



Minutes
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Annual General Membership and Board of Directors Meeting
The Timbers Hotel
Denver, Colorado
July 22-24, 2008

Attendees:

Board Members and Officers

George Leonard, Chair	John Marker
Darrel Kenops, Executive Director	Ralph Mumme
Chuck Hendricks (former board Member)	John Sandor
Jack Lavin	John Combes, Secretary – Treasurer

Other Attendees

Bernie Weingardt	Megan John, Forest History Society
Jerry Williams	Jay Jensen – Executive Director, CWSF and WFLC
Ken Evans	Dave Dillard, Director, Ecosystem Mgmt. Coordination
Dave Hessel	John Phipps, Assoc. Deputy Chief, S&PF
Pat Lynch	
Bob Leaverton, FS, Pike – San Isabel	
Tom Harbour, FS Director of Fire and Aviation	
Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief for S&PF	
Tom Thompson , President of Society of American Foresters	

The meeting started at 2:00 PM, July 22, 2008.

Board Chair George Leonard recognized the contributions of Darrel Kenops, John Marker, Ray Bunster, and John Combes to the success of NAFSR. He summarized the budget situation and the status of The Flame Act. The Forest Service needs help to get the budget restored to reasonable levels. NAFSR must continue to push for resolution of the fire suppression funding issue and an adequate budget for management and protection of our nation's forests.

John Combes gave the treasurer's report. The report covered the period January 1 through July 5, 2008. The checking account balance on July 5th was \$8,575.84. The value of the

CD was \$5,071.94 as of the first maturity date of 6/26/2008. The CD has been extended to 9/26/2008. Membership stood at 391 members with 10 new members since January 1 and 10 members dropped because they haven't paid their 2007 dues. Three members were listed as deceased resulting in a net loss of 3 members since January 1.

Bernie Weingardt discussed the National Forest Foundation. There is a need to get more organizations to help fund projects on the National Forests. The NFF would like to get 9 large projects annually costing approximately 1 to 2 million dollars each. Such large projects would hopefully get people excited about contributing towards these projects. This information should be placed on the FSX Web Site.

Megan John of the Forest History Society gave a run down on some of the education programs the Forest History Society is carrying out.

Jerry Williams said work is being done on the history of Region 6. Jerry gave a run down on the list of histories by Region. Very little has been written since 1985 except for Region 6. Since Jerry retired from the job of National Historian, the position has not been filled. It appears the effort to fill that position is not a high priority.

Jay Jensen gave an overview of the 34 member Western Forestry Leadership Coalition,

John Marker talked about the U.S. Endowment, and its trust fund of \$200 million, with earnings available for promoting forestry and aiding forest dependent communities. There are plans in putting out a prospective for proposals from community groups for projects that would provide long term improvement for communities and forest management. As the Endowment moves forward with their investments, there may be opportunities for NAFSR's active involvement. See <http://www.usendowment.org> for full description of US Endowment and its mission.

Senator Wyden is drafting a bill to help cure forest management woes in the Pacific Northwest. Retirees in Region 6 can help to provide input for this bill. There is a need to develop a NAFSR response. John Marker will attempt to get an ad hoc group of retirees to help develop a response.

John Sandor talked about the high cost of energy in some of the native Alaskan villages where unemployment is high. There is a need for affordable energy such as hydro – electric where water from streams in the rain forest areas can be diverted into turbines. John would like NAFSR to partner with the Forest Service and the State to help develop ways to reduce the cost of energy. Electric energy is currently partially dependent on using foreign oil.

Chuck Hendricks talked about the beetle kill situation in Colorado and hopefully the beetle infestation will not cross over to the eastside of the Continental Divide. Chuck gave an update on the "Colorado Foundation for Water Education".

Jack Lavin gave an update on his role as membership chairman. It is apparent that membership needs to be increased. We need a membership who represents a good cross section of the Forest Service. It was indicated that the BLM has between 400 and 500 members in the retiree organization. Some of the actions suggested:

1. Give out pins to new members (I have 75 pins in my inventory).
2. Update NAFSR's brochure to include on the membership sign-up page, a provision stating the first year membership will be complimentary. John Combes will gather comments on revisions from the Board and members and will update the brochure and sign-up page to include free membership and family membership.
3. Look into combining NAFSR with Regional retiree clubs.
4. Board and members visit retiree group meetings and offer complimentary memberships for the first year.

Tuesday evening BOD session: 7:30, July 22, 2008

A presentation on redesigning State and Private Forestry was given by Jim Hubbard and John Phipps. They joined Tom Harbour for a discussion on fire issues.

A question was raised on how NAFSR can help in the fire arena.

Darrel discussed the expansion of NAFSR's Board of Director. Two new board members were selected

Tom Hamilton will represent research and marketing of wood products.
Jim Golden will represent a line officer.

Chris Pyron will be dropped from the Board and a new representative from the southern Rockies will be sought, possibly a retired district ranger.

There is a need to strengthen Region 1's and Region 9's involvement in the board's activities.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held in conjunction with the National Forest Service Retirees Reunion in Missoula in September 2009.

Wednesday, July 23rd.

Tom Harbour gave a presentation on the fire budget. The year 2008 has been a particularly rough fire year – especially in California. If the fire season proceeds at the same rate, funds for fire suppression will be exhausted by mid August. The budget is based on the average fire suppression costs experienced over the last ten years. In recent years, the 10 year average has been exceeded with each year getting worse. This is apparently due to global warming and the creeping of urban interface into the forested areas. The fire triangle consists of Interface, Weather, and Wood. About 78 days per year have been added to the fire season over recent years. The low fire years 1978 and 1979 will be dropping out of the ten year average which will cause the 10 year average to increase significantly.

Fire staffing is an issue. It has been found fire fighters at the GS 4 - 6 levels have a tendency to leave the Forest Service fire fighting crews for higher paid jobs elsewhere. Once employee's reached the GS-7 and higher levels, the pay and other incentives are good enough so fewer leave the Forest Service.

Bob Leaverton, Forest Supervisor of the Pike – San Isabel National Forests said staffing was dismal. It is really hard to recruit personnel. It takes 9 to 12 months to fill a position.. Downsizing, because of budget cuts is a major problem. The Forest is replacing, in effect, fire fighting positions with local fire fighting personnel and state people. Bob has found there is less Forest Service involvement over the years.

The Forest Service philosophy is to use fire as a tool when appropriate. The line officer must make the decision on how to manage fires started by unplanned ignition. Man caused fires are classed as a suppression event while lightning and other natural caused fires are classed as possible fire use fires. Line officers need to more thinking in their decision making process. Fire management experience is very important for line officers and many of today's line officers do not have that experience. Increasing urban interface protection demands is challenging local fire departments. There is a need to have property owners to do more fire proofing, which in some cases could be quite expensive.

Bob Leaverton discussed his experience with the 2008 Land Management Planning Rule since the Pike – San Isabel is one of the first Forests to implement it on the Comanche National Grassland. The new planning rule does not have standards set up like the old planning rule. It is important to get the public involved up front to enable them to get their input in. The planning rule has a lot to do with trust from the public.

Preparation of the plan under the new rule takes less people than the old rule so there is a cost savings. The Pike – San Isabel used a core team from the S.O. with district and resource help as needed.

Chris Risbrudt gave a presentation about a paper mill in Wisconsin where they are in the process of spending \$2 million for the design and engineering of a jet fuel plant that will use 1,900 bone-dry tons a day of wood fiber to produce 40 million gallons of jet fuel annually. A great deal of heat is generated in the process which could heat the paper driers and generate steam for electric production. The plant is estimated to cost close to a half billion dollars. There is a need to make the process cheaper. Possibly NAFSR could get involved in promoting this process.

Dave Dillard gave a presentation on the 2008 Land Management Planning Rule. The planning rule is more adaptive to changes, such as the changing landscape of bio energy, instead of revising the plan when such changes take place. Dave suggested that retirees could get involved in monitoring activities carried out under the forest plan as well as attend forest round tables on the planning process.

Darrel set forward a working plan for NAFSR for the period 2008 – 2009.

1. NAFSR involvement in the wildfire suppression cost process.
2. FY 2010 Forest Service budget and policy recommendations. George will be putting a package together by December. A one page document will outline the policy recommendations.
3. Energy Act of 2007. The portion dealing with biomass material, the use of wood has been excluded from public lands. Need to change the Act to include this.
4. Expansion of the board of directors.
5. Website redesign. Look at developing a separate website for NAFSR.
6. “The Lookout” newsletter and other media work. Need to look at sending out “The Lookout” through the internet even though there a couple dozen members whom do not have internet access. If the decision is made to send the newsletter out through the internet, then a letter to those whom do not have the internet will be sent informing them of our intentions and suggesting options.
7. The preparation of a transition document for the new administration and congress.
8. More effort to find organizations to partner with NAFSR.
9. The look into Wyden’s legislation for the Pacific Northwest.
10. The need to increase NAFSR’s membership. This is discussed on page 3 under Jack Lavin’s report. Need to have a greater range of disciplines represented in NAFSR’s membership. In addition, need to develop a greater connection with retiree groups which should provide NAFSR a better inventory of retirees.
11. NAFSR’s involvement in bio energy.
12. Partner with SAF and other allied organization.
13. NAFSR’s annual meeting for 2009. It is proposed to have a joint meeting with the NMFSS in Missoula during the 2009 reunion in September. The disadvantage of having the meeting in Missoula is the high cost of getting there.
14. NAFSR’s possible involvement in field monitoring of actions taking place under the forest plan on forests and rangelands.
15. The use of grants needs to be discussed to identify who to target and what product should be sought.

16. Areas NAFSR can focus on are biomass and watershed restoration. It is suggested the next booklet to be prepared by NAFSR should be on watershed restoration.

The suggested 2008/2009 work plan elements will be further condensed and put in context by Darrel and George to include suggested goal language suggested by John Marker. (See John's suggestion below.)

George Leonard discussed the John R. McGuire Award. We need to get more nominees, although Ralph Mumme has suggested one nominee. There has been no nominees in the last 2 years.

Topics for the meeting with Chief, Gail Kimbell:

1. Budget outlook.
2. Priorities for NFS, S&PF, and Research.
3. Community relations and the attention of the public on the role of the National Forests.
4. Concern that there will be a change of the Chief after the elections, although a female chief might survive the change in the administration. It is suggested NAFSR look at the possibility of talking to the transition team about this after the election.
5. The focus on water issues.
6. What would the Chief have NAFSR do as far as issues on the transition paper.

Wednesday evening July 23rd

Rick Cables Regional Forester for Region 2 discussed some of the issues he and his people were dealing with in the Rocky Mountains. Two major issues were the insect epidemic along the Wyoming-Colorado Front Range and the increasing interest by water agencies in watershed management to reduce risks such as fire.

Rocky Mountain Station Director Sam Foster outlined changes in the Station whereby the organization is centered on seven basic research program areas. The scientists for each program are located throughout the area served by the Station.

Thursday, July 24th

Susan Mockenhaupt, Program Manager for Urban & Community Forestry, discussed programs and issues. There is greater interest in energy conservation. As an example, Mayor Bloomberg is heading up a campaign to plant 1 million trees in New York City.

Many state foresters do not have the capacity to work with city foresters, although Colorado and Idaho state foresters have a good working relationship with the communities.

Recently, June 23, the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution encouraging Congress to fund the Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program at \$100 million annually.

Small grants are being given out to communities to help develop parks and to plant trees.

Susan discussed the various funding levels. State foresters support the \$50 million dollar level. There is a need to look for other funding sources to supplement funding from the Forest Service.

John Marker suggested a specific goal with four specific objectives for NAFSR in the coming year.

Goal: To assure our grandchildren have and can enjoy healthy forests.

Short term (one year) objectives:

1. One year from now, NAFSR to have 500 members.
2. Finance an on call writer-editor to help NAFSR members with public letters, papers and other written projects. Members need to run NAFSR identified documents by the Chair or CEO before release to public, media or politicians.
4. Need to develop a working relationship with 15 like-minded organizations or groups with similar objectives.
5. Over the next year establish a good working relationship with the Congressional delegation from OR, ID, MT, NV, CA and CO.

Next subject is the FSX website:

1. Ray Bunster is looking for a co-manager to eventually replace him.
2. Redesign the website to make it more visible.
3. Need to develop a website solely for NAFSR.

John Sandor made a motion to allow \$2,000 annually for a NAFSR website. Ralph Mumme seconded the motion and it passed by a majority.

Darrel, stated there is a need to attract more financial resources. George stated if we want to go after grant money, we need to have a concrete proposal of a product people can buy into.

Dave Hessel stated that NAFSR needs more visibility which will make it easier to get grant money. The website, particularly if NAFSR has its own website, would be a big step towards visibility.

Session with Chief Gail Kimbell and Region 5's Regional Forester Randy Moore.

The Chief is focused on 4 threats:

1. Conservation of open space.
2. Strategy for evasive species.
3. Unmanaged recreation and travel management.
4. Hazardous fuel reduction – need to treat more acreage.

Some of the challenges are:

1. Changing ecosystems, climate changes, and water for agriculture and municipal use. There is a great need for healthy ecosystems across the United States. Should forests be considered in the carbon market? Forests can sequester 10% of the carbon emissions.
2. Water is critical to the health of the forests. Sixty per cent of western communities use water that originates on the National forests.
3. Kids are the ones whom are going to manage the National forests after we are gone. Today, youthful voices are not getting much involves in the National forests or forest issues.
4. More and more partnerships are being used for many programs. An example is that research is very much tied in with the universities.

The budget was discussed. The 2009 budget was submitted to the Department and the OMB at the same time the Farm Bill was submitted. Flame Act was supposed to move major fire suppression out of the regular Forest Service budget, but was amended to allow the average fire suppression costs over the last ten years.

The 2010 package emphasized increased funding for:

1. Vegetative management – forest health.
2. Recreation management.
3. Climate change research.
4. Wood for energy.

The “Kids in the Woods” program is being emphasized as well as strategy for water planning. Fires impacting watersheds is a major issue.

Randy Moore indicated that Cal Fire has been emphasizing their efforts on homes being threatened and loss by wildfires. Based on President Bush's visit of the California fires, there appears to be greater emphasis being placed by the Administration on watershed, timber, and recreation values. The President's flyover the northern California fires showed how fires were nearly stopped when they hit treated forest lands which indicates what effect the Healthy Forest Act could have.

Region 5 and research are working on wetlands to quantify increased water output from restored wetlands.

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Gail stated recruiting Forest Service personnel is going forward quite well. Many people now want to get a job with the Forest Service. We are attracting young and middle age people. Biggest struggle is recruiting people in remote areas. One of the reasons is there is very little social life.

Human Resources – there are problems with the handling of employees pay and other issues. Need to work with means to correct the current problems. There was too much loss when H.R. moved to Albuquerque.

Randy talked about personnel. The consent decree has weighed heavily in Region 5. One Forest has 9 female and 3 male leadership positions, which was viewed by someone as a hostile atmosphere.

Most people are doing great work. Apparently consent decree issues are diminishing. Randy is optimistic about the future of personnel issues. Staff is being structured in some small towns to act as a fire department and this needs to be reviewed. Need to make the Forest Service a relevant organization with a projected population of California of 62 million people.

George made a request to Randy to help recognize those who might deserve the John R. McGuire Award.

Other subjects:

Tommy Thompson suggested some ways the retirees can help out the Forest Service. A paper like George's four pager can be of great help. Retirees and active employees can keep each other informed of current issues and the current culture.

Randy stated the \$105 million settlement from Union Pacific will be invested and the interest used for reforestation.

John A. Combes
Secretary - Treasurer
August 5, 2008