



December 14th, 2021

Google Meet 3pm – 5pm

Gary Allen
Maryland Forestry
Foundation
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

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

Steve Resh
Allegheny College of
Maryland (Retired)
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tony DiPaolo
Pixelle Specialty
Solutions
Delmar, Maryland 21875

SFC Members

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

DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
Marian Honeczy
Kenneth Jolly
Iris Allen

Guests

Frederick Jonson (Prospective
SFC Member)
Maura Ross, MCEC

Interim Chair of the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Byran Seipp, called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. The council welcomed Fred Johnson, a prospective new member to the SFC, and Maura Ross, the Maryland Clean Energy Center's new Wood Energy Coordinator. Anne Hairston-Strang gave a brief overview of the minutes from the September retreat. The forest technical study is still planning to be released at the end of 2021, Rob Feldt is the DNR contact for that. Gary Allen moved to approved the minutes, Bill Rees seconded, and the minutes were approved at 3:18pm.

Anne then led a discussion about opportunities for strategic planning with the local Forestry Boards. She attended the Garrett County Forestry Board meeting earlier in December and offered to attend other counties meetings at the state-wide Forestry Board meeting in November. There appears to a varying degree to involvement among the boards, so help with strategic planning might be most useful at the executive committee level. The SFC then recommended bringing back the multi-day, in-person, state-wide meetings (pandemic dependent), as there is something for everyone there and they are engaging.

Anne then provided a DNR Forest Service update. She started by announcing the new hires and position changes. She then moved to the handful of retirements, which include the Southern Regional Forester, Dave Gailey, and the Frederick Washington Project Manager, Mike Kay. She discussed some of the major accomplishments for 2021, which included the Economic Matters Committee Tour at Cedarville and Doncaster State Forests, the Board of Public Works Tour at Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, and a very busy interagency wildfire season. Mike Kay was recognized as the National Tree Farm Inspector of the Year and Melissa Nash, Project Forester in Garrett County, was awarded the Northeast Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative Management Forester of the Year. Some of the new opportunities coming up include the 5 Million Trees Bill, the Family Forest Carbon Program, and several new grants. Anne then gave a brief update on 5 Million trees; MDA and FSA have approved the additional \$1,000/acre CREP signing bonus from the bill and DNR is getting ready to hire the new positions funded through the bill. DNR is also likely to receive some more funds with the passing of the large, federal infrastructure bill.

Marian Honeczy and Gary Allen gave a update on the recent special legislative session and the upcoming 2022 regular legislative session. There was a veto override during special session for SB 417, which deals with certificates of public convenience and necessity. For regular session in 2022, no bills have been dropped yet. This is an election year, so Marian expects a lot of bills to be submitted. The State Park

Commission released [their report](#) in November and there will likely be some legislation growing out of it. Gary confirmed that there will be a new climate bill this session that will have elements from the failed 2021 climate bill. Gary doesn't think it will have significant new forestry sections, though. There's going to be a bill that's going to set a goal to preserve and protect 30% of Maryland's landscape by 2030 and 40% by 2040. There will also be a small bill proposing some changes to Forest Conservation Act (FCA) to add more signage for FCA plantings. There is another bill that will create an Urban Ag program, similar to Rural Legacy. There is another bill to payback funds to Program Open Space that were borrowed over the last few years, likely around \$160-200 million over 10 years. Groups have been meeting to discuss where to spend these funds, but some of them will likely impact the forestry community. There also might be a biomass bill in the new session. The Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings (created from the 2021 Tree Solutions Now Act) will have its first meeting in January, right before legislative session starts.

Dan Rider then gave an update on forest markets and the Economic Adjustment Strategy. He began by introducing Maura Ross, the new Wood Energy Coordinator with the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), funded by the new federal wood innovation grant. Maura has developed a screening tool for identifying priority locations for where to focus attention on developing wood energy systems in Maryland. The tool includes environmental and social justice indicators to address who could benefit from clean, renewable energy with stable pricing and local job creation, along with proximity to wood supply. Maura has a presentation with more details on what went into making the tool that she can send out. Some of the top areas identified include Allegany County, who are looking to bring in [torrefied wood](#), Garrett County, St. Mary's County (the college is high priority), Baltimore City, and Princess Anne; the goal for the grant is to reach out to 15 communities. Maura can send out a full list of communities and candidate facilities. Dan and Maura requested if anyone in the SFC has any connections with these facilities, could they help set up a meeting with the MCEC and Dan. Maura's contact information is mross@mdcleanenergy.org; 304-676-9224.

Dan then discussed progress on workforce development. The Economic Adjustment Strategy helped create a relationship with the Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA has a lot of available money for workforce development and they have signaled that they would like to make more investments in Maryland in the forestry sector. There is a need for more trained forestry equipment operators (in sawmills, wood machining, wood processing) in Western Maryland, and there is an opportunity to get a training program in Allegany College, if they could get funding. More coordination is ongoing to develop the partnership and proposals for workforce development in the forestry sector.

The SFC then began meeting planning for 2022. It was decided to meet in late January to discuss workforce development, the Hughes Technical Study (if out), and upcoming legislation; March to discuss the Rural Maryland Council, MARBIDCO update, and a legislation update from Bunky Luffman; April to discuss communication strategies from American Family Forests with Christine Cadigan, Maryland Forests Association's Faces of Forestry project, and the Maryland Forestry Foundation's webinar series; July to discuss No Net Loss, land conservation, and the 30 by 30 bill with Josh Hastings from the Forever Maryland Foundation; September to discuss planning needs; and December to have a check in before the 2023 legislative session.

Gary motioned to end the meeting, Beth seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang and Iris Allen.