



# MINUTES

## TENNESSEE FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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1/12/2021

**Tennessee Forestry Commission meeting was held at Montgomery Bell State Park, Clement Meeting Room in Burns, TN, January 12, 2021**

### Participants:

**Forestry Commission Members:** Johnny Heard, Chairman; Tom Midyett, Vice Chairman; John Charles Wilson, Secretary (attended remotely via WebEx), Alex Richman, Bob Qualman, Mike Witt (attended remotely via WebEx), Sharon Jean-Philippe

### Forestry Commission Ex-Officio Members:

**Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA):** Brian Chandler, Forest Management Program Leader (attended remotely via WebEx)

**Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC):** Roger McCoy, Director of Conservation (attended remotely via WebEx).

**Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA):** Tom Womack, Deputy Commissioner; Shannon Klonowski, Assistant Commissioner; Samantha Wilson, Budget Administrative Coordinator (attended remotely via WebEx)

**Tennessee Department of Agriculture - Division of Forestry (TDF):** David Arnold, State Forester; Heather Slayton, Assistant State Forester; Rachel Greene, Forest Data and Analysis Unit Leader; Gina Sowders, Reforestation Unit Leader (attended remotely via WebEx), Tim R. Phelps, Communications and Outreach Unit Leader (attended remotely via WebEx); Wade Waters, Fire Chief (attended remotely via WebEx); Dyshea Brown, Executive Administrative Assistant (attended remotely via WebEx); Philip Morrissey, State Forest Unit Leader (attended remotely via WebEx); Ward Tarkington, Project Manager (attended remotely via WebEx).

**Tennessee Forestry Association (TFA):** Candace Dinwiddie, Executive Director (attended remotely via WebEx).

**Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC):** Neil Letson, President

Chairman Johnny Heard welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.



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## Roll Call

***Johnny Heard motioned to acknowledge having a quorum of members with two members participating remotely. John Charles Wilson seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve: Johnny Heard, Tom Midyett, John Charles Wilson, Mike Witt, Bob Qualman and Sharon Jean-Philippe. The motion passed. Meeting can be conducted.***

## Tennessee Urban Forestry President's Award presentation

- Neil Letson, president of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council presented Forestry Commission member Sharron Jean-Philippe with the council's President's Award.

## Approval of the Minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting

***John Charles Wilson motioned to approve minutes as presented. Bob Qualman seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve: Johnny Heard, Tom Midyett, John Charles Wilson (remotely), Mike Witt (remotely), Bob Qualman, Sharon Jean-Philippe and Alex Richman. The motion passed.***

## Review FY2021 budget – YTD expenditures and revenues

Heather Slayton

- A year to date budget review was provided. All budget variances were explainable and followed previous year's trends. The Division's budget is tracking as expected.

## Vacancy report

Heather Slayton

- Status of current position vacancies was provided. The Division has been quite successful in filling critical vacancies during COVID enacted hiring freezes. Current vacancies are 95 across all position classifications. These vacancies include 73 positions being held for budget reduction needs.

## Review timber sales – FY2020 closeout & FY2021 projections

Phil Morrissey

- FY2020 closeout and FY2021 timber sale projections were provided. The FY2020 closeout report will be attached to the September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Forestry Commission minutes. FY2021 timber sale revenues are projected to be \$300-\$400 thousand below revenue target of \$3.2 million.

## Review Forestry Commission Annual Report

Tim Phelps

- A draft of the Commission's FY2020 annual report was reviewed. Minor edits/additions were noted and will be incorporated. Bob Qualman requested to have the draft Forestry



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Commission Annual Report as a standing item on the agenda to review in January for future Commission meetings.

## **White Oak Initiative and Interest from the Sazerac Company**

Candace Dinwiddie

- Sazerac Company has approached the Tennessee Forestry Association (TFA) with interest to invest in activities that promote sustainability of the white oak resource in Tennessee. Continued discussions will occur among Sazerac, TFA, and the Department of Agriculture.

## **Report from committee assigned to meet with USDA FSA Director**

John Charles Wilson  
Bob Qualman  
David Arnold

- John Charles Wilson, Bob Qualman, and David Arnold were appointed to a subcommittee to meet with Mike Mayfield, executive director of the Farm Services Agency, to discuss FSA's Emergency Forest Restoration Program. The program lacks exposure and is underutilized in Tennessee. Action steps from the meeting include building a conservation agency/organization communications network to have access to program information provide such to landowners that incur timber damage after storm events.

## **Approval of resolution to recognize forestry workers and related manufacturing workers in the forest industry as essential workers for COVID 19 vaccination eligibility.**

***Tom Midyett motioned to approve the Resolution below to recognizing forestry workers and manufacturing workers in forest industry as essential workers for COVID 19 vaccination eligibility. Alex Richman seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve: Johnny Heard, Tom Midyett, John Charles Wilson (remotely), Mike Witt (remotely), Bob Qualman, Sharon Jean-Philippe and Alex Richman. The motion passed.***

I move that The Tennessee Forestry Commission encourage Governor Bill Lee, Agriculture Commissioner Dr. Charlie Hatcher, and Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Lisa Piercey to recognize forestry workers, and related manufacturing workers in the forestry industry, as essential workers in the establishment of the hierarchy for COVID-19 vaccination eligibility

## **Future Meeting Dates**

- April 6, 2021 – Approve Nursery current year seedling pricing, following years seedling productions quantities and appoint sub-committee to nominate Commission officers (first Tuesday in April).



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- June 9, 2021 - Approve Commission officers (second Wednesday in June).
- September 7, 2021 - Approve Division Budget – location: Nursery (first Tuesday in September).
- January 11, 2022 – Discuss budget, timber sales and review draft Forestry Commission annual report (second Tuesday in January)

***Bob Qualman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sharon Jean-Philippe seconded the motion. Commission members voted yes to approve: Johnny Heard, John Charles Wilson (remotely), Mike Witt (remotely), Bob Qualman, Sharon Jean-Philippe, Alex Richman and Tom Midyett. The motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 3:10PM CST.***