

Council Report To Members

It's US vs. THEM.

Who are US and Them? US is the SESAF and THEM is the amorphous "national." The group that we're sure is not responding to or doesn't care about the SE members. I can't tell if I hear only a vocal few or if this is the general attitude of many of the members. In either case I believe it arises from a lack of understanding of the SAF organization.

There is nothing wrong with debate and discussion of the issues. In fact, we don't have to agree on everything and usually don't. But, I'm referring to comments that can lead to declining morale among the national staff and your fellow members. After all, if the SAF is so bad, then why continue to be a member?

So, let me briefly explain. The SAF staff takes direction from the Council and HSD. Both of these bodies are elected by members and provide broad direction to the staff. Michael Goergen and the staff work to meet those directions and handle the daily operations. Some projects require debate during Council meetings and continue beyond those meetings. Council members may disagree (there are eleven of us) on specific requests from a region of the country and we debate the issues focusing on a unified decision. This often means that not everyone gets what they want. But, I believe that the national staff works hard to satisfy the members and accomplish the goals set by Council.

I have heard that there is a lack of communication from the national staff. How can that be? We have the eforester, the [Forestry Source](#), a web site, quarterly Council reports, local chapter meetings and weekly policy emails to name a few tools being used to communicate with members. In fact, I don't have time to read all that is available. If you need information, you can call anyone on the staff or your Council rep and I bet you'll get what you need. Do you realize that we have decreased staff from 25 to 17 while increasing services?

So, let's continue to agree to disagree but also, seek to understand what is behind certain decisions and actions. We can and should receive feedback from members. I ask your elected state chairs for comments and concerns on a quarterly basis before each Council meeting. If we can continue healthy debate, then SAF will continue to be a quality professional organization of which you can be proud

Report On December, 2009 Council Meeting.

I sat in the December meeting and watched it snow all day, eventually reaching four inches. It was a great day to be inside for a Southerner. Let me briefly tell you what we discussed.

Finance. SAF has two endowment funds that began in 2009 with about a 30 percent decrease in value. At year end, the funds had recovered almost all of their value and ended up with a 0.1

percent decline. These funds provide one source of revenue to fund our operations. Advertising, grants and other are the top three revenue sources and declined to an extent that we have to look for new sources. Member dues only declined three percent but we'll need to look at options to raise revenue.

Leadership and Membership. SAF will thrive with good leadership. The Leadership Academy will continue to be held at the national convention. The Academy program is being revised and improved. Please continue to hold local chapter meetings and look for the talent to lead SAF locally and nationally.

We are looking at ways to increase participation by Federal employees. Federal laws and rules governing those employees worked to cause many foresters to resign their SAF membership to protect their jobs.

Accreditation. The Accreditation Committee revised standards for accrediting educational programs to include forest technology programs and a new Terrestrial Ecology curriculum.

Position Statements. Policy Chair Mike Zupko reported that the statements on "Roads in Managed Forests" and "Loss of U.S. Forest Land" were expiring. Council voted to extend these position statements. Two Task Forces were chartered last year to develop position statements but have not been funded yet due to the short fall in revenue. Shorna B. Allred, Cornell Dept. of Natural Resources is the new Policy Chair.

Sign up for Erica's email to get up-to-date news on her efforts representing SAF on capital hill.

Other Actions. Fellow nomination procedures have been revised. Our chair, Alan Long is looking for nominees from the SESAF. I'm sure we have foresters who have a long service to SAF and the profession deserving of Fellow recognition.

The Forest Science and Technology Board is looking for emerging issues in natural resources. These are issues you see as being on the horizon and that SAF needs to get ahead of. Contact Bill Rockwell through the SAF web site with your thoughts.

The national convention in Orlando was as successful as could be expected given the economic climate at the time. Final data was not available in December, but attendance was the same as previous conventions. I'll report on the financial outcome after the February, 2010 Council meeting.

Finally, forward your comments and concerns that you want me to carry to the next Council meeting