



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

April 20, 2021

Google Meet 1pm – 3:30pm

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
Kim Finch
Beth Hill
Bryan Seipp
Donnelle Keech

DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang
Kenneth Jolly
Marian Honecny
Iris Allen

Guests

Jason Dubow, MDP
Elizabeth Vranas, American
Forest Foundation
Neil Cox, CSU
Steve Resh
Tony DiPaolo

Action Items:

- Get suggestions for biomass summer study to Kenneth
- Anne will confirm environmental justice speaker for next meeting
- Bryan will reach out to Jana Davis at the Chesapeake Bay Trust to talk about HB 991 at the next meeting

Minutes

Bryan Seipp, interim chair of the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. Gary Allen moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting and Bill Rees seconded it; the motion passed at 1:12 PM.

Kenneth Jolly provided an update on activities at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Steve Resh and Tony DiPaolo have applied to the Governor's Appointments webpage to be SFC members. Their applications have been forwarded from the DNR Secretary's office to the Governor's office for action. Progress is being made on several of the vacant positions at the DNR Forest Service, with interviews completed and offers made on two urban positions and a S MD ranger. The Kent/Queen Anne Forester position has been reposted for a second round of applications, the Howard/Montgomery ranger is posted, and the Headquarters GIS position and the Western Trail Manager position are expected to be posted soon, and additional vacancies are occurring.

Kenneth reported that the budget was stable, and provided some context on the Tree Solutions Now Act (HB 991). HB 991 will require an additional 1,000 acres of trees to be planted each year; last year the Maryland Forest Service planted 900 acres and this year they are planning to plant around 700 acres. Gary asked if hiring contractual position would be easier to hire than permanent positions. Kenneth responded that they were not.

Marian Honecny provided a summary on bills pertinent to the Maryland forestry that passed this session. HB 92 prohibits the purchases of invasive species with State funds. The bill originally also included non-natives, but that was taken out. Several bills about licensing passed, it is not clear currently how they will affect licenses provided by the Maryland Forest Service, like Licensed Tree Expert and Forest Product Operator. HB 80 creates an urban tree program at the Department of Transportation to replace trees removed during the construction of certain transportation projects. There were two biomass bills that did not pass- SB 65 and HB

682. SB 65 amended the definition of biomass to include several different kinds of wood, like mill residue, precommercial soft wood thinning, slash, brush, and yard waste. HB682 would authorize certain biomass systems primarily fueled with qualifying biomass other than animal manure to be eligible for renewable energy credits; and altering the definition of "thermal biomass system". It was referred to interim study over the summer. HB 441 creates a new number for business to see if they are in good standing for licenses. This could potentially impact Licensed Tree Expert and Forest Product Operator licenses, where numbers often are painted on trucks and other equipment. HB 592 requires a certain amount of State vehicles in the future to be zero-emissions. SB 414, Climate Solutions Now Act did not pass.

HB 991, or the Tree Solutions Now Act, was originally just about forest mitigation banking but absorbed the tree planting requirements from the failed Climate Solutions Now Act and reauthorized the Forest Technical Study by the Harry Hughes Center. The bill requires 5 million trees to be planted by June 2031. Any planting on private land can only count towards this goal if the planting is not intended for timber harvest and with a binding legal agreement for 15 years to maintain the area in forest cover. Of the 5 million trees, 10% of them are to be planted in underserved areas as defined in the bill. These areas are a focus for tree planting grants from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The bill also creates 13 contractual positions in the Maryland Forest Service and one position at the Maryland Department of the Environment to oversee the planting of the 5 million trees. Al Goetzl asked about the State Tree Nursery's capacity to increase production to meet the tree planting requirements of the bill. Anne mentioned that there are plans to meet with the Nursery in mid-May to identify investments needed to expand seedling capacity. There is enough land to expand, but other resources and prep are needed. Beth Hill suggested that the DNR Secretary or a legislative rep be invited to a future SFC meeting to consider SFC input. Kenneth agreed with Beth and suggested that the biomass summer study would be a great starting point for the SFC to get more involved with the legislative process.

The SFC then discussed progress on increasing woody biomass as an energy source in the State. Anne reminded the council of the Wood Innovation Grant application which Dan Rider submitted in January. If funded, the grant would create a wood energy specialist at the Maryland Clean Energy Center, working with a team of partners to advance projects and policies. Gary then brought up the biomass summer study and said it could be a good opportunity to engage with the folks who were the most opposed to the bill. A summary of the Dovetail white paper on biomass in Maryland has been added to the biomass online resources, and Gary is working with the Maryland Clean Energy Center on creating a fact sheet for the bill. Kenneth said that the summer study will likely take place towards the end of the summer, and called for the SFC to send suggestions soon. Gary suggested working with the sponsors of the bill to reach out to their colleagues with questions and concerns.

Anne provided an update on the Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS), noting that a summary document is currently in review at DNR. Jason Dubow then gave a summary of the model ordinance work he and Tom Bradshaw have been working on. They have been looking into model ordinances about harvesting, zoning categories where forest product activities are appropriate, resource conservation, forest health/diversity, and climate change adaptation.

Kenneth gave a quick update on a new member to replace Al Goetzl's intended vacancy, and said he was working with the DNR Assistant Secretary for suggestions and will pass along information when he gets it.

Elizabeth Vranas from the American Forest Foundation presented on the Family Forest Carbon Program. There is high climate change mitigation potential in reforestation and improved/ natural forest management in the United States. Smaller, family-owned forests are an untapped resource for this as they make up a large section of the forest land in Maryland, but the vast majority of carbon projects happen on forest land over 1,000 acres. The goal of the Family Forest Carbon Program is to help individual landowners sequester more carbon on their land and pay the landowner by selling the carbon credits to businesses. This program differs from other projects by focuses on smaller landowners; paying landowners for implementing

practices, not by how much carbon they sequester; spreading the cost of monitoring across many properties; and having shorter contracts (10-20 years). The two current practices they are paying for now are growing mature forests and enhancing future forests. The landowner can see if they are eligible by looking up their property on woodscamp.com. One of the keys to this program is technical assistance from forest professionals who write the forest management plans. American Forest Foundation is working with Maryland DNR Foresters and consulting foresters to train them about the program. The pilot program in Pennsylvania has been successful with many people expressing interests and currently over 50 contracts signed. They are also working to expand the program into other areas in the central Appalachians, including Western Maryland. They are also pursuing verification of carbon impacts under Verra's verified carbon standard, building the financial pilot, and recruiting needed market actors.

Elizabeth then took questions from the SFC about the program. Gary asked about similarities to the Silvia Terra program, to which Elizabeth responded that they used a different accounting system and the Family Forest Carbon program is more focused on longer term impacts. Gary also asked about what companies had already signed up, whether there was any public funding for the program, and what the size limitations are. Elizabeth responded that they have already had some companies sign up (e.g. Amazon), that the program has some public funding which does not go towards landowner payments, and the program is for forests between 30 and 2,400 acres. Tony asked about which foresters could work with the program and if folks who already have a management plan in place could sign up. Elizabeth responded that the program works with State and consulting foresters in the area and they are working to hire a staff member to help out. Recent management plans could be eligible for the program, they just might require a site visit to get updated inventory data. Donnelle Keech added that the next steps for Maryland are to figure out the Maryland Forest Service's role in the program and train foresters in the area about the program.

Topics for the July SFC meeting were discussed. An updated on the EAS and Jason's model ordinance work were suggested. Anne has reached out to Sarah Anderson to talk about environmental justice at the July meeting. Gary suggested having someone from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to speak about their expansion from HB 991; Bryan will reach out to Jana Davis about this. Donnelle suggested inviting people who oppose the use of woody biomass to have a conversation. It was proposed that this get worked into the biomass summer study, maybe as a site visit. The current plan for the September retreat at Woodmont is a half day on 9/1, full day on 9/2, and a half day on 9/3. Depending on pandemic restrictions, Anne can get a DNR van for group transportation. Topics and themes for the retreat include no net loss, forest markets, sustainable forest management as a low risk source for wood, and the EAS.

SFC members provided updates from their organizations. Gary discussed Maryland Forestry Foundation's plan to plant 90,000 trees over the next few years. Donnelle highlighted an [article in the Cumberland Times](#) about The Nature Conservancy Planting 4,000 trees at Finzel Swamp with the help of Adam Miller from the Maryland Forest Service. The trees planted there are from cones sourced throughout the central Appalachians because researchers found low genetic diversity in the Finzel Swamp population.

Donnelle motioned to adjourn the meeting, Beth seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang and Iris Allen