

Illinois Forestry Development Council – Meeting Minutes November 4, 2020

Location: Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Eric Holzmueller (IFDC Director), Jay Hayek (IFDC Chair), Mike Brunk (DNR); Chris Whittom (IDNR), Kim Watson (ILDOC/Rep for Chris Miester); Lisa Helmig (FS/Shawnee); T.J. Benson (Wildlife Society); Steve Felt (DNR-Tree Farm), Wade Conn (NRCS); Steve Graves (New-Private Landowner); Mike McMahan (IFA); Rob Sproule (IL Arborist/Urban); Elliot Lagacy (IDOA); Dave Gillespie (SAF); Joel Pisoni (Procurement Forester); Raelynn Parmely (Farm Bureau); Patti Cludray, Recorder SIUC); and, late arrivals Casey Calvert (IL Walnut Council); Robin Hanna (WIU).

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

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes of the September 9, 2020 member review.

Meeting Agenda and Minutes of September 9, 2020 meeting of the IFDC were sent by email to members by Director, Eric Holzmueller.

- Council members were asked if any errors or omissions were noted in the minutes as distributed.
 - Need to add Mike Brunk to the list of attendees.
 - Correct spelling of Steve Graves' name.
- Errors as noted will be corrected by IFDC secretary, Patti Cludray.
- MOTION. Mike McMahan made motion to approve the minutes with corrections, motion seconded by Rob Sproul. With no further discussion, Motion carries, minutes of the September 9, 2020 meeting of the IFDC are approved with corrections.

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Director Report

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- There have been few expenditures to the SIUC - IFDC budget allocation at this point. SIU FY20 budget was 60K and restrictions/changes due to COVID – 19 resulted in only about ½ of the normal expenses. All remaining funding went back into DNR funds. Please contact Eric with comments and/or concerns.
- The RCCP report was filed with the NRCS discussion about submission of final report.
 - IFDC was not selected for follow-up last year by NRCS.
 - Will file a final report soon.
- Forest Mgmt. update: Working with Ben Snyder and looking at the TSI, RX burns, harvest treatments established about 5 years ago at Trail of Tears. Looking at how treatment is working; how it could be made better. There will be follow-up.
- FY 21 projects: Since the FY 21 IFDC budget was approved projects can go forward.
- The copyright issue on name usage which was brought up at the September meeting was determined to be because of confusion in interpretation of the rules. There is no issue and it can be used.
- There is an additional \$12,000 in the Budget for small projects; additionally, if things remain the same with zoom meeting, etc., it is anticipated that the IFDC Administration budget expenditures will be under budget for FY 21 so we can discuss how to spend that excess funding.
- The Council was presented with a request for additional funding for 2 projects which were submitted for consideration by J.D. Tanner at Touch of Nature (TON), Carbondale, IL.
 - Project 1: This proposal is spearheaded by Roger Smith. It is a request for funding for a follow-up management plan for treatment (secondary spraying) of autumn olive.

- Project 2: This is a request for funding for a new demo area on a historic area at TON.
- Question for discussion, should proposals be considered on a rolling basis or should we do another call for proposals. This topic is opened for discussion by IFDC Director.
 - Steve F., is \$5,000 cap still in place. Eric, Yes
 - Jay H., likes the rolling basis, with the caveat that the projects must be finished by June 30, 2021, regardless of when they are approved for funding.
 - Eric, considering the Council has about \$22,000 available would it be advisable to set a new deadline and get the word out?
- Council considers the two TON proposals specifically.
 - Steve F., did TON give us an estimate of how much completion of their proposal will cost? Eric.,- Roger Smith is looking into getting help from AmeriCorps, but it looks like with the cost of equip., and herbicide they will need \$3,000 for that.
 - Mike M., concerned about the timing of this project; do we have time to wait until January for the work at TON to be completed. Eric, those concerns were not addressed in the proposal. Steve F, thinks TON may considering spraying in May, they would still meet the deadline.
 - Mike, B. believes when Roger at TON wrote this follow-up proposal he thought the additional funding may be voted on and approved by the Council today.
 - Jay H., addresses a concern; what are these grants intended to accomplish, we don't want to crossover in this being cost-share, we need to make sure this has regional impact.
 - Chris W., would like to see specifics on the TON proposal, need to screen specifics.
 - Eric H., reminds Council this is a follow-up request for project that the Council funding last spring.
 - Jay H., as a Council we are already invested in this project.
 - Dave G., has spoken with Roger Smith and this request is for follow-up clean-up of on treatment that was done last spring with IFDC funds. They are also looking to go into extension with the demonstration. Roger has already lined up people from SIU to help with this program; student outreach project.
 - Chris W., will the Council have time to review these proposals. Eric, yes, these will be sent to the Council for review. Not sure about the proposal deadlines.
 - Requested amount for these proposals is \$5,000 each.
 - Jay H. questions, do Council members want to table any action on these proposal to give time for review and feedback? Chris W., wise not to be in too big of a hurry and for the follow-up treatment of Autumn Olive. Looks like they have time to get this done if we wait on making a decision.
 - Eric H., it is not unreasonable to wait till January meeting for the Council to make a decision. TON would appreciate giving the Council time to review these proposals.

MOTION: Mike McMahan makes a Motion to table the Council decision on funding for the 2 TON proposals; giving time for review. The Council will come back to Eric with a yes/no decision on these proposals at the January 13, 2021, IFDC meeting. Mike Brunk seconds the motion. Jay asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

Jay asks for any further discussion on the executive report, none noted. Thanks Eric for his report.

AGENDA ITEM: IFDC Member Update

Eric Holzmueller presents this report.

- No real update on official approval of new members, this takes time.
- Representative Reitz lost the election so there will be a new representative on the Council. Representative Windhorst ran unchallenged, so his representative on the Council will remain.
- Eric concludes his report.

Jay asks for questions or further discussion of the member report, none noted. Thanks Eric for this report.

AGENDA ITEM: Legislative Issues Update:

Jay Hayek opens this up for group discussion.

- To Farm Bureau (FB) rep in attendance today, Raelynn P.; do you know of any legislative issues that are on the FB radar? Not aware of any legislation addressing environmental concerns at this time; if anything comes up, Austin will provide information to the Council.
- US Forest Service (FS) Lisa H., shares an update on legislation.
 - Great American Outdoor Act: Proposal for projects was officially submitted; differed maintenance and those directly tied to public recreation; will have a better update on progress in January.
 - New Regional Forest greenlight to do prescribed burning – demo of smoke/air quality related to COVID -19 in areas. Looking intently to be sure that there is a good assessment of the impact of prescribed burns.
- NRCS – no legislative updates to share.
- IL DNR – work continues on Administrative Rules to Changes to the Wrongful Tree Cutting Act.
- IL Dept. of AG – no legislative updates to share.

Jay H., asks for any further reports, none noted. Thanks to those who shared reports.

AGENDA ITEM: Urban Committee Report

Rob Sproul presents this report.

- He and Mike Brunk will be looking into having a meeting sometime after Thanksgiving; establishing a work plan for 2021.
- Discussions have continued on Tree City USA and other Urban Issues
- Looking forward to having a more detailed report for the Council at the January meeting.

Jay thanks Rob for this report; asks if there are any questions, none noted.

AGENDA ITEM: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Forestry Report. Moved ahead in the Agenda.

Mike Brunk presents this report to the Council

- Looking forward to being a part of the virtual Arbor Day Partners conference. Working on video clips; creating a virtual booth. Highlighting how IL Urban/Community Forestry is working with our partners Trees Forever; Morton.
- Tree City USA application are coming in; about 80 applications of which ¼ are graded.
- IL was a partner in updating the Tree City USA program; looking at modernizing, more social outreach; utilization.
 - Staffing the new program will help with data entry. There is 36-56 GB of data for the committee files, readily available in the event of a Fed audit.

- Stats are available for the 2019/2020 program: 462 Communities, 152 Townships; anticipated that 10+ million individuals benefited from the program in some way.
- Tree City USA helps traditional and urban communities across the US.
- Jay H., asks if data could be shared; perhaps an executive summary that could be attached to the minutes for the review of the Council members?
- Mike B., acknowledges that they work through their partners and wants to thank Illinois Arborist Association and others for their help.

Jay asks Chris Whittom if he would please include the **IDNR Report**, if available, with his report since Paul Deizman has not joined the meeting today.

AGENDA ITEM: IDNR Forest Stewardship Report including Legacy Report

Chris Whittom presents this report to the Council.

- Unfortunately, Chris indicates that he did not have the chance to talk with Paul before the meeting but will give a brief IDNR report.
 - Staffing remains the same. Not sure about the status of the fire position. Back-filling for the Fairfield position; interviews were scheduled, but COVID 19 put a halt to all interviews. CMS has faced challenges, and there has been some confusion on hiring.
 - No real updates that he knows of however it is amazing how well IDNR Forestry is functioning in the midst of COVID 19 protocols.
- Stewardship: Field staff are doing a great job overall.
 - Certification paperwork is being processed. Things are going as well as can be expected due to the circumstances.
- There were 2 fire dispatches (Glenwood Springs and Montana). Stewardship activity is continuing even with these deployments.
- Legacy: No activity with the new Legacy particle.

Jays thanks both Chris and Mike for their reports and asks if there are any questions for either.

- Steve F., RE: status of INDR Foresters working on chronic wasting disease.
 - Sharp shooter operations will continue as it did in previous years. There are no new sharp shooters; those Foresters who participated in the program last year will do it again this year.

AGENDA ITEM: Other Business New/Old

Jay Hayek opens this up for group discussion.

- Steve F., Tree Farm's annual field day was postponed until May 2021 due to COVID 19. He will keep the Council posted.
- Mike B., - IL Arborists Association will meet the 1st week of December for its first ever Virtual Conference.
- Wade C., - NRCS is happy to have a new additions to the ecological science staff; new biologist, Gene *Barrick* (sp); Chris Green, SIU grad, zoologist, has good experience and will come on 11/23; Jennifer Anderson left after only a short period of time. –
- Dave G., - IFA and a good virtual Annual Meeting on October 19.
 - Successful webinar on various Forestry topics. Acknowledges that Chris Evans was very helpful.
 - 117 people participated.
 - Now there are more video presentations in our library, these are available through the IFA website.

- Jay H., - Are there any updates from the Farm Bureau; none at this time.
- Casey C., - Illinois Walnut Council reports that no field days have been set due to COVID 19. The Indiana chapter of the Walnut Council did schedule a field day and it will be interesting to see how that went. The National Walnut Council meeting was scheduled of course.
- Jay H., it appears that 2021 meetings for committees, councils, and organizations will continue to be in a virtual world. Thanks go out to Council for being faithful in attending meetings virtually. Open for suggestions on how to make meeting better. Wants to make sure that the IFDC members are getting the best “bang for their buck” so to speak.
 - Inviting a speaker to a future meeting, perhaps in March may be a good idea. How about having a Forestry grad student present an applied research topic.
 - Jay and Eric will work on that and put together a slate of speakers for consideration.
- Mike B., - If anyone has not completed their Ethics or Sexual Harassment training please do so as soon as possible. Casey C., will need to complete the training.
- Eric and Mike need to get together and update the member list.
- Jay H., going back to the idea of inviting speakers to the meetings. If anyone has ideas please let him and/or Eric know. Guest speakers could give talks on a wide range of topics; and, virtual meetings have advantages that speakers who could not or would not normally travel to an IFDC meeting may be willing to attend virtually.
- 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., - January 13, 2021 is the next scheduled meeting of the Council. This meeting will once again be virtual and the meeting time has been bumped up to 9:00 a.m.
 - Council members are encouraged to review the 2 submitted proposals, and send speaker ideas to Jay and Eric.

MOTION to ADJOURN: Dave Gillespie makes Motion to adjourn; Casey Calvert seconds the motion. Eric asks for any further discussion, none noted. Motion carries.

The November 4, 2020 virtual meeting of the Illinois Forestry Development Council is adjourned.