

**NAASF Urban and Community Forestry Committee**  
**Meeting by Webinar**  
**June 30, 2009**  
**10am – 12:30pm**

Attendees: see attached list

Introduction by Drew Todd and review of web technology by Jill Johnson

**NA UCF Update – Phillip Rodbell**

- Phillip is on detail with the national UCF office in DC. Jim Apgar will fill in for him while he is out (japgar@fs.fed.us).
- The proposed merger of NA and Region 9 is currently open for public comment until July 9. Any comments should be emailed to [spf@fs.fed.us](mailto:spf@fs.fed.us). Ian mentioned that NAASF is in opposition to this merger, due to what they feel will be a negative impact on program delivery. NAASF recently sent out information on key messages to assist people in weighing in on this issue. NAASF encourages partners to write letters if they are concerned about this merger. Phillip said that no matter what happens, the USFS remains committed to S&PF.
- An overview/review of NA demographics and conditions was presented
- The two main NA goals are as follows:
  - a. Promote sustainable forest management
  - b. Enhance the capacity of forests to provide public benefits
- The core UCF objectives are as follows (these objectives were chosen due to current NA trends/conditions/needs):
  - a. Assist communities in setting tree cover goals/policies
  - b. Improve community tree and forest management
  - c. Enhance the health of urban watersheds
- A review of the CARS outcomes was presented:
  - a. 78% of people live in managing or developing communities (40% of these in managing and 38% in developing)
  - b. NA is doing very well nationally as far as performance goes
  - c. Congratulations go out to everyone for doing a great job
- Funding updates:
  - a. The 2009 funding allocation formula was suspended this year at the national level because NA states and the South would have seen some major declines. After considering several options in consultation with NAASF leadership, the NA Director decided to apply the existing formula, but cap any decreases at 9%. If the actual formula had been used, some states would have seen reductions of up to 22%.
  - b. Phillip is optimistic that funding will go up next year.
  - c. NA's funding that is passed through as small grants to communities (36%) leverages other funds by 5 to 1
  - d. Though 55% of funding goes into planting projects, most of the narrative reporting surrounds educational efforts. Note that reforestation on a massive scale could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels; this is yet another reason that our work is important.

- e. The states need to focus reporting on success stories that have impact.
- The following are the NA staff's 2009 priorities:
  - a. Providing guidance for incorporating urban forestry in the state assessments
  - b. Developing guidance, assistance, and training for effective responses to catastrophic events in urban areas
  - c. Preparing a comprehensive strategy to address EAB
  - d. Improving urban forest health monitoring (i.e. the iPed tool, UFORHIC data center)
- New products/resources to utilize:
  - a. *Urban and Community Forests of New England* – Nowak (rest of country to follow)
  - b. *Planning the Urban Forest* – if you need copies of this publication, contact Phillip. You can also check out [www.planning.org/research/forestry](http://www.planning.org/research/forestry)
- Related legislation/funding opportunities:
  - a. Dept. of Energy: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (the grant deadline is within the next few months)
  - b. Dept. of Energy: American Clean Energy and Security Act, 2009
  - c. ARRA state revolving funds and the Corporation for National and Community Service
  - d. USDA FS Community Forestry and Open Space Conservation Program (Obama has listed this in his 2010 budget request at \$1M)
  - e. NUCFAC Grants
- Funding trends:
  - a. 2008 enacted: \$27.691M
  - b. 2009 President's budget: \$5M
  - c. 2009 enacted: \$29.541M
  - d. 2010 President's budget: \$29.327M
  - e. 2010 House: \$30.777M
  - f. 2010 Senate: \$29.327
- i-Tree and UTC: the USFS is really encouraging states to utilize this technology and help communities set UTC goals. They would like to collect data for use in the information center.

**Question/Answer/Comment period:**

Q. C. Donnelly: Why was air quality not included in the focus areas?

A. we will effect air quality if we focus on energy conservation outcomes. USFS is involved in developing model State Implementation Plans, but were told that "maintenance" SIPs for CO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> rates, was a better focus of our energy, requiring less documentation work.

Q. C. Donnelly: for the watershed focus, was the USFS looking at drinking water or some other watershed value?

A. mostly focusing on stormwater and techniques for slowing runoff and encouraging infiltration

Comment: S. Sinclair: note that the allocation formula this year included 9% reduction to the \$200K base for each state. The remainder of the funds were distributed according to your state's portion of NA's performance. A focus on performance of large population states in the current formula ensures that NA will command higher national allocations that will benefit all of us.

Q. R. Billingham: Is the \$1M for the Community Forests and Open Space Conservation Program in the 2009 or 2010 budget – if it is in 2010, is there any news from the House and Senate?

A. the \$1M is in the 2010 President's budget, no word on this yet from the House and Senate. The program would provide funds for communities to purchase open space. The state foresters are pushing for this program. The House and Senate marks for Legacy are stronger than ever. It is unlikely that growth in CFOS Conservation will impact negatively on the traditional Legacy work.

Q. K. Holman: the drastic drop in stewardship funding this year has shifted some focus from Stewardship to UCF in MN. Is this happening elsewhere?

A. redesign funds have begun to make a dent in allocations. Funds seem to be down more for Stewardship this year because there were no carryover funds from previous years to lessen the shock. The states will be well positioned to make the case for all S&PF-related programs via the state assessments and strategies.

Q. K. Sayers: What is the role of earmarks? Are they taken off the top of our budget?

A. in general, the USFS does not support earmarks. Right now, less than 5% of UCF funds are going to earmarked projects and Congress seems to be growing the budget each year by approximately the amount of the previous year's earmarks, so in the end, many of the UCF earmarks are additive. Chicago is the recipient of a 20-year earmark and has been the recipient of positive attention. Earmarks have decreased in this administration, but don't expect them to go away. The state assessments and strategies will likely cause a revamping of the way funds are allocated.

#### **General NAASF Updates from Ian MacFarlane:**

- NAASF is meeting in VT in two weeks (July 12-15). Danielle Fitzko will represent this committee at the meeting.
- The membership of NAASF has been expanded to include USFS Regional Forester Kent Connaughton and NRS Director Michael Rains. Previously, members included state foresters from the 20 states and DC as well as Kathryn Maloney.
- The UCF Committee now has a website for committee use: [www.northeasternforests.org/UCF](http://www.northeasternforests.org/UCF). Let Ian know if you need particular functionality on the site.
- WV travel assistance, which some states are using for out-of-state travel has hired a travel coordinator: Cindy Gasby. She is developing formal procedures for handling our state travel. These procedures should be ready in about 2 weeks.

#### **Redesign Information: Ian MacFarlane**

- NAASF endorsed a list of redesign projects in January 2009. Because some of these funds will come out of one program area and go into another through this competitive process, the USFS has to go through reprogramming of some of these funds, which requires special permission. They are working on legislation that will enable redesign funds to bypass the reprogramming process, so the time frames will hopefully improve next year.
- NA hosted the list of approved projects at <http://na.fs.fed.us/redesign09> to get in, you will need the following access info, which is case-sensitive:

Username: Innovation

Password: Progress

It is recommended that you view the prioritized list of projects to get an idea of the types of projects that received funding.

- The competitive process will remain at 15% (off the top of the total funding) for 2010.
- The 2010 RFP should be out shortly and the deadline is expected to be in mid-October

### **Economic Stimulus: Ian MacFarlane**

- the RFP put out in February gave states very little time for submission
- the USFS released a large list in April, including \$250M of S&PF-related projects. However, this list was pulled back a week later. The USDA has released projects by category over the last few months. To date, 56% of the total funds have been released to recipients, mostly coinciding with the list that was released in April.
- Some states have been concerned due to a lack of funds going to those states. To date, no evidence of how projects were selected has been released. Hopefully, the USFS will be able to distribute some funds to “have not” states.

### **Question/Answer/Comment Period for Ian MacFarlane’s Topics:**

Q. M. Lear: When will the funds be available? She has projects with summer timelines and needs the funds as soon as possible to stay on schedule.

A. it remains uncertain when the final announcements will be made. Unfortunately, the waiting game may result in some deadlines being missed or pushed back. You may want to work with your Congressional delegation (if you have one) to apply pressure.

Q. K. Sayers: Will there be any changes to redesign regarding equitable distribution, especially considering the disproportionate amount of funds that have gone to the West?

A. the Washington Office takes the 15% off the top. This year it was allocated the following way: \$5.2M to NA, \$6M to the South, and \$7M to the West. It turns out that some programs are exempt from adding to the redesign pot of funds, thereby leaving a smaller amount to take off the top. Because Fire is such a big program in the West, that may be adding to their allocation. It is important to note that the UCF share of redesign is substantial. The types of proposals we are sending in are appealing to the ranking team.

Q. C. Donnelly: How is Redesign being assessed? Is it successful or not?

A. State Foresters are concerned about the looming deadlines to complete the assessments and strategies; however, these same documents are seen as an opportunity to highlight things in the state that need to be done. In general, the State Foresters are positive regarding this effort. The USFS sees this as an opportunity to raise the profile of S&PF in the agency and in Congress with the appropriators. The competitive process has definitely been noticed by Congress and staffers. The annual report card seems to be important to people and may turn out to be a good tool.

### **Other NAASF Updates: Steve Sinclair**

- the NASF UCF Committee met last week. Steve Scott is the current chair and Steve and Monica represented our group at that meeting.
- the Washington Office is beginning to recruit someone to fill the Assistant Director position. NASF will be on the review panel for this decision. States are welcome to send in what they would like to see in an assistant director. Drew or Kevin will send out a call to the states for this information, which is needed by mid-July.

- The National Arbor Day Foundation is working on an online system for Tree City USA applications, review, and approvals. This should decrease everyone's workload. They would like information from the coordinators on this effort and are looking for volunteers. They intend to pilot this in a few states (they are looking for guinea pigs here as well).
- If you have not done so as of yet, be sure to get engaged with your State Forester and your planners regarding the state assessment and strategy.

### **Work Plan Discussion: the Group led by Drew Todd and Kevin Sayers**

- the to-do list from last year was mostly completed.
- Danielle will need to present a workplan at the upcoming meeting of the NAASF
- Many thanks to all the members who attended meetings on behalf of this group throughout the previous year.
- Review of current leadership rotation:
 

2009	MI	Chair
	VT	Vice Chair (note NY and RI declined a leadership role)
	PA	Secretary
2010	VT	Chair
	PA	Vice Chair
	MN	Secretary
- Kevin Sayers is our new Chair. Thanks to Drew for his great work over the past year.
- Dick Rideout's proposal to support additional UCF research via the USFS was discussed briefly. This will not take funds from existing UCF programs, as Research has its own pot of funds. Dick has laid out the information needed in his proposal regarding who to talk to and how to go about it. Some of this could be accomplished via the new website.
- NY will host next year's meeting. This will need to be part of Danielle's request to NAASF. Please send agenda items or location suggestions to the folks in NY. The timing of the meeting was part of the discussion. After some deliberation, the group decided that our usual week in May is preferred.
- Because we did not use much of our budget last year, that amount will be rolled into this year, so that we do not have to request as much.
- We intend to have more conference calls this year. This was recommended as a work plan item.
- We should discuss how the states are handling integrating UCF into the state assessments and strategies. As a work plan item, there was a suggestion to do an analysis across the states to find out similarities and differences into how this was done in each state. Support documents for this process are located on the NASF website, including links to data and the infamous "MD Method," which has been completed for all the NA states. Available through Anne Steketee at [asteketee@fs.fed.us](mailto:asteketee@fs.fed.us)
- The USFS would like to have as many people trained to respond to catastrophic events as possible and this was recommended as a work plan item.
- The NAASF wants feedback on how this webinar went. Please send any comments to Danielle.
- States that aren't yet using the WVU travel service may want to consider setting funds aside for those services in order to travel out of state.

- We would like to schedule a state sharing webinar. This may require states to do some pre-work so that the call will go quickly. Written summaries for each state could be placed on the new website.
- The NAASF would like this committee to be involved in the Urban Forest Health Information Center. This was recommended as a work plan item. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kevin.

**Ms Jill Johnson - Conference Leader**  
**June 30, 2009 12:00 AM**

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