

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek, (U of I, IFDC Chair), Mike Brunk (DNR), Paul Deizman (DNR), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Scott Schirmer (IL DOA), Dave Gillespie (IFA), Patrick Windhorst (IL House Rep), Robin Hanna (IL Rural Affairs), Rob Sproule (IL Arborist/Urban), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), and Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Michael Chaveas (USFS), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority)

Call to Order: 9:05 a.m. – Eric Holzmueller - IFDC Director welcomed members and guests with introductions

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the November 10, 2021 Review.

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of November 10, 2021 meeting of the IFDC were 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 to accept by Rob Sproule, SECOND by Dale Schumaker. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Annual report was part of Fall IFA newsletter, in addition it was sent to General Assembly and posted on IFDC website.
- DNR informed Director that IFDC budget was officially approved and FY22 project recipients were notified.
- Met with DNR about TBLA act – discuss further in meeting
- Gave talk at Division of Forestry meeting to discuss current silviculture research – primary take away message of talk – TSI and fire treatments are failing to produce desirable oak regeneration across most stands, this failure can be at least somewhat attributed to high deer populations.
- Eric asks for any questions, none noted.

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update

Eric H. presents this report.

- Member updates are ongoing. Working with State to update and correct the State Member list. Official approvals are pending.
- Scott Schirmer has replaced Elliot Legacy as the IL Department of Agriculture Representative

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Paul D. opens this up for group discussion.

- DNR is continuing to look for ways to increase compliance for 4% timber tax and needs to know timber sales in the state. Waiting for green light from Director's office to move forward as well as language for the bill.
- Scott Swisher – It is important to get new language so committee can properly review.
- Jay H. asks for any reports regarding other issues from fall veto session – none noted.
- At Federal level the infrastructure bill passed and most of the forestry money is going out west for fire, but some will come to eastern states. Combined with potential reconciliation bill there could be even more funds to forestry however the legislation has been like on details.
- TJ B. – Recovery in Americas Wildlife Act provides for potential increases in State and Wildlife Grants Program.
- Mike B. – Reconciliation bill could increase support for urban forestry by 4-6 times but we are awaiting details. Partnerships will be utilized to provide outreach across the state.
- Scott Swisher – Senate Bill 1262 Future Logging Careers Act – allow 16/17 year-olds to help operate equipment that is owned or operated by a parent.
- Scott Schirmer – There has been deregulation for 1000 cankers disease to ease burden on industry as it turns out to be less of a threat than previously thought – primarily a problem on stressed walnut. There have been proposed rules changes for firewood weights and measures.

AGENDA ITEM: Urban and Community Forestry Report

Rob Sproul presents report to the Council.

- Committee supposed to meet in Nov/Dec – will report findings at next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community

Forestry Report. Mike Brunk presents this report to the Council.

- DNR urban forestry (and partners) worked with over 500 communities last year
- Working with IAA to provide training opportunities across state
- Looking at expanding efforts to serve underserved communities and increase capacity to manage all urban forests.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Forest Stewardship and State Forester Report. Paul D presents this report to the Council.

- There has been a lot of discussion within DNR on how FDA plans are approved, and they want to improve relationship with timber growers across the state.
- Have approval to hire a nursery technician and district foresters in Jenny Lesko's old district.
- Working with NRCS to hire forest specialists to work with District Foresters to deliver CRP and EQIP plans on the ground.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

SIU/IDNR Partnership

Paul D presents need for new Forest Legacy AON.

- The current AON is 2-3 decades old with some additions in 2010s. There is a need to add additional areas to program – Driftless area and Shawnee Forest area in southern Illinois. The goal of the program is to prevent development and keep working forests as forests.
- Current activity of the program is low in Illinois, but a new AON is needed to better position IL for funding. Unfortunately, the DNR is tied to current (old) document. A new document would allow DNR to prepare for the future.
- Division has trouble with staff shortages to do the work in house, thus the need to outsource to SIU to complete task.
- MOTION to fund SIU proposal to update Forest Legacy AON over three years by Scott Swisher, SECOND by Lydia S. Motion PASSES unanimously.

Industry update

Scott Swisher – about 50% of logging contractors operate at a loss or with low margins. Coal Ridge lumber is closing sawmill. Currently there are low interest rates for farmers.
Joel P. – Hardwood market is strong and overall, all prices are up except crane mats.

USFS update

Mike C. – Sharp Rock project is in public comment right now and there is extensive planning to keep these projects moving.

IL General Assembly update

Patrick W. – Veto session just wrapped up – will be back in January to start spring session.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

January 12, 2022 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The November 10, 2021 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.

Illinois Forestry Development Council

Meeting Agenda
January 12, 2022 9:00 – 11:00

Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Introductions	Jay Hayek, Chair
Minutes from the November 10, 2021 meeting	Eric Holzmüller
Executive Director report	Eric Holzmüller
Forestry Development Council member update - New IFA president – Tom Walsh	Eric Holzmüller
Legislative Issues Update -TBLA update	Group
Urban Committee Report	Rob Sproule
Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban & Community Forestry report	Mike Brunk
Illinois Department of Natural Resources report	DNR
Other business, new or old	Group
Next meeting, March 9, 2022	Group
Adjourn	Group