

IFDC Urban and Community Forestry Committee Meetings 9/7/17

Prepared by: Sravya Pamulapati, GPSI IDNR UCF

Edited by: Reinee Hildebrandt, IDNR

Attendees: Rob Sproule, Oak Park City Forester; Reinee Hildebrandt, State Urban Forestry Administrator IDNR; Sravya Pamulapati, GPSI IDNR; Debbie Fluegel, Trees Forever; Daniella Pereira, Openlands; Matt Basile and Stephanie Brown, Illinois Forest Association.

Rob Sproule called the meeting to order.

INTRODUCTIONS

Rob took attendance of people who were present at the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVED

Rob Sproule called for an approval of the minutes.

Matt Basile made a motion to approve.

Daniella Pereira seconded the motion.

All committee members present at the meeting approved.

REPORT – Illinois Forestry Development Council July 13, 2017 Meeting Update

Rob Sproule: An update from the last Council Meeting was provided. The Forest Action Plan will be edited by an actual editor from U of I and is expected to come out later this year. Hopefully there will be another update at the November. The state budget was approved, but that the funding has not been appropriated and so there's no appropriation until capital budget is approved. There is a group discussion on a work plan for 2018. Bill will consolidate those things for a vote at this next meeting.

The Illinois Forestry Summit came up as a large item that it seems the Council wants to move forward with. Rob was voted as the committee chair. They are going to be moving forward with some sort of format. Bill had asked me just to poll you guys to determine what we would want to see at that event from an urban perspective. There was a lot of discussion about increasing the engagement of the Council with the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Topics discussed at the Council Meeting included:

- Looking to develop strategies to share information with legislators and build awareness regarding the council and the committees as a resource for legislation on Illinois forestry practices.
- Look for ways to preserve the integrity of the forestry programs, identify and support opportunities for state and federal funding.
- Look for ways to expand the forestry industry in Illinois including some data collection that would allow us to compare Illinois to other states.
- Look at certain either economic or legislative situations within the state that impact the forest industry.
- And then investigate a future financial need for the council so that appropriate funds and recommendations can be made and along with that looking at possible focuses for grant programming including urban as one of the primary focus is moving forward through the last grant.
- R.F.P. that the Council did there was a strong focus on Oak regeneration. They may identify urban as one of the next key focuses for grant funding through the Forestry Development Council. That's obviously contingent on the budget so we'll have to see where that goes.
- There was interest in getting open positions both professional and legislatively filled so that we get more voices involved and maybe can get some more things accomplished.

Daniella Pereira: There was discussion on whether or not the Council was open to the bylaw concept and raised the question of this committee really is visioning the council to do, was there any movement towards this? to get stronger or get better or?

DISCUSSION ON FORESTRY FUNDING

Group Discussion: There was a group discussion on what the Council does now and historically. The role of the committee with in that group. The lack of open arm

policy historically and now with urban and community forestry within the Council and forestry profession. The fact that this committee is here because it was mandated as one of the four requirements for being eligible for the federal money but does not influence the “getting more access to” federal funds which is controlled at the USDA FS and State Forester level. We took a sidebar and discussed the Landscape Scale Restoration Grants from the USDA FS and the match requirement and potential state match.

The discussion then turned to the 4% Harvest Fee and its history of being swept during the Blagojevich era. Reinee Hildebrandt provided some clarification and then asked Paul Deizman to come in and answer questions.

Reinee Hildebrandt: The four percent harvest fee be and that's where you will get the traditional foresters very much up in arms because, that's the fund that they don't want to share and those funds go back to the land owners whose trees were harvested to help them replant and reforest those acreages.

Daniella Pereira: suggested that there is a need for those funds to not be swept but to go into Forestry and that the committee should help with that even if it's going back to be planted where they have harvested trees.

Reinee Hildebrandt: Yes, that would be very helpful.

Rob Sproule: One of the action items was for the Council to have more influence in terms of how and what that Council's budget number is. The action item is to figure out how we can influence that number, identify things that the council wants to do with that money and then hopefully if we have action items that we want to work on including grants or other projects or documents or research then we might be able to influence and change that number in the budget to increase the funding that the Council gets to do those things.

Reinee Hildebrandt: cautioned that the funding is tied to the Department's funding and with the tight fiscal situation any increases could impact programs and people's jobs. “When you influence that number, you're taking away from the Division. We shouldn't be trying to just reallocate the same money repeatedly what you really need to be thinking about is why isn't forestry as a whole getting the dollars and getting the allocation it needs to fulfill the basic purposes of the Division. That's what you need to be thinking about.” Examples such as the Real Estate Transfer Tax was provided. It was suggested to redirect your thoughts to is to building forestry, making

forestry strong that supposed to redirecting pieces here and there within a tiny limited budget.

BEGIN DISCUSSION ON BY-LAWS

Rob Sproule: (While waiting for Paul to arrive at the meeting) we discussed: UCFC Meeting items are available on the website for review was the latest kind of draft of the committee bylaws last charter and a draft of the potential memorandum of understanding for member organizations of the Committee. Changes to the charter/by laws document included: membership. changes based on the last meeting discussion, and conversations with Reinee including adding an ex officio categorization for the committee for IDNR. People seemed to like the idea of a member organizations with a signed a memorandum of understanding, that outlines some of the expectations for the people who act in those positions to try to get a little bit more regular involvement with the committee.

And then we kind of identify at large appointees who are individuals that may not represent a specific organization but want to be involved. He is working on the memorandum of understanding and will review the one provided by memorandum Daniella for further changes.

Paul Deizman, Wood Utilization and Marketing Specialist for the Forestry Division, enters for answering questions on the four percent harvest fee. Rob Sproule asked Paul to address the current utilization of the timber tax and where that money goes and how it's spent as of right now?

BACK TO DISCUSSION ON FORESTRY FUNDING

Paul Deizman: explained how the law reads. The law was updated last few years back and it says “may spend the money a number of ways”. So, the Act authorizes the DNR to spend money with anything to do with forestry that they can justify although the original intent was that money was designed to throw back into forest management through the Forestry Development Act in some other places you know it names all our programs. But the money generally has been used to compensate where we lacked general revenue. And we are heading down of course where we're going to have less and eventually zero General Revenue. So, the four percent fees come in every year between five hundred thousand to upwards of five million. We're

over a million I think already for the year. But most all of it is going to the salaries, I just don't know the percentage. Most of it's going to keep the Division alive at the current time although that's not ideal but they know it's not ideal. That's where we sit.

Daniella Pereira: Raised the question of whether or not forestry staffing was really what it was created for or was the four percent supposed to go exclusively for restoring trees that were cut down?

Paul Deizman: The original intent was to better forests through our programs and since we did cost share and special projects for so long with land owners without using any of it for salaries, people have come to expect that the money is spent on cost share but it is also available for programming for forestry, the Forestry Development Act, management plan implementation and amongst other things that are great for the resource and for us who care about resource. But it's original intent in 1983 was more clear on spending that money for forestry purposes. The rewrite/last update of the law used the word "may" so the original intent has been melded over the years to mean the Division or its programs versus just the cost-share program.

But you're not alone in your opinion and that I mean the rural community Foresters, consultants, landowners other orgs kind of are entrenched in the rural side. They are screaming the same thing that this is for cost sharing. Why aren't we going to cost sharing? Why are you paying salaries? Because a lot of people out there remember the original intent in 1983 that went through 1999 but ten years or so ago they switched little bit of language. So, we don't have any rural side forestry cost-share for our ad rules and our program on the forest management side for private landowners.

Stephanie Brown: Speaking for the Illinois Forestry Association I just want to echo what Paul said we're really concerned because it's the landowners paying into that tax and there was an expectation that they would be able to get cost sharing to help recoup some of that in order to replant or to do improvements after a harvest and so it is a problem and in our position is that we'd rather not see it all spent on administration but you know like you pointed out earlier Reinee, heads can roll if you become too forceful on insisting that that money is used in cost sharing. You're talking about someone's job. So, it's a dilemma that's what it is.

Paul Deizman confirmed for Rob Sproule that the 4% Harvest Fee (905 account) is the same place that the Forestry Development Council funding is coming from as

well as the Forestry Administration. It was clarified that the funding amount has been around One hundred and eighteen to One hundred and fifty thousand annually for the last decade or more and that if the Council asked for more it could mean loss of staffing.

Paul Deizman exits the call.

INTERIM DISCUSSION ON ROLE OF UCFC WITHIN FDC

Stephanie Brown: I think the committee's role is really important and I guess I'm more interested in why you exist and exactly what you do in the way of the mechanics of the way you're set up and who's involved? The important thing I see is that first of all your committee is by far the most and only functional committee associated with the Council and by demonstrating your functionality including this effort you have to clarify the charter. I think that you are positioning your interest to be in receipt of some of these funds even though they're quite limited those small Council projects can make all the difference to get something done in the urban forestry arena but more importantly than that your legitimacy as a committee and what you bring to the council table can be very influential in addressing some of these challenges that Reinee eluded to in terms of respect for urban forestry, devotion of resources, the value and importance of urban forestry. It's at this nexus between urban and rural where these improvements in understanding and such things can be improved. The summit is a great opportunity to help build understanding and support from your rural partners for what you do and for you to better understand the needs and things that we have out in the rural areas. So, I think there's a great role for the Committee to play and I would just encourage you to convey that to people who you want to be who you want to be involved in what you're doing it's not just trying to get a few thousand dollars of funding, it's being part of these overall discussions and asserting the value and importance of urban forestry in the overall scheme of things so that's what I wanted to say. ... You've been demonstrating functionality for some time now and I think it's good, that's why I like to participate in these calls even though I am not an urban forestry person per say I see the value of it and I see the opportunity to interact across the urban rural interface.

BACK TO DISCUSSION ON BY-LAWS

Group Discussion on by-Laws occurred.

Reinee Hildebrandt: shared the results of a survey on how their Council function with the twenty state Northeastern US region. Twelve states responded. The first question was by what authorities? and two of them were bylaws, three of them had bylaws, nobody had a charter, three of them are “(501) C3” organizations. The number of voting members or council members or board of directors were between fifteen and twenty, voting members. In response to “Who does the council advise?” All of them but Illinois advises the state forester, Illinois is the only one that advises a separate Forestry Council, two of them advised legislators and one of those was us through the Forestry Development Council Three of them specifically mentioned that their major task was the Forest Action Plan. Focusing on the role of the state coordinator, half of them were voting and half of them weren't. All state program people were advisory to their councils and some of them were liaison to the Council or to the State Forestry Department. Six councils had paid staff (and I did include Illinois only because we have Sravya that's doing the minutes but in the past, we would have been a no so that would have meant five or six). All of them attend the meetings regularly. When asked about how they got their members: In Vermont and New Jersey, the State Forester was the person that determined who was on the council. In Illinois, it's the governor that identifies two and then the rest are organizational.

Pennsylvania has an outstanding Council system. They have three state coordinators in Pennsylvania that serve in various functions to their council but they have one voting membership for the council from the Forestry Bureau. So, Bureau gets one count and the highest-ranking person there at the meeting cast the vote. The personnel don't put themselves in leadership positions since they feel it's a conflict of interest. They can serve on committees as needed and the State Bureau provides desk space and some equipment to the Council. The state hires two contract employees through the council to serve as state coordinator. They have the grandest example of the cooperative relationship between the state and the council.

Wisconsin's Council work together with D.N.R to help elevate urban forestry issues of importance. The main purpose of the Council is to advise the DNR. WDNR provides a half time Urban Forestry liaison. The State Coordinator facilitates quarterly executive and committee meetings. They manage the membership including recruitment appointments, orientation training and support. They facilitate regular communication among the Council members and the Chief of State Forester in the Urban Forestry Team. They have a team of eight Urban Forestry Coordinators in Wisconsin and two or more people at Headquarters. The council has several

subcommittees and the DNR acts as a resource to those subcommittees and the DNR hosts the council page.

Vermont also is kind of interesting is in that, here they don't advise the State Forester, they advise the State Urban Forestry Program Administrator and together they collaborate. (It's a small state similar in size to the Chicagoland area.) The state coordinates with members to advise and assist. They lead the citizens. They work together on the five-year Action Plan and have quarterly meetings with feedback to identify gaps and opportunities.

In New Jersey, the State Forester designates the State Urban Forestry Administrator is the secretary for the group as does Michigan. Michigan's State Coordinators also serves as the permanent secretary to the group.

That gives you an example of some of the ways that this state programs and the State Foresters and the Councils work and the different types they have.

Sravya Pamulapati posted three state's by-laws. 1) Iowa's Bylaws are very rigid. They went for "501 C 3", 2) New Jersey's bylaws and 3) Vermont's handbook which includes bylaws within it.

Rob Sproule: That's great! I think probably the one thing we get out of there is Urban Forestry in Illinois is definitely under represented based on what we see in other states. Please take a look at things. See where we are at in terms of the bylaws. I will be moving forward with a revised document and I think we'll just go back to calling it bylaws since that seems to be what everybody else does. If you have opinions on the memorandum of understanding in terms of a draft document for that so far let me know. Hopefully, maybe Reinee and I with some review can get something together for the committee to vote on and send to the Council at the next meeting.

Group Discussion took place. A vice chair position was discussed. It was mentioned that the other Governor's position could serve as the Vice Chair. There was a question as to if we need additional executive board positions. Sravya Pamulapati's fine work was acknowledged as well as her graduation December 15th. No one volunteered.

DISCUSSION ON FORESTRY SUMMIT

Rob Sproule: Redirected the conversation to the Council's interested in moving forward with a Forestry Summit probably spring of 2018. The past discussion and recommendations on the Summit by Rob, Daniella, and Beth can be seen on the web page.

Additional comments included:

- Stephanie already made some comments about trying to help make a connection between the urban forestry groups and the rural groups and talk about kind of that interface and understanding a little bit of each other's issues that was already included as a possible topic.
- Talk about the state forest action plan,
- how to implement the plan and timeline,
- identify possible underutilized collaborations and partnerships
- looking at oak ecosystems and their decline,
- rural to urban interface,
- improving education in engagement of private property owners both in rural and urban forestry,
- forest health monitoring,
- looking for ways to engage youth more,
- expanding entry level professional training and engagement,
- state funding,
- building sustainable local forestry programs,
- building bipartisan support for forestry for urban and rural, trying to pool our support for each other could make forestry as a whole so much more formidable in a state in which we can be the secondary in interest. So, I think building bipartisan support for forestry for urban and rural is a really important. Aim for a summit to have and it sort of gets out this interface.
- Forest Resiliency of Illinois Forest Resources such as reforestation, natural disaster recovery, loss of oaks and unknown losses of other vegetation,
- Engaging New Partnerships and People/ Thinking Outside the Box

Group discussed that this was a statewide event involving both the rural and urban aspects of forestry.

The possible advanced survey process for the 1- 2 day summit was mentioned by Rob Sproule. The survey will help identify how to position people in groups or you

know work groups or facilitate having certain people meet or whether we do kind of a one day or two-day conference.

There will be roundtable discussions that help kind of facilitate the developing the mission and goals on it.

UF needs good representation of what the committee would want to see brought forward it in a summit. CRTI was mentioned as a part of the UCF representation at the Summit.

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS:

Stephanie Brown: Illinois Forestry Association - When you get back to your emails, you will see that I have sent you an email about our annual meeting and fall conference the “Healthy Forests on the Edge” which will be held at the Morton Arboretum this year. There is exhibitor space. There is a silent auction that will be fun.

Reinee Hildebrandt: IDNR -

National Level News-

Sravya has posted the “State Forester’s Priorities for the Farm Bill”. This is looking at next federal fiscal bill (2018). While there was concern that UCF information wasn’t going to the Hill and that while UCF was only mentioned briefly but not in the funding priorities, this new document is improved. Phillip Rodbell, (USDA FS, PN office) (who you met last meeting), feels that urban forestry has been included in this next document. I wanted to show you this document since it represents improvement since the last meeting. With Urban Forestry not being included, it kind of gave me a throwback 20 years to where urban forestry was within forestry. In the document, they have Forestry Facts including “136 million acres of urban and community forests” which was in there previously.

In the “Forests in the Next Farm Bill” section includes:

- “bolstering community trees and public support for forestry through reforestation initiatives and green infrastructure program.”
- “enhance public and private forest management” (adding the word “public

- “establish authorization to provide special technical assistance and analysis to local governments to municipalities in coordination with state agencies” (This is a planning tool and not to say that any of the money will come out of either of those two pockets but it would be more asking for additional funding.)

In PART B - Growth Community Trees and Public Support for Urban Forestry, they mention:

- Establish a green infrastructure tree planting and maintenance program for communities to improve human health, water quality, reduce storm water flooding and treatment, reduce energy costs, increase building opportunities, reduce crime and improve air quality.

In addition to trees in urban areas and communities, this would tie into watershed improvement work. This is something they have been telling us at the regional and national level to do is to tie it watershed because water is a high priority. The more we can link ourselves to providing quality water and improving water quality the better off we are in terms of being considered a viable program and component. And we need to link to the Forest Action plans and EPA impaired rivers and streams programs.

In PART D - Expand and Diversify Forests Markets. I did not see a lot about urban forestry mentioned in here. But it is a challenge to determine how urban and community forests fit into this. They are trying to expand the markets and trying to give higher billing to those traditional forests that are “Forest Certified” that have a management plan and that are being managed appropriately. We have urban woods and we have not looked at certifying the urban woods and forest that is well managed. In some capacity, such as TCU. Just something for you to think about for those of you who will be here for the next decade.

The last one is strengthening the role of the State Foresters.

And codifying the Landscape Scale Restoration program which Daniella I thought you might enjoy hearing. That is an update on the Farm Bill and it does not look as grim as it did the last meeting.

State Level DNR UCF Business:

The Ottawa Strike Team reports will be finished this week. Sravya did some very nice Field Guides that are included with the maps.

The Illinois Urban Manual Tree Protection Standards will go to a final vote in November to become either be IUM standards or IDNR standards, depending on the final vote.

The seven IDNR Famous and Historic Tree Interpretive Signs (sponsored by the Forestry Development Council) have been installed with Sravya and I hand dug through heavy clay and sometimes shale. To set the signs three feet in concrete. It was a lot of hard work. They look nice and we have gotten a lot of positive comments on them. We are looking for the possible sponsors for the remaining signs for \$700 each. Sponsors will have their name on the sign perpetuity.

There have been changes to the TCUNEWSBITS to make it a little lighter and with more photos. There has been a delay in getting the TCUNEWSBITS out over the summer. FYI - Position in Wilmette – Forester.

Sravya and I have been waiting for the IT people to set us as a priority for Web updates since March. We are planning on using boxes for the different sources of Grants. DNR – OTHER DNR GRANTS – USDA FS – OTHER FEDERAL GRANTS – OTHER SOURCES

We are wanting to update the Council page by including photos of people and a bio about each Council members.

Sravya is doing one last project similar to the ADF Faces of Urban Forestry concept. We want to talk about unique stories about how people are using our urban forests. We already have leads on one from Paul D'Agostino and one from Clint Meyers. So, if you have suggestions please let Sravya know.

Daniella Pereira: Openlands. One issue is the Stewardship bill. The Governor has signed this bill signed on August 25th to get funding to either compensate land trust and other non-profits to do restoration work in Illinois Nature Preserves. So, that had gone through which is a big win. We had been trying for a few years so this is a big win. If anyone wants more information, I can send you that. We have been working a lot with TCIA in trying to develop stronger pipeline for people (like Reinee said) who are not part of the choir to get into Forestry or Arboriculture types of jobs. So, we have been working with them and we are going to have another meeting next week with employers to discuss with them the idea of having an Apprenticeship. So now Arborist in the Department of Labor since last year

have the ability to have an Apprenticeship. The question is “how do we get that going in Illinois?”. We are going to have a day to talk with just employer. Then another day to talk to groups that could potentially start a pre-apprenticeships program. There is funding (at least in Cook County and Chicago) for pre-apprenticeships. So, groups like Green Corp in other organizations where any of the hours put in by people would count toward a pre-apprenticeship qualifications. We will have these meetings next week. TCIA has been awesome in trying to establish this all over the United States. We are fortunate to have them in the Chicago area to push this forward.

We start planting this week on Saturday. There will be 12 different plantings.

Tree Keepers course is completely filled up with many people on the waiting list. We are already trying to schedule for next Spring for the Treekeepers Course because there are 10 people on the waiting list right now.

Matt Basile – SMA REPORT – Working to put together the page for the SMA website. Rob, I will be talking to you about materials for that so we can coordinate.

Debbie Fluegel – TREES FOREVER - Reinee sent out an e-mail earlier this year that back in June we had the STRIKE TEAM come to Ottawa and Naplate to assess all of the public trees in that tornado impacted areas. Since then we have met with both communities again and in NaPlate just a few weeks ago, we did a volunteer tree identification and inventory workshop and we completed all volunteer based tree inventory for Naplate. I will be working up the report for that. We are trying to get dates set up for Ottawa. We also have a few other small communities downstate that are doing inventories. All this work is a part of a grant provided by the USDA Forest Service to work with small communities and communities that have been impacted by natural and/or man-made disasters. We have 15 communities throughout the state and are still looking for about 5 more for next year. Trees Forever provide the community either a workshop and technical assistance on a tree inventory which includes basic information on how to do a volunteer-based tree inventory as well as a written a report for them. Or they are getting a workshop on tree care and maintenance for their village staff on how to properly take care to their trees and it is based on what the community needs.

The communities are also getting tree planting grants. We have a couple tree plantings coming up in October for these communities.

Other Trees Forever Programs: Pollinator Habitat Conservation Grants and Illinois Partnership Buffer Grants are available right now for anyone who wants to plant trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and provide wildlife and pollinator habitat. Those are available on the website. They are open to any public or private individual or entity. So, if you have young people who are interested. Direct them our way.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Rob Sproule: Any Motions to Adjourn?

Matt Basile: Motion to Adjourn

Daniella: Seconded

All agreed

Next meeting is the November 9th.