



The Lookout

Newsletter of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees

“Sustaining the Heritage”



March 2017

In this issue we address the threats by some officials to “transfer control of federal lands to the states” with a few articles that reflect the thoughts of NAFSR on the topic. We also present a piece on an innovative program in New Mexico designed to expose young people to forests and forestry. There’s a short report on our annual NAFSR Board meeting with a link to the full minutes.

Darrel Kenops has drafted a paper that addresses NAFSR governance, and he included a brief history of NAFSR highlighting some significant events. We have included a variety of quotes throughout this issue.

A couple of upcoming book releases are featured, including an opportunity to submit an essay on FS management. And an announcement about a new organization of interest to some FS folks.

Finally, a big thank you to Stan Tixier who has tirelessly led the McGuire Award committee for a number of years. Under Stan’s leadership, NAFSR has recognized the good work of many outstanding Forest Service employees throughout the country.

NAFSR is looking for a few folks who are interested in serving as board members. Please let us know if you are interested.

We welcome the notion of spring here in Central Oregon!

Jim Golden
Interim Editor



Photo by Les Joslin

Keep Public Lands in Public Hands!

The following guest editorial was written by NAFSR Chair Jim Caswell and appeared in the Idaho Statesman. Jim is NAFSR President and served as director of the Bureau of Land Management under Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne. He also headed Idaho's Office of Species Conservation under Govs. Kempthorne, Risch and Otter.

America’s national forests, refuges and other public lands are one of the most successful ideas our nation has ever created, and it’s heart-wrenching to see them at the center of a dispute that has spiraled needlessly into violence and the loss of life.

Whether it’s self-styled militants in Oregon or legislators in Boise, there is little sense in painting a target on a resource that has benefited so many for so long.

Together, Americans own 193 million acres of national forests and 245 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These lands have been a vital part of the nation’s fabric for a century, providing sustained yields of timber and valuable minerals, world-class fish and wildlife, vast recreational opportunities and drinking water. (Continued on Page 3)



Stan Tixier Receives John R. McGuire Award Superior Performance Recognition

The John R. McGuire Award is presented to Forest Service employees who take the lead and achieve results in spite of overwhelming obstacles encountered in meeting the challenges of today. Such accomplishments exemplify former Chief's McGuire's observation of the potential challenges facing the Forest Service when he commented: "Perhaps the greatest challenge facing forestry today is the calendar, namely the arrival of the 21st century. My question is will American forestry be ready to meet the 21st century?"

Stan Tixier more than met this challenge during his 14 years as Chairman by his exemplary leadership and accomplishments in leading the John R. McGuire award committee!

The inscription above appears on the beautiful plaque recently awarded to Stan Tixier by NAFSR at the monthly luncheon of the Intermountain Region Old Timers. Jack Troyer presented it on behalf of the Board. Stan richly deserves this recognition after 14 years of dedicated service that ensured the John R. McGuire award always remained a prestigious award given only too well researched and deserving Forest Service employees. Stan also made sure the presentations themselves were something special in an important setting. Congratulations to Stan and thanks for his many years of excellent work.

NAFSR HISTORY: *"More than 10 years ago, some of us in the Washington D.C. area, including retired US Forest Service Chief's, met a few times to discuss the idea of retirees having a more active role in supporting appropriate policies for public lands. Nothing came of it immediately, but it was gestating" said the Association's charter Executive Director, Dick Pfilf.*

"In 2000 many retirees were shocked by the way Forest Service leadership was fired by the Administration and by the glaring political contrivance of the roadless rule. This was the final impetus to organize on a national basis" remembers Association charter Secretary-Treasurer John Combes.

The first organizational meeting was held November 18, 2000, in Washington, D.C. Doug Leisz, Dick Pfilf, George Leonard, Larry Whitfield, John Combes, Al West and John Marker were present. Initial NAFSR membership was 18 dues paying members.

“Public Lands” from P.1: As one who spent 40 years in public land management for federal agencies and the state of Idaho, I’ve seen my share of disputes over public lands and resources. It hasn’t always been pretty, but amid disagreements, there’s always been recognition of how vital public lands are to the American people and especially to the health of many Western economies and communities.

When laws are broken and public lands exploited, local communities suffer most. Westerners know this, which is why collaboration and forging common ground — not breaking the law — are the norm for settling disagreements.

Situations like an armed takeover usually happen when outsiders exploit a situation for self-interest. The consistent attempts in Idaho and other legislatures to seize control of public lands are a perfect example. Public land grab efforts almost never rise up from local communities. They are instead galvanized by partisan politics, mainly at the national level, where the real agenda is wresting public lands from public hands and ultimately privatizing them for nonpublic uses.

As a forest supervisor and director of the BLM during the George W. Bush administration, I know well there are problems with the current public lands system that need fixing. Managing public lands for multiple uses is complicated, and the task is growing more so as America grows and changes.

Given the complexities, it’s difficult to find the right balance. In almost every decision land managers make, someone is displeased.

But the answer is certainly not taking away public lands, as some would have us believe. “Transferring control” of public lands to states will almost surely result in parcels being auctioned off; states simply can’t afford the management costs. Once public lands are privatized, Americans will lose access to them, forever.

Instead of a massive land transfer, we should work for solutions that keep public lands in public hands. Any solution has to start with local communities. Luckily, this is something Idaho knows how to do.

When Idaho developed its own federal rule for managing national forest roadless areas, we reached out to counties and asked them to lead the effort. Working with folks on the ground — hunters, anglers, campers, loggers, foresters and biologists — county commissioners embraced the challenge. In the end, Idaho ended up with a plan that, through hard work and compromise, addressed the needs of everyone involved.

There’s a valuable lesson here. The entire land transfer debate is driven by national politics. Much like the standoff in Oregon, it reeks of outside influence and does not serve the people of Idaho.

Frustration around public lands is real. But that doesn’t make violence the right response or land transfers a realistic solution. The best answer to our problems is to join hands to fix the management, and to keep the truly greedy hands driving this debate off our public lands.

You can find another article by Jim Caswell that was published in “The Hill” [HERE](#). And many of you have already seen Jack Troyer’s guest commentary in the Ogden Standard Examiner but you can also read it [HERE](#).

The Philmont Visiting Forester Program

Help Young People Discover Forests and Forestry!

By Rick Thom

Philmont Scout Ranch in the Cimarron Mountains of Northern New Mexico is the largest outdoor youth camp in the world. Each year over 22,000 young men and women from throughout the U.S. come to Philmont to experience adventure and learn outdoor skills. Thanks to the Philmont Visiting Forester Program, my friend, Greg Hoss, and I have had the pleasure of talking about forests and forestry with many hundreds of young people, their adult leaders, and Philmont staff. A week at Philmont as a visiting forester is an invaluable investment in young people and the future of our profession. I'm confident you will personally gain as much from the experience as you give!

Philmont established its 40-acre Demonstration Forest in 2002, tested the Visiting Forester concept in 2009, and launched the program the following year. Philmont recruits two foresters per week to staff the Demonstration Forest beginning in late June through late August. Philmont looks for individuals who can relate to Scouting and young people and who have an interest in helping them learn about forests, natural resources, and the profession of forestry. Some Visiting Foresters have participated previously at Philmont as Boy Scouts, Venturers, or staff, but this is certainly not a requirement.

Most crews that stop at the Demo Forest are interested in a program. However, this is the crew's choice; the amount of time varies, with most programs lasting from 15 to 40 minutes. Many programs begin with a discussion of the history of the forests at Philmont, including factors such as fire exclusion, livestock grazing, and the insects & diseases that have dramatically changed the forests since the arrival of Europeans and the displacement of Native Americans. We use a 412-year old ponderosa pine cross section from the University of Arizona's Tree Ring Laboratory to illustrate the changes in fire history. This tree recorded fires as burn scars that can be traced to specific rings/years, providing cogent support for our fire history story (frequent fires until the last 150 years, then only two fires, one in 1842, and the last one in 1890. No fires were recorded by the tree from that year until its death in 1996.). This information is crucial to understanding the present forests of Philmont and in many parts of the West.

After this historical background, we customize the program to the interests of the crew. Sometimes we talk about forests in their home state. We point out that the shelter under which they sit was built from logs harvested in this forest. We talk about Philmont's forest management plan, its affiliation with the American Tree Farm program, and its certification by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. If the crew's itinerary includes a hike through Ponil Burn of 2002, we talk about why this type of large, intense wildfire is becoming common in the West. We help them identify tree species and talk about the different life zones so they can appreciate how elevation and aspect relate to the vegetation they see. Participants are also interested to learn about the different silvicultural treatments showcased in the Demo forest. If a crew has time, we show them how to use an increment borer, giving them hands-on experience in aging a tree and interpreting the annual growth ring patterns. Crews love this activity.

NAFSR HISTORY: "...to establish a non-partisan, professional, science-based Association with members consisting of US Forest Service retirees, associates and sustaining members with germane training and experience..."

Greg Hoss and I, both retired from the Missouri Department of Conservation, have served for several years at Philmont. As Visiting Foresters we are attached to the seasonal staff at Hunting Lodge. Philmont provides us with comfortable platform tents and we share meals and routine chores with the staff. It is a pleasure to work with these conscientious young adults who are typically 18-25 years old. Our typical day starts about 5:30 with a quick breakfast, packing a lunch, and a half-mile hike to the covered pavilion, which is next to the Demo Forest. We often leave Hunting Lodge before the staff stirs so we can ready our station for early trekkers between 7:30 and 8:00. On some days we wait a while for business, using this time to set up our teaching props and to become better acquainted with the plants, birds, and other natural features nearby. From 9:00-3:00 we expect to be busy giving programs to crews. We close shop around 5:00 and hike back to Hunting Lodge.

Philmont provides very good background material for Visiting Foresters before they arrive, including an operations handbook and a staff guidebook. At the Demo Forest pavilion there is a wide range of publications covering forestry, plant ID, wildlife, etc. and all the standard tools you need for tree/forest measurement. When you first arrive at Philmont base camp around noon on Saturday, Philmont staff provides a first-class orientation. All your lodging and food is provided during your week at the ranch. You provide your own personal gear, including a sleeping bag.

Are you interested in being a visiting forester at Philmont? Several weeks in 2017 still have openings and we are glad to receive applications for 2018. The co-leaders of the Visiting Forester program are Mary Stuever, Chama District Forester for New Mexico State Forestry, and Mark Anderson, Philmont Director of Program. For more background and history of the Visiting Foresters program see Mary's Forester's Log: <http://www.foresterslog.com/Home/mary-s-links/swsaf/philmont-visiting-forester-program>.

For additional information and an application please contact Mary or Mark:

- Mary Stuever, mary.stuever@state.nm.us, by phone at 575-588-7831 (office) or 575-756-4406 (cell); or
- Mark Anderson, mark.anderson@scouting.org, by phone at 575-376-2281



Greg Hoss talks with a crew in the Demonstration Forest pavilion about the history of the forests at Philmont. The wooden shelter is made from logs harvested in the nearby forest (left). Greg helps a crew member examine an increment core to determine the age of a ponderosa pine (right).

NAFSR Board Meeting February 13th and 14th



Back Row: Marlin Johnson, Jane Kollmeyer, Rich Guldin, Johnny Hodges, Hank Kashdan, Jim Golden, Pete Griffin, Mike Rogers, Darrel Kenops, Rich Stem.
Seated: Tom Thompson, Jim Caswell, Corbin Newman, Larry Payne.

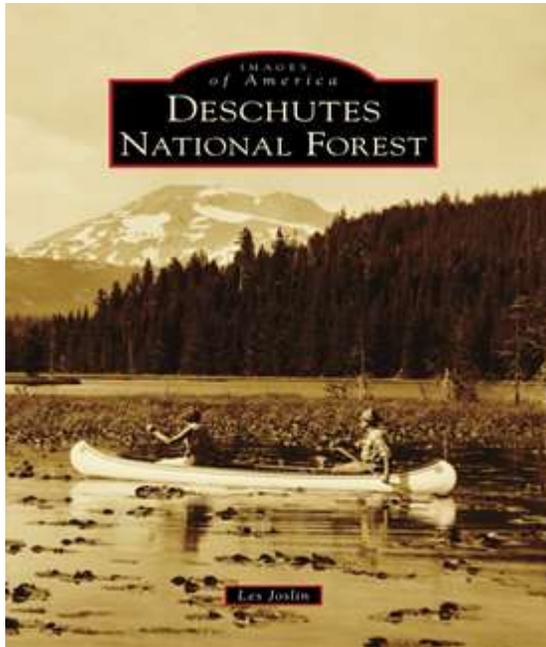
The Board of Directors for the National Association of Forest Service Retirees met in Las Vegas in February to review our current work plan and to move forward on developing priorities for the coming years. Predictably, there was lots of discussion about the new Trump administration and how leadership and policy changes may affect the Forest Service. There has not yet been much interaction between the Trump transition team and the FS, so it is safe to say that the FS is not “in the crosshairs” for the moment. It is expected that the new Secretary of Agriculture (Governor Perdue of Georgia has been nominated) will be confirmed sometime in March. Key leadership appointments will then follow and the FS will become fully “engaged”. The many rumors afloat about who might be the new Chief and Undersecretary are mere speculation until that time.

There was a great deal of discussion around the threatened state takeover of federal lands. While NAFSR has not yet developed a formal position paper on the topic, if the threat becomes more imminent, we will make that happen. See the guest editorials by Chair Caswell and Jack Troyer elsewhere in this issue.

The work plan for 2017 will focus on some routine operational tasks such as website maintenance, succession management, developing a MOU with the FS, and improving our communications. We will forge ahead to create a new position paper on National Forest restoration. We will continue to work for fire funding reform as our top legislative priority. And with the continuing turnover of leadership and board positions, we must focus on recruiting new members for the Board of Directors.

The complete notes from the meeting are available on our website [HERE](#).

NAFSR HISTORY: *In NAFSR's early years, retired Forest Service Chief John R. McGuire saw us serving as both critic and supporter of the "outfit". He strongly encouraged NAFSR to be non-partisan, active and engaged. "Be independent and stay away from litigation".*



On the cover of Les Joslin's new book, early recreationists on the Deschutes National Forest canoe on Mud Lake (renamed Hosmer Lake in 1962) and admire the view of South Sister.

Images of America: Deschutes National Forest

By Les Joslin

"I saw a need to and an opportunity to tell the story of the Deschutes National Forest in a way readily available to and appreciated by the citizen-owners of the last national forest on which I served, and I used that opportunity to fill that need. As a result, Arcadia Publishing of Charleston, South Carolina, will publish—on March 27, 2017—*Images of America: Deschutes National Forest* in its popular Images of America show-and-tell series which celebrates local history nationwide."

"This effort to share at least the basics of the complex story of the Deschutes National Forest produced ten thematic chapters of about 18,000 words and more than 200 photographs presented within the 128 pages Arcadia Publishing allots each book in this long-established and successful series. This article announces the book. I leave reviewing it to others."

The book will be available after March 27 at bookstores and Central Oregon museum shops, at Deschutes National Forest sales outlets, from Arcadia Publishing online at www.arcadiapublishing.com or by toll-free phone at 1-888-313-2665, and online from Amazon.com and other online booksellers.

Call for Contributions of Essays

"193 Million Acres: Toward a more healthy and resilient US Forest Service"

A collection of essays outlining constructive approaches for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency.

Essays by a wide range of authors

Editor: Steve Wilent

Editor, The Forestry Source

The Society of American Foresters

503-622-3033 (home office in Oregon)

wilents@safnet.org

Publisher: The Society of American Foresters

Release Date: Late 2018 (projected)

This book will examine the state of the agency from a variety of viewpoints and propose solutions that would address challenges the agency faces. Overall, the book will look at the internal policies and management strategies of the agency itself, including its National Forest planning regulations, as well as the role of Congress and the Executive branch, existing federal laws, legal challenges to resource management, economic opportunities and challenges within and outside of the agency, political support for the agency, the need to adapt forest management as the climate changes, and so on. The purpose of the book is not to criticize the agency, but to offer concrete proposals for how, ultimately, the agency's operations might be made more efficient and effective and its land-management activities maintained, expanded, and improved. In short, the objective of the book is to examine paths toward a more healthy and resilient US Forest Service.

Each author or group of coauthors would offer concrete — and plausible — proposals for improving and modernizing the agency and, ultimately, its management of National Forest System lands and resources.

**For more info, and how to submit proposals,
Click [HERE](#).**

NAFSR SAYS WELCOME!

The newly formed U.S. HOTSHOTS ASSOCIATION (USHA) is an organization created with a specific mission: to support, promote, and preserve Hotshot Crews and Hotshot Crewmembers, both current and former. Dedicated to preserving the rich history of the US Hotshot program, committed to mentorship, and intended to support both special and dire needs, the USHA has also formed with an intent to directly influence innovation and advancement across the pillars of Wildland Fire: Safety, Suppression, and Management. Originally conceptualized by a group of former Superintendents with deep roots in making the nationwide Hotshot program what it is today, the U.S. HOTSHOTS ASSOCIATION is open for membership: current and former Hotshots, Fire Managers (both former Hotshots and otherwise), Friends and Family, Media, inquisitive laypersons — in short, any individual interested in learning, promoting, and supporting Hotshots through the stated Mission of the USHA and its elected Board Members.



CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT USHA!



NAFSR HISTORY: *In 2006 NAFSR took a position educating lawmakers and opposing the Administration proposal HR 517 to sell federal public lands to provide revenues for reimbursing counties for the lack of in lieu tax payment. This still resonates today as we track comments on proposals to transfer Federal, public natural resource lands to States for a variety of reasons.*

**FOREST SERVICE REUNION SEPTEMBER 24-28 2018
In BEAUTIFUL ASHVILLE NORTH CAROLINA**



**Don't forget to mark your calendar! Visit the FS Reunion website [HERE](#).
Registration for the "Reunion at the Cradle" will open on March 15, 2017.
You can get registration information by clicking [HERE](#).**

NAFSR HISTORY: *When we were asked our advice on filling the US Forest Service Chief position. We underscored we do not make recommendations on individuals, but we provided important criteria in selecting a Chief. NAFSR criteria provided were: 1) substantial period of time in the USFS and field experience; 2) someone well aware of USFS role in USDA; 3) have a professional background related to primary US Forest Service missions.*



The Lookout is the newsletter of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees. It is produced by Jim Golden, acting temporary interim editor on detail. Contact us at nafsr2000@gmail.com