



## Illinois Forestry Development Council

The Council shall study and evaluate the forest resources and the forest industries of Illinois.

### Report from the Director...

As required by the Illinois Forestry Development Act (525 ILCS 15/), the Illinois Forestry Development Council (the Council) submits this report outlining its activities and analysis of Illinois' forest resources.

#### Inside This Addition...

Fiscal Year  
2018 Report

The Council met six times over the course of the fiscal year. It meets on the 2nd Thursday of the odd months. Locations are varied across the State. Those locations are selected by the Council and posted to the website, <http://ifdc.nres.uiuc.edu>

The Council, as lead organization, continues to follow through with the reporting requirements for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that is improving Oak-Hickory forest type. The project has brought \$1.4M into the State over the last two years that is helping forest landowners install much needed practices to allow the mighty oak to reclaim its habitat.

The Illinois Forestry Summit was held for the first time since 2005. The people that worked hard to make it a success were: Rob Sproule, Beth Corrigan (pictured below with yours truly), Lydia Scott, Jim Zaczek, Patti Cludray, and Tom Wilson. The speakers were great, Wayne Rosenthal, Ivan Dozier, & Tom Wilson. A special thanks to Senator Chapin Rose for being a late replacement for Council Member Sen. Jason Barickman. And a big thank you to the participants and facilitators who shared their ideas and strategies for working together to make Illinois forests better.

Included in this report is the Council roster of appointees and those slots directed by statute. The Executive and Legislative branches still have open positions that could be filled.

Illinois forests provide a number of environmental benefits for both rural and urban citizens: clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat and improved soil health. The Illinois Forestry Development Council is dedicated to the cause of improving this resource and it is a pleasure to work with this outstanding group of people.

Sincerely,

**Bill Gradle, Director**

Illinois Forestry Development Council





## IFDC Annual Report -- FY 2018

During fiscal year 2018, the Council has been involved in many statewide forestry issues that affect the delivery of forestry technical assistance and financial assistance to private forest landowners and municipal/urban forestry interests and communities.

### Illinois Forestry Summit

A gathering of 55 invited guests, representing 40 organizations of government, industry, and non-profits from across the State, met at the I Hotel in Champaign on June 12th & 13th to discuss the major threats to the forestry resources outlined in the Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP). Those threats; loss of Oak-Hickory forest type, fragmentation of large forest blocks, increasing forest-health threats, lack of trained forestry professionals, reduction of forest industries and mills, extreme pressure and challenges on urban and community forests, and insufficient forestry funding were discussed in a series of break-out sessions. The Council encouraged input and collaboration from the attending organizations on the implementation of the IFAP, the Council's role, and the role of each organization. With all parties working toward common goals and understanding of stakeholder resources, we can make substantive, positive change to improving forest resources within the State.

The Council will proceed with a strategic planning session with the information gleaned from the conference to move toward the implementation of the Illinois Forest Action Plan.



# Initiatives & Accomplishments - FY 2018

## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Improving Oak-Hickory Forest Type in Illinois

Addressing one of the threats outlined in the Illinois Forest Action Plan, the Council applied back in 2015 through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to leverage local funding with Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding. This brings \$2M of cost-share money into Illinois over 5 years. In this second year of funding, 57 contracts covering 3,333.30 acres will be funded at \$622,558.11. This is great, until you see that 150 contracts were NOT funded. Also note this project only covers 37 counties in our great State. Illinois needs to re-establish the State's cost-share program. This is funded--or should be funded--from the 4% timber sale tax.

Council initiatives during FY 2018 include the following:

- Updated & professionally edited the Illinois Forest Action Plan.
- Hosted and planned the Illinois Forestry Summit in June at the Hotel in Champaign.
- Provided leadership and completed reporting requirements for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, "Improving Oak-Hickory Forest Type in Illinois."
- Provided a grant to update the *Economic Impacts of the Forest Products Industries in Illinois*.
- Approved the set of by-laws developed by the Urban and Community Forestry Committee which will allow the Committee to strengthen membership.
- Continue working with Congressman Rodney Davis on Farm Bill issue in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) where it mandates 60% of EQIP funding goes to livestock concerns. The Council still feels that each respective State Conservationist, working with their State Technical Committee, can make that decision rather than a mandate from the "Beltway" in Washington, D.C.

## Recommendations to the Illinois General Assembly

### 1. Forest Industries & Mills are Shrinking

Over the last 50 years, the number of sawmills has decreased by 72%. This is due to the high costs incurred by sawmill operators for workman's compensation rates, utility rates, and business taxes compared to neighboring States. This translates

into exporting high quality hardwood logs to those states and countries as far away as China. The products manufactured by this raw material means jobs and tax revenue lost to Illinois.

**Recommendation:** Overhaul the workman's compensation system so that Illinois can compete w/ adjacent States for jobs and keep the wood industry strong.

### 2. Forestry Funding

Illinois has failed to generate or legislate permanent funding for forest and natural resources conservation. Threats to forestlands outlined in the Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP) are the result of this shortcoming. Decline of Oak-Hickory forests, the decline of our overall forest health on both rural and urban forests result from a lack of technical and financial assistance, "boots on the ground" and the resources needed to plan and install sound forest management practices.

**Recommendation:** Increase Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Division budget by \$4.5M for 8 additional field foresters and 3 additional urban foresters. Direct \$1M to a Forestry Practices Cost-Share Program and \$100K to reinstate Invasive Species Council to address forest health issues.

### 3. Forestry Professionals

As "baby boomers" continue to retire, the brain drain in forestry professionals will quickly become even more of a challenge as agencies search for qualified individuals to fill those vacancies. Colleges and University's charged with preparing students to enter the workforce with forestry degrees are also affected.

**Recommendation:** Increase appropriation to Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Agriculture Sciences, Dept. of Forestry by \$2.5M to hire additional teaching/research professors. This will ensure an adequate supply of degreed forester graduates qualified to fill future vacancies. Direct \$1M of that increase to research "assistant-ships" needed for forestry research.

### 4. Illinois Forestry Development Council

The "Council" is charged to "study and evaluate the forest resources and industry of Illinois." In order to complete the job assigned, the Council needs additional funding. The Council would normally solicit through a grant program to complete either a study or update a forestry management booklet. This year as an example the Council hosted the Forestry Summit and little funding was available to carry out the grant program.

**Recommendation:** Increase Council funding to \$650K per year. This would allow for an adequate grant program to ensure the Councils' mission would be addressed as directed by the Illinois General Assembly in the Forestry Development Act. The Council would also be able to follow up on the Forestry Summit with regional mini-Summits.



## Critical Members of IFDC

The Illinois Forestry Development Council was created in 1983 upon passage of the Illinois Forestry Development Act (525 ILCS 15). The Council's charge is to identify and evaluate the social, economic, scientific and educational value of Illinois' forest lands and forest products industries. The 29 members of the Council represent the following interests or groups:

MEMBER	REPRESENTING	MEMBER	REPRESENTING
Mr. Terry Davis	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Dr. Jeffrey Brawn	University of Illinois/Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
<b>Vacant</b>	Landowner Engaged in Farming	Mr. Jay Hayek**	
Mr. Roy Bailey	Private Timber Grower	Dr. James J. Zaczek,	Chair, Southern IL University-Carbondale Dept. of Forestry
Dr. Karla Gage	Private Timber Grower	Mr. Raymond Poe	Illinois Department of Agriculture
Mr. Stan Curtis	Wood Products/Primary Forest Industry	Mr. Elliot Lagacy**	
Mr. Craig Willenborg	Wood Products/Secondary Forest Industry	Mr. Wayne Rosenthal	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Mr. Kurt Bobsin	Illinois Tree Farm Committee	Mr. Tom Wilson, CF**	
Mr. Joe Fitzsimmons	Illinois Forestry Association	Ms. Kim Watson	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Mr. Dave Gillespie**		Mr. Chris B. Meister	
Mr. Cole Craft	Illinois Walnut Council	Ms. Lorrie Karcher**	Illinois Finance Authority
Mr. Benjamin Snyder	Illinois Chapter of the Society of American Foresters	Mr. Patrick Evans**	
Mr. Christopher N Jaques	Illinois Chapter of the Wildlife Society	Mr. Christopher Merrett	Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Mr. Michael Brunk	Urban Forestry Representative	<b>Vacant</b>	IL Speaker of the House
Mr. Robert Sproule	Illinois Arborist Association	<b>Vacant</b>	IL House Minority Leader
Mr. Steve Stierwalt	Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts	<b>Vacant</b>	IL Senate President
Mr. Ray Herman**		Mr. Jason Barickman (R)	IL Senate Minority Leader
Ms. Lydia Scott	Environmental Issues	Mr. Ivan Dozier*	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service Illinois
		Mr. Wade Conn**	
		Mr. Brendan Cain*	U.S Forest Service Shawnee National Forest

*\*Ex-officio Members, \*\*Designee or Alternate*



2018 Forestry Summit speakers included (L to R) Tom Wilson, Bill Gradle, Ivan Dozier, and Wayne Rosenthal.