



# Sustainable Forestry Council

580 Taylor Avenue – E-1 • Annapolis, Maryland 21401 • 410-260-8531

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## SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

October 26, 2010

### Minutes

Gary Allen, Chair  
Center for Chesapeake  
Communities  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Eric Sprague, Vice-chair  
Pinchot Institute for  
Conservation  
Annapolis, MD 21403

Kirk Rodgers  
Private landowner  
Woolford, MD 21677

Connie Hoge  
Carroll County Forestry  
Board  
Westminster, MD 21157

Gregory Purnell  
Ocean City Arborist, retired  
Ocean City, MD 21842

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

Kenneth Roberts  
NewPage Corporation  
Westernport, MD 21562

Donald Outen  
Natural Resource Manager  
Baltimore County DEPRM  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Alberto Goetzl  
Dream Catcher Farm, LLC  
Adamstown, MD 21710

#### Attendees:

##### Members

Gary Allen, Chair  
Eric Sprague, Co-chair  
Donald Outen  
Connie Hoge  
Alberto Goetzl  
Kirk Rodgers  
Gregory Purnell

##### Members absent

Kenneth Roberts  
Kim Finch

##### Staff and guests

Donald VanHassent, DNR  
Marian Honecny, DNR  
Bill Miles  
Sandi Patty, DNR  
Jeff Horan, DNR  
C.J. Lammers, PG County  
Jim Boone, PSC

Gary Allen welcomed Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) members and guests. Gary asked members to be prepared to discuss potential legislative ideas for the 2011 session of the General Assembly. One potential item suggested by Gary is a tax incentive for stewardship plans with the assumption that forest land under management is more likely to be retained as forest.

Sandi Patty, DNR – Power Plant Research Program (PPRP), gave a presentation on the status of new or revised utility power line rights-of-way under consideration in Maryland. (The PowerPoint presentation is available on line at the Sustainable Forestry Council website.) The key message is the scope of the proposals. Since 1995, approximately 40 miles of utility ROW have been built. The current list of proposed projects totals almost 400 miles. The impact to forests is not completely known as some of these are revisions that will require little or no additional clearing and others do not yet have final approved routes. Three of the routes that are close to being finalized will have a cumulative impact in excess of 500 acres of forest. The Public Service Commission (PSC) will require some form of mitigation although amounts and form are not yet final.

Distribution lines also impact our forest and tree resources. Power companies are also responsible for trimming or removing trees along distribution lines to ensure outages due to tree problems are minimized. The Council will invite representatives from the Maryland Electricity Reliability and Tree Trimming Council (MERTT) to discuss programs and issues related to forest and tree interaction with power lines.

Jeff Horan, DNR – Chesapeake and Coastal Watershed Services, gave a presentation on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) process. (The PowerPoint presentation is available on line at the Sustainable Forestry Council website.) This is a comprehensive effort to reduce pollutant loading in the Chesapeake Bay. Existing forest land is the best land cover for water quality. Therefore, there is no reducible load for forest land. However, forests have a role to play, primarily through the establishment of riparian forest buffers and the planting of trees in urban areas where they will improve water quality.

There were several issues raised that warranted comment by Council members. First was the lack of a forestry representative on the 24 member Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Although forests and trees are a comparatively small part of the overall effort, the role forests and trees can play is not insignificant. Jeff assured the members that forestry would be represented. (Don Outen has agreed to be the forestry representative.) The second issue was the inclusion of a recommendation to eliminate the fee-in-lieu option in the Forest Conservation Act and require the use of mitigation banks. A great deal of discussion led to the general consensus that the elimination of the fee-in-lieu option was not a good idea. Although it may not be the preferred option in many cases, it is a viable tool that needs to be retained. Chairman Allen will draft comments for review by the Council prior to sending official comments to the Maryland Department of the Environment.

The Council returned to the issue of utility ROW's to discuss why forests appear to have the lowest priority when a new power line is being planned. The Council agreed to encourage DNR – PPRP to continue to exercise as much discretion as possible to conserve forests when reviewing new proposed power lines. Connie Hoge made a motion to send a letter from the Council to Secretary Griffin regarding the Council's appreciation for the effort PPRP staff provide to minimize the environmental impacts of ROW projects and as a reminder of the role the Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009 can play in the retention of forest land in Maryland. The motion was seconded by Greg Purnell and approved by the Council. Chairman Allen will write the letter.

The SFC will meet again on November 23 in the Neal Conference Room of the James Senate Office Building and on January 11 at a location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald VanHassent