

**Draft Minutes**  
**NAUFRP GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
Sacramento, CA  
**Wednesday, October 25, 2023**  
**Hybrid/Zoom Meeting (recorded)**

**Kathleen Kavanagh, President**, opened the meeting with a welcome and thanked the California Board of Forestry for hosting NAUFRP. Introductions. Meeting Participants Listed at end of minutes.

The **draft minutes** from September 20, 2022 General Assembly meeting held in Baltimore, MD were introduced. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer to approve them, seconded by Andrew Storer. There was no discussion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report, Robert Burns**: Treasurer reviewed the 2022 and 2023 budgets; a written report was distributed. He noted additional investments in DEI to better understand and assist the Society of American Foresters (SAF) with diversity efforts, the investment in AV equipment (purchase of Meeting Owls) used today to enable a hybrid meeting and the increased interest rate for the PNC money market account. The Executive Committee approved a ten percent increase in Washington Counsel Randy Nuckolls' (Dentons) annual compensation. There was a motion yesterday from the Executive Committee to approve the budget for next year; no motion is needed from the General Assembly. There was no further discussion. The proposed 2024 budget was approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

**Dennis Becker, NAUFRP President-Elect**, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation outlining NAUFRP activities over the last year, primarily by committee and regions. This was posted on the NAUFRP website.

**Terry Baker, CEO and Sam Cook, President of the Society of American Foresters (SAF)**, welcomed NAUFRP representatives to Sacramento for the annual SAF Convention. Key things happening at SAF: (re)structural changes to membership dues, affiliate members, two new professional credentials (urban and community forestry and forestry technician certification), workforce challenges. Next February, SAF will host a conference on 'Rising Professionals' in Baton Rouge. New to the convention this year is a student orientation.

**Chief Matthew Reischman, Deputy Assistant Director, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)** gave an overview of the state organization. This building is headquarters for CAL Fire. He is responsible for forest resource management. He discussed some of their programs and how they are administered. They have a cap & trade programs that funds (@\$400 million, but they are not permanent or on-going funds) 13-14 programs that include assistance to private landowners, nurseries, tribal grants, urban and community forestry, forest health. A 2021 Board of Forestry report identified research needs. Areas for Forest Research Grant priorities: forest health, carbon studies on state forests. These can be viewed on the website. They have several collaborative partnerships with universities; much of this focuses on crew development which gets young people out into the field where they collect data and information. Recruitment is a significant issue. Questions were on forest products, cap & trade, tribal grant programs.

**Apsana Kafle**, representing the **International Forestry Student Association (IFSA)**, joined virtually. She is originally from Nepal and just completed a masters from the University of Alberta. She leads IFSA

International Policy and prior to that position she represented North America within IFSA. She described what IFSA is and how they operate and engage forestry students. IFSA was established in 1973. They hold an annual symposium. They are a global organization which connects students and young researchers world wide; they are an education hub. Their goal is to connect forestry students beyond borders. They are exclusively run by students based at the University of Freiberg in Germany with about 12,000 students although their core team is about 51. They operate thru student chapters with 141 in 64 countries concentrated in Europe. Partners include IUFRO, CIFOR, They are looking for partnership with SAF and NAUFRP. There are currently five chapters in Canada; in the US, chapters are at Oregon State, Michigan Tech, Mississippi State, Yale and the Universities of Montana and Washington. They held a regional/North American meeting at Oregon State in March 2023 and will hold one in 2024 at the University Laval (Canada). Options for partnership: sign MOU with IFSA; opportunity for IFSA to collaborate with existing US chapters. There are no costs to students but their universities pay an annual fee for membership; for the US it would be about 125 Euros.

**Dr. Peter Thompson**, Director, Division of Environmental Systems Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): (joined virtually). Thompson discussed NIFA's mission and vision. The recently released USDA Science and Research Strategy for 2023-2026 outlines USDA's highest scientific priorities and provides guidance to NIFA. The sharing of information between the agency and grantees is foundational; they need to know stakeholder concerns and issues. It is essential communication be open and transparent; this will help strengthen and expand relationships. He has questions for NAUFRP. For example, how do NIFA investments align with our needs, priorities and challenges? Where is NIFA funding actually going? What is the level or rate of return on investments and have stakeholders actually benefited? To what extent are we successful in translating research into action? Are we in position to address emerging and future forest resource challenges at the national level? To what extent are we supporting the development of expertise in key areas? Thompson thinks it is crucial to know the type and caliber of resulting expertise. Are we investing in the development and application of ecological forecasting models including supporting the development of regional experts? Are we training? Is funding going to training? Are we training experts in bioinformatics, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, spatial analytics and so forth? Information on specific gaps and needs with forest resources. Request from David Newman for an in-person meeting with the forestry program leader with NY institutions; Thompson said this is not a problem. Dennis Becker said it would be good for the leadership of both organizations to sit down in a small group, including Daniel Cassidy and Diomy Zamora, to discuss Thompson's requests for information. Thompson is amenable to this.

**Washington Report, Randy Nuckolls**, NAUFRP General Counsel: Randy noted that after 22 days without a House Speaker, Mike Johnson (R-LA) was just elected. He is a conservative and considered a constitutional law expert. Rep. Johnson is on record for supporting a Continuing Resolution (CR) but critical of Farm Bill programs and their costs, particularly SNAP programs. The House has a very short time to deal with major legislative issues like appropriations bills, aid to Ukraine, Israel, boarder security. The Senate is going to deal with the agriculture appropriations bill in the next few days but since both H&S have flat funding for McStennis, there will be no increase for the next fiscal year. Recall there was a \$1 million increase last year. There will likely be more CRs; the Farm Bill will be delayed until next year. Presidential and Congressional elections happen next year. The Democrats will have a big challenge to retain the majority in the Senate. Randy strongly encouraged NAUFRP representatives to contact and get to know their university government affairs people; this is very important. We work closely with APLU and their Boards of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Linda Nagel is the NAUFRP representative. We are also a member of the APLU Budget and Advocacy Committee which deals with funding recommendations. Randy also encouraged institutions to identify a representative to track funding coming from the Inflation Reduction Act; there are/were billions

of dollars, much of it for climate programs/goals; the Ag schools have people doing this. APLU is looking at how to talk about capacity programs.

Jeff Stringer, NAUFRP Extension Committee Chair: NAUFRP and the National Woodlands Owners Association (NWOA) provide annual awards for Individual and Comprehensive **Family Forest Education Program Award**. These awards are judged on impact and innovation. The Comprehensive Program Award was presented to the Outreach Program at the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. The 15 faculty and 4 professional staff members working from 4 locations throughout Georgia continue an ongoing robust outreach extension program. Dale Greene, UGA Dean, accepted the award. The Individual Award goes to the Connecticut Master Woodland Manager Program for a highly interactive program requiring family forest owners to complete 7 required integrated online and field education "modules" and 6 elective events. These provide the education and training necessary for the participants to complete a self-assessment and planning process for their individual woodlands. Six partner organizations were involved and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association coordinated. The program, in its third year, was designed to have woodland owners assess their own woodlands and develop a plan to graduate. It requires seven courses and six electives; 120 learning hours were involved. Tom Worley, University of Connecticut Extension and Beth Bernard, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, accepted the award.

**"National Forestry R&D Priorities: It might be easier than we think", Dr. Emily Huff**, Associate Professor, Michigan State University, Department of Forestry and Bob Wagner, NAUFRP Research Chair) Bob Wagner reviewed the decline in forestry research over the last 20 years. His recent examination of doctoral dissertation topics revealed the decrease in capacity and relevancy for solving forest management problems. There is no feedback mechanism for land managers as to what their needs are. Based on agriculture experience, a broad coalition of forest based organizations is needed as well as a process for identifying priorities for a coalition to get behind. Thirty organizations have been identified and two thirds are interested. A host organization is being sought and a MOU would be developed. There are two "To Dos": develop a periodic survey to identify the highest priority problems and develop a allied communications educational effort aimed at policy makers and funding agencies. There have been two forest and forest product summits and implementation of a national survey of forest managers. Emily Huff: Emily Huff discussed the two summits and survey. This is the data side of what Bob has just spoken about. They had 50 leaders review the virtual summit and survey. She has just gotten back the Executive Summary of the report; it will be sent to all participants and posted online (probably on the Endowment website). She described the survey process and results to date of the 'grand challenges'. They will go back out with a second iteration of the survey. At this point nine key priorities have been identified. These include: workforce issues, forest health, climate change/adaptation,

**David Lytle**, Deputy Chief for Research and Development, USDA Forest Service: Lytle took this position about six months ago. He has a varied background: PhD from Univ Minnesota, worked for TNC, USGS, USFS (previously), was Ohio State Forester, came back to FS in the NFS. Most of his career is between management and applied science. What is in front of the FS: lots of attention and dollars to solve the wildfire problem; a lot of pressure on the agency to deliver, translate information into applied knowledge quickly. And that's not a model they are set up to deliver on well. They have lost capacity. They work in partnership with universities. FS R&D has about 1,400 active agreements right now; 40 new ones in FY22 for \$63 million. About 65 percent of the Infrastructure bill has gone out.. They need university resources. For the first time they are seeing external support for (ie recent Wildfire Commission Report, WGA); it is good to have external support. They need to figure out how to get outcomes, and how to better characterize them – they don't do this last well – who is actually using the information? What decisions are they making based on that information and what are the benefits at the End of the day? We can talk generally about the benefits of well managed forests but it is harder

to talk specifically about what that \$20 million investment did on the ground. We've all wrestled with this but it is becoming increasingly important. We should all have a collective conversation on this. We need to be able to speak in a language that Congress and the administration understand and respect and appreciate. Randy said we have not talked about how we spend FS dollars; does David have a person to report on collaboration? David agrees we should collaborate on this; he gets asked about this by the Chief and it's difficult to provide specifics. Final points, not going to be successful if we are competitors, FS R&D has staked everything on delivering on the wildfire crisis. Needed are new technologies, new understandings, new ways of thinking, new strategies to really accomplish what we need to accomplish. They are feeling their way through that. That's the place where university research, Forest Service research and others can meet.

**Resolutions** were read on behalf of Bob Wagner and Dale Greene for their service on behalf of NAUFRP. Both planned to retire from their academic/administrative careers at the end of 2023.

### **Adjourned**

Meeting Participants: Katy Kavanagh (Oregon State University), Dennis Becker (University of Idaho), Robert Burns (West Virginia University), Todd Petty (Clemson University), Zhu Hua Ning (Southern University), Andrew Storer (Michigan Tech University), Jeff Stringer (University of Kentucky), Bob Wagner (Purdue University), Hans Williams (SFA University), Charles Goebel (University of Idaho), Richard Kobe (Michigan State University), Dale Greene (University of Georgia), Kozma Naka (Alabama A&M University), Jan Thompson (Iowa State University), Sayeed Mehmood (Ohio State University), Paul Winistorfer (Virginia Tech University), David Ackerly (University of California-Berkeley), Randy Nuckolls (NAUFRP General Counsel), Tara Bal (Michigan Tech University), Erin Kelly (Cal Humboldt), Thomas Worthley (University of Connecticut), Don Hodges (University of Tennessee), David Newman (SUNY), Buck Vandersteen (NAUFRP Liaison to CARET), Michael Blazier (University of Arkansas), Matt Broom (SFA University), Linda Nagel (Utah State University), Djoma Zamora (NIFA), Dave Auty (Northern Arizona University), Adrian Leighton (Salish Kootenai College), Allen Rutherford (Louisiana State University), Ian M (Washington State University), Aaron Sills, (North Carolina State University)

*2:30-3:45 Meeting with NAUFRP Exec committee and USDA Forest Service Station Directors and Washington Office Leadership Team (Valerie Hipkins)*