

NUCFAC Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2015

Denver, Colorado

Council Members Present: Bill Hubbard, Kamran Abdollahi, Claire Robinson, Sara Davis, Liam Kavanaugh, Lance Davisson, Steve Goetz, Robert Ruano, Scott Josiah, Karen Firehock, Walt Warriner,

Forest Service: Patti Hiram, Steve Koehn, Jan Davis, Alice Ewen, Dana Coelho, Monica Lear, Margie Costa

Guests: Dan Lambe

Welcome

- Kavanaugh welcomed the Council and visitors, and the group exchanged introductions and safety instructions
- **COUNCIL DECISION: Warriner provided a motion to accept the minutes from the previous Council meeting as written. Josiah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ten Year Action Plan – Promotion At Conference

- Kavanaugh thanked Council members and FS for the tremendous job on the Ten Year Action Plan (Plan), and commended Stremple, in particular for her perseverance in bringing the plan to successful release.
- Kavanaugh expressed that the goal this morning would be a discussion of what role NUCFAC should/could take in advancing the Plan goals and develop clear fist year objectives to advance the Plan.
- Hiram complimented this group on the Plan and said it was a significant accomplishment.
- Koehn echoed support and thanks, and expressed support for working with the Council going forward to advance the Plan goals.
- Hiram sees the connection between the NUCFAC Plan and the FS/Agency Strategic Plan, particularly in the area of Benefits to Communities.
- Jan explained where the FS can promote the Plan to give it traction:
 1. USDA Leadership – meet w/ Council rep's and Robert Bonnie
 2. Other FACA's
 3. Federal agency targets through Urban Waters Partnership, Sustainable Communities

4. Urban Agriculture Working Group
 5. Urban Strategy Team for Associate Chief
 6. National Organizations with a policy reach such as SUFC (TNC, TPL, APA etc.)
 7. State Forestry Agencies
 8. NUCFAC representatives' national associations (City Parks Alliance, etc.)
 9. Continental Dialogue community
- Kavanaugh reviewed the PPT tool for rolling out the Plan this week and commented it is a strong presentation that any of us can use to publicize the Plan and gain participation from our stakeholders.
 - Davisson said "The Plan is not just a NUCFAC plan, not a Forest Service plan, it is a plan for our entire sector/community of practice. It is a tool we can all use. A tool to align around over the next 10 years."

Ten Year Action Plan -- Implementation

- Kavanaugh and others discussed possible actions for Council to take so that one year from now the Plan is operationalized. Desire is to seed pick up with local, state, regional leaders in our sector. Get the Plan embedded into the ranks, and then tell that story. Group discussion on ideas:
 - Have one or two cities, or states, or nonprofits who can be challenged to show how they use the Plan as a tool, how it actually helps them in their work, and how by taking the macro plan, it informs their local body of work, and that they in turn implemented it. Idea here is that one year or two years from now at a future conference, you have some story tellers who can speak to their national associations about how they used the Plan, or how it helps their work, or how they moved it to implementation.
 - Ask Arbor Day to plan for time at the national conferences going forward that are framed around "Moving the Action Plan Forward Together" with presentations from the UF community at large.
 - Think about how we can serve out presentation materials for others to deliver – tip sheets, power points, as well as individual graphics which stakeholders may want to borrow or deploy in different ways.

ACTION ITEM: Council may develop a communications kit toolbox to aid getting this information out to people we don't know directly.

- Printed Plans were provided to the Council as a thank you for their efforts. The distribution strategy is primarily electronic. Only a limited number of paper copies will be produced.

- Some corrections are still needed. Council can correct any remaining typos or errors of fact you may find in the print version. FS will make any last corrections to the electronic PDF version that will live online. FS will send link to electronic version of the current report for Council to mark for edits. Corrections will be sent to Stremple with CC to Davis.

ACTION ITEM: FS will send final electronic copy before Thanksgiving with a 2 week turn-around for Council Comment. (Note: in Post Council Meeting follow up, the date of Dec 4 was decided to catch contractors before leaving for Holiday Break)

FRAC Visit from Shannon Ramsay

- Shannon Ramsay, guest/liaison from the Forest Resources Advisory Council (FRAC). The FRAC is the advisory council reporting to Secretary of Agriculture regarding forest related research. Ramsay joined FRAC with the goal of representing urban and social research interests. Recent activity has been focused on development of a 2 page letter advising the Secretary. FRAC had a recent urban focused presentation from Morgan Grove of the FS. Council Chair is Cassandra Mosely from University of Oregon. A few key themes have emerged as areas of priority for FRAC:
 - Fire Funding Fix
 - Need to restore Forest Service R&D budget, which has shrunk dramatically. FRAC asking for 10%.
 - Extramural Research
 - McIntire Stennis
 - Pipeline for PhDs is financially constrained and of great concern in some highly specialized areas of knowledge.
- Follow up FRAC discussion with Council:
 - NUCFAC should track/consider how to influence and help recruit good quality nominees to the FRAC over time, which can help carry urban portfolio. FRAC's scope is broad, but it would be good to ensure that there is always one person on the FRAC who can speak to the Urban research segment.
 - Davis said to consider more coordination/cross-communication between FRAC, NUCFAC and the FRCC (Forest Resources Coordinating Committee). Coordinating to share same messages with Secretary is convergence that will grow a voice.
 - Koehn advised that we are operating in a budget constrained environment and so advice – to be meaningful – is largely about priority setting within the existing resources.

- Ramsay plans to review the Plan and make some notes on how it aligns with FRAC interests.
- Follow up fire discussion with Council:
 - Hiram explained how fire affects agency resources for other programs. Currently, the Forest Service is obliged to pay for the cost of fire expenses, calculated on a 10 year rolling average, within its budget. FS is spending its resources on fighting fires and reducing budget available for all other programs. This constrains money for research, money for land and water restoration on public lands, and money for cooperative forestry work like U&CF or private landowner assistance. Unless Congress passes new authorities to pay for fighting forest fire the way the nation does for other natural disasters, then fire will continue to constrain the resources of the FS as an agency, and limit the potential for funding for other activities.
 - The wildfire budget cap is developed from an average of 10 years of actual fire - fighting expenses. We are entering a cycle where the 10 year average is increasing. Drought, insect infestation, climate change, land use patterns and many factors contribute to this trend. Overall, there is an expectation that more intense, more expensive wild land fire will occur in the future.

Ten Year Action Plan Communications Needs

- Liam distributed a draft marketing plan to communicate and advance the Plan over the next 10 years. There's recognition that Council will need to find a way to resource continued rollout / advancement. Challenge is where that investment would come from, and who are the natural stakeholders/investors. Possible targets:
 - Arbor Day / merged ACTrees
 - American Forests
 - The Nature Conservancy
- Firehock asked if Council could target a group of possible NGO targets for their reaction and thoughts about
 - What the report/action plan means to them or aligns with their work
 - Gauge how they could help message and implement
 - See if they have interest
- Ewen explained some lessons learned: Where things landed in the past w/ Vibrant Cities was to go after many different pipelines rather than try to develop 1 master pipeline, and to develop the tool kit, disciplined talking points and tools so that different organizations/networks could use it.

- Josiah said there is still the important value of having a Champion and a home for the Plan nationally. Practically, to do that work of feeding 50 different pipelines, but also to carry forward the spirit and “keep the flame alive”.
- Warriner said we should be accountable to report on the Plan progress every year with our stakeholders; for example at the Partners Conference.
- Robinson said NUCFAC can serve the role of approaching some foundations that understand collective impact models, like Rockefeller or Surdna. Firehock will add Doris Duke to the mix.

ACTION ITEM: Council will approach the Foundation community and ask them to start funding these priorities in their giving programs. That would take some thought and an ambassador team. Doing some collective cultivation would develop new resources for U&CF.

- Council discussed possible next steps:
 - Organize some thinking with NGOs about possible buy in for the Plan
 - Approach Foundations with the report to ask them to fund giving areas aligned to the goals
 - Organize coalition of federal agencies that would work together on interagency basis to advance U&CF.
 - Work w/ FS to think about how Urban Waters as an interagency process has been working, what we can learn from it, and whether we can either amplify and leverage the partnership more or develop a Federal Interagency Workgroup focused on Urban Forestry. Maybe a lessons learned presentation at next NUCFAC meeting and invite some of the Federal partners from UW to the table to meet w/ NUCFAC.
 - Build on Ed Macie urban forest audit management tool. Audit of Urban Forest Program Sustainability. Explore more.
- Kavenaugh presented options:
 1. FS find funding to pay for it outside of NUCFAC budget.
 2. FS pay for it out of NUCFAC’s available budget, which would reduce the grant pool available for cost-share grant program.
 3. Find a partner organization who is mission aligned and might host and cost-share.
- Davis explained that FS is under a continuing resolution and does not know the future if a budget is actually passed. Congress recent proposals were for \$23.5 million as opposed to current \$28 million budget. There is some uncertainty on FS future budget prospects. As a national program, UCF is looking at a possible \$5 million budget reduction. FS needs to be careful about expenses that would cut into what the State programs get, or what is available for grant making. Davis likes the third option of

working with a partner because it can leverage some resources and is a strategy we generally use.

Forest Service Updates

- Davis recognized Kavanaugh and Ruano and presented them with a NUCFAC wood box and thanked them for their service.
- Davis explained that the next batch of nominations are in the Secretary's Office, but can take a while to be processed. At the Council member's option, they may continue to serve in the positions until the position is formally filled. So, this may not be Ruano and Kavanaugh's last meeting.
- Davis reported out that the NASF Urban and Community Forestry Committee discussed key priorities for 2016 at their last meeting:
 - NASF is working closely with ADF to plan celebrations and amplification for the 40th anniversary of Tree City USA.
 - The committee is preparing to have urban forestry take center stage at the NASF 2016 Charleston Meeting.
- Davis mentioned some examples of some partnerships for the U&CF program that were currently underway:
 - Energy Saving Trees Program with ADF, which is a key part of the USDA Building Blocks for Climate Smart Forestry and Agriculture
 - ACTrees transition to ADF
 - American Forests Champions work
 - SUFC new Director
 - The Society of Municipal Foresters internship program
 - EPA and Urban Waters Partnership
 - NFWF grants for urban water restoration
- Davis said U&CF was pulling together some operational documents for partners and regional staff:
 - U&CF Program History
 - 10 Year CARS data anniversary – analysis of trend data
 - Map and Spreadsheet of focal city efforts from FS and key Partners
 - Working with the FS National Partnership Office to develop a stronger cross-agency identity and strategy on urban issues.
 - Potentially, doing a grant impact analysis of 10 years' worth of NUCFAC grants
- Davis shared some documents for Council to read later:
 - CARS reporting system basics. This year in CARS, for the first time, U&CF hit 200 million people and an increase of 500 communities last year. Both are big jumps.

- Allowable expenses within our authorities (this is what States are allowed to spend U&CF funds on)
- Roles of the Council – captures role of the Chair, the DFO, the staff support etc. to help you understand the different roles.
- Hubbard offered that the NUCFAC report final grant archive is now 153 grants now online with fully searchable final reports and products through 2013. He will upload the 2014 and 2015 grants soon. www.nucfac.org is purchased and available for Council use when/if ready. Council asked that it redirect to the FS landing page.
- Hiram added some points of intel:
 - CR contained \$700 million to reimburse the Forest Service. The Chief may send those funds back to the Deputy Areas from which they came, and latitude will be to the Deputy Chiefs to decide destination of those funds. That decision has not been made yet by the Chief. There is certainly thought that we may as an agency need to prioritize rainy day planning given the fire situation.
 - Government is in a CR through December 11.
 - This year's fire bill for the FS was \$1.7 billion.

Teams Configuration Discussion

- Davisson lead a discussion about Council team configuration and asked for team members to consider skill sets when building teams.

ACTION ITEM: New team configuration will be considered based on interest and need and will be determined between now and next meeting. Davisson will work to even out teams.

Work teams met during concurrent sessions

Council Work Teams Report Out

- **Accomplishments/Recommendations Team**
 - Team will update Davisson's template for annual reporting.
 - On-line system did not work well this year and Davis, Ewen, and Davisson filled in gaps.
 - In this year's report, team wants to highlight Ten Year Action Plan, Maintaining Healthy Communities, and encourage support for federal agency research.

ACTION ITEM: Accomplishments/Recommendations team will send report to Council for electronic vote of approval. Council is to vote by Dec 15.

ACTION ITEM: FS will work to confirm Secretary's receipt of Council's Annual Report and Davis will find out at what juncture in the submission process that the report can be shared publically.

- **Grants Team**

- Grant categories started with ecological services and financial analysis categories.
- However Grants team wants to listen to several ADF Partners Conference presentations to determine if there is still a need for this category.
- Josiah requested that all research be considered such as University and Private Companies research. He said he does not feel there is a single repository for all U&CF related research.

ACTION ITEM: FS will review American Forest Technology and Science Delivery Team work to see if Josiah's concern regarding the repository is being addressed in their current grant.

- **Work Plan Team**

- Warriner exchanged pictures in NUCFAC brochure from people to trees.

COU NCIL DECISION: Kavanaugh made a motion for Council to accept the brochure. Abdollahi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Robinson reported that the Ten Year Action Plan will be promoted through a mass email circulation to all key constituencies. Warriner agreed to create a publication time table to promote the Plan. Firehock explained Conference of Mayors work based on specific issues such as water. Kavanaugh would like to convene a federal panel within a year to promote the plan and then reflect on outcomes at the one year mark.

Member Succession Planning Discussion

- Davis explained the selection process for Chair that has been historically used but feels it is time for more Council input into this process. Davis explained a trajectory that started two years ago with Davisson as a mentee to Kavanaugh as a mentor to replace himself as Chair.
- Davis also commented that Council members need to think about who replaces them and other Council members as terms end.
- Goetz commented that he wished he had had a better newcomer orientation.

COU NCIL DECISION: Davis made a motion for Davisson to succeed Kavanaugh as Chair. Josiah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Ruano commended Liam for his time as Chair during the Ten Year Action Plan effort.
- Davis mentioned that the Council Charter was up for renewal in 2016 but FS would do most of the work to move that through the process.

Next Meeting Planning

- Davisson and Davis discussed the need to reduce Council in person meetings from three to two in 2016 because of the budget.
- Council agreed that the next meeting should be in person in DC because of all the Ten Year Action Plan activity but that Council could meet in person for the summer meeting in 2017.

ACITION ITEM: Davisson will send out a Doodle Poll to determine best time for Council to meet in early March in person in DC. Davis will coordinate scheduling of Robert Bonnie or Butch Blazer and possible overlap time with FRAC.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM