



# Sustainable Forestry Council

580 Taylor Avenue – E-1 • Annapolis, Maryland 21401 • 410-260-8531

## Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council

### Agenda, In-person Retreat

Wed., Sep. 1 to Friday, Sep. 3, 2021

**Woodmont Lodge, Woodmont Natural Resources Management Area  
11761 Woodmont Rd, Hancock, MD 21750**

Gary Allen  
Maryland Forestry  
Foundation  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kim Finch, co-chair  
MNCPPC,  
Prince George's Co.  
Planning Dept.  
Upper Marlboro, MD  
20772

Alberto Goetzl  
Dream Catcher Farm,  
LLC  
Adamstown, MD 21710

Bryan Seipp, Interim  
Chair  
Ecotone  
Forest Hill, MD 21050

Elizabeth Hill  
Maryland Forests  
Association  
Linkwood, MD 21835

Donnelle Keech  
The Nature Conservancy  
Cumberland, MD 21502

Bill Rees  
Catonsville Tree Canopy  
Committee  
Catonsville, MD 21228

#### SFC Members

Gary Allen  
Bill Rees  
Al Goetzl, retiring  
Kim Finch  
Beth Hill  
Bryan Seipp  
Donnelle Keech  
Steve Resh

#### DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang  
Kenneth Jolly  
Dan Rider  
Iris Allen

#### Guests

David Lillard, Catoctin Land  
Trust  
Jeff Larkin, IUP and Am. Bird  
Conservancy  
Rachel Soobitsky, Chesapeake  
Conservancy

#### Action Items:

##### **Consensus goals for SFC**

##### *Short-term priority:*

Advance policy for forest markets sourced from sustainable forestry and supply chain practices

##### *Medium-term priority:*

Advance MFS and Volunteer Network Strategic Planning and Communications

##### *Long-term priority:*

Advance policy for No Net Loss of forest in MD, especially on private lands and with ecosystem markets

#### Presentations:

(List and post on website)

#### Minutes

Bryan Seipp opened the retreat on September 1 at 1:10 pm with a welcome to the historic Woodmont Lodge and the panel covering trends in forest stewardship for climate, habitat, and water quality. David Lillard with the Catoctin Land Trust presented on Land Conservation Goals and Partnerships in Maryland, illustrating the ways in which land trusts work together and have interests in long-term and large scale forest restoration and management efforts. Dr. Jeff Larkin of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and American Bird Conservancy presented on the latest science for wildlife habitat management around the need for a shifting mosaic of diverse forest habitats, from young to old. He communicated the severely declining trends in bird species, many of which are dependent on younger forests at some stage in their life cycle, and the landscape approach to generate intermixed old and young forest habitat to counter the trends, and the positive response seen where the approach was applied over a decade or more. The SFC discussed the interaction of forest management, wildlife habitat, markets, landowner preferences, and other factors. Anne provided a brief overview of a new US Forest Service-funded Landscape-Scale Restoration grant, Delmarva Woodland Stewards for Wildlife, Wildfire, Water, and Wood, which is taking a landscape-scale approach to improving landowner education materials for forest management for wildlife.

Dan presented an overview of the MD Forestry Economic Adjustment Strategy just being completed. He covered new demand related to corporate sustainability goals (Environment, Social, and Governance goals, or ESG) for local renewable products, supply chain management opportunities, and biomass policies. The SFC discussed actions for forest management to improve forest health and other priorities including renewable fuels, economic drivers in rural and urban areas, climate, habitat, water, and communities. Bryan adjourned the session at 5pm.

Bryan opened the session on Sept. 2 at 8:45am with a presentation by Iris Allen on Tree Canopy and Forest Assessments, giving an overview of data sources available for tracking and trends. Rachel Soobitsky from the Chesapeake Conservancy presented an update on draft data and expected production timeline for the 2017/2018 Tree Canopy Draft data and forest loss trends being prepared for the Chesapeake Bay Program and used in the Maryland Forestry Technical Study. Iris presented results of two projects, a Regional Tree Canopy Assessment by Zoning Category conducted using the 2013 Chesapeake Conservancy tree canopy cover product for Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to consider in potential regional tree canopy goals, and the statewide Tree Planting Opportunity assessment, including buffer planting opportunity. Substantial discussion was had around the different timelines for public availability of the 2017/2018 data and potential release of a MD Forestry Technical Study. The SFC reviewed drafts of FCA data, mitigation banking prices, tree planting programs and costs and discussed complexities of tracking.

The Council agreed that the report is much needed and that the drafted material will be helpful to the product. Based on their experience with the tree canopy/forest cover issues, the SFC had some concerns about timing, and some of the previously seen reactions to similar material. Gary Allen moved to send a recommendation to the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agroecology regarding the Forestry Technical Study and Bill Rees seconded it; the motion passed: *Members emphasized the need to have very clear transparency with the report, and the importance of having the source of data available at the same time as the report is released. The scope and complexity of the tasks in the report were seen as substantial, and sufficient time to develop quality products was suggested. They strongly advised that the report not be released ahead of the publicly available land cover/land use data, currently anticipated in February 2022. They also commented on the importance of having the context clearly explained for regional and statewide trends, and parsing out how forest management differs from forest clearing for land use change. The SFC advises that the DNR Forest Service be included in the review process, if this is not already anticipated.*

Anne presented an overview of the 5 Million Trees goal from House Bill 991 from the 2021 Legislative Session, identifying DNR roles and charges, including 13 new positions to implement the bill, hired to reflect the diversity of the state as much as possible, and with most funding targeted to and involving community members from urban, underserved communities. A variety of resources and partnerships were discussed. One of the categories of underserved communities was Department of Housing and Community Development housing projects, each of which have a Community Needs Assessment. Mapping tools for other climate-related impacts that could be influenced by trees were discussed, from coastal and stormwater flooding maps to the American Forests' tree equity mapping, and urban heat island mapping. It was noted that upcoming infrastructure investments could leverage 5 Million Tree funding, such as the Federal Emergency Management Administration Building Resilient Infrastructure for Communities (BRIC) program, and a potential infrastructure bill. Interaction with stormwater permitting was discussed. Anne shared the new investment planning tool developed by MD Department of the Environment with a contractor, the Forestry Financing and Investment Tool for MS4 permit planning

[https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/TMDL/DataCenter/Documents/MDFFIT/MD\\_FFIT\\_User\\_Guide\\_ver1.0\\_15Jun2021.pdf](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/TMDL/DataCenter/Documents/MDFFIT/MD_FFIT_User_Guide_ver1.0_15Jun2021.pdf)

The tool allows local planners to estimate crediting of nutrient and sediment credits based on average or user-input costs for tree planting and protection, and allows quick calculation of total projects costs with a mix of grant and loan financing. The SFC identified a variety of approaches to expanding outreach to help implement a goal of 5 million additional trees by 2031.

#### Discussion Summary for Outreach Opportunities for Expanded Tree Planting

Engage:

- Faith-based Communities, e.g., Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
- Local organizations:
  - Casey Trees beyond DC boundary
  - Tree Baltimore
  - Baltimore Tree Trust
  - Parks and People
  - Blue Water Baltimore (with own nursery)
- Connector and grassroots groups
  - Neighborspace- Baltimore County Barbara Hopkins
  - Baltimore Metropolitan Council
  - Local Land Trusts- create stewardship funds for tree planting/forest management/TSI, Ecotone engaging for mitigation banking options

- Civic Works to engage with existing workforce development, and add forestry job options to larger program that builds the support network
- Living Classrooms
- Trout Unlimited
- Land Managers and contractors
  - State Forests
  - Municipalities with Urban Foresters
  - Mid-Atlantic Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (MAC-ISA)
- Housing Managers
  - Habitat for Humanity- provide landscaping options and volunteer connections for Habitat houses, then reach out to neighboring lots near Habitat houses
  - Homeowner Associations
  - Public housing, looking at DHCD Needs Assessment lists, including energy efficiency and tree planting opportunities where AC is shaded Columbia Association
  - Cumberland neighborhood blight program connections
  - Vacant lot programs
- School projects
  - Colleges and universities- Tree City Green Campus USA, and their student groups, environment, climate action committees
  - Green schools (~650 of the ~1875 in MD)
- Health and Wellness
  - Health organizations, especially Health Equity groups
  - Teach from Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative
  - Mental Health Care providers, adding interpretative trail accessible
  - Talmar Horticultural Therapy for PTSD, Vets, autistic
  - Keiser Building and potential trail and nature play space
- Commercial/corporate sustainability
  - Port Covington/Kevin Plank, TradePoint Atlantic
  - Energy companies help share promotional information on 5 MM Trees in newsletter in bills
- Integrating with agriculture
  - On ag lands, with trends of loss of dairy and gain of chickens (less land intensive)
  - Horse pasture and Hunt organizations that coordinate across landscape, working with MDA and neighbor-to-neighbor contact (Bryana and Bordy Vinyard contact)
  - Horse territory, work with landowners to identify opportunities for shade, riparian, edges, clumps
- Microbreweries, building on TNC national promotion of forests-water-beer connection: Guinness, RAR, Burley Oak
- White Oak Initiative (partners like Bulleit and Sagamore Spirits)

A circuit rider approach was discussed to aid knowledge transfer to smaller communities, and collective impact of attention to smaller communities.

Discussion concluded at 5pm, and Bryan adjourned the session.

Kim Finch opened the Sep. 3<sup>rd</sup> session on SFC Priorities, Partnerships, and Capacity-building at 8:50 am. SFC roles and potential goals were discussed, looking at a one to five-year timeframe.

#### SFC Role Ideas

- Review/approve wood supply risk assessment
- Review/approve Branding standards to meet demand for corporate sustainability in the Environment, Social, and Governance elements (ESG)/impact investing
- Review Chesapeake Conservancy Tree and Forest Trends and Summary Products
- Define Sustainable Forestry in MD
- Develop a Forest Stewardship Act
- Coordinate with Power Plant and Research Program on carbon

- Develop Ecosystem Services and voluntary carbon market, considering valuation and market levers
- Develop a Corporate Sustainability Index, styled after the Dow Jones or Morningstar rating systems
- (consider TNC board with impact investor and a MD landowner)
- Collaborate with Wildlife and Heritage Service and Park Service
- Support Access to Nature

The SFC brainstormed potential ways to expand partnerships and build capacity to meet sustainable forestry goals.

### Opportunities to Expand Partnerships

#### *How:*

- “Moving at the speed of trust”
- Link to landowner outreach, social media outreach
- Use existing networks and Forestry Boards as springboard
- Outreach for new members
- Strategic Planning for Forestry Boards and MD Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council
- Communications Plan
- Example: Fellowship Program and expanded recruitment for Natural Resources Career Camp
- Compensate Chairs of Forestry Boards
- Regional or Statewide circuit rider for strategic planning and communications- resource for expertise
- Develop resource list for speakers
- Fund travel and speakers for Forestry Boards
- Foster inclusive and welcoming environment for multiple perspectives
- Strategic and tactical planning, success and failure
- Recognize good forest landowners, such as the 1,000 ish Tree Farmers (vs. 200,000 landowners)
- Look at outreach/marketing approaches being used by American Forest Foundation and TELE/Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively

#### *Who:*

- MD Forests Association, working with the Economic Adjustment Strategy
- Society of American Foresters, including MD/DE Chapter
- Urban Foresters at local level
- Sustainable MD Program
- Mid-Atlantic Professional Arborists Association, MD Arborist Association
- Audubon Mid-Atlantic (combining MD and PA, expanding from MD coastal focus)
- American Bird Conservancy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- League of Conservation Voters
- Sierra Club, especially around woody biomass as a viable renewable energy alternative under certain circumstances
- Local District Forestry Boards

One example presented was the Garrett Forestry Board Photo Contest, where the local Forestry Board partnered with the Arts Board to expand reach and interest in the photo contest. The effort capitalized on moment of engaged interest by the public and reached very different portions of the population through the partnership.

A perspective was shared that if you’re not reaching the audience with the message, then you need to change the message and the avenue. The example of American Forest Foundation was raised, with the foot-in-the-door approach to expanding reach of messaging, buying subscription lists to certain magazines that may have a receptive audience. It was suggested that Christine Cadigan present on AFF outreach approaches at a future SFC meeting.

Goals were brainstormed, and then SFC members were given 3 red dots for shorter term priority and 3 green dots for longer term priority (not including Bryan Seipp, Tony DiPaolo, and Al Goetzl who could not be in attendance that day). Dot tallies are recorded by the potential goals.

### Goals for SFC 2021-2025

Potential Goals (red dot for shorter term priority and green dot for longer term priority)

1. Define Sustainable Forestry over the supply chain (4 red dots)
  - a. Review MD Wood Sustainable Sourcing Risk Assessment
  - b. Review MD Wood Branding and Sustainable Purchasing standards for ESG policies
  - c. Advise on communicating tree and forest trends
2. Develop a Forest Stewardship Act (1 red dot, 3 green dots)
  - a. Provide resources for management and environmental stewardship
  - b. Inform ESG standards
3. Convene Ecosystem Services Discussions to develop Markets (4 green dots)
  - a. Develop MD options
  - b. Meetings, survey of other states' approaches, policy options
4. Advance policy for sustainable forest markets (4 red dots, 3 green)
  - a. Broaden partnerships
  - b. Biomass and other markets to pursue forest health
  - c. Ecosystem services (water, carbon, other)
  - d. Assemble timber or forest caucus
  - e. Invite DNR Legislative Liaison to meetings
5. Advance policy for No Net Loss of forests, esp. on private lands (2 red dots)
  - a. Engage with local Climate Action Plans
  - b. Education
  - c. Developing ecosystem services markets in MD
6. Advance MFS/Volunteer network capacity through strategic planning and improved communications (2 red dots, 3 green dots)
  - a. MFS, Forestry Boards, MD Urban and Community Forestry Council

The potential goals were discussed and consensus reach on priorities for short (to be completed within a year), medium (next couple of years), and long-term attention (within five years).

*Short-term priority:*

Advance policy for forest markets sourced from sustainable forestry and supply chain practices

*Medium-term priority:*

Advance MFS and Volunteer Network Strategic Planning and Communications

*Long-term priority:*

Advance policy for No Net Loss of forest in MD, especially on private lands and with ecosystem markets

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang