

# **NAFSR Board of Directors Zoom Meeting**

## **Thursday, May 6, 2021**

### **Final Notes**

**In Attendance** – Becki Heath, Sharon Friedman, Rich Guldin, Rich Stem, Larry Payne, Lynn Sprague, Jim Caswell, Steve Ellis, Hank Kashdan, Sandra Holsten, Don Howlett, Jane Kollmeyer, Mac Gramley, Jack Troyer, Mike Rogers, Tom Thompson, Bill Timko, Susan Skalski, Jeanne Wade Evans, Phil Aune, Nora Rasure, Ed Shepard (PLF), Bill Disbrow, and Johnny Hodges. Guests – Jane Darnell and Mike Dudley.

#### **Membership and Finance – Johnny Hodges**

- Our current membership is 724 members.
- This includes 202 Golden members (age 80 plus) and 165 Lifetime members. We have gained 22 “Lifers” so far this year. Golden members are 28% of our total membership and Lifetime members are 23%.
- We currently have 26 members that have not paid their 2021 dues. Their membership will be suspended this month if they remain delinquent.
- Financial summary – at the end of the first quarter (March 31) we had \$31,240 in cash and CD’s and \$12,749 in our long-term investments for a total of \$43,989.

#### **Legislative Update – Bill Timko**

- The Chief has three budget meetings this month.
- The current Infrastructure Bill has a jobs plan portion that includes the FS.
- The Outdoor Restoration Act includes a \$60 billion fund for high-risk fire suppression activities.
- The Westerman Bill is back with some adjustments - carbon sequestration, reforestation trust fund, seedlings, and improved forest management. There are now three Titles in the Bill.
- The Replant Act which would remove the cap on the reforestation trust fund is looking for a home (where it can be attached to another bill).
- Bill provided a Section-by-Section summary of the Trillion Trees Act. We will post it on our website in the Legislation Box.
- The Growing Climate Solution Act is new.
- There are four types of infrastructure in the Biden bill.
- No word on new Under Secretary. Chris French will remain as acting Under Secretary until it is filled.

#### **Public Lands Foundation Update - Ed Shepard**

- PLF has hired a paid, part-time, Executive Director. Her name is Courtney Lyons-Garcia.

- This year is the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BLM.
- The nominee for the BLM Director is Tracy Stone-Manning.
- We are currently updating our Position Papers.

### **Introduction of Next NAFSR Chairman of the Board**

Jim and Larry introduced Steve Ellis as our next chair. Jim will remain as chair until Steve is ready to take over.

Comments from Steve –

- The most rewarding thing in my career is watching the people you mentor progress in their career.
- I am working on getting familiar with issues, our positions, and how we operate.
- This is an incredibly talented and respected group of retirees.
- Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time.

### **Update on our Position Paper – “America’s Forest Management Crisis” - Jim/Larry**

For many years NAFSR developed numerous letters, transition documents, reports, reform actions, and budget messages supporting the need to increase the pace and scale of active forest management. These were specifically designed to use every tool available to confront America’s forest management crisis that has resulted in devastating wildfires.

These collective actions along with other organized efforts from various partners and stakeholders served as a catalyst that convinced us we needed to take a much stronger and more aggressive position going forward. As an advocacy organization we have a responsibility to do just that.

Specifically, conversations with Phil Aune and Michael Raines about our position on the wildfire crisis and the current “Call to Action” campaign convinced us that NAFSR must also develop a strong campaign. Based on that effort and those discussions we spoke with several senior Board members and became even more convinced that NAFSR needed to promptly take steps to develop and distribute a position paper on America's wildfire crisis. The discussions with Michael, Phil, the “Call to Action” campaign, and input from a variety of stakeholders, were the catalysts for the development and distribution of the NAFSR position paper.

Jim and Larry shared additional thoughts and background on how the paper was developed. A copy of the paper is included in this document starting on page 5.

- We wanted an integrated paper to display the magnitude of the problem.
- It was developed over a couple of months and then approved by the Board of Directors.
- The feedback has been mostly good. We did not go far enough in “asks” according to some people. We do not support getting down in the weeds. We wanted to stay strategic and avoid being prescriptive.
- The Boone and Crockett organization has a similar strategic paper.

- PERC has another similar paper.
- We have sent 17 letters along with the Position Paper to select members of Congress.

#### **Update from the B Team—Wildfire Risk, Scenario Planning, Restoration – Becki Heath**

The team put together a 3-page report that is included in this document starting on page 9.

- Team members are Jeanne Wade Evans, Rich Stem, Steve Ellis, and Becki Heath.
- The team has put together a communications strategy focused on the “America’s Forest Management Crisis” position paper. There are three recommendations in the paper.
- Do we need a permanent Communications Team? How would it operate with other issues? The team needs the ability to respond quickly to new issues.
- Do we want to create a new standing team which would be called the Restoration Team?
- Send thoughts to Becki by May 21 about our three recommendations. Also, your opinion whether the Communications Team should be short or long term.

#### **Update from the Fire Committee Action Team - Jane Darnell**

The draft Fire Committee Charter is included in this document starting on page 12.

- Team members are Jane Darnell, Mike Dudley, Lynn Sprague, Becki Heath, and Colin Hardy.
- Fire is a part of restoration. There should be interface with the Restoration Team.
- The team refreshed the draft charter by looking at the current charter and looked at other charters as well.
- Mike Dudley, Becki Heath, and Lynn Sprague interviewed current Fire Committee members.
- The draft charter needs to be reviewed by the Fire Committee.
- Provide any feedback to Jane by May 15.
- The team will meet on May 19.
- The team will provide a final report to the BOD the week of June 7.
- We need to look at the makeup of the future Fire Committee and search for interested potential members.

#### **Update from the Sustainable Recreation Team – Nora Rasure**

The team prepared a Recreation Briefing paper which is included in this document starting on page 15.

- The team interviewed current FS leaders and other organizations.
- There are ongoing conversations about sustainable recreation, especially with Covid impacts.
- There is increasing recreation use and flat budgets are straining the system.
- There are opportunities at the FS national level for us to engage.
- There are ongoing, long term opportunities for us.
- We recommend forming a standing committee from Board and non-Board members.

- We need to identify key contacts, key external groups, potential legislation, position papers, and introduce sustainable recreation to our members.
- There is growing interest in NAFSR about recreation.
- It is about time we are working on recreation issues (comment).
- NAFSR will adopt the paper.
- Nora will lead the group. It is open to new members. Susan, Ed, Rich G., and Sandra are interested in joining.

#### **2022 National Reunion Update – Mike Rogers**

- The Reunion Committee has asked NAFSR to support the ice breaker at a cost of \$5,000.
- No decision was made.
- Mike will send us the paperwork with a final date for a decision.

Johnny Hodges  
Final Notes, 5/29/21  
Revised 6/8/21



## **“America’s Forest Management Crisis - A National Catastrophe”**

### **Position Paper**

#### **The current situation**

As we examine the impacts and effects of recent catastrophic wildfires, our nation faces a crisis of epic proportions. There are cries from across the political spectrum to change the current reality. There have been papers, books, initiatives, forums, studies, articles, petitions, and Congressional concerns both at the state and national level. There is increasing interest by successive Administrations to “do something”.

Unlike the intense polarized debate of most nationally prominent issues, the impacts of catastrophic wildfire, and the path forward is at least somewhat understood across most of the nation. We can no longer simply invest in small scale fuel treatments and make small incremental increases in funding on treatments while continuing to spend billions of dollars to fight these uncharacteristically destructive wildfires. The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) strongly believes now is the time to “do something”.

It is difficult to adequately understand the current level of death and destruction, especially in Western communities. Irreplaceable natural resources have been lost, vital soil has washed away, and untold floods have occurred—damaging community water systems. Other resources impacted include fish habitat, water quantity, water quality, and the timing of release from an ever-dwindling snowpack. Smoke has impacted the health of people near and far from wildfires. It is hard to imagine the emotional and psychological trauma on our firefighters and citizens from the loss of loved ones, homes, and communities.

The enormous effects from the warming climate, combined with landscapes out of balance, have created a deepening environmental, social and health crisis within our nation. By

September 2020, California wildland fires had already generated more than 91 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, which is about 25% more than the state's annual emissions from fossil fuels. Researchers project that by 2050 many of our beloved dry forest habitat types are at risk of disappearing.

Critically needed reforestation is simply not happening, and conversion to brush is occurring at a rapid rate. Impacts and warnings have been eloquently described in many professionally written papers, articles, and books in recent years. Despite all the concerns and outcries, the situation worsens each year. Not very much is getting done.

### **What should we do?**

We strongly believe that the general population of our country understands that there is a path forward to address this crisis, and many of our citizens across the political spectrum understand key components of that path. What is lacking is focused leadership and advocacy from top government officials including the President, Governors, and other key leaders.

Along with that advocacy comes the critical need to make the nation's budgetary and legislative process work towards resolution. We should have changed course many years ago. Even those who do not live in the most affected states see a need for action. How do we take a step back and try to better examine how to move forward?

### **NAFSR recommends the following actions -**

1. **Landscape Treatments.** The current situation stems from overly dense forests with massive amounts of accumulated biomass, extensive development in the wildland urban interface (WUI), and climate change. Continuing to emphasize fire suppression efforts without front end investment in treatments of large landscapes has brought us here, and more of the same will not solve the problem. It will take a paradigm shift to make a difference. Actions must take place on all three fronts.
2. **Landscape Investments.** The Administration must step forward to fully support and Congress must act to provide the funding for the Forest Service to prepare and implement a 10-year plan to significantly reduce wildfire risk. The science, data, and capability exist to do that now. A science-based approach to treatment of large landscapes is needed and management actions must be done at the right place, at the right time, and for the right reasons.

To return low intensity fires to key landscapes will cost several billion dollars over multiple years and will require the use of a wide variety of management tools ranging from prescribed fire to a variety of mechanical treatments including mastication, mulching, thinning, and commercial harvest. The budgetary commitment amounts to increases using the word "billion" not "million." However, compare the cost to the estimated economic damage of \$150 billion dollars caused by wildfires in 2020 as

opposed to the \$3-5 billion dollars per year to treat these lands. These plans and treatments must also include acres on other federal, state, tribal, and private lands and be prepared and implemented in a coordinated manner.

3. **Massive Development in the Wildland Urban Interface.** Since 2000, suburban development has encroached on wildland forests. Not only has this heightened the risks of loss for new residents and businesses, but it has also altered wildlife habitats, impacted soils and groundwater through extensive use of individual water wells and septic systems.

Further, it has driven up the costs of protecting these newly developed areas from wildfires and suppressing wildfires that occur. While local governments are responsible for land use regulations regarding new developments, the recent scale of development warrants a broader, more intensive communications strategy that highlights the tradeoffs between the gains from increased development and the risks and costs of further WUI development. Collaboration with the home insurance industry in a messaging campaign is an option NAFSR believes has potential.

4. **Climate Change.** NAFSR supports healthy and productive forests as a counterbalance to the forces that cause climate change. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the atmosphere and in the process store carbon for the long term as wood. These gigantic wildfires are releasing destructive amounts of stored carbon back into the atmosphere. In addition to reducing wildfire size and risk, planting trees is another essential action to reduce climate change. NAFSR recommends increasing the size of the reforestation trust fund and supporting efforts to increase reforestation capability.
5. **Capacity.** NAFSR is convinced that the Forest Service does not currently have the capacity to do the job it is required to perform. There are two dimensions to the lack of capacity. First, the agency does not have the necessary mix of skills in its current workforce. Second, there are too few people to implement the actions needed.

These same points apply to many of its federal, state, and tribal partners. NAFSR completed a recent study and published a report that confirms a dramatic loss of capacity over time which is available on our website [www.nafsr.org](http://www.nafsr.org). The loss of capacity is directly related to the shift of employees to fire suppression and away from its basic land management function. We recommend the Forest Service prepare a staffing plan to complement the wildland fire plan.

6. **Significant Changes.** It will require a large, highly organized effort and multi-jurisdictional coalitions to support the massive work to be done at such a large scale. Not only will budgetary increases be required, but also significant policy changes, such as considerations of alternative funding sources. For example, authority should be sought to sell carbon credits for reforestation projects to the private sector.

It will require improved ways to use biomass to reduce costs, such as building more biomass electricity generating plants. The USDA woody biomass grants program has been successful and should be expanded.

Finally, regulatory constraints on implementing projects should be loosened to enable faster approval and implementation of essential fuels treatment and management activities that improve the health and resiliency of the nation's forests.

## **Conclusion**

This crisis is truly an emergency. NAFSR believes that now is the time to initiate action. There are no quick, easy solutions. We need leadership and vision to approach the many facets of the problem in the most effective way. This issue is so large and so important that we believe it calls for more than several efforts or fixes. It calls for the forestry community to commit to doing something, not just in the short term to begin changing the trajectory, but to accelerate a broader approach for the long term to ensure that progress is ongoing well into the decades ahead.

This is not just a public land issue. It is an issue that faces all forested lands in America. There needs to be a concerted effort to put our focus on working together across ownerships, states, tribes, watersheds, landscapes, competing special interests, and political divides. This effort must recognize that far more financial resources are needed than are presently available. These additional financial resources will be far less than the massive wildfire costs we are currently paying each year.

To effectively change the reality that we face, it is going to take much more focused efforts to address this issue together by setting priorities, committing to increase the capacity to change forest conditions, and to sticking with a vision to change the situation at the tribal, state and federal levels. We absolutely must work together across boundaries and ideologies to make a difference. It will take a campaign that does not waiver in the face of the change to the next administration or the next crisis to confront the agency. It will require reliable off-budget funds for the Forest Service, DOI agencies, tribes, and states.

Without this action, we will continue to lose our forests, communities, and the lives of many people. This is a massive crisis that must be addressed before it is too late.

March 31, 2021



**Recommendations to the NAFSR Board  
For a Communication Strategy and Plan for  
NAFSR's "America's Forest Management Crisis-A National Catastrophe" Position Paper**

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Background

In March 2021 NAFSR finalized the position paper on America's Forest Management Crisis and sent the paper to Robert Bonnie, at the Department of Agriculture, and Vicki Christensen, Chief of the Forest Service. This position paper aligns with the Administration's priorities for climate change, fire management, jobs, and forest health. Currently Congress is working on Climate, Forest Health, Reforestation, and Infrastructure legislation. The time is ripe to share NAFSR's position paper with key legislators, conservation organizations, State and local governments, Internal Forest Service personnel including Forest Supervisors and Regional foresters, and other stakeholders in Americas Forests.

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**Recommendation #1.**

Key products of NAFSR are position papers, letters of support, or advocacy and sharing of information. We believe a Communication Plan should be developed by a new and separate team as soon as possible, (a decision point for the Board on whether this is a standing team). The plan should incorporate the specific key items below in order to align with the NAFSR Position Paper and to also incorporate the current planning of the Forest Service.

Create this team to implement the following work immediately.

Suggested Talking Points:

- The National Association of Forest Service Retirees feel we are at a crisis point on the health of America's Forests.
- In 2020 the United States experienced a historically destructive wildfire and 2021 is setting up to be as damaging to forest, property, people, jobs, and the environment.
- The economic damage caused by the wildfire in 2020 is estimated at \$150 billion.
- In California alone, more than 91 million metric tons of carbon dioxide was produced by wildfires and that figure is 25 percent more than the state's annual emissions from fossil fuels. Similar unprecedented carbon release occurred in many states.
- It will take a concerted effort by all to treat the lands at risk. Data shows that upfront landscape investments will mitigate this damage if completed at a large scale across the country.

- Previous landscape treatments demonstrate the effectiveness of abating the destructive effects of wildfires. Experience shows these treatments are needed on a much larger percentage of the landscape.
  - Annual investments of \$5 billion per year for the next 10 years are needed to prepare projects and, importantly, to pay for reestablishment of the infrastructure necessary to implement the projects and to process products that the projects produce. This will include such things as training of crews, purchase of equipment, reopening idled facilities and, in some cases, construction of new facilities. When we compare this with \$2.5 billion on average spent on wildfire response and the billions in losses annually, the needed investments are well justified.
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- ✓ One member of the Part B Team will join the Comm Plan team to ensure continuity and to ensure the topic stays current.
  - ✓ Develop a list of all NGOs and cooperating organizations, key State, and local elected officials (counties), and other individuals who are working on related legislation or can help influence such legislation. Also included would be internal Agency leadership across the country. Develop a specific plan for the discussion and distribution of the Position Paper with designated NAFSR members that entails a schedule of who and when this would happen. Ensure that all entities listed in the background paragraph are covered.
  - ✓ Communications should include graphics and photos where appropriate to help explain ideas, concepts, etc., especially for persons or audiences that may not be fully familiar with the subject matter. This is particularly important when advocating “restoration” to show what restoration entails in various forest types/ecosystems.
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**The B Team has completed the following work to support the Comm Team:**

- Developed a list of all key congressional representatives that are working on related legislation and those key congressional staff to moving legislation. Once that is in motion, the newly formed Comm team will ensure the follow through once that is started.
- Created a cover letter template to accompany the position paper, for distribution to the key Congressional members. Finished by April 30, mailed by NAFSR ASAP.
- We have created a file of other initiatives that mirror the NAFSR position paper, and it will be available to the Comm Team.
- Established a communication link with Legislative Affairs and Doug Crandall for the purpose of furthering distribution of the NAFSR position paper.

Timeframe for short term work, that is related to this Comm strategy.

- Because Congress is currently proposing legislation related to this issue, cover letters and the position paper are being emailed out by the end of **April 2021** to inform the discussions. List of legislators was finalized. Key Committee members were identified, and letters sent transmitting the position paper April 30, 2021.

**Recommendation #2**

A standing team made up of NAFSR board members and/or other members as needed to be successful. Just as we developed the strategy for “Leads” of topic areas, the same will be needed once the Comm plan is executed. There will be many moving parts to include the “Scenario” planning that the Forest Service has undertaken and coupled with the support needed as well as advice promised and asked for by the Agency. The team lead will create a team of informed and interested NAFSR members to follow through on questions, requests, and communication both within NAFSR and outside of NAFSR. This can be called the Restoration team; however, it will cover all facets of the recommendations of the Position Paper.

Once the Comm team is established, this team should be involved early on, and ready to assume the duties that will likely follow.

**Recommendation 3#**

Because we understand the agency intends to use the Western Fire Leadership Coalition (WFLC) as a first host of scenario planning within the Cohesive Strategy, a member of the Board with direct access to WFLC should develop a plan or strategy on how to introduce and/or present this paper at their next meeting. This particular entity requires direct interaction with a person that can explain the history and motive behind the paper and recommend that WFLC endorse it.



## **Fire Committee Charter**

DRAFT May 2021

### **OBJECTIVE**

The Fire Committee (FC) represents the National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR), working with Forest Service Senior Leaders and Interagency, Intergovernmental fire management officials. The Committee prepares reports, briefing materials, and delivers analysis of fire management issues and topics of importance and recommendations for action by the Board, toward shaping and supporting the future of the agency.

### **ORGANIZATION**

#### **Appointments:**

- The NAFSR Board will appoint the FC Chair and eight additional members.
- The FC Chair will be appointed as a non-voting member of the NAFSR Board of Directors.
- The FC Chair will ideally be appointed from current or past FC membership.
- FC members shall be diverse and broadly represent NAFSR membership; demographically, geographically, and organizationally from State & Private; National Forest System and Research and Development Deputy areas.
- FC members will have representation and strong backgrounds in wildland fire policy, management, operations and research.

#### **Terms:**

- The FC Chair serves a three-year term and that may be served consecutively with their committee term.
- The FC Chair may be re-appointed to a second three-year term by the Board Chair.

- FC members may serve up to three consecutive terms if re-appointed by the Board Chair.

#### **Member Responsibilities:**

- The FC will determine if additional FC officers (such as Vice-Chair or Secretary) are necessary for optimum effectiveness. If so determined, the FC Chair will make those appointments from the FC membership and report to the Board.
- If a FC member cannot complete their term, the Board Chair shall appoint a replacement member to complete that term.
- FC members may be replaced if they are not able to participate in a majority of the Committee meetings or assist with assignments.

#### **CHARGE AND ACTIVITIES**

The FC Chair will serve as the primary contact for the FC and will represent the FC on the NAFSR Board of Directors. The FC Chair may designate another FC member to represent the FC when appropriate.

The FC Chair is responsible for setting up an Annual Meeting with the Deputy Chief of State and Private and the Director of Fire and Aviation Management (other WO Staff may attend as needed or interested.).

- The focus of these meetings is a best look forward to the coming fire year given weather forecasts and drought conditions, plans for preparation and lessons learned from the previous fire year.

The FC reports to the Board of Directors via the FC Chair on quarterly conference calls or video meetings and at the Annual Board/Membership Meeting.

The FC is tasked to identify topics of interest and screen topics and emerging issues when submitted from the NAFSR Membership directly.

The Fire Committee will assess topics of interest to determine which may warrant the development of national position statements or other consideration/action and make appropriate recommendations to the NAFSR Board for their determination and direction to the FC.

For topics approved by the Board, the FC will facilitate further study and research and compile information into DRAFT position statements for NAFSR Board review and consideration.

As necessary, the FC may reach into the general membership of NAFSR to develop Study and Ad Hoc Committees for specific assignments as approved by the Board of Directors.

The FC will hold teleconference or video meetings as needed to discuss emerging issues, assignments and topics of interest and will brief the NAFSR Board on the outcome of this coordination.

By invitation or assignment, FC members may consult other external contacts such as the National Association of State Foresters Fire Committee, Inter-tribal Timber Council, etc. Such participation must be approved by the FC Chair and must be reported back to the FC.

# **National Association of Forest Service Retirees Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Briefing Paper Introduction**

## **Introduction**

The NAFSR Board identified sustainable outdoor recreation as a strategic priority in the 2021-2022 program of work. A sub-group of board members formed to explore the issue and recommend potential actions. This paper summarizes the sub-group's work and provides background information, challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for the Board's consideration.

## **Background**

Background In 2010, the Forest Service published "A Framework for Sustainable Recreation" that recognized the value of outdoor recreation to people, and the need for a national vision and strategy to address the growing challenge of sustaining outdoor recreation opportunities.

Many other organizations are also addressing sustainable recreation and share a belief that sustainable recreation includes three pillars: economic growth, environmental protection and social equity. In addition, the scale of the work extends beyond the public land boundary to communities and society at large.

COVID-19 has accelerated the numbers of people visiting and playing in America's great outdoors. Since February 2020, over 81% of Americans say they have spent time recreating outside and 31% were doing so for the first time. This is expected to continue into 2021 and beyond as the pandemic continues and as people continue to take advantage of these newfound recreational opportunities.

The outdoor recreation economy accounts for 2.2 percent of the GDP or nearly \$900 billion in consumer spending, accounts for 3.3 percent of U.S. employees and support 5.2 million jobs, according to the most recent statistics from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The growing number of people going outdoors to recreate comes with a cost to the natural environment; impacts to soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife have been accelerating due to increased visitation.

## **Challenges**

**Staffing** - The Forest Service staffing and funding is inadequate to address deferred maintenance, ongoing operation, and maintenance needs, and to engage communities,

partners, and volunteers. A footnote in the 2019 NAFSR report on Increasing Workforce Capacity stated: Though not the focus of this report, recreation and special uses have also been adversely affected by changes in the workforce, processes, and funding. Given that support for the agency is strongly tied to the public's ability to use national forest system lands, this is a substantial issue with significant ramifications that demands attention from agency leadership.

**Funding** - The Forest Service has \$5.5 billion of deferred maintenance, including \$300 million for trail maintenance needs. The Forest Service deferred maintenance represents only a fraction of the needed work for all local, state, and federal lands. The Forest Service recreation budget declined in 2000-2010 by 16% (need update)

**Increasing Number and Diversity of Public Land Users and Uses** - There are increasing numbers of public land users especially around urban areas, and with the pandemic the numbers are increasing even more. The diversity of users' knowledge, experience levels, and expectations creates an even more complex situation. New and expanding definitions of what is appropriate, or quality adds complexity.

## **Future Opportunities (or Focus Areas)**

**Align with New Administration's Priorities** - The new Administration has four immediate priorities 1) address pandemic, 2) provide economic relief and help build economy, 3) tackle climate change, and 4) advance racial equity and social justice. These priorities may present opportunities for new policies and innovative approaches that overlap with the goals of sustainable outdoor recreation.

**Engage with Forest Service** - Forest Service national level leadership is engaged in dialogues about a contemporary vision and strategy for sustainable outdoor recreation. Conversations are happening at the national, regional, and local level and include external organizations. Forest Service contacts have indicated a willingness and opportunity for NAFSR to engage in these dialogues. This would continue to strengthen our relationship with agency leadership and provide an opportunity for NAFSR to add our value to agency efforts.

**Forge Strategic Partnerships** - There is a growing diverse and broad array of organizations engaged in advancing sustainable outdoor recreation. There is a call for unifying the outdoor recreation community to create a powerful lobbying group. There are many opportunities for NAFSR to engage with these organizations, including individual members at the local level and the Board at a national level. Creating partnerships or alliances with other key organizations can utilize our unique strengths and leverage the expertise of diverse communities, disciplines, and networks to achieve shared goals.

### **Engage in Congressional and Administration Efforts**

- Appropriations - Support funding to address workload.



- Civilian Conservation/Climate Corps - Both the President and Congress have been actively pushing for a job corps focused on conservation and climate change. Congress has largely focused on a Conservation Corps and the President's recent Executive Order outlined a Climate Corps. Regardless of the approach, a significant increase in jobs around conservation and public lands is on the horizon, which will be a significant win for outdoor recreation. This may also be an opportunity to address diversity and social equity.
- Transportation and Infrastructure Bills - Potential bipartisan bills could address infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and construction.
- Farm Bill - While the Farm Bill expires in 2023, Congress will begin their work as early as 2021. Given a growing focus around rural economic development, outdoor recreation advocates can play a larger role in the development of the Farm Bill than they may have in the past.
- Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) 2020 - The Forest Service is focused on identifying and completing deferred maintenance projects for the five years of funding. As part of the project prioritization external stakeholders are being consulted. There is also an interest in how the successful implementation of GAOA can be shared with others which could support reauthorization for another five years.
- Fees - Recreation user fees are an integral part of a sustainable recreation program along with appropriations. Fees also impact access to facilities and services. Monitor and evaluate future opportunities to engage in fee discussions.
- REPLANT Act - The REPLANT Act lifts the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund, allowing the Forest Service to increase reforestation efforts on public forest lands. This historic investment in reforestation will also strengthen outdoor recreation opportunities across National Forest System lands. The replanting of burned areas and bug killed forests, scenic areas, campgrounds, and waterways plays an important role in sustainable recreation, and its contributions to the physical, mental, and economic health of individuals and rural communities.
- 30 by 30 - Monitor this resolution and executive order to evaluate future engagement.

**Inform and Engage NAFSR Members** - Adding sustainable outdoor recreation as a strategic priority may resonate with more members and increase their interest in being informed and engaged in this effort. It could also be a catalyst for others to join NAFSR.

## Recommendations

1. Form a standing committee for sustainable outdoor recreation:
  - A. Include 5 board members.
  - B. Include 3 non-board members.
  - C. Include other non-board members on an ad-hoc basis.
2. Assign committee the following tasks:
  - A. Identify key contacts within the Forest Service and assign a liaison(s) to continue dialogue.
  - B. Identify key external groups and assign a liaison to form a relationship with the group and identify potential areas of shared interest and action.
  - C. Identify potential legislation, explore opportunities for NAFSR engagement and recommend actions/positions.

- D. Identify other opportunities for NAFSR to engage.
- E. Develop a position paper for NAFSR on sustainable outdoor recreation.
- F. Introduce the recreation priority to NAFSR membership and identify opportunities to inform, educate and engage members.
- G. Share sustainable recreation priority at 2022 Retirees' Reunion

## **Conclusion**

Sustainable outdoor recreation is important to our nation and to the Forest Service. It also serves to connect people with the management of our National Forests and create a more informed and supportive constituency for forest management needs. This appears to be an opportune time to engage and get in on the ground floor of an increasingly active movement. Active engagement in sustainable outdoor recreation will position NAFSR to deploy effectively when needed. By getting informed about what is happening, by getting connected and building relationships with others, and by utilizing our strengths and leveraging our resources, we can make a difference in the future of National Forest System lands, the Forest Service and the public that enjoys this valuable resource.