



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

September 15, 2015

Tawes State Office Building, C1B, Annapolis, MD
10am-2pm

Minutes

Eric Sprague
Alliance for the
Chesapeake Bay
Annapolis, MD 21403

Donald Outen
Natural Resource
Manager
Baltimore County DEPS
Towson, Maryland 21204

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kirk Rodgers
Private landowner
Woolford, MD 21677

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

Kenneth Roberts
Verso Corporation
Westport, MD 21562

Alberto Goetzl, chair
Dream Catcher Farm,
LLC
Adamstown, MD 21710

Bryan Seipp
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Attendees:

Al Goetzl
Don Outen
Gary Allen
Bryan Seipp
Kirk Rodgers
Eric Sprague
Bryan Seipp (phone)
Ken Roberts (phone)

DNR and Guests:

Anne Hairston-Strang, MFS
Shenika Dyson, MFS Fiscal Officer
Dan Rider, Stewardship/Utilization Mgr.
Christine Cadigan, Am. Forest Fdn.

Action items:

- Work with Don VanHassent to followup with tax office on implementing definition of 100% wooded parcel.
- Pursue reliable tree planting funding through Chesapeake Bay funding.
- Anne prepare background summary for MFS budget issues for SFC

Minutes

Al Goetzl opened the meeting at 10:05, and has agreed to serve as chair until a replacement can be found. Introductions were made, including a proposed member, Christine Cadigan with American Forest Foundation. Her work focuses on

landowners and includes use of social media to increase awareness and use of forest management, moving towards measurable impact in targeted places for conservation outcomes (10-10,000 acre ownerships). Gary suggested adding biomass to the meeting agenda.

Shenika Dyson reviewed the effects of SB862 on MFS budgets related to Special Funds. That legislation mandated that revenues that MD Park Service contributed to the shared Forest Park Reserve Fund had to be distributed back to MPS only, 60% in FY16, 80% in FY17, and 100% in FY18. Since Program Open Space funds were authorized to support MPS park management more than 7 years ago, excess Special Funds from the Forest Park Reserve Fund were allocated to MFS, and most General Funds cut. Loss of access to the Special Fund revenues could affect more than a third of the MFS budget, an unsustainable funding position. Al recommended that SFC should testify on behalf of MFS to budget committee in the 2016 Legislature, anticipated in February and March 2016. Gary emphasized the need for base general funding, which is currently less than \$1 million statewide, and recommended engaging other stakeholders like District Forestry Boards and Tree Farmers. Eric recommended that a brief be prepared on the situation summarizing issues, background, assessment of budget, historical contacts, and information on workload trends: growing number of landowners, declining number of positions and field staff, need to retain forest for public benefits. Shenika noted that FY17 budget targets are not yet distributed, although normally the budget is being submitted at this time. Eric and

Gary discussed the possible role for the SFC to communicate the messages of the budget threats and importance of funding to reach forest goals and benefits important to people. NASF and Jay Farrell may be able to offer insight on how other states are funding forestry agencies. Metrics such as per capita forest management investment could be useful (e.g., less than \$2/citizen for 40% of land sustainably managed).

Anne presented a table of the forest and tree canopy statewide that is being added to the Forest Action Plan. SFC members suggested using a metric with 100-acre patches, with a goal of retaining as much of those as much as possible. Comments for comp plan review could include both. The issue was raised of changes in methodology and higher forest cover being found due to higher resolution data analysis. Don recommended updates for Water Resources Elements in comp plans. Gary suggested emphasizing resiliency that green infrastructure can impart.

Anne shared MFS updates including staffing changes, issues with maintaining a functioning fleet at the current level of replacement, and collaboration with University of Maryland University College for summary and analysis of forestry cost-share programs. Dan Rider shared the recommendations of the Rural Economies Workgroup of the Sustainable Growth Commission. The Commission will send a letter to relevant agencies to seek support, primarily for inclusion of harvest permitting in forest management plans, similar to farms and soil conservation plans.

The SFC discussed options to pursue to improve Woodland Incentive Fund income, even if funding formulas cannot be changed. One change would be continuing to address confusion over the definition of woodland and 100% wooded property, since some of the most forested counties in the state were not contributing to the fund, which should receive transfer tax from sale of woodland. The State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) issued guidance to clarify the correct classification to staff; a follow-up meeting with SDAT was recommended. Don VanHassent was following up with Asst. Secretary and Secretary on administrative changes. Another option is encouraging greater use of other cost-share programs, particularly EQIP, as an alternate funding source for planting, plans, and other practices that are eligible. Other options for conserving WIF funds were to use the ranking option to prioritize applications, and capping annual use. Don O. suggested contacting local jurisdictions. For EQIP cost-share for plans requires TSP preparers. Barriers for use of EQIP include annual batching and paperwork demands, and, for plans, the use of a certified Technical Service Provider. Gaining TSP status has been problematic due to glitchy technology and cumulative time investment needed. Suggestions including looking at other states' programs for precedents for continuous sign-up, increasing demand, tailoring advertising (grow oak not weeds for ag area), and investing in marketing. Other options included Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund (dedicated funding source for tree planting), and programs like Healthy Forest/Healthy Waters.

Gary brought up development of biomass energy tax credit legislation, and engaging industry in being supportive. Gary moved that the minutes be approved, and AI seconded; all were in favor. Suggested topic for a next meeting were:

- Support for MFS budget sustainability (letter and white paper)
- Christine Cadigan to provide background on forest landowner social outreach
- Kenneth Jolly for Tree Farm update (check % enrollment)

AI Goetzl adjourned the meeting at 2:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Hairston-Strang