

Forest Practices Advisory Board

10/31/2022

Members: Christopher Martin, Barbara Kelly, Bruce Spaman, Patrick Comins, Dr. Mark Ashton, Tom Degnan, Ian Branson, Joan Nichols

Guests: Nick Zito – DEEP, Eric Hammerling – CFPA, Hailey Baranowski, Sheila Hoefle – DEEP (recorder)

Absent: Brennan Sheahan

Chris called the meeting to order at 9:02 am. Chris thanks Eric and CFPA for hosting the meeting and announced that the meeting was being broadcast on CTN.

Background on FPAB – The Forest Practices Advisory Board was established by State Statute ([CGS 23-65g](#)) in 1991. The Board is charged with three primary duties:

1. To periodically review applicable regulations concerning forest practices and the certification of forest practitioners and, as needed, issue recommendations to the Commissioner of Energy & Environmental Protection for changes to such regulations;
2. To periodically review the programs and policies of the department regarding forests, forest health and forest practices and issue recommendations to the commissioner for changes, as needed, to such programs and policies; and
3. To provide advice and guidance to the commissioner regarding the certification of technically proficient forest practitioners and the revocation or suspension of such certifications.

Members introduced themselves. Haley introduced herself as an Environmental Science Student attending as a requirement for a class.

Minutes of the June 27, 2022, meeting – Minutes amended moving Tom Degnan to the list of absent members. Motion to approve as amended by Joan, seconded by Barbara. Bruce abstained.

FPAB Vacancies – Christina Smith from Groundwork Bridgeport has been suggested as a new member of the Board. The vacancy will be filled by an appointee of the House Minority Leader as a member of the general public. Tom Degnan's term as a Board member for the Connecticut Forest and Park Association is coming to an end, Jeff Ward will be replacing him at CFPA. Chris thanked Tom for his participation on the Forest Practices Board as an officer of an environmental organization that is headquartered within the state and is concerned primarily with forests. A new Board member will need to be appointed to replace Tom.

2023 Legislative Proposals – 2022 Legislative Actions clarified the appointing authorities for the Forest Practices Advisory Board members, implemented a grace period for forest practitioner certification following certification expiration, simplified forest practitioner continuing education requirements and expanded reciprocity for certified forest practitioners. (See page 4 for the memo that was sent to Forest Practitioners). Nick is working with DEEP Legal Staff to determine the how to ensure that practitioners that are issued a certification through reciprocity can demonstrate a knowledge of the applicable laws

and regulations in Connecticut. Updates to the regulations will be available on the e-regulation system, Chris to alert the Board when they are available.

Chris reiterated the importance of the GC3 Governor's Council on Climate Change report. Results from the Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry subgroup are relied upon by DEEP to guide legislative proposals.

UConn has made a new GIS tool available that details the percent of canopy cover in Connecticut. The board discussed the importance of providing reliable electric service to residents but that it should not be at the expense of bad arboriculture, results from the 2011 Two Storm Panel should be taken into consideration when making recommendations for tree trimming. Additional factors, extreme weather events and pest issues also need to be considered.

CFPA is aware of several legislative proposals that may be of interest to the Board; invasive plant controls, tree removals by electric utility companies and the Department of Transportation as well as establishing renewable energy sources. More information to be shared when it is available.

[GC3 Working Group](#) – Climate Smart Ag and Forestry Update- The General Assembly approved \$14 million for climate smart agriculture, \$7 million could be used for forestry. The funds will be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

Funding for Urban and Community Forestry is increasing due in part to the Inflation Reduction Act. Nationally funding is increasing to \$1.5 Billion. Forest Legacy is also being increased from \$90 million to \$700 million.

Enforcement Actions, Exams – The number of certified forest practitioners is 380. In 2022 most applicants for forester level certification have failed the exam. One Supervising Forest Products Harvester has taken advantage of the reciprocity certification.

Staff continue to work on municipal regulations that need to be approved by DEEP or repealed at the municipal level. Work also continues encroachment issues. The Board discussed permitted as of right and jurisdictional rulings.

Staff are working on an app for Best Management Practices for Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products.

Division of Forestry Staffing – DEEP has experienced many retirements throughout the Agency. Forestry is working on refilling the vacant service forester position for central Connecticut and a fire control officer for Western Connecticut. The service forester position was made vacant when Andrea Urbano was selected as the supervisor for the Private and Municipal Lands and Urban Forestry Supervisor. The Urban Forestry program will be making an announcement for recruitment of a seasonal resource assistant. Other anticipated positions to be filled are in the State Lands Program.

Andrew Fisk has been selected as the new Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Natural Resources at DEEP. Andy comes to DEEP with an extensive background in natural resource management at the State of Maine and the Connecticut River Conservancy.

Additional items of interest:

Recovering America's Wildlife Act - \$1.3 billion annually would be dedicated to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement wildlife action plans. This will allow states to proactively conserve fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need.

The board discussed potential barriers to certified forester in Connecticut in the future. There is concern that if there is a shortage of certified professionals uncertified individuals will become more involved in forest management activities to the detriment of our natural resources.

TIMPRO is going to offer two Heartsaver CPR courses in December. The TIMPRO 2023 Annual Meeting will be scheduled for April.

Joan would like to thank Frank Cervo and Eric Dunnack for their assistance with 2022 Envirothon.

Chris shared that the Division of Forestry staff are currently in discussion to develop definitions for mature and old growth forests.

More information on a federally funded skidder bridge program will be shared when it is available. DEEP Forestry is anticipating collaborating with TIMPRO to administer the program in Connecticut.

Meeting called to a close at 11:11 am. Next meeting date to be determined.



Memo

To: Connecticut Forest Practitioners
From: Christopher Martin, Director/State Forester
CC: Nicholas Zito, Forest Practices Act Forester
Date: 10/11/2022
Re: Changes to Connecticut's Forest Practices Act. 2022 Legislative Session
Outcomes Effective October 1, 2022.

Dear Connecticut Forest Practitioner,

As a result of several years efforts and with approval of the [Forest Practices Advisory Board](#), [Senate Bill 238](#) now [Public Act No. 22-143](#) includes the following changes to Connecticut's Forest Practices Act effective October 1, 2022;

- 1) Clarifies General Assembly and Governor appointment authorities to the Forest Practices Advisory Board. Section 23-65g(a).
- 2) Authorizes a 60-day extension for expired forest practitioner certifications without the need to reexamine. A fee to exercise this privilege is expected to be enacted in Regulation during 2023. Subsection (c) of section 23-65h(c)(4).
- 3) Eliminates the need for individual state-to-state occupational licensing reciprocity agreements by accepting forest practitioner licensing/certifications from other states and professional organizations that require examination. Knowledge of Connecticut forest practice laws is still required. 23-65h(c)(6).
- 4) Simplifies obtaining continuing education units (CEUs), allowing the total required CEUs for the certification period be obtained throughout the four-year certification period rather than obtaining one-half of the CEUs in the first two-year period and the second half during years three and four. 23-65h(c)(9).
- 5) Changes submission of annual CEU obtainment documents to annual attestation. Submission of all required CEU documents to be included in a comprehensive report at the end of the current certification period prior to recertification. Section 23-65i.