

## SUFC Policy Work Group 11/22/13

On call: Danielle, Chuck, Rebecca A, Gerry, Brent, Gary Belan, Jen Hinrichs, Cara, Nick, Jen O., Becky

Agenda:

1. Urban forestry funding and path forward: “all hands on deck” approach to securing U&CF funding in the FY14
  - a. Gerry-CR budget only through Jan 15<sup>th</sup>
    - i. U&CF was vulnerable during government shutdown, when possible compromise included accepting House Appropriations version.
  - b. Steering Committee Fly-in Dec 4
    - i. 11 meetings attended by Steering Committee members and a group from Virginia organized by Paul R. – VA urban forestry coordinator
    - ii. Talking points were developed by Rebecca from pre-existing notes
    - iii. SUFC members to meet with Undersecretary Butch Blazer and Robert Bonnie’s chief of staff
2. Hill update: budget and farm bill conferences
  - a. Farm Bill- will not be done before Thanksgiving
    - i. Possibly pushed to Jan 15 and attached to a budget deal
    - ii. Deadline end of year for old one to expire
  - b. Budget
    - i. No additional language will be added to the Appropriation Bills that were not already in the House or Senate versions.
    - ii. January 15 is deadline.
    - iii. CBO report released 11/13 online on achieving deficit reduction
      1. On page 77 it lists two FS programs to be cut by \$5 billion over 10 yrs
      2. <http://cbo.gov/publication/44715>
3. Other
  - a. Kevin to send Innovative Stormwater Act info for groups to sign on.

## SUFC Call 12/13

In attendance: Jack, Nick, Keith Kline, Gerry, Phil, Cara, Danielle, Brent, Brenna

1. Budget Deal Update: what does the Ryan-Murray Compromise mean for the appropriations cycle, FS budget and U&CF?
  - a. House passed budget, on to Senate, expected to pass
  - b. We are waiting on the wording analysis, don’t know. Initial analysis of budget line items, still won’t know effect on urban until urban budget folks look at it. Impact not known until after Senate passes, look at budget after. Seems like it eased up on sequester level.
  - c. Interior Appropriations will most likely be a continuing resolution
  - d. What does the 2015 budget/approps process look like? Hopefully potential for more regular order (approps late spring/summer pass bills prior to end of year)

2. Meeting with USDA Undersecretary Blazer recap
  - a. Undersecretary Blazer would like to set up monthly meetings with SUFC members to better understand how SUFC aligns with his other interests. Jen is working with his office to set the topics for each meeting and we will be sure to get a diverse audience in front of him.
  
3. Steering Cmtee Hill Day recap
  - a. What we heard on the Hill is that Interior Approps will most likely be CR.
  - b. We attended 12 meetings, and a VA delegation participated as well.
  - c. Overall, frustrated response from staffers, feel like process is broken. Committees feel powerlessness, hopefully budget deal will remedy this. Staffers on House Ag committee, still working on Farm Bill compromise.
  - d. More awareness of the benefits of urban forests needs to occur.
  
4. Steering Cmtee meeting recap
  - a. Key outcomes, Mark Garvin from TCIA is working with Ullman Associates to coordinate a “Fly-out” – meeting Rep. Joyce from Ohio in his district – goal is to develop a relationship and even champions on BOTH sides of the aisle. We are using this as a model and other fly-outs may occur. Ullman Associates has vast experience with grassroots mobilization and fly-outs. Rep. Joyce was selected as a Board member of TCIA has a personal relationship, he is close to Davey’s headquarters, right subcmte, and is a relatively new member looking for an issue to champion.
  
5. Advocacy Fly-in dates and Fly-out opportunities
  - a. Fly-in and annual meeting. Separate them? More opportunity for strategic visits.
  - b. Separate annual SUFC meeting from Fly-in?
  - c. Water fly-in week April, bringing in regional groups. Green infrastructure incl.
  - d. May 15 fly-in with landscape architecture groups
  - e. Share SUFC policy talking points with like-minded groups
  
6. Other
  - a. Farm Bill update: House passed extension, Senate did not take it up. Hope to gear towards stronger deal in January. Commodity title is the hold up now.
  - b. When Forest Service folks receive calls about how to help their urban forests, FS staff can give them Becky Turner and Jen H’s name. We will have resources up on SUFC soon regarding talking points for urban forests that these interested folks can use in their advocacy.
  - c. Discussion regarding the possibility of field trips. If within the DC area, get congressional staff out to visit urban forestry projects. Keep trips within one day drive.