



**Notes from
NAFSR Board of Directors
Zoom Meeting
August 13, 2024**

Attendees

Board Members - Steve Ellis (Chair), Jamie Connell (Vice Chair), Johnny Hodges (Secretary), Rich Stem (R-1 outgoing), Cheryl Probert (R-1 incoming), Sharon Friedman (R-2 outgoing), Frank Beum (R-2 incoming), Jerry Perez (R-3 incoming), Lynn Sprague (R-4), Teresa Benson (R-5), Marisue Hilliard (R-8), Doug Crandall (Congressional Liaison), Rich Guldin (Research), Ralph Crawford (Research), Gene Blakenbaker (National), Ranotta McNair (National), Nora Rasure (National), Susan Skalski (National), Jeanne Wade Evans (National), Bill Timko (National), Mary Jo Rugwell (PLF)

Unable to Attend - Greg Griffith (R-3 outgoing), Becki Heath (R-6), Don Howlett (R-9), Earl Stewart (R-10), Bill Avey (National), Tim DeCoster (National), Ed Shepard (PLF Liaison), Kevin Martin (AWCP liaison)

Committee Chairs – Rich Guldin (Climate), Nora Rasure (Recreation), Mike Dudley (Fire)

Staff – Bill Disbrow (Webmaster)

Forest Stewards Guild – Zander Evans and Esme Cadiente

Welcome – Steve Ellis

Steve welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then gave the outgoing Board members a chance to say goodbye.

Rich Stem (R-1)

- I have been on the Board a long time, ten plus years, and I have known some of you since
- 1987, and I appreciate everyone's smiling faces.
- Thanks to those that replied to my "retirement" note and to those that called me.

- Continue to support the agency when you agree, and when you don't agree, make it known to them, as that is the mission of NAFSR. We have always done that, but we do it professionally.
- The agency has many issues right now, and they need a voice. Issues such as fire suppression, suddenly the agency in deficit, hiring issues, capacity issues continue, recreation infrastructure, and the future of the 10-year strategy. Keep working on current big issues.
- Regional representatives should make a point to talk to current forest supervisors to get a real pulse of what's going on.
- We produced and wrote a lot of good stuff over the years and in doing so, helped the agency with measurable actions.

Sharon Friedman (R-2)

- Thanks for the opportunity to serve on the Board.
- It's time for new blood with better contacts with current employees in Region 2.
- I may post on the Smokey Wire (forestpolicypub.com) blog posts gently critical of the FS, and I don't want that to reflect badly on NAFSR.
- I will continue to support NAFSR via the Restoration Committee and being NEPA lead."

Greg Griffith (R-3) – Not on the call.

Administrative Report – Johnny Hodges

- Our current membership is 775.
- At the end of June, we suspended 20 members for not paying their 2024 dues.
- So far this year we have collected –
 - Annual dues - \$6,600
 - New Lifetime memberships - \$5,400
 - Donations - \$10,615
- Our current bank balance is about \$36,500 and our investment fund is about \$14,900 for a total of \$51,400.

Congressional Update – Doug Crandall

- 85 days until the election.
- 27 days before Congress returns. There will be 13 voting days before the end of the year.
- The Freedom Caucus is pushing for a Continuing Resolution (CR).
- Interior Appropriations Bill passed the House. Nothing from the Senate. The permanent pay increase for Wildland Firefighters is included in both.
- The Farm Bill (FB) has House markup. The current FB expires at end of September. We hope the FB can be attached to a CR. The ACES program is affected by the FB.
- The Defense Bill (NBAA) currently has lots of amendments since it must be passed.
- Nothing will happen before the election other than a CR.
- The House race is really close. There are 22 tossup races about evenly split.

- The Senate races favor Republicans. Currently all tossups are controlled by Republican. They only need to flip 1 seat to make the majority.
- Republican Governors have a 4-seat advantage.
- Split ticket voting is not common any longer.
- Ballot measures are being used to get out voters.
- The Chevron deference issue affects all agencies. The FS is worried about Rx fire becoming more difficult to use.
- Mill closures is an issue.
- Mexico is a big wood products buyer from the U.S. We provide 50% of their wood supply.
- SES retirees have a 1 year cooling off period before being able to join ACES.

Update on Board Vacancies – Steve Ellis

- We have filled all 3 current Board vacancies. The vote was unanimous for all 3.

Comments from our new Board members -

Cheryl Probert (R-1) – Thanks for the vote. I am 2 months into retirement. I hope I can bring perspective as a recently retired Forest Supervisor. I appreciate NAFSR’s positive influence on the FS. I have had several conversations with Rich S.

Frank Beum (R-2) – I am glad to see lots of friends. I retired May 31 and turned 65 on August 11 (I made it and it’s weird!). I am enjoying retirement. It is great to be part of the team.

Jerry Perez (R-3) – It is good to see familiar faces. It has been 7 months since I’ve been on Zoom. It is nice to be here.

Fire Committee – Mike Dudley

- We have been at PL-5 (Planning Level) for 30 days.
- The #1 area is the Northwest.
- The early season fires were in Eastern Oregon. A couple of weeks ago lightning hit the West side.
- CIM – Complex Incident Management. Former Type 1 and 2 teams are now all CIM.
- There are no longer Area Commands. At the Forest level, when you order a team, you will get a CIM.
- There are 60 people in the NW from Australia.
- The Boise and Payette have several long-term fires.
- The 430,000-acre Park Fire is the 4th biggest in CA history.
- This is the 75th anniversary of Mann Gulch. Various activities were held in Helena, MT as part of the remembrance.

Restoration Committee – Sharon Friedman

- Sharon filled in for Committee Chair, Bill Avey who was unable to attend today’s meeting.

- A draft of our Old Growth DEIS Comments was sent to the Board a few days ago.
- We received no further comments from the Board.
- It appears this will create more work for FS partners. The adaptive strategies are confusing. It requires the FS to do Old Growth projects with timelines. This very unusual and opens us up to possible litigation.
- If you have further comments, send them to Sharon by 8/19.

Climate Committee – Rich Guldin

Rich introduced Zander Evans of the Wildfire Resilience Coalition (WRC) to discuss their organization and goals.

- The WRC seeks to help federal, Tribal, state, local, and private partners realize transformational change in wildfire risk management. We want to leverage the historic investments for wildfire resilience in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). We offer a focal point for engagement among diverse interests within the administration, Congress, and policy and opinion leaders.
- Formally launched in late fall 2022, the WRC builds on the success of the diverse coalition that led to the 2018 Fire Fix, focusing on wildfire resilience through federal funding surges.
- They have many other participants with a wide range of interests.
- Their focus is on resilient landscapes. They enhance resilience through innovative strategies and securing ongoing funding.
- They work together with the Forest Climate Working Group.
- They have sent four sign-on letter letters to Congress on key issues including sustained funding, firefighter pay, Wildfire Commission recommendations, and resilience workforce.
- They are planning a D.C. fly-in for September 24-26 to make Congressional visits. NAFSR may provide one or two Board members to join them.
- The Board questioned whether WRC was involved in the issue of housing for FS employees. They are not. The discussion then focused on the current authority provided to use FS lands for employee housing. Some forests, such as the White River, are utilizing the authority, but many are not. NAFSR needs to encourage forests to use the authority.

Comments from Rich Guldin –

- This is an example of NAFSR working with other organizations.
- SAF hosted an Old Growth meeting back in February. The final report was to be done in June, but it is behind schedule.
- Rich provided the Forest Climate Working Group (FCWG) Policy Platform which has just been issued. It was sent to the Board a few days ago.

Awards Committee – Tim DeCoster

Tim was unable to attend the meeting, so no report.

Student Congress Update – Ranotta McNair

- The Student Congress is managed by the Public Lands Foundation, the Andrus Center at Boise State University, and NAFSR. It is held every other year.
- This year’s Congress will be held in Las Vegas, October 7-10. The topic is energy.
- There was good student response this year, high quality and very diverse.
- Ranotta was able to set up a participating agreement with the WO for \$25,000 to support the Student Congress. Hopefully it will continue.
- This is a good pipeline for new employees

Public Lands Foundation - Mary Jo Rugwell

- Thanks for your support of the Student Congress. It started in 2012.
- We continue to struggle to engage with the BLM.
- BLM asked for help in mentoring current employees. There are just a handful of employees engaged at this time, but hopefully it will expand.
- BLM is moving ahead with the Land Health Conservation Rule. It is currently challenged in Court. They are setting up a FACA committee to move ahead. PLF would like to be engaged, but we don’t know what our role will be. BLM will add no additional employees to work on implementing the Rule, although it is a huge increase in workload.

Wrap up - Steve

- Welcome again to our new Board members.
- Jose Linares is our liaison on the NW Forest Plan Advisory Council. He will send us an update.
- Ranotta – Great job on obtaining to FS funding for Student Congress.
- Cosigned letters – Make sure you run them by Steve, Doug, and Johnny before we sign on.
- We will finalize and submit our comments on the Old Growth DEIS next week.
- There is a Zoom call on Thursday with the Forest Service WO on “Socializing Outcomes.” Steve and Mike Dudley will participate for NAFSR.
- Our next meeting via Zoom will be on November 12. Cheryl Probert will help Jamie with the agenda.

Final Notes by Johnny Hodges
8/20/2024