

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2023

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Tom Gargrave (IL DNR), Joe Hansen (IL Arborists Association), Justin Dodson (SNF), Chris Evans (U of I), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Paul Deizman (IFA), Mike Chaveas (USFS), Dale Shumaker (AISWCD), Mike Brunk (IL DNR), TJ Benson (IL Wildlife Society), Amelia Cheek (IL Farm Bureau), Joel Pisoni (Industry), and Scott Schirmer (IL DOA)

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 July 12, 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. None were noted.
- MOTION to accept by Scott Sw., SECOND by Dale S. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric H. presents this report.

- Mailed out the annual report to the IL General Assembly.
- Collected and coordinated scores for the FY24 small projects.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

- Eric H. - TBLA update – mailed Kyle Burkwald about the act - he said that they are currently working with IDNR legal counsel and office of law enforcement and hope to have something for review soon. I requested that he keep me in the loop so that we can give input on the admin rules for this act.
 - Tom G. – let the Council know that DNR has not yet got to the 1st Notice period, but hoping to get there by the end of the month. Once TBLA is in 1st Notice period the public has 45 days to make comments. DNR is hoping to get final approval by Jan 1.
 - For more information on rules process go to [Illinois Joint Committee on Administrative Rules](#) website – Eric H. addition post meeting.
- No other legislative issues discussed.

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

Mike B. reported on IL DNR urban activities.

- Illinois Urban Forestry currently receives about \$1.2 million in funding from USFS that is shared with various partners across the State.
- Looking to spend IRA funds on projects with communities – no match will be required.

- Continuing to work with a professional marketing team to develop ways to attract more interest in urban programs – will also create a new urban forestry logo.
- Scott Sw. – can IRA funds be used for other forestry purposes such as invasive species control?
 - Mike B. – urban funds no, but DNR is looking into additional dollars for support forest stewardship.
 - Chris E. – there have been funds awarded to traditional forestry through NCRS – RCPP (EQIP) and Shawnee RC&D (Let the Sun Shine In). More opportunities coming up.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Forestry Report.

Tom G. reported on IL DNR forestry activities.

- Working on a mechanism to get cost share funds to landowners and adjust admin rules to increase payments for applied treatments.
- Staffing – 4 new district foresters coming on board and 1 new regional manager. However, there are additional vacancies at district forester, regional forester, and upper administrative levels.
- Fire crew was deployed two times out west (California and Montana).
- Nursery continues to maintain production but will need additional staff to increase production (there continues to be demand for product).
- Stewardship is continuing to improve database management and ways to communicate with landowners.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- For FY24 the Council reviewed and ranked 14 proposals from 12 groups/agencies requesting a total amount of \$97,032.06.
 - Motion for Council members to approve full funding requests for the top five proposals
 - Natural Land Institute - \$10,000
 - Shawnee RC&D - \$9,000
 - Illinois Forestry Association - \$9,150
 - AISWCD - \$7,500
 - Illinois Walnut Council - \$4,921
 - And for partial funding (while maintaining proposed project deliverables) for Village of Godfrey Parks - \$4,921.
 - MOTION to accept by Scott Sw., SECOND by Tom G. Motion PASSES unanimously.
- Roundtable discussion was opened to members.
 - Eric H. from Casey C. – Walnut Council has several upcoming field days and events:
 - September 12,2023 Walnut Council is sponsoring Midwest Invasive Plant Network webinar on Japanese Chaff Flower, Field event on February 17,2024 with UoI Ext Forestry -Beginning Land Owner Workshop and IWC at Calvert Farm near Carmi, White County IL, Field events on April 13, 2024 with IFA, Tree Farm, and IWC in Douglas County IL and Nov. 13-14, 2023. WC and WC Foundation board meeting will be in Springfield IL, the WC Annual Meeting 2024 is in Dayton Ohio -date

TBD, and the WC Annual Meeting 2025 is on the Goetsch Property in Beloit WI.- date TBD.

- Results of Membership survey - 436 responses: 50% use government programs in forestry, 26,000ac of tree plantation, 80,000ac native woods, 1,000,000 plantation trees, 800,000 marketable native trees, 250,000 BW marketable in the next 10 years.
- Walnut Council annual meeting was held last July in Columbia Mo. This was a joint meeting held with NNGA and Chestnut Growers of America. Steve Felt accepted the position of Walnut Council President. Claude Diehl -VP. John Kelsey of West Virginia was honored with the Life Time Achievement Award. National membership has slipped to below 600.
- Chris E. – Extension Forestry had a virtual class that just ended – 80 participants. Will host a field day in October.
- Joe Hansen – has been elected Urban Forestry Chair.
- Mike C. – (Shawnee FS) has returned from detail out east. Shawnee still has several positions to fill, however staff numbers are up. Justin D. added that two timber sale projects were sold. Currently has some TSI projects that are underway.
- Group discussion on proposed article from Chicago Tribune. Appears that author has contacted a number of IFDC members for comment, but no one has seen a preview of the article.
- Joel P. – Industry reports that low grade and pallet lumber prices are down – other products are stable.
- Group discussion on hunting success of upland birds. Over the past decade, the number of hunters has dropped and there are less birds being grown because the demand isn't there. However, overall success rates have been maintained.
- Paul D. – IFA is working to improve website performance.
- Dale S. – AISWCD had 300 attendees for annual conference and is currently searching for an executive director.
- Scott Sch. – DOA had an increase in detection for spongy moth compared to last year. There appear to be some problem areas in Central IL. Mirrors trends seen across current range and is likely due to ideal conditions for development. The DOA is planning to increase treatment efforts as needed next year.
- Amelia C. – IFB is seeking a replacement for Lauren Lurkins. IFDC acknowledges her support over past few years on several Council issues and appreciates her assistance.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

November 8, 2023 – will be a virtual meeting – Eric H. will send out a calendar invite.

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The September 13, 2023 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 10:45.