

## Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2024

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Attendees:** Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), TJ Benson (IL Wildlife Society), Amelia Cheek (IL Farm Bureau), Scott Schirmer (IL DOA), Dale Shumaker (AISWCD), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Brad Petersburg (Private Timber Grower), Kenneth Jolly (IL DNR), Joel Pisoni (Industry), Casey Calvert (Walnut Council), Chris Whittom (IL DNR), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm), Joe Hanson (IAA), Mike Chaveas (SNF), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Chris Evans (U of I), Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), and Justin Dodson (SNF)

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

- Members gave a brief introduction of themselves to the group.

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

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of March 13, 2024 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.
- MOTION to accept corrected minutes by Scott Sc., SECOND by Joe H. Motion PASSES unanimously.

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

Eric H. presents this report.

- Small project reports are due May 15 - some groups have already submitted summaries and invoices.
- IFDC members were surveyed regarding the prioritization of cost share funding for management practice for Forestry Development Act management plans in March of 2024. The following questions were asked to members:
  - The DNR is considering prioritizing three cost share practices that are most commonly prescribed in forest management plans: Section 1536.51 Timber Stand Improvement, Section 1536.70 Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration (includes Rx fire), Section 1536.77 Invasive Species Control. Do you feel that prioritization of these practices is appropriate?
  - Do you feel that the DNR should prioritize any other practices listed below?Nearly 82% of the respondents (n=11) agreed that the proposed practices should be prioritized. Other practices that were recommended for prioritization were Section 1536.35 – Preparation of Forest Management Plans (5 responses), Section 1536.60 – Permanent Firebreaks for Management and Protection of Forests (1 response), and Section 1536.75 – Forestry Best Management Practices (1 response).
- Discussed the impacts of the new planning process for NRCS and impacts on FDA program. Additionally, discussed recommendation for cost share terminology should line up with NRCS given this is where the bulk of funding comes from and it would make it easier on landowners, consultants and NRCS staff.

**AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:**

- Eric H. - TBLA update – IFDC TBLA ad hoc committee met with JCAR committee to discuss 2nd notice as comments from first notice were not all addressed. Agreed to a few word changes and also proposed some examples to clarify when/who pays the harvest fee. These were sent to DNR April 30 and JCAR will review them on 5/15.
- Update on other legislation of interest to IFDC
  - HB5237 – Axe the Timber Tax - in rules committee
  - HB1855 - Illinois Forestry Fix - Passed house in senate as of 4/26 - technical fix that allows DNR to reinstate cost share program - requires DNR have some reporting \$, # of acres, & # of agreements (this legislation was a compromise in effort to repeal 4% harvest fee – HB5237)
  - HB5117 – Deforestation Free Procurement - in rules committee
  - SB2942 –Wildlife-Forestry Development - in rules committee
  - HB4717 - Rx fire liability - in rules committee
  - SB3342 – Pesticide Application Notice – Placed on Calendar for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading
  - SB2747 – Exotic Weed Permits – Placed on Calendar for 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

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

Report by Kenneth J. on IL DNR urban activities.

- Partnership with DOT to reforest areas lost to construction continues.
- Tree City USA efforts continue.
- University of Illinois hired new forestry extension specialist in urban forestry.

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

Kenneth J. reported on IL DNR forestry activities.

- Developed three one-pagers that were shared with IL legislature to highlight DNR Forestry efforts (sent to IFDC members as well)
- Continue to work on solutions for reinstalling cost-share program.
- State Fair planning is underway.
- Working on developing a new master agreement to send IL fire crew members to assist with wildfires in other states when needed.

**AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business**

- FY25 small projects program – will proceed with \$45,000 in funding for projects. Some projects may be partially funded. Applications will be due in beginning of July.
- Roundtable discussion was opened to members.
  - Matt P. – Attended ATFS conference in Washington this past March. ATFS is working on a family forest carbon sequestration program. IL chapter has updated their database to identify active members.
  - Mike Ch. – SNF is closely following farm bill that designates 750 of SNF as wilderness and 12,000 acres as special management acres. SNF has started the process to hire a new forest supervisor and move away from sharing a supervisor with Hoosier NF.

- Justin D. – SNF burned over 12,000 acres this year and treated a oak wilt pocket at Oakwood Bottoms.
- Scott Sch. – spongy moth applications will be applied in northern Illinois and cicadas are on their way (already emerged in some locations).
- Tricia B. – reported that IFA has lost their coordinator and the annual meeting will be at Touch of Nature on October.
- TJ B. – Annual meeting of IL Ch of WS was held last month.

**AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting**

July 10, 2024 – will be a virtual meeting – Eric H. will send out a calendar invite.

**MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.**

The May 8, 2024 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 10:55.