



# Sustainable Forestry Council

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

November 10, 2020

Google Meet 1pm - 3pm

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 Goetzl, 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

Gary Allen  
Bill Rees  
Al Goetzl  
Kim Finch  
Beth Hill  
Donnelle Keech

## DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang  
Kenneth Jolly  
Daniel Rider  
Marian Honecny  
Iris Allen

## Guests

Joe Hinson  
Jason Dubow  
Phillip Gottwals  
Anna Jensen

## Action Items:

- Send nominations for new SFC members to Anne (3 potential vacancies)
- MFS compile tree planting progress for past several years
- MFS send web link on the Family Forest Carbon Program

Al Goetzl, Chair, opened the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC) meeting at 1pm. Gary Allen moved to accept the minutes from the Sep. 22nd meeting, Bill Rees seconded it, and all approved.

Kenneth Jolly, Acting State Forester, provided an update on the DNR budget and its challenges and adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 10% overall reduction in DNR's general funds includes no new vehicles and loss of the Mel Noland Fellowships to support youth training programs, but special funds are offsetting reductions to avoid any further losses of staff positions or core operating funds. The FY21 budget was increased, but the additional funds are

repayments to the Forest, Park, and Reserve Fund and do not increase the current operating budget.

Kenneth reviewed the eight vacancies at the Forest Service, about 10% of staff, and noted that all paperwork is in, they are being held in DNR while revenue projections are reviewed, and are expected to be submitted to DBM for review later. One position, the forest technician in Frederick and Washington Counties, was eliminated in July. Gary asked about other units being able to hire. Kenneth responded that most of the directors are trying to get hiring approval and the few newly filled positions at Wildlife and Heritage and Engineering were very critical to managing the budget. Some smaller units had 50% vacancies. Al asked about the newly approved constitutional amendment which gives the legislature more control over amending the Governor's submitted budget and Kenneth clarified that it will not take place for a few years, after Governor Hogan is out of office.

Kenneth then provided an update on other Forest Service activities. He is working on nominations for new SFC members and has been working with MDE to make changes to sediment and erosion control rules. Kenneth then gave a summary on the Forest Service's tree planting efforts this year- over half a million trees on over 1,030 acres. Gary requested a record of tree planting efforts for the last few years. The Forest Service also provided assistance to 1,604 woodland owners with 473 forest management plans on 79,667 acres. Maryland fire crews responded to 73 fires on 1,416 acres in Maryland and have been mobilized to 27 incidents around the country. Some other yearly highlights include the production of the 2019 annual report and the biomass webinar series, which had 173 attendees.

Phil Gottwals of ACDS, LLC gave an update on the Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS) for the Maryland Forest Products sector. The three foundational strategies of the report involve an effective advocate for the forest industry, inclusion in economic development planning, and accessible information on Maryland's forest resources that could improve supply chain coordination. Subject to review and approval by funders, a draft should be available in December. Phil then reviewed the four goals and nine initiatives, and explained the outreach to the legislature. He also mentioned some potential grant support for supply chain coordination from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and Wood Innovation Grants from USFS. Given the current disaggregated nature of the industry, the analysis suggested that helping mills, loggers, and secondary manufacturers communicate on supply issues could generate near-term gains for the industry, whether through forest resource information dashboards and relational databases or through service providers, such as [Agulus](#), an agricultural tech company. He went on to say that this could aid in supply chain certification. Beth Hill affirmed that these services could be useful for forest industry.

Jason Dubow from the MD Dept. of Planning reviewed the set of goals developed by the Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee of the Rural Economies Workgroup for the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission. The Commission is due to sunset this year, and MDP was identifying implementation pathways for the important recommendations from this effort. Jason proposed a letter from the MDP Secretary to the DNR Secretary, and went over the two major asks for follow-up implementation and the SFC provided feedback on a potential role of the council. "Is the SFC willing to advise and provide guidance to support the recommendations from the Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee of the Rural Economies Workgroup, with the understanding that MDP and DNR staff would be able to assist in facilitating implementation of those recommendations" and "Is the SFC willing to periodically consider providing advice and guidance for additional forestry or forest product market recommendations that MDP and/or DNR staff bring to them for their consideration?". Beth asked who has been on the forestry subcommittee and Jason reviewed the emailed names (provided at the end of the minutes). After the SFC reviewed the goals and noted the relevance to sustainable forestry, Donnelle moved to approve the SFC serving as an institutional venue to continue to advise existing Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee recommendations and generate related new items. Beth seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Jason detailed the recommendations from the MSGC Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee: integration of sediment and erosion control plans in forest management plans, standardizing the application procedure for harvesting across the state, expanding the market for local wood, getting more wood stoves/ pellet burners in residential areas, expanding MD forest products utilization and marketing program plans to address emerging opportunities, establishing policy for forestry cooperatives in MD, providing property tax relief for landowners in easements to generate forest products, and supporting markets for wood residue/by-products/waste. Jason agreed to follow up with

The Committee decided to postpone action on biomass until the next call, when Gary could provide an update. Dan gave a quick update on Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). He has been informed that there will be proposed legislation by Senator Augustine to include stand-alone woody biomass for thermal renewable energy credits into the RPS, which it is currently excluded from except combined with animal waste.

Anne provided an update on the status of the State Forest Action Plan (SFAP). The deadline for public comments is November 16<sup>th</sup>. So far there have been a lot of comments from the Old Growth Forest Network. Anne inform the SFC about a webinar on November 13<sup>th</sup> which will review the SFAP documents and is open to the public. Anne mentioned a meeting DNR staff had with U.S. Forest Service program leads, who will provide formal feedback on the SFAP by November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Donnelle informed Anne that comments

from The Nature Conservancy will be submitted soon. Anne requested that SFC members look over the documents and make any comments by November 16<sup>th</sup>.

The SFC discussed emerging carbon trading platforms for access by small landowners to voluntary carbon markets, spurred by the availability of new remote sensing technology and more research on carbon accounting outcomes of forest management practices. Dan reported on work with Dr. Elliot Campbell of DNR and American Forests to look specifically at MD and PA forest management and its influence on carbon, including economic modeling of harvested wood projects over a lifecycle analysis in MD and PA, supported by the US Climate Alliance. Dan mentioned Finite Carbon's CORE Carbon project which supports carbon-based easements on small, family owned forests. Anne said that Sally Claggett, the US Forest Service Chesapeake Bay Liaison, was setting up meetings with Finite Carbon and State Foresters in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Donnelle explained that The Nature Conservancy and the American Forest Foundation are working on a similar project called the Family Forest Carbon Program. Donnelle added that TNC is very focused on getting payments to small family forests in Western Maryland. She mentioned that the model used for the program has had third party verifiers sign off on the methodology and that the second phase of Family Forest Carbon will launch in two MD counties in the Central Appalachians next year. She suggested getting a guest speaker to present on forest carbon at a future SFC meeting, which was well-received. Al suggested sending web links on programs. The connection between carbon and forest certification was discussed, noting that a system that measures the level of risk could be used to combine the two and leverage Maryland forest products as responsibly sourced.

Logistics for the next meeting were then discussed. It was suggested that the next meeting be in mid-December, before legislative session begins and after the EAS has its final recommendations, perhaps the week of December 14<sup>th</sup>. Anne will send out a doodle pool to get an exact date/time and will start putting together dates for 2021. Potential topics for next meeting include upcoming legislation, carbon, woody biomass, and the MDP letter. New member nominations should be sent to Anne, who will send them to Kenneth.

Al Goetzl adjourned the meeting at 3:01pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang  
Forest Service

Sustainable Growth Commission's Forestry Subcommittee members-

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