



NAUFRP

National Association of University Forest Resources Programs

Creating Knowledge—Developing Leaders

NAUFRP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 14, 2022

12:00-3:00 EST

Virtual Meeting

Janaki Alavalapati opened the meeting with a welcome and reviewed the agenda. Introductions were made. A list of meeting participants is included at the end of these minutes.

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 4-5, 2021 was made by Dale Greene and seconded by David Newman. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously as presented.

Janaki thanked everyone for attending and noted that this was to have been an in-person meeting but now that is planned for May 23-24 in Washington, D.C. Janaki recognized Jay Sullivan for his work to get forestry programs to STEM status.

Treasurer's Report, Robert Burns: Robert reported on the final 2021 budget. Income was more than \$26,000 over expenses. Expenses were down due to Covid which prevented in-person meetings and travel since March 2020. NAUFRP made a \$1,000 memorial contribution in memory of Kamran Abdollahi, (Southern University), a long-time member of the Executive Committee. Executive Officers agreed to commit \$5,000 towards a diversity survey in 2022. Work on a web-based data base is expected to be completed for an estimated \$1,500. Carryover from 2021 to 2022 was approximately \$165,000. About \$87,000 has been collected in dues to date and the bank balances are approximately \$243,697. A text of the report is attached. Janaki asked that the report be approved. A motion was made by Myron Floyd and seconded by Bob Wagner. The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.

Washington Report, Randy Nuckolls: DC is currently pre-occupied with the invasion of Ukraine and the Supreme Court nomination. An Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY22 has been adopted but not yet signed by the President. It is fairly lean for agriculture. The USDA National Institute for food and agriculture (NIFA) competitive grants program (AFRI) got a \$10 million increase; the 1890s and 1994s programs also got significant increases. In the Interior Appropriations bill the Cooperative Research Units received a \$1 million increase and the Joint Fire Science Program received a \$2 million increase. Funding for the McIntire Stennis (McStennis) Cooperative Forestry Research Program remained flat.

Doug Steele, Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU): APLU's FY23 budget recommendations were approved last week. They are advocating \$10 million for 'Women and Rural People in Stem Activities'. Dennis Becker has agreed to serve on a NIFA-APLU Climate Initiative Working Group. They are looking to convene the group with a Summit in July at

NIFA's headquarters in Kansas City, MO. The process will begin with the writing of a strategic road map outlining steps to be taken to be implemented in 2023. The working group will be internal for now but expanded to partners in time. Doug is putting out a monthly newsletter with a lot more context and details of the work his group is doing. Contact him if you would like to receive it. Linda Nagel reviewed that a new process was used to develop the FY23 unified ask. The request for McStennis is \$46 million. Randy commented that there is work to do to educate policy makers on the importance of capacity programs. These were frozen in FY 22 appropriations however the competitive AFRI program received a \$10 million increase. The 1890s and 1994s had a concentrated effort with appropriations committee chairs to increase those capacity programs; it is time to do this for ours. Changes are coming to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Senators Leahy (D-VT) and Shelby (R-AL) will be retiring and there will be new leadership -- likely Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME). We will need to focus on getting to know them with representatives from our institutions. There is an ATR meeting planned for April 28 in Washington, D.C. Janaki thought this could be an opportunity to involve Congressional aides; something like this was done several years ago. Randy believes it important to engage with NIFA program leaders, especially new ones and discuss research priorities and refresh our peer review teams. We need to be aggressive talking about forestry to them. Janaki agreed and referenced a meeting NIFA Director Dr. Castille organized about a month ago at Auburn which included 12-15 NIFA staff from the Washington office; no one from forestry or natural resources was involved.

Policy Report, Dennis Becker: NAUFRP is a member of both the Forest Climate Working Group (FCWG) and the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) group. Both were very active on the bi-partisan infrastructure bill. He anticipates Farm Bill conversations and work to ramp up. Build Back Better has stalled and the thinking is elements from it will manifest in the Farm Bill. A sign-on letter led by FACA was successful in pushing back USDA deadlines for Climate Smart Solutions proposals to May. USDA funding for this is massive.

Diversity Report, Yeonsu Kim: The Diversity Committee originally planned a survey similar to what the National Association of University Fish and Wildlife Programs (NAUFWP) did last year, however their thinking has changed. Instead, they want to build on the earlier NAUFRP survey meant to get a quick assessment of what is happening with diversity efforts among forestry programs. The effort now will be to get similar information from the FAEIS data base and summarize that. Yeonsu said they will go back to institutions that did not respond to the earlier survey. She hopes to be able to provide a more comprehensive report at the May meeting. Yeonsu is also talking to Michigan Tech who is doing a lot of this work already.

Janaki noted that Communications Chair, Red Baker, could not be at this meeting. He has been working with Terri to develop a regular newsletter and they hope to have one out before the May meeting.

Education Report, Andrew Storer: The committee been considering new initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion in forestry educational programs and they are looking to develop a project that would look at best practices. Andrew will discuss this in more detail with Yeonsu in the near future. Part of this will be to identify information gaps and to develop recommendations for Best Practices. They have been working with faculty members at Michigan Tech and the University of Minnesota to share ideas which he hopes to bring to the May meeting as well as a request for

support from NAUFRP to bring on a graduate student. Andrew continues to serve on the SAF Education Policy Review Committee. Jocelyn Harris has been appointed to serve as SAF associate director of accreditation. Both the 2021 Accreditation handbook and the Visiting Team Manual Under 2021 Handbook are available for download through links at <https://eforester.org> The committee is currently reviewing a student demographic reporting spreadsheet which SAF has been including in accreditation documentation over the years. Regional Assessments from the Global Forest Education Project are available at <https://www.fao.org/forestry/forest-education/99204/en/> The 2022 Biennial Conference on Undergraduate Education in Natural Resources, hosted by Oklahoma State University, will be held virtually March 23-24. A presentation on enrollment trends for 2018-2021 will be made at the conference; there is interest in getting this data more rapidly and the committee will be looking at this. Andrew encouraged NAUFRP representatives to submit data to FAEIS reporting for 2021. Andrew provided a written report which is available.

Southern Report, Hans Williams: The Comparative Survey is out with a deadline of May 21 for responses. The compiled information will be sent to those who participated. They are planning their regional annual meeting in conjunction with the Southern Group of State Foresters, June 6-9 in Greenville, SC. There will be more information out on this soon.

North Central Report, Rich Kobe: The group continues to have quarterly meetings over Zoom. They have talked about sharing Best Practices related to diversity and inclusion. This would seem to interface with what Andrew discussed earlier. They are planning to begin a dialogue across institutions about what they are doing to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Their other conversations have been about interfacing with USFS Research and meeting in Madison to visit the Northern Station.

Research Report, Bob Wagner: Bob reviewed what has been done around the R&D Forest and Forest Products Summit in a PowerPoint presentation (available). They now need feedback from the Executive Committee for the next stages. The project on changes in doctoral dissertation trends over four decades is about to be published in *Forest Science*. Emily Huff has drafted an article on the Summit results for the *Journal of Forestry*. The team has continued to meet every couple of weeks since last fall and have drafted 'a thought piece' on next steps. This has been circulated for feedback. Next steps: refine proposal, reconvene summit steering committee and expand as needed, vet proposal with externals, seek funding. What he needs from the Executive Committee: review and comments on proposal and additional volunteers for the task team. There was discussion about comparisons to agriculture models which have been successful and in place for some time -- the agriculture community as a whole decided research was important and recognized the need to marshal all the resources they could to organize for advocacy.

Alex Friend, Deputy Chief, USDA Forest Service Research & Development: In a PowerPoint presentation (available from Terri), Alex reviewed R&D structure and regional leaders and USDA priorities. USDA Climate Hubs are strongly supported by USDA Secretary Vilsak. They are similar to extension and are being amped up in the budget. The annual appropriation for R&D is up about 15 percent; agency-wide it is up 5 percent. The annual appropriation does not include funding for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which dramatically increases funds available to the agency (\$5 billion to FS of which \$3.4 billion is for wildfire, \$68 million for science support). For FY22, the IIJA plan is to distribute \$1.6 billion. Alex said

they have worked hard to have funds possibly ‘earmarked’ for R&D. It is being internally negotiated. The Budget Modernizations process is meant to enhance transparency. The FY22 budget went up \$50 million but most of it is for Congressional directives. ‘Salary and Expenses’ is pulled out and is up 10% to cover pay increases. Eight percent of the R&D Budget goes out externally, mostly to universities. Questions: Randy asked if regional R&D leaders are meeting regularly virtually and Alex said yes, quarterly and wants to get back to meeting with NAUFRP at the SAF Convention even if it has to be virtual. Dennis asked about infrastructure bill and when that money might be released and out the door and importantly how it is moving thru the research stations. Alex said they will be getting their allocations out in the next month. Funds are not going to be allocated until they have a clear plan for what the regions need: it is going to be very targeted. Katy expressed concern about the rate Covid restrictions are being relaxed because this impacts planning for summer research work – people need to find housing and such. She urged Alex to advocate to lift restrictions where field work is being done as soon as possible. Alex said they are making final changes in the guidance but it is coming and he will follow-up on this.

Kevin Kephart, Deputy Director, Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment, USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA): Kevin joined NIFA almost two years ago as a division director of agriculture systems before became deputy director. He noted NIFA did have a meeting last winter of RREA and McStennis administrators. A further meeting is planned in April to build interaction and collaboration between extension and research. NIFA’s FY22 budget had about a 7 percent increase in its overall budget: in particular, AFRI had a \$40 million increase. Last year six Climate Hub Partnership grants were funded for \$9 million. This will be continued in new RFAs and extension systems can apply. Janaki commented on Dr. Castille’s visit to Auburn University about a month ago. He learned that the NIFA Chief of Communications holds monthly meetings with deans of agriculture; forestry and natural resources leaders are not included and we would like to have an opportunity to participate in these. Kevin said he will follow-up on this. He tries to specifically include forestry when talking climate, climate hubs, Janaki said his intent is not to be critical but mentioned further during Dr. Castille’s visit that she brought on screen 12-15 NIFA people who talked about agriculture but with no specific focus. Daniel plans to go through the RFAs and identify each program forestry should be applying for. Kevin said Dr. Castille has recently announced her departure. She added a great deal of stability to the agency. Kevin’s institute is responsible for environmental justice and for carrying out the Justice 40 Initiative. The goal of Justice 40 is for 40 percent of benefits of programs/activities in topical areas such as climate change and clean water go to historically underserved communities. They are working to identify programs within NIFA that are covered by the guidelines. Some common misperceptions are that it is intended that 40 percent of awards/money be spent; this is not correct. It is not about the investment made but about the benefits derived in these communities. There is not an agency that has this figured out especially in research. Paul Winistorfer urged Kevin to invest in some sort of visiting science program, short term sabbatical or an intensive/immersive experience that would facilitate relationships. Keven said this would be a good discussion topic. He looks forward hosting meetings at the new Kansas City facility. Randy said that the NAUFRP Executive Committee would like to plan a visit to this new location.

Terry Baker, CEO, Society of American Foresters: Over the past several months SAF has been restructuring and hiring new staff. Carol Redelsheimer retired at the end of last year. They have

split her responsibilities into two different positions to focus more attention on the accreditation program as well as the science and education program and working groups. Terry introduced Jocelyn Harris, Associate Director for Accreditation and Amy Juliana, Manager for Science and Technology. SAF has also added staff capacity for professional development and policy. They are pulling together a Farm Bill Steering Committee and working on the topic of Pro-Forestation; there will be more to come on the last. The 2022 Convention is planned to be in-person and they will soon make public the dates and locations for the national conventions three years out. Another area of focus is on job opportunities and workforce development. SAF has been partnering with the FS who has announced several hundred jobs they are hiring for. SAF is continuing to look at an Urban and Community Forestry Certification/Credential.

Laurie Shoonhoven, National Forester, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service: Laurie has been with NRCS since 2020. She gave an overview of NRCS forestry. NRCS has three major initiatives at this time: Urban Agriculture, Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry and Climate Smart Commodities Partnership. Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry focuses on practices that store carbon and can be quantified (agroforestry, tree/shrub establishment); they are looking for tools and/or research studies that calculate carbon storage from forest practices. This program is leaning into universities to look at what they have. The Climate Smart Commodities Partnership is brand new. Partners will cost effectively measure and validate green house gas benefits from NRCS conservation practices. Laurie stressed this is about measuring carbon benefits from agency conservation practices. All commodities produced must be in NRCS programs like EQIP. There are two funding pools. One is from \$100,000 to \$5 million for large scale pilot projects emphasizing green house gas benefits and meaningful benefits for a cross section of producers. The second funding pool is \$250,000 to slightly less than \$5 million for innovative pilot projects that emphasize small and underserved producers and/or monitoring, reporting and verification objectives. Universities are eligible to apply for this. This is about NRCS leaning into partners to do the research so that we understand the carbon benefits of NRCS conservation practices. The RFPs are already out and due by May 9th. She has a FAQ sheet and link to share. Katy appreciates the systems-based approach this RFP took which is from the practice into the supply chain and ultimately into the built environment in the case of forest products. She is wondering about the incentives; in the context of forestry, we do not have the same type of incentives that agriculture has like price supports. Katy asked what is meant by incentives within the commodity realm? Laurie is not sure but it makes her think about the wood certification process and higher values in the end for sustainably raised wood. Katy believes this project can help determine what those incentives should or could be relative to the market place. She thinks there is some research to be done on that understanding: what is a viable incentive in terms of marketplace and in terms of the cost and the amount of carbon that is sequestered. Katy said there is mention of a couple different current tools to measure carbon, one is Comet Planner and the other is USDA Entity Scale Method. At least with Comet there does not appear to be any below ground component. Could not a research question be to incorporate a below ground component? For forestry that is a huge piece; it is always left off the table because it is hard to verify. Katy asked if it would be worthwhile to organize a session to talk and ask these kinds of questions. Janaki offered when it comes to review panels it is important that it is understood that forestry is not an annual crop like typical agriculture commodities.

NAUFRP Reviewer Database, Hannah Abbotts: The newly modified NAUFRP website will have new content and be more powerful than the previous one. It has been moved from Word

Press to Drupel. The latter has higher security and access permissions that will allow us to keep the data base off the public facing site. You will have to log in and create a profile. Hannah demonstrated what it would look like. David asked when it would be online. She wants to do a final check with Myron to see if all the information that is supposed to be in there is. Then she will move it to a live site Definitely before the May meeting. She is using full list from the member directory and that is going to need to be double checked. Linda asked if it intended to be limited to just NAUFRP; would it be of value to NIFA to include NAUFWP? Hannah said there is no technical limitation to doing this – it is up to NAUFRP. David said if it were expanded it would bring in additional institutions. Linda said her College has five departments including Human Dimensions – do we want to include them all in this database? This may need to be further discussed at the May meeting. Hannah says the list can be expanded or narrowed down. She has been working with a list of discipline areas of expertise developed several years ago. David volunteered to help with testing (beta users).

Meeting Adjourned

Available from Terri: Treasurer's Report, Education Report, Bob Wagner's PowerPoint, Alex Friend's PowerPoint

Executive Committee: Janaki Alavalapati (President, Auburn University), David Newman (Immediate Past President, SUNY), Katy Kavanagh (President-Elect, Oregon State University), Robert Burns (Secretary/Treasurer), Andrew Storer (Education Chair, Michigan Tech University), Dennis Becker (Policy Chair, University of Idaho), Dale Greene (At-Large, University of Georgia), Bob Wagner (Research Chair, Purdue University), Hans Williams (Southern Chair, Stephen F. Austin State University), Myron Floyd (At-Large, North Carolina State University), Nancy Mathews (Northeast Chair, University of Vermont, Rich Kobe (North Central Chair, Michigan State University), Linda Nagel (APLU-BAC Liaison), Colorado State University), Yeon-Su Kim (Diversity Chair, Northern Arizona University), Randy Nuckolls (General Counsel), Terri Bates (Executive Liaison)

NAUFRP Representatives: Jim Ansley (Oklahoma State University), Mike Blazier (Univ of Arkansas), Mike Kilgore (University of Minnesota), Jay Sullivan (Va Tech), Paul Winistorfer (VaTech), Terry Sharik (Michigan Tech), Erin Sills (North Carolina State University), Don Grebner (Mississippi State University), Wes Burger (Mississippi State University), Dan Brown (University of Washington), Kozma Naka (Alabama A&M) University, John Carroll (University of Nebraska), Pat Layton (Clemson University)

Participants: Doug Steele (APLU), Eric Norland (NIFA), Daniel Cassidy (NIFA), Diomides Zamora (NIFA)

*Minutes Approved
May 23, 2022
Washington, DC*