

SUFC Policy Workgroup
April 23, 2015

In attendance: Becky Turner and Deanne Buckman (American Forests), Faith Campbell (Center for Invasive Species Prevention), Gary Lovett (Carey Institute), Kathy Fallon Lambert and Marissa Weiss (Harvard Forest/ Science Policy Exchange), Paul Reis (SUFC), Danielle Watson (SAF), Nick Tobenkin (APA), Laura Schweitzer-Meins (Northeastern State Foresters), Gordan Mann, Brenna Mannion (NACWA), Bill Toomey (TNC), Cara Boucher – National Association of State Foresters

1. Greetings – introduction of SUFC members

- a. Comments for APHIS draft EIS are due Monday April 27

2. Presentation

- a. Introduced Forests Insects and Diseases: Impacts and Options
 - i. Gary Lovett of the Cary Institute, and Kathy Fallon Lambert and Marissa Weiss of the Science Policy Exchange, Harvard Forest
- b. A Forest Pest and Pathogen Initiative
 - i. Brought together 20 scientists and policy advisors to address the ecological impacts and potential policy solutions of introduced forest pests to the nation's forests.
 - ii. Submitting the paper to peer-reviewed journal
 - 1. There will be press kit, media roll out, briefings once the paper is published
- c. The Problem
 - i. Non-native pest introduction into the U.S. at a rate of about 2.6 insects per year since the 1950s. Since the mid-1980s there have been about 1.2 wood-borers introduced per year.
 - ii. The steady rate does indicate that existing policies are doing some good. However there is a need for more: EAB killed 100 million trees in the Eastern and Midwest US.
- d. Biological Pollution
 - i. Northeast is most affected
 - 1. Probably because it has some of the busiest ports in the country and tree species there are common to those in Asia and Europe
- e. Ecosystem Disturbance
 - i. Species of trees can be made ecologically irrelevant by pests
 - 1. Chestnut, Hemlock, and Ash are being affected
 - ii. Wildlife habitat can be compromised by this
 - 1. Green Warbler relies largely on Hemlock

- 2. Streams can be warmed due to lose of shade cover
- iii. Productivity of forests can be disturbed: nitrogen leeching
- iv. When the pests hit urban and suburban forests the damage can be severe due to lack of species diversity and stress

f. Economic impacts

- i. Forestry impacts are small compared to urban and suburban impacts
- ii. Largest impacts are on homeowners and municipal governments

g. Policy Options

- i. Policy options range from easy to implement to those that are more stringent and harder to implement.
 - 1. Focus is primarily on introduction of pests
- ii. At point of origin:
 - 1. monitor sentinel trees abroad – monitor species in other countries to give us an idea of what to look for
 - 2. pre-clearance partnerships – set up a system so customs can be sure that exports are clear of pests
- iii. Clean Pathways
 - 1. Two main pathways: live plants and wood packaging materials
 - 2. Wood Packing material:
 - a. phase out its use; promote voluntary substitution of WPM by retailers – IKEA and Trader Joes are doing this, but not for ecological reasons, more for economic reasons
 - b. improve existing WPM treatment regulations – some pest can survive current treatments, or pallets can be reinfested after a certain period of time after the treatment, there is also some fraud in regulations
 - c. strengthen enforcement and penalties
 - 3. Live Plants:
 - a. phase out import of live woody plant
 - b. certify “pest-free” retailers
 - c. switch to a “white-list” screening system – currently we have a black list that lists plants that cannot be imported; white-lists lists those that are known to be safe to import
 - d. strengthen enforcement and penalties
- iv. Prevent establishment
 - 1. Data-based inspection; random and targeted inspections
 - 2. Post-entry quarantine for live plants, must be quarantined for a year or two - has been effective here and in other countries, already required for some agricultural plants
 - 3. Integrated surveillance system
 - 4. Funding for rapid response to eradicate pests, current funding is often too little too late

- h. Why Focus on Urban Forests
 - i. Urban forests are sentinels of invasion – provide early warning but are at the greatest risk
 - ii. Economic value of damage is greatest for urban and suburban forests
 - iii. Ecosystem services provided per tree are greater on urban and suburban ecosystems
 - iv. Increased potential for public engagement with the issue – people have more attachment to trees in their neighborhood
- i. Strategy for Impacts
 - i. Use science of impacts to build constituency and a coalition of engaged foundations and NGOs
 - ii. Use science to focus attention on strengthening existing US policies and programs
 - iii. Urge groups to pursue funding via Farm Bill – choose some urban areas that have busy international trade ports and active NGOs to support the new initiative
 - iv. Use media attention to promote corporate conservations around ‘packaging’ and clean plants – hoping to help bring attention to the issue

3. Q&A

- a. In a time of strapped federal budget how can we encourage precautionary efforts that are federally based even though the municipalities and home owners feel the brunt of the costs? Are there efforts to engage municipal governments on working on these issues?
 - i. League of Cities, Counsel of Mayors, etc. ought to be giving strong support, but it may not be high on their lists – when you talk to them about the cost to their cities you might be able to get their attention
 - ii. Find a way to break national numbers down to specific cities to make it more concrete
 - iii. Information is out there but people are still waiting until they find it in their communities (three-year lag) – we need to get the info out here differently
 - iv. We keep planting monocultures like Elm then Ash, making the same mistake over and over
 - v. Need more media coverage and education
 - vi. Sometimes the threat makes people finally pay attention – how to leverage this to expand education efforts, but also how to encourage people to make trees a priority even before the threat takes hold.
- b. Other strategies for moving recommendations forward
 - i. possible NGO Collaboration – TNC urban forest program (Bill Toomey) is interested. Fits into activities on early detection, monitoring, engaging citizens.

4. Next Steps for SUFC

- a. Use the report as a background for developing policy positions around this
- b. Think about engaging municipal governments
- c. Add to efforts in green infrastructure to work on protecting the infrastructure; invest in green infrastructure and in protecting it
- d. Discuss potential of endorsing recommendations in the paper – may be ways to highlight the report and some of the recommendations, individual organizations can do their own
- e. Individual organizations can work with Cary Institute and Science Policy Exchange to help promote the work and policy options.