



May 3rd, 2022

Google Meet 3pm – 5pm

Bryan Seipp, Interim
Chair
Ecotone
Forest Hill, MD 21050

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

Gary Allen
Maryland Forestry
Foundation
Annapolis, MD 21401

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
Allegany College of
Maryland (Retired)
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tony DiPaolo
Pixelle Specialty
Solutions
Delmar, Maryland 21875

Frederick Johnson
M-NCPPC Department of
Parks and Recreation
Upper Marlboro, MD
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SFC Members

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

DNR Staff

Phil Hager
Stephen McGee
Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
Marian Honecny
Kenneth Jolly
Iris Allen

Guests

Al Goetzl (Retired SFC Chair)
Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees
Italia Peretti, Casey Trees
Maura Ross, MCEC

Action Items:

- Anne will reach out to Jonathan McKnight, DNR Wildlife and Heritage, and invite him to speak at a future SFC meeting to talk about the Irreplaceable Natural Areas Bill
- Dan will share the slides from the outreach presentation at the CFM meeting

Interim chair of the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Bryan Seipp, called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. Beth Hill shared [Maryland Forests Associations latest newsletter](#). Beth moved to approved minutes from the March 2022 meeting, Tony DiPaolo seconded, and the minutes were approved as written at 3:12pm.

Anne Hairston-Strang provided an update on activities at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service. There have been a lot of promotions lately and now some new positions are being filled, putting the Forest Service at 10 permanent position vacancies. Some of the new positions that have been filled include the Anne Arundel County Forester, the Western Urban Forester, and Assistant Manager at Green Ridge State Forest. The Tree Equity Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator positions are being advertised now, and the 13 positions through 5 Million Trees will be posted soon. The Chesapeake Bay Trust completed the first year of applications for the Urban Trees Grant Program through 5 Million Trees. They received \$14

million in requests for the \$10 million they have to award. Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford recently visited some of the State Forest management on the Eastern Shore, as a follow up to the Board of Public Works visit. Maryland's State Forests just passed their 19th audit for dual sustainable certification. DNR Leadership and Watershed Forestry staff participated in the Chesapeake Bay Program's Riparian Forest Buffer Leadership Workshop in late April, and are now working to write the State's buffer plan with help from Maryland's Stream ReLeaf Committee. Turnover at University of Maryland Extension is coinciding with an opportunity to reinvigorate the MD/DE Master Logger Program and create updated content.

Marian Honecny gave a summary of the 2022 legislative session. Below is a list of the passed bills that the Maryland Forest Service followed:

- [Trail Access Provision \(HB 1395 & SB 86\)](#)
- [Conservation Finance Act \(HB 653 & SB 348\)](#)
- [State Park Investment Commission Bill/ Great Maryland Outdoor Act \(HB 727 & SB 541\)](#)
- [Climate Solutions Now Act \(HB 528\)](#)
- [Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board and Fund \(HB 838 & SB 474\)](#)

- [University of Maryland Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance \(HB 540 & SB 437\)](#)
- [Irreplaceable Areas Bill \(HB784\)](#)
- [Pocomoke River Wildland – Alteration of Boundaries \(HB 882\)](#)
- [Firewood Certification Bill \(SB 695 & HB 1140\)](#)
- [Old Growth Forest Bill \(HB 884\)](#)

There are some bills that DNR needs to spend some time interpreting, like the bill that requires trail access provisions on all lease agreements. Gary Allen's [Maryland Forestry Foundation Education Bill \(HB 876\)](#) did not pass, but received some feedback on how to make it better for next year. Beth mentioned that many MFA members were concerned about the Irreplaceable Natural Areas Bill, as it could be too restrictive with logging, especially in areas where wildlife, like the golden-winged warbler, could benefit from active forest management. MFA proposed an amendment, that did not go through, to include the SFC in the process of implementing the bill. Donnelle suggested having Jonathon McKnight, Associate Director of Maryland DNR Wildlife and Heritage Services, talk at a future SFC meeting about implementing the bill.

The SFC then discussed the \$1 million for the Woodland Incentive Fund (WIF) that the Great Maryland Outdoors Act will provide in FY24. The money can be used for many things, including outreach, stakeholder meetings, forest health emergency funds, tree planting, and urban forestry. A full list of uses for the fund can be found [here](#). Donnelle Keech and Dan Rider have been working on an agreement to allow The Nature Conservancy to tap directly into the WIF and use it for forest management in Western Maryland as sometimes that money goes unused due to staff capacity and some landowner's reluctance to work with a government agency. The application did not work this time around, but Dan and Donnelle want to try again with their lessons learned. Steve Resh proposed the Allegany County Forestry Board use some of the funds to support their outreach efforts surrounding the Family Forest Carbon program. Donnelle suggested using the funds to pay for professional marketing materials.

The Council then spent time discussion outreach and communications. Beth gave an overview of MFA's [Faces of Forestry campaign](#). It will continue next year with an emphasis on management techniques to tie into the Delmarva Woodland Stewards Network project. Dan is attending the Community Forest Management meeting this week and mentioned the work of someone up in Vermont who organized field tour for different forest uses, emphasizing how those uses can be supported by forest management and wrote forest management plans in a story board format. The U.S. Forest Service is going to invite him to give a webinar on this and Dan can share his PowerPoint slides. Dan also shared [this website](#) as a great example out outreach for forest conservation.

Mark Buscaino and Italia Peretti gave an overview of communications and outreach at Casey Trees. Mark started by emphasizing the importance of consistency and simplicity in messaging. Italia gave an overview of marketing for their free trees program. They use messaging on buses and in metro station and utilized google analytics to track how messaging was spreading. Casey Trees also had success with a mailing campaign that looked like a party invite and had QR codes. She mentioned that branding was more important than a logo. Mark agreed, logos are nice but not as important as consistency and clarity. He also mentioned that people gravitate more towards nonprofits than government agencies, so that should be factored into messaging. DC recently lost 500 acres of canopy, mostly due to extreme development pressure. SFC then discussed the 5 Million Tree campaign and logo with Casey Trees. Mark warned of "logo salad" happening, where every partner has to have their logo on something, which just looks messy. This could be an issues with the 5 Million Trees campaign as there are so many partners. Mark suggested only use the one logo with one set of contact information to keep things simple and easy.

The council then discussed ESG and the Wood Risk Assessment. Beth and Donnelle said they both had a great time at the ESG Charette last month and thought there was good discussion. However, the concept still seems abstract and needs some time to develop. Anne thinks something missing from ESG standards is

a connection to local markets, which is important for viable rural economies. Dan mentioned the importance of getting an implementation strategy together. A product from this effort could be a GIS dashboard for regional economic development associations about rural development for local wood products. Sarah Crowe is giving a webinar on the wood risk assessment on June 9th. A final version of the risk assessment will come out in Fall 2022.

Maura Ross with the Maryland Clean Energy Center gave an update on the State Wood Energy Team. They identified high priority facilities for conversion to wood energy. The analysis includes technical and environmental justice components, like age and type of facility, wood markets, air quality, and demographic data. They have a list of 65-70 priority facilities, divided up into rural, urban, and Baltimore City. The State Wood Energy Team has started contacting the facilities. They are also working with other facilities that have previously expressed interest in converting to wood energy. Frostburg State University is one of those facilities, and has a lot of opportunities for wood energy, like combined heat and power (CHP) or heated sidewalks. Some folks from Frostburg State joined the Wood Energy Team for a field tour in Pennsylvania, which went well. The engineers have started the analysis for their facilities, which should be complete in about two months. They are also working with the public schools in Garrett County. Northern Garrett High School and Northern Middle School are closer to each other and could share a boiler house. The Interagency Commission for School Construction (IAC) awarded them money for an air conditioning system and boiler but did not say what kind of boiler. However, they are limited on time, so a wood boiler might not be feasible. The IAC is going to produce a feasibility report for implementing wood energy in Western Maryland. There are also two schools in Garrett County that are going to be combined into one new building, and a recent bill requires at least one new school in each county to have net zero emissions by 2030. This could be a good opportunity for wood energy. Some DNR facilities are also planning to incorporate wood energy.

Bill Rees asked whether there are any fatal flaws to look out for with wood energy projects, like material quality/size and freezing in the winter. Maura responded that freezing is not an issue, but sometimes supply can be an issue, which is a problem that happens in New York right now. Regarding material quality/size, pellets are designed to be a consistent size. Chips can vary in size, which is why they are used in larger systems which can handle more variability in size. Also, chipping facilities have metal separators, which is important to have when working with waste wood. The technology is there, the main hold up is the upfront costs and finding a consistent supply. Bill also asked if there is a possibility to do a dual system in combination with gas. Maura said that often when a system is upgraded to wood, the old gas boiler is left to serve as a backup. If you want to get in contact with Maura about wood energy, her contact info is mross@mdcleanenergy.org and 304-676-9224.

The council discussed topics for the next SFC meeting on July 6th. Bryan suggested revisiting the Woodland Incentive Fund discussion, No Net Loss, and inviting Josh Hastings from Forever Maryland to speak. Beth mentioned that she is the new chair for the Maryland Farm Bureau's Environmental Affairs Committee. The Committee is focused on getting a biomass bill passed in legislative session, but they want to learn more about biomass and will be organizing some tours soon. The meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Hairston-Strang and Iris Allen