AISWCD Forestry Committee Meeting May 21th, 2020

Chairman Dale Shumaker, called the May meeting of the AISWCD Forestry Committee to order at 9:05 am via teleconference.

 Roll Call:

Members Present Members Absent AISWCD Present

Dale Shumaker Bill Littrel Rebecca Osland

David McCormick Jody Shimp

Chuck Schafer

Kevin Bennett

Gary Albers

Chairman’s Report:

Dale gave a brief Chairman’s report. Dale thanked everyone for being on the call today and those who sent in questions to be included on the Forestry Survey for SWCD’s. Dale also noted that we may have another committee member coming onboard, he had invited Katie Adams with the Savanna Institute to attend a committee meeting.

Old Business:

Prior to this meeting a draft survey intended for future distribution to SWCD’s statewide had been sent to Forestry Committee members for review. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and uncertainty about future events including AISWCD Annual Meeting the consensus of the committee was to wait until after August 1 to send the survey out to the Districts.

The committee discussed the draft survey as submitted and recommended a few changes; the edited survey questions are as follows:

1. What percentage of your District is forested? Of the forested acres what percentage is privately owned?
2. Has your District had any inquiries from the public about forestry issues? If yes, what is the most pressing concern?
3. How many Forestry Management Plans have been written in your District in the last five years?
4. Does your District encourage landowners with forested acres to incorporate a Forestry Management Plan into their operation?
5. What funding sources has your District used to promote and support forestry practices?
6. What programs would you like to see initiated to promote forestry in your District?
7. What can the AISWCD Forestry Committee do to help promote forestry in your District?

Dale stated that Grant was willing to disperse the survey when the committee was ready to proceed. After discussion Rebecca suggested we send the survey document to the Districts for them to review and to use Survey Monkey as the actual survey mechanism. The committee agreed with this approach.

New Business:

Dale presented a small project that he asked the AISWCD Forestry Committee to support. The project is an outdoor classroom to be located on the campus of Century Community School in Pulaski County, Illinois near Ullin and Shawnee Community College. The vision for the outdoor classroom is to provide students, area residents and groups the opportunity to experience an outdoor learning center that emphasizes Forestry.

What are the primary goals?

1. Plant a variety of native hardwoods, shrubs and wildflowers with an emphasis on Oak and Hickory. Potentially tie this project to the “Let the Sun Shine In” project.
2. Identify each plant with an information placard.
3. Install walkways
4. Make the outdoor classroom available to the general public and groups

How do we get the work done?

1. Century Ag and FFA students will do the planting
2. Century Ag and FFA Students will make and install information placards
3. AISWCD Forestry Committee Representative, Century FFA Advisor, Pulaski/Alexander SWCD, and Conservation Technologies Representative will supervise the project.
4. Kevin stated that he could be of assistance locating trees and plants for the project.

How will the project be funded?

1. AISWCD Forestry Committee will submit a request to the Illinois Forestry Development Council (IFDC) small grant program (maximum of $5,000). Grant requests are due June 15, 2020 for FY 21 grants.
2. Shawnee RC&D has approved $1250 for the project contingent on funding from IFDC
3. Gary stated there may be an opportunity to acquire some plants from the Henry White Experimental Farm.
4. Forestry Committee members are currently preparing an IFDC grant request. If the project moves forward a large sign with all the partners logos will be installed near the highway for maximum visibility

Concerns

1. Layout of outdoor classroom to make it functional and accomplish goal to emphasize Forestry.

Rebecca volunteered to reach out to Katie Adams with the Savannah Institute to see if she or her group could provide assistance as far as layout and functionality.

After committee discussion David McCormick made a motion to support this project and Chuck Schafer seconded. There were no objections

Dale stated that IFDC would be approving project requests at their July 2020 meeting. If the project is approved the Forestry Committee will probably meet in late August or early September to discuss the project and the forestry survey results.

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 10:15 am. Motion Chuck Schafer and second Gary Albers