

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2023

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek, (U of I, IFDC Chair), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Tricia Bethke (IFA), David Gillespie (IFA), Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), Mike Brunk (IL DNR), Scott Schirmer (IL Department of Ag), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Joe Hansen (IL Arborists Association), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm Program), Chris Young (IL DNR), Mike Chaveas (SNF), Kim Watson (IL DCEO), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Paul Deizman (IFA), and Brad Harrisburg (Private Timber Grower)

Call to Order: 9:04 a.m. – Jay Hayek - IFDC Chair welcomed members

- Chris Young from Illinois DNR. Chris is the Director of the Office of Resource Conservation
- Joe Hanson is the new representative for the Illinois Arborist Association

AGENDA ITEM: Review of the previous meeting minutes

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of November 9, 2022 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. None were noted.
- MOTION to accept by Dale S., SECOND by Joe H. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric H. presents this report.

- Have received progress reports from the FY23 small project recipients and all projects appear to be running smoothly.
- Next meeting, we will discuss how to fund FY24 small projects or other items that might interest Council. Council has flexibility on how it can spend funds, e.g small projects, bigger items like silvics manual, forestry summits have all been funded in past.
- Budget expenditures for this year are on track to be less than allocated funds – all funds not used will be returned to Division of Forestry – Illinois Forestry Development Fund

AGENDA ITEM: Ethics training and IFDC Council member update

Eric H. and Mike B. present this report.

- Thanks to everyone who completed DNR Ethics and Harassment/Discrimination training. Next year we might have a paper copy option in addition to online option for training.
- Will request Governor's Office review our submission for Council member appointments that require his approval.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Eric H. leads discussion.

- TBLA update – DNR sent proposed legislative changes to IFDC Director on Monday which he then distributed to the ad hoc TBLA committee. The committee is looking over the changes and will meet as a committee to discuss soon. Then they will request a meeting with DNR to discuss any further proposed suggestions. At first glance there will be some feedback from what the DNR sent.
- Tom G. – Followed up on Eric H. comments – thanks Council for patience on this matter as there has been a significant rewrite of the current legislation. If approved by legislature the next step will be to work on the administrative rules.
- Chris Y. – Administrative rules put the law into practice. The process involves putting the rules out for public comment then back to committee for final approval and allows for better oversight of legislation.
- Scott Schirmer – Firewood rules are now in place, but enforcement will not come until 2024 to allow producers more time to comply. Biggest impact will likely be to local producers who want to send their product further than a 50-mile radius. Rules apply to firewood that is cut, split and ready to burn.
- TJ B. – Recovery for American Wildlife Act died in the US Senate – will likely have a difficult time being funded in future legislation.
- Lydia S. – the Illinois Invasive Species Council is currently looking for feedback on a number of plants – check your email for a link to provide comment.

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

Mike B. reported on IL DNR urban activities

- Have over 300 Tree City, Tree Campus, and Tree Line applications.
- Have over 100 Tree City Growth Award applications.
- Lots of opportunities to apply for additional Inflation Reduction Act funding.
 - Working with underserved and rural communities to procure funding
 - May not have to require match which would be beneficial to these communities
 - Ideas include dead tree removal and replacement projects and assistance with tree planting if a community fulfills requirement for Tree City USA, more technical assistance, invasive species control in urban areas, and nature-based pathways programs.
- Submitted spring reforestation tree planting request to IDOT – 36 acres in Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Looking to ramp up native tree production with Mason State Nursery
- Partnership opportunities across state have created upwards of 20-25 new positions

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Forestry Report.

Tom G. reported on IL DNR forestry activities

- Stewardship currently has over 10,000 approved FDA plans in IL
 - 320 new plans covering 15,000 acres this year
 - Over 400 visits with new landowners last year
- Fire has seen increased federal funding with has allowed Division to hire some additional administrative assistance

- Forest Health – Dr. Miller’s annual report will be available soon. He is also looking into a study to determine the influence of phytophthora pathogens on oak health.
- 6 positions posted by still have a number of vacancies – more funding for projects but less staff make it difficult to produce deliverables
- Division Foresters are working with agency to address the CWD issue
- Working on the logistics to run cost share program and get money to landowners under the new rules
- Nearly 150 acres were added to Big River State Forest

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- Group – Discussed the proposal to turn Shawnee National Forest to the Shawnee National Park. This is not a proposal coming from the SNF but a group of citizens in southern Illinois. Similar proposals have been made in other NF outside of Illinois and most of them are tied to climate change under the assumption that forests should be allowed to grow older so they can store as much carbon as possible (notably the system is often more complicated than this basic assumption). Based on the discussion, the Council does not believe that turning the SNF into a National Park is in the best interests of citizens of Illinois. Turning it into a NP would limit the management opportunities within the forest, threaten forest health, and also limit economic opportunities within the region.
- Paul D. – IFA annual conference has been scheduled for September 21-23, 2023. IFA continues to work on landowner education programs and is preparing to kick off a native oak seed collection this fall.
- Matt P. – Tree Farm met in December and there are no current changes in leadership for 2023. Several members will attend a national meeting in Alabama in January.
- Dale S. – AISWCD relocated their offices in Springfield to be closer to the capital area.
- Joe H. – IAA continues to offer trainings to members, over 70 last year.
- TJ B. – The IL Chapter of Wildlife Society meeting will have their annual meeting in April.
- Joel P. – timber markets are softening but wet weather should increase demand.
- Scott Schirmer – the gypsy moth has been officially changed by APHIS to spongy moth. IL had a spotted lantern fly detection, but specimen was not living.
- Chris Y. – DNR Director Callahan has retired, and they are currently looking for a replacement.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

March 8, 2023 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The January 11, 2023 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.