

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2023

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), Joe Hansen (IL Arborists Association), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm Program), Justin Dodson (SNF), Amelia Gooding-Cheek (IL Farm Bureau), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Casey Calvert (Walnut Council), Chris Evans (U of I), and Brad Harrisburg (Private Timber Grower), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Scott Schirmer (IL DOA), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Paul Deizman (IFA)

Call to Order: 9:05 a.m. – Eric Holzmueller - IFDC Director

- No new members to welcome.

AGENDA ITEM: Review of the previous meeting minutes

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of March 8, 2023 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 noted.
- MOTION to accept by Lydia S., SECOND by Chris E. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric H. presents this report.

- Completed audit of IFDC from IL General Auditor Survey.
- Compiling invoices and reports from FY23 small projects which are due next week.
- Discussed article written for IFB FarmWeek on keeping Shawnee National Forest as part of USFS system. Response so far has been positive.
- Selection of new Chair for IFDC
 - Chris Evans nominated
 - Approved by Council unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Eric H. leads discussion.

- TBLA update – Bill passed Senate on 3/23/23. Currently in the House as of 5/2/23 awaiting 3rd reading.
- Tom G. – Has represented the Division to answer any questions the legislatures might have including use of 4% fees and need to track timber resources in the State. Also had a discussion about the challenges the forests in Illinois face and how those might be addressed.
- Scott Sch. – There has been an education and outreach campaign for the implementation of the new firewood rules. A pilot program of the certification process has gone smoothly.
- Tom G. – Wanted to bring to attention another bill of interest to the group. SB 2357 would create a funding source for Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies. Bill is

sponsored by Rachel Ventura and is currently with the Senate Environment and Conservation Committee.

- Scott Sw. – The American Loggers Council is trying to add language to the Farm Bill to allow the children of loggers work with them similar to how the children of farmers are allowed to participate in family farming operations.

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

Tom G. reported on IL DNR urban activities

- Illinois received nearly \$14 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding.
- Funding is primarily for underserved areas

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Forestry Report.

Tom G. reported on IL DNR forestry activities

- Nursery sales have went well but still have some trees available. Several members commented on the high quality of seedlings produced this year on seedlings they have purchased.
- FDA numbers are slightly up.
- Fire Program is currently undertaking a inventory of all and trying to acquire some new vehicles.
- Position update:
 - Interviews underway for Timber Buyer Program Manager position.
 - Regional Forester position inventory will take place in June for Benton office.
 - Hired Forest Ecologist to work out of Clinton County
 - Position mostly entails working with private landowners on EQIP and CRP contracts
 - Goal is to create well rounded individuals that are cross trained in wildlife habitat and forest management.
 - Still more positions to be filled both staff and district foresters.
- Eric H. – asked if Division would be welcome to suggestions from Council on how to improve website, e.g. identifying dead links, outdated information, missing content.
 - Goal is for the Council to compile this information and pass along to DNR.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- FY24 Small Projects
 - Have \$60,000 to devote to projects
 - \$15,000 of FY24 funds are allocated to Assessment of Needs revision by Dr. Pease at SIU. He is planning on having a draft completed next year for the Council to review.
 - This leaves \$45,000 for remaining projects
 - Some discussion if there should be a special topic targeted or if we should keep it open to items that address the Councils mission and function and strategies/actions of the IL Forest Action Plan (similar to previous years).

- Council decided to prioritize at least one project that assesses reforestation potential in IL (both in terms of available acres and willingness to participate).
 - Remaining funds will be used for projects following protocols of previous years.
- New Initiatives – With work on the TBLA (hopefully) coming close at some point in the near future Council is looking for new ideas of where to focus their energy. Some ideas include supporting prescribed burn associations and the IL Invasive Species Council. Was suggested circling back to initiatives from 2018 Forest Summit to see what has been accomplished and what is left to be done.
- Matt P. – Illinois Tree Farm members attended National meeting in Jan/Feb 2023 in Alabama. Discussed the Family Forest Carbon program which will pay family forest owners to sequester carbon on their property. Currently a pilot program which IL is not a part of.
 - Eric H. – Carbon markets appear to be a rapidly evolving industry. NCX has recently shifted their focus from year-to-year contracts private landowners to bigger, long term projects.
 - Joe H. – Currently the fit isn't right for urban forests given the effort need to document and amount of dollars received.
- Casey C. – Walnut Council survey results have now been posted. Held a successful field day in April. Annual meeting is in Missouri this July.
- Dale S. – AISWCD is wrapping up their tree planting projects and hope to do more in upcoming year to get coverage across all districts in the State. They have 3 bills in which they are monitoring and are cautiously optimistic they will pass this year.
- Tricia B., Paul D. and Brad H. – IFA is hosting two field days on May 13 (one in southern IL and one in northern IL). Thanked IFDC for support in printing of 2,500 invasive species treatment guides. These will be handed out to landowners across the State. IFA recently accepted a donation of 80 acres in Central IL. Will be used to demonstrate good forestry practices. Currently pursuing additional opportunities.
- Scott Sw. and Joel P. – Timber pricing has remained steady over past few months.
- Justin D. – SNF participated in the White Oak Progeny test at Dixon Springs planting 1,000 oaks in a 3-acre enclosure. Planting includes white oak from throughout its range and will hopefully be used as a seed source after tree mature. SNF burned about 8,000 acres this year which was lower than normal due to unfavorable weather. Finally, SNF was recently awarded a 3-year cross boundaries project for work in southern Illinois.
- Chris Evans – U of I Extension spring webinar series is wrapping up. The Beginning Forest Landowner virtual short course is planned for this fall and will be paired with field days across the State. Planning is underway for restarting the TriState Forestry Conference to be held in 2024 and located in northwestern IL.
- Amelia C. – Illinois Farm Bureau is hosting their Nutrient Stewardship Field Days this summer in Sangamon County - June 8, Fulton County, June 20 - Piatt County, July 12 - Jo Daviess County, July 21 - Clinton County, July 29 - La Salle County, August 15 - Wayne County - August 24.
- Scott Sch. – EAB treatments are currently underway in northern Illinois. Spongy moth treatments planned as well including Bt application on 3,000 acres and mating disruptions in June on 32,000 acres. Spotted lantern fly monitoring is occurring but has

Commented [HEJ1]: Saved summit information to July 12 2023 folder - go through and review prior to next meeting.....

not been positively identified in IL. Cautioned that when discussing herbicide damage on trees to not just focus on Dicamba as misapplication for other herbicides, such as 2-4D can be problematic as well.

- Joe H. Illinois Arborist Association is working on redoing the Under the Canopy brochure. Will hold a summer conference in Bloomington in July.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

July 12, 2023 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The May 10, 2023 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.