

ILLINOIS FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – March 15, 2006

Dick Little called the meeting to order in the absence of Chair, Gary Rolfe. Six members and 15 task group members attended. The January 18, 2006 minutes were approved with three corrections noted.

Financial Report - Dick Little

Dick reported no changes to the budget since last month except for “Travel”. Five thousand dollars was allocated to travel; as of January, \$2200 has been spent leaving a balance of \$1800. The overall balance in the budget is \$32,758 which was originally allocated to the subgroups for the Statewide Forestry Conference. The contract for the U of I Great Rivers Intern has moved forward; \$6,000 was requested for FY06 and \$6,000 for FY07. Both years have been combined.

FY06 Forestry Development Fund – 4 percent is collected from the sale of timber of private and public lands. As of February 28, IDNR has collected \$768,955. There are still two major reporting periods for the year. There is approximately \$230,000 remaining in the Forestry Development Fund due to the sweeps. There is a commitment of \$55,000 for three vehicles.

There is currently \$118,500 proposed for FY07 in the Council budget. Funding has also been allocated for cost-share for FY07. Word is out that funds will not be “swept” this year as was done the last two years. Dick will bring update information on the 4 percent to the May meeting.

Council Liaison Report – Dick Little

- Attended two meetings of C-FAR with the Natural Resource and Environmental Task Force. Forestry has been put in as one of the criteria.
- A news release from the Department of Ag “*Illinois Conservation and Climate Initiative*” was distributed. The ICCI is a joint project of the State of Illinois and the Delta Institute that allows farmers and landowners to earn revenue through the sale of greenhouse gas emission credits from conservation practices such as conservation tillage, planting grasses and trees, or capturing methane with manure digesters. Dick was assigned a task to develop protocols on the forestry side.
- Attended the NRCS State Meeting.
- The general sign-up for CRP is March 27 through April 14.
- Jim Appleby, Reinee Hildebrant, Dick Little and Tom Wilson attended the Emerald Ash Borer Readiness meeting at the Morton Arboretum on firewood warning.
- Hosted the RC&D quarterly meeting in Springfield. They will help support IFA.
- John Phelps and Dick Little attended the Missouri Tree Farmers Conference.
- Distributed copies of HB4175 and HJR0095 regarding the Department of Revenue looking at the tax on forestlands. Rep. Granberg met with DNR and the Department of Revenue to discuss how to resolve the tax issue on forestland in the state. It was agreed to keep the farmland assessment at the 2005 assessment

through 2007 to give a Task Force time to meet and report back to the General Assembly. Rep. Granberg held a news conference in Carlisle and Mt. Vernon. Several Council members attended the news conferences.

- Kurt Bobsin attended the Southwestern Illinois Ag Round Council meeting along with Stephanie Brown, Director Hartke, Rep. Dan Reiss and the local assessor from Randolph County. Kurt learned a general rule that on your property you have to have 50 percent in crop production to be in a lower assessment for your woods. A question came up – what if you have multiple properties scattered not only in the county, but also throughout the state? The Department of Revenue made it a ruling that your property would be considered collectively. In other words if you have 100 acres of all woods in one county and in northern Illinois you have 400 acres of cropland that would work together.
- Attended the Chicago Farmers meeting; gave a talk on farmland assessment.
- Council display was put up at the Chicago Farmers Fair.
- Council display will be put up at the Illinois SWCD annual meeting in Decatur on July 31-August 1.
- The Council received an invitation to put an exhibit up at the Illinois Arborists Association Meeting on October 17 and 18 in Tinley Park, IL. A table costs \$500.
- Mike Rahe will host a field day at his place in Pike County on July 8 and has asked Dick to have a Council booth.
- Dick has received eight names as nominees for the vacant positions on the Council. These names will be submitted to the Governor's office. Miles Hartman and Gary Rolfe have also submitted their resignations.
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Newsletter – *Jim Appleby*

The next issue of the Newsletter needs to be published by June 1 to be mailed out in this fiscal year therefore Jim will need the articles by the first of May. Kurt Bobsin and Bill Gradle thanked Jim for his time he has spent on the Council Newsletter and stressed to everyone the importance of getting information to Jim for the Newsletter.

Old Business

Project similar to Indiana forests – Kurt Bobsin

At the January meeting Kurt distributed copies of a publication from Indiana “*Indiana Forests*” and their economic importance. He said this was a good information piece and thought it might be something the Council would want to put together to promote our resources and forestry in Illinois. Kurt is waiting for a conference call with Forest Service to find out what the next step would be for Illinois to do something like this.

FLEP – Kurt Bobsin

Kurt distributed a four-page document showing an overview of the first-round of money that was received for the Forest Land Enhancement Program. The program was divided into four areas – administrative, technical assistance, education and cost-share.

Committee reports from Statewide Forestry Conference

Industry – Lee Rife

Plans to get the group together again in the next 60-90 days. Two of the top three priorities are being worked on; 1) the Illinois Forestry Association, and 2) the booklet Kurt mentioned from Indiana.

Urban

Mike has requested the last corrections on the publication “*Select Trees of Illinois*”. The final version is approaching.

Teaching-Research – Jeff Dawson

SIU is moving ahead with new options in watershed and urban forestry. The U of I Forest Science option was recently accredited. There are about 20 students in the option. Enrollment is down nationally and employment opportunities are up. The enrollment in the Forest Science option at SIU is about 50 students.

New Business

Forest Legacy – Dave Gillespie

At a previous Council meeting the assessment of need was approved for the addition of an additional forestry legacy area in Illinois in the Lower Kaskaskia in the southwest Illinois region. The approved document was sent to the Forest Service with other supporting documentation of public involvement, needs, etc. The document was reviewed and the Forest Service asked for some goals. Twelve goals were sent back to the Forest Service, but after reviewing they ask that the goals be condensed to one goal. Dave asked for the Council’s approval on the amendment for the assessment of need for southwest Lower Kaskaskia. A motion was made to approve the amendment as written and submitted. Motion was seconded. Motion carried.

One of the projects that was approved in the Great Rivers Bluffs forest legacy area between Alton and Pere Marquette State Park in Calhoun County was a project called Coon Creek Woods. The committee went through the appraisal process, sent a letter to the landowner offering them a price per acre for the easement. The landowner rejected the offer. The bid was turned down and backed out of the program. This left \$94,000 that was allocated for the project. If the money is not used it is then returned to the Forest Legacy Program. The Forest Service would like to keep the money in Illinois. There is another project (#2 on the priority list) that was sent in FY07. It is called River Forest Tract and is located in the same forest legacy area. Dave asked the Council for approval to move the River Forest project to the No. 1 priority. Motion was made to move the River Forest project to priority No. 1. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Dave, Dick and Kurt drafted a letter from the Council to be sent to the appropriate people regarding funding in the Forest Legacy Program in Illinois. In FY05 and FY06 Illinois did not receive any funded projects. Dave will forward the letter to Gary for signature.

FDA Changes – Kurt Bobsin

Kurt volunteered at the January Council meeting to serve on a committee with Jeff Dawson, Jay Hayek, Dick Little and Mike Mason to review the FDA law and make some changes. Kurt distributed a draft copy of changes the committee recommended. Words or phrases that are underscored are new and words or phrases with a line through will be deleted. Discussion followed. Kurt asked that Council members send him comments and/or changes by the May meeting.

Funding proposals for small projects

Mike Rahe asked the Council to help sponsor the promotion of the Field Day on July 8 for \$200.

Stephanie Brown submitted a proposal for IFA in the amount of \$14,200 – “Designing and Implementing a Communications Plan to Promote Awareness of the Illinois Forestry Association and its 1st Annual Conference”. Dick said for this amount of money a contract would have to be written and wasn’t sure there was time. Stephanie said she would revise the budget and request \$4,987 for postage and mailing costs for soliciting members and participants to the first annual conference.

A motion was made to fund the \$4,987 submitted by IFA. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

Mike Rahe removed the request for \$200, but would like the Council to be a sponsor (with no cost) and have a display at the Field Day on July 8.

Agency Reports

IWPA – Lee Rife – IWPA Board will meet March 24 at 4 pm at the IDNR Building in Springfield.

Forest Service – Richard Blume-Weaver - The 2006 Forest Plan is expected to be signed Monday by the Regional Forest Service and will be released to the public by the end of April.

Extension – Jay Hayek – Working on the new Extension Website. He is also working on a photo gallery. He is requesting high-quality photos of silviculture, trees, and logs. Email or send as a CD to Jay with a caption of the photo. Also working on the Illinois Big Tree Program and may ask the Council for support.

Master Garden – Jeff Dawson – There is a companion group to the Master Gardeners who are developing a manual of training “*Master Naturalist*”.

AISWCD – Bob Sloan – A tree ID workshop was held at Funk’s Grove with 18 participants. The Will-South Cook SWCS is planning to hold one in June, time and place are yet to be determined. A summer ID workshop is planned for 2007 at Mt. Vernon and a winter workshop possibly in the Will-South Cook area.

The Illinois Walnut Council sponsored a very successful forestry field day at Forest Glen Nature Preserve on February 22 with over 80 participants.

The forestry committee also sponsored a forestry herbicide workshop on February 22 at Mt. Vernon with around 50 participants.

The committee has also been very active in promoting the IFA and is in the process of drafting a request to every SWCD to join the association at the highest level they can afford.

The committee has been very much involved in trying to explain and educate landowners about Forested Land Tax Directive that the Department of Revenue is planning to start enforcing. As a Summer Conference Speaker (July 30, 31 and August 1) the Committee is asking the Department of Revenue to explain the department's rules and regulations.

NRCS – Bill Gradle

NRCS report attached to Council file copy.

Illinois Forestry Association – Stephanie Brown – The committee is in the process of planning some regional events related to IFA, 1) at the Dixon Springs Ag Center in conjunction with the RC&D Steak Fry on May 25. The steak fry starts at 6 pm. A tree farm instructor training workshop will be held at 1 pm; at 4 pm there will be a tour of the prescribed burn and TSI plots that have been at Dixon Springs. July 22 is the first annual IFA conference.

IDNR – Mike Mason

- The Forest Stewardship position has been posted. There are no internal candidates; have contacted CMS for a list of names. Do not anticipate when position will be filled.
- There is no movement on filling the district positions to date.
- Entered into an agreement with the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry on the Upper Mississippi forestry partnership which is a partnership with the Upper Mississippi watershed which goes from the headwaters down to Cairo and includes currently the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois and also the National Association of Conservation Districts.
- State Fair – have been asked to put together a list of what will be in the Forestry tent. Mike or Robin need to know soon who is interested in having an exhibit.

SAF - Joe Newcomb – SAF meeting scheduled for April 6 and 7.

The next meeting is May 17 at the NRCS Building in Champaign, IL.

Meeting adjourned.