

## **Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – May 12, 2004**

Chairman Gary Rolfe called the meeting to order. Twelve members and 16 task group members and guests were present.

The March 17, 2004 minutes were approved as submitted.

Chairman Rolfe brought up an issue regarding a Statewide Forestry Conference. He feels it is time to reassess the Council and forestry in the State. He suggested a Statewide Forestry Conference to discuss these issues and come up with a plan as how to move ahead with Forestry in the State.

### Financial Update – *Dick Little*

Dick distributed copies of the financial report for FY04. The contracts for FY05 have been submitted. The Council budget for FY05 has been appropriated at \$118,500; \$650,000 has been appropriated for the cost-share program for FY05. As of May 1, \$815,000 has been received from the four percent harvest fee from the timber buyers.

Chairman Rolfe asked Dick to follow-up on the Administrative charge (\$9000) that the Governor took from the Council budget.

### Liaison Report – *Dick Little*

- ✓ Reported on the status of Bulletin 810 regarding farmland assessment. By 2005 the farmland assessment law will be implemented.
- ✓ Council brochures have been placed in the publication rack near the elevator in the IDNR Building. This will help expand the vision of the Council.
- ✓ Planning for the Forestry Expo in the Rock Island/Davenport area to be held September 9 & 10, 2005.
- ✓ Attended the Mississippi Roundtable Conference
  - Discussed the C&I project.
  - Discussed the Upper Mississippi River forest sustainability.
  - Council display was up.
- ✓ Attended the Tri-State Forestry Conference in Keokuk, Iowa
- ✓ Council is working with the Emerald Ash Borer planning team in the Chicago area with IWPA.
- ✓ Working with SIU on the Sawmill Survey.
- ✓ Received a copy of the National Report on Sustainable Forest.
- ✓ IWPA annual meeting May 14, Fairview Heights.
- ✓ RC&D Quarterly meeting May 20, IDNR
- ✓ Emerald Ash Borer meeting – May 24, Chicago
- ✓ Natural Resource Board meeting - June 24, Peoria

### Newsletter – *Jim Appleby*

Jim encouraged everyone to send articles in by June 1 for the next Newsletter. Currently there are 726 on the mailing list. Chairman Rolfe asked Dick to write a couple paragraphs for the Newsletter on the Administrative charge that the Governor took from the Council.

### Forest Legacy Program – *Dave Gillespie*

The Forest Legacy Program is a joint program with IDNR and the U.S. Forest Service which was called an assessment of need to be admitted for approval by the Secretary of Agriculture and the

Forest Service before IDNR could participate in the Forest Legacy Program. The program is set in three distinct forest legacy areas in the State of Illinois between Rockford and Dixon on the Rock River, just north of Peoria on the Illinois River and between Alton and Pere Marquette State Park and up the Illinois River in Calhoun and Greene Counties. Within these areas private landowners can apply to IDNR to purchase a conservation easement (development rights) on that forestland so that traditional forest values and the land will be maintained. To date, the first project was closed in 2000 and since then five easements have been purchased with four of them in the Great Rivers Bluff forest legacy area between Alton and Pere Marquette and one in the Rock River Area. These have all closed and now have easements on 288 acres of forestland on properties south of the Rockford area near Oregon, Illinois. There is another property in Rattle Snake Ridge in Great Rivers Bluff area that will close on May 27. That will give another 79 acres to the program. There are three properties (2 in the Great Rivers Bluff area – 25 and 63 acres and one property is in the Rock River area which is 75 acres. One will be closed by January 2005, July 2005 and the other was just funded for 2004. Three applications were submitted for funding for 2005. One project is 420 acres which borders Pere Marquette State Park (on the opportunity list). The other two projects did not make the list. There is 288 acres under easement now, working on 242 additional acres, 79 of those acres will be closed on by the end of May, 420 acres pending 2005 funding and plan to resubmit the two that did not get funded for 2006 (616 acres). The Forest Legacy dollars make up 75 percent of the cost of the easements. For the ones that have closed \$1,134,291 in federal money has come through the program to the State of Illinois to the private landowners to purchase the easements. Currently working on submitting a new area in the state as forest legacy status in the Lower Cascade corridor below Carlyle Dam, the boundary of the southwest RC&D. To establish an area, you go through the process where you write a section for the assessment of need, there is a public meeting where the people are informed of the area about the program to get their input and make adjustments and then send to the Forest Service for approval. The first draft of assessment of need for the Lower Cascade has been sent out for comments and to the local committee. Comments have been received and the second draft has been sent.

Guest Speaker – **Elizabeth McCance, Chicago Wilderness, Director of Conservation Program**  
Elizabeth McCance reported to the group: 1) what is Chicago Wilderness, 2) what type of work is done and 3) how do they work. Chicago Wilderness is a network of natural areas which goes through three states (southeastern Wisconsin, northeastern Illinois, and northwestern Indiana). There are 250,000 acres publicly owned natural areas (does not include golf courses or other recreation areas). It is in a variety of ownership (federal, state, county, local municipalities). There are 170 organizations that work together in these natural areas. There are over 200 different species in the natural areas.

Statewide Forestry Conference – **Gary Rolfe**

Chairman Rolfe introduced to the Council his thoughts on the need for a Statewide Forestry Conference. During the last 20 years many changes have occurred in forestry. Chairman Rolfe felt the Council should come back together and give some careful thought on the future of forestry in the broadest sense. He feels this is a good time to establish a new program and a new direction in the state. Chairman Rolfe suggested we meet with a group of key people to address these similar issues in a way that could lead to some good strategy for the forestry community in the state of Illinois. Discussion followed.

Chairman Rolfe asked Dick to canvas members of the Council and related groups to see who would be interested in serving on a planning committee for the Conference. The first meeting will be held in June.

## **Old Business**

### Update on Critical Issues Paper – *Jean Mangun*

John reported in Jean's absence. Jean prepared a letter that was mailed to the Council mailing list asking for comments on the critical issues. John distributed a copy of the letter dated April 12, 2004.

### FLEP – *Kurt Bobsin*

Kurt reported that there have been no changes since his last report. The FY05 budget hasn't changed. Congress is working on the 2007 Farm Bill and efforts are underway at the national level from the forestry standpoint with the Forest Service to make sure that FLEP is in the next Farm Bill. Update on Statewide Basis – There has been \$59,000 spent in the FLEP cost-share program. On the technical assistance component of the program there are four contracts ready to be signed for consulting foresters to do about 3,500 acres of forest stewardship lands. Four grant proposals (\$13,000) have been approved for the educational part of the program (SIU Forestry Department, Shawnee Hills RC&D project, Illinois Tree Farm Committee and the Northwest Illinois Landowners Association).

## **New Business**

### Update on Reorganization – *Kurt Bobsin*

Kurt distributed a copy of the structure of the Office of Resource Conservation Staff and the current map and list of forestry offices with addresses and phone numbers. There is a Forestry section and Restoration Ecology section which was formerly the Natural Heritage staff now under the Division of Habitat Resources. Personnel - There are 23 districts with 6 vacancies. One of the district foresters will step into the role of a forest protection program manager. Region III and IV have been combined.

### Council Funding

Copies of the FY05 proposed Council financial report were distributed for approval. Motion was made to approve the budget as submitted. Seconded. Motion carried.

## **Agency Reports**

### USDA/FS – *Mike Majestic*

Mike attended the national meeting of the Forest Landowners Assistance Program. One of the main topics for discussion was the future direction for forest stewardship.

### AISWCD – *Terry Donohue*

Terry forwarded Jean Mangun's letter regarding the critical issues to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for their comments.

### Illinois Department of Ag – *Rich Nichols*

Rich distributed information on the Watershed Forestry Assistance program. Watershed Forestry Assistance, established in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, provides assistance to expand forest stewardship capacities and activities through forestry best management practices and other means to address watershed issues on nonfederal forested and potentially forested land and lands under tribal jurisdiction. Overall purposes include: improving public understanding of the connection between forest management and watershed health; encouraging property owners to maintain tree cover and use tree plantings and vegetative treatments as creative solutions to watershed problems; enhancing forest management and riparian buffer use in watersheds, with an emphasis on community watersheds; and establishing partnerships and collaborative watershed approaches to forest management, stewardship, and conservation.

The State Envirothon is being held May 12 and 13 at Allerton Park in Monticello, Nineteen Illinois schools will be participating.

Stewardship Day was held May 6 at the Department of Ag. There were 1142 fourth grade students in attendance.

Two forestry sessions are scheduled for the Summer Conference being held August 1-3.

#### IWPA – Lee Rife

The annual IWPA meeting will be held May 14 at 1:00 pm at the Fairview Heights Holiday Inn.

#### NRCS – Bill Gradle

**Farm Bill Program** (for more details go to [www.il.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov))

#### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

A new Concentrated Signup is not likely this Fiscal Year (before October 1, 2004).

#### Conservation Security Program (CSP)

The Final Rule is expected by June. A limited rollout will occur this year. Only certain, as yet undetermined, priority watersheds in certain states will participate in FY2004. Illinois has submitted a request for certain key watersheds. Funding was intended to be generous and \$3.77 billion was authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill over a 10-year period, an average of \$377 million per year. 2004 funding, however, has been capped at \$41 million. Subsequent years may be better funded. Three tiers of participation have been established, with increasing commitment to addressing water quality and soil quality resource concerns.

#### **Training/Meetings since last IFDC meeting**

- ✓ Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference at Keokuk, IA March 27. About 180 producers/landowners attended.
- ✓ Prescribed Burn Training. April 6-8 at Morrison. Eight NRCS and three SWCD employees.
- ✓ Upper Mississippi River Forest Partnership Regional Roundtable, Lacrosse, WI, March 23-24. Approximately 120 in attendance from a multi-state area; seven from Illinois. Applying the “Montreal Process” of forest sustainability criteria and indicators at the regional level.
- ✓ Edgar County Forestry Workshop, April 13, Paris, IL. 27 attended: 16 producer/landowners and 11 agency/presenters.

#### **Upcoming Events**

- ✓ Elsberry Plant Materials Center Field Day, June 9, Elsberry, MO. Contact Jerry Kaiser at 573-898-2012.
- ✓ Tree ID Training, June 17, Funks Grove, McLean Co. and June 24 at Mt. Carroll, Carroll Co. Contact Tom Ward at 217-353-6647.
- ✓ State Technical Committee, July 7, Chicago. Contact NRCS at 217-353-6600.
- ✓ National Walnut Council Meeting. July 25-28, West Lafayette, IN, contact Liz Jackson, 765-583-3501.
- ✓ AISWCD Summer Conference, August 1-3, Springfield. Forestry Committee speakers on Forest Stand Improvement for Quality Deer Management and Cottonwood-Oak Plantations for Floodplain Sustainable Forestry. Contact Rich Nichols at 217-782-6297.
- ✓ Illinois Plant Materials Advisory Group meeting, September 15-16, Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Newton, IL. Contact Tom Ward at 217-353-6647.

NRCS reorganization, effective May 5, 2004, implementation to continue and be in place by September 1, 2004.

SIU – *John Phelps*

John gave an update on the search for a new Dean at SIU. Three candidates have been interviewed (with none having a background in forestry or natural resources).

DCEO – *Terry Weldin-Frisch*

The primary focus in the Department is the Governor's Economic Development Program (Opportunity Returns). There are six regions that the Governor has been to and made his announcement and the next region to be announced is the east central. This will not happen until the legislative session is over. DCEO worked on a project at one time that has been decommissioned – the Illinois Framework for Global Competitiveness. Michael Gallison & Associates works, Charlotte, SC helped with the project.

Forest Resource Center – *Diane Murphy*

Diane reported on Stewardship Week that was held April 21-23, 2004. There were 3277 students attending, 157 teachers, 110 resource people and 1070 on the waiting list for next year.

Diane reported she has updated the sources of assistance for the Landowners Guide for Woodland Stewardship.

Dick reported that the disk for the Illinois Report on Sustainable Forest Management; Criteria and Indicators has been completed.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2004.

Meeting adjourned.