

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2023

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), Chris Wittom (IL DNR), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Jenny Lesko (IL SAF), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm), Casey Calvert (Walnut Council), and Avery Viadero (SIU Urban)

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

- Members gave a brief introduction of themselves to group.
- Avery Viadero introduced herself as the new SIU Urban and Community Forester who is part of a partnership with IL DNR to promote urban and community forestry in southern Illinois.

AGENDA ITEM: Review of the previous meeting minutes

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of September 13, 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 Lydia S., SECOND by Casey C. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric H. presents this report.

- Contacted all of the FY24 small project applicants and those that were awarded funding agreed to get started on their projects. This includes the Village of Godfrey who will proceed with a smaller budget than requested (with small deliverables).
- SIU hosted the State FFA contest 9/30 and local contest on 10/5. Both went well. Olney IL won state contest and participated in Nationals last month in Indiana.
- A copy of the Shawnee National Forest Chicago Tribune article was emailed along with the minutes from last meeting. Overall, it was done well and represented a wide range of viewpoints on the issue despite a few comments that were incorrect, e.g. quote from Wallace on oak regeneration.
- Thanks for participating in Ethics and Harassment training – it was a much smoother process this year and hope State will allow us this option moving forward.
- Website updates should be coming soon.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

- Eric H. - TBLA update – Email from Tom G said rules are still in DNR review and should be headed out to Register for comments/suggestions by end of November.
- Input on the rules should be directed to IDNR legal counsel through proper JCAR procedure - <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/>
- Scott Sch. – Updates to the new firewood rules that were approved in 2022 were delayed for 2023 with the plan of implanting them in 2024. Some producers were unaware of this plan and will struggle to comply (despite the outreach that was done by the IL DOA to

create awareness). The biggest hurdle is the limited kiln capacity of some producers and the difficulty of securing more capacity (as is required by new rules). The rules may have to be delayed for another year.

- No other legislative issues discussed.

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

Report by Chris W. from Mike B. reported on IL DNR urban activities.

- DNR Forestry is partnering with U of I Extension, Chris Evans, to acquire new IRA funding for expanding works in building resilience to climate change in Illinois private forests
- DNR Urban Forestry completed its annual USFS Community Accomplishment Reporting System report due on October 10th. The final data report and spreadsheet includes the collection of 12 months of program data in, financial/program assistance to communities, volunteer hours, community outreach assistance (three categories), and collected community metrics (four categories) and a review of all existing metrics from previous year reports. 505 communities with a total population of over 10 million people were assisted through Illinois' Urban and Community Forestry program in Federal Fiscal Year 2023. Other facts from the 2023 program review
 - \$524,950 in federal funding was provided to Illinois communities in the form of Urban and Community Forestry grants
 - \$715,953 was leveraged in local dollar match for Urban and Community Forestry grant works
 - A total of \$1,240,903 (federal and local gov) community grant project dollars were used in the FY23 for Illinois community forestry works
 - 32,923 volunteer hours (partner and community) were accumulated in Illinois Urban and Community Forestry works
- DNR Forestry, the Illinois Forestry Development Council Liaison, has completed the tracking, collection and submittal of all member's state mandated training confirmations to Ethics/Legal team. Thank you all, IFDC Members and Affiliates, for timely response to this mandated training!
- Illinois DNR Urban Forester presided over a national meeting of State Urban and Community Forestry Coordinators in Washington DC at the World Forum.
- IDNR Forestry is in the process of executing nine FY23 partner agreements to utilize around 15 million USFS dollars over the next 4-5 years with 80% of that going into community forestry grant programs.
- Continue to disseminate USFS grant opportunities and noteworthy information through our UCF program newsletter, albeit staff are struggling to maintain sufficient time to write these bi-weekly newsletters.
- DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program manager continues to work with a professional marketing contractor to enhance program image, Illinois Tree City USA literature and outreach as a part of an approved federal BIL grant.
- DNR Forestry has utilized Morton Arboretum's GIS specialist, Lindsay Darling to create a map of disadvantaged Illinois communities and disadvantaged census tracts in Illinois for use with a soon to be released community grant program that will not require matching funds.
- DNR Forestry disseminated USFS Thunderclap opportunity (Noon-12:30pm Nov 1st) to all Illinois IRA awardees. #FundingUrbanForestry

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Forestry Report.

Chris W. reported on IL DNR forestry activities.

- Division of Forestry met for annual meeting at Giant City State Park in October – included talks from several outside professionals as well as a visit to Trail of Tears State Forest.
- Working on renewing wooden dollars quarterly newsletter.
- Continuing to explore options to provide private landowners with cost share opportunities.
- Seeking replacement of staff that has recently left DNR.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- Roundtable discussion was opened to members.
 - Chris E. – Extension Forestry announced a new U of I extension forestry position. It will be located in Champaign and the position will have extension, teaching, and research responsibilities. The new person will hopefully start in January 2024.
 - Lydia S. – Morton Arboretum received a \$15 million grant to support community forestry across IL, targeting groups such as forest preserves and land trusts.
 - Scott Sch. – The DOA confirmed spotted lanternfly in IL near Chicago. It appears to be an isolated location but they are investigating additional reports. Spread is primarily along railroad corridor in Indiana and surveys will continue this winter to document spread. The spongy moth increase this year is attributed to being blown in and not from established populations, nevertheless more trapping will occur throughout the State next year. Planned treatments include BTK applications and matting disruption but will likely be at lower levels than last year.
 - Casey C. – The Walnut Council held a board meeting this past week. Field events are planned for next spring and fall, and the annual meeting will be held in Ohio this upcoming summer.
 - Tricia B. – The IFA had a well attended annual meeting in Allerton Park in September. They are now working on revamping their website to make it more user friendly and resourceful.
 - Justin D. – Region 9 is looking into a Good Neighbor Authority agreement with IL DNR to support seed collection at the Union Hill State Nursery site. Two active timber sales are currently taking place.
 - Scott Sw. – Concern with industry from out of state mills marketing IL products and placing them at a disadvantage. No easy solution to solving this issue.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

January 10, 2034 – will be a virtual meeting – Eric H. will send out a calendar invite.

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The November 8, 2023 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 9:50.