

# Northwest Illinois Forestry Association

Minutes of November 19, 2007

President Tom Arnold called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the basement meeting room of the Stockton Library.

President Arnold asked if there were any changes or additions to the Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve them as mailed. Lee Freedlund moved to approve the minutes as mailed. Keith Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer, Keith Arnold, reported that the NIFA currently has \$7,853.97 in total of all accounts. He mentioned that the balance is declining due to mailing costs and donations to other organizations.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

President Arnold introduced Pat Keleher from Jo-Carroll Energy. Mr Keleher discussed Jo-Carroll Energy's plans to build a biomass power plant near Thomson, Illinois. Preliminary estimates call for 800,000 tons of biomass material annually as the fuel source for the power plant. The biomass material can come from crop residues, hay, warm season grasses, and wood chips. Utilizing these fuel sources, the carbon dioxide releases into the atmosphere would be offset by the carbon dioxide uses of the plants for their growth.

Mr. Keleher asked if the NIFA would like to be involved with supplying some of the needed wood residues. He envisioned that a coop might be formed to supply the wood chip needs. The estimated price for the delivered wood products was \$30 per ton.

Much discussion followed and several questions were raised that needed further research. Some of them were: if the wood chips would need to be dried; could the power plant operate a large wood chipper at their site; practical storage needs at the power plant site. Mr Keheler will try to get answers for these concerns.

Overall, the group present favored the idea of the biomass plant and thought it could help in marketing low quality and "weed" trees from our forests as well as tree tops from log sales. It would also be a source of waste disposal for sawmill operations and wood trimmings from urban areas.

Mr. Keheler will return to a future meeting when more information is available.

Bob Sloan from the Illinois Tree Farm Committee addressed the group next. He had lists of Tree Farmers in northern Illinois who have been in the program for 25 to 50 years. The Tree Farm Committee would like to present awards to these people. Mr. Sloan asked if NIFA could incorporate the awards into their Annual Dinner Meeting next March. He also passed out lists of the eligible Tree Farmers and asked how many of those people were NIFA members.

Discussion followed. It was noted that District Forester, Ralph Eads, had already given out some of these awards at NIFA meetings. President Arnold asked Jerry Misek to contact Ralph to get a list of those who have received the awards. Meanwhile, Keith Arnold highlighted the NIFA members on the list and returned it to Bob Sloan.

Mr. Sloan also told the group that the Illinois Forestry Association has hired a lobbyist for the Springfield legislature. She was influential in getting the bills passed last summer for forest real estate taxes. The next issue that she will be working on is restoring personnel to the IDNR Forestry offices.

President Arnold then read a letter from the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation concerning Schurmeier Forest. The NIFA has been actively managing the west 11 acres of the 56 acre forest. The Conservation Foundation would now like to add the remaining 45 acres to a management plan. The letter also had 2 management proposals with cost estimates included.

The letter was discussed with several important questions being raised. It was decided to invite Christine Trifone, Land Stewardship Specialist from the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation to the December meeting.

President Arnold then directed the attention of those present to creating an agenda for NIFA activities for the upcoming year. Discussion followed. Items agreed to be on the 2008 agenda include: February meeting- a speaker on biomass: Annual Dinner Meeting, March 18<sup>th</sup> with a speaker from the Tree Farm Committee; forest management session at Chestnut Mountain Lodge on April 11<sup>th</sup>; Tom Arnold to host a spring tour at his Tree Farm showing a recent timber harvest; Jerry Misek to host an October tour showing the forest reaction to the 1998 wind storm destruction. A few other tour possibilities were mentioned and members will follow up on these ideas and report back in the December meeting.

President Arnold asked the group where the December meeting should be held. The group decided to hold the meeting at the Stockton Library again.

There being no further business, President Arnold called for a motion to adjourn. Alvin Wire moved to adjourn the meeting. Lee Freedlund seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerry Misek

NIFA Secretary