

NAFSR Board Meeting

February 13 - 14, 2017

February 13

Attendees

Jim Caswell (Chair), Larry Payne (Vice Chair), Corbin Newman (Executive Director), Jim Golden (Former Chair), Darrel Kenops (Former Executive Director), Johnny Hodges (Secretary), Bill Disbrow (Webmaster), Marlin Johnson (Southwest Region), Tom Thompson (Rocky Mountain Region), Rich Guldin (Research), Jane Kollmeyer (At-Large), Hank Kashdan (WO), Pete Griffin (Alaska Region), Rich Stem (Northern Region), Mike Rogers (California Region)

Chair Opening Remarks and Agenda Review

Jim Caswell opened his first meeting as Chair. After introductions, Jim said the purpose of the meeting was to look at where we have been, what has been accomplished, and examine our purpose. Are we a strategic or a tactical organization, or a combination of the two?

Executive Director's Report

Corbin Newman shared his two page 2016 Executive Director Report with the group. He spent most of 2016 working on advocacy issues including wildfire funding reform, FS budget, forest management/restoration policy and process reform, retention of and access to federal lands. In addition, we weighed in on a few unique issues such as efforts to eliminate agency law enforcement and threats to civil servants and occupation of federal facilities.

Thanks to a small group of Board members, we completed and began use of our formal Transition Position paper. The paper generated a substantial number of comments from members, both pro and con.

We had over 100 letter signing requests during the year.

The new administration's "beachhead" team will remain at USDA until confirmation of Sonny Perdue as Secretary of Agriculture.

Rich Guldin is sharing information from NAFSR with SAF.

Hank Kashdan Congressional Update

Hank said he talks to Mark Rey and Doug Crandall regularly.

The transition with the FS to the new administration is starting slowly and that is a good thing. Perdue was the last Secretary to be named, and may be the last one to receive a confirmation hearing and Senate vote. The Chief has had little contact with the new Administration other than a one hour meeting just after the election.

Melissa Simpson is acting at the Department of Interior. She was Trump's campaign manager in Colorado. We expect DOI to be much more involved in FS affairs in the new administration as Donald Trump, Jr. is much more familiar with DOI and has friends in the DOI.

The FS (and the rest of government) is on a Continuing Resolution until 4/28.

We expect an Omnibus bill for non-controversial items and budget.

CR will carry controversial items.

Fire funding has been reintroduced at 100% of 10-year average, then kick into emergency funds. Hank doesn't think this will happen.

There is a possible freeze on everything at 2016 level.

There is a good chance fire transfers will no longer happen, but there is no agreement on restoration funding. Paul Ryan is not supportive. Fire funding is currently under the radar screen.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT) withdrew his land transfer proposals after heavy resistance and is now proposing block grants for law enforcement to help pacify his conservative supporters.

Doug Crandall says there is no list for the Chief's replacement. There is no indication that the Chief will necessarily be replaced at this time.

Hank indicated he is planning on moving out of the D.C. area and we need to begin looking for someone to take the lead in our legislative work in the D.C. area to replace him.

Membership Report

Johnny Hodges reported that we currently have 630 members, an increase of about 15 members from a year ago, but the mix of members is very different. We purged about 50 members in 2016 for non-payment of dues. We have picked up enough new members to replace those losses, plus we continue to grow.

Lifetime memberships which we started in 2016 have proven popular and have now grown to 69. We currently have 140 Golden members (over 80 years old) that do not pay dues, but many of these members do make donations.

Finance Report

Johnny reviewed the 2016 Final Financial Summary which had previously shared with the Board. He also presented the 2017 proposed budget which was approved. It provides an operating budget of about \$13,000 for the year.

Website Report

Bill Disbrow, our webmaster, gave a presentation on the re-build of our website. There were many challenges, but most members seem happy with the results. The Board was overwhelmingly supportive of the new website. Our goals for the new website – 1) Ever-evolving 2) Up to date 3) Historically accurate.

Our ability to utilize credit cards for payment of dues and donations has made the process much easier for members. It has also driven a lot of traffic to the website.

We would like to establish a website standing committee.

Governance and Archives

Darrel Kenops has completed the NAFSR Governance Reference and presented it to the Board for their consideration, review, further edits, decisions and use. The document includes a brief history, expectations, operational protocol, workplans, and current papers. Darrel recommended that a Governance Committee be formed to produce a final product for approval by the Board. Mike Rogers and

Pete Griffin volunteered to work with Darrel on a Final Draft that could be handed over for needed graphics (NAFSR logo).

Darrel has also been working with Lisa Tate and Dave Stack at the National Museum of Forest Service History on archiving the first 14 years of NAFSR records. He is developing an MOU with the Museum and will continue to work on this project, but would like help from interested Board members.

2018 Reunion

Jim Caswell shared a handout for the 2018 FS Reunion that will be held in Asheville, NC on September 24-28, 2018.

McGuire Awards

Phil Aune is now the chair of the John McGuire Awards Committee. Phil was unable to attend the Board meeting today. There have been no awards since the last Board meeting in Albuquerque in 2015.

Business Operations

We will hold Board conference calls quarterly. The call dates in 2017 are May 11 and August 10.

Our next Board meeting will be November 14 and 15, 2017 in Albuquerque, just ahead of the SAF convention. There will be no field trip, but we may hold a social with leadership.

This meeting (February) is a replacement for our Fall, 2016 meeting that was cancelled. We will now move back to holding one meeting per year in the Fall.

In 2018 we will meet in Asheville, NC on September 22 and 23, two days ahead of the national reunion. We will appoint a liaison committee to work with reunion.

The Board discussed reimbursements for expenses incurred by Board members. In the past Board members have been reimbursed for some travel expenses if they made a request. Usually there is no reimbursement for general Board representation.

A written policy would be helpful in recruiting new Board members so they would be aware of expectations before agreeing to serve. Generally, Board members would be reimbursed for special travel, such as meetings with other organizations or providing testimony.

Corbin Newman, Johnny and Ellen Hodges will write a policy proposal for review by the Board before the next conference call in May.

Board members on non-routine trips should prepare a brief summary highlighting major issues to share with the Board.

Review 2015 priorities

Rich Stem led a discussion of priorities from 2015 that were established at the Board meeting in Reno in 2014. The purpose of the discussion was to review the status of each priority and determine which ones have been completed and which need to go forward or to be dropped.

1. Complete reforestation report/survey report - Jim Golden was the lead. When the first report was prepared, some regions were not reporting reforestation needs according to policy. Hayman, Biscuit, Rodeo-Chediski fires were sampled. The first report was completed about 5 years ago. Jim Golden said we have stalled on this project and nothing has happened since. We may need to reframe the question and ask the FS how they see this issue. Add to restoration (#4). Continue.
2. Establish legislative network for the Board. We determined at the Albuquerque meeting that the Board is the network. Done.
3. Governance – A committee composed of Darrel Kenops, Mike Rogers and Pete Griffin will finalize this project. Continue.
4. Restoration – Rich Stem and Tom Thompson are the leads. The goal is to determine how to help the Forests with their restoration needs. We also added the reforestation backlog to this item. Continue.
5. Develop media contact network. Jim Golden is the lead. This is difficult to do and we don't promote many newsworthy items. Close.
6. Input to CA forest conditions/fire etc. Steve Eubanks is the lead. Rich Stem read a summary report from Steve and a progress summary from Bruce Courtright's Siskiyou County Group. The group is adamant that the FS fix the problem. Mike Rogers and Steve Eubanks will visit with the group about our Transition Paper and the potential next steps. The FS does need

to be a player, but not the leader of this effort as this is really a state and local issue. Move forward cautiously. Continue.

7. Archive our records. Darrel Kenops is the lead. We are still in the collect/catalog/storage phase of this project. Continue.
8. Develop a “theme” for NAFSR. Tom Thompson is the lead. The “Principle Beliefs and Values” document is completed. Done.
9. Website improvement/re-design – Done.
10. Assistance to leadership. Tom Thompson is the lead. Close.
11. Support to Agency. Rich Stem is the lead. Collect success stories from FS and use McGuire Awards as an example. Closed.
12. Fire management recommendations. Fire Committee is the lead. We presented the recommendations to the Chief, but never received a response. The list needs to be reviewed by Fire Committee, make any needed revisions and re-submit to the Chief. Continue.

Twisp River 2015 Fire Learning Review

Jim Golden was asked to serve on safety learning review meeting in June, 2016. The review committee was composed of the Chief, 3 state foresters and a few others for a total of 8 people. This was an interagency fire that grew rapidly, experienced serious communication issues, and was managed by a Type 4 IC. Firefighters were sent into an area for structure protection which was previously identified as indefensible. There were 3 FS fatalities.

2016 Priorities

Corbin Newman reviewed and led a discussion on our 2016 priorities.

Advocacy

1. Fire Funding – We spent a lot of time on this topic during the year.
2. Restoration and Related Policy/Process Reform – This was tied together with fire funding and made it difficult for some of our partners to support.
3. Keeping Public Lands Public – Not a lot of issues on loss of public land, but quite a few about access to public lands.
4. Multiple Use and Agency Mission – There were budget related items, but not a lot of legislation.
5. Transition of New Administration – We completed our Transition position paper. It was widely distributed by Board members and others to a wide range of organizations and individuals with ties to the transition team. Our next step is to contact the Undersecretary and Deputy when named.

Membership

6. Services – We made progress on membership structure, ease of joining, volunteer opportunities, obituaries, ease of paying dues and making contributions.
7. Communications and Involvement – We haven't done much with involvement.
8. Expanding Membership – We are exploring options with other organizations.

Relations

9. Corbin and Chief had calls each quarter, also with business ops and others. We need more work with deputy chiefs and lower levels of FS. An MOU with the FS still a possibility.
10. Regions – Fire liaison projects and miscellaneous others

Mike Rogers – He has a good relationship with RF Randy Moore. Randy and Jean Wade Evans came and talked to retirees at their summer picnic in July, 2016. Randy also initiated Wildfire Reporting in 2016.

Rich Stem – Good relation with RF Leanne Marten. Discussed NAFSR priorities and fire liaison process.

Rich Guldin – R&D station directors not aware of his relationship. Researchers are unhappy with being unable to make presentations at meetings.

Tom Thompson – Contact with the RF is up and down depending on interest.

11. McGuire awards – We need to encourage awards in 2017.

Tactical vs. Strategic

Rich Stem said 2015 was too tactical (priorities) and 2016 was too strategic because we didn't know how to measure success. We need to discuss roles of Jim Caswell/Corbin Newman/Larry Payne and the expectations of the Board.

Jim Caswell said some issues are operational.

Tom Thompson said we should focus on 3 or 4 things in 2017 plus leave room for the unknown.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Jim Caswell and Corbin Newman led a discussion of how the Board sees the roles and responsibilities of our officers. The duties are described in our bylaws.

Chair –

- You are the face of the Board and the trail boss to keep Board members on task and effective. Everyone works for you.
- You need to be strategic and make decisions.
- You are also the face of NAFSR externally (as opposed to Corbin).
- Don't feel constrained by the past.
- We can jump from issue to issue so you should be a calming influence.
- Don't make an issue out of something that isn't yet an issue.
- Provide oversight on the succession of positions.

Vice Chair –

- Alternate for the chair.
- Troubleshooter
- Monitor board committees, special projects and commitments made by Board members.
- Succession to chair.

Executive Director –

- Provide coordination and seek assistance of Board members as needed.
- Run day to day operations.
- Stand back and at look at what the organization is accomplishing.
- Supervise business operations.
- This job can become overburdened and you may need to delegate some responsibilities to Jim Caswell or Larry Payne.

Secretary/Treasurer –

- The bylaws provide a good description of this position.

Board membership/operations –

- Responsiveness and good communication.
- Be clear on what you want when you make a request.

- Jim Caswell expects responses to a request within 3 or 4 days.
- Follow through on any assignment that you agree to.
- If you can't do the job, find a replacement.
- Maintain contact with RF's and personnel from Regions and NAFSR members of given regions.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a critical issue for all Board positions. The Bylaws clearly state that the Board members will serve a 2-year term with additional terms approved by the Board of Directors. Terms are to be staggered with ¼ of the Board changing every 2 years. The Board has not been following the directions in the Bylaws.

Jim Caswell and Jane Kollmeyer will work on this topic and have a proposal by our May conference call.

2017 Priorities

Corbin Newman and Jim Caswell led an extensive discussion on our priorities for 2017. The Board agreed on the following priorities for this year and the leads for each.

Operational

1. 2018 Reunion – Mac Gramley and Corbin Newman
2. FS MOU – Jim Caswell, Larry Payne, Corbin Newman
3. Governance – Darrel Kenops, Mike Rogers and Pete Griffin
4. Website management – Rich Guldin, Larry Payne, Corbin Newman, Johnny Hodges
5. Archives – Darrel Kenops, Mike Rogers and Pete Griffin
6. Succession planning – Jim Caswell and Jane Kollmeyer

Strategic

7. Restoration/reforestation – Rich Stem, Marlin Johnson, Tom Thompson, Jim Golden - position paper
8. Fire management – Fire committee, Mike Rogers, Jim Caswell
9. Fire funding – Hank Kashdan
10. Transition issues – Larry Payne
11. Forestry Reform – Rich Stem and Hank Kashdan

12. Emerging Issues – Corbin Newman
13. Keep public lands public – Jack Troyer - position paper

Corbin Newman will write a short paper on our 2017 priorities for posting on the website. Priorities will run into 2018.

Open Discussion

Rich Guldin discussed and described the North American Forest Partnership project (<https://www.northamericanforestpartnership.org/>). One objective is to develop positive stories about the contributions forests and forestry have made to peoples' lives. They have created a private Facebook site and post stories to it. NAFSR board members can log into that site and ask to join and become members of the NAPP.

Rich Stem discussed an emerging issue regarding collaborative groups in that sometimes the FS doesn't have the ability (personnel/skills) to meet expectations, which is leading to the failure of some efforts.

Corbin Newman announced he will retire as Executive Director on June 1.

Hank Kashdan is moving out of the D.C. area and we need to find a replacement for him.

Johnny Hodges will have business cards designed for Board members and each member will have their own printed. Our mission statement will be on the back of the card.

Johnny Hodges will find a source to produce NAFSR shirts for the Board to wear to meetings.

Joint meeting with Museum Board and Chief

The Boards of NAFSR and the National Museum of FS History met with Chief Tidwell for about 2 hours. Below are some of the Chief's comments.

- Fire funding – We came close to a solution each of the last 2 years. At this time, we don't know what position the new administration will take on this issue. We need a different way to pay for fire suppression and it is still a

top issue with Congress. Our best chance for a legislative solution may be this year.

- The confirmation hearing for the Secretary of Ag may not occur until early March.
- DOI Secretary designee Ryan Zinke is looking at the FS. It feels good to be wanted. The interest in the Forest Service to move to Interior has been around since President Franklin Roosevelt.
- I am optimistic for an appropriation bill, but most likely a Continuing Resolution for the rest of FY 17.
- I expect that Senator Murkowski will continue to pursue an energy bill.
- Forest health – We treated over 5 million acres (3 million acres of hazardous fuels) last year. Each year we make steady progress with over 90% of the projects reducing fire severity, but there is a significant backlog in areas that need restoration.
- We are doing about 220,000 acres per year of mechanical treatment through timber sales and another about 700,000 acres of mechanical treatment for hazardous fuels.
- I am optimistic about new tools to move forward.
- Collaboration is giving us ways to accelerate more work.
- Good Neighbor Authority – 48 agreements last year and a good tool for building trust with partners. As expected with new authorities, there is some resistance within the agency, especially with being able to use some of the project revenues to cover State staffing and not Forest Service staffing. GNA is proving to be very effective in getting more projects implemented, creating more jobs and strengthening trust with the States.
- Using Hazard Fuels funding to cover the cost of timber sales and stewardship contracts may be our best potential for increased work. Our timber sales improve forest health, but also many of the sales reduce hazardous fuels.
- Roads funding – With the low value of some of our timber sales it is a struggle to cover the road costs. We need to find more capacity for road maintenance and to reduce road costs with timber sales and stewardship contracting.
- Last year we offered 3.5 billion bd. ft. but only sold 2.9. We had close to 500 MBF of no-bid sales. Most the problem was road costs and soft markets.

- Perms and trust funds – We are looking to increase the use of these funds to accelerate work. I expect that not all employees will be supportive, but it is essential that we use the available resources to increase the pace and scale of our forest health work. Congress is looking at carryover (prior year) funds and we are increasing our focus to use our annual appropriations each year. We closed FY16 with 98-99% of appropriations spent. We moved \$40 million of perms and trusts funding out of WO to the field for FY17.
- Transferring public lands – National forests and grasslands exist because the public wants them. If the public wants to transfer land, then it could happen. But I continue to hear strong support for keeping our public lands public. One example is the backlash from sportsmen groups and others against a bill introduced by Rep. Chaffetz to sell 3.3 million acres of public lands. The bill was pulled.
- I want the Forest Service to find more ways to work closer with the states and counties to get more work done and address their concerns.
- Research needs to focus on pressing issues of the day and show how our science makes a difference in peoples’ lives. As in the past, Research could be susceptible to budget reductions.
- Due to the extensive drought in California over 100 million trees have died in the National Forests in R-5. We have struggled to find interest in the dead trees, especially with the amount of dead and dying trees on private land. Last year Sierra Pacific Industries indicated to R-5 that they wouldn’t be buying sales for maybe 18 months. They own many of the mills in CA. But things have changed and they have bought several of our sales that have more of the larger diameter trees.
- Even in the Southeast (R-8), no-bid sales are an issue. However, I believe that it is a positive sign that Canadian Companies have purchased and are operating mills in the South.
- New chief of staff at USDA, Heidi Green. She previously worked for Governor Perdue.
- Dr. Clovis, from the Trump campaign, is heading up the beachhead team for USDA.
- Dan Jiron, our Associate Chief is the acting Under Secretary for NRE.
- Doug Crandall, our Director for Legislative Affairs is the acting Director for Congressional Relations at USDA
- New Under Secretary – no announcement yet.

- The Hill asked for briefings on Forest Service backlog and deferred maintenance needs for roads, bridges, dams, etc.
- Our focus is to make sure the administration can trust the FS and we are here to work for them.
- There has been no direction on climate change science. The science hasn't changed and we should always welcome questions about our science. We are in a good spot because our research is focused on understanding how climate is affecting ecosystems, forest and rangeland health. Then applying that science through management to ensure that we will have resilient forests and grasslands. It is too early to know how things are going to work out.
- We want to support membership in professional societies.
- With the increase in the cost of wildfire suppression, today in non-fire programs we have about 40% fewer employees (50% fewer foresters) in the FS than we did in 1998.
- There are 44 million homes in the WUI. 60% of new construction is in WUI.
- We are making good use of the CE authority in the Farm Bill. CE's are a good tool to use for routine work like thinning in Ponderosa pine stands.
- Congressman Westerman's bill will be an opportunity for additional forestry authorities. He will carry the bill in the House again. His bill in the last Congress would have provided more CE's for routine work.
- Today there is support for more active management to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels. To increase the necessary pace and scale of our work, it is essential that we maintain the public trust that has been built through the collaboratives.
- Workforce – There is a hiring freeze in place for 90 days and then OMB/OPM will put out a plan to reduce the federal workforce through attrition. The Forest Service did receive exemptions to hire fire and law enforcement positions and all temporary and seasonal positions.
- As with every transition we need to take the time to brief the new administration.
- Be patient!!