

Illinois Forestry Development Council Meeting – May 17, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Rolfe. Six Council members and 14 task group members were present.

Gary submitted his resignation to the Council effective May 31. He has been a member and Chair of the Council since December 1983. He was involved in creating the IFDC and the Illinois Forestry Development Act with Dr. George Weaver from Southern Illinois University.

Chairman Rolfe suggested the Council:

- Consider carefully what the long-term future of the Council is.
- Think about how the Council should be configured.
- What the goals of the Council should be.
- How the Council is funded or not funded.
- Think of the long-term goals of the Council and where you want to go as a group and what role do you want to play in this state in forestry and how do you want to accomplish that.
- Think about how new structures and/or partnerships could benefit the Council.

Other issues to think about:

- The Council has been very effective in increasing awareness of forestry among landowners, very effective in increasing the acreage in forestland in the state and developing a very strong group of landowners around the state.
- The greatest disappointment has been one of the early goals that the Council had to raise the level of awareness and the profile of forestry within IDNR. We did not make the progress that we should have made – haven't been able to be as politically active or aggressive as an organization of this sort needs to be.
- The Council needs to carefully think about how the funding flows. It seems to be a problem to have the Council resources flow thru IDNR. The Council needs to seriously consider the source of funding and how to operate as an independent body. Need to think about whether there is a way to configure the Council so that it does not and is not as beholden to IDNR as it has originally been.
- Need to establish some short-term and long-term goals as to what the Council can accomplish. Revisit how the Council is organized and how the Council is funded.

Gary thanked the Council for the opportunity to work with forestry in the state. He made a lot of friends and enjoyed working with everyone.

Dick Little presented a plaque to Gary Rolfe – “In appreciation and dedicated service while serving as Chair of the Illinois Forestry Development Council – December 1983 to May 2006”.

The March 15, 2006 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Financial Update – Dick Little

Dick distributed the FY2006 financial report. The budget shows a balance of \$27,475 that has not been allocated. A million plus dollars has been collected in the four percent for FY06 to date. This is the highest amount ever to be collected. There is only \$127,000 remaining in the account. Discussion followed.

Liaison Report – Dick Little

- Dick reported Robin Blue was promoted and moved to the Water Resources Department. Robin processed the travel vouchers and contracts for the Council.
- Mike Mason and Dick attended the Midwest State Ag Meeting in Madison, WI on the carbon credit initiative program.
- Attended two public meetings on the Wood Assessment Act. Taxes will not change for 2006-07.
- Started working with DNR Education on a new seed and leaf poster.
- Mike Rahe will host a forestry field day on July 8 in Pike County.
- Met with the Forest Service in Chicago. Talked with the Delta Institute about the carbon credit issue and how to make it work.
- Council display was put up at the Second Annual Industry Day at SIU.
- Made two trips to Chicago to talk to fourth grade classes on Arbor Day – 120 students each.
- There are three landowner vacancies on the Council. Nine names have been submitted to the Governor's office.

Update on Great Rivers Project – Gary Rolfe

The National Great Rivers project came about five years ago. It was meant to focus research and educational attention on large rivers and the watersheds that feed those rivers and the human communities within the floodplains in those watersheds. The goal was to create a holistic look at those systems and be a state of the art internationally. The concept involved into a three-way partnership with the University of Illinois, Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois and the IDNR Natural History Survey. The Natural History Survey currently operates a field laboratory with a long-term monitoring program on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

Congressman Costello has been very helpful in providing Federal funding for the program. There is approximately three million dollars in Federal funding. There is an active research program currently focused on floodplain forests and ecological issues involving the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. There is also the environmental education program which has been underway for the last year and is looking at targeting school age children across the board, but some elementary education as well. The Council has funded two interns. This year the internship program will involve 25 students from the U of I, SIU, Lewis and Clark Community College, Illinois State University, Western Illinois University and a variety of other institutions in Illinois. Currently the National Great Rivers funds about half of the interns and the other half is funded by organizations.

The Illinois River Watch Program has been adopted this year. A full-time coordinator has been hired for the program. The Lt. Governor's Office provided \$10,000 for the

program. They will also partner with Cooperative Extension to increase the network throughout the state.

The Great Rivers Program was attached to the U of I through Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and the College of ACES. An additional linkage was worked out that The Great Rivers Program is now attached at the campus level through the Water Resources Center, as well as ACES and NRES. This will open up the opportunity for faculty and students from other parts of the U of I to be actively involved with the National Great Rivers Program.

The National Great Rivers will sponsor a conference on the Cache River Watershed Project on August 10-12, 2006 at the John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois.

Old Business

Committee Reports from Statewide Forestry Conference

Extension – Bill Gradle

The main assignment from the committee was to get the Statewide Forestry Association organized. Interim officers have been elected. An organizational meeting will be held July 22, 2006 in Springfield at the Northfield Center. Currently there are 140 members in IFA. IFA requested funds from the Council at the March meeting to help with the meeting. The Council approved and funded IFA with \$4900.

Four officer positions, two directors from each region and two directors at-large will be elected. If anyone is interested in being nominated, please contact Bill Gradle.

Bob Sloan mentioned several joining IFA because of an interest in the woodland tax issue. He was wondering if the Council could sponsor a meeting with all the forestry groups in the state to prepare a position on this issue. Jeff Dawson suggested contacting someone like Bill Hoover, a tax specialist from Purdue University, to write an article for the Illinois Steward or the Council Newsletter which goes to all the legislatures, envisioning the impacts. Chairman Rolfe ask Jeff to contact Bill Hoover to see if he would be willing to write an article.

Industry – Lee Rife

The committee met twice last year. They looked at a number of issues and prioritized the top issues. The Forestry Association was one issue and another top issue is a brochure similar to one from Indiana “Impact of Forestry in Indiana”. Plans are to put together a similar brochure for Illinois. A third issue identified was a lack of comprehensive strategy, including globalization, for marketing Illinois wood products. The group will meet again in July or August to discuss these issues.

Urban – Mike Brunk

The committee is preparing a brochure to teach homeowners how to plant trees around their home as well as introduce lesser common trees to them. This will be a how-to-illustration type of publication. All the drawings for the publication are finalized. The

next step will be a draft form of the publication. The draft version should be completed by mid-summer.

Teaching/Research – John Phelps

SIU and U of I Universities have discussed the teaching/research issues. They feel that some of the issues discussed at the conference have helped both departments internally. SIU is in the process of accrediting a watershed program and an urban program as options. The U of I Forestry Department was recently accredited by SAF for another 10 years.

FDA Changes

Tabled until next meeting.

New Business

Proposed FY07 Council Budget

The General Assembly appropriated the same amount (\$118,500) in the budget as last year. The second year award for the Great Rivers Intern has been approved for \$5,667. The Contract Committee had four concerns on the FY07 budget, therefore the UI Support and UI Field Support/Newsletter has not been approved. Dick will make the appropriate changes and resubmit for approval. A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY07 budget as submitted. Motion carried.

DNR Changes – Mike Mason

Mike reported he received word there is now a Division of Forest Resources again and he is the Division Chief. They also recreated the Division of Natural Heritage. There are four vacancies currently being filled. The Department is in the process of setting up interviews. Robin Blue left the Division to go to Water Resources. Mike has permission to fill Robin's position. There is also movement on the two District Forester positions in Region II and Region V.

Stewardship Week – Diane Murphy

Stewardship Week was held for four days the last week of April. Three thousand one hundred seventy-six students, 165 teachers and 110 resource professionals attended. This was the first year that all 16 southern Illinois counties came. This was the 17th year for Stewardship Week.

Process for selecting a new chair

Bob Sloan suggested appointing a nominating committee. Mike Mason, Bill Gradle, and Jeff Dawson will serve on the committee. Bill was asked to serve as Chair. The committee will meet immediately after the Council adjourns.

Meeting adjourned.