



March 16th, 2022

Google Meet 3pm – 5pm

Bryan Seipp, Interim
Chair
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Forest Hill, MD 21050

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Upper Marlboro, MD
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Steve Resh
Allegany College of
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Tony DiPaolo
Pixelle Specialty
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Frederick Johnson
M-NCPPC Department of
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Upper Marlboro, MD
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SFC Members

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

DNR Staff

Phil Hager
Stephen McGee
Bunky Luffman
Lisa Eutsler
Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
Marian Honecny
Iris Allen

Guests

Al Goetzl (Retired SFC Chair)
Jason Dubow (MDP)

Action Items:

- Dan to share Pennsylvania biomass field tour information with the Council
- Dan to share an executive summary of the Frostburg State analysis (when available) and examples of previous wood energy analyses
- Start planning educational roundtables on forest mitigation banking and biomass as part of annual MFA meeting
- Develop factsheets on forest mitigation banking and biomass

Interim chair to the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Bryan Seipp, called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. Bryan announced that Frederick Johnson has been officially approved to be on the SFC. Beth Hill moved to approved minutes from the January 2022 and the July 2021 meetings, Bill Reese seconded, and the minutes passed as written at 3:09pm. Bryan and Anne Hairston-Strang welcomed the guests to the meeting- retired SFC member, Al Goetzl, Jason Dubow with MDP; Assistant Secretary of DNR, Phil Hager; his assistant Stephen McGee; DNR's Legislative Liaison, Bunky Luffman; and DNR's Legislative Coordinator, Lisa Eutsler.

Anne provided an update on activities at the DNR Forest Service. DNR just had their leadership retreat and were instructed to move forward with their 5 Million Trees Strategy and Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS). This is a good year for the budget, so some issues including the backlog of vehicles to replace are being addressed with some additional POS funds.

Dan Rider updated the SFC on woody biomass projects. Frostburg State wants to transition their entire campus to wood heat and the USFS has started their feasibility analysis, which should be done in about 3 months. Dan will share the general outcomes of the analysis when it is complete and some examples of previous analyses with the council. There are two more potential biomass projects on campuses in Garrett County. Both look promising, but timing and approval from DGS could hold them up. Dan is putting together a field tour to check out two biomass systems in Pennsylvania, he is planning to take the decision makers from Frostburg State, Garrett County, and DGS on the tour. They are also planning to visit the fish hatchery in Accident, Maryland as it might be a great candidate for a woodchip system to keep the tanks at a consistent temperature all year long. Beth asked if some SFC members could join the tour, which Dan agreed was a good idea; Fall 2022 would be ideal. The SFC will invite Maura Ross with the Maryland Clean

Energy Center to present on these projects at a future meeting. This work is supported by a USFS Wood Innovation Grant.

Anne discussed upcoming projects, events, and opportunities. Western Maryland RC&D is putting together a risk assessment for Maryland wood products. There will be an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Charette April 11th and 12th, hosted by The Greater Cumberland Committee for the Maryland Wood Branding Project. The Chesapeake Bay Program is hosting a Riparian Forest Buffer Leadership Workshop on April 27th, with two pre-workshop webinars. There are several federal funding opportunities coming up, like the Infrastructure Bill, Chesapeake WILD grants, and the Great Outdoors Act. Arbor Day Celebrations are being planned for early April. Maryland Forest Service Awards were awarded recently, Mike Schofield is the employee of the year, Luke Marcek is the forester of the Year, and Julie Conway is the Ranger of the year. Bryan used the Maryland Forestry Economic Adjustment Strategy to inform a new scoring system for a Harford County Conservation Group, he will keep the SFC updated on the progress. As part of workforce development, Anne and other people who worked on the EAS are meeting with the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership on April 20th.

Bunky Luffman gave an update on legislation that impacts Maryland Forestry. Below is a list of the bills Bunky covered with links to their progress:

- [Firewood Certification Bill \(SB 695 & HB 1140\)](#) – Would create a process to certify that Maryland firewood is pest free
- [Forest Education Bill \(HB 876\)](#) - Would fund the Maryland Forestry Foundation (MFF)
- [Forest Mitigation Banking Bill \(HB 960 & SB 651\)](#)
- [Old Growth Forest Bill \(HB 884\)](#) – Prohibits logging in DNR identified old growth forests.
- [Biomass Bill \(HB 11\)](#) that would have taken all type of biomass, incineration, and digestion out of the RPS is withdrawn
- [Biomass Bill \(HB 1085 & SB 903\)](#) that made woody biomass practical to use is not advancing
- [State Park Investment Commission Bill/ Great Maryland Outdoor Act \(HB 727 & SB 541\)](#)
- [Conservation Finance Act \(HB 653 & SB 348\)](#)
- [Irreplaceable Areas Bill \(HB784\)](#)
- [Maryland the Beautiful Act \(HB 1031 & SB 791\)](#)

The Committee discussed issues surrounding legislation. Several amendments have been added to the forest mitigation bill (HB 960), which have really changed what the original intent for addressing issues around using forest retention as mitigation banks. The Harry Hughes Technical Study release has been pushed back to June 2022. There is a post-doc who is re-collecting information on forest mitigation banking for the study. Kim shared that no one in Prince George’s County has put in a new forest mitigation bank since last year as solar fields are more profitable. Beth suggested that Maryland Forest Association (MFA) host educational roundtables with the environmental community and legislature as part of the MFA annual meeting in Fall 2022. One day could focus on forest mitigation banking and another day could be about biomass. Assistant Secretary Phil Hager suggested using a different term instead of biomass that is more marketable, is clear that “old growth” forests are not being cut down to produce it, and that appeals to folks in urban areas. The SFC suggested that creating two fact sheets, one on forest mitigation banking, and one on biomass would be helpful tools for the roundtables. The old growth bill (HB 884) was recently amended to exclude State Forests and private lands from its impact.

Anne gave an update on 5 Million Tree Program. DNR’s strategy was presented by Phil, Anne, Marian, and Iris to the Trees and Carbon Markets Commission on March 11th. She covered that the trees are additional to the trees required by the Green House Gas Reduction Act, how the State Nursery is ramping up

production, and outreach for the 13 new positions. MFS is distributing a [link to a form](#) that people interested in the new 5 million trees jobs can fill out to be notified once the jobs are posted, trying to reach people to reflect the demographic and geographic diversity of the state. She also discussed DNR's plans to expand current programs and create new targeting opportunities to address needs. Healthy Forest Healthy Waters is a great partnership between DNR, MFF, and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay that DNR wants to use as a model for new programs. Landowner interest is a challenge and the bill has some constraints for how the funds can be used. Maintenance is also a challenge, but there are a lot of great opportunities going forward, like volunteer programs, regional care teams, and creating a solid network for contracting out maintenance. Ramping up production of seedlings and workforce develop will be very important for this effort. The Chesapeake Bay Trust is running the program to administer funds for tree planting in urban, underserved areas. Their first grant application window closed and they received \$14 million in requests for the \$10 million in funding. DNR is developing a map to identify the urban, underserved areas to assist with the future grant cycles.

Dan discussed progress with the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) and MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural & Resource-based Industry Development Corporation) grants. The RMC grant cycle will be open to receive letters of intent in April, full proposals in late Spring, and funding in late October. MAERDAF (Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund) grants will be capped at \$40,000 per project this year. The Council brought up concerns that this limit is too low; awarding more money to less people tends to create more change, especially when you factor in how much money admin work takes. RMPIF (Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund) caps are TBD, some of their categories will have no upper limit. They usually fund \$50,000 to \$100,000 projects. MAERDAF grants are for ag education and economic development, usually smaller projects. RMPIF grants are more traditional economic development oriented, with three funding categories- infrastructure, health care, and entrepreneurship. The Rural Maryland Council has been very supportive of forestry. MARBIDCO is doing well. Dan and company are trying to make MARBIDCO better benefit forestry, which has been difficult due to lack of good collateral. They were able to get out some federal pandemic funds to the forest industry, which was highly sought after. There will likely be a \$500,000 of annual funding for MARBIDCO starting July 2022.

The meeting ended with member updates. Gary promoted the MFF Framing the Future webinar series, on every third Thursday. Tony DiPaolo brought attention to the issues loggers are currently facing with inflation, cost of equipment, and cost of gas. Wood prices are not strong enough to support this.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang & Iris Allen