

# Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020

**Location:** Online Zoom Meeting

**Attendees:** Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek (IFDC Chair), Stan Curtis (Forest Industry), Mike Brunk (DNR); Chris Whittom (IDNR), Kim Watson (ILDOC/Rep for Chris Miester); Lisa Helmig (FS/Shawnee); T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society); Lydia Scott (Environmental); Robert West (Shawnee); Dave Gillespie, Steve Felt (DNR-Tree Farm), Wade Conn (NRCS), Jenny Lesko (SAF); Steven Graves (New-Private Landowner); Malcom Simmons (IFA for Stuckey); Mike McMahan (IFA), Logan William (IL Finance Authority); Austin Omer (IFB); Rob Sproule (IL Arborist/Urban); Nathan Reitz (District Representative); Joel Pisoni (Procurement Forester) and, Patti Cludray, Recorder (SIUC)

**Call to Order:** 10:05 a.m. – Jay Hayek, IFDC Chair welcomed members and guests with introductions

## **AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the May 13, 2020 Review.**

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of May 13, 2020 meeting of the IFDC were sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmüller.

- Council members were asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed. None were indicated.
- Errors were noted and items will be corrected by IFDC secretary, Patti Cludray.
- MOTION. Mike McMahan made motion to approve the minutes with corrections, motion seconded by Jenny Lesko. With no further discussion, Motion carries, minutes of the May 13, 2020 meeting of the IFDC are approved with corrections.

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

Eric Holzmüller presents this report.

- The IFDC budget allocated to SIU was 60K FY20; about ½ was spent. Restrictions/changes due to COVID – 19 resulted in only about ½ of the normal expenses. All remaining funding will go back into DRN funds. Please contact Eric with comments and/or concerns.
- Eric is working with Mike to update the Council members of the website and to get new members approved as quickly as possible. It is recognized that IFDC needs to update the membership and fill vacancies; need to be sure that our new nominees are confirmed.
- An expense report will be emailed to members.
- Lydia S. asks, if it is known that a project can't be completed could that funding be used for other projects that could be completed by the budget deadline? A suggestion is made for a reprinting of the Forest Action Plan. Eric indicates that no grantees have given up as of this date; so, it is hard to say.
- Eric notes that on the SIU administration side of the budget, there is approximately, 10K that will be returned to IDNR and this could possibly be used for other projects, but that those projects would need to be completed before the end of FY20.
- The final draft of the IFDC Annual Report was sent to all members by email for review. Would like members to send him their comments and suggestions. Would like to go forward with printing of the document and sending to General Assembly as soon as possible. Council discusses the Report.
  - Lydia - Suggestion/question: Is there a way that the background of the report could be lightened to make it easier to read? Eric indicates that the report background could easily be lightened or omitted altogether.

- Mike M. -Compliments to Eric on preparation of a concise and easy to read report. Members indicated that they liked the format of the report; and appreciate Eric's work on this.
- Eric indicates that after any corrections are made to the report, Patti will arrange printing of the report at SIU and will facilitate the mailing of the report to the General Assembly.
- Jay asks for any further discussion on the report, and thanks Eric for his good work on this project.

**AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update**

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Member updates are ongoing. Filling open places on the Council is a slow process. .
  - Steven F. – Has been in contact with \_\_\_\_\_ to see if they would be interested in serving on the Council, should be a good fit, he will keep Council posted if this person is interested.
- Members are encouraged to bring suggestions for members forward. And, when looking at candidates to serve on the Council; think about increasing the diversity of those who serve on the Council.

**AGENDA ITEM: Race and Gender request from Office of Resource Conservation**

Mike Brunk presents information on this topic to the Council.

- Survey was sent out asking for a voluntary response from each individual.
- Purpose: DNR Coordinator is working on Civil Rights report and a question was raised about the diversity of Councils, Boards, etc. within the IL DNR. This survey will help in the preparation of the report analyzing diversity.
- Completion of this survey is not required; all materials that were required to be turned in were.
- Will give plenty of notice to members of upcoming Ethics and any other required online training; reminders with due dates will be sent as well.
  - All training will be online and should be available to start late summer, with a due date of mid-October.
  - State employees should only need to complete training once.
  - Suggest that Council members complete the training as soon as possible; Mike will follow-up with those who do not complete the training by the due date.
- Jay asks if there are any questions or discussion, none noted.

**AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:**

Jay Hayek opens this up for group discussion.

- Thanks to IL Representative, Nathan Reitz who is with us today; are there any updates/issues that need to be brought to the Council's attention?
  - Rep Reitz notes that the IL Legislature met for a short/abbreviated session; COVID-19 issues and the budget were the primary focus; Wish there had been more time but any bills that would have been of interest to the Council were not addressed. Veto session is scheduled for mid-November (17-19) and early December (1-3) next week.
  - Malcom Simmons (IFA (for Stuckey) adds that even though this session was very brief; IFA will be looking more closely at what was passed / discussed.
  - Austin O., there is a proposal for review at the Federal level; the 547 page Climate Crisis Plan.
  - Nic M. (Rep for Patrick Windhorst), Echoes that there was a lot of legislation that they would have liked to see acted on but which was not in that short session.
- Chris W., There was no movement Wrongful Cutting Act. DNR notified that administrative rules need to be completed for the new Act; will get those to the committee as soon as possible.

- Mike M, wonders about the 1 M, tree planting initiative; Not sure where IL is with this, hope is that IL is lined up to benefit from this program.
  - Jay H., understands that some states are already working on their proposals, does anyone have any insights on where IL is with this? None noted. This is worth checking into.

**AGENDA ITEM: Urban and Community Forestry Report**

Rob Sproul presents this report.

- Due to COVID-19 the Urban Committee has been quiet; all members have been working from home the first half of this year, as many others.
- Committee will be taking an active role in the Story Map project; will be working closely with Mike.
- Looking forward to meeting later this year to discuss projects for 2021.
- Jay thanks Rob for this report; asks if there are any questions, none noted.

**AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Report including Legacy Report**

Chris Whittom presents this report to the Council.

- There is still no active Stewardship Committee in place. Would really like to see a Committee formed and looks to Council for their guidance.
- Work continues on the data-base, numbers are showing 9600 to 10,000 are in the program. Acreage fluctuates from 350 – 500 acres.
- State Stewardship: Field staff are limited in what they can currently do. They can still process certification paperwork; this is going well. Things are going as well as can be expected due to the circumstances.
  - Unfortunately there are not enough staff to meet 1 on 1 with landowners; to better explain the benefit of having current management plans.
  - Most districts count on this data to monitor when management plans are expiring.
- Legacy: There is no activity other than what was mentioned at the last Council meeting.
- Jay thanks Chris for this report; asks if there are any questions, none noted.

**AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Forestry Report.** Mike Brunk presents this report to the Council

- Just received approval for core funding focusing on canopy assessment; 7 IL counties are up for this assessment. This is a committed grant program of outreach to communities looking at tree inventory ordinance work.
- Working hard to finish up the last projects.
  - Trees Forever – webinars
  - IL Arborist – webinars
  - Morton – continuing small grant program
- Paul D, is working on the Action Plan; cleaning up the document, including new needed language.
- Looking at the new Story Map project; excited about this
- Tree City USA program; Arbor Day Foundation it is noted that the updated growth in these programs is being recognized.
  - Communities are going above and beyond Tree City USA.
  - Need is recognized that it is important to log how monies are being spent.
  - This year we have many more people involved.
- Thanks to all of our partners for their help and for their service.
- Jay, thanks Mike for his report and asks if there are any questions; none are noted.

## **AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Report**

Jay H. asks if there are any questions about the DNR report that Paul D. sent to everyone by email, no questions noted at this time. Jay reminds Council members to be sure to let Paul know if you have any questions or need clarification about anything on his report.

## **AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Small Grant Program**

Eric Holzmüller presents this report.

- FY 20/Small Grant Program: 9 Grants were funded – 8 grants were completed by the deadline.
  - SIUC Forestry Club was not able to complete their funded project due to COVID-19 restrictions. Conclave competition was cancelled this year as well.
  - Of the 8 projects that were completed some were done with COVID-19 modifications. For example:
    - Funded Webinar was successful with over 200 participants.
    - Funded Video of Forest Restoration; very nice, posted on website.
- FY 21/Small Grant Program: There was a max of \$60,000 in budget for funding of FY 21 proposals. Members were sent projects for review.
  - Received requests for approximately \$32,000 in funding for proposals so far.
  - 7 projects were sent to Council for review. Discussion of these proposals should include determination if the projects meet the goals and objectives.
  - The separate Div. of Forestry “Story Map” proposal is above the \$5,000 limit; but this will still keep the total committed to proposals at about \$45,000, should the Council agree to fund this.
    - That will leave about \$15,000 in reserve so we can be flexible to fund future projects that come up.
- Eric asks for questions or concerns from the Council about any of the projects that were submitted.
- Story Map project- Mike B. give a brief summary.
  - The IL FAP is a 70 page document that is not an easy read. The Story Map will be a modern way to present this information to the public with pictures/graphs/interactive content. It will read more like an executive summary. Should the Council assist in the funding of this project; Mike would request pertinent interesting photos from the Council.
  - Goal is to highlight those portions of the FAP that we want to prioritize and get our city leaders and the public more involved.
    - Encourages Council to review the “Story Map” example that was sent by email.
  - Wade C., to Mike B. - this sounds like a great idea; who will be working on this and do you see this as being editable, a format that could be changed with FAP changes. Mike B., - initial project will be done with DNR staff; look to create relationships with other DRN divisions; would like to fund additional staff/seasonal position. With the \$10,000 from the Council there is money in the budget to cover cost of hiring an intern to work on the Story Map. No problems foreseen in tweaking the Story Map with updates.
  - Stan C., what will happen if you have overrun and end up needing more money to complete the project. Mike B. – We are comfortable that the work can be done for the amount budgeted; not looking to extend past this fiscal year.
  - To Mike B., - do you feel comfortable finding someone who can do the work. Yes, person in this position will be a DNR employee and this will be part of their job.
  - Lydia S. –Morton has done a couple of Story Maps with success and will be happy to help.

- AISWCE proposal – Dale Schumacher gives a brief summary.
  - Passionate about duplicating the “Let the Sunshine In” format; recreating a mini-Oak Hickory environment
  - Work will include preliminary landscaping; a trailhead through an outdoor classroom.
  - Big Item: The AG Department at Century Community School has agreed to incorporate some forestry content into their curriculum.
- Invasive Species Map – Dave Gillespie available for questions.
  - Eric H., - How does this differ from the previously published document? Dave G., This document will be more appropriate for our landowners to let them know what is out there; it will not be as technical as previously published docs. Once the landowners understands what they are dealing with; it will make it easier for them to address. Mike – This is a complementary document, it takes the technical language and make it easier to understand.
  - Eric H., will this give clear treatment recommendations. Mike – It is hoped that this will give the landowner clear information in layman terms.
- Eric H. asks for any other questions or concerns about submitted proposals and if the Council feels that these proposals meet the goals and objectives; if they do not then should they be funded. Council considers and discusses the merits of the submitted projects.
  - Nic M. – What type of distribution is used to get information out once the projects are completed.
  - Eric H. – This depends on the project. Each proposal outlines / designates how information will be distributed; how outcomes will be shared once the project is complete; printed materials; online; social media etc.
    - The met goals are typically summarized in the project final reports which are required to be submitted to the Council once the funded project is completed.
  - Jay H., the projects/summaries could be presented in webinars/you tube/etc., work with Eric on how to consolidate those so people will know how to see the deliverables after our funded projects are completed.
- Jay asks if there is any further discussion on the proposals; if not is there a motion for approval?

**MOTION:** Jenny Lesko makes a Motion to approve the 7 small grant proposals + 1, DNR “Story Map” proposals for funding. Stan Curtis seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

- Jay thanks all for their work on the review of the proposals. Eric and Jay will look at the budget balance; and will make a formal announcement regarding the remaining available proposal funding at a later date.

**AGENDA ITEM: Other Business New/Old**

- Mike B., - Remember he needs photos (with summary of photo); he will let you know how to get those to him and in what format.
- Mike M., - Wants to let the Council know that he has been an active member of the IFDC off/on for many years, and he now sees that the Council has renewed life and purpose. He is proud to be a member. Thanks to all for their volunteer efforts.
- Shawnee Updates – Robert West (Acting Forest Superintendent)
  - Even with COVID protocols in place the timber harvest is on track for the FS region.
  - NEPA planning process is moving forward; working collaboratively on the Shawnee, at the core is Oak Bottoms good habitat improvement. Impressed with the breadth of discussion topics.

- Shared stewardship with State DNRs. Hope to see an agreement soon with IL
  - Listening to our partners; managing land in a holistic way.
- Forest Service is also looking at story board maps; may be able to help Council.
- Golconda: Job Core; progress on that what and what is will look like for the community to benefit all of IL.
- Robert will supply his email to anyone who needs it; reach out to him we are here to help. Jay H., Thanks to Robert for the updates. Jenny L., - DF is very interested in signing a Shared Stewardship Agreement.
- Tree Farm – There will be a Heritage field day on September 26; still plans to hold that event.
- IFA Brief Update – Looking to develop relationships with like-minded groups.
  - Working to improve quarterly newsletter.
  - Webinars were a success- those are available in the library for viewing. Thanks to the Council for their support.
- Jay H. has a question for Mike B. or Chris W. Paul sent a draft of the IL & Reg. Economic Analysis Report; is there any final report. Chris W., - Not aware of a final report yet, will refer this question to Paul.
- Mike B., to Robert W. – Could you go ahead and give the Council your email address: Robert; yes, [robert.west2@usda.gov](mailto:robert.west2@usda.gov)
- . – The NRCS office are working; by appointment only. Going through statewide admin. Rollouts. There have been changes in personnel; due to retirement the state of IL has a new State Resource Conservationist; George Henshaw.
- No new EQIP.
  - Available money seems similar to last year as far as funding goes for plans and implementation.
  - CS program picked up a bit more steam for doing Forest Management (FM) Plans.
- Council goes back to high-lights of Mike Brunk’s Urban and Community Forestry Report
  - Tree plantings in non-urban areas: 12.5 seedlings at Spoon River; Mississippi Palisades State Park 20 acres.
  - 2 year agreement with ILDOT – more funds next year. Will assist with tree mitigation; one tree replaced for every tree removed.
- Jay H. asks if anyone else has any further business to bring before the Council. If there are no further comments or discussion will call for Motion to Adjourn.
- Eric H., - September 9, 2020 will be the date of the next Council meeting. This will be at a site to be determined; should the Council decide that they want to hold a face-to-face / hybrid meeting; a large enough room will be needed. Council discusses possible options.
  - Eric H. - It is reasonable to wait and see what situation looks like in 6 weeks or so; meeting location or information on Zoom meeting will be sent to Council if a face to face meeting is not possible.

**MOTION to ADJOURN:** Stan Curtis makes Motion to adjourn; Wade Conn seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

The July 8, 202 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 11:50 a.m.