

# Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2021

Location: Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek (IFDC Chair, SIU), Lisa Helmig (FS/Shawnee); Dale Shumaker (AISWC); Scott Swisher (Forest Products); Kurt Bobsin (Illinois Tree Farm); Steve Felt (Illinois Tree Farm ); Casey Calvert (IL Walnut Council); T.J. Benson (IL Chapter Wildlife Society); Lydia Scott (Morton Arboretum / Environmental); Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), Wade Conn (State Staff Forester/NRCS), Jenny Lesko(SAF/ILDNR); Elliot Lagacy (IDOA); Mike McMahan (IFA), Logan Wilhelm (IL Finance Authority); Austin Omer(IFB); Nicholas Mott (Patrick Windhorst Rep for IL State Republican- House Representative); Steven Graves (Private Landowner); Robin Hanna (IIRA, WIU); Roy Bailey (Private timber grower); Elliot Lagacy (IDOA); Rob Sproule (IL Arborist Association/Chair, Urban Forestry Committee); Paul Deizman (IL DNR)

**Call to Order:** 9:04 a.m. – Jay Hayek, IFDC Chair welcomed members, guests and members made introductions.

**AGENDA ITEM: Review of Minutes of the March 10, 2021 IFDC Meetings**-as recorded by Patti Cludray  
March Meeting Agenda and meeting minutes of the IFDC were sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmueller.

- *March 10, 2021 Minutes:* Council members were asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed. None noted. Lydia Scott makes a MOTION to approve the minutes as written; motion seconded by Mick McMahan. With no further discussion, Jay Hayek calls for a vote. Motion carries, the minutes of the March 10, 2021 minutes are approved as written.
- Jay thanks Patti for the preparation of the Minutes.

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

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- IFDC Budget
  - Once again, other than wages no funds have been spent from the SIU portion of the FY 21
  - At least \$17,500 of SIU IFDC budget will be returned to DNR 905 fund
- Eric has been in touch with several project partners regarding status of their work
- IDNR will not finish story map for state forest plan this fiscal year – map complete and submitted to Washington office for approval
- Eric mentioned that Mike Brunk has spent a tremendous amount of time and effort to track down unpaid invoices for previous projects and he would like to thank him for his time and effort. Hopefully he has solved the issue and we can avoid this situation in the future.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Forestry Development Council Member Update**

Eric Holzmueller presents this update.

- Working with Mike Brunk to make sure the member listing is updated and correct will add new members once the appointments are official.
- Members are aware of the issues regarding official approvals, there are technically 29 voting members on the Council.
- Scott Swisher has been working on organizing a meeting for timber buyers and sawmills, needs better mailing list for secondary processors
- Lisa Helmig introduced – Mike Chaveas as new Forest Supervisor for Shawnee National Forest. Holds same position for Hoosier National Forest.

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

- Eric H. - Feedback from members on proposed changes to Timber Buyers Licensing Act:
  - Lack of transparency with the process
  - Drastic increase in fees and bonding
  - Ambiguous language, e.g. insurance requirements, timing etc.
  - Requirement of a landowner number, permit,
  - Significant trust issues with usage of the 4% fee
- Paul D. - issue will be revisited by Division of Forestry with more feedback from stakeholders
- Tom Gargrave encourages changes to TBLA reflect objective of IL Forest Action Plan
- Eric H. – if interested in participating in ad hoc committee on this matter let him or Jay know
- Scott Swisher – questions why DNR states there are too many loggers and why isn't interested in building better relationships with loggers and timber buyers. Few loggers mean less competition and lower prices for landowners. There are better ways to protect landowners and resources – KY provides some good examples
- Paul D. – DNR would support master logger program - wood utilization forester position within Division that needs to be filled could assist with this
- Jay Hayek opens this up for group discussion; asking members if they are aware of legislation impacting environmental or conservations in natural resources.
- Lydia S. – asks if DNR is following Federal legislation – will send out copy of bill via chatbox
- Paul D. – DNR is working on some of these issues

Jay asks for any further legislative issues to report. None noted. Thanks to all for sharing these updates.

### **AGENDA ITEM: Urban Committee Report:**

Rob Sproule presents this report to the Council.

- Committee has not recently met.
- Working with Mike Brunk on number of issues
  - Urban and Community Forestry Program Partnerships for 2021 through 2023 that look to include
  - Community Urban forestry grants through partner organizations for tree inventories, management planning, tree planting and ordinance development
  - Enhanced Tree City USA outreach
  - Inner City outreach and social equity attention
  - Statewide community urban forestry program technical assistance, ordinance development, tree inventory, plan/program development, community advocacy recruitment
  - Oak Ecosystem Recover work in the specifically USFS defined Great Lakes region
  - Urban Forest Strike Team – local government presentations, partner recruitment, Disaster Tree Risk Assessment Specialist recruitment, training and deployment
  - Training for arborists, community staff and residents
  - Video work, training, public information, local government infomercials
  - In the process of applying for federal funding to support 2021-2023 UCF Core partnerships
  - DNR UCF program applied for a GPSI Intern for fall of 2021 through spring 2022
  - Illinois garnered a record number of Tree City USA Growth Communities from 2020 applications (maybe enough to move from 3rd to 2nd in nation?...and closing in on first place Ohio)
- The committee looks forward to meeting again in soon.
- Tom Gargrave – recognizes Mike Brunk for excellent job for urban forestry for the State

Jay asks for any questions for Rob, none noted. Jay thanks Rob for this report.

### **AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Report including Legacy Report**

Paul D reported during the IDNR Report that unfortunately Chris Whittom is unavailable today; Changes need to be made to make IL more competitive for program. Stewardship mailing delayed but hopefully will be sent out soon. Work continues to be made to clean up database.

Jay thanks Paul for this report.

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

Paul Deizman presents this report to the Council

- Still short-staffed, interviews are starting shortly – 8 positions need to be filled.
  - District Foresters, Office Coordinator, Nursery staff, Wood Utilization Coordinator
  - Ben Snyder moving to Fire (will hold District Forester responsibilities until position is filled)
  - Skeleton crew even if positions filled
- Permanent forestry funding is needed to sustain division. Perhaps this could be tied to climate change and clean energy through forestry.

Tom Gargrave – losing positions faster than replacing them – can't hire people because of funding resources and permission

Jay thanks to Paul for his report.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Other Business New/Old**

Jay H. welcomes discussion of items or updates of interest to the Council.

Old Business: None noted.

New Business:

- Eric H. Small Projects: if we follow timeline for our last RFP we can send out call for projects after our May meeting and discuss in our July meeting.
- Please work on taking your ethics training
- Lydia S. – released 2020 tree census – increased canopy but mostly from invasives, IL Invasives Species Council is working on forming committee
- TJ Benson – feral hog bill did not make it out of committee
- Steve Felt – Tree Farm committee meeting June 10 – Field day for 9/25
- Nicholas Mott – Rep Windhorst is welcome to any feedback
- Robin H. – encourages business assistance from IL Institute of Rural Affairs
- Mike McMahan – IFA push to develop committees to look at issues
- Jenny L – SAF no report, plan to meet in the future
- Dale S. – Outdoor classroom planning is a success so far, would like to expand effort to other parts of IL
- Austin Omer – unclear how future legislative changes affect working land e.g. forests. Moving forward with in person field days
- Lisa H. reports on FS news.
  - Wanted to clarify SNF and Hoosier NF share a director but are not being consolidated
  - Want to update facilities and mountain biking trails to keep SNF as recreation destination
- Steve G. – Reviewed National Woodland Owners Survey – will present results when they come
- Wade Conn – 2 RCPP awarded to IL for Forestry 1. Let Sun Shine In and Shawnee RCP and 2. Kinkaid Watershed Restoration Project

Eric Holzmüller announces that the Council is approaching the time when it can meet again face-to-face, however the option for ZOOM meetings must still be a choice. The next meeting of the IFDC will be a hybrid meeting with ZOOM on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 from 10:00 till 1:00 a.m in Carbondale.

**MOTION to ADJOURN:** Jay Hayek, IFDC Chair, calls for a Motion to Adjourn.

**MOTION:** Mike McMahan makes a Motion to Adjourn. Wade Conn seconds the Motion. Jay H. asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.