



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

9:30-11:30 am

Conference Call 1-888-450-5996

Eric Sprague
American Forests,
Washington, DC

Donald Outen
Natural Resource
Manager
Baltimore County DEPS
Towson, Maryland 21204

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kirk Rodgers
Private landowner
Woolford, MD 21677

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

Kenneth Roberts
Verso Corporation
Westernport, MD 21562

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

Bryan Seipp
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Minutes

Attendees:

Al Goetzl
Kirk Rodgers
Ken Roberts
Don Outen
Eric Sprague
Bryan Seipp
Gary Allen
Kim Finch

DNR and Guests:

Donald VanHassent
Anne Hairston-Strang

Action items:

MFS research budget info for Parks to help coordinate and articulate funding solution related to HB862 (meeting scheduled)
Ask Rob Feldt to analyze how many entirely wooded parcels (confirm decision rules for entirely wooded)
Don VanHassent to check whether gypsy moth funding proposed in a supplemental budget (no supplemental budget prepared)

Minutes:

Al Goetzl called the meeting to order at 9:35am on the conference call. The minutes from the January 19, 2016 call were reviewed, Gary Allen moved to approve, and minutes were approved with a correction to the 5/24 proposed meeting date. Eric Sprague noted his new contact information at American Forests and expressed willingness to continue serving on the SFC.

Don VanHassent presented a legislative update, noting that a record number of bills were introduced, relatively few related to forestry. The departmental bill HB65, removing the sunset clause on the 2-year licensing approach for licensed tree experts, was approved in the House and was being heard in the Senate. Other bills to alter roadside tree processes and alter net tract area for Forest Conservation Act (Prince George's County only) were not progressing through the legislature. The bill changing state land payment in lieu of taxes, sponsored by Senator Edwards, passed the Senate and was in the house. Kirk Rodgers reported that he had testified on the Program Open Space funding bill.

Al Goetzl testified on the DNR budget on behalf of the SFC in the House; the Senate did not take oral testimony. Tim Casey with Friends of Maryland State Parks also testified, and expressed willingness to communicate regarding future funding for Forest Service following enactment of SB862. DNR will pursue more information on budgeting for Parks to better inform and articulate options for future funding.

Gary Allen reported that the Woodland Incentive Fund review workgroup was delayed by waiting for the Land Preservation Study Group, and a one-year extension has been drafted for review and approval by the legislative committee.

The SFC discussed other funding formulas to replenish the Mel Noland Woodland Incentive Fund. Updated agricultural transfer tax information from the State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation was provided, showing that some counties had no completely wooded parcels sold, and many properties were subject to letters of intent to retain rural use and not subject to tax. Don Outen described the shifts in land preservation investments by local governments due to re-prioritization of funding for TMDL (restoration rather than conservation) and the role of the septic tier law. Gary suggested that the workgroup could include that issue. Identified needs included: clarify transfer tax logistics, internal clarification of the transfer tax process, implementation, case studies, and follow-up with what is needed for change. Al offered to invite a county tax assessor employee to a later meeting. The 2014 WIF report and Land Preservation Study Group report will be made available to Council members.

Gary Allen reported that the 2016 biomass bill did not include biomass in the renewal portfolio standards. This will affect the viable size of potential biomass projects since tax incentives would not be available.

Don Outen updated the committee on the Prettyboy Resource Collaborative effort and the proposal in response to the Healthy Watershed Request for Proposals from EPA. The Prettyboy proposal was developed in conjunction with Center for Watershed Protection, the Prettyboy Watershed Alliance, Keystone Development Center, and Dovetail Partners, titled: Beyond Easements, Cooperative Resource Management to Protect Water Quality.

The committee discussed the need to follow up on the gypsy moth suppression funding issue. Gypsy moth outbreaks are occurring in surrounding states, and preparations to allow a timely response in Maryland would be prudent. It was not added to the regular budget. Don VanHassent volunteered to check the supplemental budget.

Gary reviewed opportunities related to the Baltimore Wilderness Coalition efforts on using green infrastructure and investments in natural capital to improve landscape resiliency to climate change. Discussions included looking at capital improvement efforts that could include green infrastructure at local government levels. Don Outen and Kim Finch brought up current investments through the MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permits and planning requirements for septic systems that limit development outside of areas served by sewers.

Future meeting topics were discussed, including an annual report from the SFC and a field trip for late May. May 24 (now changed to June 7) and Sep. 27 were proposed meeting dates.

Al Goetzl adjourned the meeting at 11:10am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Hairston-Strang
MD DNR Forest Service