

# Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2024

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Attendees:** Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Justin Dodson (SNF), Chris Evans (U of I), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), TJ Benson (IL Wildlife Society), Amelia Cheek (IL Farm Bureau), Scott Schirmer (IL DOA), Kim Watson (IL DCEO), Dale Shumaker (AISWCD) Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Zach Wirtz (Environmental), Jenny Lesko (IL SAF), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm), Avery Viadero (SIU Urban), Mike Brunk (IL DNR), Joe Hansen (Urban), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Pat Joyce (IL Senate), Chris Young (IL DNR), Mike Chaveas (USFS), Brad Petersburg (Private Timber Grower), and Kenneth Jolly (IL DNR)

**Call to Order:** 9:00 a.m. – Chris Evans - IFDC Chair

- Members gave a brief introduction of themselves to group.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Review of the previous meeting minutes**

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of November 8, 2023 meeting of the IFDC were sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmüller.

- Council members were given time for review and asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed. Typo was noted and corrected.
- MOTION to accept by Scott Sch., SECOND by Dale S. Motion PASSES unanimously.

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

Eric H. presents this report.

- Recipients of FY24 small projects submitted reports and things appear to be progressing well
- Website updates are taking place and they will continue.

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

- Eric H. - TBLA update – Proposed amendments are available on JCAR website – these have been emailed to the group. Comments are due by 1/14 and if members have concerns, please let the Director know before the end of the week.
- At first glance, there is some confusion in the proposed amendments that can hopefully be addressed in the revision process.
- As a reminder, input on the rules should be directed to IDNR legal counsel through proper JCAR procedure - <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/>
- Scott Sch. – There is a continued holding pattern with implementation of new firewood legislation. Other neighboring states are looking into similar updates to their firewood legislation.
- No other legislative issues discussed.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban & Community Forestry Report.**

Report by Mike B. reported on IL DNR urban activities.

- Review of Tree City USA applications is underway.
- Nearly \$14 million in IFA funding is now available to underserved communities – Deadline is March 1, 2024. Map and RFP is available on the CRTI website.
- Looking to fund two additional grants – one for large metropolitan areas and the other for smaller communities to improve their urban forests.

### **AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Forestry Report.**

Tom G. reported on IL DNR forestry activities.

- Tom Gargrave has retired from Illinois State Forester Position.
- Mason State Nursery will have to facility updates in 2024, Union Nursery updates are on hold.
- Wood Utilization is looking to review and update forest management plans for the state forests.
- Forest Health has contracted with Dr. Fredric Miller again this year to lead efforts.
- Jim Tresouthick was promoted to a Regional Forester and the Division is looking into creating another district in southern Illinois.
- Kenneth Jolly was hired as the new State Forester as of January 1, 2024. Kenneth is from Maryland and is well versed in state forestry programs having served 35 years at Maryland DNR. He is looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of working in Illinois Forests.

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

- Roundtable discussion was opened to members.
  - Scott Sch. – IL Ag is conducting winter egg mass surveys for spotted lantern fly. Spongy moth traps will be set out in the spring to determine population changes.
  - Steve G. – Private Timber Grower was concerned about cicada impact this year. Group consensus was that impact should be minimal on established trees, but newly planted seedlings and saplings could suffer some damage.
  - Mike C. USFS released a Notice of Intent for an EIS regarding Land Management of Old Growth Forests in the National Forest System. The Notice of Intent and Definitions of Old Growth were sent to IFDC members. Justin D. (USFS) discussed working on a good neighbor agreement with DNR to improve orchards at Union State Nursery.
  - Chris E. – The University of Illinois is continuing the process of hiring an additional extension forester. The Tri-State Forestry Conference will take place on March 2 in Freeport, Illinois.
  - Joe H. – The Illinois Arborists Association is conducting equipment training with municipalities.
  - Amelia C. – The Illinois Farm Bureau held their annual meeting last month and has discussed updating their forest policy to oppose the change of the SNF to a NP / Climate Preserve. They also have proposed to repeal the 4% Timber Tax.
  - Scott Sw. – Wood yards around the State are full and markets are starting to slow down, particularly for low grade materials. Joel P. stated that some species are back to pre-covid prices. White oak prices remain steady.
  - Jenny L. – Illinois SAF has incorporated into a non-profit.

- Tricia B. – IFA recently acquired two properties to use as demonstration areas. The 2024 fall meeting will be held in Carbondale, Illinois.

**AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting**

March 13, 2034 – will be a virtual meeting – Eric H. will send out a calendar invite.

**MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.**

The January 10, 2024 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 10:20.