

WISCONSIN URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

January 21, 2011

WDNR SCR Service Center - Fitchburg - Rm 215-216

Members in attendance: Kelli Tuttle, Jeff Treu, Bryan Spencer, Joe Wilson, Jeff Wolters, John Gall, Ken Ottman, Don Merkes, Shirley Brabender-Mattox, Kevin Westphal, Mark Freberg, Vijai Pandian, Marla Eddy, Deena Murphy, Art Ode, Tom Landgraf, Leif Hubbard, Bob Brush, Bob Dahl

Ex Officio members in attendance: Laura Wyatt, Dick Rideout and Jeff Roe

Members Absent: Patti Dreier Tom Dunbar, Dan Traas, Les Werner

DNR in attendance: John Nielsen, Mark Heyde, Jeff Weatherly, Olivia Witthun, Candice Sovinski

Guests: Secretary Cathy Stepp, Executive Assistant Scott Gunderson, Lloyd Eagan, Al Shea

1) **Call to Order-Introductions**

Kelli Tuttle

- a. Introductions
- b. Minutes from 8/20/2010 approved

2) **DNR Staff Changes**

Jeff Weatherly

- a. Olivia Witthun has been hired to fill the East Central regional Urban Forestry Coordinator position. RUFC, Don Kissinger (NOR-Wausau) has accepted another position in DNR Forestry. At this time questions within the NOR region should be directed to Forestry Supervisor ,Patricia (Pat) Murphy. Tel. number (715) 839-3760, Email patriciad.murphy@wi.gov
- b. The southern DNR Regions have been reconfigured into the Southern Region and include urban forestry regions South Central, Southeast and East Central. Jeff Roe, Kim Sebastian and Olivia Witthun report to the Area Forestry Leader Jeff Weatherly and Regional Forestry Leader John Nielsen.

3) **Address from State Forester**

Paul DeLong

Paul has been re-appointed as the State Forester. Paul provided highlights as well as context for the draft Division's Strategic Direction. The document would be used as a guide for either a growth or reduced budget level. Paul expressed his appreciation for the 2009 UFC report as a clear format for identifying issues. He also noted that the segregated forestry account has taken a hit in relation to the real estate market. The budget reductions ahead are unclear. It's possible that across the board cuts could occur. Expect some initial direction on the budget from the Governor in February. The new plan will be compared to where the Division is now and an operational plan will be developed. The new direction will be implemented by July of 2011.

The new Administration has identified their initial priorities:

- a. Job creation
- b. Regulatory streamlining
- c. Sustainability was outlined in the Governor's inaugural speech
- d. Customer service

Secretary Cathy Stepp and her staff joined the meeting. She expressed her appreciation for the passion, talents and experience of partners and DNR staff. Her office is working to determine what the agency can do better. In these budgetary challenges they're looking at how we can do a better job with greater efficiency. If the Secretary's office can do anything better, the office door is open. She invited members to keep her office abreast of issues. Secretary Stepp noted that part of the Secretary's office is to promote the success stories and the UF Council and

members were encouraged to submit good news (as well as issues) to her office. Also let her know about any educational opportunities to the urban audience. Secretary Stepp can be reached at dnrsecretary@wisconsin.gov Telephone number (608) 267-7556.

4) DNR Forestry Strategic Direction

All

The DNR Forestry Leadership Team (FLT) developed the wording. The Division is aware there are areas where the draft falls short and doesn't clearly convey the intent of the strategic direction. Paul asked the Council to revisit the 5 strategies they identified as priorities in the June meeting and to comment on whether the Council agrees, disagrees, or supports the Division of Forestry Strategic Direction.

The overarching context to grapple with is, "What is the niche and role for DNR Forestry?" The DNR is one actor among many. There is a breadth of issues and how best does the Forestry Division invest limited resources. The Forestry Leadership Team (FLT) considered many criteria while compiling the draft document:

- a. Maximizing return on investment
- b. How does the State stimulate those outcomes?
- c. How does the DNR then—stimulate the actions or increase the capacity of others to do their work?
- d. The State assessment of the resource.

Comments and concerns:

- i. The wording seems to support the 'metropolitan' areas. Clarify what constitutes a metropolitan area
- ii. The 'rural' areas have difficulty with 'metropolitan'
- iii. Overall the members support the concepts, but the wording isn't there
- iv. There wasn't an expectation that DNR would serve everyone. However, the intent of the strategic direction is to serve more customers
- v. The comments and examples that followed from Dick were helpful. An analogy to the MFL program was provided whereby consultants were transitioned to provide service
- vi. The Mutants networking group from Southeast developed out of community needs...
- vii. How does the DNR serve more communities?
- viii. The wording is not clearly understood. The wording referencing 'reduce' does not mean eliminate. What does this mean?
- ix. There is a significant increase in funding!
- x. Respond to whether the overall concepts of the strategic direction are / are not supported
- xi. Is it DNR's role to assess the urban forest? Is a repeat assessment needed to determine the extent and health of our urban forests. (The consensus is yes).
- xii. A concern with the 'decrease' in outreach and education initiatives (UF-5). Propose better wording to clear up the contradiction within the draft
- xiii. Great care is needed on the implementation and further feedback is needed

Blackboard notes:

- Need the infrastructure to service the regional market of stakeholders.
- The service needs can vary broadly within a region / communities
- The DNR provides a variety of services including advocacy, promotion
- Value of partnerships – a concern that smaller communities may be left out
- Support of the statewide inventory
- The grants are very critical to small communities
- What is a metro area? Partnership? Additional definitions are needed

There is some difficulty with commenting on the Strategic Direction when the operations process is very unclear, i.e. how will the DNR deal with communities within a Region when there are differences? That concern may be addressed by working on the common goals. An example would be looking at regional opportunities like the grant award to Sheboygan County that assisted multiple communities.

Action item: Kelli will draft a response and forward it to the Council members. Expect a quick turnaround to incorporate input as comments are due by February 4, 2011. Feedback from members on behalf of the stakeholder groups they represent is also encouraged.

4) Role of UFC

Ken Ottman & Kelli Tuttle

From the **Forest Assessment** that began in 2008, the DNR drafted the **Forestry Strategy**. Members are to consider how the Council can help fulfill the Wisconsin Statewide Forestry Strategy (June, 2010). The document encompasses all aspects of forestry throughout the State. It assumes that the DNR will do some of the strategies and it assumes that other stakeholders are better suited to do address other strategies. From the Forestry Strategy, the Division developed the **Strategic Direction**. There's a shift of emphasis in how the DNR might approach their work to increase outcomes. In that context, how can the Council be a presence? Taking the examples of successful collaboration to a broader audience may be a role the council could fill. What will the Council do to move UF forward and what jobs/tasks will the Council take on? What areas will the Council tackle?

(Background at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/assessment/strategy/strategicDir.htm>)

Role of the UF Council: The Council is appointed by the Secretary of the DNR. According to UFC bylaws:

1. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Wisconsin State Forester and Department of Natural Resources on the best ways to preserve, protect, expand and improve Wisconsin's urban and community forest resources, as authorized by Wisconsin Statute 15.04 (1)(C).
2. The Council shall advise and assist the State Forester to develop, implement, monitor and revise a state urban forestry plan.
3. The Council shall advise and assist the State Forester on activities to further the understanding, appreciation and practice of urban forestry in Wisconsin.
4. The Council shall strive to assist all parties involved in urban forestry matters to coordinate activities to avoid duplication, inefficiency and conflict, with the ultimate goal of the betterment of the urban forests in Wisconsin.

The Council on Forestry is appointed by the Governor. It is a statutory board. They advise the Governor, the DNR Secretary and the Legislature on how forestry should work within the State. They advise on legislative studies that have been done as well as the budget and issues like the Managed Forest Law (MFL). They do less direct lobbying than the UFC.

Natural Resources Board directs the DNR Secretary on the direction and actions of the DNR. The NRB also approves the budget before it goes to the Governor. It is a statutory board.

It was noted the final strategic direction may reveal gaps for how the Council can expand stakeholder involvement. Would changes be need for the Wisconsin Council? Last August, Jill Johnson USFS, extended an offer to share information regarding the direction of other state uf councils.

Does the Council want to stay as the advisor to the DNR or enlarge our voice throughout the state?

Considerations:

- a. Legal concerns may arise with expanding the Council voice with conflict of interest.

- b. The Council does a good job in the advisory role.
- c. The budget will likely change what the DNR does and the Council may need to change what they do – whether it would be temporary or not
- d. The Council is a convener of broad issues of the state

Action Item: Ken Ottman made the motion that the Council form an ad-hoc committee addressing the Forestry Strategy and how the Urban Forestry Council fits in and moves forward within that strategy. Seconded by Leif Hubbard. Motion passed. Kelli Tuttle, Joe Wilson, Art Ode, Ken Ottman, and Leif Hubbard were appointed to the committee.

7) Legislative Outreach Kelli Tuttle & Shirley Brabender-Mattox, John Gall, Jeff Treu

Members received a list of the Legislative committees. Council members will receive a folder for each of their Senate and Assembly districts for the March 23rd meeting. The folder will include a grant summary, the total number of grants for that district highlighted on UFC letterhead, a summary of the program, as well as a project highlight for that district. The folder will contain similar information to what was provided last year. There was a request for additional information related to job creation. DNR staff will analyze the 2011 grants and provide additional economic data. John Gall has scheduled an earlier meeting with his Senator the week of 1/23/11.

Meeting prep and suggestions:

- a. Review the legislators web sites-- Keep their issues in mind and how UF addresses it
- b. Make appointments with your legislators -- note that many are new
- c. The \$150,000 Congressional Directed Appropriation provided one-time support however it is now gone. Can the Representative(s) work toward establishing stable, long-term funding
- d. Have an all-star team meet with the US Congressional Representatives, including new Senator Ron Johnson. Be sure someone from the Council connects with Paul Ryan's district
- e. Personal connection is important. Ask for their concerns. Invite them to Arbor Day celebrations and other events in their district.
- f. Subsequent follow-up can be done via email or note

Action Item: Members need to make appointments with their Representatives. The goal is to establish rapport, provide the information folders and highlight 2-3 key points of the program.

8) Committee Reports

Awards Committee Deena Murphy

Deena Murphy, Jeff Wolters, and Jeff Treu announced the UFC Awards. The official announcement of the UFC awards will happen at the WAA luncheon on Tuesday, February 1st.

Lifetime Achievement: Dave Liska, Waukesha

Distinguished Service: Mike Wendt, MATC – Milwaukee

Elected Official: Madison Alderwoman Marcia Rummel

Innovation – 2 awards: 1.) Forest County Potawatomi Tribe and 2.) Mechanized logging demonstration in Oak Creek

Project Partnership – 2 awards: 1.) Taking Root Fund; Oshkosh Community Foundation and the City of Oshkosh and 2.) We Energies and the City of Waukesha

Nomination and Orientation Committee:

On a trail bases, the responsibility to chair the Nomination Committee will reside with the vice chair, Tom Dunbar. Les Werner as past chair has agreed to assist.. The nominating responsibilities and timeline were reviewed. The nominating committee will be composed of are: to confirm whether

those completing a term would like an additional termoff the Council would want to stay on; call new Nominees, brainstorm appropriate representation, etc. Tom Dunbar, Les Werner, Marla Eddy and Mark Freberg are on the committee. Members can review the composition of the Council, provide input, and consider nominating those who would compliment the Council representation

9) **DNR Report**

Jeff Roe & Olivia Witthun

-Regional Coordinators report provided

-Council involvement in the Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI)

Members noted that continued funding is crucial to support this type of urban forest management training within the state. Support for the CTMI training was strongly encouraged. Jeff Roe extended a suggestion if the Council would want to sponsor an evening event at the June, 2012 CTMI graduation session (tentatively Stevens Point) or perhaps serve as a Mentor role.

-The DNR submitted a proposal for S&PF funds to support the next urban forestry assessment. Should funding be received, the assessment would start in 2012 which would be 10 years since the last assessment in 2002.

10) **New Business**

-Kelli Tuttle asked each member to share information/issues/potential future Council agenda items as she called on each member.

-DATCP has scheduled a Public Hearing regarding Black Walnut Thousand Cankers disease. See the DNR *Urban Forestry Insider* for specifics.

-Operational ideas for the Strategic direction:

-Utilize a form of Block grants for the grant funds

-RUFCS to assist with forming a buying coop

-Consider targeting a younger audience for outreach

-How to support / form partnerships to make uf better in 5 years, 10 years

-A suggestion was made to recognize Don Kissinger and his contribution to the Council and urban forestry management.

Art Ode presented the motion that the Urban Forestry Council compose a letter of appreciation and thank you to Don Kissinger in recognition of his years of serve. Art will draft a letter and circulate to the members for approval.

Next meeting, March 23rd, 2011 – Madison

Meeting Adjourned 3:01PM