

SUFC Working Group Call
August 17, 2012

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National Academies of Science Work Shop:

- The National Academies of Science (NAS) is hosting a workshop, *Urban Ecosystem Services: Toward a national research agenda for quantifying the benefits of urban tree canopy*. (See the preliminary attached summary. More detailed information on the 1.5 workshop is forthcoming.) October 29-30, 2012.
- The purpose of the workshop (funded in part by the Forest Service) is to bring a diverse science community together with practitioners and end users to advance common metrics and methodologies on urban ecosystem services and identify knowledge gaps.
- The results of the workshop will be multifold for the UF community and will help inform the NUCFAC recommended urban research priorities (report out in 2015) and provide a synthesis of the state of the urban research field. The NAS has strong credibility on the Hill and the results/outcomes of the workshop are independent.
- SUFC leadership is considering sponsoring the reception on October 29th at the National Academies of Science Building (on the Washington, DC Mall).
- Workshop capacity is limited to approximately 100 people. NAS will work to have a cross-section of communities and representatives participating in the workshop to help bridge multiple communities and raise the visibility of integrated urban system research. While on-site participation is limited (and full registration required/no early departures etc.), the workshop will be webcast and a dedicated website forum will be developed.
- Four breakout sessions will address urban ecosystem research issues including tools and metrics; managerial session addressing planning and policy implications/future; science and empirical data behind current research, and more.

General Updates:

- **Vibrant Cities:** SUFC holding page provides baseline information on process and advisory committees etc. <http://www.urbanforestcoalition.org/VibrantCities/VibrantCities.aspx>
- A draft of the Vibrant Cities work plan is underway by the Vibrant Cities team and advisory bodies - and will be distributed widely for comment in September. The work plan is designed to engage and accelerate the work already being done in multiple communities and sectors and help mobilize the vision behind the Vibrant Cities report.
- The Forest Service is funding a **Vibrant Cities UF Standards Pilot Project** led by the NE Research Station. In early September, Michael Leff will join the Ecosystem Services team within the Davey Institute, a division of the Davey Tree Expert Company. It is a joint position with the US Forest Service, intended to advance common goals between the two organizations.

- The role will involve leading the development of “sustainable urban forestry standards and practices,” one of the key goals of the USFS Vibrant Cities & Urban Forests call to action. The initiative will also support the Federal Urban Waters Partnership, launched last year by the Forest Service, EPA, NOAA, and many other collaborators. In addition, Davey and the Forest Service are increasingly interested in opportunities involving ecological restoration and its intersection with urban forestry.
- **Farm Bill** – the drought and the re-election are taking the forefront on the Hill; leaving few to address the more “routine” components of the FB.
- While it is very difficult to see when the FB will be finalized, SUFC members on the call generally felt a “hide and wait” or “holding mode” is the preferred status. However, if the current provisions in the FB appear to work for individual organizations, advocates should tell Congress to “get it done.” SUFC Policy WG will re-group on the issue later this fall.
- **Appropriations** –There is a 6-month Continuing Resolution once Congress returns from the recess. The CR seemed to receive support from both sides of the aisle. SUFC Policy WG should begin to address appropriations issues and larger SUFC policy platform following the Thanksgiving holidays; preparing for a busy January and working backwards from a March/April SUFC Hill day.