



Sustainable Forestry Council

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

Monday, January 27, 2020

10 am-12:00 pm

580 Taylor Ave., E-1 corner Conference Room, Annapolis MD 21401

Conference Call- google hangouts

Gary Allen
Center for Chesapeake
Communities
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Kenneth Roberts
Verso Corporation
Westport, MD 21562

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

Bryan Seipp
Center for Watershed
Protection
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Elizabeth Hill
Dorchester Forestry Bd.
Linkwood, MD 21835

Donnelle Keech
The Nature Conservancy
Cumberland, MD 21502

Bill Rees
Catonsville Tree Canopy
Committee
Catonsville, MD 21228

SFC members:

Al Goetzi
Kim Finch
Gary Allen
Donnelle Keech

DNR Staff:

Anne Hairston-Strang
Kenneth Jolly
Marian Honecny
Iris Allen

Guests:

Action Items:

Gary send updates when relevant legislation is introduced
Anne and staff develop a tree/forest plantings program background paper for an April meeting
Donnelle to check with TNC lead on ecological departure analysis at future meeting

Kim Finch, Vice-chair, opened the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) meeting at 10:10 am. Gary moved that the December minutes be approved as distributed by staff, Kim seconded, and minutes were approved.

Kenneth Jolly gave a DNR update. He reviewed the 1/16/20 Sustainable Forestry briefing in Annapolis organized by Association of Forest Industries for the MD House

Environment and Transportation Committee. The Secretary spoke and the Deputy Secretary attended, and gave positive feedback on the variety of presentations, personal connections from the Western MD industry speakers, and level of engagement and active questioning from the legislators. Gary noted that one of the newer members expressed concern over the negative carbon impacts of woody biomass as being dirtier than coal, citing the Natural Resource Defense Council, a perspective relevant to the biomass roundtable planned for June 2. An update was provided on the forest harvesting best management practices MOU with MD Dept. of Environment and DNR; it was signed in July 2019 and is expected to be implemented with policies, revised forms, training, and procedures ready by July 1, 2020.

Marian Honecny reviewed recent and anticipated legislation. The Governor released the new proposed budget, with a budgeted increase, which may primarily reflect county payments in lieu of taxes. The bill will be heard again the day after Presidents Day (mid-February). Some of the new bills proposed that are pertinent to the DNR employees include one on adding adult changing stations to all state government restrooms, and bills on ethics (transparency), term limits, pensions and taxes, retirees and health benefits, workforce development, and public/private partnership toll roads and bridges. The nutrient management bill from last year is back. The Clean and Renewable Energy Standard (CARES) bill is out-SB0265 and HB0363. Marian mentioned that any changes to Forest Conservation Act will likely not happen this session as advocates are waiting on the 2017/2018 Chesapeake Conservancy land cover data to be released this spring.

Gary Allen spoke about several upcoming bills that will impact forests in Maryland. A new climate change bill that would affect the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act will be introduced in early February. One of the proposed parts of the bill is to require planting an additional 1 million trees every year for the next decade. The bill also sets a 100% clean and renewable energy standard, but does not specifically address biomass. Gary will let the SFC know when the bill is released. Gary also mentioned a bill that would raise the cap on the transfer taxes going to the Woodland Incentive Fund from \$200,000 to \$500,000 and define wooded as 80% forested rather than 100% forested, addressing the potential for misclassifying a parcel as not wooded if it had a road or shed.

Gary talked about the potential for a Forest Stewardship Act, which would provide funding for forest landowner outreach from forest district conservancy boards. It would provide \$750,000 a year for activities like training and outreach that would enhance the skills of forest landowners. It would likely require full time staff from Maryland Forestry Foundation. There is another bill proposed by Rep. Dana Stein that would provide staffing and outreach to municipal governments for a backyard forest landowner program. It would need local foresters and a green teams. Gary also mentioned that the biomass bill was recently introduced. He explained support going to the UM Environmental Finance Center for Sustainable Maryland, and expansion to support an urban forestry camp at University of MD College Park, similar to the Natural Resources Career Camp in Garrett County.

Anne Hairston-Strang discussed the State Forest Action Plan (SFAP), which is due at the end of June. The current timeline involve a draft getting posted for public comment in mid- March. The goals for the SFAP are to emphasize keeping forest, forest health, water issues, importance of urban trees, and climate change. She then asked for suggestions on other things to mention in the SFAP. Donnelle Keech suggested emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to fire management, making it clear that fire is an important part of ecology, but suppression is also important to protect communities. Another suggestion she had was to mention the need for landscape-scale age-class diversity, which looks at ecological maturity, not just economic, explicitly defining older forests and how they are being managed. The council discussed differences between forest cover and tree canopy, and impact on measuring no net forest loss. Gary Allen suggested that the State Forester should be responsible for defining.

Al Goetzl identified a need to highlight the legality and sustainability of forest management in Maryland, particularly for overseas markets, and the advantages of performing a risk assessment to document Maryland's low risk of unsustainable harvesting. Donnelle Keech mentioned the ecological departure analysis that the Nature Conservancy is working on. The goal of the project is to model the gap between current and desired forest conditions at the landscape scale with a focus on age class diversity distribution. The project shares boundaries with the Potomac Headwaters Project from the Fire Learning Network. Donnelle will check with the TNC lead for a future update for SFC.

Next meeting dates were discussed. Anne will add more dates to the meeting poll. Members suggested that a meeting in March would be helpful to discuss new legislation, the Action Plan, and ideas on how to increase tree planting efforts.

Al Goetzl adjourned the meeting at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang
Maryland Forest Service