

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – November 17, 2004

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Rolfe. Seven Council members and 15 Task Group members were present.

The September 22, 2004 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Financial Report – *Dick Little*

The Council budget remains the same as distributed at the September 22 meeting. Dick reported that \$456,000 has been collected in five months in the four percent harvest fee. Last year \$898,000 was collected.

Council Liaison Report – *Dick Little*

- Mailed out the CNI report prepared by Lyle Guyon and John Edgington.
- Council was invited to the US Forest Service Centennial Forum and also asked to sponsor the forum. The Council sponsored the afternoon break.
- Council is involved in the Sudden Oak Death Task Force. A draft plan has been put together and will be distributed later.
- Council is involved in the Mid-Mississippi Partnership.
- Two Rivers State Conference is scheduled for September 2005.
- Lisa Burban sent a notice about a one-day meeting at the Morton Arboretum December 1 on “Building Effective Partnerships Seminar”.
- Dick reported the Fall issue of the Newsletter is at the press and will be mailed out soon. Articles are needed for the next issue.

Guest Speaker – *Jeff Walk, IDNR*

Jeff gave a presentation on the State Wildlife Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This will be a state wildlife conservation plan. The website for the Plan is:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/theplan/>

Statewide Forestry Conference – *Gary Rolfe*

The date has been set for the Forestry Summit – March 23 & 24, 2005 at the Northfield Center in Springfield. The main focus at the conference will be on building leadership, capacity and partnerships. An outside keynote speaker will be invited who could bring some new and unique perspective as to how this might be accomplished. There will be four discussion groups focusing on leadership, capacity and partnership on the educational and research side, one focusing on outreach, one industry and one focusing on urban issues. A professional facilitator will facilitate each group. The groups will report back for general discussion. An executive summary will be prepared that can be taken to a group of meetings with appropriate agencies and organizations in Illinois that can help deal with the issues of the conference.

Chairman Rolfe noted there was another important issue to discuss at the conference – the need for a statewide landowner conference.

New Business

Jean reported on the Critical Issue briefs. Jean wants to include recommendations and action items in the Critical Issue briefs. At a previous meeting it was discussed of having focus groups with Council members or an in-depth interview with outside key people on the issues. If outside people are interviewed, a list of people will need to be compiled. It was decided to interview Council members and people from the outside. This item will be on the January meeting agenda.

Agency Reports

IWPA – *Lee Rife*

IWPA is finishing up with the Game of Logging. Nine registered with seven showing up. In the future IWPA will be looking at some training in First-Aid and CPR.

Forest Legacy – *Dave Gillespie*

Dave attended the National meeting of the Forest Legacy Coordinators that was held in Providence, Rhode Island. While at the meeting Dave learned that the Illinois project funded for 2005 was cut. The Forest Service said it was politics and had nothing to do with the budget. Dave distributed copies of the Draft Strategic Direction for the Forest Legacy Program which is in the review stage. If you have comments please send them to Dave by December 10.

AIWCD – *Bob Sloan*

The AIWCD workshops are ongoing. Feedback from the Bureau County Workshop was very possible.

NRCS – *Bill Gradle*

Personnel changes seem to dominate things lately:

Anne Venetman will be leaving as Secretary of Agriculture, effective as soon as a replacement is named and confirmed by the Senate. This will undoubtedly result in a number of changes within USDA at the Washington, D.C. level.

A number of District Conservationist positions (5, possibly 6) will be vacated due to transfers/retirements.

A new NRCS State Forester has been selected. Kathleen McTighe, currently with the USFS, Santa Fe National Forest. She will report on January 23, 2005.

2005 Budget

The House and Senate will be meeting during the current session to iron out differences in the 2005 budget. In the meantime we have been given an initial allocation for mandatory programs. Ranking criteria will be sent to field offices November 22, 2004. Ranking cutoffs for EQIP will start in January and run through March. Other program cutoffs will occur later in the Spring to allow for good planning.

Conservation Security Program

Two watersheds in Illinois were announced by Secretary Veneman, The Lower Kaskaskia and the Middle Wabash-Busserron. Staffs are scheduling training and public meetings should be occurring in January 2005.

Conservation Reserve Program

Secretary Veneman announced the latest contracts accepted into a General Signup. Approximately 1600 contracts were accepted in Illinois. NRCS staffs will begin working on the conservation plans of operations for these new contracts.

University of Illinois – *Jeff Dawson*

The NRES Department is preparing a document for accreditation by the Society of American Foresters. The report is due in April. The Extension Forestry position (vice Bolin) is being advertised with a regional search being conducted. NRCS is a collaborator in the position and will be paying half the salary. The closing date is November 19.

Department of Ag – *Rich Nichols*

The funding for the cost-share program was eliminated.

Southern Illinois University – *John Phelps*

Two specializations have been added to the Forestry program – urban and watershed hydrology. The Forestry Department will also be preparing an accreditation report due July 1. SIU Forestry Conclave won first place - 13 consecutive years !

Forest Resource Center – *Diane Murphy*

A fire-training workshop was held in October at the Ag Center. The Forest Service has hired new employees trained in forest fire ecology. They are going through the Shawnee and designating areas that they want to run fires through. SIU is helping train local fire districts in case there is a problem in their area.

Meeting adjourned.