



October 27th, 2023

Google Meet 10am – 3pm, and C-1 Conference Room, 580 Taylor Ave., Annapolis, MD

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
20774

SFC Members

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

DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
JT Bowers

Guests

Katie Lautar, Baltimore Green
Space

Action Items:

- Send 5 Million Trees report, link to tracking website
- Send link for NIACS, Forest Patch First Aid, and BGS Forest Health Protocol
- Dan Rider contact Subgroup: Bryan, Gary, Beth, and JT

Interim chair to the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Bryan Seipp, called the meeting to order at 10:05am. Anne Hairston-Strang, Acting State Forester, announced that Paul Peditto was confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Land Resources, Governor Moore was the new lead for the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council, and Josh Kurtz was heading the Bay Cabinet. She reviewed the intensive hiring efforts to fill many state positions by the end of the year, the wildland and prescribed fire acreages both above average, and tightening budget environment. DNR opened a new building at Cypress Branch State Park heated with bulk pellets, a first and now being held up as a model for locally sourced renewable heat for DNR facilities. The Council discussed recent forestry outreach, including the Southern MD Ag. Dev. Commission's tour, Rural MD Council tour, MD Clean Energy Council Summit panel, the MD Planning Commissioners Assn. presentation, hoped-for Service Year hiring, and DNR Science week. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy is hosting a Forestry Forum on Nov. 30th. Beth Hill explained the forestry role in the first rural Junior Achievement Center opening in Salisbury and serving 10,000 youth throughout the Delmarva Peninsula with career education at elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Kirk Rodgers memorial display is finally in design for installation at the newly completed fire tower interpretive center in Dorchester County.

Dan Rider summarized results from the State Forest Stewardship Committee meeting and the evaluation for program changes to Stewardship approaches and Woodland Incentive Fund planned expenditures in forestry education and workforce development, including an Urban Forestry camp in 2024. Fees for forest stewardship plans are not expected to be raised, and outreach on Stewardship Program changes will be continued with internal and external partners. Dan reviewed the upcoming wood energy tour to Vermont in November and the recent changes in MD Clean Energy Center with Maya Ross taking over from Maura Ross, now with USFS. He explained the wood energy possibilities in a possible future Clean Heat Standard, separate from the thermal Renewable Energy Credits.

Gary Allen presented the Stewardship Disalignment Report prepared by the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, and proposed better aligning ecosystem and traditional markets with forest conservation needs. SFC

members discussed options for revising forest stewardship programs, cost-share, workforce development, forestry career awareness, and revising incentives to better reward good forest management. Members discussed outreach options for better alignment of the stewardship work and sharing information on the critical nature of sustainable forest management, including the Blue and Green Infrastructure Committee, Private Forest Landowner Workgroup, and Land Trust Alliance. Bryan suggested two rounds of hybrid in-person/virtual outreach around the topic of how to protect green space and encourage forest health, with round 1 in February 2024 and round 2 in April or May. Beth raised the question of whether it would be suitable to coordinate that outreach with the MFA Forestry. Bryan proposed Forest Stewardship and Incentives Roundtables, Bill seconded it, and the motion passed with none opposed. Gary offered a model ordinance and an upcoming MD Municipal League issue on Smart Growth.

In the round-robin, SFC members presented current issues, including Beth's active schedule for forestry tours (see above) and at Salisbury University, Kim's challenges with implementing FCA changes in Senate Bill 526 with nonaligning timeframes and ongoing climate action planning, Bryan's new opportunities for ecosystem planning and restoration, and Bill's urban forestry curriculum being developed with Northern Arizona University. Gary brought up a Family Forest Carbon program presentation, the four new Mel Fellows, ongoing Natural Resources Career Camp, the new 2024 Urban Forestry Camp at UMD, and expanded urban tree planting funds from MD Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Program partnership with MD Urban and Community Forestry Committee. Steve raised the issue of wood energy facilities using chips rather than pellets since they were more locally available and did not require additional processing for pelletizing. Dan explained that the wood energy leads in Western Maryland were contemplating chips rather than pellets, and potential movement of a portable wood kiln.

JT Bowers, Associate Director of Policy and External Relations, provided an update on the 5 Million Trees initiative, including increased staffing, and the new tracking tool developed by MD Dept. of the Environment, University of Maryland and Maryland Environmental Service, with the interagency coordinating committee where Justin Arseneault represented MD Forest Service. JT described a recent climate resiliency tree planting in Charles County school yards most in need of countering the urban heat island effect. SFC members discussed tracking needs and challenges, and opportunities for expanding tree planting. Links to other tree accounting resources were provided: Tree Canopy Fact Sheets at <https://chesapeaketrees.net/understand-your-canopy/> and State of the Chesapeake Forest 2.0 <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cb5b91c1c6fd43478f01cf8e8a7d6e9d>

Katie Lautar, Executive Director of Baltimore Green Space, presented extensive work on community-managed forests with citizen stewardship and science-based monitoring of conserved forest patches in Baltimore. Results of more than a decade of collaboration with UMBC and other researchers found that consistent neighbor involvement in tending wooded patches reduced the level of invasive species, particularly vines. Resources for tending urban forest patches were shared, including the invadedness metric, Forest Patch First Aid, and Baltimore forest patch inventory. SFC members discussed how to use already developed tools to improve forest conditions in additional areas.

SFC members discussed the private forest incentives workgroup called for in SB 526 on the Forest Conservation Act. One member from SFC had been requested, and options for appropriate representation and background knowledge were evaluated. Beth moved that Gary Allen be the representative for SFC, considering his familiarity with the workgroup mission. Kim seconded the motion, and all approved.

Members discussed future meeting topics and formats, and suggested avoiding Mondays. The next meeting is 12/19/2023. Suggested topics including northern long-eared bat policy, legislative issues, Forestry Day, Roundtables, Biomass, and others.

Brian adjourned the meeting at 3:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

