



Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
John R. Griffin, Secretary
Joseph P. Gill, Deputy Secretary

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY COUNCIL

June 3, 2010

Minutes

Attendees:

Members

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

Members absent

Kirk Rodgers
Kenneth Roberts

Staff and guests

Joe Gill, Deputy Secretary
Kristin Saunders-Evans, Assistant Secretary
Kenneth Jolly, Acting Director, Forest Service
Donald VanHassent, Associate Director, Forest Service
Bill Miles

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

Joe Gill distributed ethics forms that are required of Council members. Joe also welcomed the members and thanked them for their willingness to serve as members of the Council. It is a terrific opportunity to develop synergy that produces real forest conservation results.

Gary highlighted some major points and possible areas of SFC action as follows in no particular order:

- Provide copies of the Sustainable Forestry Act (SB549 – 2009). (Done at the meeting)
- SFC is not a snapshot group. This will be an on-going effort.
- SFC will help develop SB666 requirements of a No-Net Loss of Forests policy by December 1, 2011.
- Development is a major driver of forest loss and cannot be addressed by a single policy statement.
- Acquiring forest land to protect it is not the answer. There isn't enough money to accomplish the task.

- Have to take into account political realities.
- Need to find ways to fund the Woodland Incentives Fund.
- Need to look at existing regulation and statute to see if changes should be made.
- The number of forest landowners continues to increase. It is now estimated to exceed 150,000 in Maryland.
- Markets are changing. Traditional forest product markets are shrinking. Potential new markets such as biomass and ecosystem services are developing but still have a ways to go before landowners can use them.
- Need to encourage retention of private forest land.
- The Maryland Forest Service has lost approximately 40% of its staff in the last decade.
- Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) goals in cities, towns and communities are important in keeping tree cover.
- Every member has unique knowledge and experiences that will help the SFC become a success.

Gary asked each member to say a few words as to thoughts or expectations of the duties of the SFC.

Eric Sprague – we need to develop concrete ways to advance forest conservation

Connie Hoge – trees should not be considered an inconvenience. Need to change that culture/mind set.

Don Outen – has been involved in the national roundtable on forest sustainability and trying to get some ideas implemented in Baltimore County including no net loss of forest. County governments have responsibilities for forest conservation. The water agenda has driven a lot of what counties do.

Gregory Purnell – as a representative from the county and municipal arena, what does “urban forest” mean – what is the value to the public? Tree plantings are frequently photo-ops with little or no follow-up care. There needs to be an outreach component to our efforts.

Al Goetzl – brings the perspective of a small woodlot owner. Need measures to determine if policies are working and how to disseminate information. The deterioration of the health of the forests due to invasive species, deer and other agents is a major concern. The loss of forests is part of a demographic issue and we need to involve planners to help address the issue.

Kim Finch – there appears to be a lack of coordination with all the environmental activities going on. Perhaps this group can help.

Gary stated that he did not want this group to become a “being briefed” group. Some briefing will be necessary but we need to spend more time discussing issues, developing actions items and working to implement those items. He also asked each member to send him a one page summary of their expectations for the Council by July 9.

Kristin Saunders-Evans stated that the SFC is a partner with DNR. In keeping with the “political realities” idea mentioned earlier, Kristin (and DNR) is looking for new, bold ideas for the next gubernatorial term.

Kenneth Jolly gave a brief presentation on the status of the Forest Service’s effort to fulfill U.S. Forest Service requirements for states to conduct a State Assessment and Strategies (SAS). This effort will provide an assessment of current forest conditions and issues and develop strategies to address those issues over the next five years. The Forest Service has a web page that explains the effort including draft and eventually final documents. That web page is <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/sas.asp>

Bill Miles provided a brief history of how the Sustainable Forestry Act came to fruition as well as the No-Net Loss of Forest Task Force. The SFA and the No-Net Loss report will be key documents for the SFC to use as it moves forward.

The SFC will meet again in late September and again in November. A tentative date of September 23 has been put on the calendar. This meeting will be in the Tawes Building in Annapolis.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald VanHassent