

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – January 19, 2005

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Rolfe. Eleven members and 21 task group members were present.

The November 17, 2004 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Financial Update – *Dick Little*

Dick distributed copies of the Financial Report for FY2005. The Conference contract for \$10,000 was amended and \$9500 added back to the budget and \$500 sent to IDNR. The change was made as a result of a new policy by the State. Contracts over \$10,000 need further approval by IDNR and CMS. The contract for the printing of the silviculture handbook was also removed leaving a balance of \$13,769.00

Dick has submitted the annual report listing the current Council members, dates of meetings, and total dollars spent.

The four percent harvest fee has collected \$482,667.

Liaison Report – *Dick Little*

Dick distributed copies of a memo from Jay Hayek who has taken over the responsibilities of the Big Tree Program. The Big Tree Program is a once-a-year publication that showcases the largest native trees of an individual species. Jay is putting together an advisory committee to assist with the program. The first meeting will be January 31 at the DNR office.

Jeff Walk who gave a presentation at the last meeting on the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan sent a memo with an update on the Plan. A draft of the Plan should be available to the public by April 1, 2005.

Rural Partners, the Illinois Rural Development Council, is seeking a knowledgeable, experienced not-for-profit Chief Executive Officer to manage the private-public partnership and its statewide programs and initiatives of the corporation.

The NRCS office in Washington is seeking input on the effectiveness of the resource conservation and development program. Comments are due January 31, 2005. Dick asked Council members to share comments on the great things the Illinois RC&D does.

The technical committee has been working on the Mid-Mississippi River Project. Maps are being developed to show the floodplain areas from St. Louis down to the Ohio and up the Ohio River. A presentation will be made on the project at the May or September Council meeting.

A memo and agenda was distributed for the Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference to be held on April 2, 2005 in Keokuk, Ia. Jeremy Shafter reported on the Tri-State Forestry

Conference to be held in Sinanswa, WI. On March 12, 2005. Approximately 500 landowners from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois participate in the conference in Wisconsin and approximately 200 landowners from Missouri, Iowa and Illinois participate in conference in Iowa. If anyone is interested in attending please see Jeremy.

The Emerald Ash Borer now covers 20 counties in Michigan and is moving north towards the Traverse City area. The Morton Arboretum is working on a Plan for Illinois.

Interstate RC&D Forestry Expo will be held September 9 & 10, 2005 in Davenport, Iowa.

Dick attended the Farm Bureau Ag Roundtable.

Council exhibits will be put up at the Teachers Conferences at the U of I and SIU.

Presentation – ***Richard Vraga, U.S. State Geological Survey***

Dick gave a presentation on his role at the Survey. In his position he speaks with people about activities that are going on in the U.S. Geological Survey and anything related to the national spatial data infrastructure. The national spatial data infrastructure is a concept that was established by an executive order. It involves technology, people, and software and everything it takes to have a solid infrastructure base of geospatial information for the nation. This connects local, state, federal governments and, academic. Dick discussed the imagery activities in Illinois and U.S. Farm Services Agency Program – the national aerial imagery program in Illinois.

Presentation – ***Barb Tormoehlen, U.S. Forest Service, State & Private***

Barb gave a presentation on the Forest Stewardship Program Spatial Analysis Project. The Spatial Analysis Project began in the northeastern area four years ago. The states were canvassed for interest and developing this project. Four states were selected – Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Missouri. The project is a GIS-based strategic management tool that allows participating state forestry agencies to identify and spatially display their important forestlands (rich in natural resources, vulnerable to threat); tracts currently under Forest Stewardship Plans; and areas of opportunity to focus future Forest Stewardship Program efforts.

Newsletter – ***Jim Appleby***

Jim reported that he needs articles for the Newsletter. The next issue of the Newsletter will be out in February.

Statewide Forestry Conference – ***Gary Rolfe***

Plans are being finalized for the Forestry Summit to be held March 23 & 24, 2005 at the Northfield Conference Center in Springfield. A key group of forestry professionals, landowners, public officials and other individuals related to forestry and natural resources will be invited with the intent: 1) to begin the process of developing a more dispersed and greater leadership in the state, 2) to center in on critical issues in forestry and to develop those issues to the point which we can make a clear and concise argument for what our needs are to solve those issues to people in a decision-making role. Following the

conference the results will be summarized and in a concise way take that message to key political leadership, key agency leadership and solve some of the long-standing issues that have troubled the forestry profession for a long time. Four main topics to be discussed will be: 1) education and research; 2) technical support; 3) industry; and 4) community forestry. Each group will be facilitated to come up with an action agenda to work with key people and agencies.

Peter Pinchot has been contacted for the keynote speaker. Dick is waiting to here from him. Other key people will be invited from other states who may have had similar experiences.

Old Business

Critical Issue Briefs – Jean Mangun

Jean distributed copies of the eight critical issues that the Council has been working on. Jean is currently working on the action items for each issue. Discussion followed. Jean plans to have a working draft at the Summit. The project will be completed by June 30, 2005.

New Business

Kurt Bobsin distributed copies of “Forests of Indiana: Their Economic Importance” brochure. Kurt suggested the Council might want to develop a publication similar to this for Illinois.

Kurt reemphasized the importance of the Special Analysis Program. Kurt would like for the Council to consider putting some funds towards a project like this.

Chairman Rolfe seconded the idea of putting together a proposal to fund part of these tasks, but we should wait until after the Summit.

Landowner Association – Gary Rolfe

Chairman Rolfe brought the idea of a landowner association to the table for discussion. He feels there is a great need to have a group of citizens to speak for forestry besides the Council. Commodity groups have been very successful in lobbying efforts at every level. This is a group we have never had. There has been discussion on how to go about establishing a statewide group that could have strong leadership and effectively speak for forestry in this state. Discussion followed. Chairman Rolfe stated this item would probably be brought up at the Summit.

Agency Reports

DCEO – Terry Weldin-Frisch

The six regions have been announced for the Opportunity Returns Economic Development Plan. Four regions remain to be announced. Waiting to see if funds will be available to continue the process.

IWPA – **Lee Rife**

Training has been completed with the Game of Logging. There was a lot of interest in the Game of Logging training. IWPA Board meeting will be held January 28, 2005 at IDNR in Springfield.

Department of Ag – **Rich Nichols**

There will not be a conservation program for FY05 – funds not available. The AISWCD annual meeting will be held July 31, August 1 & 2 at the Holiday Inn Select in Decatur.

AISWCD – **Bob Sloan**

A Forestry Workshop was held in Bureau County co-sponsored by Bureau & Marshall-Putnam County. Attendance was over 50 people from several different counties.

The direct seeding website is still running despite funding problems.

The Interstate forestry expo planning is moving along with only a few glitches. The schedules and attendance fees have been settled.

February 22 the Illinois Walnut Council and the A.I.S.W.C.D. Forestry Committee are hosting a Forestry & Herbicide workshop at Wildlife Prairie Park.

February 27 a Shitake mushroom workshop will be held at Woodland H.S. in LaSalle County. The event is being sponsored by the forestry committee of the A.I.S.W.C.D., Prairie Rivers R.C.&D, Long Lions Club and Wood Land F.F.A.

NRCS – **Bill Gradle**

Kathleen McTighe, replacing Tom Ward, will start Monday, January 24, 2005. The U of I Extension Forestry position, that is being cost-shared with NRCS, is temporarily on hold due to some language change in the position description. Comments on the RC&D proposals should be sent to Anne Dubey (annedubey@usda.gov) who is the national RC&D coordinator. Continue to work on the rule process for the Healthy Forest Reserve Program.

Forest Service – **Allen Nicholas**

The draft Forest Plan of the Shawnee will be out in February. Under the next fire plan there will be more coordination with the State. Plans are underway for a timber sale program.

IDNR – **Todd Strole**

Kurt introduced Todd who is the Division Chief for the Division of Habitat Resources, which is a new term – a combination of the forestry and the natural heritage programs. Todd has been in this role since last April. His efforts have focused on administrative items and operation, getting to know how to get things done and how they work.

IDNR – **Kurt Bobsin**

Personnel – Tom Wilson was recently hired to fill a forestry program manager position with responsibilities in fire and the Forest Health Program.

There were 23 district forester positions and now down to 15. The office at Hillsboro was closed. There have been several layoffs in DNR this past year; the most recent being on January 14. The Forestry office lost 6 positions (4 clericals and 2 technicians). DNR will be operating with four clericals (originally 14) and two technicians (originally 6).

Program Highlights

Fire Program – Tom Wilson will be overseeing the program. Have been working with personnel at Shawnee in signing agreements for cooperation in training; externally and internally. Received a \$100,000 grant from the Fish and Wildlife Service to address fire and safety issues.

Burn Policy – a draft has been finalized. It needs to be circulated throughout the entire agency for further review. This should be signed off the middle of February.

Forest Health Program – The Forest Service at Shawnee provided some grant money for the program.

Two handouts were distributed on the Emerald Ash Borer.

Traveled to southern Illinois for a field review of the Forestry Stewardship Program. Looked at the writing Plan of the Forest Stewardship, looked at some of the practice implementations and some of the coordinating efforts going on.

A Few Facts

Harvesting - 3,000 timber sales in the state in FY04

FLEP program – spent about 60 percent of the funds, spent about 55 percent in technical assistance

Education - \$24,000 (with \$14,000 obligated)

Have received another allocation for FLEP dollars – about \$56,000

Upcoming Events

Kurt has been asked to speak at the Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (Farm Bureau) in March. Kurt will speak on Forestry.

Hosting the National Walnut Council Meeting on July 31, August 1-3, 2005 in the Quad Cities.

Meeting adjourned.