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TENNESSEE FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

1/10/2023

Tennessee Forestry Commission meeting was held in the Cordell Hull State Building, Senate Hearing Room II in Nashville, TN, January 10, 2023

Participants:

Forestry Commission Members: Tom Midyett, Chairman; John Charles Wilson, Vice Chairman; Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe, Secretary; Alex Richman, Mike Witt, Bill Legg, Drew Getty.

Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA): Chris C. Eaton, Chief Financial Officer; Samantha Wilson, Budget Coordinator; Jay Miller, General Counsel; Carol McDonald, Assistant Commissioner.

Tennessee Department of Agriculture - Division of Forestry (TDF): David Arnold, State Forester; Heather Slayton, Assistant State Forester; Rachel Greene, Forest Data & Analysis Unit Leader; Andy McBride, State Forest Unit Leader; Dyshea Brown, Executive Administrative Assistant.

Tennessee Forestry Association: Candace Dinwiddie, Executive Director

State Representatives: Chris Todd, Chairman, House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee; Rusty Grills, Chairman, House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee.

Chairman Tom Midyett welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting began at 10:05 a.m. CDT

Approval of the Minutes of the September 9, 2022 meeting

John Charles Wilson motioned to approve minutes as presented. Bill Legg seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed.

Community Riparian Forest Restoration Program

Madison Johnson

- Madison Johnson, graduate student with University of TN – Knoxville presented the Forestry Commission with data about the University's Riparian Forest Restoration program.



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Review FY2023 budget and FY2024 budget proposal

Heather Slayton

- **Fiscal year 2023 expenditures** (current) – Budget amount: \$37,118,900.00, Sum of Total expenditures: \$14,129,488.23. Year to date expenditures are 38% of budgeted amount.
- Overtime and travel above budgeted amount. Overage is due to out of state emergency deployments. These expenses are 100% paid by the receiving out of state agency.
- Due to FY23 expansion request, the division received extra funds for uniforms, tools, PPE and logging mats for state forest system. An update on spending of these funds was provided.
- **Fiscal year 2023 revenue** – Current Services (nursery, timber sales and vendor services) is low due to uncollected revenue from seedling sales at nursery, low number of fall timber sales, and deferred prescribed burns due to wet weather- current revenues are 29% of budgeted amount.
- **Fiscal year 2023 Capital & Facilities Budgets** – Current \$25,200,000.00 project list was reviewed, and updated status of individual projects was provided.
- **Division vacancies** 38 FTE vacancies; 12% FTE vacancy rate. This does not include FA1 positions.
- **State employee's salary increase Recent** salary improvements within the division were summarized. Increases should help in recruiting and retaining quality employees. will have a positive impact.

Review timber sales – FY2022 closeout & FY2023 projections

Andy McBride

- FY2022 timber sales brought \$3,130,908.00. The revenue target was \$3,200,000.00.
- FY2023 timber harvest total projections \$4,165,328.00.

Review Forestry Commission Annual Report

David Arnold

- Tom Midyett recommended a motion that comments, additions, or corrections provided by Commission members during the meeting be incorporated into the annual report draft by the State Forester.

Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe motioned to have state forester to make changes to annual report as provided during the Commission meeting. Bill Legg seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed.

FIA program update

Rachel Greene

- Handouts were provided of Forest of Tennessee fact sheets for 2018 and 2021.



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- Data has been completed for 2019 and 2020 fact sheets have not been completed.

Report on Forest Landowner regional input sessions

John Charles Wilson/Bill Legg
Heather Slayton

- Three regional scoping sessions (east, middle, west) were conducted to receive feedback on how TN Division of Forestry could better assist forest landowners.
- Findings included lack of communication to small landowners from the division and landowners were not knowledgeable of what opportunities were available to them.
- Information from scoping sessions were used to empower a broader ranging survey to involve over 2,000 forest landowners.
- Surveys have been emailed along with mailings to landowners.

The sub-committee previously formed of John Charles Wilson, Bill Legg and Alex Richman is to operate as a working group in assisting Heather Slayton with the Division's landowner assistance programs.

Drew Getty motioned for sub-committee to form a working group to assist division with landowner assistance program. John Charles Wilson seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed.

Future Meeting Dates

- April 4, 2023 – Approve Nursery seedling pricing/production and appoint sub-committee to nominate Commission officers (first Tuesday in April).
- June 14, 2023 – Approval of Commission officers (second Wednesday in June).
- September 6, 2023 – Approve Division budget (first Wednesday in September).
- January 9, 2024 – Discuss budget, timber sales (second Tuesday in January)

Bill Legg made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sharon Jean-Philippe seconded the motion. The Meeting was adjourned at 2:25PM CDT.