, the Illinois Arborist Association, and the Chicago Region Trees Initiative to bring an Urban Forestry Basic Training for front line Public Works Employees to the Southern part of the State.



Critical Successes of IFDC

The Illinois Forestry Development Council was created in 1983 upon passage of the Illinois Forestry Development Act (525 ILCS 15). The Council's charge is to identify and evaluate the social, economic, scientific, and educational value of Illinois' forest lands and forest products industries. The 29 members of the Council represent the following interests or groups:

MEMBER	REPRESENTING	MEMBER	REPRESENTING
Mr. Terry Davis	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Dr. Jeffrey Brawn	University of Illinois/Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
Vacant	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Mr. Jay Hayek**	
Mr. Roy Bailey	Private Timber Grower	Dr. James J. Zaczek,	Chair, Southern IL University-Carbondale Dept. of Forestry
Dr. Karla Gage	Private Timber Grower	Mr. Raymond Poe	Illinois Department of Agriculture
Mr. Stan Curtis	Wood Products/Primary Forest Industry	Mr. Elliot Lagacy**	
Vacant	Wood Products/Secondary Forest Industry	Mrs. Colleen Callahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Mr. Stephen Felt	Illinois Tree Farm Committee	Mr. Tom Gargrave, CF**	IDNR's Acting State Forester
Mr. Kurt Bobsin**		Ms. Kim Watson	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Mr. Joe Fitzsimmons	Illinois Forestry Association	Mr. Chris B. Meister	Illinois Finance Authority
Mr. Dave Gillespie		Mr. Christopher Merrett	Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Vacant	Illinois Walnut Council	Vacant	IL Speaker of the House
Ms. Jenny Lesko	Illinois Chapter of the Society of American Foresters	Vacant	IL House Minority Leader
Mr. Christopher N. Jacques	Illinois Chapter of the Wildlife Society	Vacant	IL Senate President
Mr. Michael Brunk	Urban Forestry Representative	Mr. Jason Barickman (R)	IL Senate Minority Leader
Mr. Robert Sproule	Illinois Arborist Association	Mr. Ivan Dozier*	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service Illinois
Mr. Steve Stierwalt	Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts	Mr. Wade Conn**	
Mr. Ray Herman**		Mr. Brendan Cain*	U.S Forest Service Shawnee National Forest
Ms. Lydia Scott	Environmental Issues		

**Ex-officio Members*
***Designee or Alternate*

