



California Urban Forests Council – 4.14.17 – Executive Director’s Report

Federal Policy Update: - I have attached a few documents that are part of the work that we are participating in with the Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition. Here are the highlights:

1. An outline of the activities and follow-up to the Hill Day visits and SUFC Annual Meeting
2. A Dear Colleague Letter to the House Appropriations Committee
3. Administration Letter on Fire Funding
4. SUFC FY17 House Interior Appropriations Testimony Final Sign-ons
5. Letter to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue
6. Administration Letter on Fire Funding

I’d be happy to talk to you separately about what has occurred thus far as best as I can explain and update you as I have more information.

Forest Service Regional Update – no update

Forest Service Funding – Miranda Hutton, Our Forest Service representative, called me on March 30th and told me she had some extra funds and suggested I submit a proposal for additional program deliverables. I did this – had Emily review it first, but it supports the funding for the regional efforts we discussed at our in-person board meeting in February, including Napa and Sonoma counties. I asked for more money than she suggested, but she likes our regional approach to things so I went for it asking for funds for two years. Miranda is out of the country currently, but as soon as I hear anything I will let you know.

Forest Service Research – I am flying to Riverside 5/2 for a Forest Service Research division review process. I’ve been asked to participate because I’ve been around a long time and have worked with research during that time. The two day meeting is 5/3 & 5/4.

Federal Advocacy – See referenced documents above. Also, I visited with our Congressional representative Jared Huffman’s staff and Doris Matsui’s staff (Sacramento rep) as well as Dianne Feinstein’s staff. We couldn’t get an appointment with Kamala Harris’s staff but we did a drop-in and had a quick conversation with new staff there. This would be an excellent relationship to focus on and build. Anyone game?

It was an insane time to be there as it was the couple of days running up to the Trumpcare legislation and so the typical meetings such as ours, when the President’s budget is released, were overshadowed by the health care drama. Also, ask me about John Boehner hitting me in the head (this way I’ll know if you actually read this!)

CalFire – Will be submitting final proposals for our CIRCLE grant 2.0 and contribute to the Merced submittal.

Our very cool new TreeMap and Greenhouse Gas Calculator will be up and running on our website by sometime next month. We will be meeting with the Air Resources Board later in May for their blessing on the technology to be used by CalFire and other state agencies in tracking trees planted through the Cap & Trade program along with the associated benefits and carbon sequestered. If approved this can be a tool for grant applicants to use prior to their submittals for accurate projections of their carbon and other benefits.



Other State Funding: we will be a partner on the Urban Greening Grant submittal with ABAG – it appears that only El Cerrito will be the ABAG focus – more on this will unfold Monday. Also, we have been asked to submit a proposal to the High Speed Rail funding in the 11th hour – in a similar fashion to our CIRCLE program. So that’s on the table too.

State Policy Update –

- Our focus has been mainly on the AB1530 – the reauthorization of the Urban Forestry Act. The invasive pest issue is being incorporated into this conversation. This is startling situation with the Polyphagus shot-hole borer and its devastation in San Diego - now moving across Southern California and been found in Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Santa Barbara. It is expected to explode into Northern California and loves many species of trees, native and exotic. This is the most serious issue I can think of now in terms of the management of the urban forest. Funding for research and eradication is very slim. We are working with Dr. John Kabashima on this, and he is working with many others. I attended the committee meeting of the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee on Wednesday. So many agencies with some responsibility but no one in the lead and no Strike Force yet to truly get after this. As the urban forest is not a commodity/crop there isn’t the business bottom-line driving the agenda. We took Kabashima to meet with Budget Committee staff members for the Senate and Assembly to explain the vital need for funds to address this issue. I feel this will become a political issue once the beloved oaks start to die across the state as residents will become emotional at the loss of their icons.

Program Updates –

- **CIRCLE Project (Cap & Trade Funding)** – no update
- **Conferences** – Locations determined – The Marin Center, San Rafael, CA – August 23 & 24th. The 23rd is essentially planned with 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** – no written report this month as Deb is on vacation
- **Workshops** – no update
- **Regional Councils** – no update

Other Issues/Opportunities:

- Budget – still owe you updates – once office is all unpacked and the grant apps are completed I can circle back to this.
- Audit will be scheduled for the Fall
- Office relocation update – we have moved; desks are set-up, technology is essentially working (a couple of hiccups still) but things are good. I personally still have some building changes to get done over the next few weeks such as replacing the doors, but it is a peaceful, productive place to work. We should schedule an open-house at some point when it gets warmer.
- I will be attending the WCISA conference in San Diego May 8-12.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hughes