

Forest Practices Advisory Board
October 2, 2014

Members Present: Thomas J. Degnan, Jr., Joan Nichols, Michael Bartlett, Patrick Comins, Joseph Theroux, Dr. Mark Ashton, Stephanie Lebanowski (by phone)

DEEP Staff Present: Douglas Emmerthal, Jennifer Hockla, Sheila Hoefle (recorder)

Members absent: Christopher Martin, Bruce Spaman, Ian Branson

Meeting called to order at 9:37 am.

Minutes of the June 26, 2014 FPAB meeting. Patrick Comins motion to approve, Mike Bartlett seconded. Unanimous vote to approve minutes.

On August 20, 2014, EAB was found in the northwest corner of New London County. Quarantine hearing scheduled for 8/27/14 was cancelled due to the find on 8/20. Debate continues on whether to quarantine the entire state or just the infected counties. Doug stated that Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) is going to wait until the end of the collection season (Nov/Dec) before making a decision on how to proceed. Massachusetts (MA) going to public hearing to quarantine the entire state of MA with the expectations that the quarantine will be in effect by November. The CAES is getting pressure from USDA APHIS to speed up quarantine in Connecticut. CAES is trying to hold off until the beginning of next year to not impede the delivery of firewood. Question remains as to where Rhode Island is on this. The infestations have been mapped in Connecticut and we expect to have updated maps at the end of this trapping year.

There have been a few incidents of people bringing quarantine wood from NY into a non-quarantine area in CT and APHIS has dealt with the import.

A Labor Day checkpoint on I-84 west in Union was conducted. Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) was the focus but staff were looking for all insects. Staff made 2 stops, neither had potentially infested wood. The event went well and was a good test of cooperation between Department of Motor Vehicles, Environmental Conservation Police and Forestry. Next phase will be shifting to infractions, moving out of educational.

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection - Division of Wildlife and Inland Wetlands – Working Lands for Wildlife New England Cottontail permitting issues for certified practitioners (Working Lands) - There are two situations regarding permits for timber harvests that can arise from the Working Lands project. Timber harvests that are a part of the Working Lands project are covered by a blanket permit by DEEP from the Inland Wetlands Division. The DEEP Wildlife Division had numerous trainings for Foresters and Supervising Forest Product Harvesters for the Working Lands project about the blanket permit. There is some concern that certified forest practitioners may think that the blanket permit will apply to all harvests they are working on. Joan noted that if a practitioner had attended the required training, they will understand. DEEP personnel are involved with all aspects of the “Working Lands” Plan, which is why local permits aren’t needed.

The Use of Wood from Urban and Municipal Trees Urban Wood by Chris Donnelly, Urban Forestry Coordinator and Gabriela Doria, Research Assistant. A USDA Forest Service Grant was used for this publication. The purpose of the report is to explore the current status of the use of urban wood in

Connecticut and to suggest some direction as how this wood could be better used. There was a pilot project proposal submitted to the USFS for grant consideration in Fairfield for further study for the better use of roadside trees.

Hydronic Heater Buy Back Program (Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces) – Early in 2008 Doug and Chris Martin started to ask Environmental Quality side of agency about starting a wood stove buyback program. He had hoped to get a new mindset in the Department about wood stoves and wood furnaces. The idea, rounded up from colleagues in other states and the EPA, was to offer financial incentive for the replacement of older less efficient units. Funding from made available through the settlement of an interstate air pollution case against American Electric Power Service Corporation. If the funds aren't completely expended, the program will be expanded to include wood stoves and perhaps pellet units. Doug stated that the advertising for the program was not as good as he thought it would be.

US Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS) probable Northern Long-eared Bat ESA listing – In October 2013 the USF&WS proposed listing the northern long-eared bat as an endangered species, mainly due to white nose syndrome. The USF&WS held three public information webcasts in August to provide information and answer questions about their proposal to list the northern long-eared bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. There is potential impact to the forestry community in Connecticut because during the summer, the bats roost alone or in small colonies underneath bark or in cavities or crevices of both live trees and snags. A final decision on listing the northern long-eared bat will be made no later than April 2, 2015. NAASF had an opportunity to send in comments regarding the decision. The hope is that if the bat is listed that there won't be too many restrictions place on forest activities. Doug to provide the link to ICPG to FPAB members. A board member asked if comments from the forest products industry could still be sent in; response was Chris would be better able to answer on his return. As this discussion continues DoF staff will keep FPAB members informed and also communicate with the certified forest practitioners.

The DoF will be looking for statistics on harvesting, specifically what amount of harvesting occurs in the winter to see what the level of impact of the listing might be to forest practitioners in Connecticut. Considering adding that to the 2015 annual report.

Update on Municipal Regulation on Forest Practices Issues – The issues in Killingworth have been resolved. DoF staff are currently working with Willington, East Hampton, to change their regulations. Staff have not had any luck in reaching out to personnel at the Town of Stafford. Stafford currently requires a road bond for forest practices. DoF will send out letters to chief elected officials, Inland Wetland Agents, Planning & Zoning Departments and Conservation Commissions reminding them of the Forest Practices Act. Will also reach out to CACIWIC and ask to put an article in their newsletter.

Staffing changes at the DoF – As of 9/30/14 Rob Rocks has retired. The Forest Protection Supervisor has been refilled by the staff member who was the Forest Planner. The Forest Planner is a key position within the Division. They coordinate grant work, Forest Action Plan, and the Forest Legacy Program. Forest Action Plan is required to be eligible for competitive grants through the USDA Forest Service. Forest Protection Supervisor authorization to refill came with an automatic refill authorization if the person was already a staff member with DOF. Planner position should be able to refilled. State Lands Supervisor is scheduled to be replaced, interviews will be held on 10/15 & 10/17. Ten out of 17 staff members are age eligible to retire. Judd White retired in 2011 from the Forest Practices act Program, he will not be replaced.

Annual Report/PA490 Form Update– Form distributed. There may be additional adjustments to the form for purposes of tracking issues that arise from the northern long eared bat listing. DoF Staff anticipate sending out NEC habitat survey form again with the FPA annual report form. Wildlife Division staff were pleased with the information they acquired. Expect the form for next year to be more specific about the location of the practice.

Forest Practices Act Program Updates - There are currently 493 practitioners. Holding steady at that number. There are several enforcement actions that staff is working on. One enforcement action was delivered to the AG’s office last week.

Doug thanked those that commented on the revisions to the “Agriculture...Forestry... and Wetlands Protection in Connecticut” brochure. The Brochure has been sent to legal counsel for review by the Attorney General’s Office. The final brochure should be completed by the end of the year.

Future of PA490 training – Service Foresters, Dick Raymond and Larry Rousseau will do the training for 2015. Going forward Webinars is under consideration. Outsourcing and webinars were suggested by the Board.

Farm Bureau on PA490 Publication – Several years ago the Farm Bureau was granted an Ag Viability Grant which allowed them to publish 3500 PA490 Guides. The Farm Bureau is going to apply for another grant to enable them to revise and publish additional guides. Chris Martin is on the steering committee for the new Guide. The Farm Bureau has performed PA490 training for their members and friends and will continue to do so when the updated Guide is completed. It was suggested that webinars are a great way to widely disseminate information and will be accessible to a large audience. Joan is going to do PA490 webinar and post on Farm Bureau website.

Patrick Comins received his appointment letter and is a member of the FPAB. Jennifer requested that Patrick send her contact information. Mark needs to renew, Joe too. Joan too. Doug will get Mark and Joe info about who to contact regarding appointment.

Name	Appointment Expires
Ian Branson	12/31/2015
Michael J. Bartlett	12/31/2014
Thomas Degnan	6/30/2017
Dr. Mark Ashton	12/31/2005
Patrick Comins	6/30/2018
Joseph Theroux	12/3/2011
Joan Nichols	12/31/2013
Bruce Spaman	6/30/2010
Stephanie Lebanowski	12/31/2014
Christopher Martin	Permanent

Meeting adjourned at 11:04– motion to adjourned Mike Bartlett, second Joe Theroux.

Next meeting in January 2015, date and location TBD.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheila Hoefle