

Final Meeting Notes
NAFSR Board of Directors Meeting
Phoenix, AZ
February 12 - 13, 2019

Attendees – Jim Caswell (Chair), Larry Payne (Vice Chair), Rich Stem (R-1), Tom Thompson (R-2), Greg Griffith (R-3), Jack Troyer (R-4), Mike Rogers (R-5 south), Ranotta McNair (R-6), Don Howlett (R-9), Pete Griffin (R-10), Rich Guldin (Research), Bill Timko (National), Hank Kashdan (National), Jane Kollmeyer (National), Dale Robertson (Chief Emeritus), Dale Bosworth (Chief Emeritus), Al West (Fire Committee Chair), Bill Disbrow (Webmaster), and Johnny Hodges (Secretary).

Others in attendance – Ed Shepard, President, and Beau McClure, VP of Operations from the Public Lands Foundation; Terry Baker, CEO of the Society of American Foresters; Vicki Christiansen, Chief of the USFS (Wednesday afternoon); and NAFSR members Lynn Sprague and Ted Stubblefield.

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks, Agenda Review, Bin Items – Jim Caswell

Jim opened the meeting with self-introductions, including our newest Board Members Greg Griffith and Don Howlett, as well as several guests.

Jim complimented the Board on the large number of items we accomplished this past year. Every item on our Program of Work was addressed.

Jim quickly reviewed the agenda indicating it is purposely loose so we can address other emerging issues. The Chief will be with us Wednesday afternoon.

Jim asked for questions and additional items from the attendees. Items added to the Bin - Capacity Analysis, attendance at the AWCP meeting at the North American Wildlife Conference, western invasive species legislation, infrastructure, newsletter and the McGuire award.

Secretary/Treasurer Report - Johnny Hodges

Johnny Hodges passed out the NAFSR Financial Summary 2015-2018 and the Membership Summary.

Our ending balance on December 31, 2018 was \$33,211. During 2018, our income was \$17,911 and expenses were \$19,257 for a net decrease of \$1,563. We had a couple of large “one-time” expenses in supporting the FS National Reunion and a trip for several board members to meet with Secretary Perdue in Washington, DC.

Our membership at the end of 2018 is 686. We gained 75 new members in 2018, and 17 who resigned, didn’t renew their annual dues, or were deceased. We have 169 “Golden” members

who are over 80 years old. They don't pay dues, but some do make donations. Of the 686 current members, we have 102 Lifetime Members (15 percent).

This is our largest increase in membership in the past few years. We gained about 25 new members at the National Reunion. As of mid-February, we are close to reaching 700 members. In 2018 we saw the fewest number of members resigning in at least the last 6 years.

Membership Survey – Johnny Hodges

Johnny reviewed the results of our Membership Survey which we completed in October 2018 (the results of the survey are posted on our website). We had 314 members participate in the survey.

Members were generally very positive in how NAFSR is operating. On the question of the use of Twitter, very few members use Twitter and most members are not interested in learning to use Twitter.

Question 12 gave members a chance to comment or offer suggestions about NAFSR. A few highlights –

Issue – Too much emphasis on fire and vegetation management and ignoring other resource areas in the FS.

Response – The Board will always be limited in how many issues we can address (we are all volunteers). Some examples of our current focus are EADM (Environmental Analysis and Decision Making), changes in the ESA (Endangered Species Act) and a study on the capacity of the FS. You can find the documents on current issues posted on our website.

Issue – NAFSR takes positions on issues that I don't agree with.

Response – NAFSR members have a wide diversity of opinions on many issues, as does the Board of Directors. Your Board will always try to represent our members to the best of their ability.

Issue – Whether or not to publish a newsletter.

Response – The survey response to this question was almost evenly split. The Board decided not to publish a newsletter. We will publish an annual report each year summarizing issues and accomplishments.

Website – Bill Disbrow

Bill provided an excellent handout with statistics related to our website. The total number of visitors to the website in 2018 was 32,967, an increase of 6,849 over 2017. Our total page views in 2018 were 64,031, an increase of 12,672 over 2017.

Our survey generated very positive responses related to the website.

Correspondence related to Advocacy on the right side of the home page is limited to documents produced in the last 12 months. We have archived older documents under “Advocacy Archive” on the top line of our home page sorted by year.

2018 Activities and Accomplishments – Jim Caswell and Larry Payne

Jim and Larry highlighted our activities and accomplishments during 2018.

- Refocused on our main purpose as an advocacy group.
- Redesigned our Plan of Work with a lead assigned to each issue. The lead will recruit additional help if needed.
- Fire Funding was a major issue in 2018. We identified key people to work on this issue and it resulted in success.
- Added new board members – Greg Griffith from R-3 and Don Howlett from R-9, as well as two Chiefs Emeritus – Mike Dombeck and Tom Tidwell.
- Reached out to the Department of Agriculture to join the task force on rural prosperity - nothing has yet happened with the task force.
- Sent a letter to Secretary Perdue on criteria for selection of the new Chief.
- Sent letters to Secretary Perdue and Chief Tooke on Job Corp closures.
- Phil Aune gave a talk to Back Country Horsemen at their national meeting.
- Conducted a Membership Survey in October.
- Wrote a letter of support for the nomination of Jim Hubbard as Under Secretary.
- Visited with Senator Daines (MT) regarding confirmation hearings on Jim Hubbard.
- We produced a set of questions for Jim Hubbard’s nomination as Under Secretary and gave them to the appropriate senators. Also developed questions for the nomination hearing of the Chairman of the Council of Environmental Quality.
- At the FS National Reunion, we Joined with the National Museum of Forest Service History to present the first “Doug Leisz Leadership Award”.
- Passage of the Farm Bill required many calls and time-consuming effort.
- EADM (Environmental Analysis Decision Making) – Board members attended 7 of 9 regional meetings around the country. We continue to be involved in the on-going process.
- Supported FLTFA authorization.
- Anne Zimmermann attended the North American Wildlife Meeting in Roanoke, VA on behalf of the Board and provided a written report.
- At his request, several Board members met with Secretary Perdue in April in Washington, DC to discuss current issues.
- In response to Secretary Perdue, we produced the 44-page report, “Sustaining the Forest Service” dated September 12, 2018. The report focuses on four major topics – 1) CEQ Regulations reform (Ranotta McNair – lead), 2) EADM Process /NEPA regulation

reform (Rich Stem - lead), 3) ESA Reform (Jack Troyer – lead) and 4) Forest Service Culture.

- Jack Troyer authored a commentary on ESA reform which was published in the January 2019 issue of the Journal of Forestry.
- Developed several support letters including for the re-authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Working on a new retiree outreach initiative. Leads are Tom Thompson and Jack Troyer.
- Jim Caswell and Sam Forster attended the Public Lands Foundation’s Student Congress in August. NAFSR will fully participate in the 2020 Student Congress. Jim has talked to the Chief about this topic on three different occasions.
- Board members met with Secretary Perdue at the FS Reunion in Asheville, NC in September.
- Wrote a “Thank You Letter” to Congressman Westerman, the only Congressional Representative that is a Forester, for his excellent Op Ed on the Budget Process.
- Larry Payne really likes the Business Model we adopted at the last Business Meeting. Operating without an Executive Director and assigning a Board Member to each task. That Board Member can then pull together membership retirees to work on the task.

Good Samaritan Fund – Al West and Larry Payne

A number of employees and retirees lost their homes in the recent California wildfires. The Smokejumpers Association asked if NAFSR would help affected families. The Board agreed we need to recognize these people. Providing financial support is outside of our charter and bylaws and we do not have the resources to collect and disburse funds. We decided to post a list of charities on our website where our members could make donations directly. We will write a letter of support from NAFSR and send to each of the retiree organizations. We will fully support and help highlight their charitable efforts.

Outreach to New Retirees – Tom Thompson and Jack Troyer

At the FS Reunion in Asheville, there was considerable discussion during the Regional Association meeting about connecting with new retirees. New retirees are not getting the word about our retiree associations or who to contact or how to join. Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) is not providing information to new retirees in their retirement packages. The Rocky Mountaineers can get a listing of pending retirees from ASC. Other regional retiree groups should be able to do the same and then send out the information inviting new retirees to stay active.

Succession Plan – Jim Caswell and Larry Payne

Board members were given a copy of the Succession Plan developed by Jim Caswell and Jane Kollmeyer in April 2017. Johnny revised sections of the plan to bring it up to date.

If anyone plans to leave the Board, Jim and Larry want to know in advance. The departing Board member needs to recruit a replacement before leaving. We are continually striving for diverse Board members not only in gender and ethnic diversity, but also diversity of thought.

Term limits described in the Succession Plan are not hard and fast. We do need some flexibility. We agreed that the plan is a part of our bylaws.

Public Lands Foundation Update – Ed Shepard

The PLF has about 600 members. They also struggle with recruitment of new members and their numbers are down over the past few years.

Ed thanked us for the partnership that has developed between PLF and NAFSR. PLF has signed on to most of the same support letters NAFSR has endorsed.

They held their 2018 annual meeting in Billings, MT in Sept. with 70 attendees. The theme was “access”. Their 2019 annual meeting is in Reno in September. The theme will probably be “wild horses and burros”.

Some of their advocacy issues - wild horses and burros, fire management, LWCF, reorganization of the Department Interior proposed by Zinke, the move of some portions of their Washington Office to the West.

PLF organizes the Student Congress which has run every other year since 2010. They recruit nationally for 25 students. The cost is \$2,000 per student, for a total of \$50,000. The Congress takes issues the BLM is grappling with and develops a position paper which BLM may adopt. They are interested in NAFSR helping with the Student Congress.

PLF is involved with the “Pathways to the Future” which provides new employee orientation and interviews between retirees and new employees.

They award two \$5,000 scholarships each year for upper level students.

Review 2018 Plan of Work

Strategic

1. Keeping public lands public – Jack Troyer - This will be a continuing issue.
2. Fire funding – Bill Timko – DONE. This issue will need continued monitoring.
3. Forest Policy and Process (EADM) – Rich Stem - This will be a continuing issue.
4. Transition of Under Secretary – DONE
5. Capacity Study – Tom Thompson and Rich Stem – This will be a continuing issue.
6. Farm Bill – Larry Payne, Rich Stem, Ranotta McNair, Bill Timko – DONE
7. Emerging Issues – Jim Caswell and Larry Payne - Ongoing

8. Job Corp support for non-closure – Tom Thompson – Tom indicated the letter we wrote in support of continuing USFS Centers helped and the issue seems to have been resolved for now.

Operations –

1. Facebook – Ranotta McNair – Decision is to drop the idea of a Facebook page for NAFSR.
2. Twitter – Bill Disbrow, Johnny Hodges – Little support for Twitter from our members. Decision is to drop.
3. National Reunion – Mac Gramley - The 2018 reunion is complete. Preparation for the 2021 reunion in South Lake Tahoe is ongoing. Phil Aune is a possible liaison with planning committee.
4. MOU with FS – Jim Caswell – No interest from the Chief in an MOU. Decision is to drop for now.
5. Records management – Darrel Kenops, Johnny Hodges – Darrel is working with the FS Museum on storing historical records. Johnny is working on current records and storing them on Dropbox.
6. Executive Director Search – The Board decided not to fill the Executive Director position at this time.
7. Newsletter – Decision not to publish a newsletter, but we will publish an Annual Report for our members.

Forest Management Executive Order and 2021 Budget Strategy – Bill Timko and others

Executive Order on Promoting Active Management of America's Forests, Rangelands, and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk.

Additional funding is really the critical element to execute the order. Dale Robertson pointed out that without increased funding for the USFS all of the Executive Orders in the world will not improve conditions on the ground. We are advocates for the agency and we need to clearly make the case for increased funding and capacity. Capacity needs to include other means of getting work done.

Jim pointed out that the FY 20 Budget is essentially already formatted. Dale Robertson stated what is needed for the two Secretaries meet with the President (without OMB) and openly present and outline the problem and the need for increased budgets and capacity.

Keep an ear to the ground regarding the 2020 Budget. Jack Troyer mentioned Michael Rains paper/letter where he added up the staggering costs associated with the California wildfires and the cost of active forest management.

The EO and the 2020 Budget Initiative are linked. Jim feels we have about 6 months to develop a polished presentation. The President will announce his proposed 2020 Budget on March 11. We need to find out what is in his proposal and advocate with members of Congress for support of the items that we support.

Capacity/Culture Project Status – Jim Caswell

Jim gave a quick overview of the Capacity Study that is underway. The plan is to talk to 3 or 4 people at the ground level in each region. Questions are developed for the interviews and the interviews are continuing.

Larry is working with Albuquerque Service Center for FTE's/skill levels data. The analysis is completed, but it has not been released by the WO. We would like to have all data in by March 5 from our group. This study hopefully will give us both quantitative and qualitative data on the losses in non-fire Work Force Capacity the USFS has experienced.

Environmental Analysis Decision Making – Rich Stem

The overall goal is to become more efficient at NEPA. The Agency is focusing on three primary areas - policy, business practices, and field support.

The latest items are:

- NEPA reform through regulation change
- 3 new NEPA training classes
- 40 sessions produced and more planned for FY19
- Withdrawal of regional & forest level supplements
- Regional cadres continue to develop and implement efficiencies
- Reduce the number of EIS with authority moved from Forests to Regions
- Expansion in CE categories.

Focus areas for FY 19 include:

- A pool for contracting NEPA
- Learning workshops for field personnel
- Better ways to conduct data analytics to reduce cost and time to complete NEPA
- Development and delivery of advanced effects for ESA training

New NEPA Regulations should be out for comment and review by mid-April. CEQ regs will marry up with NEPA changes, but it is still unknown what the CEQ changes will be.

The FS is focusing on policy and field support with lots of training. There are Regional EADM cadre (20 people per region) working on new strategies

Endangered Species Act – Jack Troyer

Changes to ESA final regulations were scheduled for public comment in January but were delayed by the shutdown. Secretary Perdue told us at our meeting in Asheville that he planned to talk to the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce about proposed changes, but we do not know if that has happened. Nothing more we can do at this time.

USDI Secretary Confirmation

We will put together a set of questions for the Interior Secretary like we did for the Under Secretary of Agriculture and Chairman of CEQ.

Reforestation Backlog

Rich Stem and Jim Golden discussed the on-going issue of reforestation. Jim went through the history of what NAFSR attempted in the past.

Rich shared information on Dave Cleaves who is working on a study about the reforestation backlog. Dave is working with the Forest Climate Working Group which is made up from a list of many critical and important members. They estimate the current backlog is 1.25 million acres, but many think it is probably much higher. The number of acres needing reforestation is growing while reforestation funding has been declining since 1994. They are using carbon sequestration to highlight the impacts created by the lack of reforestation. Lands that were once forested are now carbon emitters rather than carbon sinks.

The Board decided that NAFSR would support the efforts of the Forest Climate Working Group on this important issue. We also decided that it was critical for the Natural Resources Directorship in D.C. to be aware of the work of this Group.

Rich Guldin, Jim Golden, and Bill Timko will be the leads to determine how NAFSR can help with this effort. In our discussion with Chief Christiansen, she said this issue is critical and is something to be addressed.

February 13, 2019 – Day Two

2019 Plan of Work

Strategic

1. Keeping public lands public – Jack Troyer will continue monitoring.
2. EADM and NEPA regulation comments - Rich Stem (lead)
3. Capacity Study – Steering Committee of Jim Caswell, Larry Payne, Pete Griffin, Tom Thompson, Susan Giannetino, Rich Stem and Ranotta McNair
4. Emerging Issues – Jim Caswell, Larry Payne (leads)
5. EO and 2021 Budget – Hank Kashdan (lead), Dale Robertson
6. ESA and CEQ comments – Jack Troyer, Ranotta McNair, Bill Timko
7. Secretary of Interior confirmation hearing questions – Jim Caswell, Larry Payne
8. Reforestation – Jim Golden, Rich Guldin, Bill Timko - Join with the Forest Climate working group.

2019 Operations

1. National Reunion 2021 – Phil Aune
2. Records Management – Darrel Kenops and Johnny Hodges
3. Accomplishment Report – Jim Caswell, Larry Payne, Johnny Hodges – Our target audience is NAFSR members and all regional associations.

SAF Update and Potential Partnership Discussion - Terry Baker, CEO

Terry Baker is the CEO of the Society of American Foresters. He has been on the job for less than a year. He came to SAF from the USFS.

There are 35-40,000 foresters across the country. SAF membership is under 11,000. The staffing of the national headquarters is down from 18 to 11 personnel. The SAF headquarters building is up for sale. SAF is undergoing an analysis of their operations. There are numerous organizations involved in forestry/resource management issues with lots of overlap and SAF is searching for their best niche.

SAF has established five pillars or goals to emphasize –

- Establish financial security
- Grow membership and diversity
- Increase value to members
- Elevate professional status of forestry
- Sound forest science and policy

How SAF and NAFSR Might Work Together

- Networking with each other.
- What's agreed to in the Beltway and what happens on the ground is not the same.
- Opportunity to engage with local line officers – lack of knowledge among current line officers.
- Is there overlap between NAFSR and SAF where we can work together?
- Engagement at national level or regional/local level? NAFSR deals primarily with national issues.
- Current issues we could work on together – oversight of fire funding, implementation of EADM, reforestation, policy papers on various issues
- Don Howlett and John Barnwell can be points of contact between NAFSR and SAF. Don is on the Boards of both organizations.

2019 Conference Calls

May 9

August 8

November 7

BOD meeting February 4/5, 2020

Review of Bin Items

- Capacity Analysis – Ranotta McNair suggested that when we write the final report, we tailor it to Secretary Perdue, knowing that he relates to stories. We want to summarize the results into a few findings/recommendations. Rich Stem mentioned that Secretary Perdue has met with timber industry personnel. The timber industry associations have told the Secretary that the USFS is well below capacity to meet resource management needs. We need to emphasize this.
- American Wildlife Conservation Partnership (AWCP) attendance on March 3 in Denver. Tom Thompson will find someone to represent us.
- Infrastructure – Bill Timko – Doug Crandall thinks this will be a big-ticket item on the administration's agenda this year and may be a budgetary focus for the FS. NAFSR should support this initiative if one develops. This could help address the \$5.2 billion deferred maintenance backlog Forests have been carrying for years.
- Congressmen Westerman – Invasives - Westerman is very concerned about the explosive invasion of non-native vegetation. He wants exemption from doing EA's to remove exotic species so when encountered they can be immediately eliminated. We need to keep an eye on this issue and help guide legislation if needed. Rich Guldin will monitor.
- McGuire Award - Nothing is happening. Al West will call Phil Aune and discuss. Regional Reps need to be feeding candidates to the Awards Committee for consideration.
- Fire Committee - Committee Meeting scheduled for this spring in Sacramento with the Washington Office.

Regional Reports

- Rich Guldin (Research) – Numerous personnel changes, moving research station from PA to WI.
- Mike Rogers (R-5) – Gearing up for 2021 Reunion. Most retiree groups in CA are Forest related and don't talk to each. Hopefully the reunion will bring them together. Randy Moore doing good at updating retirees.
- Jack Troyer (R-4) – Pole Creek fire escape was a large event – state prescribed fire. Not too much negative response from retirees or outside groups. Jack appreciates how Region 4 invites him to fire briefings to keep him in the loop.

- Greg Griffith (R-3) – No update. Larry asked for him to meet with RF.
- Tom Thompson (R-2) – Quite a bit of turnover with forest supervisors. Capacity issue and shutdown hurting ski areas and fire training. 100th anniversary of Memorial Grove with 1,300 people recognized. 75th anniversary of Smokey this year.
- Rich Stem (R-1) – Huge number of changes in personnel, at all levels in R-1. RF trying to involve external groups and ask for advice. Emphasis on treating acres. 7.2 mm acres have burned so far across Montana from 2000-2019. Signed MOU with state of Idaho on a shared stewardship strategy. Creating a restoration strategy as opposed to a 5-year plan. Zoning 3 forests at a time to create a pod.
- Ranotta McNair (R-6) – New RF Glenn Casamassa. Smoke issues are a problem for governor and tourism. Good examples of stewardship and good neighbor authority. Old Smokeys new web page.
- Don Howlett (R-9) - No update.
- Pete Griffin (R-10) – Timber sales aren't selling. Over 1 mm visitors from cruise ships in 2018. Cruise ship business expected to increase 16% in 2019. New RF and Deputy RF.
- Bill Timko (National) – Working with Joan Golden trying to update membership for the DC area. They have a lunch every 2 months with 20-25 members attending. Vicki Christiansen and Jim Hubbard are speaking at the next 2 lunches.

Visit with Chief Vicki Christiansen

In the afternoon the FS Museum Board joined the NAFSR Board and met with Chief Christiansen for about two hours.

Jim Caswell went through our plan of work for 2019.

Tom Thompson emphasized how the Museum teaches the importance of conservation.

Lisa Tate gave a presentation on museum activities.

We discussed the brochure for new retirees and asked the Chief for help in distribution.

Some of the Chief's comments -

- ✓ She was very pleased to interact with USFS Retirees in Asheville and attend this joint Board meeting.
- ✓ We have strong and resilient employees in the FS per shutdown. They wanted to be at work.
- ✓ As an Agency the USFS has been focusing on Core Values - Conservation, Service, Interdependence, Diversity, Productivity, Health, Safety.
- ✓ The priority after the shutdown was to get everyone paid. Our heroes worked at the Albuquerque Service Center. They processed 50,000 timesheets over the weekend, and everyone was paid by Wednesday.

- ✓ A 17-month hiring freeze and 3 years of Continuing Resolutions has made work planning difficult.
- ✓ 2018 was a rollercoaster year of highs and lows.
- ✓ After being pushed to the edge, more employees are willing to take risks.
- ✓ Finished 2018 with a 20 year high in acres treated (3.5 million).
- ✓ Spent non-appropriated \$\$ to continue critical business.
- ✓ Shutdown was a momentum and morale buster. 22,000 employees furloughed for 35 days.
- ✓ Feel OK about the current firefighting situation.
- ✓ 10% loss in production from shutdown.
- ✓ We know there are pinch points in our workforce. Advocating that with the Secretary has been helpful.
- ✓ Making progress with states in leveraging workload.
- ✓ Maximum flexibility in addressing capacity issues and ways of doing work.
- ✓ Farm Bill authorities are a high priority.
- ✓ Secretary Perdue is a big supporter of Dashboard. Likes to see the score. He also really likes Task Forces.
- ✓ Focused on improving forest conditions, customer service, recreation, healthy and safe work place, stewardship and good neighbor.
- ✓ Reforestation has 1.3 mm acres need, and 1.1 are because of fire. The National Forest Foundation and American Forests are launching a campaign for reforestation.
- ✓ Opportunity with Congress is with infrastructure - \$5.2 billion in need. Just thinking so far with no request from the Hill or Administration.
- ✓ Capacity – Expectations for what we can deliver and the \$\$ available for that are not aligned. Prioritizing (the main thing is the main thing) with tradeoffs (the gap); being more efficient in getting our work done (change processes); leverage tools and creativity to increase capacity; arc of shared stewardship, being focused on priorities state by state, that will drive targets.

Question - In light of the Executive Order, and in light of the capacity and budget issues that we have been talking about since the meeting we had with Secretary Perdue (and you) and then the follow up meeting we had with the National Leadership Team; what was the plan to increase pace and scale of acres to be treated (the result of mortality and larger fires) for the Agency?

Response - She said that was an excellent question and that there are 3 things:

1. Resetting priorities for the Agency around this item
2. Increasing efficiencies of the process that they go through to produce projects (EADM and regulation changes).
3. Using GNA and Master Stewardship agreements with the States and Counties.

She then went on to say that the "Umbrella" for all this is the "Shared Stewardship Strategy" in terms of overall approaches in working and specific actions.

Notes taken by Mike Rogers and Johnny Hodges.

Edited by Johnny Hodges

February 28, 2019