

SUFC Policy Working Group Call
January 17, 2014

Participating: Becky Turner (Chair, Am Forests), Gerry Gray (Chair, ACTrees), Jen Hinrichs (Convener), Nick Tobenkin (APA), Seth Brown, Rebecca Arvin (WEF), Stacy Detwiler (Am Rivers), Chuck Mills (CA ReLeaf), Danielle Watson (SAF), Cara Boucher (NASF), Brent Keith (NASF), Rich Dolesh (NRPA), Faith Campbell (TNC), Peter Bachmann (NACD)

Appropriations:

The following was shared by SUFC member organizations:

- House and Senate passed 1.1 trillion compromise budget (through Sept.) Several budget excerpts circulated by SUFC members (TNC, NASF) are attached to these notes (not an inclusive list).
- Of note is the *Urban and Community Forestry Program* (previously slated to be zero-ed out earlier this year). SUFC recommended staying at FY '12 enacted levels of \$31.1 but it dipped slightly to \$28. Committee members voiced this was a positive outcome to hold so close to previous years – noting SUFC advocacy efforts playing a role in maintaining \$. *See attached budget excerpt for U&CF, Forest Stewardship, Research, FIA+).*
- USFS Research overall: \$292.805 (1% decrease overall). Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA): \$66.8 million, increase over FY'12 enacted (but lower than NASF rec. of \$72).
- Brent (NASF) also shared the new Landscape Scale Restoration line item of \$14M was a victory as this eliminates taking 15% off the top of other programs to fund this effort (including U&CF) – which factors into the reduced line item above.
- American Rivers: Clean Water SRF stayed the same as the Senate draft (\$1.45 billion); Drinking Water \$907 million – “generally happy overall, as it could have been much worse”; Clean Water SRF set aside for green infrastructure, water efficiency, and environmentally innovative projects (Green Project Reserve) was maintained at 10%.
- On the legislative side, American Rivers is supportive of the Innovative Stormwater Infrastructure Act (3 components: 3-5 Centers of Excellence; Design Implementation grants; and promotion and integration of GI – Rep Edwards and Sen. Udall)
- Residual Designation Authority (RDA) Petitions – American Rivers along with NRDC, the Conservation Law Foundation, and a number of local partners petitioned the EPA in July to use its authority under the Clean Water, called “residual designation authority,” to require management of stormwater runoff from already existing commercial, industrial, and institutional sites that currently aren’t required to do anything to manage the runoff coming off of those sites.
- APHIS (Tree & Wood Pests) - \$54M which is good – “if not enough.” *See attachment.*
- WEF: Seth recently attended a Patel College of Sustainability conference/event: <http://psgs.usf.edu/news/article/patel-college-with-uf-ifas-host-successful-green-infrastructure-conference> and was very impressed – strong UF component to the GI conversations.
- WEF is also focused on LID and GI competitions. Along with ASLA they submitted a grant to the USDA FS to develop a challenge competition for local design and planning communities with a UF component

(esp. @ stormwater). Potentially coordinating 5-8 competitions across the US with a national finals event; winner recognized at WEF Tech Conference (which provides a large platform for issues/work).

- NACD/NASF: [Wildfire Act](#) has a significant impact on all Forest Service programs including State and Private Forestry funding (the transfer of funds from other programs to cover fire suppression/fighting etc. would be limited and a sep. fund/account would be established for diasters). Important issue for SUFC to keep in mind. Introduced by Senator Wyden, the bill has good partisan support. It will fall to Ryan and the Budget Committee to review.
- NRPA: Rich shared that his organization has been continuing a push on green infrastructure with the focus of parks as a great source of sustainable planning, stormwater management etc. NRPA and APA have partnered up to
- LWCF remained “surprisingly large” including a 3 million designation for competitive funding awards (not clear what yet).
- CARELeaf: Chuck provided a UF budget state update of \$10 million – partially funded from carbon cap dollars.
- Jennifer will provide an update on the SUFC Fly-Out efforts at our next meeting. A meet/greet is planned with Rep. Joyce for Jan. 23rd in Kent, Ohio.

NOTE: SUFC Annual Meeting: March 26th Washington, DC. PM partners and networking reception on the eve of the 26th at the US Botanic Gardens. Rep. Moran is retiring and SUFC event may recognize him on the 26th. However, other DC-based conservation groups are planning an event recognizing his significant contributions to environmental/conservation issues. More information pending. SUFC Advocacy Hill day plans TBD.

Overall, this working group is working to make our agenda more inclusive and this feeds well into the overall SUFC strategic planning process that is underway.

These links may provide more detailed information relevant to your interests:

ASLA:

Here is a link to ASLA’s cursory summary of the bill and a breakdown of allocations for some of the programs they are watching.

<http://www.asla.org/NewsReleaseDetails.aspx?id=42360>

Approps report:

<http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20140113/113-HR3547-JSOM-G-I.pdf>

Other Approps links that might be useful:

http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/fy14_omnibus_-_informational_graphs.pdf