Central Regional Forest Conservancy District Board
Meeting Minutes

Address: Virtual
Date: June 1, 2026
Time: 2:00 pm
DNR Executive Secretary: Anne Gilbert

1. Call to Order

- Justin Bowers (JT)calls the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.
- Welcome by JT. Thank you all for bearing with us through this transition. This is the 3rd regional board meeting so far this Spring, but the first for Cental Region. Connections and opportunities have already started.
- JT will not be the Chair of this regional board. Hope to elect a Chair and Vice Chair to the committee.

2. Roll Call

Members:

- Jim Harris, Montgomery
- Jim Sherring, Harford
- Elissa Reineck, Howard
- Erik Dihle, Baltimore City
- Geary Schwemmer, Carroll
- Not in attendance: Glenn Ferenschak, Baltimore Couty
- Not in attendance: Gabrielle Oldham, Cecil
- Not in attendance: Dori Murphy, at-large

Guests:

- Anne Gilbert, DNR
- Justin Bowers, DNR
- Daniel Coy, DNR
- Dawn Balinski, Foundation
- Emma Beck, Foundation
- Megan Mills, Previous Howard Chair

3. Approval of the Agenda

- The agenda was approved with no amendments.

4. 4. Icebreaker Activity: Self-introductions: What motivated you to join your county board, and what accomplishments are you most proud of? (2-3 minutes per person)

- **Jim S** (Harford): With the board since ~2012. Seedling giveaways to school students annually and several local community events.

- **Elissa** (Howard): Works for HoCo govt. In the sustainability office. Wanted to gain more knowledge of trees to inform her work. Minigrants and NRCC are her favorites.
- **Geary S** - (Carroll): Joined in 2020. Volunteered with Big Tree and was pulled into the FB. Chair and Treasurer. Main interest is MBTP and developing educational materials. Enjoys tabling events. Thinking about getting into a joint Workshop with a neighboring board if interest.
- **Erik** - (Baltimore City): Retired from Chief of Forestry in the city and wanted to stay involved and do the good work. Most proud of Market Day tree giveaway and board involvement with current events. Works closely with the city's Tree Baltimore to receive the giveaway trees. Arbor Day event with a local school to plant ~26 trees. Most proud of a public discussion with scientists and local stakeholders to explain how Stream Restoration projects may or may not be beneficial to the environment.
- **Jim H** - (Montgomery): With the board for 30+ years. Started when running a small tree care business. Chair for 8 years. Significant involvement with NRCC student recruitment - 9(!) this year. The board has a high level of involvement with MBTP. Assist with local school plantings with students.

5. Maryland Forestry Foundation Updates, Q&A

Emma Beck, MFF Field Officer & Dawn Balinksi, MFF Treasurer

- The Forestry Foundation reports that 27 of the 37 NRCC applications were accepted. Within the Central Region, attendee counts are as follows: Carroll (1), Montgomery (9), Howard (2), Baltimore (2), and Cecil (1). Two applicants from Baltimore City are currently pending letters of recommendation.
- Regarding UFCC, 13 of the 20 applicants were accepted, and 2 students have registered for both programs.
- Patty manages social media and outreach for the Foundation, including Instagram, Facebook, and press releases. Her work also encompasses Maryland Municipal League (MML) magazine advertisements, DNR Office of Communications coordination, and county newsletters.
- ALL chapter agreements for the region have been submitted!
- The Membership Council application is now available for local chapter members. These agreements are a prerequisite for the approval of official applications. Notably, Dori Murphy serves as the sole member at-large for the Central Region.

https://www.marylandforestryfoundation.org/forestry-boards/forestry-board-application/

Administrative Requirements Changes In Progress:

- **Liability & Insurance**: New forms are required for coverage.
- **Registration**: Mandatory new registration for all members and volunteers, including Big Tree participants.
- **Points of Contact**: Emma is the current lead, but responsibility will soon transition to Nicole, the new finance representative (FinanceMdForestryFoundation@gmail.com).

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11CryaQinKd1U4Qior0_6kz6rJXr043BO?usp=drive_link

6. Approval of Minutes

- Not applicable; this was the first meeting of the Central Region Forest Conservancy District Board

7. Reports of Officers

- Not applicable; this was the first meeting of the Central Region Forest Conservancy District Board

8. Committee Reports

Not applicable for this meeting.

9. Report from Agencies

Maryland Forest Service

- The MFS is currently codifying the Forestry Board's work for the first time. Draft regulations and bylaws are expected to be developed within the next 6 to 12 months.

10. Unfinished Business

- Not applicable; this was the first meeting of the Central Region Forest Conservancy District Board

11. Annual Work Plan Discussion

Baltimore City: Interested in a workshop collaboration. Highlights annual events and community-building activities for members.

Harford: Missed out on Chestnut planting; would like to reinstate it next year. Trouble finding the land for planting. Will connect with Dan Lewis to keep an eye out for options. Continue annual events and seedling giveaways.

Montgomery: MBTP monthly measurement and website updates. Champion Tree Tour annually and community-building activities for members. Significant effort for NRCC and UFCC recruitment.

Howard: New tiny forest site visit to increase in-person engagement since meetings are virtual. The Howard County Forestry government website has a tiny forest section. MUCFC grant coordination with Dylan Orr (Tree Planting Specilist, MFS). Minigrants funded by the county ($5,000 annually). MUCFC and Dylan are supplementing projects significantly. MBTP interest: getting members connected with state coordinators.

Carroll: Low membership at this time, active member recruitment high on the list for FY27. High level of involvement with the Arbor Day poster contest. Annual display of the posters with the Arts Council. Seedling giveaways and table events. Attended a Scout Expo to match scouts with badges. Active with MBTP. Starting merchandising efforts.

Cecil: not in attendance

Baltimore County: not in attendance

Draft AWP Received: Carroll, Baltimore City, Montgomery
ACTION: Needs Submission: Cecil, Harford, Baltimore County, Howard

12. New Business - *None*

13. Announcements - Anne requested suggestions for an in-person/hybrid location for the next meeting. Date TBD

14. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 3:32 pm.