

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – January 15, 2003

Chairman Gary Rolfe called the meeting to order. Eleven Council members and 15 Task Group members and guests were present.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the October 29, 2002 minutes.

Financial Report – Dick Little

Dick reported there was no change in the budget from the last meeting except for a small amount spent on travel. The Forestry Development Fund generated \$404,620 from July to December 2002 through the four percent harvest fee. This is an increase from last year. Last year's total was \$719,000.

Newsletter Update – Jim Appleby

Jim reminded everyone to send him meeting announcements or other news items for the newsletter. There was discussion on how the Council might get feedback on the effectiveness of the newsletter. It was suggested to send out a questionnaire survey to the Legislatures and others receiving the Newsletter to see how the Newsletter helps them and/or what they would like to see. Mike Brunk agreed to help Jim on putting together the questionnaire that would be sent out with the next Newsletter.

Sustainable Forest Criteria and Indicators Update – Lyle Guyon

Lyle distributed copies of a brief summary of the Criteria and Indicators Project he has been working on. There are seven criteria and 67 specific indicators in the project. These are the same ones the Federal Forest Service used in their national report. The scope of the criteria and indicators being used are extremely comprehensive which covers a spectrum of ecological, economic and social perspectives as how they might relate to forest sustainability.

Presentation – USDA–Rural Development Programs – Shelton Kaiser & Jerry Townsend

Shelton gave a presentation on “Partnerships as Well as Programs”. Programs by themselves seldom make a difference long-term. It is how those programs are used and who uses them that make a difference.

Jerry distributed a handout and gave a brief overview of the programs in Rural Development. Also included in the handout was a listing of the local area offices around the state.

Council Liaison Report – Dick Little

- The Forest Service is funding a study on the ecological indicators, forest health, oaks, savannahs and woodlands at Ohio State University with Kathy O’Neill.
- Vacant Council Positions -- Senator O’Daniel retired, Rep. Jones has moved to the Senate, Jeff Fulgenzi from the Rural Affairs Council transferred to IDNR, but is now unemployed, Al Mickelson’s position will change with a change in the Governor.
- Preparing a letter to send to the legislatures along with a copy of “Forest Resources of Illinois 2002” report.
- Working with DNR in reviewing the Rural Development Proposals. Three proposals have been submitted to the Forest Service.

- FIA has initiated the annual inventory in Illinois. In 2006 there will be a new complete statewide inventory. Every year thereafter there will be update statewide data. The first year there was only 20 percent of the plots; this still indicates a trend in the increase in growth and acres. Pine is beginning to increase and shows up on the inventory. The website address for the new report is www.ncrs.fs.fed.us. Click on Publication and Products, then go to Search – type in Illinois. The first report is the current report. For the Data Base of the inventory go to www.fia.fs.fed.us/. Click on Illinois, and then click on Access to Data, then Run Mapmaker Program.
- Working with Jim Appleby on the upcoming newsletter.
- Mailed out copies of the “Forest Resources of Illinois 2002” report to foresters, wildlife biologists, heritage biologists and consulting foresters, Council members, some teachers, IWPA members, RC&D Council, NRCS offices and FIA group.
- Delivered 40 copies of “Forest Resources of Illinois 2002” report to the Library.
- Distributed a draft copy of a letter to send to Associate Dean Campion in support of the Extension Forester position that has been eliminated. Encouraged others to write a similar letter expressing concerns for the need of the Extension Forester position.
- Submitted a request, on behalf of the Council, to attend a Diversity Options Workshop in Washington, DC.
- Upcoming meetings to attend: RC&D, IWPA, State Technical Meeting
- Talked with Stephanie Brown from the American Tree Farm Foundation regarding the Certification Program. Stephanie will send information on the program.
- Shawnee National Forest continues to work on their Plan. Two public meetings are scheduled -- January 22 in Marion and January 28 in Murphysboro.
- Several years ago the Illinois Technical Forestry Association developed the brochure “Recommended Silviculture and Management Practices for Illinois Forest Hardwood Types”. This publication is online at <http://ilvirtualforest.nres.uiuc.edu/page4.html>.
- Jeff Dawson and John Edgington have agreed to help Dick revise the brochure.
- FYI – March 19 is the Legislative Sportsman Fundraiser at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The Forest Service National Woodland Survey has been completed.

Illinois Forestry Cost-Share Program Update

Moved to the March 19 agenda.

Committee Reports

No Committee reports

Old Business

FLEP – Kurt Bobsin

FLEP (Forest Land Enhancement Program) is a multi-year program funded at \$100 million; \$20 million/year will be appropriated for use of this program which will be divided up among the States. There is a Federal interim rule that has been developed, being reviewed and commented on. This interim rule is a guiding document giving focus and direction on how the program will be set up and run. One of the requirements that are needed to receive funding and operate the program in the State is that a State Priority Plan has to be developed. The Plan is supposed to be a joint venture between the State Forester and the State Forest Stewardship Committee. Three people have been working to put a draft of the Plan together. A copy of the first draft was mailed to Council members in December. A second draft of the Plan is now out. Comments or questions should be sent to Dick Little by February 15. Gary asked Stan Curtis, John Phelps, Lee Rife and Dick Little to help with this Plan. Dick will provide the formal input back to Kurt. It was discussed how to let the public review this Plan. It was suggested public meetings around the State, but wasn't sure how many people would attend the meetings. Also suggested putting the Plan on a Website for review by the public.

This program is replacing FIP (Forest Incentive Program) and SIP (Stewardship Incentive Program). The Plan can be amended anytime during the five years.

Proposed changes to FDA – Stu Pequignot

With the change in Governor, issues have been raised over boards and commissions and the fact that there will probably be some activity regarding the existing boards and commissions; Stu recommends this is not the time to make change to the legislation. The Governor has talked about taking a hard look at all the boards and commissions. Issues that have been discussed as changes are: adding the Walnut Council, the President of the Tree Farm Association and change the acreage figures. Stu feels we will send the wrong message if we ask legislation to increase the size of the Council which will be perceived as additional expenses. It was agreed not to initiate anything at this time. This issue will be brought back to the table for further discussion later with an agreement as to how the Council might be reconfigured, adding or deleting members

Gary asked Dick to update the existing information sheet or create a new brochure giving a synopsis of what the Council is and does to distribute to the legislatures, the Governor's office and for use by the Council to use at other events. Gary asked Dick to prepare a draft and send out to Council members. Bill Gradle offered assistance from his Public Affairs Staff in preparing this brochure.

Policy Paper Update

Dick and John Phelps met to discuss the Policy Paper. SIU is preparing a proposal to submit to Dick. Information is being gathered to prepare the Policy Paper.

New Business

Bob Sloan visited the Forest Legacy site west of Oregon, Illinois and was somewhat disturbed by the fact that some Indian remains were removed. He was told that in 1928 the Smithsonian Institute came in and took something out of every gravesite. He feels that it would be a good gesture on the part of the Council to call the Institute and have them bring the remains back and bury them. Bob will do more research and bring back to the next meeting. Dick will check with the State Museum to see if they can tell us how to proceed.

Stu suggested we think about giving a presentation to the Ag Committees with copies of the Annual Report. Meet with the Ag Committees in the House and Senate and present what the Council has done the past year to promote forestry issues in the state.

Agency Reports

NRCS – Bill Gradle

Job Sheets, to guide conservation practice planning and installation, are being prepared for Tree/Shrub Establishment, Forest Stand Improvement, Riparian Forest Buffer and Forest Trails and Landings. Job sheets will be posted on the NRCS Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), available on the Internet at www.il.nrcs.usda.gov.

Illinois EPA is printing the Illinois Direct Seeding Handbook. A Sustainable Agriculture grant has been awarded to print tree species identification pages in full color and provide binders and tabbed dividers for the Handbook. Assembled copies of the Handbook should be available by early summer, in time for seed collection this Fall.

Upcoming events of interest:

State Technical Committee Meeting, Feb. 6, Illinois Department of Ag, Springfield, IL

Winter Tree ID Workshop, Feb. 11, Funks Grove, McLean Co. Sponsored by AISWCD.
Contact: Dave Bishop, 309/452-0830 x 115.

Forestry Herbicide Workshop, Feb. 13, Eagle Creek Resort, Lake Shelbyville. Sponsored by IL Walnut Council and Townsend Chemical. Register by contacting Bob Sloan at rsloan@joysta.com

Forestry Conference, Feb. 26, USDA Service Center, Danville, IL, sponsored by Vermilion River Ecosystem Partnership. Contact: Kevin Green at 217/354-4030.

Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference, IL-IA-WI, March 8, Sinsinawa, WI, contact Tom Ward, 217/353-6647

Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference, IL-IA-MO, March 22, Keokuk, IA, contact Tom Ward, 217/353-6647

Forest Service – Richard Blume-Weaver

The Forest Service published in the Federal Register a proposed planning rule that will streamline the 2000 rule that was not implemented because it was so burdensome. The proposed rule will allow category of exclusion under certain general circumstances so no environmental impact statement will have to be prepared. It eliminates a lot of procedural requirements, it still keeps the scientific approach and review that was in the old rule, but it is a more streamlined approach. It is drawing a lot of fire from environmental groups because it eliminates public participation. There is still a 90-day comment period on the draft from the public. Comments must be received by March 6, 2003. See <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/publiccomments.htm> for further information. It still has the emphasis on ecological, social and economic sustainability and science, public environment and the objection process and will be approved by the Forest Supervisor and not by the Regional Forester as had been done before.

The President has put out the so-called “healthy forest initiative” series of proposals that has been published in the Federal Register to expedite the elimination of hazardous fuels on forestland. There is a lot of debate on this issue.

The Forest Plan revision is proceeding under the 1982 rule and will conclude under that rule.

Allen Nicholas has been named the new Forest Supervisor. Dan Lenz is the new District Ranger at the Jonesboro-Murphysboro district.

Department of Ag – Rich Nichols

The educational guide for Watershed Park has been completed. Three training sessions are scheduled for Ag, Natural Resource Coordinators, and SWCD personnel. These people will be trained as facilitators in Learning Tree, Project Wet, and Project Wild Aquatics.

IWPA – Lee Rife

On January 8, Lee attended the Agricultural Legislative Roundtable in Bloomington. The major topic for discussion was “budget”. There is concern that raising certain taxes may alter the tax structure.

IWPA will be at the Illinois Lumber and Building Trade Show at the Peoria Convention Center on February 11 and 12.

DNR – Stu Pequignot

Stu has been hired back by the Department on a temporary basis to serve as Acting State Forester and do some liaison activities, one being with the Council, the Northeast Area Association and the National Association of State Foresters and coordinating some duties in the Springfield office in the forestry programs.

Early retirement dust has settled in Springfield – 16 forestry related positions vacant due to early retirement, that combined with reorganization and vacancies that have been going on for the last two or three years in Springfield leaves at least 27 forestry related positions vacant; also lost two of the seven interns that were working in the field.

With the proposed changes the Governor is talking about there will be some major impacts on the way State Government operate this year and years to come.

Forest Service program funding for FY02 has not been resolved to date – a portion of the funding has been received, but have not received all the \$\$ that should have been received for the various Federal programs. For the northeast area alone that amounts to \$34.8 million that was not allocated out to the states for the various state and private programs. Still trying to figure out how to come up with the money and get restored to the budget and back to the states.

Joe Brunsvold from the Rock Island area is supposed to be named the new DNR Director next week.

Illinois Arborists Association – Mike Brunk

Mike distributed copies of some promotional material he received from the Olympic winter committee and the University of Illinois Human Research Laboratory in promoting Greenscapes. These are excellent promotional publications – short and brief. Mike suggested using some of these as inserts to the Newsletter occasionally.

A Plant Ecology class is being offered at JoDaviess Junior College for the Spring Semester.

AISWCD – Bob Sloan

Summer tree I.D. workshop was held at Funks Grove on July 25, 2002 with 28 attendees.

A forestry field day sponsored by the Illinois Walnut Council and IDNR Forest Resources was held on December 13 in St. Clair County on the Wildy Farm.

The last of the three T.S.I. workshops co-sponsored by the RC&D state association was held at Blackburn College Farm, Taylorville, IL on December 19.

A Winter tree I.D. workshop will be held on February 12, 2003 at Funks Grove.

A forestry herbicide workshop will be held at Eagle Creek State Park (Findlay) on February 13. Registration can be emailed to Bob Sloan @ rsloan@joysta.com - registration fee \$15 to be paid at the door.

Crawford County SWCD received a grant to purchase a cooler for seed and seedling storage. They purchased a five x nine Leer refrigerated transport and mounted it on a 7,000-pound trailer.

Crawford County will be hosting a T.S.I. tree planting, direct seeding and prescribed burn this Spring.

Direct seeding manual grant proposal to fund printing of chapter three and purchase binders and dividers has been approved. Printing and assembly should be completed in the next 90 days.

At the annual AISWCD summer conference the forestry committee will sponsor a session on Making Money with Tree Seed Collection and Direct Seeding. Agreement was reached with the Tree Farm Committee to send their newsletter to all SWCD Districts.

Training of district employees for CRP and CREP Compliance will be addressed at the March quarterly board meeting.

Seed collection was somewhat difficult this year, but all of the needs seem to be met.

University of Illinois

Gary reported the new Department Head for NRES, Wes Jarrell, was on campus. Dr. Jarrell is a soils faculty and comes to the U of I from Wisconsin. Gary invited him to the meeting, but he was not available.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19 at the Mason State Nursery near Topeka, IL.

Meeting adjourned.