

Forest Practices Advisory Board

October 31, 2019

Present: Tom Degnan, Bruce Spaman, Joan Nichols, Chris Martin, Patrick Comins, Ben Oko (phone),

Absent: Ian Branson, Peter Nieman, Joe Theroux, Mark Ashton

Guests: Eric Hammerling (CFPA), Dan Peracchio (DEEP Forestry), Doug Emmerthal (DEEP Forestry), Nick Zito (DEEP Forestry)

Circulated Material: Minutes from the June 2019 meeting,

Meeting called to order at 9:17

1. Approve minutes from June 20, 2019 FPAB meeting. Tom made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Joan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. 2020 Legislative Session

Agency proposed legislation is massive this year. There are 13 sections in the technical portion of the revised legislation. The forestry component is included in Section 12 (23 pages). Includes proposed changes to FPA included clarifying appointment authority for FPAB, 60 day grace period for certification renewal, enhanced reciprocity with other states and Society of American Foresters – Certified Forester. Proposed legislation also includes liability language with Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact that would allow private CIFIC members to respond to instate and Compact to Compact incidents. Proposed legislation is with the Commissioner for review then will go to OPM. If the proposal is approved for legislative consideration and a Bill number, Chris will distribute to FPAB.

Chris doesn't anticipate any other bills that will be forestry related. Chris will be keeping a keen eye in MA regarding proforestation movement. A Bill in MA that bears watching proposes to have all public lands become nature preserves. That would result in no active management or forest health response, no invasive species work. A proponent of proforestation spoke at the CT Urban Forest Council Meeting last week. Discussion about proforestation lead to discussion about carbon sequestration vs carbon storage. The issue is very complex and still evolving.

On Sept 3, 2019 Governor Lamont issued Executive Order No 3, re-establishing and expanding the membership and responsibilities of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3). A Working and Natural Lands working group is being established. The working group will evaluate the role of nature based solutions in climate change mitigation and adaptation and how to best incorporate the economic, social, and environmental co-benefits of these solutions into Connecticut's climate change planning strategies. The Council on Climate Change follows the committee set up of the US Climate Alliance. Chris and Jenny Dickson were invited to work on talking points that will be discussed with the Governor about public land management in Connecticut. Patrick will be submitting testimony on behalf of Connecticut Audubon. Chris has asked that CT SAF get more involved with the policy making in CT. Chris will distribute the public notice with request for comment to FPAB members.

3. Proposed Municipal Forest Practice Regulations Update – The Town of Willington will cover amendments to the Town of Willington Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Forest Practices Regulations at their October 28 meeting. The town has worked extensively with Doug and Nick Nick in developing their regulations. Members of the board discussed the potential confusion on the part of the general public between a land clearing site and a forest operation. It is important to note that land clearing sites do not need to be worked by certified forest practitioners as long as a permit for a change of land-use has been obtained from the town.
4. FPA Enforcement Actions – Staff are working on multiple enforcement actions. Three consent orders are being negotiated. The issues include violations of the conduct regulations and failure to possess forest practitioner certification.
5. 2020 Forest Action Plan - DEEP Forestry is currently in the process of updating the State Forest Action Plan, which needs to be updated every 10 years. The current update is due at the end of June 2020. The State Forest Action Plan was made a requirement in the 2008 Farm bill and CT's first plan was completed in 2010. The Forest Action Plan comprises two sections, an assessment of the current forest resources, conditions, trends, and issues, and a strategy section that sets goals, priorities, and desired future conditions, develops strategies and actions to accomplish those goals, and determines what resources are needed to meet the desired future conditions.

The update of the Forest Action Plan includes a broad outreach component to help shape the goals, priorities, and strategies. This was accomplished via an online survey (>1,000 respondents) and six public roundtable sessions (>100 unique participants). This input bolstered the issues and desired future conditions set forth in the 2010 plan. The Forest Action Plan update process also includes targeted outreach to important stakeholder groups that are integral to accomplishing many of the goals of the plan. This outreach will be combined with the assessment to develop a guidance document that can be used by DEEP Forestry and any other partners working with forest resources throughout the state.

6. Other items –

On August 14 Joe Orefice, Hidden Blossom Farm, hosted a Healthy Soils Workshop – Silvopasture & Agroforestry 101, event. The program covered prescribed grazing concepts, fencing and grazing techniques, livestock impact on the forest, tree regeneration systems for silvopastures and a field tour. There was some concern that a PA490 forest land classification could be cancelled because of silvopasturing taking place. As long as the property still meets the requirements of PA490 Forestland the classification shouldn't be cancelled. Joan made a note that if the property is being used for farming it may be appropriate to have the land classified as PA490 Farm – Woodland. The Board briefly discussed using silvopasture techniques to help control invasives.

FPAB members inquired about the availability of funding for dead/dying roadside trees, specifically in eastern CT. The DEEP does not have any such funding available. DEEP conducted a survey of DEEP owned high-use areas (parks, boat launches, parking areas and some forest roads). Urban forest – any assistance going to be available in eastern Connecticut for dead roadside trees?

Beech leaf disease – Beech leaf disease (BLD) was first detected in August 2019 in CT. It was first found in Ohio in 2012 and has since been found in PA, NY and Ontario, CA. Not much is known about the disease and no effective control or eradication measures have been developed.

Spotted Lanternfly – one live adult spotted lanternfly (SLF) was found in Southbury, CT. A delimiting survey was conducted and no additional SLF were found. The SLF is an invasive insect that was discovered in Berks County, PA in 2014. It is native to Asia. SLF attacks many hosts but prefers tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*). Residents should report potential sightings to ReportSLF@ct.gov.

The Division of Forestry has recently had three position postings; a Western CT Fire Control Officer, State Lands/Wildlife Forester and a Service Forester for Eastern CT. Ideally the Service Forester will start before Larry Rousseau retires in the spring of 2020. The State Lands forester position is funded by the timber harvest revolving fund and Pittman-Robinson funds.

Timpro sponsored a log load fundraiser that resulted in a \$6,000 donation to CT Children's Medical Center. The fundraiser has raised \$40,000 since program started.

Timpro representatives met with Commissioner Dykes, Chris Martin, Rick Jacobson and Deputy Commissioner Whalen. They had a very informative conversation. Timpro hopes to schedule another meeting in the future.

On Saturday October 26 Jim Parda and Joan volunteered at the Teacher Orientation for the Envirothon at the Tolland Agricultural Center in Vernon. Together they taught 49 students about tree measurement techniques (clinometer, DBH tape, and Biltmore stick) to determine tree diameter, merchantable height and estimating board-foot volume.

Susan Whalen's [last day with DEEP was October 31](#). The Commissioner has initiated a nationwide search for a replacement. After hiring Forestry [can](#) coordinate [a field tour with](#) Timpro. Joan suggests visiting an active sale and a small-scale wood-to-energy plant.

The [2012 Best Management Practices guide](#) is now available online. Thank you to Marielena Lima, DEEP Forestry Seasonal Resource Assistant, for her work on the electronic publication.

On October 3, a B-17 providing riders to the public crashed while conducting an emergency landing at Bradley International Airport. Among the victims was Gary Mazzone, a recently retired inspector with the Chief States Attorney's office and a former Captain with the Town of Vernon Police. Gary worked with Forest Practices Act staff on numerous timber theft investigations. Most notably, his work with FPA staff led to the conviction of Cathy and Lee Morsey leading to the restitution of \$275,000 to the 7 victims and a 4 year jail term for Cathy Morsey. His degree in forestry from Paul Smith's greatly facilitated the investigations and communications with prosecutors. The outcomes of the forestry cases he worked on went a long way to cleaning up the industry's image that had been damaged by a few bad apples.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal grant program administered by the Dept of Interior and National Park Service federally. The State of CT program provides funding for recreation planning, acquisition of lands and waters and facility development. The goal of the program is to increase opportunities and the quality of outdoor recreation. Connecticut has protected undeveloped land near Devil's Hopyard and Mondo Pond state parks.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2019 – the act would amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies. The Act would bring approximately 12 million dollars to Connecticut.

Tom made a motion to adjourn at 11:40am , Bruce seconded. Vote unanimous to adjourn. Chris to send out an email regarding next meeting date.