

Forest Practices Advisory Board

February 28, 2024

Attendees: Chris Martin, Brennan Sheahan, Ian Branson, Jovan Bryan, Joan Nichols (virtual), Dr. Jeff Ward (joined at 9:30)

Absent: Dr. Mark Ashton, Barbara Kelly, Bruce Spaman

Guests: Nick Zito-DEEP Forestry

Chris called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Approval of the minutes were postponed due to lack of quorum.

FPA Regulations Update – Proposed Regulations effective January 22, 2024. Chris reviewed the regulations and asked for questions.

BIL/IRA – Large number of urban grants are available covering increasing canopy cover, money for riparian area restoration, tree inventory work on municipal lands. NRCS EQIP dollars set to be \$17 million for 2024, and will continue to increase for a number of years. Andrea Urbano is applying for IRA funds to provide training and pay foresters to obtain TSP certification.

Chris recognized the new Fire Control officer, James Bryan, who is responsible for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant.

FPAB welcomed Jovan Bryan, appointed to FPAB as a representative of an environmental organization not primarily concerned with forests, in succession to Patrick Comins, for a term ending February 22, 2028, and until a successor is appointed and has qualified. Roundtable followed for attendees to introduce themselves.

FPAB vacancies – The Board currently has one vacancy. Chris continues to work on having replacement identified and then appointed. Chris to If anyone has recommendations, please let Chris know. Joan identified that she has a letter for requesting appointments for use as a template in the future.

Timber Harvest Notification Form – The Board tabled this discussion until Barbara returns from vacation at the next meeting.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the October 25, 2023 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as written by Joan, seconded by Jeff. Unanimous vote to accept.

Enforcement Actions and Exams – CT River Valley State Park – staff are working on an enforcement action along with CT River. The homeowner removed trees on the bank which potentially destabilized the railroad tracks. The activity is visible from the CT River. DEEP Forestry staff are in continued discussions with the Office of the Attorney General regarding penalties and acceptable remedies. A stipulated judgement has been issued. Trial has been scheduled for September 11, 2024.

Forest Practitioner Exam was held on February 14 to accommodate new staff. 2 applicants (2 foresters, no passing scores. Nick is leading a committee to revise the forest practitioner exams.

NIC CT is creating an app similar to VT AMP app that will be used for CT BMPs. Funds for the development are from the No Markets No Management Grants as well as collected fines.

Nick and DEEP legal staff continue to work with municipalities with unauthorized forest practice regulations. Ten of the twenty municipalities have corrected or retracted unauthorized regulations with hopes of an additional six to do the same by the end of the year.

Meeting closed at 11:15am

DRAFT