

**LOUISIANA FORESTRY COMMISSION  
BATON ROUGE, LA  
JUNE 12, 2018  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Louisiana Forestry Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Poole at 10:17 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Epney Brasher

**Members Present:**

Chairman Scott Poole, Gradon Clemons, Wayne Hagan, Michael Hudson, Bill Jenkins and Dr. Allen Rutherford

**LDAF Staff Present:** Wade Dubea, Epney Brasher, David Campbell, Walter Daigre, Patricia Dayberry, Damian Johnson, Don Smith, and Roy St. Pierre

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Scott Poole announced that public comments will be dispensed at the end of the meeting, prior to adjournment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Dr. Allen Rutherford made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 13, 2018; Wayne Hagan seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**BUDGET**

Epney Brasher reported that the office is doing fairly well so far this fiscal year. The purchases of some items are still in process which is being paid for with funds from the fire protection assessment fund. The painting of the planes has not been completed. The second plane is finishing up and may get the third one started. The aircraft air conditioners we planned to install this year have been completed. We are waiting on some vehicles to be delivered as well as some slide-in units for brush suppression. The manufacturer is in Florida and has been overwhelmed with orders, so we are waiting on that.

As far as the new budget, we are still waiting. The Legislature is still in session so we don't have any hard numbers to go by for the next fiscal year. Wade reported that the news coming out of the second special session is looking like a smaller cut for the Department than was first reported. The plan to absorb a cut would be to take supply monies to cover the cut. That is where our fuel money is, so it is a gamble. The weather has been wet enough to keep down fires, so we have a surplus there. But if the weather should dry out and we start having fires, that is a whole other story. Giving up money there would be done to avoid any type of personnel consideration. We don't want to give up any of our positions.

There was a discussion of fire protection assessment fund, how it was collected, how it was forecasted along with budget authority processes. Discussion included the federal funds processes.

FPP processes were discussed. There was discussion again on a possible 75/25 split on the cost shares. The projections have not been completed, but should be by the next meeting. Wade will send out material once the projections are complete.

**DIVISION REPORTS**

When asked for a two minute report on Enforcement, Wade replied that we are understaffed and spread way too thin. Roy brought the Commission up to date on the enforcement reports. Blake Phillips has been hired to fill

the position in the southeast quarter of the state. Roy and Blake have been working on the arson problem in Washington parish and hope to have the case closed soon. There are several arson investigations going on around the state.

Wade discussed the maps showing southern pine beetles and tent caterpillar infestations. The pheromones were changed in the traps, so there were more good beetles along with more of the southern pine beetles. Most of the southern pine beetle issues are in the Florida parishes with beetles coming out of the Mississippi infestations. One other Forest Health issue is that Brent is working on getting a spraying program going to address the cogongrass problems that are starting to crop up in the Florida parishes. Most of the cogongrass issues have come in from the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama into southeastern Louisiana. The grant we are using will pay for contract services for a sprayer and the chemicals used to spray. Through this grant, the landowner would agree to have the cogongrass on their property sprayed at no expense to the landowner. We just have to go through all of the legal contract hurdles to get the landowners signatures and agreements in place to do that. We are poised to have an early fall start on this program. We will be reporting on this at future meetings.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The 75/25 split on FPP was discussed last meeting and will be discussed again in the future. Wade discussed the stumpage and severance reporting. We have talked with Mississippi and some of the third party providers that provide that data to them. Wade does not feel that a monthly or quarterly report is needed. We need to provide a summary report at the December meeting to be given to the Commission that would be a summary year to date with stumpage prices so that the Commission can set the severance tax rates for the coming year. We are working on getting prices for a subscription to that third party service like Mississippi uses. At this time we are still statutorily obligated to provide that quarterly market report based on what Revenue sends us. In order to make that complete transition, we'll have to go to the Legislature and change that law to remove that obligation. However, we don't want to do that until we see that this way is working for us and if that is the way we want to go. There was discussion on how the numbers would be derived and what clear definition is to be used for the reporting on each category. We are looking for a more realistic picture of actual reporting that should come with this service.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The next Commission meeting will be in September and not at the annual LFA Conference.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Buck Vandersteen with the Louisiana Forestry Association invited all the commission members to the annual LFA conference at Sam's Town in Shreveport, August 28-30. Buck talked about the passing of Mr. Joe Burns who was a commission member a long ago. He questioned the funding of the FPP applications and expressed his thoughts that they should all be funded. They are date stamped in and will be funded in the order they came in. Buck thanked the Office of Forestry for helping out with the 2018 Teacher's Tour that is going on now. There were 24 teachers in attendance. Jack McFarland got a concurrent resolution passed at the last special session to get a group together to address the rise of local ordinances affecting road bonds and such. At the LFA Convention, the director of the police jury association will speak to the loggers about road bonding and how we can work together to avoid those problems.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Mike Hudson made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Allen Rutherford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.