

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – September 17, 2003

Chairman Gary Rolfe called the meeting to order. Ten Council members and 17 Task Group members and guests were present.

The May 14, 2003 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Financial Report – Dick Little

Dick distributed copies of the final report for FY03 and copies of the FY04 budget. Dick reported the Governor took \$9,000 from the FY04 budget for administrative costs leaving the Council with \$116,000. All FY04 contracts have been signed. Dick also distributed copies of a report for the four percent harvest fee collected by DNR.

Newsletter Update – Jim Appleby

Jim plans to have the Fall issue of the Newsletter out by the end of October. He asked for articles to be submitted to him as soon as possible.

FLEP Update – Kurt Bobsin

Kurt distributed copies of the final approved version of the State Priority Plan. An allocation of \$242,700 has been received for FY03; do not know what will be available for FY04. Kurt met with the District Foresters and Field Staff this past week and discussed the program. Copies will also be mailed to the Consulting Foresters. Dick and Jean are working together on the education component to develop an application process and an application to fund educational type proposals.

Kurt distributed two news releases – 1) the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program Grants awarded to 59 Illinois communities for 2003, and 2) \$1.4 million grants for local Conservation 2000 projects.

Kurt reported on the Tree Farm Program – the State Committee is undergoing an effort to regionalize the program from regionalized groups throughout the State. There are approximately 1100 certified tree farmers which represent 88,000 acres. Every year there is an outstanding tree farmer of the year recognized. The certified inspectors nominate their best tree farmer. The State Committee gets the applications, reviews them and makes a selection. That individual is recognized at the State Fair on Ag Day. The following year the State Committee has a Field Day at the property of the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. This will occur on October 4, 2003 at Dale and Judy Shriver's Tree Farm near Woodstock, Illinois. There is also a Tree Farm Picnic on September 27, 2003 at the Rotary Point Pavilion, Kennekuk County Park, near Danville, IL. A flyer was also distributed for the event at the Duck Egg County Forest, Viroqua, WI on September 26 and 27, 2003 – Small-Scale Logging Equipment and Forestry BMP's.

Project Updates – Dick Little

Council Pamphlet – Dick thanked NRCS and others for their help in getting the Council publication "Working for the Forests" finished. 10,000 copies were printed for distribution.

Illinois Forest Summary Publication – John Edgington and Scott Bretthauer prepared a summary report "Illinois Forest Resources". 10,000 copies were printed for distribution.

Criteria and Indicators Project – Lyle Guyon – The Technical Report is finished (300 pages). Lyle is finalizing some formatting issues and then the report will be converted to a PDF document and put on the Council Website. Lyle will be preparing a summary of this report which will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Forestry Legacy – Mike Mason

Mike introduced Brian Reilly from the Department of Natural Resources. Brian will be working with Dave Gillespie on the Forest Legacy Program. IDNR is requesting approval from the Council to pursue the funding of conservation easements on three privately-owned forested tracts with the U.S. Forest Service through the Forest Legacy Program. The tracts are known as the Girl Scout Camp in the Rock River Forest Legacy Area, the Douglas and Hoagland Tracts in the Great Rivers Bluffs. A motion was made and seconded to approve acquisition of funding. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Liaison Report – Dick Little

- ✓ Conservation Congress Assembly that was held at the Capitol will not be held due to lack of funds.
- ✓ The Council hosted two RC&D quarterly meetings at IDNR.
- ✓ Participated in two IWPA meetings with IDNR and Law Enforcement.
- ✓ Attended an SAF workshop on Certification and Auditing.
- ✓ Co-sponsored the Northeastern Nurserymen's Conference held in Springfield.
Dick gave a presentation on the Council, FDA and the no-cost ceiling program.
- ✓ The Council display was at the Annual meeting of the AISWCD and two sites at the Illinois State Fair along with handouts.
- ✓ Attended the Northeast Forest Planners Conference.
- ✓ A delegation of 15 people from China are coming to Illinois to see what we do regarding urban and rural forestry. Dick provided them with a letter of welcome. He will meet with them sometime in the Chicago area.
- ✓ USDA/NRCS has signed an MOU to officially recognize anybody in SAF as a certified forester to be a Technical Service Provider.
- ✓ The Upper Mississippi River Forest Partnership is made up of the Mississippi River from the Ohio River north to Minnesota; the states join that along with the Forest Service, Great Lakes Alliance and other organizations. They are putting together a regional sustainable forest roundtable and want to develop a regional roundtable planning team and are looking for members to participate. They are also looking for private landowners, industry, communities, local government, economic development groups and economic and research communities to be involved in this committee. The first meeting will be held early October. Dick asked if the Council wanted to be involved or recommend someone from the Universities, landowners or industry.
- ✓ House Bill 422 – Wetlands Protection Act. The Bill is currently in the Senate. Dick put a copy of the Bill on the table for Council members to review.

Kevin reported that the Illinois Farm Development Authority will expire 12/31/03 and the new name will be the Illinois Finance Authority.

Policy Paper Project Update – Jean Mangun

Jean brought the Council up to date on what she was planning in preparing the policy paper. She plans to canvass interested parties within a forested community in the state of Illinois to find out what the most important issues are to the public. These issues would be compiled and recommendations made as to what future direction Illinois would address some of these concerns of citizens. A title that was suggested for the document was "The State of Illinois Forests – A Regional Perspective".

After talking to several people Jean decided to have a series of Search Conferences (one-time meetings) across the region and invite in any number of interested public (people who are

involved with forest resources) to show up. Suggested tentative sites for meetings: Carbondale, Mattoon, Quad Cities, Mascoutah, Peoria and the Chicago area, Pittsfield, and Macomb.

Chairman Rolfe stated that the Council has held meetings in a variety of ways similar to what was mentioned and was wondering what else would be learned, and whether or not that was the audience that we want to learn something from, because in a sense, that is the Council talking to themselves. Discussion followed.

After lengthy discussion, it was decided to reaffirm and prioritize issues and take the prioritized issues to other community leaders and individuals that are not as closely in tune with forestry as the first group. Chairman Rolfe asked Jean to go back and select the top ranked issues and bring back to the Council. Jean will send out a list of topics to be discussed before the meeting. This will be put on the agenda for the October meeting.

Committee Reports

Urban – Mike Brunk

Mike reported that the Emerald ash borer was moving around the country through nursery stock. The Morton Arboretum is having a meeting in November regarding the Emerald ash borer. For further information contact Karel Jacobs @ 630-719-5646.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Agency Reports

IWPA – Lee Rife

Additional Legislation -- House Bill 370 – deals with Landscape burning. Bill has passed the House and moved on to the Senate. It exempts from burning for agricultural purposes.

House Bill 436 – amends the Agrifirst program by adding a definition word “research”.

Farm Progress Show near Henning, Illinois on September 23, 24 and 25, 2003.

Midwest Forest Industry Show, St. Charles, MO on September 26 and 27.

IWPA is looking at several schools – Lumber Grading Workshop, Log Grading Workshop and if enough interest, will look at the Game of Logging.

NRCS – Bill Gradle

Implementing 2002 Farm Bill programs and making provisions for using Technical Service Providers to deliver the Farm Bill are two activities impacting practically all NRCS employees.

Competitive Sourcing

Four NRCS disciplines (Soil Scientist, Soil Conservation Technician, Mail and Supplies, and Clerical) were studied for potential competitive sourcing. The activities of all four disciplines were found to be more efficiently accomplished by retaining them within NRCS. Civil Engineering Technician may eventually be also studied but has been placed on hold for the time being.

Technical Service Providers (TSPs)

New information is being added daily to the Technical Service Provider Registry (TechReg) website, <http://techreg.usda.gov/>. Contribution agreements with IDNR and 73 SWCDs have been signed so that these agencies can participate in Farm Bill implementation as TSPs. The IDNR agreement allows NRCS to reimburse IDNR District Biologists for part of their expenses incurred in developing Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) plans and CRP CP-4D plans. The agreements with the SWCDs allows NRCS to reimburse 50% of SWCD expenses for planning and status reviews for CRP, EQIP and WHIP practices. The SWCD agreements range from a few hundred dollars to a maximum of \$20,000 for a total of \$573,000.

Training

Fifteen SWCD, NRCS and others attended the July 24th Tree ID Workshop at Funks Grove. McLean Co. RC Dave Bishop organized and facilitated the workshop. Instruction was provided by Dan Schmoker (retired IDNR), Jay Hayek (IDNR District Forester) and Tom Ward (NRCS Agroforester).

Fifteen SWCD, NRCS and others attended a direct seeding field trip to NE Champaign County on August. 24. Six sites were examined and plot data was taken. All sites had adequate tree regeneration and some sites had more than 1,000 seedlings per acre. The Champaign Co. SWCD (Bruce Stickers, RC) organized the field trip.

“Income Opportunities with Tree Seed Collection and Direct Seeding” was presented to the Annual Meeting of the Association of Illinois RC&Ds August 26.

Upcoming Events

Annual Plant Materials Advisory Group Meeting, Elsberry Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, MO, September 17-18.

“The ABCs of Woodland Management” Marshall Fish & Wildlife Area, near Lacon, Marshall Co., September 27. Hosted by Prairie Rivers RC&D, NRCS, IDNR, and Trees Forever. For more information call 309/364-3979.

Central States Forest Soils Workshop, October 14-16, Scottsburg, IN. Contact Gary Struben or Ken Collins at 317/290-3200 x 373 or 356.

Prescribed Burn Training for NRCS and SWCD, Pekin on October 21-23 and Marion on November 4-6. Contact Tom Ward, 217/353-6647.

Tri-State Forest Stewardship conferences: March 13, 2004 at Sinsinawa, WI and March 27, 2004 at Keokuk, IA. Contact Tom Ward, 217/353-6647.

AISWCD - Bob Sloan

Another successful Tree Identification Workshop was held on July 24 at Funks Grove. The Committee is scheduling a winter Tree Identification Workshop at Dixon Springs on February 17, Mt. Carroll on February 26 and Funks Grove on June 26.

Tom Ward is working to have a one-day Forestry workshop in the Shelbyville area. A date has not been selected at this time.

On September 27, a Forestry Workshop (The ABC's of Woodland Management) will be held at the Marshall County Conservation Area. Seven different sessions will be presented.

The Illinois Walnut Council's annual meeting was held in the Galesburg area on September 12 and 13.

The Committee reviewed its goals for 2001-2004. Action was taken on four of the six goals; and two were completed.

Daysville Legacy Site: have not been able to schedule a compatible date for meeting with Joe Standing Bear. Tentatively planning a meeting the second week of October.

Forest Service – Jeff Seefeldt

Finalizing the alternatives of the Forest Plan revision. Plans are to have a draft out in early 2004 and the final version out in September 2004. The MOU with the Middle Mississippi River Partnership has been finalized. Working with the National Wild Turkey Federation on a project.

Department of Ag – Jane Wendte

Jane thanked the Council and Dick Little for participating at Watershed Park at the Illinois State Fair this summer. Approximately 10,000 passed through Watershed Park.

Meeting adjourned.