

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2021

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Mike Brunk (DNR), Chris Whittom (DNR), Kim Watson (ILDOC/Rep), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Elliot Legacy (IL DOA), Casey Calvert (Walnut Council), Steven Graves (Private Timber Grower), Austin Omer (Farm Bureau), Roy Bailey (Private Timber Grower), Robin Hanna (IL Rural Affairs), Rob Sproule (IL Arborist/Urban), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), and Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry)

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

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the July 14, 2021 Review.

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of July 14, 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. Tabled for later in meeting

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Sent Annual report to Jay who has posted it on website, also has been sent to General Assembly
- Notified FY22 project recipients of awards pending official Council budget approval
- Worked with Mike Brunk to finalize payment for FY21 projects and come up with some guidelines for future projects to ensure quicker payment and reduced paperwork for Mike.
- Met with Division leadership to discuss ways improve relationships with consultants, landowners, and DNR, without sacrificing quality of forest management- Suggested a policy that involves approval of plans with more recommendations and fewer requirements. This would allow landowners to be flexible in the implementation of the plan based on their financial and labor constraints.....just how DNR property is managed. Additionally, this solution is not unprecedented as it was practiced in the recent past and does not violate current FDA law.
- 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.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Eric opens this up for group discussion.

- TBLA ad hoc committee met via zoom to discuss proposed changes to TBLA act including things the ad hoc committee feels should change and things that should remain the same. Prior to meeting, ad hoc committee requested background information including number of timber sales in state, number of DNR assisted sales, number of timber theft violations, number of 4% violations

and number of license revocations against timber buyers from DNR. Committee is trying to design a policy that is based on sound data and goal of improving timber harvesting for private landowners. Committee recently requested a face-to-face meeting with Paul D to further discuss. Once there is a bill that the ad hoc committee and DNR agree with they will bring it to entire Council for discussion and vote of support.

- Austin Omer discussed interesting legislation regarding energy production in IL.
- Mike Brunk discussed federal legislation that focuses on providing urban forestry funding to underserved communities and a lot of tree planting opportunities

AGENDA ITEM: Urban and Community Forestry Report

Rob Sproul presents report to the Council.

- Committee last met August 2 and discussed priorities for 2022. Will meet again in October.
- Plans to help DNR to engage with underserved communities and to apply for tree city USA as well as update IL Action Plan for 2025.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Forestry Report. Mike Brunk presents this report to the Council.

- More cities assisted equals more federal funding opportunities
 - Engagement can be hard with smaller local communities, but once it happens there are opportunities for grants, technical assistance, and other benefits, just need to get a foot in the door.
- Forestry Council projects
 - Timing is critical for prompt payment
 - Ideally invoices would be before end of May
 - May have to adjust deadlines for FY23 projects
- Working with Trees forever to provide tree planting grants to small and rural communities, MA working with larger communities
- Developing a 12-member arborist strike team
- Limited staff in Division to work on urban issues – have secured funding to work with various partners across the state
- Secured contract with IDOT to reforest acres in the state.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Forest Stewardship and State Forester Report. Mike Brunk covered material in his report.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business SIU/IDNR Partnership

Mike Brunk presents this report.

Council funding approved for DNR story map and summary of IL Forest Action Plan – due to time constraints this did not happen. Looking to use SIU to create a more user friendly IL FAP – to get information to legislators and public. Feedback from stakeholders will hopefully improve plan in the future. Cost would be \$7,500 which is less than approved by Council last year (\$10,000). The second request would be for the IL Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need – majority of AON is from 1990s. This needs to be revised to provide better data for Forest Action Plan. Need to start now so that it is completed in a timely fashion. Ideally a three year project – could be abbreviated for a lower cost (\$13,669 vs \$42,247) Dr. Brent Pease (SIU Forestry Professor) is willing to work on both projects. Idea would be to use Council funding in a proactive way to complete both projects.

Rob Sproule – thought \$7500 for story map seemed reasonable. Would like more time to think over AON. Other Council member voice similar sentiment.

MOTION: Joel P makes motion to approve funding for Story Map to SIU – Second by Scott S. No further discussion. Motion unanimously passes.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

November 10, 2021 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Elliot L. makes Motion to adjourn; Casey C. seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

The September 8, 2021 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.