

**NAUFRP General Assembly Minutes**  
**October 28, 2020**  
**Via Zoom**

NAUFRP President David Newman (SUNY) opened the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves and the institution they were representing. The meeting agenda was reviewed.

General Assembly Minutes of October 30, 2019, Louisville, KY were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report, Katy Kavanagh: Reviewed 2019 financial report: income exceeded expenses by about \$3,800. Dues income and expenses were consistent with previous years with the exception that fall meeting expenses ran high. About \$118,000 was carried into calendar year 2020. For 2020, NAUFRP is on track for dues income. Expenses for travel and the President's budget are down. A new computer was purchased for the Executive Liaison. We will probably spend about half of \$1,500 budgeted for webpage design work to add the McStennis communication one-pagers; work has not yet begun on the project that will build a data base of potential NAUFRP institution reviewers for NIFA grant panels and that portion of the budget will be carried over to 2021. Overall, because of lower expenses, a \$19,000 overage/surplus is projected. The Executive Committee discussed what to do about this but decided to carry a reserve forward equal to approximate annual operating expenses. The proposed 2021 budget projects similar income and expenses. The 2021 budget includes a three percent cost of living increase for the Executive Liaison. A budget for travel is retained although it is uncertain at this time if that can happen. Overall, the proposed 2021 budget is similar to 2020. Katy recommended that the proposed 2021 budget be adopted. There was a call for discussion. It was noted that NAUFRP now has a Zoom account and can manage meetings related to NAUFRP work. William Stone made a motion to accept the 2021 budget; it was agreed to unanimously. David noted that Katy will be stepping down as Secretary-Treasurer and thanked her for her service; she will become President-Elect. A vote for the Secretary-Treasurer position will occur later today.

NAUFRP Past Year Activities: Janaki Alavalapati, President-Elect: (Powerpoint for this discussion is posted [www.naufrp.org](http://www.naufrp.org)) NAUFRP's mission is to promote research, education and extension relating to forestry and natural resources. We do this by working with numerous partner organizations through our committees. Janaki reviewed the work of the committees over the last year. The committees include Communications (Red Baker), Diversity (Adrian Leighton), Education (Andrew Storer), Extension (Jeff Stringer), International (Steve Shaler), Policy (Dale Green), Research (Bob Wagner). Linda Nagel serves as liaison with the Association of Land-Grant Universities' (APLU) Board of Natural Resources and Budget and Advocacy Committee. Regional Chairs are Robert Burns (Northeast), Rick Kobe (North Central), Hans Williams (Southern) and Charles Goebel (Western).

Washington Report, Randy Nuckolls: Randy said this is a good time to be in contact with Congressional delegations and staff. Currently there is a Continuing Resolution for appropriations thru December 2020 for current funding levels. The House did pass all FY 2021 appropriations bills; funding for McStennis would be increased by \$2 million to \$38 million; a \$10 million increase was provided for AFRI. The Fish and Wildlife Cooperative program would be increased by \$1 million in the House. Hatch and Smith are flat funded. The Senate did not mark-up any appropriations bills. Randy talked generally about the

status of the CARES legislation and the current makeup of the Supreme Court given the new Justice sworn in yesterday.

Communications, Red Baker: The Communications Committee is new and a result of NAUFRP strategic planning. Its focus is to better communicate what McStennis university projects are doing. There is a lot of good work resulting from McStennis research that our partners do not know about. To address that, Mary Watzin former chair of the NAUFRP Ad Hoc Communications Committee, worked to create templates to 'brand' the McStennis program and tell simple accounts about the program research happening at NAUFRP institutions. Red directed attention to the NAUFRP webpage's newly created 'Research' tab and the list of university research projects beginning with Auburn University. The common theme of McStennis branding can be seen and most importantly 'impacts' of the various research projects. This is also an opportunity to 'brand' specific institutions. The idea is to have these easily and readily accessible for partner and policy makers. At the bottom of the 'Research' webpage are the actual templates in Adobe InDesign; NAUFRP representatives are encouraged to utilize these to develop their own one-page impact statements. Red noted there is a template for individual research projects as well as a university-wide template that provides an option of combining all impacts. See the University of Kentucky's example which is posted. In the future Red would like to explore video components. Additional committee members are welcome. Current members include Jeff Stringer, Bob Wagner, Myron Floyd. David Newman commended Mary Watzin's work; she was really the one who steered this effort and got it all going.

Parag Chitnis, Acting Director, USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture: Dr. Chitnis provided an update (PowerPoint is available) noting 2020 was a transformational year for the agency. A year ago most of their positions were moved to Kansas City, MO; less than 30 percent of the agency staff moved. Since then they have been working on hiring 70 percent back and now have 300 people in KC. He noted that more than 80 percent of their staff have been with NIFA for two years or less. Two new National Program Leaders with forestry expertise have been hired and will be on board in December. They will be announcing who they are soon. Dr. Chitnis discussed new programs and COVID 19 impacts at the university level. Based on Stakeholder feedback, NIFA heard the following concerns: the current agency IT system is frustrating and inhibits agency effectiveness; there is a disconnect between NIFA staff and land-grant university partners; reporting process and requirements; 2021 RFAs. Also discussed were other programs that can support forestry such as Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI), Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and SUN grants. Dr. Chitnis noted that AFRI's budget has doubled in the last 10 years. The Trump Administration is investing in research institutes to advance industries of the future. Stakeholder input is an important driver for NIFA's science priorities. There was discussion with the group about the apparent limitations the term "forestry" has within NIFA. Dr. Chitnis assured that anytime an AFRI grants refers to 'agricultural systems' it includes forestry. Daniel Cassidy volunteered to Dr. Chitnis that he has committed to going through all NIFA programs to identify where forestry can fit in and put it in writing back to NAUFRP that can be updated annually.

Alex Friend, Deputy Chief, USDA Forest Service Research & Development (R&D): (PowerPoint is available) Alex is focusing on integration; he is seeking to have R&D enhance rigor and impact on the whole agency. What makes R&D unique is their scale and scope. They have about 500 scientists. R&D has ability to do large scale analysis that have broad applications over long timeframes. FS Research is very applied and focused. Alex reviewed R&D priority research areas and agency budget. The latter is relatively stable. They are embarking on a budget modernization process at the direction of Congress to

improve accountability and transparency. There is a new line item for “R&D Salaries and Expenses” that has pros and cons. Congress wanted to see where every dollar was going. A slide depicted the dollar breakout matched to RD’s four priorities. For the FY17-20 period, approximately 19-20 percent (\$25-\$34 million) of the R&D budget went to universities. Regarding the USDA Forest Research Advisory Committee (FRAC), a set of names are waiting approval from the Secretary’s office. Paul Winistorfer (VaTech) expressed he has personally had a long research career with the Forest Products Lab (FPL) and is concerned about the erosion of the lab’s focus and erosion of our university academic programs and forest products. There has been a loss of critical mass of faculty on campus. He hopes we can all get together and work with USDA and the Lab; its time to hold a joint meeting to talk more purposely about innovation and product development. We have to have products in a competitive marketplace coming out of the forest. Alex invited Paul/NAUFRP to bring him a specific idea; he is open to tangible actions. David Newman noted that in past years NAUFRP has met with the R&D leadership. He assumes that Alex is operating almost entirely virtually and would like the opportunity to get in from of the R&D leadership. Alex said he would like to do that with the FS R&D Executive Team – that is the Washington Office leaders and Station Directors. They can do this anytime and Alex will work to see the best way to do this. It could be general or a topical focus. Alex invited NAUFRP to help build an agenda for this. David said NAUFRP will get together a list of ideas to talk about. Alex said they are doing virtual meetings at least once a month and maybe more ad hoc meetings. Katy Kavanagh asked about funding for the Joint Fire Science Program. Alex said he really values this program and it is funded under the Congressional Continuing Resolution. Bob Wagner (Purdue) asked Alex to elaborate on the direction of the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) as it relates to digital forestry remote sensing, big data, A1,... Alex was not prepared to discuss this in detail; it comes up a lot but in general “they” are looking to adopt all the technology they can. Keith Belli (Clemson) noted that in the past we have met about strategic research priorities and asked if this was where FS priorities come from (those depicted in the presentation). Alex said when he took the assignment there had been a substantial amount of work on developing national priorities and he has been trying to connect these to the whole agency.

NAUFRP Election, Katy Kavanagh: Katy recognized David for his years of service to NAUFRP. Nominees for office of Secretary and Treasurer are Robert Burns (WVa University) and Don Grebner (Mississippi State University). Katy is standing for the office of President-Elect. David recognized that it has been some time since there were two candidates for an office. David called for the nomination of Katy Kavanagh as President-Elect for a two-year term. If there is agreement we do not have to have a formal vote; David saw unanimous agreement and congratulated Katy on her election. A poll was launched for Secretary-Treasurer and Robert Burns elected. David thanked both candidates for their willingness to serve.

David called for other business; there was none.

Recognition: David noted that NAUFRP acknowledges the retirements of valued members and today there are two and both individuals have joined for this portion of the meeting. Resolutions were read on behalf of George Hopper (Mississippi State University) who formerly served as NAUFRP President and in other positions and Keith Gillless (University of California, Berkeley) who served on the Executive Committee.

Janaki recognized David Newman’s service to NAUFRP and presented the President’s Plaque and read a resolution of appreciation. David said this has been one of the real pleasures he has had in his time of

being an administrator and he appreciated the opportunity to work with all NAUFRP representatives. He was able to learn a lot from a host of people. For those new to administration this is a tremendous opportunity.

Keith Gilless said he is serving as General Chair for next year's SAF meeting in Sacramento and hopes to see us all there.

A motion was made and accepted to adjourn the meeting.

***Approved***  
***November 3, 2021***