



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

Monday, May 22, 10:30 am to Tuesday, May 23, 2017 3 pm
Woodmont Lodge, Woodmont Natural Resources Management Area
Minutes

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Kenneth Roberts
Verso Corporation
Westport, MD 21562

Alberto Goetzl, chair
Dream Catcher Farm,
LLC
Adamstown, MD 21710

Bryan Seipp
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Christine Cadigan
American Forest
Foundation
Washington, DC 20036

Elizabeth Hill
Dorchester Forestry
Board
Linkwood, MD 21835

Attendees:

Al Goetzl
Eric Sprague
Ken Roberts
Bryan Seipp
Gary Allen
Kim Finch

DNR:

Donald VanHassent
Anne Hairston-Strang
Dan Rider
Rob Feldt
Marian Honecny
Stacy Schaefer

Guests:

Don Outen, retired
Elizabeth Hill, Dorchester Lumber
Donnelle Keech, The Nature Conservancy
Greg Evans, Virginia Department of Forestry
Suzanne Dorsey, Harry R. Hughes Center for AgroEcology, Inc.
Scott Kurtzman, Glatfelter
Steve McHenry, MARBIDCO
Craig Highfield, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Action items:

Appoint subcommittee for guiding baseline forest cover assessment
Develop fund-raising for Rodgers Memorial with Society of American Foresters (\$2400 goal)

Refine goals and identify planned actions for 3 priorities:

- **Short-term:** Provide guidance on no-net-loss of forest policy for baseline, tracking, and reporting, covering all programs, suggesting a fact sheet on data sources and tracking approach
- **Medium-term:** Provide leadership in expanding forest marketing, such as a million ton challenge, expanding markets over a diversity of products more closely integrated with agricultural systems, connecting with next-generation entrepreneurs, reducing regulatory burden while meeting environmental goals, pursuing biomass for energy in a broad-based partnership, with all efforts connecting to good forest management practices, partnering with Harry R Hughes Center for AgroEcology for a workshop on forest products
- **Long-term:** Encourage forest management planning, greater adoption of active management, and broader public support with more professional outreach campaign (building on Wood-the Natural Choice, Buy Local, etc.)

Minutes:

Al Goetzl, Chair, opened the SFC retreat at 10:30am on 5/22, and introductions of members and guests were made. Donald VanHassent, State Forester, gave an overview of Maryland Forest Service (MFS) progress in implementing programs and forest-related laws. Rob Feldt, MFS Forest Planning, briefed the Council on methods of forest cover analysis, including Chesapeake Bay tracking. The

SFC discussed the challenges of establishing a clear baseline and consistent trend analysis as technologies change dramatically and different data sources become available. They expressed the need for clarity in assessing and reporting trends in forest cover to meet the 2013 Forest Preservation Act.

Guest speakers presented different approaches to conserving forest lands. Donnelle Keech of The Nature Conservancy shared the MD/DC Chapter's Resilient Forests Program efforts to connect and conserve critical areas for biodiversity to adapt to changing conditions, combining approaches for science, management, and outreach. Stacy Schaefer, with MD DNR Land Acquisition and Planning, reviewed major land conservation programs that use easements to conserve forests, including Rural Legacy, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Program Open Space, MD Ag. Land Preservation Foundation, and Maryland Environmental Trust (MET). She explained that most of the programs offer payment for foregone development rights, and MET works with donated easements. She also described a federal program, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration, which supports conservation of rural landscapes in designated zones around military bases. Council members discussed language in the standard easement document that restricts most activities in stream buffers, suggesting that a requirement that state BMPs be followed would be a better approach. Greg Evans with Virginia Department of Forestry presented recent analysis of pilot projects in Virginia and Pennsylvania to quantify value of forest land conservation in the context of meeting TMDL requirements, identifying cost savings for local governments for pursuing conservation rather than mitigation.

The SFC discussed the status, needs, and opportunities for markets in the state, since forest products markets are another major tool for encouraging retention and making forest management feasible. Dan Rider, the program manager for Forest Stewardship and Utilization, reviewed the declining trends in forest product markets, challenges for expanding woody biomass programs, adoption of new guidance for forest harvesting sediment and erosion control permitting, and future opportunities to streamline permitting and review. Members and guests currently working in forest industry, including Scott Kurtman and Elizabeth Hill, identified numerous challenges facing Maryland's forest industry, particularly challenges in locating accessible wood supply (e.g., 40+ acres more economical), road and truck weight limitations (esp. with variation in wood density), and higher wood quality requirements to improve end product performance. Al Goetzl updated the SFC on the outlook for international trade in a rapidly evolving trade environment. Steve McHenry with Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation presented current financing opportunities and programs to encourage new forest industry.

Following dinner, the SFC discussed options to commemorate the contributions of one of the founding members who passed on in late 2016, Kirk Rodgers. Location for a plaque was discussed, following up on several earlier recommendations from Eastern Region staff; feedback from the Rodgers family communicated a preference for the option to build a stone base with an inlaid bronze plaque for the existing kiosk at the entrance to the Fred W. Besley Demonstration Forest. The Forest is formerly a Rodgers family holding where Kirk spent time in his youth with his grandfather, Fred Besley, Maryland's first State Forester. In addition to the special significance for Kirk, it also is located in Dorchester Co. close to most of the family holdings, is named for his grandfather, and the existing kiosk already has Kirk's photo for his role in the land transfer to the State. The existing kiosk currently is just grass at the base, and the stone, labor, and plaque are estimated to cost \$2,400. It will require permission from and coordination with the private landowner, a friend of the Rodgers family, who was willing to place the kiosk at that location since it was more visible than the State-owned land further down the road. The SFC discussed fund-raising strategies and suggested coordinating donations in conjunction with the MD/DE Society of American Foresters. Brian Seipp

agreed to be the conduit to reach out to the SAF chapter, and organize donations around the fall or winter SAF meeting.

Another option discussed was naming a trail for Kirk Rodgers, such as the East Loop of the bird watching trail on the Marshyhope Tract, which goes down to the water. This would require approval by the State Board of Public Works.

Tuesday, May 23rd, the meeting continued at 8:30am, with a presentation by Suzanne Dorsey, the new Executive Director of the Harry R. Hughes Center for AgroEcology. She reviewed the Center's mission to advance environmentally sound and economically viable agriculture and forestry through research, outreach, and collaboration. Discussion included opportunities to expand forest product markets and wood availability, encourage forest management in more fragmented landscapes, and adapt to changes in climate. There was substantial interest in continuing collaboration with the Hughes Center to further mutual goals in forest management and markets, and discussion of a possible workshop to stimulate leadership on the issue.

Marian Honeczy, program manager for Urban and Community Forestry, gave an overview of programs contributing to forest planting and conservation in the state. These included Gift of Trees, TreeMendous, TreeCity, Lawn-to-Woodland, Marylanders Plant Trees, and Chesapeake Bay commitments to expand urban tree canopy by 45 acres per year, not counting mitigation. She also reviewed the roles of state laws, including Roadside Tree Law in limiting tree removals in the public road right-of-way, licensed tree expert law to set standards for licensed and insured tree work, the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), the State Highway Reforestation Law, and fee-in-lieu planting programs for FCA and State Highways. Progress with the FCA over 20 years included over half of forest land reviewed being retained during development and restricted from future development and over 9% replanted on- or off-site. Some sites without trees are required to add forest (e.g. 20%), with the latest rulings clarifying that solar farms are included in that requirement. Discussion included types of tree planting that could occur if more consistent funding was available for interested landowners.

The SFC discussed partnerships and opportunities for expanding forest management, and heard presentations on programs from regional and local partners. Craig Highfield with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay shared work being done on outreach and restoration through Forests for the Bay, Land Server, new riparian forest buffer and urban tree canopy websites, Real Forestry for Real Estate realtor training, Family Forest Legacy Planning workshops, and Your Woods and Your Wallet workshops on forest product income opportunities. Don Outen, recently retired from Baltimore County and the SFC, presented need for and progress on efforts to increase forest management in forest patches with multiple owners through collaborative efforts.

Dan Rider with MFS updated the SFC on the Woodland Incentive Program. The Woodland Incentive Program provided \$130,000 in cost-share assistance to Maryland forest owners this year so far, less than the \$200,000 in projects that were authorized, since some projects were delayed or not implemented. He reported that landowner interest has grown over time, with more projects funded for smaller acreages. Requests were about equal among three major categories: forest stewardship plans- usually to participate in property tax abatement programs-, reforestation, and forest improvements such as thinning or invasive species control. Recent meetings with representatives from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation have focused on Forest Conservation Management Agreement issues and property tax abatement but will continue to be able to address the Woodland Incentive Program funding questions; Dan and Don met with Delegate Stein and expect resolution by December. Following the WIP committee report in December, efforts are

concentrated on improving implementation of the requirements already in law and addressing inconsistencies among county tax offices in interpreting treatment of transfer taxes from developing rural parcels and how “entirely wooded parcel” is applied. A followup meeting between the State Forester and State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation is needed to generate the necessary training, or clarify the need to modify legislative language.

With the background information presented, the Sustainable Forestry Council reviewed action items noted during the discussion. The SFC discussed priorities for the upcoming two years, using dot voting to initiate selection of highest priorities. They prioritized short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the Council to pursue.

Selected priorities were:

Short-term: Provide guidance on no-net-loss of forest policy for baseline, tracking, and reporting, covering all programs

Medium-term: Provide leadership in expanding forest marketing, such as a million ton challenge, expanding markets over a diversity of products more closely integrated with agricultural systems, connecting with next-generation entrepreneurs, reducing regulatory burden while meeting environmental goals, pursuing biomass for energy in a broad-based partnership, with all efforts connecting to good forest management practices

Long-term: Encourage forest management planning, greater adoption of active management, and broader public support with more professional outreach campaign (building on Wood- the Natural Choice, Buy Local, etc.)

Additional actions and points were discussed, and are recorded for future discussion and refinement, and may be used to inform changes to the Maryland Forest Action Plan.

- Improve use of easements for sustainable forestry, increase flexibility in DNR easements for managing forest buffers, and expand the use of CREP buffer easements to additional counties;
- Develop dedicated funding sources for tree planting and forest preservation, particularly for developed lands and buffers;
- Pursue options for forest banking and trading, including for Forest Conservation Act, Total Maximum Daily Load goals, and with reverse auction options for generating credit demand from mitigation banks;
- Develop a database for statewide forest information;
- Provide leadership on land conservation policy to address fragmentation;
- Continue to pursue fair funding for the Woodland Incentive Fund to maintain landowner cost-share funding that is simple with quick turn-around; work with State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation to improve consistency of administration for transfer taxes on entirely wooded parcels and maintain funding for the program;
- Establish a Sustainable Forestry Recognition Program with private and local government categories to reward good work in addressing threats to forest health, including invasive species, and practices to improve water quality and habitat.

Needs/Issues warranting attention or follow-up from the discussions at the retreat included:

- Determine and communicate the base data for forest cover and urban tree canopy.

- No net loss policy issues: baseline/definition, tracking/methodology, reporting (who/when)
- Conservation easement buffer management provisions (not restricting sustainable management)
- Expand CREP easements to additional counties, developing the science-based rationale for expanding priority areas for CREP program eligibility to take to Board of Public Works, whose approval is needed to change the spending approach.
- Explore conservation possibilities in Sentinel Landscape partnerships with VA, DOD DOI
- Offsite reforestation options that can generate water qualify credits for TMDL off-set.
- Encourage reverse auctions from mitigation banks.
- Ideas for new markets
- Signups for equipment loans and forestry incentives, partnering with MARBIDCO
- Structuring a TMDL credit
- FCA/CA interaction
- Policy issues for conservation
 - Integrated reporting
 - Integrated, coordinated funding
 - Overcoming fragmentation
- New markets that pursue profitability for operators and improve certainty for supply chain
- Looking for broader ideas for wood biomass, including wood energy, urban farming, biogas/zero waste programs, including diverse entrepreneurs and building on MD Wood Energy Coalition efforts
- Bridge agricultural, forestry, and environmental communities.
- Partnership with business schools
- Need to generate ½ million tons additional demand for wood fiber in Maryland
- NJ model for waste wood
- On-farm renewable energy, solar or other on least productive land
- Poultry litter with biochar, poultry bedding and used to increase soil organic matter (e.g., Murphy Farm- IR- litter into energy, also improves chicken health and air quality)
- Need market for high phosphorus potash
- Harry R. Hughes Center for AgroEcology and US Endowment for Communities and Forests partner for a workshop on generating 1 million ton demand/million ton challenge with cash award
- Changes in urban and suburban resident attitudes
- Focus outreach on educated policymakers.
- Partner with Rural Maryland Council on working lands issues.
- Address megatrends of parcelization and invasive species.
- Production and utilization economies and potential for aggregating for services or harvests
- Keep capacity for core rural programs, including manpower to do one-on-one service, and keep tax programs for incentive for landowner participation and better follow-up implementation.
- Add capacity for managing forests on smaller lots.
- Challenges with landowners moving from understanding of forest management to action and application.
- Follow up with finding efficiencies for collective management and existing plans.
- Geodatabase- develop and pilot in Western MD.
- Tree planting needs to be consistently funded from a reliable source versus slow process through competitive grants, look at examples of Trust Fund SNAP (Stormwater Nutrient Assessment Program).

Christine Cadigan had sent word of her move to Virginia, unfortunately having to coincide with the retreat, and expressed interest in continuing to interact with the Council in her capacity with the American Forest Foundation, even if her move makes continued Council membership ineligible. The SFC discussed potential new members, including those from conservation non-profit organizations. Donnelle Keech was suggested for membership, and she requested time to present the suggestion to her organization, The Nature Conservancy.

Al Goetzl adjourned the retreat at 3pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Hairston-Strang
MD DNR Forest Service