

# SUFC Steering Committee Semi-Annual Meeting

Washington, DC

December 5, 2013

Participating in person: Don Winsett, Carrie Gallagher, Peter Hutchins, Julia Anastasio, Gerry Gray, Katrina Krause (for FS), Mark Garvin, Steve Sinclair, Scott Maco, Cara Boucher, Dan Lambe and Jen Hinrichs

## Advocacy AND Policy WG Recap

- The Policy WG has been active throughout 2013 despite the CR and the continued complete deviation from the “norm.” These efforts included formal letters under SUFC banner and individual SUFC member-endorsed letters re: specific legislation and appropriations. Work led by co-chairs and WG members, supported by convener. Funded by unrestricted dollars. See SUFC [Take Action page](#) for summarized work/platform.
- Steering Cmte Hill Debrief (12/4): 12 strategic Hill visits over one afternoon. Take-away was a very mixed bag from staffers including:
  - “Sequester is here to stay.”
  - “You really need to be talking to the ‘Authorizers’ – we (Approps. Cmte members – -House) don’t have the power anymore.”
  - “Nobody liked what came out of the subcommittee – it was ugly; don’t worry about it.”
  - “We see some signs of hope and progress – more than we’ve seen in a long time re: the budget.”

*NOTE: NASF conducted 60 meetings on the Hill and found similar mixed results.*
- Regardless – 2015 will be very “tough for all” and the Defense cuts in 2015 will be on us (part of sequester plan). Diversification for UF continues to be important.
- Question posed and put on the table: **“Does SUFC need to weigh increased Hill time – and limited resources – with the current powerless/broken process?”**
  - Good question: Remember a Senate/House compromise would still hurt UF.
  - While the process is off the rails for now – at some point it will get back on and we (UF advocates) need to have been a voice and presence all the way along.
  - The power lock (leadership of House and Senate) will open up eventually so “don’t abandon DC but plan for the future.”

- **Consensus:** It is worth keeping a two-pronged approach with a DC/Hill focus AND decentralized, grassroots effort.
- Speaking of a decentralized approach, **TCIA is spearheading a grassroots FLY-OUT** effort to help mobilize their constituency+ to carry the UF message. Mark has engaged Ulman Public Policy (via Heather Doucet) to explore this effort and is looking for potential champions. Congressman Joyce (R-OH, freshman, personal connection through TCIA board member, close to Davey HQ, Nelson etc.) is one such candidate.  
TCIA would sponsor this effort and SUFC members would carry it forward. Planning/design is underway. More TBD.
- **Why aren't we doing more urban forest TOURS with Hill leaders/staff?** Would it be beneficial and deepen knowledge to get them out into the field (District, MD, VA) to SEE what is going on?
  - These kind of tours have been conducted in the past with some positive results.
  - Monica Lear, Paul Revell, Brent (NASF) might have some insight into this IDEA (conceptual in nature only at this point/test item)
- **SUFC Annual Meeting AND FLY IN/Hill Day: May 6-7** is the current date for both events. HOWEVER, there was a discussion about un-coupling the two events (due to capacity to plan both simultaneously, moving target dates for best Hill day, potential conflict with other SUFC member Hill days, capture more SUFC members, pros/cons of hosting TWO potential PM networking/access events etc.)  
To be discussed further with the FLY IN ad hoc committee and Policy WG - ASAP

## SUFC Governance

- Steering Committee is appreciative of the efforts of the ad hoc committee and provided input on specific areas. Draft will be re-circulated by ad hoc committee shortly.

## RESEARCH:

- The SUFC Research and Develop platform gives SUFC well-vetted talking points for multiple uses but also justifies the Coalition's policy stance. *It also allows us to approach other federal agencies and talk to them about research. It is an opportunity to analyze other agencies to see what the commonalities are between them/us etc.*
- The Research WG is re-grouping and considering next steps. Recognition that iTree is an outstanding "indicator" even if some (regulatory agencies or individuals within those agencies) question the value of the tool. It is an education opportunity: iTree isn't JUST about the data...etc.

- Next steps for Research/SUFC:
  - focus on policy messaging (i.e., invasives: showing the link between invasives in the urbanized areas and their connections to larger forested areas up/downstream from cities
  - coordinate with NUCFAC re: 10-year plan
  - determine short, medium and longer-term actions (goals)
  
- NOTE: There is a “new way of thinking about our natural resources and teaching the next generation of students is a new way of doing business.” Research/natural science are the key/gateway to natural resource management – in a way that has not been done before.

### Trees Are The Key Campaign:

- Clarification: While this is a communications/marketing extension of the Vibrant Cities report/project, it has multiple and longer-standing benefits for the SUFC’s goals.
  
- Funding for Fifth Estate Communications ends in late January. There are several articles underway to illustrate the connection between urban trees and multiple sectors (stormwater, social justice etc.).
- The Steering Cmte discussed the pros and cons of “re-launching” the VC report (per Fifth Estate’s options memo) and decided NOT to pursue a re-launch but to wind down the outreach and projected work so that there is minimal hand-off to another entity (SUFC member/other). Majority vote to “wrap up vs. re-launch.”
  
- While Fifth Estate has provided “great value” to SUFC, without committed funds or SUFC member organizations willing to absorb Fifth Estate’s communication push on Trees Are the Key, there is no strategic value in a re-launch.
  
- Jennifer will continue to work with Fifth Estate to ensure all deliverables are met and transition any outstanding communication elements (website, toolkit etc.) to a willing SUFC member. ACTrees expressed some interest/capacity to have an intern/other minimally oversee static/“evergreen” Trees Are the Key website/map.
  
- Jennifer communicated change of plans to Fifth Estate on 12/5 and they are continuing with core deliverables.

### Strategic Planning Committee (Ad Hoc):

- **Cmte volunteers: Don, Steve, Julia.** NOTE: A wider sweep of SUFC membership would be valuable to have at least one or two additional members join this committee so it is not made up

exclusively of Steering Cmte members.

- Working backwards, ad hoc cmte would present draft overview at upcoming SUFC annual meeting (May?).
- Consider how SUFC-member survey tool MIGHT be used to gather information from wider membership – without opening Pandora’s Box. It may be that ad hoc cmte could collect specific feedback on draft plan from annual meeting/other in lieu of survey.

### Annual Meeting & Advocacy Day (DC Fly-In)

- May 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> were the best common dates for Steering Cmte members.
- HOWEVER, there was a discussion about UN-COUPPING the two events in 2014. To be discussed at the next Steering Cmte call (January). In the interim, SUFC Policy WG and Fly-In ad hoc cmte will review.

### Misc./Outreach:

- **OPEI:** [Outdoor Power Equipment Institute](#) is poised to become a new Strategic Partner (corporate supporter) of the SUFC. (their members include Husqvarna, Caterpillar, John Deere and wide range of outdoor/green industry equipment industry players). Mark and Don met with their President/CEO, Kris Kiser on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> and they are ready to sign on. They also have a foundation arm
- **Dep. Under Secretary “Butch” Blazer:** Several SUFC Steering Committee members met with Dep Under Secretary “Butch” Blazer. The meeting was positive and immediate outcome is a request to meet with the Under Secretary on a monthly basis to discuss specific issues that overlap between Nat. Resources & Enviro/Forestry and SUFC/UF. Full notes on meeting are available from Jen.
- Re: future federal leadership meetings (HUD to DOE) there is a standing request for SUFC to pro-actively communicate/liase with the Forest Service (specifically U&CF). This would be beneficial to all parties involved.  
**Convening Funders Recap:** The ad hoc committee reviewed successes, shortfalls and next-steps on a call immediately following the Partners Conf in Pittsburg. There were specific achievements and SUFC is planning to follow-up with several different types of communications/approaches to continue to cultivate a wider, interested audience.

## ACTION ITEMS:

Jen (1-5):

1. Follow up with OPEI to discuss membership and corp. support and invoicing.
2. Follow up with Steve Hart, Asst to Butch Blazer, re: future SUFC meetings AND pursue meeting with Robert Bonnie as well (alert Jan/Keith when moving on this). Get Jan/Feb. date on calendar.
3. Draft a template for each Work Group (3) chair/co-chair to complete and submit to newly-formed ad hoc Strategic Planning Cmte.
4. Put out query about recruiting non SC members to join this ad hoc committee.
5. Follow up with TICA re: Fly-Out AND talk to Policy WG and Fly-In ad hoc cmte: re: un-coupling the SUFC Fly-In and Annual Meeting – weigh pros and cons. Communicate final plans to ACTrees ASAP as this impacts their policy summit planning.
6. **ACTrees** expressed some interest/capacity to have an intern/other minimally oversee static/"evergreen" Trees Are the Key website/map. Carrie, Peter and Fifth Estate to connect.
7. **Cara:** Update Governance document draft and recirculate.
8. **Mark:** Meet with Ulman Public Policy and report out on Fly-Out plans; clarify role/s for SUFC members.