



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

January 19, 2021

Google Meet 1pm – 3:30pm

Gary Allen
Maryland Forestry
Foundation
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Alberto Goetzl
Dream Catcher Farm,
LLC
Adamstown, MD 21710

Bryan Seipp, Interim
Chair
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

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

SFC Members

Gary Allen
Bill Rees
Al Goetzl
Kim Finch
Beth Hill
Bryan Seipp

DNR Staff

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

Guests

Jason Dubow, MDP

Action Items:

- Iris talk to Gary about tree planting opportunity map (done)
- Look into EAS and Rural Economies Forestry Workgroup priorities crosswalk
- Iris create SFC Google folder (done)
- EAS subcommittee meet and put together comments before April meeting
- Anne and Bryan find environmental justice speaker for July meeting
- Anne and Donnelle finalize plans for carbon speaker at April meeting (done)
- Gary pursue speaker on conservation financing
- Kenneth provide update on DNR response to the MDP Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee Goals request

Minutes

The Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) welcomed Bryan Seipp as its new interim chair after he began the meeting at 1:03 PM. Gary Allen moved to approve the minutes from the December meeting, Beth Hill seconded it, and all approved.

Kenneth Jolly provided an update on Maryland Forest Service (MFS) activities at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). All eight of the submitted MFS vacancies have been approved by the DNR Secretary and the Department of Budget and Management. MFS experienced new vacancies in addition to these 8 in 2020, but there may be a pause on additional hiring freeze exceptions until the end of the fiscal year.

Kenneth then told the SFC about the 5th grade Arbor Day poster contest judging, now a virtual event with First Lady Yumi Hogan invited, coordinated through Marian's Urban and Community Forestry staff. Kenneth also congratulated Beth on the "Faces of Forestry" project which recently received funding. Beth recommended that members watch the video in the most recent Maryland Forest Association newsletter, featuring forestry in Southern Maryland, including Dave Gailey, the Maryland Forest Service's Southern Regional Forester. Kenneth reported that Tree Farm audits will take place this year, started with a kick-off meeting in January. The Frederick/Washington Project Manager Mike Kay was selected as a national finalist for Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. DNR will know if he wins, which would be a first for Maryland, at the national Tree Farm meeting in February. The Elk Neck Shooting Range is proposed to adjust its hours to limit vandalism, and some public feedback about the change is expected at the heavily used facility. There have not been any changes to the DNR's budget since last meeting.

Gary asked why the nursery is still selling green ash even though it is almost certain to succumb to emerald ash borer. Anne Hairston-Strang responded that the nursery has demand for it because it is a good pioneer and nurse crop that can help improve difficult sites like former strip mines, and the surrounding trees can fill in if the borer later kills them. Dan Rider explained that the Nursery is going to add a note in the catalogue about this.

Marian Honeczky then provided a summary of the current bills in the legislative session that could impact forestry. She had the first meeting with the legislative team at DNR where they told her that this legislative session will likely be a full session but will take place in a shorter time frame. The bill summary included:

- SB 11- “Sales and Use Tax - Agricultural Purpose Exemption - Seedlings and Fruit Trees”
 - This bill would provide a sales and use tax exemption on seedlings and fruit tree. This would not have a major impact on the Forest Service as the State Nursery, where the Forest Service gets most of its trees, is already tax exempt.
- HB 92- “Procurement - Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species - Prohibition on Use of State Funds”
 - This bill would prohibit the use of State funds to purchase invasive and nonnative plants. This would impact the State Nursery as a few of the trees there are nonnative, such as for Christmas tree planting stock.
- HB 208- “Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Sale and Storage”
 - This bill would restrict the selling of neonicotinoid pesticides to only certified applicators or farmers and provides restrictions on how the pesticides can be stored.
- HB 183- “Public Information Act – Revisions (Equitable Access to Records Act)”
 - This bill would require proactive disclosure of public records. This would impact SFC and other groups whose minutes are public records.
- SB 72- “Open Meetings Act - Requirements for State Agencies and Local Boards of Elections (Maryland Transparency Act of 2021)”
 - This bill would require State agencies to make meeting agendas and materials available to the public at least 48 hours in advance. It would also require a live or recorded video of the meetings. Similar to HB183, this would likely impact the SFC and other meetings.
- SB 106- “Licensing – Good Standing With the State Department of Assessments and Taxation – Requirement”
 - This bill would require licensing and permitting authorities to verify that the applicant is in good standing with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. This would impact Forest Product Operator and Licensed Tree Expert licenses as it adds another group to look at applications. The Bill is not currently clear about timeframes.
- HB 80- “Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment - Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan”
 - This bill would require the Department of Transportation and the Department of the Environment (MDE) to create a plan to replace all the trees lost in the creation of the Purple Line. The communities impacted by the tree loss would give input on where the new trees will go. The DNR will contribute funding towards this. The Purple Line was a Forest Conservation Act (FCA) project, so it already received mitigation; these trees would be in addition to that.
- HB 472- “Agriculture - Use of Glyphosate – Prohibition” (now withdrawn)
 - This bill would prohibit the use of glyphosate in Maryland after October 1, 2022. This will have an impact on Forestry as the Forest Service uses glyphosate (a.k.a. Round Up) to treat invasive plants. The DNR has submitted a fiscal note as this bill would increase its costs.
- SB 65- “Electricity - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass”
 - This bill would alter the definition of “qualifying biomass” under the renewable energy portfolio standard. This would include several forms of woody biomass as “qualifying biomass”. This bill is a repeat of a bill from last year and MFS has submitted comments.

Kim Finch then brought up Prince George's MD National Park and Planning Commission interest in addressing the issue with forest mitigation banks, which was created by the recent opinion from the Office of the Attorney General that retention banking was not specifically authorized in the existing Forest Conservation Act language.

Gary reviewed the conservation finance bill, expected to be introduced shortly (now SB 737). Its primary purpose is to drive private investment in environmental activities in Maryland. The other bill is the Climate Solution Now Act (SB0414/ HB0583), which is sponsored by Delegate Stein and Senator Pinsky. Its primary goal is to drive the State's commitment to climate justice and greenhouse gas reductions goals, moving the 2045 greenhouse gas goals to 2030. It authorizes the planting of 5 million trees, 10% in underserved urban communities. The bill established contractual positions at MFS, a coordinator at MDE, and Chesapeake Bay Trust program for urban tree planting.

Anne provided an update on woody biomass activities. Dan Rider has been providing forestry information to a group that was making a contingent offer on the Luke Mill and proposing a business park complex that included wood chips. MFS is submitting a proposal for a State Wood Energy Team to the USFS Wood Innovation grant cycle, due January 20th. The proposal would create a position for wood energy project development at the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) and incorporate socioeconomic aspects like environmental justice into its projects, partnering with groups including Innovations Works in Baltimore. The Maryland Energy Administration is releasing a new funding opportunity for commercial wood energy design, part of the State's readiness to implement renewable wood energy. Gary asked how the SFC can support this grant; Anne responded that the SFC can help with outreach.

Anne gave an update on the Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS). She mentioned a need for greater coordination and advocacy, which is where the SFC can help. As the Acting State Forester, Kenneth formally recommended that a subcommittee be formed for the SFC to provide feedback on the EAS at 2:24pm, which was motioned by Gary, seconded by AI, and approved by the committee. Gary, Bryan, and Beth volunteered to be on the subcommittee. It was brought up that people who are not current members of the SFC could also be on the subcommittee, like Tony DiPaolo.

Kenneth and Jason Dubow gave an update on the Rural Economies Workgroup. Kenneth said the formal response from the DNR Secretary should be coming soon. Jason told the SFC that he plans to meet with Tom Bradshaw and Dan on February 5th to discuss developing a model for forestry and forest products ordinances. They are looking to provide a framework for how counties and towns can best support forestry. They are going to consider responses from a survey Tom administered to the counties about forestry and forest products. Bryan asked about a crosswalk between the EAS and the Rural Economies Forest Workgroup priorities. The SFC was unsure if anyone had made one yet; it was suggested to check with Tom and Joe Hinson on this. It was then requested for Iris to create a Google Drive folder to put SFC materials with MDP and EAS subfolders.

Member updates and new business were discussed next. Kenneth presented Steve Resh as a potential new member for the SFC. Steve is a Professor Emeritus at Allegany College of Maryland, where he has worked since 1986. Steve brings the technical knowledge and expertise from a college and a western Maryland perspective. He is very active in the Society of American Foresters and has many connections in the State. Both Gary and Bill voiced their strong support for Steve. At 2:46pm Bryan motioned to formally nominate Steve to the SFC, which Gary seconded, and the SFC unanimously agreed.

The council then discussed topics to talk about at future meetings. Outcomes from new legislation was mentioned. Gary suggested defining the SFC relationship to new committees and making it clear to others what the SFC does and how it can be used as a resource. Gary also suggested clarifying the role of the State Forester of speaking for the Maryland Forest Service. He recommended that the State Forester declare an

official value for forest cover in the State. It was recommended that the EAS subcommittee have a summary report by the April 20th meeting. Environmental justice was also brought up as another future topic. Anne will reach out to Sarah Anderson about a potential speaker and more specific topics; Bryan offered to help Anne with this. Gary mentioned that USFS data on tree equity will come out in April, so the July meeting would be a good place for this. Conservation financing was brought up as a future topic; Gary said he knows groups involved in that and will look for someone to talk to the SFC about it. It was also suggested that someone from Innovation Works speak to the SFC about the EAS. Jason said he can give updates on the local ordinance project and the Rural Economies Forestry Workgroup's other suggestions at the next SFC meeting.

A fall, in person retreat was then discussed. Woodmont was suggested as potential location. The Donaldson Brown Center in Cecil County, Elk Neck State Park, and North Point State Park were also suggested as potential locations. Early/mid October was decided upon as the ideal meeting time. The agenda for the retreat will be built over the next two SFC meetings. The retreat will consist of a half day, full day, half day schedule to account for travel time.

Bryan announced he will be starting a new position at Ecotone, so his professional contact information will change. He will remain a member of the SFC.

Bryan adjourned the meeting at 3:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang
Iris Allen