

Forest Practices Advisory Board

September 4, 2013

Members in attendance: Steve Broderick, Christopher Martin, Joan Nichols, Mark Ashton, Mike Bartlett

Guests: Eric Hammerling

DEEP Staff: Doug Emmerthal, Sheila Hoefle (recorder)

Meeting called to order at 9:11 am.

There was no quorum present per CGS Sec. 23-65g. The Statue states, "A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business." At the last three meetings, not enough members have been present to establish a quorum.

Minutes of the May 2012 meeting reviewed. Steve Broderick made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Joan Nichols seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to accept minutes.

Minutes of the April 2013 meeting reviewed. Steve Broderick made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Joan Nichols seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to accept minutes.

Legislative Updates: (see handout) The coming year will hold a third attempt by the Farm Bureau to propose changes to the PA490 legislation. Joan Nichols will keep Eric Hammerling informed of the progress of the proposed language.

Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers (CAAO) is working on an updated M-29 form to allow for revisions/amendments/updates to PA490 Farm Land. The suggested updates will make the form easier to update and facilitate straightforward record keeping for Assessors.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Update

A public hearing was held in Prospect, CT on August 28 regarding the expanding quarantine area for EAB. One individual made a comment at the hearing. New regulations went into effect on 8/29. It is felt that the professional community is well informed and that is why there were no comments. Mike Bartlett stated that Tom Worthley, UConn Extension, has agreed to work with him to get the word out to Eastern Connecticut landowners about the threat of Emerald Ash Borer.

Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has taken up the issue of interstate transport of firewood (see handout). APHIS will hold a hearing in January concerning interstate firewood transport. The Board would like to encourage people to look at the proposal and comment if they see fit.

Mark Ashton is going to draft a letter for the Board to review at the next meeting proposing the idea of setting up a task force for a cost/benefit analysis of proactive planning/action as opposed to reactive actions. Chris Martin suggested reviewing the Forest Action Plan to have close tie-in.

Emergency Forest Restoration

EFRP is an underfunded program until an event occurs (Hurricane Sandy or Hurricane Katrina) and then has to be approved by Congress to be funded. EFRP is a program that includes forests that were heavily damaged and have the opportunity for funding to help restore the forest. Landowners can elect to become involved. There were 50 applicants for EFRP from Connecticut after Hurricane Sandy. Connecticut has been awarded \$2,000,000 but will likely spend \$100,000 on the program. Funding not utilized is returned to the federal government. Many of the applications received have been referred to NRCS to be enrolled in their existing programs. This has been a great learning process for CT DEEP Forestry and the Farm Services Agency. The program has been a catalyst for a better relationship between the two.

Biomass Best Management Practices Update

Doug Emmerthal began working on Biomass BMP's two years ago to be used in Connecticut as guidelines. Doug stated that he will let his counterparts know in other divisions of DEEP what he sets as BMPs. PURA will be notified of the progress of developing BMPs. Doug has collected information from a national website that contains Biomass BMPs from other states and also the Forest Guild. There are many soil types in Connecticut that are too fragile to support biomass harvesting. Chris Martin stated that we need to stay ahead of this issue and should issue volunteer guidelines so that the legislative process won't become too involved. Joan Nichols stated that TimPro would like to have input into the BMP Guidelines. Doug will send Joan information. Doug stated that the BMPs would not be circulated beyond the regulated community and he will notify municipalities that the BMPs should not be used in conjunction with permits.

Forest Practices Act Amended Regulations Status (see handout)

On the handout the bracketed text is the old language, underlined text is the proposed language. The DEEP DOF plans to remove the requirement of a certified check and eliminate the 3% annual increase. Personal check would be accepted and the new fees would be set at \$235 for a new application or renewal and \$65 for the exam.

Certification Program Update

Jennifer Hockla would like to sponsor a training to train the regulated community on using webinars for CEUs. TimPro is also attempting to gauge interest in webinars by sending out a survey. Joan suggests holding off on a training event until interest is gauged. DEEP Forestry will do a mailing to include; webinar survey, EAB Quarantine Information, Utilization training.

Other Business

On September 21 TimPro is sponsoring a Celebrating Agriculture Day at the Woodstock Fair Grounds. The Eastern Regional Finals for the Game Of Logging will be held at Celebrating Agriculture. Hull Forest Products has donated a children's picnic table and TimPro has donated a chainsaw for the raffle. During September TimPro is also sponsoring a Log-A-Load Campaign to benefit the CT Children's Hospital.

CFPA is sponsoring a Run For the Woods Event at Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area on September 7.

CT DEEP Forestry & the CT Urban Forest Council will be held on October 30 at the Aquaturf. Brian Hurlburt will be the keynote speaker.

Hull Forest Products is having an open house on October 12 as part of the Walk-Tober events taking place across the state.

The Project Learning Tree hosted a Teacher Tour at Hull Forest Products this summer, with 10 teachers participating. Rachael Sunny who is one of the PLT Co-Coordinators has left her state position. Chris Martin stated that the Parks Division has been interviewing to replace the vacant position.

The Urban Forestry Program within the Division of Forestry will be announcing an RFP for Road Side Forest work. Money for the grant will come from Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Funding. This funding can be expected on an annual basis.

Steve Broderick will be working with stakeholders to bring awareness to Eastern Connecticut that there are approximately 40,000 unmanaged acres of State Forests in Eastern Connecticut. Those acres cannot be actively managed with no staff present to do the work.

State Lands Management staff have been working on submitting PA490 applications to towns that have State property that is not currently classified under the PA490 program. Having properties classified as PA490 will not save the state any money but rather reallocate funds that are distributed by OPM as payment in lieu of taxes.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station should have a newly appointed Director soon. Kirby Stafford is the interim director.

Jennifer Hockla will handle scheduling the next meeting when she returns to the office.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 am.