

Urban Forest Research & Development Working Group Conference call October 7, 2014

- General updates and discussion:
- **Butch Blazer (Deputy Undersecretary USDA FS & Nat. Resources) & Lisa Pelstring (Urban Advisor, DOI) meetings:**

Gerry Gray, Scott, and Jen are exploring expansion of federal partnerships and had meetings with both USDA (Butch,) and DOI (Lisa) in September. The meetings were a continuation of dialog @ urban forestry and research and to identify other potential federal partners.

- Butch has interests in research, youth, engaging disadvantaged communities and SUFC is meeting every month or every other month with him to discuss various UF issues of mutual interest. Butch flagged an opportunity for SUFC member to potentially be on the FRAC (Forest Research Advisory Council). Carl Lucero (USDA FS) was at the meeting and followed up with names of urban forestry representatives currently serving on the Council BUT not specifically representing SUFC. This is an opportunity and a specific request of Butch that SUFC may want to pursue. Butch also expressed interest in the [ACES conf.](#) – and his office is looking into his attendance or presentation @ the conf.

ACTION ITEM: Cara will follow up with FRAC staff person

- The discussion at Interior was similar. Common points between the two meetings were around youth engagement (especially disadvantaged communities). There does not seem to be a coherent urban program at Interior so outreach will be person-by-person, or perhaps by way of an internal special interest committee. Lisa is on the coastal resilience project, urban waters (particularly in the NE), including urban farming, and is connected with the EPA (Urban Waters Initiative etc.)

Potential November/December timeline for presentation on DOI internal “urban” conference call.

SUFC could serve as a liaison between USDA and DoI as there is mutual interest in partnership but no formal outlets are now in place.

ACTION ITEM: Jennifer will follow up on connecting DOI and USDA @ urban issues of mutual interest.

- Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (John Jarvis, NPS Director, Chair) looking at health metrics/outcomes for public lands. Is there an opportunity for SUFC here?

ACTION ITEM: Rich Dolesh to follow up and provide additional information for Jen/Scott to pursue.

NUCFAC

- NUCFAC is developing (with consulting team) a 10-year plan. Jen, as SUFC representative, is serving on the advisory committee to review planning process. The consulting team is now moving onto interviewing process and will also be highly present at the Partners in Community Forestry Conference next month in Charlotte for additional input and information from the UF sector. The same team is also participating in the ACTrees meeting to gather practitioner input. SUFC will be an early go-to resource. They are working to tap the breath of urban forestry research and what SHOULD be happening in the next 10 years.

SUFC and NUCFAC had a recent call to identify a way to formalize their relationship and communication. One outcome was that Walt Warriner, Don Winsett, Jen Hinrichs and Nancy Stremple will be liaisons and both organizations will make a concerted effort to share information. In addition, there is a “contractor imbedded in the process” – Kathy Wolfe! Kathy is the research contractor for the 10-year plan team and described science assessment process. She will go to SUFC for review of draft science action plan at the right time.

- Finally, Carrie Gallagher of ACTrees is also on NUCFAC so there are multiple points of engagement and overlap which benefits all.

NASF – Urban Committee mtg and Urban FIA:

NASF Annual Meeting

NASF – Urban Committee mtg debrief by Cara Boucher: A communications campaign plan is underway - *My Tree, Our Forests*. It focuses on urban forestry and is oriented to community, managers, and program professionals. It is focused on U&CF as a mechanism to provide high-quality materials to state foresters and others working in U&CF. It utilizes Smokey the Bear etc. It is NOT a large-scale outreach campaign but a niche market for educational materials led by NASF communication cmte.

- U&CF was well represented at the recent meeting (Dan Lamb re: storm recovery, Jen received partnership award).
- **Urban FIA**

On a previous R &D call, we hosted Greg Reames, USDA FS, (see meeting [notes from July 3rd](#)) and see attached Strategic Plan (attached again). The draft doesn't appear to have much detail re: implementation, but will be working city by city (partnership dependent) and with intensified sampling and modified i-Tree Eco protocol.

Recent NASF Resolution: Urban FIA (\$3.4 M per cycle suggested from budget (of \$130M). The resolution (initiated by NE states) was controversial so it was withdrawn before it was put to the floor to vote. There were multiple issues but the core issue was focusing on completing the base program first then address urban FIA. Additional concerns about urban FIA costs overall and potentially cutting into budget for traditional FIA cycles.

An internal conversation will continue within NASF about Urban FIA with the Urban Cmte. in an effort to come to a resolution. A 5-year cycle is proposed. There is a push to maintain urban FIA as an integrated element of FIA so that it will not be removed later in process. A need to identify the following about FIA was suggested: potential input heterogeneous (??) land ownership, species/stand complexity, and stakeholder access must be addressed from the outset.

ACTION ITEM: An SUFC ad hoc committee may be pulled together to help with framing the issue for NASF membership. Kathy, Cara and Scott offered to discuss/serve.

ACTION ITEM: Scott will compile and condense SUFC WG conversations on Urban FIA so that we can, at a minimum, draft a simple document to reflect our position and recommendations.

A large issue coming up in the next five years are Forest Action Plans (2008 Farm Bill) which are ALL going to be reviewed and possibly revised over the next five years. Conversations about these plans will include shared national priorities and potentially more details in the plans – including urban forestry.

- **SUFC research priority issues**

Recently Scott, Jen and Gerry drafted one page of talking points for Butch Blazer re: urban forestry priorities – with a focus on urban research. This effort leads us to suggest we should develop refined UF Research messaging for multiple uses (federal research budget, policy WG, reference point for this WG etc.) We are soliciting your thoughts on what are the most pressing for you around research. Clearly and thoroughly answering these questions and refining our research-related priorities and messages will allow the Policy WG to align their work and target our messages to the right place/manner.

ACTION ITEM: What are those “galvanizing issues to these WG members?” and any case studies/vignettes prior to the next call – or bring to next call.

NOTE: Kathy Wolfe is specifically looking for those stories (in a more comprehensive fashion) that showcase urban research with on-the-ground impacts. We are looking for the research-to-practice stories or vignettes from across the country to highlight the successes. I-Tree is an obvious example but other research that has been locked into a success story is ideal. David Rouse underscored that the benefits of research is always being touted but following it further to advance urban forestry, policy, civic stewardship and governance is key.

- Policy - SUFC has broad set of policy messages, review for highlights and priorities in effort to set up cohesive, clear messaging; case studies or success messages; what do committee members judge to be highest/best messages? Then policy WG can align with messages; what can the research do for us?
- A future issue of the “Note from the SUFC Chair” will focus on urban forestry research – and possibly wood products science/lab.