

Legislative Action Plan

Illinois Forestry Association

Part 1: 2008 Legislative Session Goals

GOAL #1: Restore IDNR forestry staffing to 2000 levels

GOAL #2: Seek funding for IDNR

GOAL #3: Support legislation for Emerald Ash Borer control

GOAL #4: Develop proposal in support of Dixon Springs Agricultural Center

These goals will be addressed by:

- Informing key legislators including members of the Governor's and Lt. Governor's offices and staff, Agriculture and Conservation legislative committee, legislators and leadership in both chambers and parties, Illinois DNR, Illinois EPA, and other appropriate entities, coalition members and their lobbyists, and other governmental agencies as appropriate, about staffing needs in forestry, the condition of forests and forestry across the state. Information will be provided through individual meetings, IFA brochures, workshop invitations, and IFA Legislative Day (April 9, 2008).
- Brainstorming ideas for funding staffing and other forestry needs across the state with appropriate legislators, coalition members, and legislative staff, and IFA legislative committee, IFA board members, and IFA membership through meeting and workshop participation.
- Managing introduced bills that may impact IFA by attend session days, appropriate committees, and request legislative committee testimony when needed. Lobbyists will lobby the bills by sharing IFA concerns and information about IFA issues.
- Creating coalition partners on a broad range of topics concerning carbon credits, IDNR forestry positions, funding sources for forestry issues, and other related environmental issues. Partners will be identified through IFA meetings, and IFA lobbyists will communicate with those partners and seek support for common issues.
- Providing periodic legislative updates generally to correspond with legislative deadlines or relevant activities (approximately February 15, March 13, March 14, April 17, April 18, May 9, May 15, May 23 and May 29) These will be provided by email to the IFA board and a membership summary for posting on the IFA website. Bill lists will be sent to the legislative committee on a weekly basis by Friday, when legislature is in session.

Part 2: 2008 Legislative Session Lobbying Targets

- Legislators and leadership in both chambers and parties
- Governor's and Lt. Governor's offices
- Illinois DNR, EPA, and other appropriate entities
- Coalition members and their lobbyists
- Other governmental agencies as appropriate

Part 3: 2008 Legislative Calendar Deadlines

Below is a list of deadlines that occur throughout the legislative session. Some of these are flexible, for example the 2007 session was scheduled to end in May 2007. Just keep this flexibility of the deadlines in mind as we proceed to next year.

Deadline Descriptions:

An *LRB* deadline means that the *legislative reference bureau* can not release any new language to become legislation. All bills must go through the legislative reference bureau before introduction.

The *deadline for the Introduction of Bills* is the last day to introduce any new legislation. Bills can still be amended after this point, so there is still some flexibility in submitting new language if a bill with similar subject matter can be found. Any bill that does not get voted out of committee by the committee deadlines is considered a “dead” bill. Likewise, a bill will have to be voted (yes) on before the 3rd reading deadlines or it is considered “dead” as well. No bill is really dead until the end of session, but only those that are supported by the various leaders have any chance of becoming “un-dead”. Each chamber has its own deadlines, and there are separate deadlines depending on which chamber the bills originate.

Deadlines for the January – May, 2008 Session

- January 11 – House Deadline - LRB Request
- February 15 – House & Senate Deadline – Introduction of Bills
- March 13 – Senate Deadline – Senate Bills Out of Senate Committees
- March 14 – House Deadline – House Bills Out of House Committees
- April 17 – Senate Deadline - 3rd Reading of Senate Bills
- April 18 – House Deadline - 3rd Reading of House Bills
- May 9 – House Deadline – Senate Bills Out of House Committees
- May 15 – Senate Deadline – House Bills Out of Senate Committees
- May 23 – House & Senate Deadline - 3rd Reading of Other Chamber Bills
- May 29 – House & Senate Deadline – Session Ends

Part 4: Legislative Plan of Action for IFA Members

- **Thank all legislators who voted for SB 17.** This can be done by office visit which is generally the best, or by phone, letter, and email. Before sending emails, make sure that your legislative office utilizes email. Some legislators are very email savvy while others are not. Remember that you have two legislators – a senator and a representative. Be sure to thank both of them. If you are not sure of your legislator go to www.votesmart.org. When you thank the legislator be sure to share that you are an IFA member and why you supported SB 17. Legislators receive many complaints and few thank-yous. IFA will develop a positive image with legislators if we start out with thank-yous first! !
- **Invite your legislators to visit your forested areas.** We ought to make sure that certain legislators who can be of assistance, visit the areas that do not have forestry personnel. We need to plan these events when the legislators have had a few weeks to recover from the budget mess.
- **Invite legislators to join you at the various events you are planning.** Legislators are interested in their constituents' issues. *If the legislator cannot join you for the whole day* make sure that they are welcome for whatever time they can attend. *When a legislator joins you* make sure that you introduce them to all in attendance of the meeting and thank the legislator for taking time out of their busy day.
- **Need to grow the forestry caucus.** The more folks (voters) that are interested in an issue the more interest a legislator will have. Illinois is made up of downstate (west of Aurora and South of I-80), suburbia and Chicago. All of these areas have forested areas – that is very good. But we have not gotten all areas of the state to be members of IFA. Downstate legislators need votes from other areas of the state to move issues of importance for downstate. As IFA grows in membership throughout the state AND works with to develop a broad caucus our political power will grow and favorable legislation will be easier to attain.
- **Continue Legislative Work Outside of Session.** Paula and Jenni will work with IFA members to continue to educate, create awareness, and brainstorm about forestry issues throughout the year, even after session is over. The opportunity to meet with legislators and coalition partners outside of session is a great tool that all of us need to take advantage of.