

## SUFC Policy Working Group Call notes

4/11/14

Attendees: Jen, Alex, Brent, Rebecca, Becky, Stacy, Gary, Brenna, Chuck, Cara, Gerry, Danielle, Gordon

Next call scheduled for 4/25/14

### 1. Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior testimony update:

- a. Urban forests are highlighted at Chief Tidwell's testimony from both the Chief and the subcommittee
  - i. First time in a while that urban forestry played a key role in the Chief's testimony
  - ii. Highlighted in Chairman Clavert's opening statement, and questions from Rep. McCollum
  - iii. Rep. Joyce's staff asked SUFC for questions to ask the Chief as well.
- b. Other urban highlights during public testimony day
  - i. ACTrees testified: focused exclusively on urban forestry program and research. Mentioned urban waters federal partnership. Key takeaway- subcommittee focused on urban forestry, something we've never seen before.
  - ii. Others highlighted urban forests program: American Forests and NASF
  - iii. McCollum's question: Why the \$4 mil reduction of urban and community forestry in the President's budget and instead going to state foresters?
    1. Brent will follow up with the Congresswoman as it seems there is confusion around the landscape restoration grant program.
- c. Who do we need to meet with now that our testimony is in
  - i. Reach out to staff to get a real feel about what is going into appropriations.

Action Item: Gerry will reach out to/schedule with Rochelle to see if SUFC can have a conversation with her regarding appropriations.

### 2. Waters of the US rulemaking – should SUFC engage?

- a. Should SUFC submit comments given our narrow scope?
- b. Overview of the rule
  - i. 1972: Clean Water Act enacted, broad protection of navigable waters. 2001, 2006 proposals created uncertainty as to which waters were protected/which needed permits.
  - ii. New proposal defines the waters that are covered and clarifies that tributaries in flood plains, international waters, and major waterways are protected. Provides proof that small streams connected to larger waters have a direct connection. Smaller waters, such as prairie potholes, would need case-by-case justification for protection. Reaffirms existing exemptions: makes clear that waste treatment, artificial ponds and pools, agricultural pools are exempt
  - iii. Is SUFC's work relevant here? Is there a reason for SUFC to engage? We don't anticipate to all be on the same page, so we're hesitant to jump into the technicality of the Clean Water Act.

1. Information sharing rather than in-depth undertaking of the CWA?  
Makes the most sense because the new proposal does not include much about the roles SUFC can play- pollution, conservation regulations.
2. Individual groups can provide their testimonies, and SUFC members can sign on as they see fit, but it may not make sense for SUFC to send out a coordinate piece.

Action Item: Jen to follow up with Western Conservation Foundation, not the right place for us to engage, but may be other opportunities. Will also mention SUFC groups already working on these issues, if WCF wants to reach out to them.

**3. Targeted meetings this spring and summer:**

- a. Reaching out to more offices that are focused on urban forests and green infrastructure. How can you help us and how can we help you? No need to establish a point person now, but think about who we want to talk to and what we want to focus on.
  - i. EPA water
  - ii. DOI NPS urban parks
  - iii. Others

Action Item: As groups with connections in these offices meet with their point people, think about how to engage other SUFC members.

**4. Urban forests protocols for the California Air Resource Board:**

- a. how forest projects can meet the requirements of the carbon market
- b. A lot of interest, other states are looking at this as an opportunity since California is the first state to do this. Look at opportunities to better the project for other states.
- c. April 25<sup>th</sup> comment period ends. There are still some challenges involved with the original project. (Only one in Santa Monica applies under the protocols, lack of long-term feasibility, etc.)
- d. Important to separate cap and trade revenues and urban forestry protocols discussions.
- e. How do you create the right guidelines/measures to ensure urban trees are planted and are providing the environmental benefits as guaranteed?
- f. Where can we engage?

Action Item: Interested groups will work together to propose path forward to SUFC. Gerry, Chuck from California ReLeaf, and Gordon will form the discussion group. Others are welcome to join.