

SUFC Call
Thursday, November 20, 2014
2:00 PM- 3:00 PM

On call: Rebecca Turner, Jen Hinrichs, Peter Bachmann, Danielle Watson and Megan Mitchum, Brian Borkowicz, Rebecca Arvin, Nick Tobenkin, Faith Campbell, Brenna Mannion, Gerry Gray, Cara Boucher

1. Midterm election results – what it means for our strategy to build champions

Retirements in House: Rep. Bishop (R-UT) taking over for retiring Rep. Hastings (R-WA) as chairperson for the Committee on Natural Resources. A group met with Bishop's staff to discuss invasive species (focus to date has been aquatic and plant pest), and he appears to be genuine in his desire to find solutions and get things done by working with all interests.

Senate change of power: Sen. Cochran (R-MI) is expected to chair Appropriations, with Sen. Murkowski (R-AK) to chair Energy and Natural Resources and Sen. Inhofe (R-OK) to chair Environment and Public Works. Still up for question is the chairperson of the interior appropriations subcommittee. We will be working to build relationships with all new leadership.

Legislation potential in 114th: We will be keeping our eyes open for energy efficiency legislation – given its bipartisan support, it may be introduced again in the 114th, with a possibility of adding TREES Act language as an amendment.

New targets

We have been searching for new urban champions since Jim Moran (VA) announced his retirement. We have made good progress with Rep. Joyce and sent a request for sponsorship of the February, but still need to keep exploring. Some other options include Rep. Matsui, who sponsored the Trees Act in the last Congress.

2. Lame Duck – Omnibus and potential WDFEA language

Appropriated funding runs out on December 11th. We are hoping to get language similar to WDFEA included in the Omnibus Bill. The Wildfire Funding Coalition is sending a letter with nearly 100 diverse supporters asking for this language to be included. However, after the elections, people are not very positive about getting an Omnibus passed. At this point a Continuing Resolution is more probable.

3. Next steps for Climate Resiliency Agenda

We will be tracking with CEQ opportunities to continue engagement and ensure urban forestry remains a priority with the Climate Resiliency Agenda.

4. Prep for FY16 appropriations

Should we ask for a spot during Public Testimony for SUFC?

We discussed whether or not SUFC should request a spot to testify or if individual organizations should incorporate the SUFC priorities into their testimony, as has been done in the past. Most agreed that individual organizations were good for now, but it was something to consider if needed a new strategy moving forward.

Facilitated (in person) discussion on approps requests in early February

- **Look for a poll from Jen to determine in-person Policy working group meeting – most likely at American Forests.**

Office of Management and Budget: *UPDATE after the call*

We decided not to set up another meeting with OMB in the next few months. We discussed whether to invite someone from OMB to address the coalition in February. Our contact, Barbara Johnson, is no

longer with OMB and a meeting with someone prior to the submission of the president's budget in February is not likely.

5. **Update from Partners conference**

Held in early November, the the Partners in Community Forestry Conference is a great way to connect with our partners across the country. We had about 50 people attend the SUFC breakfast for a quick recap of the year from Policy, Research, Strategic Outreach, and from the Chairperson, Don Winsett. Next year the Partners conference is in Denver – we should consider inviting congressional staffers to attend to immerse them in the field.

With this year's conference in Charlotte, it highlighted the need for SUFC to work with the southern research station and let them know we are interested in the socioeconomic aspects of urban forestry. It is important for us to try and have a meeting with the head of the research station and a great way for research and policy working groups to coordinate.

6. **Invasive Species meeting with Rep. Bishop office**

Representatives from the Coalition against Forest Pests and the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species met with Rep. Bishop (R-UT) staff. Bishop's focus is on invasive plants and animals invading Utah's grasslands and lakes. His primary focus is not on urban forests or forest pests. However, he is interested in improving the invasive species programs, and welcomes ideas. We all agreed that great transparency about how money is allocated is needed. The 10% cap language in the House Appropriations bill, while opposed to by the administration, was one way to address that transparency, for FY15 the focus will more likely be on reporting, and justifying the overhead costs.

He seemed interested in exploring the USFS Invasive Species Policy (adopted December 2011), the progress in developing implementing guidance, and its possible role as a model for other land-managing agencies. I sent him the policy later in the day.

ACTION ITEM: SUFC/ACTrees needs to connect with the tree-planting group in Salt Lake City and have them reach out to Bishop so that he understands there are urban forests in Utah, the bridge between urban forests and public lands.

7. **Outstanding Issues**

- **Annual meeting for SUFC is in Washington, DC on Feb 26. The reception is Feb 25 at the US Botanic Gardens**
- We should explore ways to provide green infrastructure, stormwater management, and urban forestry talking points to our SUFC partners engaged in Water Week- as well as other fly-ins that occur throughout the Spring.

ACTION ITEM: SUFC water quality member/leaders will provide an overview of common issues/interests and sketch of opportunities for SUFC/members during the upcoming Water Week at the pending January in-person meeting to be held at American Forests. (Brenna, Rebecca Arvin+)