

Illinois Forestry Development Council

Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

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From the Director

The past twelve months have been very active for the Illinois Forestry Development Council. The Council sponsored six projects that took place across Illinois involving multiple aspects of forestry (more details page 2). We also provided our input on the conversation regarding the proposed switch of the Shawnee National Forest to the National Park system (more details page 3).



We were also heavily involved with the revision of the Illinois Timber Buyers Licensing Act. We were pleased to see that this past spring the revised bill made it through the Illinois General Assembly and is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. Overall, the biggest changes to the TBLA are higher licensing fees, replacement of the bond requirement with a liability insurance requirement, and stiffer penalties for noncompliance. The Council would like to thank the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for incorporating our feedback and we look forward to continuing to work with them on this issue in the administrative rule process. It is only through cooperation amongst the various stakeholders that we can develop a product that will benefit everyone involved.

The Council meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the odd months. Meetings are typically held remotely. If you would like to participate or have any items you would like the Council to consider, please contact me at eholzmue@siu.edu.

I look forward to having these conversations to improve Illinois forestry in FY24 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Eric Holzmueller, Director
Illinois Forestry Development Council



July 2023

IFDC Website
ifdc.nres.illinois.edu

IFDC Accomplishments

SMALL PROJECTS PROGRAM

The IFDC provided funding to six partners for the following small projects. These projects helped address forestry issues defined by the Council and included actions to mitigate these issues as outlined in the updated Illinois Forest Action Plan.

- The [Urban Wood Network Illinois Chapter](#) developed a marketing plan to grow their organization which focuses on utilizing urban wood in local communities while drastically reducing the waste component of urban wood.
- The [Association of Illinois Soil and Water Districts](#) and [Illinois 4-H](#) continued their tree planting efforts in 38 Soil and Water Conservation Districts across Illinois.
- [Chicago Region Tree Initiative](#) designed spanish tree tags and distributed them in under-resourced Hispanic communities. They also hosted two educational field trips for underserved communities to the Morton Arboretum.
- [University of Illinois Extension Forestry](#) used funding to assess the effects of forest management on the impact of moth communities in hardwood forests and engaged stakeholders by hosting a webinar highlighting the importance of moths on predators of conservation concern such as bats, nightjars, and diurnal songbirds.
- [HeartLands Conservancy](#) developed the Tree Stewards Program which provides a pronounced, cohesive source of community and volunteer education materials regarding urban forestry and its many associated impacts.
- [Illinois Forestry Association](#) used funding to engage with private forest landowners across the State via field tours, conferences, and development of a quarterly newsletter.



Shawnee National Park?

There has been a recent proposal to turn the 289,000-acre Shawnee National Forest (SNF), located in southern Illinois, into the Shawnee National Park and Climate Preserve. This is not a proposal coming from the Forest Service itself, but rather a group of local activists interested in limiting management, in particular harvesting, within the SNF. While the change appears to be somewhat innocuous, swapping the word forest for park, it would have dramatic implications for the forest and the surrounding communities in the area.

While this is a decision that would ultimately be made at the national level, it is the citizens of Illinois that would be affected the most. Currently, the National Forest system allows for a wide use of land management options across their forests. Switching from the National Forest system to the National Park system would reduce the options that land managers have in the Shawnee. The beauty of the current management philosophy on our National Forests is that it allows for the Forest Service to accommodate multiple types of visions for our forests. Certain areas may be set aside and managed like what one would see in a National Park, while other areas are managed in a way to increase developed recreational opportunities for public enjoyment. It may also include harvesting which, not only provides a mosaic of habitat conditions that are beneficial to many wildlife species, but it also supports the economic health of surrounding communities by providing jobs through the procurement of sustainably produced wood products. For these reasons, the Shawnee National Forest should be kept as such.

A previous version of the article was published in the Illinois Farm Bureau FarmWeek Now.com



Illinois Forestry Development Council

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
Vacant	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Ms. Lydia Scott	Environmental Issues
Vacant	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Dr. Robert Schooley Mr. Chris Evans**	University of Illinois/Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
Mr. Steve Graves	Private Timber Grower	Dr. John Groninger	Southern Illinois University, Forestry Program
Mr. Brad Petersburg	Private Timber Grower	Mr. Jerry Costello II Mr. Scott Schirmer**	Illinois Department of Agriculture
Mr. Joel Pisoni	Wood Products/Primary Forest Industry	Ms. Natalie Phelps Finnie Mr. John Teefey** Mr. Tom Gargrave	Illinois Department of Natural Resources IDNR State Forester
Mr. Scott Swisher	Wood Products/Primary Forest Industry	Ms. Sylvia Garcia Ms. Kim Watson**	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Mr. Matt Pustejovsky	Illinois Tree Farm Committee	Mr. Chris B. Meister Ms. Lorrie Karcher**	Illinois Finance Authority
Mr. Paul Deizman Mr. Dave Gillespie**	Illinois Forestry Association	Dr. Christopher Merrett Mr. Robin Hanna**	Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Mr. Casey Calvert	Illinois Walnut Council	Vacant	IL Speaker of the House
Ms. Jenny Lesko	Illinois Chapter of the Society of American Foresters	Mr. Patrick Windhorst (R)	IL House Minority Leader
Dr. Kirk Stodola Dr. T.J. Benson**	Illinois Chapter of the Wildlife Society	Vacant	IL Senate President
Vacant	Urban Forestry Representative	Mr. Jason Barickman (R)	IL Senate Minority Leader
Mr. Joe Hansen	Illinois Arborist Association		USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service Illinois
Mr. Steve Stierwalt Mr. Dale Shumaker**	Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts	Ms. Ellen Bogardus-Szymaniak*	U.S. Forest Service Shawnee National Forest

**Ex-officio Members*

***Designee or Alternate*

For more information on the Illinois Forestry Development Council go to:

ifdc.nres.illinois.edu