

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek, (U of I, IFDC Chair), Mike Brunk (DNR), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Scott Schirmer (IL DOA), Nicholas Mott (Windhorst IL House Rep), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Matt Pustejovsky (IL Tree Farm), Tom Gargrave (IDNR), Raelynn Parmely (IL Farm Bureau), Steve Felt (IL Walnut Council), Tom Walsh (IFA), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Roy Baily (Private Timber Grower), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Kim Watson (IL DCEO), and Mike Chaveas (USFS)

Call to Order: 9:05 a.m. – Jay Hayek - IFDC Chair welcomed members and guests with introductions

INTRODUCTIONS:

Welcome to new IFDC members

- Matt Pustejovsky is representative of the Illinois Tree Farm and owns a forested property in northeastern Illinois.
- Tricia Bethke is a Forest Pest Coordinator with The Morton Arboretum and is an Illinois Forestry Association representative.

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the January 12, 2022 Review.

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of January 12, 2022 meeting of the IFDC were sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmueller.

- Council members were given time for review and asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed. None were indicated.
- MOTION to accept by Dale Schumaker, SECOND by Tom Walsh. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- Received project updates from several partners.
- Additional discussions with DNR about TBLA act – will discuss further in meeting.
- Eric asks for any questions, none noted.

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update

No report as new members were introduced earlier in meeting

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Eric H. leads discussion.

- TBLA update – Eric H. had a meeting with Farm Bureau (Emily Hall and Lauren Lurkins) and Senator Murphy to discuss details of TBLA on February 7. Senator Murphy mentioned that she did not call legislation into committee and deadline has passed – We

mentioned to Senator that the IFDC ad hoc committee hopes to continue negotiating with DNR and other interested parties this year and Senator was supportive of this. Eric H created a word document of legislation and is working on making changes that the ad hoc committee has discussed. The next step is to send that to DNR and meet with them to further discuss so that the updated language can be sent to Senator Murphy before next session

- Eric H. spoke with Dale Fowler about SB3602 – reducing eligible lands for FDA from 10 to 5 acres.
 - Bill didn't make it out of committee, but wanted to get IFDC name out there so that legislators will contact us when dealing with these types of issues in the future.
 - Tom Gargrave - smaller parcels are difficult to manage and DNR would prefer these parcels be in the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Scott Schirmer – Gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) will now be referred to as “Spongy Moth”.
- Dale Schmaker - Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts is advocating in support of the Nutrient Reduction Bill (Senate Bill 3471).
- TJ Benson – No new information on the feral swine bill – appears to be stuck in committee.
- Mike Chaveas – Provided update of Shawnee NF
 - Prescribed fire season has started – FS is utilizing a lot of cooperation with other agencies and private landowners to implement cross-ownership burns.
 - Continue to grow staff and offer new positions over next few months.
 - Sharp Rock Timber Sale Project is under review.
- Scott Swisher – There is a small market for pulpwood, which is good as our forests can use more markets for small diameter wood.
- Joel Pisoni – Some uncertainty at this moment in timber market, fuel prices are becoming an issue. No increase in log prices since last meeting, low grade markets are strong at this time.

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

- Urban program is busy with Tree City USA
 - 307 applications including utilities and campus applications.
 - Also have a number of communities that go above and beyond expectations – Double Growth awards.
 - Working with partners (6 total) such as Morton Arboretum, Trees Forever, and Heartland Conservancy. This allows the DNR to have a wider footprint and get their foot in the door with community leaders across the state. Looking to expand partners to increase urban forestry efforts as DNR urban staff is limited in numbers (1).

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Forest Stewardship and State Forester Report. Tom Gargrave presents this report to the Council.

- No new hires for Division of Forestry until July 1 at which DNR may be eligible for attrition hires.

- Natural History Survey is hiring 6 service foresters across state (term positions). Will be used to assist District Foresters.
- Federal budget is anticipated to increase – may see some of these funds trickle down to DNR and Division. Strategic planning is underway.
- Division will stepping back from herbicide monitoring.
- Division has a new fire truck that will help in IL and also used when DNR fire crews are sent on firefighting efforts across the nation.
- Wildfire academy will take place in Marion, IL at JA Logan Community College in October.
- Ben Synder is the new Division of Forestry Fire Manager.
- Limits on how Federal dollars can be used on personnel – often because of short term commitment of funds.
- Lydia Scott – suggests pass through dollars would be best allocated with strategic local partners rather than larger national organizations.

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- Tom Walsh – Illinois Forestry Association is working on Illinois Arborist Association on multiple training sessions, some in person across state, other virtual
 - Partnering with Boy Scouts in September to provide information to Scouts so that they can earn credits for Forestry Badge – looking into items such as health forests and timber harvesting.
 - Hosting a 1st time forest landowner program in April.
 - Involved with SIU forestry camp in May.
- Matt P – Illinois Tree Farm hosting a meeting March 10, working on scheduling a field day.
- Steve Felt – Walnut Council field day is April 9th at Dan Schmoker’s tree farm in Carrolton, IL – Dan is donating tree farm to Walnut Council.
 - National annual meeting is July 24-27 in Carbondale, Illinois.
- Lydia S. – Two pilot carbon programs in urban areas, goal is to get municipalities planting more street trees.
 - Oaktober is coming up, planning is underway.
- Dale S. – planting over 800 trees this April across 31 AISWC districts.
- Eric H. – discussed NCX, the carbon credit platform, program will pay landowners to defer harvesting in exchange for payments, contracts are on an annual basis.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

May 11, 2022 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The March 9, 2022 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.