

Comprehensive Timeline of Key Events and Issues Related to Hofmann Forest

September 14, 2014 – V10

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1934 - J.V. "Doc" Hofmann, the founding Dean of NCSU's School of Forestry, sells bonds to allow the newly-created Forestry Foundation to purchase a 79,000-acre tract of land in Jones and Onslow Counties in eastern North Carolina. He begins the long process of paying off the bonds with income from timber sales from the property. His goals for buying the land were to provide a demonstration forest to benefit forestry education, and to generate revenue to support his School of Forestry. He established the Forestry Foundation to hold the deed to the land, as he didn't trust the university not to try to sell the forest for the cash.

November, 1972 - In the general statewide election, with Presidential, US Senate, and Gubernatorial races on the ballot, North Carolina voters overwhelmingly (87%) vote yes to approve an amendment to the NC Constitution that states "*It shall be the policy of this State to conserve and protect its lands and waters for the benefit of all its citizenry...*" During the buildup to the election the amendment (now Article 14 Section 5) is referred to as the "Environmental Bill of Rights".
<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/legislation/constitution/nconstitution.html>

1977 - The Forestry Foundation, under pressure from Jones County to pay property taxes, decides to transfer the deed for Hofmann Forest to the Endowment Fund of NC State University in order to clearly make it public, state land, with the stipulation that all income from the property must continue to support the College of Forestry at NCSU, or else the land will revert back to the Forestry Foundation.

1980 - Attorney General Rufus Edmisten issues a letter to Jones County stating clearly that Hofmann Forest is land owned by the State of North Carolina, and thus not subject to property taxes.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1qinhg8hp2yiw1e/Hofmann%20Media%20Stories%20v2.pdf>

September 28, 1983 -the Forestry Foundation "burns the mortgage": the debt on the Hofmann Forest was paid off (Hofmann Forest: A Narrative History of the North Carolina Forestry Foundation, 1970-2008, p. 29). After that, the property began to slowly build the contributions of income it gave to the College of Forestry at NCSU, building to moderate amounts of less than \$500,000 per year through the 1990s.

1988 - Wendell Murphy donates \$100,000 to the campaign of Harold "Bull" Hardison for Lt. Governor in NC, vastly exceeding the \$4000 limit, but the donation isn't detected until after the statute of limitations has passed. Murphy was later quoted "And I have no apologies for any support I've ever given Sen. Hardison. If he

was running today, I'd support him again." Hardison sponsored a number of bills reducing environmental regulations and tax liabilities for hog farms.
<http://www.pulitzer.org/archives/5897>

1990-1995 - hog production in North Carolina triples to 15 million animals by 1995, with 1 million hogs in Duplin County alone (most of which belong to Wendell Murphy)
<http://www.unctv.org/content/biocon/wendellmurphy/timeline>

1993 - Wendell Murphy leaves the NC Senate after voting 7 times to reduce pollution regulations on hog farming operations
<http://www.unctv.org/content/biocon/wendellmurphy/timeline>

1993-1996 - Wendell Murphy serves his first term on the Board of Trustees of NCSU

1996 - NC State Senator Tony Rand is named as one of the top five recipients of hog industry lobbying money. The Murphy Family donates heavily to legislators and to then-Governor Jim Hunt.
<http://www.democracy-nc.org/downloads/archive/statepolsswimming.html>

1999-2007 - Wendell Murphy serves his second term on the Board of Trustees of NCSU. The new arena for NCSU basketball and Carolina Hurricanes hockey is very nearly named for him, but the deal falls through when the City of Raleigh objects that Murphy's contribution is too small.
<http://www.unctv.org/content/biocon/wendellmurphy/timeline>

1999-2000 - Wendell Murphy sells Murphy Farms to Smithfield Foods, after a major depression in the hog farming industry

2001 - 2002 – Larry Nielsen arrives as Dean of the College of Natural Resources at NCSU. Nielsen soon argues that if the Hofmann Forest is a \$100 million asset, it should generate several million a year in proceeds for the College, or the Forestry Foundation should sell it and invest in the stock market, reopening an old debate about the merits of keeping the forest. Hofmann timber harvests did increase shortly after that in order to generate more income. Note that Dean Eric Ellwood also proposed selling the forest as well in 1983, which was strongly rejected by a Forestry Foundation vote (Hofmann Forest: A Narrative History of the North Carolina Forestry Foundation, 1970-2008, p. 91).

2004 - Randy Woodson is promoted to serve as Dean at Purdue University's School of Agriculture.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy_Woodson

2005 - 2007 - Wendell Murphy serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund at NCSU, the group that holds the deed to Hofmann Forest. He was also Chair of the NCSU Board of Trustees at the time.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/kuuvvgguquhylco3/10.62.14-140%20-%20Ron%20Sutherland%20-%20EFBOTRosters%202000-2014%20%28N0008576xC1D49%29.doc>

January, 2005- Larry Nielsen is promoted to NCSU Provost, Robert Brown is hired to be the new Dean of the College of Natural Resources.

2008 - The board of the Forestry Foundation is convinced to proceed with a merger with the much smaller (in terms of endowment value) Pulp and Paper Foundation, with the clear expectation that foresters would retain a majority control over the resulting Natural Resources Foundation. David Ashcraft, the Executive Director of the Pulp and Paper Foundation, becomes the Executive Director of the Natural Resources Foundation. The new NR Foundation Board agreement stated that foresters or wood products representatives should comprise a majority of the Board members. By 2012, only four persons with (decades old) forestry degrees remained on the board, and none were registered or practicing as foresters.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/kc9th2wd0mgm7c4/Memorandum2%20Forestry%20Foundation%20merger%20documents.pdf>

Key question - if the Forestry Foundation was truly duped into a bad merger deal, could that serve as grounds for a lawsuit alleging either that the Forestry Foundation did not conduct sufficient due diligence with respect to their own mission statement, or that the Pulp and Paper Foundation was duplicitous about the impacts of the merger?

2008 - Randy Woodson is promoted to Provost of Purdue University. Jay Akridge is hired to replace Woodson as Dean of Purdue Agriculture

January, 2009 - Shannon Joseph is appointed as a Superior Court Judge by Governor Mike Easley on Easley's last day in office. Judge Joseph is the daughter-in-law of powerful NC Senator Tony Rand, who resigns from the legislature in 2009.
http://projects.newsobserver.com/under_the_dome/swear_by_night

2009 - The Natural Resources Foundation (only a year old at this point) creates a development plan for the 4,000 acres of Block 10 of Hofmann Forest (= the land south of US 17). This plan is later shared with prospective buyers of Hofmann Forest.

2010 - Randy Woodson is hired to serve as Chancellor of NCSU. He swears in his Oath of Office to uphold the Constitution of North Carolina.(see 1972)

Winter, 2010 - Peter Stein of Lyme Timber makes these remarks in Silviculture Magazine: "...a particular form of conservation easement has evolved that provides for discreet economic utilization of the land as well as permanent conservation. **For farmland and ranchland, these types of conservation easements are known as...“farmland conservation easements”**. For forestry, the term of art is a

“working forest conservation easement”... Between 2000 and 2009, more than two dozen deals occurred where the acreage conserved via working forest conservation easements was greater than 75,000 acres per deal.”

<http://www.lymetimber.com/Silviculture%20Magazine->

[%20Working%20Forest%20Conservation%20Easements,%20P.%20Stein.pdf](http://www.lymetimber.com/Silviculture%20Magazine-%20Working%20Forest%20Conservation%20Easements,%20P.%20Stein.pdf)

September 20, 2011 - Stephanie Walker Spiros, an alumnus of Purdue, participates in a Purdue University Center for Food and Agricultural Business conference entitled "Advanced Precision Selling for Experienced Ag Sales Professionals". Stephanie is the daughter of Jerry Walker, and an active member of their family business, the Walker-Ag Group, which owns tens of thousands of acres across several states. Walker Ag-Group is based in Danville, Illinois, only one hour away from Purdue University.

Key question - during the period 2004-2013, did Randy Woodson make acquaintances with or solicit donations from Stephanie Walker Spiros or other members of the Walker family? Did anyone else on the NCSU Board of Trustees (or Endowment Fund BOT, or CNR staff) know the Walkers before the Hofmann sale? Did any of Woodson's staff meet with the Walkers while Woodson was an administrator at Purdue?

April 25, 2012 - Dean Robert Brown mentions in a College of Natural Resources Faculty meeting that he has received two inquiries about a possible sale of Hofmann Forest, both from members of the Natural Resources Foundation Board. No minutes were taken or provided.

May 23, 2012 - Dean Robert Brown issues a strategic plan for CNR that includes monetizing Hofmann Forest. Faculty responses in opposition are ignored.

May 28, 2012 - Stephanie Walker Spiros serves on a Purdue University panel at the Retail Executive Management Forum in Indianapolis.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wxp6icf7e48ry58/2012%20REMF%20Agenda.pdf>

Summer, 2012 - drought in the Midwestern USA cuts grain production significantly, and corn prices reach all-time highs. Since North Carolina imports a net of 200 million bushels of corn per year to feed our millions of hogs, chickens, and turkeys, this sharp increase in feed prices must hit NC livestock producers very hard.

<http://www.nasdaq.com/markets/corn.aspx?timeframe=10y>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/h42fp4ja1mafe0n/Everman%20Soil%20Water%20Quality%20Presentation.pptx>

June 19, 2012 - Dean Robert Brown emails CNR Faculty, saying the plan for Hofmann monetization is moving along methodically with three interested parties and an appraisal underway. **"the Foundation believes it is important to maintain the Hofmann name on the forest, maintain the bulk of the forest in a conservation easement that would guarantee it as a working forest in**

perpetuity, continue access to the forest for our faculty and students, and continue any long-term research projects on the forest.”

Key question - did Dean Brown ever tell faculty that he or the NR Board were already soliciting **outright buyers for Hofmann Forest in 2012?**

July 24, 2012 - Footnoted.com reveals significant financial relationships still exist between members of the Murphy Family and Smithfield Foods. Wendell Murphy remains on the board of Smithfield Foods.

<http://www.footnoted.com/thats-some-pig-at-smithfield-2/>

August 10, 2012 - Natural Resources Foundation Executive Director David Ashcraft meets with forestry faculty at NCSU. He mentions there are now four potentially interested buyers for Hofmann, including two timber groups, the Conservation Fund, and the Navy/Marines. Ashcraft states that all options for the sale will keep Hofmann a working forest, and probably include an easement. No official minutes were taken, but notes from a faculty member are available.

September 26, 2012 - Hog producers Murphy-Brown (now a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods) and Prestage Farms (which sells hogs to Smithfield Foods) go in together via an LLC to import 750,000 metric tons of corn from Brazil, due to the sky-high price of corn from the midwestern USA.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/26/us-usa-corn-imports-idUSBRE88P1KH20120926>

September 28, 2012 - Brenda Brickhouse, chair of the Natural Resources Foundation, meets with CNR faculty. She describes Hofmann Forest as just another asset that could be put up for sale as needed, although the NR Board would protect it as a forest, with research, and teaching values. There is strong faculty pushback and opposition to this view. No minutes were taken or provided.

Fall, 2012, probably October - The Natural Resources Foundation apparently votes in secret to consider selling Hofmann Forest in its entirety and apparently seeks bidders, without telling or consulting faculty or any others. Select potential buyers were sent a prospectus at some point after this meeting.

Key Question - How were those potential buyers selected? Who were they? What was in that prospectus from the Natural Resources Foundation?

October 9, 2012 - NCSU announces a \$10 million gift from the Prestage Family, to name the Department of Poultry Science. The timing is noteworthy given the summer of extremely high livestock feed prices that Prestage Farms had just weathered through.

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/10/09/2401491/ncsus-poultry-science-department.html>

October, 2012 - Mary Watzin is hired to replace Robert Brown (who retired) as Dean of the College of Natural Resources. At least three other candidates for the position were asked during the preceding interviews whether they would be willing to sell Hofmann Forest.

December 3, 2012. Mary Watzin holds her only meeting with the faculty as a whole to discuss the Hofmann Forest, but restricts that discussion only to hearing how the faculty use the forest—no comments about the value of the Forest or desires of the faculty were entertained, nor any information provided about a potential sale or monetization. No minutes were taken or provided.

[Note: This was the entire amount of faculty consultation before the sale was officially announced in January. A mention and email from Bob Brown; two meetings with NR Foundation representatives, and one with Dean Watzin, who did not want to discuss the Hofmann Forest retention or sale, just how we use the Forest. This is only four meetings at most, and they were all charades. In all cases the administrators promised that NCSU would have a conservation easement to protect the forest if it were sold. At no times were the faculty directly or even tangentially asked **if** we should sell the Forest. Faculty opposition was quite clear, nonetheless. The NCSU students or public were never consulted or met with. The true details of the potential sale were always misrepresented or outright lied about.

After the sale was announced in January, Dean Watzin was asked to meet with forestry faculty and students three or four times, and did so. At no time did she ever call a College wide meeting to discuss the Hofmann and hear views, debate, or discussion. And in any emails or web posts, she always maintained that the Hofmann would be maintained as a working forest. So overall, the public input and consultation (1) consisted of 4 pretend pre-sale announcements meetings and a few post announcement meetings called by faculty, where (2) outright falsehoods about partial monetization and working forest protections were promised; and (3) massive opposition to any sale was totally ignored. In fact, the final deal of total sale to agriculture business firm with zero forest protections was NEVER mentioned by the Deans, and totally opposed by all persons at the few pretend meetings held (NOT “dozens”). So the faculty, student, and public consultation was a complete, carefully orchestrated, deceitful charade, from start to finish, where all public input was ignored, and the Foundation and Deans did not even do what they promised to do in every meeting and communication.]

January 6, 2013 - Jerry Walker signs the application to form Hofmann Forest LLC in North Carolina, 12 days **before** the Natural Resources Foundation publicly announces their vote to sell the forest.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4qxsjpyf6tjhbc3/Hoffman%20LLC%20C201300701050%20filing%20application.pdf>

Key question - how did farmer Jerry Walker learn about the Hofmann Forest sale up in Illinois, before it was public knowledge in North Carolina?

January 11, 2013 - Chancellor Randy Woodson "...received a \$63,000 raise Friday. His annual salary rose to \$495,000 after a closed door vote by the UNC Board of Governors. He will also receive a one-time "retention payment" of \$112,630 in non-state funds by March 31, to be paid by N.C. State University." [Meanwhile, faculty and staff have had one 1% raise in 6 years.]
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/01/11/2600388/ncsu-leader-gets-146-percent-raise.html#storylink=cpy>.

January 15, 2013 - "Increasing local production of feed grains is absolutely critical to the future of the livestock industry in the Southeast, and Murphy-Brown is committed to long-term sustainability of grain production in the Upper Southeast, says Terry Coffey, chief science & technology Officer [at Murphy-Brown]"
<http://southeastfarmpress.com/livestock/future-southeast-livestock-industry-depends-local-grain>

January 15, 2013 - Former Dean Bob Brown sends an email to the College of Natural Resources listserv assuring faculty that no one is considering selling Hofmann for development: "No where has anyone mentioned selling the Hofmann for a development, commercial, residential, recreational, or otherwise. **The primary option under consideration is getting a 25 year, 50 year or permanent easement on the Forest, and retaining ownership....** The Hofmann will remain a permanent working forest, no matter what option is taken. An easement would guarantee that, and provide significant income to the college."
https://www.dropbox.com/s/9liird9rt2b637j/Faculty_Senate_Documentation_V7.pdf

January 18, 2013 - the Natural Resources Foundation Board votes [again?] unanimously to sell Hofmann Forest in its entirety. Dean Mary Watzin is allowed to vote to sell the forest. There are no practicing foresters left on the NRF Board at this point.

January 22, 2013 - Dean Mary Watzin sends out an email to College of Natural Resources alumni announcing the Hofmann sale. In the email, she pledges "The goal is to sell the property as a working forest."
<http://cnr.ncsu.edu/blogs/news/2013/01/23/hofmann-forest-letter-from-dean-mary-watzin/>

January 30, 2013 - Jerry Walker and an unknown group of co-investors file the paperwork (which Walker had signed on January 6) to form Hofmann Forest LLC in North Carolina, only 11 days after news of the sale was made public to faculty.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4qxsjpyf6tjhbc3/Hoffman%20LLC%20C201300701050%20filing%20application.pdf>

Key Question - who are the other members of Hofmann Forest LLC (current list and any original members who have since departed)? Any other corn farmers, Purdue alumni, hog magnates, NCSU trustees (or family members of trustees), etc.?

February 21, 2013 - the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of NCSU vote to allow the sale of Hofmann Forest to proceed. Until this point, Hofmann Forest was not technically for sale, as the Endowment Fund holds the deed to the forest.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5brec5zae44m19p/10.62.14-140%20-%20Ron%20Sutherland%20-%20Resolution%20%28Hofmann%20Forest%29%20%28N0008577xC1D49%29.pdf>

March 9, 2013 - David Ashcraft of the Natural Resources Foundation is quoted by the News and Observer as saying "We'll be looking for someone willing to maintain it [Hofmann] as a working forest. "Potential buyers are given until March 29 to submit bids for Hofmann, only two months from when the sale was made public. Several large timber companies later indicate they were not contacted by NCSU about the sale, including the largest forest landowner in the United States.
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/03/09/2738434/sale-of-nc-states-80000-acre-hofmann.html>

Key question - Is there any valid reason why the sale period for Hofmann Forest was so short - only two months from the NRF vote, and only one month from the Endowment Fund vote? Did NCSU ever take out print ads in any timber, forestry, farming, real estate, or conservation publications advertising the fact that this huge tract of land was for sale, and listing the stated criteria for the sale? If not, why not?

April 19, 2013 - Greenville, NC farm supply company owner Lawrence Davenport leaves the NCSU Board of Trustees, to join the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of NCSU. Davenport had previously served as Chair of the Endowment Fund Board of Trustees from 2009-2011, and vice-Chair from 2008-2009 (both posts ex officio).
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/kuuvvgguquhylco3/10.62.14-140%20-%20Ron%20Sutherland%20-%20EFBOTRosters%202000-2014%20%28N0008576xC1D49%29.doc>

April 26, 2013 - NCSU announces they are in negotiations with a potential buyer for Hofmann Forest, which in October is revealed to be Jerry Walker/Hofmann Forest LLC. NCSU later claims there were 20 expressions of interest in the forest, but only 7 bids.
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/04/26/2850161/nc-state-in-negotiations-with.html>

Key question - who else bid for Hofmann Forest, and how much did they offer? Were there any easement-only offers, which could have been combined with other offers to buy the timberland in a way that would have genuinely protected Hofmann as a

working forest? Did NCSU solicit any such easement offers? Were there any other farmers who thought about bidding?

May 6, 2013 - Ron Sutherland and a handful of protestors establish a mini-forest with 600 loblolly pine seedlings (potted in red plastic cups) in front of the Chancellor's Residence at NCSU

July, 2013 - Ron Prestage is appointed to the NCSU Board of Trustees

July 10, 2013 - Sale opponents hold a noisy and energetic protest at the NCSU Board of Trustees meeting on Centennial Campus. Roughly 45 people attended the protest, including a number of forestry students wearing blaze orange vests and hard hats.

July 10, 2013 - NCSU Chancellor Randy Woodson, denying the University's need to ensure protection for Hofmann Forest, tells the News and Observer "We are not the Department of Conservation." (see 2010 note about his Oath of Office)
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/07/10/3022404/protesters-voice-opposition-to.html>

August, 2013 - NCSU Associate Vice Chancellor Benny Suggs sends out replies to try and reassure a number of concerned alumni, stating "...we set some strict conditions of sale early in this process that any buyer must meet to ensure the land continues to be an asset for NC State going forward. Those conditions include: ...Preserving the property as a working forest"

September, 2013 - Wendell Murphy is re-appointed to the NCSU Board of Trustees

September, 2013 - a group of five plaintiffs, led by NCSU Forestry Professor Fred Cabbage, files suit in Wake County Superior Court to try and stop the Hofmann sale, on grounds that the University failed to comply with the NC Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the NC Constitution.

September 25, 2013 - NCSU and Natural Resources Foundation lawyers tell a Wake County Superior Court judge that no temporary restraining order against the Hofmann sale is needed, as no sale is imminent. The Judge denies the restraining order.
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/09/27/3233593/opponents-sue-to-halt-sale-of.html>

September 27, 2013 - Smithfield Foods is sold to the Chinese holding corporation Shuanghui International Holdings Ltd, in a deal valued at \$7 billion. The Smithfield Foods management team remains in place.
http://www.timesdispatch.com/business/economy/smithfield-foods-closes-sale-to-china-s-shuanghui/article_06e60333-2ded-57f5-b650-72336d9a3f36.html

October 29, 2013 - the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of NCSU vote to approve the Hofmann Forest sale agreement with Jerry Walker's Hofmann Forest LLC. The sale agreement discusses Walker's negotiations with the Marine Corps over the possibility of selling an agricultural easement on 70,000-acres of the property. But the agreement does not require this easement deal proceed, nor does it protect any of the land as a working forest. Walker is apparently the only farmer to have bid on the property, and several large timber groups later reveal they were not even contacted about the sale.

Key question - did the NCSU and NRF lawyers violate some code of legal ethics by blatantly misrepresenting the timeline of the impending Hofmann sale to a sitting Judge?

October 29, 2013 - Dean Mary Watzin (NCSU Natural Resources) sends out an email announcing the Hofmann sale. Watzin claims that the "sale contract meets all of the criteria established by the Natural Resources Foundation and is true to the core values of the College of Natural Resources." **It does not and is not.**
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/jonzcpb9t00v980/Purchase%20and%20Sale%20of%20Real%20Property%20Agreement%20%28N0005407%40xC1D49%29%20copy%20searchable.pdf>

October 29, 2013 - Dean Mary Watzin also sends Dean Jay Akridge (Purdue Agriculture) the announcement of the Hofmann sale to the Walkers. Akridge replies directly to Chancellor Woodson at NCSU with his congratulations.
https://www.dropbox.com/s/o9bmok0326h1aaj/results%20from%20Sutherland%20public%20records%20request%20to%20Purdue%20received%207_30_14.pdf

November, 8, 2013 - Speaking of Hofmann Forest, Dean Mary Watzin tells WRAL News reporter Bruce Mildwurf that "Sales of private property do not require an environmental assessment". When asked why the Hofmann sale agreement does not include language that protects Hofmann as a working forest (as many expected it would), Watzin replies "Because that's really not something that is typically written into a contract". Note: Working forest easements are legal contracts that are actually quite commonly used to protect forests from urban development, while still allowing timber harvesting (see Peter Stein quote above, winter 2010).
<http://www.wral.com/news/education/video/13091836/>
<http://www.wral.com/news/local/video/13113262/>

November 12, 2013 - Superior Court Judge Shannon Joseph dismisses the Hofmann lawsuit, after NCSU and Natural Resource Foundation lawyers argued that any environmental impact from the sale was mere speculation. The same lawyers also try to argue that Hofmann Forest is not public land, but desist temporarily when presented with the 1980 letter from Attorney General Edmisten.

November 13, 2013 - the investor's prospectus prepared by Hofmann Forest LLC is leaked to Hofmann sale opponent Ron Sutherland, who scans it and turns it over to

the press. The prospectus reveals plans to convert 45,000 acres of the forest into cropland over 10 years, and also a 9000-acre urban development along Highway 17. The prospectus is entirely consistent with the signed sale agreement, and boasts of potential income from the property exceeding half a billion dollars over the next decade.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/3qyyo84j31kjkk/Hofmann%20Forest%20LLC%20Prospectus%20for%20Potential%20Investors.pdf>

Key question: When was this prospectus actually written, and when was it circulated? Is there a new version out there?

Key question - in business terms, how much would it help the hog and poultry farming industry in eastern NC to have 45,000 new acres of local corn production courtesy of Jerry Walker?

November 14, 2013 - NCSU claims they have never seen the prospectus document before. But eventually they are forced to admit that the development plans in the prospectus came from the College of Natural Resources or Natural Resource Foundation, and were given to prospective buyers.

Key question: can we get our hands on whatever packet of information was given to prospective Hofmann buyers? What organizations received that prospectus?

November 14, 2013 - NCSU and a spokesperson for Jerry Walker, in a stunning use of the plausible deniability approach, announce that the leaked prospectus was an "older document", and that Jerry Walker actually told them more recently that he has no plans for development at Hofmann, despite the \$500+ million income potential outlined in the prospectus.

<http://www.wxii12.com/news/local-news/north-carolina/buyer-no-current-plans-to-develop-hofmann-forest/22988364#!bDhhra>

Key question: Will Jerry Walker or anyone else from Walker Ag Group or Hofmann Forest LLC actually ever speak to the public about this sale and their plans for the management of the tract? If they are such conservationists, why do they **never speak publicly about the Hofmann Forest or their plans?**

November 18, 2013 - Dean Akridge at Purdue sends an email to Eric Putman, director of development/fundraising for Purdue Agriculture, warning Eric that the Hofmann buyers "may" have a connection to Purdue Agriculture. The message concludes with the terse instruction "Take care."

https://www.dropbox.com/s/o9bmok0326h1aaj/results%20from%20Sutherland%20public%20records%20request%20to%20Purdue%20received%207_30_14.pdf

Key question: Was Stephanie Walker Spiros a donor to Purdue Agriculture, and would she and Eric Putman have been in contact via email/direct meetings? What steps did Akridge want Putman to take when he instructed Putman to "Take care."?

November 20, 2013 - Dean Mary Watzin tells the NCSU Student Senate that the Hofmann sale agreement establishes a working forest easement on the property. It does not.

November 20, 2013 - The NCSU student newspaper, the Technician, slams Chancellor Randy Woodson in a powerful editorial. "So to you, Chancellor Woodson, we apologize. We apologize for not doing the research we should've to realize that the conservation of the Hofmann Forest was never a priority for you. "
http://www.technicianonline.com/opinion/editorials/article_9c0e0452-51a5-11e3-b007-0019bb30f31a.html

December 6, 2013 - Hofmann sale opponents hold a large and successful protest (80+ attendees) at NCSU's brickyard, again using the baby pine trees, this time to form a large dollar sign on the brick plaza. The protest culminates with an energetic march to the Chancellor's Office.

January, 2014 - the NC Coastal Federation urges the US Army Corps of Engineers to investigate possible wetlands violations at Hofmann Forest related to land-clearing and ditching activities conducted by NCSU
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/04/01/3750701/feds-investigating-potential-environmental.html>

Key question - what do NCSU, the NRF, and Jerry Walker know about the legal wetland status of Hofmann's 79,000 acres? Have they paid to have the whole property delineated, and do the pine plantations that were ditched prior to 1977 still qualify as wetlands? And what mitigation agreement have they worked out with the EPA regarding the possible violations that recently occurred?

February 17, 2014 - Hofmann sale opponents, with help from major environmental groups, manage to send 4000 letters to NC Attorney General Roy Cooper, demanding that he stop defending NCSU in their attempt to break state environmental laws with the Hofmann sale. Cooper's office responds with an announcement that it is his job to defend the university.
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/02/17/3631009/opponents-of-hofmann-forest-sale.html> (only 2000 letters had been sent at that point)

Key question - in North Carolina, whose job is it to make sure State Agencies follow state law, if not the Attorney General's office (and the SBI, which is overseen by the Attorney General?)

February 19, 2014 - Dean Mary Watzin makes these comments about Hofmann Forest at the joint Cape Fear Arch/Onslow Bight Conservation Collaborative meeting in eastern NC (attended by dozens of conservationists): "Most people support the sale. The protests against the sale have been minor....We never said we were selling it with an easement. The buyer will keep it as working lands that is

what his primary interest is. We did not know about the prospectus done by the buyer and it has been put aside."

https://www.dropbox.com/s/9liird9rt2b637j/Faculty_Senate_Documentation_V7.pdf

Spring, 2014 - Hofmann Forest LLC (Walkers et al.) approaches RMS timber about involving RMS in the Hofmann purchase deal. RMS (a timber investment and management organization (TIMO) already has large landholdings in eastern North Carolina, and RMS had previously bid on Hofmann Forest.

Key Question: Did Hofmann Forest LLC also attempt to back out of the Hofmann sale altogether during this period, when the wetlands investigations were underway and the closing appeared unlikely by the June 30 deadline mentioned in the sale agreement?

July 14, 2014 - final briefs on the Hofmann Forest case are submitted to the NC Court of Appeals

July 17, 2014 - A MoveOn.org petition is started to Save Hofmann Forest from being destroyed, quickly reaching over 9200 signatures after only 5 weeks. A previous petition hosted by ipetitions.com reaches 2124 signatures as well (with some overlapping names between the two lists).

http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/save-hofmann-forest-from?source=c.fwd&r_by=10925835

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/cnr-alumni-against-the-sale-of-the-hofmann-forest/>

July 23, 2014 - NCSU Trustee Ron Prestage is arrested after a loaded 9mm handgun is found in his bag while he was entering a congressional office building in DC.

Prestage was in DC to lobby on behalf of the National Pork Producers Council, of which he is the president-

elect<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/07/23/4024878/ncsu-trustee-arrested-with-gun.html>

August 5, 2014 -oral arguments are set by the NC Court of Appeals for the Hofmann case, for August 26, 2014

August 7, 2014 - Natural Resources Foundation Attorney Paul Flick asks the Court of Appeals to postpone the oral arguments until "sometime after September 30".

August 15, 2014 - The NC Court of Appeals rejects the request to delay the oral arguments, and instead cancels the oral arguments altogether. It will consider the appeal based on the written briefs.

August 25, 2014 - Hofmann sale opponents hold two simultaneous protests, one at NCSU's Brickyard Plaza and one at Deppe Park inside Hofmann Forest along US 17.

The Deppe protest draws over 75 people, who spread out along the highway waving signs and getting passing drivers to honk in support. The NCSU protest is attended by over 100 people, who gather under the shade of a large oak tree and listen to a series of inspired speeches by leaders such as Fred Cabbage, Ron Sutherland, Ernie Averett, and Andrew Payne, among others. Then the NCSU protesters took the 1000-page stack of signatures from the two petitions (MoveOn and ipetitions) to the Chancellor's office. A group of about 50 protesters went into Holladay Hall and chanted "Chancellor Woodson won't you please, save the forest, save the trees" while the box containing the petitions was delivered. The Chancellor's representatives claimed Woodson was in a meeting.

August 26, 2014 - the MoveOn.org petition hits 10,000 signatures after just over a month. Between the two petitions, there are at least 11,000 different people who have signed on to call for canceling the sale and protecting Hofmann Forest.

September 3, 2014 - Charles Meeker, who served 5 terms as Mayor of Raleigh (2001-2011) has an op-ed published in the News and Observer: "State should stop impending blunder of selling Hofmann Forest." Meeker calls for the State legislature to find a way to purchase and protect the forest for the benefit of all.
http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/09/03/4119401_state-should-stop-impending-blunder.html?sp=/99/108/&rh=1

September 9, 2014 - NCSU reveals to the News and Observer that a new sale agreement had been signed (as of September 2) for a reported \$140 million. The new agreement proposes to divide the property into two parts, with the larger share (56,000 acres) going to RMS timber for \$105 million, and the remainder (23,000 acres) still going to Hofmann Forest LLC for \$25.85 million (total \$130.85 million). A contingent price is added to the deal, \$9.15 million, which will be paid by Hofmann Forest LLC upon sale of sufficient easements to the military or other third parties.
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/09/09/4137271/ncsu-changes-hofmann-deal-will.html>
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/gwq871m47iajn1q/AmendedandRestatedAgreement.pdf?dl=0> (=the new agreement text, missing exhibits and maps)

September 12, 2014 - NCSU publishes its own accounting of the Hofmann Forest saga ("Hofmann Facts"), falsely claiming that the decision to sell was an open and deliberative process (see above timeline).
<http://www.ncsu.edu/hofmann-facts/#process>