



2024 NAFSR Accomplishment Report

I would like to thank the Board and membership support for a productive 2024. Among our many accomplishments, we welcomed a new Vice-Chair, and five new Board members.

A sincere thank you to all who have served on our Board of Directors and to Jamie Connell for being our Vice Chair for the past two years. Becki Heath will officially become our new Vice Chair in January 2025. Our Board members are volunteers who cumulatively contribute many hundreds of hours to the success of your organization.

We bid adieu to veteran Board members Ranotta McNair, Rich Stem, Sharon Friedman, Greg Griffith, Mike Rogers and Steve Eubanks who stepped down in 2024. We thank them all for their invaluable contributions to the success of our organization. NAFSR filled this veteran void by welcoming four new Board members: Cheryl Probert, Earl Stewart, Jerry Perez, Debbie Hollen, and Frank Beum. They are all recent retirees (compared to the rest of us) and bring that valuable perspective and viewpoint to NAFSR leadership.

NAFSR continues to be a respected voice by Congress and the media. In 2024, we were contacted by several media outlets for our comments and thoughts on various natural resource and federal employment related matters including: *NPR*, *The Washington Post*, *The Hill*, *Politico*, *E&E News*, and several more regional newspapers. A big shout out to Doug Crandall for his help and advice (often on tight media deadlines) responding to these inquiries. It clearly helps with our organization's visibility.

We again had multiple coordination contacts with the Forest Service headquarters office in 2024. Chief Moore attended a portion of our annual NAFSR February Board meeting in Denver and has agreed to do so again in 2025. We have had numerous conversations and other communications with Forest Service leadership including the Chief's office, External Affairs, and all the Deputy Chiefs, including research!

Doug Crandall continued doing exceptional work for NAFSR as our Congressional Liaison. Doug's contacts on Capitol Hill and with a variety of NGOs contributed immensely to the

advocacy portion of our mission. Doug continues to play a key role as a primary reviewer of NAFSR media statements and letters to various policy makers. We had no congressional testimony in 2024 but expect that to pick up in 2025 with the new administration and congress.

In January, NAFSR held its first-ever **membership drive**. We recruited over 100 new members, boosting our membership to 800 members! Kudos to Nora and others who helped make this initiative such a success.

On the budget front, thanks to your membership and donations we finished slightly in the black in 2024. We also had less congressional hearing related travel expenses in 2024. We expect this to pick up in 2025. A summary of our 2024 and Board proposed 2025 budget can be found in the November 12, 2024, meeting minutes on our website. We are grateful to Johnny and Ellen Hodges for the excellent job they continue to do in managing our finances.

In 2024, Johnny pushed out 32 official announcements, notices, and updates of NAFSR work accomplishments to the Board and membership. Bill Disbrow continues to do a solid job maintaining our website.

American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP): Kevin Martin represented NAFSR with AWCP again this year. The 2024 spring meeting was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan in conjunction with the 89th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. Kevin participated and his notes were posted on the NAFSR website.

For those who may not be familiar, AWCP is a coalition of 52 organizations, including NAFSR that represent the interests of America's millions of hunter conservationists, professional wildlife and natural resource managers, outdoor recreation users, conservation educators, and wildlife scientists. Individual organizations each have their areas of interest, but collectively all are dedicated to ensuring the vitality of our wildlife resources, providing sustainable public use and enjoyment of those resources under science-based management of the state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, in cooperation with habitat and land management by federal, state, county, and local governments. Kevin has done an excellent job as NAFSR's representative. The many position letters AWCP has sent to Congress, several of which NAFSR has signed on to, are posted on their website. Letters signed by NAFSR are also posted on our website.

In 2024, AWCP updated our Wildlife For the 21st Century, Volume VII (W21). This comprehensive publication focuses on solutions to conserve wildlife and their habitats across the nation, bolstering public access, and protecting our outdoor traditions. The recommendations in W-21 will aid policymakers in the incoming Administration and the next Congress in making decisions on sporting-conservation issues and practices that are vital to current and future generations of sportsmen and sportswomen and other conservationists. NAFSR is a signatory to this document which can be found on both the AWCP and NAFSR websites.

Climate Committee: The NAFSR Board of Directors sent to USDA Undersecretary Homer Wilkes a Forest Carbon position statement and supporting science statement, both drafted by the Climate Committee and approved at the February 2024 Board meeting. Climate Committee members participated in the Mature and Old Growth Science Summit in March, co-sponsored by the Society of American Foresters and the Forest Service. A report summarizing the main

messages heard at the summit was issued by SAF in October 2024 and shared with NAFSR members. It is also posted on our website.

The Climate Committee tracked the development of the *Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MMRV)* Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Forest Service and seven partner organizations. The objective of the MOA is to work together to create a Forest Service data platform that serves as the primary source of information about forest carbon stocks and flows across all U.S. forestland, harvested wood products, and end-use life cycle assessments.

Rich Guldin, current Chair of the Climate Committee, also continues to serve as NAFSR's representative to the Forest Climate Working Group. In July, he accepted an invitation from American Forests to chair the FCWG's Knowledge Management committee, whose objective is to provide scientific support for FCWG position statements. Several other NAFSR members are also members of that committee.

Fire Committee: Compared to 2023, this was a quieter year for the Fire Committee. In February the committee coordinated on two NAFSR Op-ed's regarding the arrest of Burn Boss Rick Snodgrass on the Malheur NF. They wrote a personal letter of support to Rick that was signed by all members of the committee. During this same period, they also drafted NAFSR's letter to Congress supporting augmentation of firefighter pay.

Last summer, committee members partnered with the National Smokejumper Association and Region 1 leadership in working with the WO in having the USFS Honor Guard attend the 75th Anniversary of Mann Gulch in Helena, MT.

In September, Mike Dudley and Steve Ellis participated in a presentation of "Socializing Outcome and Performance Metrics" presented by the Deputy Chief of Research and Brian Ferebee Chief Executive of Intergovernmental Relations for the USFS.

In November the fire committee had a meeting with Deputy Chief SP&T Forestry John Crockett and ADC Jeff Marsolais. Several issues were discussed that are current to the agency including the new number of agency administrators. The committee will be presenting a white paper on how to increase opportunities to train new agency administrators in fire management.

The fire committee also prepared the wildfire portion of NAFSR's transition letter to the incoming administration. The focus was supporting and promoting maintaining and implementing a *balanced* wildland fire management program, including the use of "managed fire". The committee's point being that all wildland fires receive an appropriate level of management actions, and all are actually "managed fires." Balanced means consistent with the current framework of federal wildfire management policy; strategic guidance that has been developed in consultation with partners, stakeholders, and communities; and land and resource management objectives for affected lands. Thank you, Mike Dudley, for your leadership as committee chair.

Restoration Committee: In 2024, the NAFSR Restoration Committee was focused on responding to the Forest Service's Mature and Old Growth policy efforts. The Restoration Committee developed comments for NAFSR to respond to the initial public scoping period. In addition, the Committee reviewed the draft Old Growth Nationwide EIS and submitted comments during the official comment period. Finally, NAFSR members, including restoration committee members, attended and participated in the Society of American Foresters Mature and Old Growth Summit in Washington, DC.

Recreation Committee: The recreation committee-maintained contact with Forest Service national recreation staff and leadership. They did a great job of monitoring the progress of the Forest Service's effort to update the recreation strategy and action plan. The committee tracked various legislative proposals including the *Explore Act* (Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act). The *Explore Act* has passed the House and Senate. It is awaiting the President's signature.

Recognitions Committee: NAFSR has two major awards with the details for consideration and nominations described on the NAFSR website. Tim DeCoster is the new Chair of our Recognitions Committee. There were no nominations received for the John R. McGuire award this year. The committee has begun working with Lisa Tate on possible nominations for the Leisz Leadership Award. This is a joint Award with the National Museum of Forest Service History and will be presented at the 2025 Reunion in Missoula.

Other Notable Achievements from 2024 include:

- NAFSR prepared a joint letter with the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) in response to mature and old-growth forests team initiative.
- NAFSR was extensively involved in planning and carrying out the 2024 Andrus Center Student Congress in Las Vegas. Special thanks to Ranotta McNair for her leadership role in this successful event.

Thank you all again for your continued commitment to being dues paying members, and for your donations. These are the sole sources of funding for our impactful advocacy and engagement so your membership matters. With your help, we will continue to influence policy makers, decision makers, and interested publics in recognizing the valuable perspective we bring to the table.

I encourage all of you to reach out to your networks and encourage agency retirees to join our organization. There will likely be some critical agency issues on our plate in 2025, thus no lack of opportunities for engagement by our members!

Steve Ellis, Chair
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
December 19, 2024