



California Urban Forests Council – 3.14.17 – Executive Director’s Report

Federal Policy Update: - this info is about the Senate hearings for USDA nominee for Secretary of the agency, Sonny Perdue, and questions that will be presented to the nominee during his hearing.

An email this week from Becky Turner of American Forests –
“Perdue’s ethics paperwork is in (Perdue is the nominee to become Secretary of the USDA [where Forest Service lives]), and while his hearing has yet to be scheduled, I thought this would be the best time to circulate questions we’d like asked. I will be sending the final version of these along to Stabenow’s professional staff, if someone with Republican ties can send it along to your contacts that would be great.

News is not good – There have been rumors of zeroing out U&CF, while I haven’t confirmed those yet, it will be very important to get at least 1 UCF question and affirmation from Perdue that U&CF is necessary.

Potential Targeted Questions -

1. With 80% of people living in metropolitan areas, how important is the USFS Urban and Community Forest program to ensure healthy, liveable communities of all sizes?
 - a. Follow-up: Do you support the research efforts to continue to better understand urban and community forests, the threats to them, and the many benefits they provide?
2. Urban forests across the country are under threat from a growing number of non-native or introduced insect pests. Examples include the emerald ash borer – now found in 27 states including Georgia; Asian longhorned beetle – which threatens a large proportion of urban trees across the country. Given all the benefits urban forests provide, will you fully utilize the authorities under the Plant Protection Act to help protect our urban forests from additional introductions of tree-killing insects and diseases?”

Forest Service Regional Update – no update

Forest Service Funding – no update though should have info when I return from DC.

Forest Service Research – same as above

Federal Advocacy – SUFC advocacy days are tentatively scheduled for March 22nd and 23rd in DC and as of this writing I am planning on attending.

CalFire – We have been invited back to submit the secondary proposal for our Invest From the Ground Up – CIRCLE II grant – yippee!! We will be working on this over the next few weeks. We are also included in a grant for the City of Merced to help with their



community outreach. I'm unclear currently what the gravity of this is but we will work it out as well.

Other State Funding: we will be a partner on the Urban Greening Grant submittal with ABAG and several cities along the East Bay Corridor – focus is coalescing now.

State Policy Update –

- Senate Bill 5 will be amended to include \$30 million for UF. Major thanks to Alfredo Arredondo from CSG suggesting that Chuck Mills stop by meeting with Bill Craven while he was actually writing the amendments to the bill!
- Tree San Diego and Chuck met with Assemblymember Garcia's office to invite him to speak at a an event in El Centro next month regarding Tree City USA. This seemed to really click Garcia staff member who may now be more open to seeing UF in AB 18 after it gets off the Assembly floor.
- We're up to 65 supporters for AB 1530 (The updated Urban Forestry Act), including some heavy hitters like The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and California League of Conservation Voters.
- We signed onto a letter from CA ReLeaf and Public Advocates to Senator Beall urging him to remove language that would increase continuous appropriations from Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds to transportation by 15%, leaving only 25% of all GGRF unallocated each year. We've heard that is getting some traction.
- It appeared we are taking the right approach in keeping our GGRF ask nebulous right now, but putting it on the radar. Most elected's staff agreed this was the right approach now.
- Finally, the draft 2017 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities guidelines that came out Wednesday recommend *All projects must incorporate AHSC-funded greening components.* As a reminder, the definition of "urban greening" in the Guidelines "means the incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle trail systems, urban street canopy, drought tolerant and native species landscaping and landscape restoration, green and cool roofing, community gardens and stormwater features into public open spaces." A support strategy and sign-on letter will be forthcoming.

CaUFC Board of Directors – to my knowledge no updates

Program Updates –

CIRCLE Project (Cap & Trade Funding) – maintenance is what we are up to now on Phase I. All trees planted. We've been invited back for Phase II with a One Million dollar proposal! We will be working on the fine points over the next couple of weeks.

- **Conferences** – Locations determined – The Marin Center, San Rafael, CA – August 23 & 24th. The 23rd is essentially planned with a training on "How to organize a ballot measure for your community." ½ day event. Day two will be a full day with a working title of Urban Forestry and Nature in Your Neighborhood. Save the date will be going out soon and I have ideas for a soiree – fundraiser for the board at the Embassy Suites right next to the Marin Center.



- **Communications** - See Deb's reports
- **Workshops** –nothing firm yet – looking at a series on stormwater this Fall (after the conference)
- **Regional Councils** – As mentioned above we will schedule a series of workshops this Fall for each council on Stormwater management. I need to pencil out a calendar to have the councils choose dates that work for them. We did hold a council leadership call last week and discussed this and the new website, etc. Many events already underway across CA!

Other Issues/Opportunities:

- Budget – I still need to do the updates. I've been overly busy with the bookkeeper's work, compiling paperwork and getting all invoices out. I am caught up through February – amazingly! I will circle back to the budget very soon.
- Dave and I help job interviews and we felt only one candidate was qualified. We offered her the job but she turned us down. Saying that the 2nd and third place candidates simply weren't versed enough so I will be putting off a search until April sometime – after my travels and the office move.
- Also, Deb and I have not completed our programmatic plan for the rest of the year into 2018 but we are well underway on many fronts. More to come!
- Office relocation update – I have given our 30 days notice to our current landlords. Departure date 3/31/17. I have many things underway in preparation for CaUFC to arrive. If anyone is around and wants to help with the move on 3/31 it'd be great. Also, if you can recommend a small moving company I think we need that. I can't quite haul things the way I used to!

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hughes