



# Sustainable Forestry Council

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## SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

May 7, 2013

Minutes

### Attendees:

Eric Sprague  
Don Outen  
Gary Allen  
Al Goetzl  
Kim Finch  
Kirk Rodgers  
Connie Hoge

### DNR:

Don VanHassent  
Steve Koehn

Called to order at 10:10 AM.

Connie Hoge moved to pass the minutes from the March 26, 2013 meeting as amended. Kirk Rodgers seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Don VanHassent briefed the Council on the results of the 2013 General Assembly.

- \* HB 706 - the Departmental "Forestry Omnibus" bill passed the House on a 107-27 vote and in the Senate on a vote of 43-1. Several amendments were approved that the Department considers "friendly".
- \* HB 210/SB 236 – extends sunset of Board of Foresters from 2015 to 2025 – passed unanimously in the Senate but was killed in committee in the House. Work will be done over the summer to prepare for the reintroduction of this bill in next year's General Assembly.
- \* HB 728/SB 211 – would prohibit a licensed tree expert (LTE) from supervising more than one tree care company – passed unanimously in the Senate but was killed in committee in the House.
- \* HB 572 and SB692 – 2 separate bills that would reduce the apprenticeship period requirement from 5 years to 3 years to be eligible to take the LTE exam (HB 572) and would establish a "continuing education" requirement for LTE's (SB 692). The Senate bill died in committee but the concept was amended into the House bill which then passed 134-0. It passed in the Senate 42-1 with several amendments. The House concurred with those amendments. Continuing education credits will be required for license renewals starting in late 2017.
- \* SB 564/HB 1025 – would exempt Frederick County Schools from complying with the Forest Conservation Act. This was killed in committee in the Senate and withdrawn in the House.
- \* SB 457 – would allow Calvert County to use FCA fee-in-lieu funds to pay staff salaries. After its' hearing no further action was been taken by the committee, effectively killing the bill.

\* SB 797/HB 1084 – has been amended to create a task force to study and make recommendations on the incorporation of thermal energy into the State’s Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS). This bill passed unanimously in the Senate and by a 128-9 vote in the House. Following a discussion and vote, the Sustainable Forestry Council will be represented on the task force by Gary Allen.

The Council briefly discussed the idea of updating the Forestry Board statute (Natural Resource Article, Title 5, Sub-title 6. Can this be revised to address the capacity of the boards to work effectively? Forestry board operations need to improve.

Eric Sprague provided an update on his effort to look into the Woodland Incentive Fund. He has spoken with Amanda Mock, Department of Legislative Services and also with the Revenue Estimates Office within the Comptroller’s Office. Further discussions will be held and this will be on the next Council agenda.

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) has a new head. Gary will send the contact information. It has been some time since MALPF made a presentation to the Council on the amount of forest land included in their easements. Do we want to ask for an update?

HB706 included a section that required the Maryland Department of Planning, in conjunction with DNR, the Council and other interested parties, to provide local jurisdictions with guidelines, recommendations and technical assistance on policies and standards to protect forest land and urban tree cover. Don Outen has been in touch with Peter Conrad, MDP, about what information is available and how we might get this effort started. A meeting will be scheduled before the next Council meeting.

A wide ranging discussion on private land certification led to the following points and questions:

- Forest Stewardship Council has a small landowner program but how landowner friendly is it?
- Are loggers offering lower bids in order to do what is necessary to meet certification standards?
- American Tree Farm System may charge for cost of group certification.
- Certification can boost forest industry visibility; could be a branding opportunity and could distinguish products from other states.
- Would purchasers of timber see any value in private land certification? UMD Extension study may provide some information.
- What is the benefit of certification to the small landowner who harvest timber once a generation?
- Chain-of-custody certification for mills is difficult to attain.
- Do we have information on High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) on private land?
- Can we isolate the cost of certification on state land?
- Do our existing landowner assistance programs lend themselves to group certification?
- We need to continue the discussion, meet with people from the certification groups and make recommendations by the end of the year.

Don VanHassent handed out three articles on a new approach to landowner outreach being tried in Wisconsin. Should Maryland consider sponsoring a roundtable on forest landowner outreach? Need to discuss in upcoming meetings.

Marian Honeczy provided an update on the ongoing audits of several county Forest Conservation Act (FCA) programs. DNR's auditor has conducted numerous field visits and expects all reports to be completed later this summer.

Marian also briefed the Council on changes to FCA contained in HB706 – 1) modifies FCA requirements for certain stream restoration and stormwater management projects; 2) reinstates the “paved area exemption” in Priority Funding Areas (PFA) and 3) strengthens our ability to address shortcomings in local FCA programs. This topic led to a discussion on plantings for mitigation not currently eligible for the Watershed Improvement Plans (WIP). There seems to be some confusion on how WIP interfaces with, or complicates, other programs that require or encourage tree planting. Don Outen moved, and Gary Allen seconded, that the Council request a letter of clarification on whether or not FCA funds can be used for WIP projects.

The next Council meetings will be July 9, September 10 and November 12.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald VanHassent