



Sustainable Forestry Council

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

February 15, 2011

Minutes

Attendees:

Members

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

Members absent

Staff and guests

Donald VanHassent, DNR
Steven Koehn, DNR
Kenneth Jolly, DNR
Rob Feldt, DNR

Gary Allen welcomed Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) members and guests.

Minutes were distributed. Motion to accept the minutes made by Don Outen and seconded by Connie Hoge. Motion was approved.

Don VanHassent provided a legislative update. Of interest to the forestry community:

- SB 80 is the Department's bill to alter the renewal period for Licensed Tree Experts. Current renewals are annual. The bill would allow the Department to set new periods by regulation. The intent is to make the licenses a 2 year renewal and stagger the start so our reduced staff has to deal with 600 renewals per year instead of 1,200.
- HB 313 is a bill to rename the Woodland Incentives Fund to the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund in honor of Mel Noland, a long time friend and champion of forestry in Maryland.
- SB 783 would provide some estate tax benefits to "forest banking operations". The definition of "forest banking operations" is not very clear. The Department will try to provide a better definition.

Steve Koehn expressed regret on behalf of Assistant Secretary Kristin Saunders-Evans that she has been unable to attend the last few Council meetings. Steve also delivered a message from Kristin that the top priority for the Council is to address the issue of no net loss of forests. Steve has been working on a briefing paper for the Governor on forest loss. This will be shared with the Council when it is available. Steve also offered to put together an overnight retreat for the Council so we can really focus on the issues. Options and details will be presented when available.

Gary Allen began a wide ranging discussion on no net loss of forests. The following are notes and thoughts for future consideration.

- Definitions of forest currently in statute
- Must be useable to be able to track year to year
- Growth issues – how or who controls growth will definitely have an impact
- What are the benefits and costs of no net loss of forests?
- Don Outen provided a number of handouts of examples of types of analysis done by Baltimore County that could be applicable across the state.
- Differences between forest cover and canopy cover
- 30 meter scale too limited for state-wide detail
- Chesapeake Bay Program and Forest Conservation Act data not reconcilable
- Trends in forest cover loss vs. rural land loss vs. agricultural land loss
- LIDAR – generates tree height if we feel we need that info
- 1 meter orthophoto is suitable for forest determination
- GIS is good for trees going out, how do we measure trees coming in? Reporting each type of planting, what about mortality?
- NAIP available every 2 or 3 years
- Need list of each type of data – years available, coverage, etc.
- Get LIDAR for other purposes but have access to data?
- Would LIDAR be able to replace need for other data sources?
- Develop cost estimate for LIDAR coverage.
- Current list of UTC communities
- How much forest land is in GreenPrint?
- Water supply limits the ability to grow (develop) up – forcing development out
- What would it take and how long to do an analysis of forest cover and zoning to determine vulnerability to conversion?

Rich Josephson, Maryland Department of Planning, gave a presentation on PlanMaryland, a MDP effort to plan for a sustainable future. The powerpoint presentation will be posted on the Sustainable Forestry Council website.

The following is a proposed list of items for discussion/agreement. These will also form the bulk of the report due at the end of the year.

1. Background (why no net loss?)
2. Program/policies
3. Definitions
4. Measurement – data cost/efficiencies
5. Delivery/implementation
6. Recommendations

The SFC will meet again on March 15, 2011 at a location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald VanHassent