



Sustainable Forestry Council

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

March 13, 2012

Minutes

Attendees:

Gary Allen
Eric Sprague
Don Outen
Kim Finch
Al Goetzl
Kirk Rodgers
Connie Hoge

DNR:

Don VanHassent
Steve Koehn

Guests:

Jonathan Kays, Extension

Called to order at 10:00 AM.

Chairman Allen welcomed Council members, staff and visitors. He introduced Jonathan Kays, Cooperative Extension Service. Jonathan gave a presentation entitled “Wood Energy Portfolio” about the use, and potential use, of small to medium sized wood burning energy systems. The publication and the PowerPoint will be posted on the Council website. Wood systems are being used more in the U.S., particularly in the northeast. There is potential in Maryland but Maryland Department of the Environment regulations will need to be updated to reflect current technology and to make Maryland more comparable with other northeast states.

Don O. – Baltimore County is pursuing the use of a wood system at the county detention center. He feels any permit issues with MDE can be worked out. USFS is paying for the engineering study for the detention center.

Al G – The biggest driver of wood use is overseas (Europe) in the form of wood pellets. He feels home systems are oversold. The time and effort necessary to use wood may not be OK with most suburban people. The best opportunity is commercial and institutional scenarios.

Eric S. made a motion to send a letter to the Secretary thanking the Forest Service for working on biomass issues and projects. Connie H. seconded the motion. Council approved. Eric will draft the letter.

Don V. gave a legislative update. There have been three bills introduced that have a direct impact on the Forest Service. HB594 renames the Tree-Mendous Maryland Program the Pamela J. Kelly

Tree-Mendous Maryland Program in honor of a longtime supporter of Baltimore and tree planting. This bill passed the House unanimously and will now go to the Senate. HB975 would provide a subtraction modification of up to \$500 for qualified expenses to enter into the Forest Conservation and Management Program. This bill has had a hearing but has not yet received a vote. HB854 would alter the Forest Conservation Act to exempt certain stormwater management activities from requirements of FCA. This bill has been withdrawn by the sponsor. Don informed the group of the desire of the Secretary to propose an “Omnibus Forestry Package” for next year’s legislative session. This package would contain the elements necessary to implement a “no net loss” policy. This package will be developed over the next 6-7 months in consultation with forestry stakeholders.

The State is nearing the one year anniversary of receiving dual, third party certification of its’ state forest lands. Additional efforts are underway to obtain group certification on private lands. Several problems have been encountered and cost is still an issue but future wood markets will likely demand certified wood. Perhaps we could have someone from American Forest Foundation at a future Council meeting to present the Tree Farm case.

Gary mentioned again the need to send a letter to the Department of Assessment and Taxation regarding the calculation and collection of the Woodland Transfer Tax that is to be deposited in the Woodland Incentive Fund. Don will draft the letter for Council review.

Incentives are needed to help forest land compete with real estate values. Ecosystem services systems such as Bay Bank are possibilities that are outside the normal tax structure. There are a number of potential incentives within existing tax structure but the cost, individually or collectively, will be an issue.

There are a number of items for the Council to consider involving the relationship between forests and water quality:

- The nutrient efficiency benefit will be difficult to develop. The Council should have Anne Hairston-Strang and Sally Claggett brief the Council on the latest developments.
- What can we do and what do we need in order to have forestry play a bigger role in TMDL issues? Forests already have the lowest load level but protection of that forest gets no credit.

All forest losses should be mitigated – how can we do this and what needs to be changed?

Forest Conservation Act – do county fee-in-lieu accounts accurately show revenue and expense amounts. Biennial reviews conducted by the Department this year will include an audit review when possible.

The Council needs to take a look at the state of the forest industry in Maryland – what’s happening and what can we do to help. Dan Rider can brief the Council on his interactions with industry and the latest developments on the use of woody biomass in Maryland. The Council may want to invite other members of industry to speak on their situation and needs.

The next meeting will be the retreat in May. Don will find the location and potential dates and poll the Council to find the best time. The primary purpose of the retreat will to follow up on our report and begin to develop an “Implementation Plan”.

Minutes from the January 17, 2012 meeting were approved.

Don noted that minutes from a number of previous meetings had never been officially approved. He will send those out for another review. Official approval will occur at the retreat.

Adjourn – 2:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald VanHassent