

Forest Practices Advisory Board
June 12, 2024

Members present: Barbara Kelly, Joan Nichols, Bruce Spaman, Chris Martin, Brennan Sheahan, Dr. Mark Ashton, Dr. Jeff Ward, Jovan Bryan (arrived at 9:13)

Members absent: Ian Branson

Guests: Nick Zito (DEEP Forestry), Sheila Hoefle (DEEP Forestry, recorder)

Meeting called to order at 9:03. Board members review the minutes from the February 28 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as written by Brennan, seconded by Joan. Unanimous vote to approve.

2024 Legislative Update – overall the session was quite for the Forestry Division. There were a few bills that staff were watching but they didn't move forward. Staff were able to use their outreach work associated with timber harvests for an inquiry that immediately satisfied the legislator who made the inquiry. DEEP has a hazard tree policy for trees within State Parks and Campgrounds.

[sHB 5522](#) leased a parcel of Nye Holman State Forest in Woodstock to the YMCA of Metropolitan Hartford, Inc.

HB5004 was a bill implementing measures relating to climate change. The initial draft specified forest management efforts but that was removed.

State Lands Management (SLM) Foresters are utilizing acoustic monitoring equipment for present/absent detection of bats. The SLM program has 4 units to record data that will help NDDB staff with future determination letters for forest management projects.

The Board briefly discussed several municipal assessors who are requesting updated PA 490 Forest Land Foresters Reports for properties enrolled in the program that have reports that are over 10 years old with no other justification. The Farm Bureau is sponsoring two upcoming webinars with PA490 as the topic. One CEU will be awarded for participating.

Chris introduced an upcoming issue to the Board. The Southern New England Stumpage Survey which was used in the calculation for the valuation of PA490 Forest Land. A possible solution is polling Forest Practitioners for the data needed for the formula. Joan recommended allowing practitioners to report anomalously.

The Board discussed CEUs for Forest Practitioners. At question is can Forest Practitioners use participation on professional or municipal boards and committees concerned with forestry/land use as a source of CEUs. An agenda/minutes will need to be submitted as proof of participation. DEEP Legal reviewing current statutes and regulations to what is necessary to accommodate this request. The suggestion was made that universities in coordination with DEEP Forestry could compile and distribute information on CEU opportunities that should be shared with the natural resource community.

FPAB Vacancies – There continues to be a vacant position to be filled by the general public. Jeff Ward will be stepping down from the Board at CFPA and will also need to resign from the FPAB board. A new member representing an environmental organization primarily concerned with forests will need to be appointed.

Enforcement actions, Exams

August 11 Kurt Lenahan's consent order will be complete. Not many enforcement actions currently.

Beth Bernard, Outreach Forester, passed the Forester exam.

Municipal FPA Regs – most towns coming are into compliance.

[Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association](#) Forest Practices Notification Form Review and Update – Barbara to review form with CT Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions. Discussion about ensuring that the language is consistent throughout the form.

Forestry Div Staffing – Forest Protection Supervisor position remains vacant. It is anticipated there will be an internal promotional opportunity for a Program Specialist within the Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) Program. Tom McGrade transitioned to the State Lands position vacated by David Irvin when he accepted the Central District Service Forester Position. There is a State Lands vacancy in eastern Connecticut. Les Welker joined the UCF team as a contracted grant program specialist through the Wildlife Management Institute.

Utilization update – There is renewed interest in the Connecticut Grown Forest Products program. Joan shared that Timpro has signs that can be distributed to program participants.

BMP app - a vendor is working on creating the BMP app that will be very similar to Vermont's AMP app using federal grant funds.

State bond funds are being utilized to rebuild the sawmill at the DEEP Portland Facility. Jim Moore is the sawyer and Nate Piche, SLM Forester, works collaboratively with Jim.

Additional items of interest:

Bridge mat program – VT and MA have a bridge mat lending program. That model will not work in CT as DEEP has been unsuccessful in finding a partner to run the program. Other models to be explored are a cost-share program.

TIMPRO to host a John Deer Worldwide Program on July 11. Program will be a high-level overview of high tech equipment, including retrofitting of older equipment. Dinner to be provided to participants. A Master Logger Program will be scheduled before September, target audience is loggers in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Andy Bicking introduced himself. He is excited to have joined CFPA and is looking forward to the future.

Nicks shared that the number of Forest Products Harvesters has steadily decreased over the year, mentioned to the board to consider combining the Supervising Forest Products Harvester and Forest Products Harvester certification levels in the future to a standard logger level.

Meeting closed at 12:08.