

## **Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – January 16, 2002**

John Phelps called the meeting to order in the absence of Chairman Gary Rolfe. Twelve members and 15 Task Group members and guests were present.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the September and October 2001 meeting minutes.

### **Financial Report – *Dick Little***

Dick distributed a copy of the FY02 financial report. The current balance remaining is \$12,157.

### **Project Report Updates**

- Illinois Sustainable Forest Criteria and Indicators Project – *Lyle Guyon*

Lyle reported they were still collecting data for the last two criteria's - #6 that is primarily concerned with the socioeconomic indicators (production and consumption in the forestry sector) and #7 is mostly concerned with the ecoinstitutional economic indicators (forest investments, cultural, social and spiritual values). They have hit a lull on the ecological criteria's (Nos. 1-5) in terms of collection of available data and are also approaching that point in criteria 6 & 7. They anticipate having a draft completed by Summer 2002.

- Forest Resources of Illinois Atlas and Analysis Project – *Scott Bretthauer*

The report has been written and in the process of editing and looking for a graphics editor for the graphs and figures.

### **Forest Legacy – *Dave Gillespie***

Dave distributed a memo from Stu Pequignot regarding a request for the Council's approval to pursue the acquisition of conservation easements on two privately owned forest tracts (Kyte River Project and the Byron Project) through the Forest Legacy Program. Stan Curtis made a motion to approve the acquisition of the conservation easements; Tom Ward seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Tri-State Forestry Conference – *Mike Bolin***

Mike Bolin reported on the Tri-State Forestry Conference held in Keokuk, Iowa with 134 landowners participating in the program. A similar conference scheduled for March has been postponed until August. This two-day conference will be held in Sinsinawa, WI and will focus on the production of non-timber special forest products. There will be 14 different commodity areas that speakers will be coming in to talk about and an evening session on how to prepare a business plan. The first day of the conference will focus on marketing. This same conference will be offered October 24 & 25, 2002 south of St. Louis.

### **Presentation – *Mindy Varley***

Mindy Varley, Program Coordinator from the Illinois State Treasurer's Office gave a presentation on Agriculture and the Alternative Agriculture Loan Program. This program

is one of the largest link-deposit loan programs in the nation. The program is available to farmers statewide through over 1000 financial institutions and to date has helped more than 10,000 farmers across Illinois. The program currently has committed over \$1 billion in state funds toward the agriculture community. A borrower may receive these loans by completing a simple application form with his/her financial institution and certify that he/she will be using the funds for goods and services related to the production of agriculture products and alternative agriculture products.

### **Presentation – *Miles Lowry***

Miles Lowry, a professional photographer, working in Chicago gave a presentation on the Old Growth Forest Project he is working on. Within the next three years he intends to publish a book and a traveling exhibit of fine art photographs on the eastern old growth forests in the United States. Mr. Lowry submitted a request to the Council to help subsidize his efforts in Illinois to get the book and project started.

### **Newsletter Update – *Jim Appleby***

Jim distributed a list of the articles that will be printed in the Winter issue of the Council Newsletter. He also reminded anyone submitting articles for the Spring issue that he will need them by April 15. Articles submitted by an email attachment are much appreciated; also color slides are best for photos. When submitting articles with publications listed, also include the name of the publication, year/month or season, the volume, the number and page numbers. Newspapers and magazines often require permission to copy from them so be sure to check on this before submitting. For calendar items list the name of the event, date, time, place, city/state and contact person with a phone number.

### **Council Liaison Report – *Dick Little***

- ✓ Dick met with Rep. John Jones, Minority House Representative to the Council. He is very busy, but would like to be kept advised and will help in anyway he can.
- ✓ Met with Rep. Dan Reitz from Sparta. He has agreed to be the Speaker's appointment to the Council.
- ✓ Attended the RC&D quarterly meeting and the IWPA Board meeting.
- ✓ Attended the grand opening of the Wabash Valley RC&D.
- ✓ Talked with Rep. Dale Righter – he was the sponsor of HB1006.
- ✓ Evaluated 35 C-FAR proposals regarding natural resource issues.
- ✓ Upcoming meeting - will have the Council display at the North Central RC&D regional meeting in Springfield.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **▪ Rural & Economic Development Task Group– *John Phelps***

Reported on the lumber-drying cooperative. This is a report on the feasibility study that is being prepared by staff of the office of Economic and Rural Development at SIUC. Copies will be distributed at the next Council meeting. The study highlights the interest of sawmill operators in the state for a lumber-drying cooperative.

The IWPA Board will meet with the IDNR Office of Law Enforcement.

- **Stewardship & Education Task Group – Tom Ward**

The committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss the draft assessment and issue papers that are being developed.

- **Urban Task Group – Mike Brunk**

Mike reported on the new law that was passed in Illinois – the Utility Tree Trimming Act. The Illinois Arborist Association wasn't directly involved – they stepped out of the situation. A few communities went to battle with state utilities this year and the end result was that the communities were successful in getting the law passed. The Illinois Arborist Association held their annual meeting in early December and commented that Commonwealth Edison and Illinois Power boycotted the seminar because they were presenting the results and how the act would play into the communities and said they weren't coming and were opposed to the presentation.

The Utilities agreed to conduct a study of burying their overhead lines. Mike chose four different areas in Urbana that he felt would be good study areas. They combined efforts with the communication people, the cable people and did a very extensive (with their engineering department) study on the kind of cost there would be in a particular block and it averaged out to about \$7 thousand dollars per household – to take telephone poles out, to take the overhead lines out and put everything underground. A cheaper method was to put the power lines underground and leave the communication lines up and that reduce the potential for the trees getting trimmed. The drawback that a lot of people didn't consider was that you need 100 percent of the people in the block to buy into this and that is at least \$4000 per household to do it. It is a little more involved than what a lot of people think. There is new tunneling technology out there, but some of the blocks were long enough that they would have to have access mid-block to excavate a two foot hole to get the boring equipment and lot of things have been built back on the property lines that should not have been built that would cause some problems. It was a very interesting study – utilities is sending communities maps showing where they plan to trim so people are aware of this.

**Old Business – Dick Little**

- Timber Buyer Licensing Act Amendment (HB1006) update

HB1006 passed out of the House and went into the Senate. HB1006 did not make it out of the veto session and is currently transferred back to the Senate Rules Committee.

- Draft Timber Sales Contract/Agreement

Dick distributed a copy of the Sample Timber Sale Agreement. Please provide Dick with your comments. This will also be taken to IWPA for their comments.

**Agency Reports**

- **Consulting Foresters – Joe Newcomb**

Timber prices are about the same. There is still more demand and interest from landowners than can be satisfied by both the state and consulting foresters in writing plans. There are currently 23 consulting foresters in the state.

▪ **Forest Service – *Skip Starkey***

No announcements to date on the new Regional Forester for the Eastern Region. Don Meyer is the acting Regional Forester at this time.

The Notice of Intent for the revision of the Forest Plan is undergoing internal review and comment is in preparation for finalization and release to the public for comment this Spring.

A draft EIS and preferred alternative for development of equestrian trails in four natural areas on the Shawnee National Forest is available for notice and comment. The document is available on the Shawnee National Forest web site at [www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee) - click on News Management. The comment period ends in early March.

By late Spring or early Summer hope to release, for review and comment, a draft EIS and preferred alternative for the eradication of kudzu on the Shawnee National Forest. The EIS is being prepared in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

▪ **DCCA – *Terry Weldin-Frisch***

Currently working with the five University partners in getting their contracts finalized for the five-year state and regional economic development planning process. Some of the contracts are signed. The agenda for this year was to try to move this process from planning per se, going out into the regions and talking to stakeholders and doing the planning process and getting the feedback as to what they feel are the important economic issues in the various regions that they are working with. Moving that process from planning to actually getting projects that DCCA would do some grant funding for. Starting to see the projects gradually come in now from the various University partners and are starting to take a look at what will be funded. Some of the funding was cut, but funding still remains to get something done this year. Project recommendations to date:

- ✓ Northern Illinois University – Development of a leadership academy, which would focus on providing three one-day conferences primarily, designed to inform and educate local elected officials on the regional effects of local economic and community development.
- ✓ Southern Illinois University – Development of a southern Illinois equity funded network and development of a marketing plan for the region.
- ✓ Western Illinois University – Develop marketing materials which would include labor availability in that region and also do an under-employment study.
- ✓ University of Illinois @ Springfield – Work on best practice model for public and private partnerships, business plans for the development of regional capitol venture board and an annual state of the region summit meeting, which came out of the Champaign area.

- **NRCS – Tom Ward**

The second of two tree seed collection and direct seeding workshops were held at Funks Grove in McLean County on October 30 sponsored by the State Association of SWCD's, NRCS and IDNR. Thirty people participated in the workshops.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Central Hardwoods Forest Conference is scheduled for April 1-3, 2002 at the University of Illinois. Research findings will be presented on subject areas: silvicultural systems, forest ecology, silviculture and stand dynamics, tree physiology and genetics, soils, hydrology, and nutrient cycling, forest health and protection, forest biometrics and modeling, harvesting and utilization, forest economics and marketing for wildlife and recreation and human dimensions of forest management.

A one-page summary of the 2001 Forestry Incentives Program was distributed.

The direct seeding website ([www.directseeding.org](http://www.directseeding.org)) was used heavily this past Fall with people buying and selling seed and getting seed to people to plant.

Just received word that there will be not be a CRP concentrated sign-up this year. The continuous sign-up will still be available.

- **IDNR – Stu Pequignot**

The agency continues to struggle under the budget problems that are facing the state. All non-union employees are expected to take an unpaid furlough day sometime between now and the end of May. Some of the budget cuts are still unknown. There are four vacant district forest positions. They have been submitted to the Director's office for approval. It is uncertain how many were forwarded to the Governor's Office. To date the position in McHenry County has been approved in Region 2. The other vacancies will likely not be considered until the next fiscal year.

- **AISWCD – Bob Sloan**

AISWCD is in the process of planning several workshops this year for SWCD employees and Directors. They are also working on a five-year plan to hold a training workshop on such topics as direct seeding, tree ID, TSI, etc. During FY03 they plan to hold sessions on timber stand improvement.

- **IWPA – John Phelps**

IWPA Board Meeting will be held February 8. Working on membership and trying to keep the members informed of legislation and other issues that are important. Also working on the lumber-drying cooperative.

- **SIU – John Phelps**

Facing some budget cuts; not sure how it will impact the department. Enrollment is about the same.

▪ **Report from Reinee Hildebrandt**

The Illinois Arborists Association cooperating with IDNR, Council of Forestry Development, Illinois Park District Association, Regional Planning Commissions, Universities and non-profit organizations met October 25 in Joliet, Illinois for the first Illinois Urban Forestry Critical Issues Forum. This was a 10-year combination of issues that were developed through the strategic planning processes of the various agencies and organizations that helped co-sponsor this event. Sixty people attended the event. The top issues were: natural resources and development, public education awareness of urban and community forestry and related issues, residual wood utilization marketing, and youth education. For a full summary it is available in the Winter issue of the Prairie Tree Companion Newsletter.

**New Business**

- ✓ Forest Certification Issue – John Phelps and Stan Curtis volunteered to serve on a committee to develop a paper on the forest certification issue.
- ✓ International Paper Letter – distributed for your information.
- ✓ Illinois Ag Assembly Meetings – Regional meetings are scheduled March 5 (Springfield); March 6 (Mattoon); March 7 (Carbondale); March 18 (Kewanee); March 19 (DeKalb); March 21 (Arlington Heights). Discussion followed on attending these meetings to discuss forestry resource issues. It was suggested putting together an issue paper that would be taken from the Plan. John Phelps agreed to help put an issue paper together. It was suggested for someone to find out what the focus of the meeting was and who would be on the panel.

**Other**

The Illinois Envirothon Association of Illinois SWCD requested funding in the amount of \$1500 for the 2002 Illinois Envirothon Competition. This year's event will be held at the Allerton 4-H Memorial Camp, Monticello, Illinois on May 7 and 8. Mike Bolin suggested if the Council considered funding this event that a Council member be on this statewide committee to help develop the questions on forestry for this competition and also have some goals and objectives. Stu Pequignot made a motion and Miles Hartman seconded the motion to table this request until the next meeting.

Mike Brunk submitted a request for funds to develop a professional web site for the Council's web site. Mike discussed the project he is working on and also looking for funding sources to complete this project. The basic layout of the website would allow anyone to see the general look of the website. It would focus on one of the four regions and complete that region's tree listing with a sample individual tree page. This amount of work on the project would cost around \$10,000 and the second phase, which would complete the project, would cost around \$28,000. Discussion followed.

A no vote carry.

Meeting adjourned.

