

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020

Location: Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek (IFDC Chair, SIU), Stan Curtis (Forest Industry), Paul Deizman (IL DNR-SAF), Chris Whittom (IDNR), Kim Watson (ILDOC/Rep for Chris Miester); Lisa Helmig (FS/Shawnee); Steven Graves; T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society); Lydia Scott (Environmental); Dale Schumaker (AISWCD); Dave Gillespie (SAF), Wade Conn (NRCS), Jenny Lesko(SAF); Steven Graves (New-Private Landowner); Elliot Lagacy (IDOA); Mike McMahan (IFA), Logan William (IL Finance Authority); Austin Omer (IFB); Late addition: Rob Sproule (Urban) and, Patti Cludray, Recorder (SIUC)

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

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the March 11, 2020

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of March 11, 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.
- MOTION. Dale S, made motion to approve the minutes as written, motion seconded by Dave G. With no further discussion, Motion carries, minutes of the March 11, 2020 Meeting of the IFDC are approved as written.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric Holzmüller presents this report.

- The IFDC grant program has several projects in the works, but there is concern about their completion due to COVID 19 restrictions and circumstances. There will be no carryover of budget funding, so if the projects cannot be completed the grantees will need to reapply.
 - 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 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.
- A case study was recently received from the IFA, involving private landowners; the data is from 2015-2019 and is concerned with pesticide drift. There is information on testing and suggestions; this 9-page document will be passed along to the Council.
 - Mike M. indicates that it is important to note that blame is not being placed; the reports purpose is to bring to the surface a serious issue that needs to be addressed; offering solutions without placing blame.

AGENDA ITEM: Member Update

Eric Holzmüller presents this report.

- The IFDC welcomes Steve Graves as the newest Member of the IFDC (private landowner).
 - A friendly reminder of meetings will be sent by email to all Council members.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Jay Hayek opens this up for group discussion.

- Are there any issues that need to be brought to the Council's attention?
 - There has been some talk that Madigan may call the IL Legislature back into session next week. Austin O., the IFB is not sure this will happen.
 - Representative Windhorst's office is very busy; could not attend today. The Rep looks forward to attending the next IFDC meeting.
 - House Democrats were told they would be returning to the Capitol next W – F.
 - House Bills: 3070 – Amendment to the IL Forest Development Act (Mgmt Plan) for approval. It is recycled from last year; there are still concerns. 3105 – Wrongful Tree Cutting Act, some additional changes were supposed to be made; Chris could research what this is about.
 - Jay H. to Austin O. – Does the IFB have any information about Legislation of concern? No due to COVID 19 only necessary business is being conducted at this time.
 - Paul D. – Federal Actions like the COVID stimulus package are still out there. Many people are trying to take advantage of those monies. Not sure, of the actual dollar amount, but it is reported to be a lot of money. There are some good committees working on how to get this money where needed. He will try to get more information for the Council.

Urban Committee Report: (Rob will not be available until 11:00 so Council moves to next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Report including Legacy Report

Chris Whittom presents this report to the Council.

- There is still no committee in place
- Still trying to better represent State and Private issues to the legislature, but change is hard
- Work continues on straightening out the data-base.
 - Most districts count on this data to monitor when management plans are expiring.
- Legacy: One landowner expressed an interest but they were not in a legacy area.

AGENDA ITEM: Urban and Community Forestry Report

Mike Brunk submitted a report and it was forwarded to the Council for review.

- Paul D. is available to go over the report if the Council would like. Mike is available by email if Council members have questions.
- Mike is doing a phenomenal job; he is very engaged. Council members are encouraged to look over the report.

Recorder's Note: Report will be included in May 13, 20 minutes as Appendix I

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

Paul Diezman presents this report to the Council

- DNR staff are working remotely or if essential up to 2 days per week.
- Field staff are working and staying on track.
- The State Nursery is operating; as they are still authorized to work.
- Tom Wilson and Tom Gargrave are still working on fire; luckily they have been granted permission to continue to work.
- There is no hiring at this time; due to spending freeze.
 - Interviews have been ongoing, but all personnel issues are on hold.
 - DNR has 5 critical positions; just don't know when they will be filled.
 - Hoping for monies from the Federal stimulus package to keep the State operating.
- All working staff are observing social distancing. Considering the circumstances, the DNR is keep up relatively well.

- Economic Analysis (20 State Regions) is ongoing – this will be forwarded to Eric for distribution. State Reports will follow.

Jay H. asks if there are any questions for Paul.

- Eric H. - Can you comment on the 4%? Will the current budget affect 4% next year?
 - Not really, but finally got a foot in the door about getting the 4% back; there is no certainty, but we keep lobbying for it.
- Jay H. – Have you heard about any statewide sweeps of budgets.
 - There is no money to sweep in cost-share. It is not an easy target since money is allocated and is being used. There are lots of funds out there that would be easier to sweep.
- Stan C. – Federal monies are available for state projects, does the governor’s office have to apply for this funding.
 - The process for applying and qualifying can be cumbersome, hopefully the governor will be supportive. The Feds are well aware that the state economies are flat. Federal money is greenlighted to come to the states. It is our job as a Council to stay on top of this and be sure the money gets where it is needed. (i.e. staffing, cost-share, habitat, timber, etc.)
- Paul D. – The federal stimulus package contains a lot of special funding packages; it is our hope that there will be allocations to the IDNR to help with critical needs. There are many protocols and reports and briefings from the DNR concerning 10s of millions of dollars that are needed.

Jay H. - Council asks that Paul keep us updated, thank you for this report.

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Small Grant Program

Eric Holzmüller presents this report.

- Call for FY 20/21 proposals went out in April with a due date of June 15, 2020. Anticipate sending these to the Council about a week before the July meeting.
- Since Council has not been advised of the budget yet, due to current circumstances, we do not know how much money will be available to fund projects FY 20/21.
- We have no new proposals yet; only those that were previously submitted and funded; with work due before the end of FY 20.
- The Council can discuss ranking projects for funding as soon as there is a confirmed budget in place.

Jay H. thanks Eric for this update, and asks for any questions or further discussion.

AGENDA ITEM: Other Business New/Old

- Lydia S. – Updates the Council on Working Groups.
 - The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) partners. 35% of funding is given 8 critical conservation areas; in Illinois (NE counties) the focus is Oak Ecosystem Conservation for Private Landowners.
 - The Urban and Community Forestry Program is working on wrapping up projects and adapting to challenges.
 - There is a lot going on with our groups across the state; everyone is staying busy.
- **Lisa H. – (Lisa reported that a correction needed to be made to this section of the minutes, however, she did not send the corrections to Patti, so this section is not corrected.**
- Forest Service – Update response to COVID 19
 - The Shawnee is open, some staff are working, and projects are going forward.
 - Eastern Region/20 states all have their own rules (i.e. dealing with COVID 19 protocols, etc.) However, there is a shared stewardship concept with regard to opening trails and recreation sites. There are problems across the nation with availability of personnel and PPE, for cleaning, etc.
 - Garden of the Gods; Bell Smith Springs have reported fatalities in the last 2 weeks: 1 due

- to illegal use of an ATV and the other was a hiker fall at Jackson falls.
 - Some field-work is going forward; Timber sale prep; Praise for prescribed fire work.
 - Receiving calls weekly in regional office from those concerned about timber industry.
 - The mid-June timber sale is still moving forward.
 - Bottom line, FS is looking out and developing plans on how to operate going forward. Evaluating what a return to the office will look like.
- Jay H. – asks if the Council if there is any further discussion if there is any additional business or of if members have any questions for Lisa or Lydia.
- Wade C. – 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 EQUIP.
 - 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.

AGENDA ITEM: Urban Committee Report:

Rob Spoule presents this report to the Council.

- Cudos to Illinois District Forestry: Paul D and all for their hard work getting things done. There was a race against time to finish contracts.
- Tree City, USA (Reps NE Midwest) will be re-vamping growth awards – presentation to National Association in June. The re-vamp is an update making better access to communities; wood utilization; canopy studies; inventory work.
- Southern Region 8 had offers applying to:
 - Forest Action Strike Team – protocols for invasive pests.
 - Assessment of Urban Forests after storms – hoping to preserve trees if possible.
 - Looking for / accessing emerald ash borer (EAB), lantern fly; Asian longhorn beetle; etc.
 - Fred Mills – the leading authority on EAB in the region is developing protocols for the next 2 years; this will mean more money coming in; 20K.
- Public workshop training has been converted to virtual training to comply with COVID-19 protocols.
 - Chainsaw safety training is being done as a webinar.
- Story map webinar has been done in other states to present Forest Action Plan to the public. Rob and other ILDNR staff were attendees. Rob would like to know if the Council would be interested in creating an Illinois story map of IL Forest Action Plan (IL FAP); this mean we would need to have staff that could work on creating a story map.
 - Stan C., - Honestly it is boring to read the IL FAP a visual aspect may make it more interesting.
 - Eric H. – It would make the report nicer and much more available/appealing to a larger audience.
 - Mike will see if staff is available to do something like this and will keep Council updated.

IFDC Director, Eric Holzmueller, notes that Jay Hayek lost his internet connection. Thanks Rob for this update and asks if there is any other Council business before close of the meeting. None noted.

- Thanks to Rob for this update and the Council will look forward to his next report.
- Next meeting of the IFDC will be July 8, 2020. Would like to try for a face to face meeting if not the meeting will be conducted by ZOOM as an option.
- Hope to have all proposals, that have been received, to Council members for review to be ready for ranking/voting at the July 8, 2020 meeting.
- Eric will send out meeting information as it is known; as well as, any other pertinent information or reports.
- If there are no further comments or discussion will call for Motion to Adjourn.

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

The May 13, 2020 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

APPENDIX I

May 13, 2020 Report to Council: Mike Brunk - Urban and Community Forestry

For IFDC May 13 meeting

State level

- Attended a story map webinar for potential public presentation use with our Forest Action Plan
- ongoing development of urban forestry e-learning opportunities for fun and or arborist CEUs, latest work - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y72Y6BF> ; <http://illinoisarborist.org/elearning/Chainsaw-Maintenance/story.html> (Illinois Arborist Assoc., Trees Forever)
- secure inner-city partnerships for “Spanish” language urban forestry training (hands-on and written) through Openlands Treekeeper program and the Illinois Arborist Association Certified Arborist program
- observed several good virtual Arbor Day Events, Urbana Park District. <https://www.urbana-parks.org/happy-arbor-day-2020/>

National level

- Representing NEMW Region on an appointed team of national reps that has developed a New Tree City USA Growth Program. We have modernized and expanded the program to lead community forestry programs through this decade and into the next. The new program draft is being presented to the National Association of Foresters in June.
- Position Illinois to lead the development a new Emerald Ash Borer Forest Action Strike Team Protocol. The idea is to develop a strike team protocol that can be used nation-wide for assisting communities with EAB.

Forestry

Spring 2020 IDNR Reforestation Tree Planting

Forestry Spring 2020 Reforestation Tree Planting

- Spoon River State Forest (District Forester, Steve Felt)



- Mississippi Palisades State Park (District Forester, Paul Bane)



