



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016, 11am-12:30pm

Conference Call

1-888-450-5996 Code: 393479#

Eric Sprague
American Forests,
Washington, DC 20005

Donald Outen
Baltimore County DEPS
Towson, Maryland 21204

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Christine Cadigan
American Forest
Foundation
Washington, DC 20036

Attendance:

Al Goetzl
Kim Finch
Gary Allen
Bryan Seipp
Eric Sprague
Don Outen
Christine Cadigan

Staff and Guests:

Kenneth Jolly
Rob Feldt
Anne Hairston-Strang
Donald VanHassent

Action Items:

Send Save the Date for next meeting Friday, Jan. 27- Anne
Send suggestions for new SFC members to Anne- All

Minutes:

Al Goetzl convened the meeting at 11:02am and welcomed Christine Cadigan as a newly confirmed member. Al and Gary Allen spoke about the recent loss of Kirk Rodgers, and suggested that efforts be planned to honor his role as a forestry statesman, a founding member of the Sustainable Forestry Council, leading landowner in the state, and descendant of Fred Besley, Maryland's first State Forester. Suggestions included a plaque on the Eastern Shore, naming a feature such as a trail or soft launch site on lands donated by the Rodgers family, and planting memorial trees. Kenneth Jolly explained that naming often requires approval by the Board of Public Works, such as when the donated land was named the Besley Demonstration Forest, so would require more lead time and organization. Eric Sprague volunteered to help coordinate efforts to honor Kirk. Al also recognized the extensive contributions, vision, and institutional memory of Don Outen, who announced his upcoming retirement from Baltimore County on Jan. 20, and was choosing to resign his seat on SFC. A retreat was discussed to plan future SFC work and to aid transition from earlier to new members, potentially as the second meeting of the year.

Al solicited names for potential new members to fill the vacancies, and requested that suggestions be sent to Anne. Gary offered to submit a suggestion to represent urban and community forestry, potentially from a municipality. Al brought up the need for a co- or vice-chair, and Kim Finch agreed to serve. Gary moved that Kim be approved as vice-chair for the Sustainable Forestry Council. Eric Sprague seconded, and the motion was approved by voice vote with no opposed.

Al brought up the need to address approval of minutes. Gary moved that the minutes from the June 7 and September 27 meetings be approved, made a part of the official record of the council, and posted on the website. Kim seconded the motion, and it passed on a voice vote with no opposed.

Gary provided an update on the Woodland Incentive Fund Task Force authorized by the Maryland House Committee on Environment and Transportation. The task force met in November and early

December and a report is due at the end of December 2016 with recommendations on improving the funding base and coordinating forest protection with statewide land preservation programs. Discussion of differing methods of administering the current agricultural land transfer tax for entirely wooded parcels concluded that it could be helpful to draft clearer guidance for SDAT to consider when applying the wooded provision, building on commonly used approaches. Suggestions also included having more information on rates and trends of forest protection through land conservation programs. Al noted that agriculture representatives seemed to be very supportive of addressing circumstances that were unfairly disadvantaging WIF and causing it to be unsustainable as a source of cost-share support for private forest management. Kim asked about next steps and Gary replied that the report will be drafted, reviewed, and released by the end of December, and suggested that the House Committee could hold a public meeting to make recommendations for action relatively early in the legislative session. Al asked what SFC could do as a result of the task force report, and Gary suggested that the Council could look more broadly at the forest preservation issue, beyond the current six programs, and identify additional protection methods.

Kenneth Jolly, Associate Director with MD Forest Service, presented an update on Maryland's Tree Farm program, last presented to the SFC in late 2014. He reviewed the history of Maryland's participation in the 75-year-old national Tree Farm program, with Maryland joining in 1948, the 21st state. By 2010, the addition of sustainable forest management certification to the Tree Farm program created changes in requirements, such as addressing Forests of Regional Importance and special sites. Sustainable forestry audits in 2010 and 2014 found that Maryland needed to improve contact frequency with landowners, and update older forest management plans with addendums to address new requirements. For the past several years, Tree Farm inspectors, many in MD Forest Service, reviewed ownerships to confirm that properties met the eight certification benchmarks and decertify ones that were no longer interested in participating or could not meet standards, often due to sale or transfer of the property. Maryland had 1,105 Tree Farms in 2010; following the extensive reviews and updates, the state now has 839 Tree Farms: 689 farms covering 83,984 acres that fully meet standards, and another 150 properties on 35,909 acres in Pioneer status that need some additional work to meet standards, often consisting of updates to the forest management plan. Current Tree Farm goals are to complete the next audit in 2017, work with the Pioneer farms to fully meet standards, and to expand the program following the winnowing out of properties that are no longer active. This year, 21 new Tree Farms were added. Gary asked about incentives to add Tree Farms, and Kenneth explained the various programs that support enrollment in Tree Farm.

Don VanHassent gave a DNR update, including Bill Anderson starting as Assistant Secretary for Aquatic Resources. For the upcoming 2017 Legislative Session, no bills related to forestry have been pre-filed, but some may be filed in response to recent issues regarding Forest Conservation Act, continuing education for Licensed Tree Experts, and alternative payment-in-lieu-of-taxes for state-owned land. The Forest Service budget is mostly flat, and General Funds have been increased to offset the loss of access to some Special Funds following SB862. Staffing is at 86 permanent positions, with 4 recent contractual conversions and loss of one position.

Members discussed next meeting dates, and proposed a face-to-face meeting with call-in option on Friday, Jan. 27, 2017 and a retreat planned for April to develop new SFC priorities. Al adjourned the meeting at 12:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Hairston-Strang
Maryland Forest Service

12/16/16