

# Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2021

**Location:** Touch of Nature, Carbondale, IL / Zoom Hybrid Meeting

**Attendees:** Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek (IFDC Chair), Stan Curtis (Forest Industry), Mike Brunk (DNR); Chris Whittom (DNR), Kim Watson (ILDOC/Rep), Lisa Helmig (USFS), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Mike Chaveas (USFS), Wade Conn (NRCS), Jenny Lesko (SAF), Steven Graves (Private Timber Grower), Ryan Toot (USFS), Sara Selendic (Farm Bureau), Roy Bailey (Private Timber Grower), Mike McMahan (IFA), Logan Wilhelm (IL Finance Authority), Rob Sproule (IL Arborist/Urban), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), and Patti Cludray, Recorder (SIUC)

**Call to Order:** 10:05 a.m. – Eric Holzmueller - IFDC Director welcomed members and guests with introductions

## **AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the May 12, 2021 Review.**

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of May 12, 2021 meeting of the IFDC were given and sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmueller.

- Council members were given time for review and asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed. None were indicated.
- MOTION. Dale Schumaker made motion to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Scott Swisher. With no further discussion, Motion carries, minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting of the IFDC are approved.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report**

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Of the \$118,000 IFDC budget allocated \$61, 581 was allocated to SIU; \$34 K was spent. Restrictions/changes due to COVID – 19 resulted in only about ½ of the normal expenses. All remaining funding will go back into DRN funds. Should be back to normal spending in the future.
- The final draft of the IFDC Annual Report was sent to all members by email for review. Plan to go forward with printing of the document and sending to General Assembly as soon as possible.
  - FY 21 Small Project reports have been received from grant recipients and these will be included in the Annual Report. Sharing how IFDC has supported these endeavors.
  - Economic Impacts of Forestry in Illinois is highlighted.
  - Council discusses the Report.
  - Report will be printed and mailed from SIU as in previous years.
- Eric asks for any questions, none noted.

## **AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update**

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Member updates are ongoing. Working with State to update and correct the State Member list. Official approvals are pending.
- Members are reminded that they need to complete the Ethics training online and are encouraged to do this training right away. Jay notes that members need to be sure to remember their user names and passwords as it is difficult to retrieve those if forgotten.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:**

Eric opens this up for group discussion.

- An Ad-Hoc group has been formed to review the Timber Buyers Act. This group will be presenting the IDNR with feedback. If you would like to participate in this group, please contact Eric or Jay and let them know.
- To TJ Benson; any update on the feral hog legislation? T.J. last he heard this died in committee; no news.
- To Mike/Chris; any upcoming DNR legislation? Chris is not aware of anything of note. There seems to be an interruption in the flow of information this year, not sure why. Mike was not given anything to discuss.

With no additional legislative issues to discuss members move to the next agenda item.

### **AGENDA ITEM: Urban and Community Forestry Report**

Rob Sproul has been delayed, so this report is moved down on the agenda.

### **AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Forestry Report.**

- Mike Brunk presents this reports to the Council noting that he has been busy.
- Captured additional federal dollars which will advance important projects. Doubled partners that they are working with for a total of 6 (i.e. non-profits). Allows more outreach:
    - Morton Arboretum - Oak mid to large community tree program grants: woodlot mgmt; Oak regeneration; Oak ecosystem recovery; Build Urban Forestry capacity through the Chicago Tree Initiative, Tree workshops and Tree City USA;
    - Trees Forever (Central to So IL) focusing on mid to small community tree planting grants; urban forestry Strike Team will cover community tree risk assessment, recovery and tree inventory; hands on and virtual workshops, TCU assistance, etc.
    - Heartlands Conservancy – (So IL focus) Community assistance with tree ordinance development, building tree advocacy, tree boards, Arbor Day celebrations, Tree City USA, etc.
    - Illinois Arborists Association – Community professional arborist development, hands on and video education presentations.
    - Openlands (Chicago area) – Inner city enviro stewardship, tree care, social equity, urban FIA mapping canopy cover, building a volunteer base.
    - Chicago Wilderness (No IL and across the state)- Tree City USA outreach, Café series urban webinars, JEDI (justice, equity, diversity inclusion) etc.
    - Looking to do a full Chicago tree inventory.
  - This funding supports multi-year; multi-portal grants; expands community grant programs to include more tree planting; and renew efforts to build TCU community involvement across the state.
  - Successfully acquired 50K in fed urban forest resiliency funding for Chicago tree inventory study/action plan.
  - Working with Carrollton and Cambridge IL on tree inventory.
  - The Urban Strike Team is scheduled to review tornado damages in Fairview.
    - Accessing tree risk with the primary goal of saving trees by assessment and planning.
  - Collected 165K with IDOT for IDNR tree planting, spring 2021. Planted approximately 60 acres this spring.
    - Thanks to District Foresters, Jenny Lesko and Ben Snyder and all of our partners for their help and for their service.
    - Mason nursery is providing the trees for project.

- Would like to plant 75 more acres spring 2022 (Barrie McVey, Jim Tresouthick and Shane McDearmon are on-board with these acres); 106 acres have been planted so far over 2 seasons in native forests.
- Funds from these arrangements are set aside for forest tree planting on state lands. Looking to mitigate tree loss which is experienced through highway projects.
- DNR was recognized for completing the National State Foresters Assoc. Centennial Challenge; assisting 100 new communities and/or new community projects within the time of 10-2019 to Aug 2021. Added 18 communities to Tree City in 2020; 16 to growth and 12 with new ordinances and treatment systems.
- Illinois reached 1<sup>st</sup> place ranking for having the most advanced Tree City USA growth: Proud that DNR has helped the State reach #1 for state growth in Tree City USA communities.
- Working with the FS on a possible re-printing the Tree Owners Planting manual, this will provide the Forestry Division with available copies for distribution to organizations and distribution to the public summer/fall 21.

Jay, thanks Mike for his report and asks if there are any questions;

- Eric H., what is the policy that covers DOT's replacement of trees? Mike: There is a set fee to plant acres of trees which includes the purchase of the stock. Agreements are signed with separate districts. There is a limit on what is covered for replacement and plantings are staggered. Chris adds: Believes the rule is that trees which are removed that are over 2" in diameter must be replaced. The hope is that more trees are actually being replaced than are destroyed.
- Mike, so far things are going really well with this program. Species selection depends on site. Working with Mason Nursery on what is available and selecting species by site/district.

Jay thanks Mike again for his report, no further questions are noted.

NOTE: Mike McMahon joining the meeting via Zoom at 10:50 apologizing to group for being late.

### **AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Program Report**

Chris Whittom presents this report to the Council.

- Nothing really to report.
- Continuing to audit records by an ongoing cleanup of the stewardship database.
- Eric notes at the last meeting Paul mentioned sending out reminder letters, is that being planned? Chris: In the past District Foresters sent letters out every 2 years regarding management plans, etc. However, no letters have been sent out since 2015 because of the problems with the database. There was some thought that letters should still be sent out; but Chris determined that it would be a waste of time and money. However they are still considering sending out letters to those counties which have been updated in the database.
- Work continues on the data-base, numbers are showing 9600 to 10,000 are in the program. Acreage fluctuates from 350 – 500 acres.

Jay thanks Chris for this report; asks if there are any questions, none noted.

### **AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Report**

Paul D. was not able to be here today, but Mike agreed to go over highlights of the report that was sent to everyone by email.

- Mike conveyed to the Council that Paul would like to attend the next meeting of the IFDC, but the meeting would need to be moved to September 15, to accommodate his schedule asks that the Council take this request under consideration. .
- The 4<sup>th</sup> stakeholder meeting is scheduled for late July – August in North Central IL.

- Work continues on pending Timber Buyers Act changes; DNR would like to present the proposed changes in a public forum in late July early August.
- IDNR is still short 5 positions; hiring is still slow; with retirements the problem is only getting worse. Anticipating that hiring will pick up by the end of FY 22.
- Fire crews have been called up to assist with ongoing issues. (Council discusses).
- State Nursery is doing well; now selling native pollinators.
- The State Fair is ongoing for 2021.
- State Forest: working on keeping 9 core business plans

Eric H. thanks Mike and invites further discussion on the IDNR report.

- Eric opens discussion on the Timber Buyers Act meetings mentioned in Paul's report noting that an Ad Hoc Committee of IFDC members was formed to discuss as directed to review the changes to the Timber Buyers Act (TBA).
  - Committee finds that the time-line for a decision on proposed changes to the TBA as presented by the IDNR are rushed. More input is needed to address problems with the current language and to address major issues with changes. Time needs to be allowed for detailed review and some public meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the TBA
- Eric asks for Council discussion; points are noted.
  - The timeline does seem to be rushed. Changes are too important to just be pushed through and it needs to be slowed down giving more time for discussion and consideration of what these changes would actually mean for buyers/landowners.
  - Ad Hoc Committee agrees that all of the proposed IL regional public meetings should be re-scheduled for a later time. The way the bill is currently written is getting a lot of negative feedback that should be addressed and that State Forester should be included in any discussion before this is presented to the public and Timber Buyers as a whole.
  - There is thought that there is additional data out there that needs to be considered and reviewed before a fully informed discussion can be held. The Ad Hoc committee representing the IFDC would like to meet with Paul to discuss concerns. Mike to Eric, contact Paul D, so see if he would be available to meet with the Ad Hoc Committee?
    - Mike notes that Paul D. may be considering the deadlines for the fall legislative sessions when pushing the timeline for the meetings. The DNR can only put legislation forward at certain times; if it is rushed this may be why.
  - Council member's final thoughts are that it is the consensus that Timber Buyers are very concerned about this proposed legislation and, that it does not need to be rushed. Thanks to the Ad Hoc committee for working on this on the Councils behalf, and there is hope that the meeting with Paul can be set up soon.
  - It is the decision of the Council that there is no need to move the IFDC meeting date to September 15, to accommodate Paul's schedule; Ad Hoc Committee may be meeting with Paul before the next meeting.
  - Eric thanks Council members for their feedback on this important issue.
- DNR Fire – crews are being called out. There is a high demand for help again this year. Jenny L, notes she will be going on the board today. Call is out for resources. The duty is for 14 days (includes work and travel time).

**AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business**  
**IFDC FY 21 Small Projects Reports / FY 22 Small Projects Program**

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

**FY 21** Final Small Project Reports have been received. Recipient present today is invited to give a summary of their report to the Council.

- Dale Schumacher: presents a report on the Century School project.
  - Worked with an enthusiast group; giving kids an opportunity to learn about Forestry.
  - 1.5 acres grew to 3 and a second phase on wetland planting is due in the fall; the goal was to emulate an Oak/Hickory Forest. This was a success, the classroom is finished and anyone in the area is invited to stop and visit this classroom. There is a nice presentation and thanks go out to the many volunteers who helped make it happen.
  - Great project – targeting student involvement. There is a plaque at the site with scannable information which is age level specific.
  - Thankful for the IFDC monies and for the help of all those who made it possible. Notes that there were 200+ at the open house – students and community members.
- Dale invites Council questions.
  - Chris wonders, how much out-reach was done to present this to the public? Dale; local papers; TV coverage in the Metropolis area and regionally; and, AISWCD news outlets. Dale notes he would love to see this publicized across the state. Would love to see other schools in other regions involved in the creation of outdoor forest classrooms like this. But, not sure how to get the word out. Chris says he will think about how DNR may be able to help with that.
- Eric notes that this was an interesting project and it was great that IFDC could help with initial funding. Dale notes that once people found out about the project they began showing up wanting to help with additional funding and other support.
- Mike to Dale: if you would like to do a story he would be happy to put that in the newsletter so people can see how successful this project was. The article link will be forwarded.

**FY 22 Small Project Program:** proposal review.

- During the FY 22 Small Project Proposal Request Period, the Council received 10 proposals from 7 different individuals/agencies requesting a total amount of \$46,600 dollars in funding. A detailed summary of the projects was prepared by the Director and presented to the Council for their consideration. (To be included as an appendix to these minutes).
- There is a max of \$60,000 in budget for funding of FY 22 proposals. In past years any unused SIU budget appropriations has also been used to fund projects as well.
- Any unspent IFDC budget dollars are returned and go into the 905 funds. As in past years a second round of proposals are called for later in the fiscal year.
- Since the total funding requested for the projects received is \$46,600, there is plenty of money to fund all of the proposals. The question for consideration of the Council, are the proposals submitted for review an appropriate use of Council funding. Chris W., another question will the completed project meet the goals of the IFDC as outlined in RFP.
- Council considers and discusses the merits of the submitted projects.
  - The 2 of the 3 IFA proposals seem to be a duplication of efforts.
    - Mike M. indicates that the IFA would not have a problem backing off on the Champion/Big Tree proposal. Mike will re-submit this after the trees are verified on the registry first. Council is asked to remove this proposal from the list submitted for consideration.
- Council Director asks for a review the Proposals in order as listed on page one of the summary sheet.
  1. U of I Extension State 4 H Office & AISWCD (\$5,000): Dale Shumaker is the point of contract. Overall appears to be a good project. Council members like that there is a volunteer

match and linked contributions. Overall, Council finds this proposal addresses issues as outlined in the FAP. Funding recommended.

2. IFA (\$4,000): Zach DeVillez is the point of contact. Mike M. explains need for funding. There has been limited success on doing plantings from local stock; about 50%. Would like to try and share with homeowners the benefits of growing trees from local sources; designed for lay-people with very little experience. Process and results will be recorded for future use. Council finds this to be a good proposal. Funding recommended.
3. IFA (\$5,000): Zach DeVillez is the point of contact. Mike M. presents basic of proposal. To print materials for public distribution. Many completed projects are offered online; but not in printed form the IFA would like help with funding for the purpose of disseminating to the public/landowners. Jay H., could the Council review URLs of the specific projects to determine what will be printed? Would like to review what will be printed before deciding on funding. Mike - Yes URLs will be sent.

Stan Curtis joins meeting as 11:45.

4. Chris Benda/Individual (\$3,300): Mr. Benda point of contact. Questions are raised about the appropriateness of this proposal. Chris W., Not really sure what is meant by “high quality habitats” Are they going to really be looking at forests and not just plant communities (grasslands, glades, swamps). Mike B - sounds like a public education piece. Eric – there is a precedent of the Council funding of workshops in the past. Jay H. – shares some of Chris’ concerns; want to be sure the workshops are inclusive and include trees; could we get some clarification. Eric thinks this is possible, if so would everyone be okay with the proposal then. Yes.
  5. Chris Benda/Individual (\$5,000): Mr Benda point of contact. IL Big Tree Register 21/22 recert campaign. All okay with this proposal. No questions.
  6. Lillie Marable-Douglas/Individual (\$5,000): Ms. Marable-Douglas point of contact. Valentine Nature Unity Park. Council has concerns about this proposal: Jay H. – over 4K of the amount requested is requested to pay for someone to remove 4 trees. Mike – language of proposal is very subjective. Chris W. – agrees this does not meet IFDC FAP. Chris W., is there some way the IFDC could help this individual without putting money into this project. Perhaps providing advice. Funding not recommended at this time.
  7. Shawnee RCD (\$5,000): Kevin Rohling point of contact. Increase landowner participation in Forest Management. Good proposal. Funding recommended.
  8. SIPBA ((\$4,900): Jessie Riechman point of contact. Good proposal. Will be working with a company that did forest restoration support. Funding recommended
  9. Keep Carbondale Beautiful (\$4,500). Anne Krippenstaple point of contact. This is to establish an urban forestry educational area in Carbondale. Good proposal. Funding recommended.
- Eric asks if there is any further discussion on the proposals; if not is there a motion for approval?
    - 7 proposals were reviewed and were recommended for funding by Council; 2 were reviewed with concerns; 1 was withdrawn.
    - Reminder funding for any approved proposal is subject to the receipt of funding.

**MOTION:** Jenny Lesko makes a Motion to approve the 7 proposals with positive feedback and to fund the additional Benda: Natural Area Train Workshop projects once Council’s concerns have been addressed. Scott seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

- Eric will notify all those who submitted proposals to let them know where they stand.
- Eric and Mike would like to get together with the IFA to see if they can work their approved proposals into one project so only one invoice needs to be submitted for payment.

## Other Business New/Old

- Jay H. – Eric H. - the IFDC grant to SIU is entering its 3<sup>rd</sup> and last year of funding. Moving forward, is there an interest in proceeding with the SIU/IFDC partnership. If so this needs to be discussed now. Eric welcomes a continuation of the partnership and is willing to continue this relationship. A motion and approval from the Council is needed if we choose to continue the SIU/IFDC relationship.

**MOTION:** Mike M. makes a Motion to pursue and extend the IFDC/SIU agreement for the next 3 years. Chris W. seconds the motion. Jay asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries. Eric will get the proposal started.

- Mike - Forest Legacy – Assessment of Need. Approval from the Forest Service on 10 year planned assessment was required to be included. Would be nice to have an updated assessment.
  - This will allow us to open up the Action Plan with an undated assessment of goals.
  - Costs associated with this update would be the help of a professional consultant. SIU has hired a new faculty member: Dr. Brent Pease, he is familiar with assessment and he may be willing to tackle this need. He can be contacted to see if he would be interested.
  - There are projects included that the council has funded in the past: BMP manual; Silvics manual.
- Eric – Announces the retirement plans of IFDC recorder, Patti Cludray, this will be the last meeting she will attend. Patti will send the minutes of this meeting to the Director for distribution at the September meeting of the IFDC.
  - Eric, on behalf of the IFDC, presents plaques of recognition and thanks to both Patti Cludray and Stan Curtis for their years of service to the IFDC.
- The next meeting of the IFDC will be held on September 8, 2021. Assuming there are no COVID restrictions would everyone would be willing to do a hybrid meeting again. Eric will look for a location and will let everyone know before the next meeting.

Lunch is provided by the IFDC and served by Touch of Nature catering and will be served after meeting is adjourned.

**MOTION to ADJOURN:** Mike McMahon makes Motion to adjourn; Joel Pisoni seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

The July 14, 2021 hybrid meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 11:50 a.m. lunch is provided