

WISCONSIN URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL (UFC)

June 13, 2014

Location: LaCrosse DNR Service Center - LaCrosse, WI

In Attendance: Tom Dunbar, John DuPlissis, Mark Freberg, Dan Green, August Hoppe, Leif Hubbard, Thomas Landgraf, Don Merkes, Shirley Brabender-Mattox, Art Ode, Dan Siewert, David Sivyer, Jordan Skiff, Jeff Treu, Kelli Tuttle

Ex Officio members in attendance: Jill Johnson, Olivia Witthun, Laura Wyatt, Dick Rideout, and Jeff Roe

Members Absent: Bruce Allison, Todd Chwala, Christopher Deegan, Patty Dreier, Marla Eddy, Brea Grace, Tony Nowak, Blake Theisen, Les Werner, Kevin Westphal, Jeff Wolters

DNR in attendance: Olivia Shanahan, Brain Wahl, Cindy Casey, Don Kissinger, Elizabeth Dierickx, Roberta Walls

Public guests in attendance: Bernard Lenz

Call to Order and Introductions

David Sivyer

David Sivyer called the meeting to order at 9:35am. Introductions will be deferred until our guests arrive.

ACTION: Leif Hubbard moved to approve the 03/12/14 meeting minutes; seconded by Tom Dunbar. Motion passed.

UF Council Business

David Sivyer

David Sivyer David thanked UFC members for their service and attributed the success of the UFC to the engaged members and their support. David reviewed the following actions of the May 15 Executive committee meeting: 1) beginning with the September meeting the **UF Council meeting start time will be 9:00 am.** Morning coffee and refreshments will be available at 8:30am; 2) the open mic portion of the meeting will be combined with introductions so the agenda may be amended as needed; 3) issues groups will be asked to meet between meetings and prepare a written report of activity that can be distributed to UFC members before meetings, so members will be prepared for needed discussion. **Issue group reports should be sent to Laura 10 days in advance of a council meeting so they can be included in meeting materials.** Marla will develop a form to facilitate easy accomplishment of this task; 4) the DNR UF report, which is being organized by strategic direction priorities, will also be distributed before the meeting so UFC members can review and be prepared to discuss and ask questions as needed; 5) in an effort to better align and partner with other groups interested in urban forestry the council is looking at organizing co-meetings. In 2015 we would like to hold one meeting in conjunction with the Council on Forestry, maybe touring an urban forestry site? John DuPlissis shared information on the Council on Forestry's September 17 & 18 meeting in Rothschild, WI and tour of the biomass energy operation. CoF meetings are open for anyone to attend. John will distribute additional meeting information as it becomes available.

David shared that one of the issues discussed at the December Forestry Economic submit was the fact that 50% of Wisconsin's forested property is contained in fragmented parcels of 10 acres or less. These properties are not economically feasible to harvest. Is it possible to expand the urban borders to include these fragmented woodlands? Should we consider encouraging the industry to adapt and make changes in downscaling equipment? Should UF serve as catalysis in this area and possibly ask the incoming DNR forest economist to study the issue of economic feasibility of these areas. Opportunity for UF leadership? Something for continued discussion?

UF Council has participated in the 2013 and 2014 WAA/DNR Annual conference. Would we want to offer to coordinate networking roundtables as we did in 2013? If we have a project lead we can contact the WAA/DNR program planning committee with our offer to assist. DNR UF will host an display at the ISA conference.

Nominations

David Sivyer

Nominations committee (David Sivyer, chair, Marla Eddy, Kelli Tuttle, Leif Hubbard and Blake Theisen) presented the following slate of new and renewing members for consideration. Terms extend from 7/1/2014 to 6/30/2017.

- Renewing: Thomas Dunbar, Leif Hubbard, Shirley Brabender Mattox, and Jordan Skiff
- New members:
 - Wendy Braun (representing North American Stormwater and Erosion Control Ass. - stormwater)
 - Kristin Gies (Mequon Nature Preserve, Inc.—non-profit)
 - Dwayne Sperber (business owner—urban wood)
 - Curt Witynski (representing League of Wisconsin Municipalities—new alliance for us)

ACTION: Jeff Treu moved to accept slate of renewing members; seconded by Kelli Tuttle. Motion passed. Jordan Skiff moved to accept slate of new members; seconded by Tom Dunbar. Motioned passed.

These nominees will be forwarded to Secretary Stepp through Paul DeLong for final appointment. Laura shared that the DNR administration is reviewing processes for committee/council appointment and also organizational award programs. Look for guidance on standardization of processes throughout the agency.

We will be recruiting mentors for each new UFC members. If you would like to assist in welcoming a particular new member to the UFC, please contact Laura. UFC By-Laws are contained within the UFC orientation notebook which you have all received.

UF Council Awards

Jeff Treu

Proposed changes with the award program: 1) omit preliminary nomination form process - just have one type of nomination form 2) with 2015 move award nominations due date to end of November, 2015. Changes will be made to webpage the first of the 2015 year.

Jeff expressed thanks to all UFC members who helped with the award program, including those folks who made award presentations to award recipients. Jeff Roe suggested we consider also announcing award recipients at a League of Municipalities meeting. Shirley Mattox concurred.

Jeff Treu is interested in recruiting a co-chair to assist. Please contact him for additional information or to volunteer. The DNR traditionally compiles a press release regarding the Council awards which is distributed to 1500 media outlets. To encourage wider use, we might want to make award winners aware of the release and suggest they contact their local media to encourage local use.

Introductions

Everyone

Stormwater Related Presentations:

- **Roberta Walls, WDNR – Overview of State Stormwater Permit Program**
 - Urban trees don't appear to be on agency radar; forestry needs to come to table with how trees can be utilized as a water quality improvement component
 - Trees do impact peak flow
 - Trees increase infiltration; increase in previous pavement
 - Permits driven by technical standards; need supportive modeling and technical standards
 - Not known if anyone is considering impact on stormwater due to loss of urban ash canopy

- **Bernard Lenz, Assistant City Engineer, City of LaCrosse – Stormwater Run-off in the City of LaCrosse: It’s a Brave New World**
 - Bernard provided an overview of why LaCrosse is so interested in incorporating green infrastructure (GI) into stormwater management program (area is flat and issues with flooding) and what they have done. . . bio-retention cells, previous pavement, previous alley, porous pavement, swales, etc.
 - Technical standards are needed for implementation
 - Engineering is required to ensure techniques functions properly
 - Hydrologically disconnect bio-cells is the way to go to avoid winter snow/ice related issues
 - Need to consider where water is coming from and if it is carrying sediment
 - Partnerships (and education) are important; neighborhood associations, other city departments
 - Example: porous pavement had sand/salt mix applied by untrained temporary worker
 - Inspection of GI is important along with necessary maintenance
 - Driven by complete streets ordinance; need guidelines regarding when & where to install
 - Porous pavement installation is about 30% more, but less to maintain; does look different
 - Longevity study; areas 4-5 yrs. old still functioning
 - Education (including outdoor display at Eco Park) drives community support
 - Industrial and commercial areas yield greatest credits
 - Maintenance critical
 - Having a stormwater utility drives action

- **Jill Johnson. USFS – Minnesota’s Minimal Impact Design Standards**
 - Legislative initiative started in 2008 with a change in stormwater management to keep water on site
 - Design standards and guidelines to encourage low impact design (LID)
 - New performance goals
 - New credit calculations for new techniques
 - New ordinance package to assist communities and developers
 - Credit system for trees; most credit based on infiltration; credit is small
 - At least trees recognized
 - Not the end of the story
 - If trees assist in keeping water on site; P from leaves becomes less of an issue
 - MN is interested in sharing with other states

Lunch

Next Steps-Stormwater

Jordan Skiff -

Chair of the stormwater and trees issue group

Jordan recognized the value of the presentations and acknowledged that they support much of what the stormwater issue group has learned. The issue group focus is the development of a credit system for trees where municipalities receive credit for planting and maintaining canopy; motives municipalities into UF action. Many stormwater experts don’t appear to recognize the benefits trees provide and some even consider trees a liability. Other states (MN, PA, MD) are moving ahead and incorporating trees in stormwater planning.

Jordan provided the following recommendations on behalf of the issue group:

- Continue to track what other cities/states are doing regarding incorporating trees in stormwater plans

- Compose a letter to Paul DeLong asking that the stormwater and urban forestry staff meet to discuss how urban trees can be incorporated into stormwater plans and credits awarded for planting and maintaining trees.
- Support a research study that investigates the impact on water quality within a community before and after canopy is impacted by emerald ash borer.

ACTION: Tom Dunbar moved that the UFC support the recommendations; Leif Hubbard seconded the motion; motion passed. Jordan will draft a letter and work with the Executive committee on getting it to Paul DeLong.

A discussion of the SLAM model occurred and the fact that tree canopy is not individually accounted for. Bernard Lenz provided a brief explanation that community modeling is calibrated based on community sampling and this accounts for what is there but doesn't specially tease-out trees and other individual components. The council was interested in learning more about SLAM.

Dick shared that when the modeling/conversations regarding trees was first occurring, the stormwater folks were understaffed and didn't have time/resources to fully consider forestry models. With the additional information on urban tree benefits it is time to rekindle the conversation. In addition to having divisions within DNR talk, it is important to have the UFC at the table. Green Tier communities will be interested in this outcome; water sustainability if one of their priority issues.

John DuPlissis commented that trees remove phosphorus from the soil and store it in stems and what comes back due to leaf decomposition is small relative to what is taken up. The questions should be comparison of non- tree and tree environments/landscapes and how much phosphorus is leaking through the system. We receive a wide variety of benefits from trees including the absorption and removal of phosphorus. Leaf management and collection methods can impact the amount of phosphorus that gets returned by way of stormwater.

Bernard Lenz commented that communities need technical design standards for any BMP that is developed. There is a need for technical design standards for construction/building and also guidelines regarding how to calculate credits; this should be the end goal.

Laura reminded the UFC of Bob Skiera Memorial Fund-Building Bridges in Urban Forestry which the Wisconsin Arborist Association has generated \$250,000 from members and friends towards a goal of \$500,000. Proceeds from the fund will support communications and collaboration between professional disciplines to create more livable urban spaces. Our efforts could be such a project. Support the Skiera Fund with a gift to the STIHL Tour des Trees –Team Wisconsin riders. Visit <http://stihltourdestrees.org/> to donate. Team Wisconsin has 11 riders with Dick Rideout serving as team captain.

DNR Report

Jeff Roe and Staff

Olivia Shanahan reported that the first phase of changes to the grant program involving changes in grant rating criteria supporting better alignment with federal and strategic direction priorities have been drafted. Changes are out for public comment. All UFC members have received an e-mail regarding the comment period which ends June 23, 2014. A revised application, based on the rating criteria will be more of a narrative format. At the end of June, Olivia and Brian Wahl will be completing a scoping document which will outline the second phase of grant changes which will address funding larger grant projects with multiple partners. This process will be more involved and take a longer period of time, potentially several years.

Dick shared that the interim report on UFIA (urban forest inventory and assessment) scoping document was presented to FLT. A few minor changes were made and it is available for comment by UFC members. A technical team comprised of DNR staff will be developed. There will be a need for collecting input from externals with the UFC playing a critical role in facilitating that. The DNR UFIA team will meet with the UFC Executive committee to discuss and present a proposal to the full council for consideration.

The current Farm Bill directs the Forest Service to establish a national UFIA. The feds are looking for an initial project partner and Wisconsin and our state UFIA plans could work nicely meet what they are looking for. The FS plan looks at larger cities and also brings funds for remote sensing. Additional information will be available.

Tour

Bernard Lenz

Bernard shared a map and description of the eight tour stops. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm with members carpooling to tour locations.

Future meetings –

- **September 12 in Richfield**
- **November 14 in Madison**