

FOREST PRACTICES ADVISORY BOARD

September 28, 2011

Members in attendance: Stephanie Labanowski, Ian Branson, Mark Ashton, Joe Theroux, Mike Bartlett, Steve Broderick, Chris Martin

Guests: Eric Hammerling

DEEP Staff: Doug Emmerthal, Jennifer Hockla, Ken Collette, Sheila Hoefle (recorder)

Meeting called to order 9:15am

Introductions

Minutes of the February 2011 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve Ian, Stephanie second. Board voted to approve the February 2011 minutes.

Minutes of the May 2011 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve Stephanie, Mike second. Board voted to approve the May 2011 minutes.

Potential Regulations regarding the movement of wood/firewood:

The primary focus of today's meeting is to start discussions on firewood regulations and importation bans, impacts on industry and homeowners. Stephanie noted that during the FPAB meeting with DEEP Commissioner Esty the FBPA was tasked with looking at this issue, information handed out. The distributed documents should be used to provide guidance as we move through this process. Board members identified the ALB infestation in Massachusetts and the EAB infestation in NY as posing significant threats to CT's forests. Board members recognized people moving firewood as posing a great threat to the spread of ALB, EAB and potentially other insects and diseases into CT. Board members encouraged DEEP to move forward with measures to protect CT's forests from the spread of ALB and EAB particularly through the movement of firewood. Board members discussed the possibility of regulating the movement of firewood into CT. Discussions focused on adopting regulations but mixing a heavy dose of consumer education in with light-handed enforcement.

Bans and quarantines are in place to require people to keep the movement of firewood local. At issue are not only Asian Longhorned beetle (ALB) and Emerald Ash borer (EAB) but also 1000 Canker disease and other pests. Within some states, there are only countywide bans. Discussion regarding the difference between Connecticut and neighboring states. Connecticut is known as the gateway to New England. Most individuals traveling to northern New England will pass through Connecticut. Ian inquired if there are any updates because of the monitoring of EAB. Chris noted that EAB & ALB continues to creep closer to CT. One of the maps handed out shows that the ALB quarantine area has dropped just south of I-90 in Auburn, MA. Until this point, I-90 had been a holding spot. EAB – the most recent find was in Orange County NY, in the area of West Point at a very narrow section of the Hudson River. In Green and Ulster County, the width of Hudson River might provide a natural barrier. It is estimated that the

infestation in eastern NY had been there for 5-7 years. Things to consider are keeping the public engaged in vigilance, utilizing the do not move firewood campaign. Once ALB or EAB is found, there is a significant difference on how to handle the next steps. ALB has an eradication effort to completely remove the pest. EAB is a containment effort to slow the movement of the pest. Due to the differences in treatments, federal aid for ALB is high, EAB would be less funded. Statutory authority within Connecticut for establishing quarantine lies with Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). DEEP is secondary and would play a supportive role. On July 25, 2011, an MOU was put in place to allowing DEEP to assist CAES to enforce quarantine regulations, which were passed April 13, 2010. Chris stated that he felt it was important that we respect statutory authority and private property rights. Personnel, who go beyond that, then disrespect personal property rights and outside statutory authority, and put agency at legal risk. During delimiting surveys, there may be a need to go on personal property but staff should be respectful and protective of a person's property. In Massachusetts 30,000 trees have been removed and an aggressive replanting campaign has started in the urban setting surrounding Worcester. No tally was taken on the trees removed from the forest. A next logical step would be to have state parks sell firewood through contract services and within the contract it should state that if wood comes from out-of-state has to be kiln dried.

Information needs to be obtained regarding how much wood actually crosses state lines into Connecticut. Annual reporting that is collected for the Forest Practices Act Program collects information regarding the amount of wood harvested, but does not ask for the destination of the wood after harvest. There are economic impacts to the movement of long-length firewood. Discussion regarding the quarantine violation in New York. Doug clarified that a logger, sawmill and trucker that got a large job inside quarantine area and were transporting logs over 3 month period out of the quarantine area were caught. Discussion on the definition of what firewood is. Chris stated that when quarantine is in place, saw logs can move out, depending on time of year and if bark has been stripped. Logs, fuel and pulp because of the nature of business process are considered low risk because the act of processing kills pests in the wood. Doug stated that anything chipped to a 1"x1" size would also be allowed for movement. Steve questioned how effective regulations have been in other states that limit the movement of wood. At this time, it is hard to determine how effective they have been because most have been in place for a very short time. Maine and New Hampshire passed regulations within the last year. States are successful with education programs. Maine has utilized their major roads to educate travelers. On major holiday weekends signs direct people who were transporting firewood to visit the Welcome Centers. Once they drive in, their wood is exchanged for wood from Maine and they are educated about keeping firewood local and the risk of introducing pests. Jen stated if they do encounter firewood from a known center of infestation the enforcement is there. If wood were confiscated from a known quarantine area the individual would be reported to law enforcement from the quarantine area. A discussion would have to take place with the Attorney General's Office regarding the fines for Connecticut.

Stephanie questioned how the forest products industry would react. Steve stated that we are close to a crisis situation. The Asian Longhorned beetle is close to Connecticut and it seems like it is time for action. Suggestion to seriously consider using Maine as a model for wood transport. Maine is initially using soft approach that hardens through education and recognition. From discussions, it sounds like any ban in Connecticut would not be on the export, just import. Mark

stated that there is a clear bipolar aspect to firewood. Commercial and residential; residential is where the focus needs to be at this time. It would be relatively easy to reach the regulated community, if DEEP Forestry offered a class that would offer free CEU's, most certified practitioners would come.

Advisory Board Appointments and Meeting

Reminder to make everyone on the Board aware that they should be familiar with their appointing authority and their appointment expiration dates. Doug asked to confirm that daytime meetings are the best time for all.

Emerald Ash Borer Update:

No EAB was found on the purple traps that were hung this summer. A lot of education took place at fairs and when other opportunities were presented.

Connecticut Grown Forest Products:

Connecticut Grown Forest Products website is not published (http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2697&Q=484488&depNav_GID=1631&depNav=). Information and applications are available on the website or by calling 860-424-3630.

Certification Update:

Jen gave a certification update. Applications for exams have picked up quite a bit. There are 25 people scheduled to take the exam in October, most taking forester's exam. DoF currently has two cases in the Attorney General's Office, one is semi-resolved, and one is unresolved. Two hundred and fifty certified practitioners would renew their license this year. DoF will continue to post courses that we are aware of on the internet. Some people have been utilizing webinars as a way to accrue CEU's. In the past when renewal packets were being sent out we included information about the list-serve maintained by Steve, now handled by Tom Worthley. Should we do that again? Jen to discuss with Tom to determine if we should begin that practice again.

Other Business:

- Doug commented that meeting with commissioner went very well.
- Bill Hyatt, Bureau of Natural Resources Bureau Chief sent his apologies along with Chris that he missed this meeting. He will plan to attend in the future.
- State Lands Management Durational positions. It is nice to have new employees in the division. They are currently working on forest inventory work in Goodwin State Forest.
- Carol Youell asked, through a member of the Board, where things are Forest Practices Act Temporary Task Force's work. Chris informed the Board that the Task Force that was originally set up to determine if DEEP should adopt further regulations regarding timber harvesting, has been on hiatus for 1-year now. Chris is aware that there is unfinished business to look at and that things should be wrapped up. He hopes to have them reconvene and finish the business that they started.

Steve motion to adjourn, second Stephanie. Meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.

Next meeting to be scheduled by Doodle Poll.