



# Sustainable Forestry Council

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## SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

January 22, 2013

### Minutes

#### Attendees:

Gary Allen  
Eric Sprague  
Don Outen  
Kim Finch  
Al Goetzl  
Ken Roberts  
Connie Hoge

#### DNR:

Don VanHassent  
Steve Koehn

#### Guests:

Robert Tjaden, Cooperative Extension  
Elliott Campbell, Cooperative Extension  
Steve McHenry, MARBIDCO

Called to order at 10:08 AM.

Chairman Sprague introduced Don Outen as the new Vice-Chair of the Council.

Don VanHassent briefed the Council on legislative activity to date. The Departmental “Forestry Omnibus” bill has not yet been introduced but is expected to be in the next week or two. In anticipation of what may be in that bill regarding local comprehensive plans, Don Outen suggested we take a look at a few comp plans to see if there is much of an issue with forest protection. He also suggested we determine the schedule of county comp plan updates and see which counties are due in the next few years. The Council has talked about developing guidelines concerning forest protection that counties could use when revising their comp plans. We need to seriously pursue this in the coming year.

Steve Koehn informed the Council that a “Dear Colleague” letter will likely be drafted in support of the “Omnibus” bill once it is introduced. This letter will be circulated to forestry stakeholder groups for their consideration and, hopefully, signature.

Don VanHassent and Eric Sprague gave a recap of the history and statistics of the Woodland Incentive Program (WIP). It was agreed that we need to pursue the apparent inequities in reporting with the Department of Assessment and Taxation (DAT). We should consider starting

the discussion on making the agricultural transfer tax proportional to the land use of the property being transferred. Currently, the WIP fund receives ag transfer taxes only from parcels that are 100% wooded. Taxes from a parcel that is 95% wooded and 5% agricultural would not go to WIP.

Robert Tjaden, University of Maryland Extension, briefed the Council on his efforts to research forest industry sustainability. He has prepared a series of surveys that will be sent out in the coming months. The first survey will go to loggers. The plan is to meet with loggers at Master Logger Programs in February and March. The second survey will target primary wood processors and larger secondary processors in April and May. The third set will target landowners and will be sent out in late summer or early fall. Bob provided copies of what they have developed so far and asked for comments.

Steve McHenry, Maryland Agricultural and Resource Based Industries Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), briefed the Council on the various programs available through MARBIDCO. The vast majority (90%) of their budget is in making loans to eligible agricultural and resource-based industries. He expects to loan approximately \$4,000,000 this year. He would like to fund more forest industry projects but applications have been lacking.

A discussion on potential items to address in 2013 produced the following:

- Opportunities to increase urban tree canopy and remove impervious surface
- Renewable energy
- “On ramps” to forest certification for forest landowners – proposal by end of 2013
- Group certification for Maryland sawmills
- How do we better deliver technical assistance with a reduced staff?
- Development of next generation of forestry leadership
- Ecological services markets
- Coordination of land protection policies between agencies and departments
- Woodland Incentive Fund
- Evaluate planning activities of various counties (as mentioned above)

The final item of the meeting was a request by the Chair for the members to start thinking about new members, length of terms and the staggering of terms. Authorizing statute did not specify length of term but membership on the Council should not be thought of as an appointment for life. Ideas will be discussed at the next meeting. Establishing terms would require a statute change in the next General Assembly.

The next Council meeting will be a conference call to go over the “Omnibus Forestry” bill and the Maryland Forest Service reorganization. This is tentatively scheduled for February 19.

The meeting adjourned at 2:38PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald VanHassent