

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – May 9, 2001

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Rolfe. Ten members and 12 task group members were present. A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 21, 2001 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved.

Financial Report

Dick Little distributed copies of the financial report. Two additional workshops and the Council's State Fair project that have been approved by the Council were added to the report. No other changes have been made.

Presentation

Professor Ken Olson from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois made a presentation on Soil Yields and Productivity Indices. Professor Olson has been working with soil productivity research for many years in the former Agronomy Department and currently in the Department of NRES. He is the principal author of the baseline work on establishing soil productivity indices. These are extremely important in terms of how land is taxed in the state and so a change in the soil productivity index can have a substantial change in tax rates depending on how counties interpret this and how they apply different aspects of the equation. Historically we have talked a lot about the Forestry Development Act and the provision of the FDA which taxes forestland at 1/6 the rate of typical agricultural land and typical productivity category. This is an important dimension that is not being uniformly applied around the state. Several questions have been asked on how the soil productivity index works and how it relates to this taxation issue so Professor Olson was asked to present his latest work on soil productivity indices.

Professor Olson presented his report and also distributed copies of Bulletin 810.

Old Business

A report on the 2001 Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference and the Landowner Chain Saw Safety Training program prepared by Mike Bolin was distributed. Tom Ward briefly summarized the report that was distributed.

The Council funded the Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference that was held in Quincy on March 24, 2001. This was the first conference held in this particular area. One hundred eighty-six people attended the conference. Participant evaluation was very positive; attendees wanted to see another conference next year. A planning committee meeting will be held in July to plan next year's conference. Mike Bolin will possibly look for another site that would be closer to the three-state corner and perhaps draw more people from Iowa.

The Council awarded a \$5,500 grant for four chainsaw safety-training programs in the state of Illinois. Each demonstration was 5.5 hours in length and conducted at Mt. Carroll, Seneca, Moweaqua and Mt. Vernon. Tim Ard, a consultant and national known speaker on chainsaw safety and felling techniques, served as the demonstration instructor.

Council Liaison Report – Dick Little

- Dick distributed updated copies of the General Assembly’s legislative proposals. Discussed HB1006 (Timber License) – motion was made and seconded to draft a letter in opposition to this proposed legislation. Motion carried unanimously.
- Discussed the changes made in HB6104 (Forestry Development Act). These changes will be discussed again at a later meeting before being submitted.
- Dick obtained 850 mailing labels for the tree farmers and will send the Plan out in a few weeks. The Plan has been widely distributed.
- Dick distributed copies of a “draft” information sheet on the Illinois Forestry Development Act. If you have comments, please send to Dick.
- The Council now has their own website – <http://ifdc.nres.uiuc.edu>
- The Governor’s Office is working on two vacant Council appointments.

Newsletter – Jim Appleby

Jim distributed copies of the Spring issue of the Newsletter. Jim will work with Dick and Bill to prepare the Annual Report for the Council. Chairman Rolfe said the cost would need to be reduced on the color part of the Newsletter next year because we want to expand the audience.

New Business – Dick Little

- Dick distributed copies of the FOIA Policy Review to Council members and explained some of the changes that he made. This will be reviewed by the Attorney from IDNR and brought to the next meeting for final approval by the Council members.
- Council Display – Dick redesigned the Council display and plans to take to the State Fair and use at other meetings he attends.
- Fall Tour – Chairman Rolfe asked if there was any interested in having a Fall tour. Stu suggested visiting the Cache – projects that are going on – C2000, Shawnee RC&D project that they got through EPA, cost-share programs, reforestation, work they are doing with the fish and wildlife service. Chairman Rolfe asked Stan and Marland if there was anything going on in industry that would be of interest.

AGENCY REPORTS

Forest Service - Skip Starkey

Skip reported on issues from the Shawnee National Forest:

- Revision of the land management plan-will focus some serious attention on the problems in the '82 planning rights that have been there, publicized and well known. The goal is to have an amendment to these new rights or new direction by the end of the year.
- New Chief of the Forest Service – Dale Bosword. Prior to taking over as Chief, he was Regional Forester in Region 1 - the northern region in Montana, northern Idaho, North/

South Dakota; prior to that he was Regional Forester in Region 4 which is Utah, Nevada and southern Idaho. The new Chief has testified at a couple of appropriation hearings and mentioned the number one priority was the Fire Plan.

- Accountability – another big issue which relates to the fire plan commitment, but also all the programs. The new Chief is concerned about the inability to make things happen on the ground and move things forward.
- Regional Forester in Region 9 has been heading up the transition team; doing some very serious work trying to lay out some things for transition.
- Forest Service is working with Dan Price on the SAF meeting in the Fall that is scheduled for October 4 & 5.

DCCA – Terry Weldin-Frisch

Working on the five-year state and regional economic development planning process. Chairman Rolfe asked Terry to provide an overview presentation at a later meeting.

Illinois Forest Resource Center – Diane Murphy

Diane reported that 3,392 students, 42 schools, 165 teachers, 110 resource professionals representing 14 counties attended Stewardship Week over a 4-day period. There were 2,103 students on the waiting list. They will be given preference for next year. Forty agencies co-sponsored that came.

NSRC – Tom Ward

- Tom passed out a summary of the 2000 Forestry Incentives Program.
- The planning process is starting for a Midwest Special Forest Products Marketing Conference. This will be targeted for Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri forestland owners, extension foresters and the forest marketing specialist in NSRC will begin planning the conference focused on how to produce and market many different types of forest products and a variety of other products that could come from forestland. The plan is to offer two 2-day conferences.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Stu Pequignot

- The Department is getting ready to move into the new building sometime in the Fall.
- The Illinois Rivers 2020 program – looking at getting \$21,000,000 to \$22,000,000 from the Corp of Engineers for projects on the Illinois River basin focused on water quality issues and erosion issues.
- ORC is in the process of trying to fill two of the vacant district positions.
- Looking at the budget with concern in the rise in gas prices – this could affect fieldwork.

Department of Ag – Rich Nichols

- Stewardship Day at Department of Ag was held for May 1.
- Water Resources Conference for SWCD's annual meeting will be held August 5, 6, 7.
- 16 teams competed in the State Environthon contest that was held at the 4-H camp.

IWPA – Lee Rife

- Held two 3-day wood grading workshops (one in western Illinois and one in south central Illinois) through the National Hardwood Lumber Association down at Memphis.
- In the process of collecting dues for the 2001 year. Working with Dick on the some of the legislation such as HB1006.

University of Illinois – Gary Rolfe

In the process of recruiting for an urban forester/volunteer coordinator/community forestry coordinator for northern Illinois; closing date will be July 1.

Meeting adjourned.