



Sustainable Forestry Council

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

April 28-29, 2011

Minutes

Attendees:

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

DNR:

Don VanHassent
Steve Koehn
Gene Piotrowski
Rob Feldt

Don V. – review of agenda

Gary – thanks to DNR for use of facility. Need to reach out to other potential stakeholders – need to involve others now while in process, rather than after we finish or nearly finish our work. Perfect is the enemy of the good. Product needs to be able to pass legislative muster.

Gene – introduce himself, background, etc. This is the beginning of a dialogue.

What do we expect to have by 2PM Friday

Importance of why we are pursuing this in first place

Definitions:

Forest

No net loss

Quality, quantity, function of forests

How will we get there, what will state do?

Baseline – agreement on where bottom line is – measurement and tracking

Economic drivers

Taxes

Incentives

Loss of infrastructure

Linkage to broad environmental issues

Water quality – Chesapeake Bay, WIP/TMDL issue,

Growth management

Economic (jobs)

Health

air quality

water quality

climate change

Discussion of report template.

(Need to determine the causes of forest loss. We have an idea of loss from development via FCA reporting but what are the other causes? FCA is discretionary forest loss. The answer will have a major impact on what we recommend in the final report.)

Don O. – Balt Co what they have done to minimize forest loss – how could this be statewide? Work in benefits of forests in WIP implementation process – have a credit for forest retained/added.

Desired future condition(s)

Enough forest to retain a viable forest products industry

Widespread respect for sustainable forest management

All forest land under certification

Sufficient forest area to improve or maintain all the ecological services we depend on

Significant investment in forest protection/restoration to improve water quality

Growth is not at the expense of Green Infrastructure

Landowners/public are major players/supporters – they are inextricably tied to benefits of forests

Forest recovery – planting of turf areas

AI – need to reference working lands (including agricultural lands) in the final report. Get copy of report mentioned by Don O. Projections had MD losing 650,000 acres (ag and forest) unless using Smart Growth and then only lose 150,000 acres.

Definition of forest, forest cover, no net loss

Forest will have to be very broad in order to attain NNL

Recommendations may be stronger if we reference existing definition in statute rather than developing a new definition for the purpose of NNL

How we define forest has to be measurable and trackable over time

Rob F. –

1. use a statewide 1m resolution (2007) to establish baseline, \$50,000 for state

2. in subsequent imagery, compare images to determine changes

Should DOP be the agency to provide the correct/validated data or should we continue the current version of Rob cleaning it up as he has time? We give mapping rules to DOP for them to do the analysis?

Ken R. – report should have the data at every time period for reassessment

No Net Loss

Keep acreage stable

NNL is a policy recommendation – this will not happen all at once. Implement something, refine, implement something else.

Implementing strategies

Forest base is maintained

Look at functional characteristics

Urban – bring up to 40%

Large patches – prevent forest conversion to non-forest, encourage sustainable forestry (high priority – mitigate at higher ratios?)

In-between lands – 1:1 mitigation? Will still have forest loss.

Use 2007 as base year to judge success of strategies and programs.

Identify protection priority areas.

Del. Koch (?) – bill in 2011 session regarding consideration of forest in easement discussions – try to find the number and get the text.

Need to be courageous in offering recommendations.

Rob to run forest patch size distribution on 2001 (2006 maybe) data. Also run on Cecil and Baltimore Counties using 2007 data. PG will also ask UVM to do their county. Have this for June meeting.

Potential Recommendations – (bold is big ticket item)

1. Have MDP do mapping/analysis
2. Have planning requirements/performance standards
3. Revisit agricultural exemptions – BE COURAGEOUS
4. **FCA amendments – look at all exemptions, thresholds**
5. **Forest as a WIP BMP (credit rather than spend a bunch of money on other things)**
6. Look at all pertinent laws and regs to see if incentives/disincentives can be stronger – stormwater, taxes, clean air act
7. **Provide local government guidance on developing incentives and disincentives to protect forest land base**
8. Develop program for group certification of private forest land
9. Pilot program for developing cooperative plans
10. **Revision of sensitive area element of comp plan, do forest function assessment, determine vulnerability, change zoning. Make forest protection similar to WRE (Water Resources Element) in comp plan process. Get link to sensitive area protection element.**
11. Redirect local stormwater money to forest protection, management
12. Package of what we could use to improve forest management on the ground (for x dollars, we could do x plans, x plantings, x stuff for forest industry)
13. Have a three tiered approach – urban, developing, “rural” (forest blocks of x size or larger)
14. **Endorse 40% UTC in urban areas**
15. **Conversion of open/turf lands on large lots**

Ask Kristin about DAT and ag transfer tax payments to WIF.

Urban and developing zone options – need to develop. Much of the above recommendations are most applicable to the larger forest block areas.

Report Template

Utilize basic format of Wetland Plan
10 page maximum
Section 1 – Overview
Don O. – draft strawman of the three tier approach
Mapping analysis – Rob F.
Next meeting – June 21, deadline June 7

Potential stakeholders

League of Conservation Voters (July and August – after agencies meeting)
TNC
CBF
Thousand Friends
MACO
MML
AFI
Development community

State agencies – may need to have a meeting with this group prior to meeting with above stakeholders. (July)

DNR
MDE
MDP
MDA
Governor's office
Legislative committees

Draft complete by Oct 1.

Final due by Dec 1.

Get copy or link to DE law re: property tax on forest land under a plan.

Minutes of 3/15/11 meeting – Connie moves, Don O second, approved.

Gary provided background on funding (or lack thereof) of WIF (forestry in general) from Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. No forestry funding has been received.

The next meeting will be held June 27, 2011. Location to be determined.

Adjourn – noon.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald VanHassent