



## Garrett County Forest Conservancy District Board

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### Minutes of the Garrett County Forest Conservancy District Board Meeting January 13, 2025

#### Call To Order:

The Garrett County Forestry Board met at 9:00 a.m. on Monday January 13, 2025 at Mt. Nebo. Those Board members in attendance either in person or virtually were: Fred Eggleston, Mike Ferguson, John Bambacus, Bill Buckel, Ken Fisher, Mike Kozier, Will Williams, Siera Wigfield, Bill Aiken, Derek Buckel, Linda Harris and Melissa Nash.

The agenda was approved following a motion by Fred and 2<sup>nd</sup> by John.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved following a motion by Mike K. and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fred.

Bill B. read the treasurer's report. Activity included expenses of the Christmas breakfast at Perkins and postage to mail calendars. A deposit was made for calendar sales.

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Forestry Board | \$8,287.45                                       |
| MUCFC          | \$0  |
| NRCC           | \$3,217.26                                       |
| Scholarship    | \$2,849.08                                       |
| CD             | \$10,000.00 (12 month @ 4.4%, matures Sept 2025) |

#### Volunteer Hours:

The Board's hours since the last meeting were as follows:

|                   |             |             |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ken – 6           | Mike K – 6  | Mike F. – 3 |
| Siera – 3         | Fred – 3    | Derek – 3   |
| Larry – no report | Will – 6    | John – 3    |
| Bill B. – 5       | Bill A. – 3 | Linda – 3   |

**TOTAL 44 hrs**

#### OLD BUSINESS:

##### **Chuck Hoffeditz**

Former GCFB Chair Chuck Hoffeditz passed away recently. Ken attended his funeral service.

##### **Watershed Update**

Siera reported the public meetings for the trails planning went well. There was the most support for using public properties. She expects to have recommendations from the

consultant in February or March. Fred asked if there was a public report available. That is still in the works.

Siera shared that Molly is working on focal points for the DCL watershed plan. Water quality and infrastructure are rising to the top. She will have additional regular and workgroup meetings. The next meeting is Friday 1/17 at the Garrett College PAC from 10-12.

Siera is working with the Deep Creek Lake Lions Club on an ADA accessible playground at the Lions Park in McHenry. Finding funding has been a challenge.

Ken asked if Siera is representing Garrett County at the PACE reception. She is.

### **Kitzmilller Light Up the Park**

There were approximately 65 trees decorated this year. The Kitzmilller Lions Club is taking donations of any unwanted artificial trees for future years. Our tree needs to be un-decorated by 1/31. Anyone interested in helping should meet at the Botanical Garden 1/16 at 1pm.

Bill A. suggested having an ornament workshop to involve students next year. This could possibly be done in cooperation with the Garden Club or Hickory. Tree cookie ornaments that could be painted and sealed were suggested.

### **Hickory Open House**

Will attended and presented the Hickory staff with Big Tree Calendars. There were over 100 people in attendance.

### **Tree Classroom**

Jason Shank at Hickory requested a letter of support for a treehouse classroom. He has been looking at several grants for funding the design phase of the project. Melissa shared a draft letter and asked for any changes by Friday. Siera and Molly have also been on the lookout for grant opportunities.

### **Poster Contest**

Information has been distributed to the schools. Deadline to turn in posters locally is March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Fleece/outer-wear**

Will will try to have information available for the February meeting.

### **Mt. Laurel Garden Club Tours**

Linda expanded on the suggestion from last month about including a forestry component or theme for the annual Garden Club tour. The 2025 tour is already set, so this would be for 2026. The date will be June 20, 2026 from 10-3 and is a come and go type tour where participants visit the listed sites on their own. Suggestions included a Tree Farm property, tree planting site and Hickory arboretum.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Wildfires in CA**

Will suggested Board members watch a YouTube video entitled "Design for Disaster". It highlights the conditions that are still contributing to high fire risk in California today, despite it being filmed in 1962.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj0rfeF5GbA>

Politics are running rampant with the issues surrounding these current fires and problems have arisen from years of ignoring standards and guidelines. Melissa shared current numbers:

Palisades Fire – 23,713 acres & 1,105 structures lost

Eaton Fire – 14,117 acres & 1,422 structures lost

A discussion followed on fuel management, home & development design, disaster management, and parallels that can be drawn between this situation and the wildland urban interface surrounding Deep Creek Lake. The Watch Duty phone app that can be downloaded to keep updated on current status of large fire incidents nationwide.

### **Statewide Meeting**

The spring statewide Forestry Board meeting will be held at Greenbrier State Park on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. More details will be coming, but Melissa offered a ride to anyone who would like to attend. Depending on interest, a van can be arranged. Please let her know by the February meeting if you are interested in a ride.

### **Library Window**

We have the display secured for April and Will suggested focusing on the centennial of the Big Tree Program. Siera suggested a large map showing public trees. Other ideas included showing how the measurements are taken, using a 100 year old tree cookie to show local historical forestry events and a display of measuring tools. Siera will work on a mock up of some ideas.

### **Big Tree**

We have one tree that needs re-measured. Mike K. may have a couple new trees. We will try to get those taken care of when the weather breaks.

### **Mt. Loggers**

Next meeting will be 1/14 at 6pm at Pine Lodge.

### **Legislative Update**

Melissa shared the first legislative update. There was concern and discussion over the possible banning of gas leaf blowers. At this point, it does not have a bill number. If it does, several Board members expressed interest in taking action due to the impracticality of using battery operated equipment on wildfires.

### **Lingering Hemlock**

A webinar will be held on 1/15 on Lingering Hemlock. Melissa sent out the information prior to the meeting via email. Free registration is required.

### **MD FS Staffing**

Melissa reported interviews were held for the vacant contractual forester position in Allegany County. She is waiting for an offer to be made by HR before any additional information can be shared.

Interviews for the vacant forest technician position in Garrett County will be held next week.

### **Ethics Reporting**

Annual ethics reporting should be completed by April. Board members should have received an email with a link to complete online. If you have trouble with the online reporting or would prefer to complete over the phone, Young Smith is still the contact at 410-260-6174.

### **Public Fire Info (continued)**

Ken suggested including a section of the window display on fire. Melissa said we can share information on the Facebook page, website and in the newsletter as well.

John expressed a general concern with the lack of cell coverage and internet access in many areas of the county in the event of fires or other disasters, especially at state facilities (New Germany/Savage River SF, Mt. Nebo, Potomac Garrett SF and likely others have poor cell reception). Discussion followed on some improvement in recent years depending on location and provider.

### **Owls of Garrett County**

Kevin Dodge, director of Garrett College's Natural Resource & Wildlife Technology Program will present "The Owls of Garrett County - A Who's Who" on Thursday, January 16 at 11:00 am in the Garrett College Auditorium (Room 715 in the Business Administration Bldg; directly accessible from Parking Lot D off of Mosser Road). This program is free and sponsored by the Mt. Laurel Garden Club.

### **Biochar**

Bill A. shared information on Metzler Forest Products based in Reedsville PA. They produce biochar soil amendments.

### **MUCFC**

Linda may have 3 MUCFC applications before the February deadline.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be February 10<sup>th</sup> at 9am at Mt. Nebo.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Upcoming Dates**

1/14/25 – Mt. Loggers @ Pine Lodge 6pm

1/15/25 – Lingerin Hemlock Webinar

1/16/25 – Kevin Dodge on Owls of Garrett County @ Garrett College Auditorium 11am

1/17/25 – DCL Watershed Steering Committee @ Garrett College PAC 10am-12pm

2/10/25 – Next regular Forestry Board meeting

2/15/25 – MUCFC application deadline

3/3/25 – Poster contest deadline

3/6/25 – Statewide Forestry Board meeting at Greenbrier State Park