

URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MEETING OF DECEMBER 19, 2008

Present: Mike Ahern, John Baird, Pablo Jourdan, Joyce Reier, Drew Todd, and Ellen Walker

Guest: None

The meeting began at 10:05 AM with each attendee receiving a Smokey Bear License Plate mug and a Smokey Bear pocket calendar. Drew Todd then followed with a brief review of the Division's approach to the state's economic challenge. Drew also mentioned the anticipated dissolution of the stock and equipment at Marietta State Nursery.

Drew shared with the group his experience at the National Association of State Forester's (NASF) annual meeting of their Urban and Community Forestry Committee. According to Drew, Rep. Matsui's bill (H.R. 5867) that would establish a grant program to help assist retail power providers establish an energy conservation program targeting residential tree-planting, might have a chance in the new congress. The NASF is also supporting a \$36 million funding level for the Urban & Community Forestry Program nationally.

Drew reviewed the Division's Invasive Plant Grant. This three-year effort involves private landowners, state forest lands, as well as municipalities within a five watershed area of southeastern Ohio. The Urban component of the grant will focus on the invasive plant awareness and needs of municipal administrators. To identify their knowledge level, a questionnaire was developed, and will be executed face-to-

face by the Invasive Plant Forester and the Regional Urban Forester. Drew shared the questionnaire with the group. Mike Ahern suggested putting the questionnaire in electronic format and placing it on the web. Pablo Jourdan recommended that it should take no more than ten minutes to complete on the web.

A new venture, entitled Tree Commission Academy (TCA), was also discussed with the group. This is an attempt to address the critical role that tree commissions play in the management of many community tree care efforts. The issue is that all tree commission members are volunteers, most have limited technical knowledge, and many are unsure of their role within the municipal framework. Add rapid turnover to this mix, and the training needs of this group becomes obvious. The question is how to do this efficiently? DOF's answer is TCA, a series of "university" style courses especially for tree commissioners, provided in specific locations and given once a week for several weeks. There were positive comments for this effort.

Drew reported that the two competitive urban grants recommended at the September meeting (Urban Tree Canopy and Land Use Planning), were submitted in November. The review process will not be known until late January.

Mike shared with the group his experience at a US EPA Smart Growth conference he recently attended near Phoenix, AZ. Although it was focused on Homeland Security, the Virtual Alabama presentation had application in several other areas. Virtual Alabama uses a 3D globe interface to retrieve images from a merged global imagery dataset. This dataset transforms massive amounts of data into useful information for technical and non-technical users. It's a Google Earth application. Anyone who contributed data would get free access to the site. According to Mike, there's a description on Youtube. [Editor's Note: You can access their website at http://www.dhs.alabama.gov/virtual_alabama/home.aspx?sm=g_a].

Thanks to Dan Balsler, Drew gave a short EAB update. All the purple traps have been inspected, and only two finds resulted. The traps will probably be used next year as well.

At the request of the Division's Forest Products Administrator, Drew passed along a Forest Service grant opportunity. The Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) is accepting applications for cost-share demonstration projects through February 2, 2009. If anyone with an idea that would encourage the adoption of new technology, or further information about processing urban wood, or develop utilization option in the urban arena, can share it with Drew.

During Open Comments Ellen Walker mentioned the positive strides MORPC has been making under their new director. An example is their Center for Energy and Environment. Ellen also

mentioned that the Ohio Townships Association's annual conference will include a presentation on ODNR Grant Opportunities for Townships.

Mike Ahern repeated his awe with the Virtual Alabama effort. According to Mike, there is a shift at the federal level from the cultural bias of hoarding data to sharing data with others. Mike also mentioned a presentation that used a Google search model that the Center for Disease Control used to predict possible flu outbreaks. Apparently, this was 90% accurate.

With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM. The next meeting was scheduled for the Columbus Forestry office on **Friday, March 20, 2009.**

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Todd

Urban Forestry Program Coordinator