



July 20, 2021

Google Meet 1pm – 3:30pm

Gary Allen
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Foundation
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kim Finch, co-chair
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Alberto Goetzl
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Bryan Seipp, Interim
Chair
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Elizabeth Hill
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Donnelle Keech
The Nature Conservancy
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Bill Rees
Catonsville Tree Canopy
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Steve Resh
Allegany College of
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Cumberland, MD 21502

Tony DiPaolo
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SFC Members

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

DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
Marian Honecny
Iris Allen

Guests

Jason Dubow, MDP
Sarah Anderson, American
Forests
Jana Davis, Chesapeake Bay
Trust

Interim Chair of the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Bryan Seipp, called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Bryan extended a welcome to Steve Resh and Tony DiPaolo, the newest members of the SFC. Minutes from April's meeting were reviewed. Gary Allen moved to approve them, Beth Hill seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved as written at 1:11pm.

Anne Hairston-Strang provided an update on activities the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from Kenneth Jolly, starting with an update on personnel. Only one position was lost in FY2021 and there are three contractual conversions in the works for FY2022. Anne will start as acting State Forester July 28th, with an open advertisement for the position expected later. Several vacant positions have been filled by current employees, creating new vacancies. The Eastern Shore office has reorganized its multi-county projects to aid transition with new staff. The Forest Service currently has 5 vacant positions and 88 filled permanent positions.

Anne continued with other general DNR updates. The Tawes office in Annapolis is currently closed to the public, but you can make an appointment to get in. The field offices are open. DNR has approval to increase capacity the State Nursery to accommodate increased tree planting from HB991. The Economic Adjustment Strategy will hopefully get final DNR approval late July.

Maryland started sending out fire engines out West in Spring to aid with the extreme fire season; there is a severe drought in the western U.S. and there are reduced firefighting resources. The Tree Farm audit went well, a lot of WIP applications have been sent in, and the Healthy Forests Healthy Waters program is going well and staying very popular. The Forest Service is offering increased technical assistance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) at forest harvest sites. So far this change is going well, the main problem is loggers forgetting to call DNR before starting a harvest. In State Forest news, DNR received some comments on the proposed harvest at Pocomoke SF and recently hired a trail planner for Western Maryland. The 2020 annual report is still in review and the Natural Resources Career Camp is back this year. It was canceled last year due to COVID and has a rigorous safety protocol in place.

Sarah Anderson with American Forests then presented on Tree Equity from a national perspective on urban forest management. American Forest's strategy to get trees where they are needed the most includes analyzing current tree equity to identify goals and challenges, creating plans on where to plant the trees, propagating tree species that will thrive in their proposed area, maintaining the new and old tree cover, and reusing wood when possible.

Sarah then detailed the tree equity work American Forests has done. They support the Climate Stewardship Act, which was proposed in summer 2019 and funds green landscape scale restoration and urban wood reuse. American Forests also supports the Trees Act which incentivizes planting trees for utilities. They also developed a Tree Equity Score, which maps the need for tree maintenance and planting at the census block level (<https://treeequityscore.org/>). The goal of this tool is to help decision makers and managers find the best place to plant trees. American Forests has been modeling different financing mechanisms for forest management, including impact bonds from cities and carbon credits. They have developed the Urban Forestry Career Pathway to aid in the massive demand for tree care professionals. There is an arborists pre-apprenticeship program which provides work readiness training by teaching teamwork and tree care fundamentals. There is also a Tree Corps, which focuses on hiring people of color, who are vastly underrepresented in the field. American Forests has a partnership with Fender Guitars and the U.S. Forest Service called Roots of Rock Forest Health Restoration. They are planting emerald ash borer resistant ash trees in urban nurseries with a goal of utilize the wood to make things, like Fender Guitars.

Sarah took questions from the SFC. Bryan asked about getting trees in densely populated areas that will likely require identifying and creating of tree pits to plant trees, which can be expensive and labor intensive. Sarah responded that there are mechanisms to incentivize private financing to aid with this. American Forests is also working with policies to make funds available for pit work via large scale infrastructure work. Donnelle asked about the scale of the tree equity score, and Sarah said it is calculated for municipalities that have a population of at least 20,000. Gary then asked about a current bill that would increase the U.S. Forest Service's funding significantly and expand its urban and community forestry program. Some organizations are concerned about the capacity of the U.S. Forest Service to handle this work. Sarah responded that we need to revamp how people can get into the field to expand staffing basis, including rewriting starting credentials.

The SFC then discussed old business. Dan Rider gave an update on biomass in Maryland. The Maryland Forest Service received the Wood Innovation Grant from the U.S. Forest Service. Most of that money will go to the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC). MCEC is in the process of hiring a new position to help advance the concept and application of biomass projects. The DNR is working to expand information on woody biomass. Potential resources include Ann Bartuska (Resources for the Future), David Wear (Resources for the Future), Dan Rider, Lew McCreery (USFS), Dan Wilson (Wilson Engineering Services), and John Hartline (Tri-County Council For Southern Maryland). Gary emphasized the need to include the environmental community in the discussion, such as the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters, who were very opposed to the biomass bill. Beth mentioned the importance of experts talking about concerns over burning.

Beth then discussed the Maryland Forest Association's 2021 regional meetings. These meetings will also serve as outreach for the Economic Adjustment Strategy. The theme for the meetings is Maryland's Forests are great for the environment and the economy. There are four regional meetings, each has a different agenda. For a detailed schedule of each meeting and to register see: <https://www.mdforests.org/regionalmeetings2021>.

Other miscellaneous business was discussed. The Kirk Rogers memorial is in progress, it will hopefully get going by Spring. The Rural Maryland Council received 75-100 proposals this year, with decisions in August. Maryland DNR is involved in two grant proposals, one with Western Maryland RC&D to conduct a risk assessment of timber at the State Level to verify and document that Maryland timber is produced sustainably. The other is to fund The Greater Cumberland Committee to create a branding campaign for Maryland forest products with a focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) protocols driven by the finance industry. Jason Dubow provided a quick update on the model forestry ordinance for local

governments. They are using Pennsylvania's Brandywine Conservancy's timber harvesting ordinance. The goal is to cover every component of forestry.

Jana Davis from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) discussed the role the CBT will play in implementing the Tree Solutions Now Act (HB991). Informal listening sessions will be held in the summer, with formal listening sessions planned for this fall as they put together the request for proposals. The money from the bill will start flowing in July 2022 and the CBT wants to have everything in order to distribute money quickly, in time for fall 2022 plantings. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is putting together a map to identify which places are qualifying "underserved areas" as defined by the bill and is working on a tool to easily determine if you are eligible for the money. Grants can be as low as \$5,000 and Jana thinks that grants will not max out in the first year. They will not require match for the grant, but CBT will ask partners to keep costs down because there is not adequate funding for every needed tree. The bill's language is vague about what the money can be used for, so Jana suggests getting creative with ways to spend it.

Jana then took questions from the SFC about CBT's role in the bill. Anne asked whether CBT is looking for proposals from connector organizations, like regional non-profits. Jana indicated that CBT currently uses that approach for some programs, and that they will need to test the waters during the first year of funding. Donnelle asked about using tree equity score to determine funding eligibility. Jana responded that the criteria is already defined in the bill, but tree equity score could be mentioned in proposals. Anne provided a short update on the forest technical study out of the Harry Hughes Center, which was reauthorized and funded through HB991. The goal is to have the products from the study completed soon, but the largest limiting factor is the updated Chesapeake Conservancy land cover data.

The SFC then discussed the fall retreat. Potential topics for the retreat include no net loss, agroforestry, tree equity, community engagement, the economic adjustment strategy, biomass, forest health, oak decline, and markets. Gary suggested discussing emerging forest issues, balance of stewardship and harvesting, balance of stewardship and stream restoration, and how to bring in emerging markets for air quality and climate. Emerging markets for other resources will require find common ground with the agricultural community and providing adequate incentives for landowners. Beth brought up the importance of caring for planted trees in urban areas, which can get expensive. Bill Rees mention that the Baltimore Tree Trust has a program called Baltimore TreeKeepers that trains members of the community to care for street trees. Bill also mentioned that he would like to hear more about the Family Forest Carbon Program at the retreat. Steve brought up his concern about low quality markets in Western Maryland.

Gary motioned to end the meeting, Bill seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang and Iris Allen.