NAUFRP Research Chair Report
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Progress continued developing new approaches for addressing the two-decade decline in forestry R&D funding, capacity, and relevance. This effort has involved partnering NAUFRP research chair efforts with SAF (Terry Baker) and the US Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Michael Goergen).

Below is a summary of progress made since last Spring:

1. **June 2023 Forestry and Wood Products R&D Summit.**

In cooperation with the Society of American Foresters and US Endowment for Forestry and Communities an in-person Forestry and Wood Products R&D Summit was held on **June 6-8, 2023 in Washington, DC.** As a follow-up to our 2020-21 virtual R&D Summit sponsored by NIFA, about 50 leaders representing more than 25 private, state, federal, and academic forestry organizations attended. The objective of this Summit was to discuss approaches to collectively identify, communicate, coordinate, and advocate for U.S. forest and forest products R&D priorities, capacities, and funding.

A final report summarizing the conclusions and recommendations of the Summit participants is near completion. We will make it available to the NAUFRP Executive Committee as soon as it is completed for their review and comment.

The 2023 Summit leaders identified three primary R&D priority areas that merit focus from a future consortium: (1) forest health improvements; (2) climate change adaptation; (3) wildfire mitigation, with one additional priority - strengthening workforce capacity - that cannot be addressed through R&D itself but is an end-goal of a long-term collaboration effort.

2. **National survey to identify highest-priority forest management problems at state, regional, and national levels.**

During the spring of 2023 we also conducted a national survey of over 300 forest managers asking them to identify their highest-priority forest management problems. The survey was led by Dr. Emily Huff of Michigan State University and distributed broadly through associations representing forestry professionals, including the Society of American Foresters, Forest Climate Working Group, National Association of State Foresters, USDA Forest Service, American Wood Council, National Association of Forest Owners, Southern Landowners Network, Intertribal Timber Council, National Association of University Forest Research Programs, and others.

The survey was designed in two rounds using a modified Delphi approach. The first round collected information about participant's professional profile and one open-ended question asking participants to identify the most important challenges facing either forest management/conservation or wood products. Open responses were thematically coded and then themes were aggregated, keeping only themes that were mentioned more than twice.

Then, the resulting 28 themes were presented, with definitions, during a round 2 survey that asked participants to rank them in order of importance.

Full results from the survey are being analyzed and will be summarized in a report. The top 5 forestry R&D priorities were:
- Workforce Issues
- Forest Health
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Public Perceptions
- Wildfire

3. **Build consortium of national forest-based organizations willing to support and lead a long-term communications effort about the need to address high-priority forest management problems.**

To organize and sustain this effort over time, 2023 Summit leaders also discussed how to best build a consortium of organizations willing to support and financially contribute to continuing periodic national surveys of high-priority forest management needs, as well as an allied communications effort. The consortium should include leading organizations representing the interests of private, state, federal, and other forest managers across the country.

Bob Wagner contacted more than 30 national forestry organizations to gauge their level of interest in supporting a consortium that would be responsible for periodically conducting the national survey of forest managers, as well as an associated communications effort with forest research funding agencies and the forest research community to help ensure that solving the highest priority forest management problems get needed attention. There is a high level of interest and support for this general idea. Forestry organizations would like more attention in solving on-the-ground forest management problems from the forest research community.

2023 Summit participants were also asked about the best options for developing a national consortium of forest management organizations. Summit participants proposed three core objectives for the consortium: (1) the efficient use and dissemination of translated science; (2) better alignment between research users, managers, and producers, and (3) improvements in communicating the value and relevance of forest R&D in approaches that resonate with key decision-making audiences. Consortium deliverables would include establishing a structured convening forum to connect disparate parts of the forest R&D sector ecosystem; translating and aligning the perspectives of decision maker and manager audiences, and sharing information broadly across stakeholder groups to drive a consistent message about the value of forest sector R&D.

A draft governance structure and MOA has been developed that could be used as the foundation for developing a consortium of forestry organization interested in supporting this effort. We also are searching for start-up funding opportunities to continue the work already begun as the consortium of supporting organizations was developed over time. SAF has expressed interest in possibly serving as the host organization for the consortium.

If you have any questions about this effort, please contact Bob Wagner at rgwagner@purdue.edu or 207-949-4067.