

Forest Practices Advisory Board
January 29, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Board members in attendance: Mike Bartlett, Joan Nichols, Bruce Spaman, Joe Theroux, Tom Trowbridge, Chris Martin, Ian Branson

DEP staff: Doug Emmerthal, Forest Practices Act program leader

Guests: Eric Hammerling, Deborah Spalding

The meeting opened at approximately 9:40 am with a review of the September 10, 2008 meeting minutes. There were no additions or corrections. Mike Bartlett moved to approve and Joe Theroux seconded. The board unanimously approved the minutes.

Deborah Spalding presented to the board a summary on a Yale Forest Forum held in April 2008 concerning incentives for forestland conservation in Connecticut. A copy of the published summary was distributed to each board member. Deborah solicited ideas and comments from the board on the process of rolling the publication out and moving forward with implementation of the ideas presented at the forum.

Joan and Eric brought the board up to speed on the status of the Notification of Timber Harvest. The form is done and the guidebook needs to be circulated for comments. Eric will email the guidebook to the board members. SAF, TIMPRO and CFPA have indicated endorsement of the notification concept and the Farm Bureau has it under consideration.

Doug briefly reviewed some of the program responsibility changes that have occurred within the Division of Forestry. Helene Hochholzer is now the forest planner and will manage federal grants, state strategic planning and assessment, forest resource plan implementation and Legacy. Doug has assumed the leadership of the Private and Municipal Lands program (three service foresters), Forest Stewardship, Urban & Community Forestry (one urban forester) and Environmental Review team participation. Doug will retain program responsibility for the Forest Practices Act and Utilization and Marketing programs.

Chris Martin led a discussion on the need to examine Doug Emmerthal for Forest Practitioner certification. The need arises from the Division's plan to exchange the job title Program Specialist 1 for Supervising Forester. In order for Doug to migrate from Program Specialist 1 to Supervising Forester he will need to be certified as a Forester. Since Doug had great involvement in the development of the original certification examinations Chris solicited ideas from the board in how to deal with the issue. Doug indicated to the board that he has not been directly involved with the examination process, including development and grading, for several years. He further stated that Jennifer Hockla has taken over those responsibilities and that part of her responsibilities was to develop a new examination series by March 2009. The new series would be created from a pool of questions formed from all eight versions of the current exams and by adding additional questions written or collected from various selected sources and edited by her. The board discussed several

options including having Doug take the Maine licensing exam or another such state exam. It was pointed out that the examinations from other states would not address Connecticut's laws nor reflect Connecticut's forest types, conditions or management practices. The concept of developing an examination from the question pool Jennifer Hockla is currently working on with individual questions being chosen by the advisory board was brought up and discussed. Because the security of the examinations is an issue it was suggested that questions could be assigned a unique number and the board could then choose the questions to be asked by picking from a "hat" of unique numbers. The question that corresponds to the unique number would then be placed on the examination.

After discussing the proposal at length, Chris Martin moved that an examination for Forester be prepared and given to Doug. A question pool would be formed by section and topic from all previous examinations and new questions now being collected. Each question in the pool would be assigned a unique number. The board would select each question to be placed on the examination by choosing the particular question from the section or topic pool based on its unique number only. The board will not view the text of the questions to be asked. The motion was seconded by Joan Nichols. The board unanimously approved the motion with no abstentions.

Doug gave a brief summary of certification program updates noting that enforcement issues had not fallen off.

Doug presented the new study guide and explained that the guide's sales price has been the same since 1994 and would have to be raised from \$10 to \$15. It was pointed out that the proceeds from the sale of the guide would be handled differently now that the federal grant guidelines permit the Division of Forestry to use revenue gained from the sale of the guide to further the purpose of the grant. The Division would now recycle \$12 from each sale into a fund for the sole purpose of purchasing inserts for future guides. It was suggested that all certified practitioners be notified of the new guide as they may wish to purchase one.

Doug announced that the Selling Timber guide is now with the graphics person at UConn for layout.

Doug stated that the Division now has its own photo ID printer. The printer is not new but having one within the Division should help resolve some of the delays the Division has experienced caused by sharing the equipment.

Doug pointed out that a page listing approved continuing education opportunities for certified forest practitioners had been added to the Division of Forestry's website. A copy of the page was circulated.

Joan brought everyone up to speed on the continuing education opportunities that TIMPRO has in the works and those that are in planning.

The meeting adjourned.