

Policy Work Group

Meeting, Wednesday, August 4, 2010

ASLA Offices

Attending: Alice Ewen, Gerry Gray, Kevin O'Hara, Jake Donnay, Christy Layman, Jennifer Dillon, Rich Dolesh, Jen Hinrichs (facilitator)

Guests: Becky Hammer (NRDC), Greg Lewis (NE/MW Institute), Gary Belan (American Rivers)

Action Items:

- The outcome of the WG discussion about the recent McCain and Coburn Report: *Summer Time Blues* (with at least three negative references to urban tree plantings) is to use this as an opportunity to seek out a quick “meet and greet” meeting with Coburn and McCain’s staffers; get a sense of their underlying concerns re: support for urban forestry-related projects– if any – and to begin to develop an initial relationship.
 - **ACTION:** Christy and Jennifer will reconnect to set up a meeting for SUFC members such as ASLA, ANLA, TCIA etc.
 - **ACTION:** NASF will pursue a formal response and provide information to the rest of the SUFC as to their findings and activities.
- There is a clear lack of ready-to-use data around jobs and urban forestry/green infrastructure to effectively underscore importance of UF/green infrastructure in relation to jobs/economic stimulus. While several groups have access to limited information, a comprehensive and compelling single source is lacking.
 - **ACTION:** All Policy WG members will collect and forward findings to Alice/Jen to compile (Green Economy Council/Greg; American Rivers/Gary; ANLA, CNT etc.).
- An accepted working definition of Green Infrastructure has not been created by SUFC to date. The group recognized that we need to incorporate different scales referenced in differing definitions – from site-specific solutions like rain gardens to large landscape scale solutions like habitat corridors. Acknowledge it is working definition/term of art.
 - **ACTION:** The Policy WG will continue to collect definitions and construct a suggested definition for review by the larger Coalition. Jennifer will compile, draft and re-circulate. *NOTE: Approved definition will be re-inserted to SUFC Principles document.*

- SUFC internal and external eBulletins.
 - **ACTION:** Feedback needed on content and expanding mailing list to Hill via Jennifer for expanded communications efforts. Send contact suggestions to Jennifer or forward eBulletin directly to colleagues who may have some interest in signing up for quarterly eBulletins.

Decisions:

- WG members will draft detailed summary of issue areas and recommended legislative solutions of interest to all SUFC members prior in the fall. This could include current legislation, as well as desired legislation or public comment for the future. This will be compiled and circulated for comment by the full SUFC so that everyone can familiarize themselves and colleagues with the legislation prior to receiving a Call To Action from SUFC.
- NEXT Meeting: Mid-to-late September via conference call and possibly post-election meeting in person.

Issues of Interest to SUFC – Sustainable Communities

Overarching Themes

- Green Jobs
- Sustainable Communities

Research to Assemble:

- Jobs
- Cost savings to cities
 - Functional benefits (like stormwater interception)
 - Compliance and consent decrees; vacant lands for stormwater management
- Environmental benefits
- Economic development / property stabilization
- Green Infrastructure definition used by SUFC
- Sustainable Sites success stories featuring UF

General Hill Climate:

Land and Water Bundle possibilities for this fall. In the past, land bills passed during lame duck sessions. Senate jobs package possible next session. Climate action delayed. Transportation and Farm Bill reauthorizations must happen. Appropriations must happen. Water, HUD, Transportation is where money is.

Tracking and Action

Appropriations

- 2012 Urban and Community Forestry Program, Forest Service and USFS R&D (*Alice*)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), stateside grants (*Rich and Jake*)
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund – GI set aside (*Gary, Julia*)
- EPA Brownfields + Groundwork USA (*Greg*)
- Ag – urban agriculture? *unclear, will keep on radar*

Economic Development/Jobs

- HR 4509 and S. 3279, Small Business Environmental Stewardship Assistance Act of 2010, Small Business Tree Planting Program (*Jake, Corey*)
- Monitor and comment on regional planning grants program and how HUD should include forests and urban tree canopy in evaluation criteria for rating. Implementation funds that follow are \$3-4 billion. (*Rich*)

Green Infrastructure for Wet Weather Management

- HR 4202 Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act (*Julia*)
- S.3561 Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act of 2010 (*Julia*)
- S.3602, Safe Treatment of Polluted Stormwater Runoff Act (*Kevin*)
- S. 1005, Water Infrastructure Financing Act (*Julia, Gary*)
- EPA Nationwide rulemaking process begins September (*Julia, Gary*)

Livability and Community Revitalization

- HR 2222, The Green Communities Act (*Alice, Jennifer D.*)
- HR 3734, The Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act (*Kevin, Rich*)
- S.1619, Livable Communities Act (*Kevin, Rich*)
- HR 4382, Revitalizing Communities Through Parks Enhancement Act (*Kevin*)

Energy

- S 1733 ACES (Section 167 Energy Conservation Through Trees) – (Alice) – *NOTE: NASF requests further discussion @ compatibility with language and SUFC Principles*

Transportation Reauthorization

- Goal to include GI language and landscape enhancement in transportation (Kevin)
- Oberstar interest in creation of Office of Livability w/in Dept. Transportation
- Wetland /aquatic mitigation to promote forests

Policy Committee Recruitment /Engagement:

- Clean Water Network
- Clean Water for America Alliance
- Green roof manufacturers

Reminder: SUFC members should not submit any matching hours spend on advocacy-related efforts under the SUFC umbrella.