

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2022

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmüller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek, (U of I, IFDC Chair), Dale Schumaker (AISWC), T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society), Lydia Scott (Environmental), Nicholas Mott (Windhorst IL House Rep), Scott Swisher (Forest Industry), Joel Pisoni (Forest Industry), Lorrie Karcher (IL Finance Authority), Tom Gargrave (IDNR), Austin Omer (IL Farm Bureau), Tom Walsh (IFA), Steve Graves (Private Timber Grower), Tricia Bethke (IFA), Wade Conn, Robin Hanna (IL Institute Rural Affairs), and Mike Chaveas (USFS)

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

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the March 9, 2022 review.

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of March 9, 2022 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. Typo was noted and corrected.
- MOTION to accept by Dale Schumaker, SECOND by Tom Gargrave. Motion PASSES unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric H. presents this report.

- Received project updates from several partners.
- Storymap of IL Forest Action Plan is coming together
- Participated on the IL 30 x 30 conservation task force –
 - Todd Strole discussed impacts of FDA program on conservation
 - Some individuals are promoting the idea to turn SNF into a National Park
 - Outcome of task force is unclear but will be followed and reported to group as necessary
- Eric asks for any questions, none noted

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update

Dr. Justin Shew is the new President of the Illinois Wildlife Society, Dr. Benson will continue as a representative to IFDC

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Update:

Eric H. leads discussion.

- TBLA update – Eric H. contacted Natalie Finnie to discuss meeting with stakeholders. She is reaching out to Senator Murphy to Murphy first to see what level of involvement she would like to have. Once that is established, we can get a meeting with all stakeholders scheduled.

- Austin O. – Federal infrastructure bill should trickle down to States and we should keep an eye out for grant opportunities
- Dale S. – Senate bill 3471 did not pass, will try to revise and resubmit
- TJ B. – Avian flu is a concern, primarily for poultry and domestic wildlife. Concern it could affect songbirds, so DNR is recommending to take down birdfeeders at this time.
- Tom G – echoed previous comments, stated birdfeeder recommendation will likely be lifted at the end of month due to lack of reported songbird damage
- Scott Sw. – Fuel and interest rates are rising so costs are a concern. Low grade mills are low on product. Needs to dry up to resume cutting.
- Mike C. – Funding for agency passed with infrastructure bill, mostly increased benefits for western states to address fire but there are some opportunities for eastern and central National Forests. Increased support for staffing as well.

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

- Arbor Day was successful
- Infrastructure bill – more money for forest health, nursery, stewardship, and fire – waiting for it to come to fruition
- Interviewed 6 service foresters to assist with District Foresters – hires should become official soon
- Positions posted for District Forester, Wayne County and Nursery Technician, looking to fill Wood Utilization position
- FY23 budget looks good
- Nursery had 1,200 orders, up from 800 last year (almost sold out)
- Fire crew will be gearing up to head out west for assistance, demand is high and cost of crew is paid for out of the federal budget
- DOT planted 75 acres in trees this year to mitigate developed land

AGENDA ITEM: New / Old Business

- Small projects – Eric H. – Council is going to announce a call for small projects for FY 23– we have AON project slated for next year so we will have about \$45,000 to devote to additional projects. Some updates include – raising project cap to \$10,000, project completion dues dates are in May with final reports and invoices due May 15 so that these can be processed in a timely fashion. A single entity may work on multiple unrelated projects but will be subject to \$10k cap and will submit one final report and invoice detailing all their work. Multiple entities are allowed to collaborate on single project, but project cap is still \$10,000.
- Tricia B. and Tom W. – 4 IAA sessions planned in June that will focus on Urban Forestry and EAB management.
 - Offer for IFA to help DNR send FDA letters to landowners – increases membership to IFA
 - Annual meeting – September 16 & 17, Chestnut Mountain Ski Resort, Elizabeth, IL – will focus on wildlife management and first aid in the woods

- Joel P. – Stumpage prices are steady, but higher than they have been compared to last few years. Fuel prices are reducing distance logs are being transported before they are processed.
- Dale S. – AISCW appreciates small projects program, last year they got 31 counties involved and would like to see it expanded
- Mike C. – working on getting feedback from SNF proposals, would like to get feedback from all partners, if interested in commenting please reach out to SNF.

AGENDA ITEM: Next meeting

July 13, 2022 – will be a virtual meeting

MOTION to ADJOURN: Motion carries.

The May 11, 2022 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.