

DRAFT

Minutes

National Association of Forest Service Retirees
Annual General Membership and Board of Directors Meeting
Hilton Garden Inn
Missoula, Montana
September 7, 2009

Attendees:

Board Members and Officers

George Leonard, Chair (past)	Larry Payne
Jim Golden, Chair (present)	Max Peterson
Darrel Kenops, Executive Director	Dick Pfilf
Dale Bosworth	Dale Robertson
Jim Brewer	John Sandor
Tom Hamilton	Dave Spores
Gail Kimbell	Stan Tixier
Jack Lavin	Al West
Doug Leisz	John Combes. Secretary / Treasurer
John Marker	Ken White, Webmaster
Ralph Mumme	

George Leonard opened the meeting at 1:00 PM. George gave a brief on how and why NAFSR was formed back in the year 2000. Initially, the Association was set up to help Regions in their forest planning activities but instead provided input and assistance on revising the planning regulations. George stated one of NAFSR's major programs is awarding the John R. McGuire Award to Forest Service people who do an outstanding job in getting work done.

George recognized the outstanding work done by Darrel Kenops, John Marker, John Combes, and past webmaster Ray Bunster. Ray recently pasted the webmaster duties on to Ken White.

Doug Leisz stated the Forest Service is taking on six additional Job Corps Centers from other Departments. NAFSR should get involved in various aspects of coordination between the Agency and Centers. Jim Webb gave an update on the newly acquired Job Corps Centers along with the challenges they will present. He asked NAFSR to give the Job Corps all its support. A motion was asked by George Leonard to adopt a resolution to provide support to the Job Corps. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

George Leonard discussed the need for a rationale way to fund fire fighting. Because of the current big ticket issues as healthcare, global warming, the economy, and the war in Afghanistan; there is likelihood the funding issue may be set aside. NAFSR needs to

provide as much support as possible on this issue. Also, NAFSR needs to take on an active role in the revision of the Planning Regulations.

George Leonard indicated that there appears very little interest by outside organizations in testifying on behalf of the Forest Service during hearings on the Forest Service Appropriations over the last few years, although there is some recent improvements. There has not been the emphasis on funding reforestation due to the curtailment of timber cutting. However, there is a definite need to bring reforestation funding back out in front due to deforestation after forest fires.

George stated NAFSR need to be involved in providing professional assistance in the area of fire management as well as the need to get involved in the Roadless issue.

Ways need to be found to attract more retirees to join NAFSR. With many major issues facing the Forest Service, a strong retiree organization dealing with some or all of these issues would be a great asset to the Forest Service.

George introduced James Golden as the new Chair of the Board of Directors. Jim gave a brief update on his career from District Ranger to Deputy Regional Forester in Region-6.

Keith Argow offered to give NAFSR a \$5.00 donation for each new member whom joins the Association.

John Combes gave the treasurer's report. The report covered the period January 1 through August 15, 2009. The checking account balance on August 15th was \$9,561.16. The value of the CD was \$5,121.07. Membership stood at 409 members with 17 new members since January 1 and 18 members dropped because they haven't paid their 2008 dues. Two members were listed as deceased resulting in a net loss of 2 members since January 1. Motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Darrel Kenops presented a summary of the proposed 2009 – 2010 Work Plan.

Max Peterson suggested the Board and regular members provide input dealing with legislation to their elected officials using e-mail and "snail mail". He said it is important to contact local Congressional Staffers as the Members of Congress do have a "Monday morning" discussion on the topics happening in their Districts.

Al West gave the Fire Management Committee Report focusing on fire policy. There was a lot of input from State fire organizations, congressional reports, citizen reports, and other input. Some of the findings are:

1. There are three types of fire:
 - a. Wild fire – man caused
 - b. Prescribed fire
 - c. Wildland fire caused by natural events.

2. Vales at risk are not being looked at to the degree they should be.

Some of the changes in policy will include classifying fire into two types.

- a. Wildfire – human caused which will require suppression.
- b. Prescribed fire – natural or artificially set and which will be used as a tool. In certain instances, suppression may take place.

Continuing concerns are:

1. Currently, only 9 percent of Forest Service employees are involved in fire whereas years ago it was nearly 100 percent.
2. Lack of the availability of resource personnel during fires.
3. Many line people lack fire experience.
4. During the Station Fire in Southern California, no upper level Forest Service official was covered by the media at the time Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the fire, which was well covered by the media. However, Regional Forester Randy Moore spent most of the previous week in Southern California visiting the fire.

A couple of issues are:

1. The erosion of relationship with cooperators. Forest Supervisors and fire staff have very little relationship with fire chiefs and other local fire organizations.
2. Fire fighting safety

Jim Golden indicated there should be more emphasis of the review of fire in what went wrong and what went right.

Max Peterson brought up a couple of questions:

1. What time of day does the greatest progress in fighting fire occur?
2. What time of year when it is the best time to use prescribe fire?

Tom Harbour stated it is very important that line officers need to know how to manage fires. Also, there is a need to get a greater portion of Forest Service personnel involved in fires and fire management.

Doug Leisz stated there are some local Forest Service employees doing some great work; both in fire management and other activities, and these people need to be recognized.

George Leonard stated we need to continue with Al West's effort and his Committee should be re-chartered.

The subject of Forest Service morale was discussed. Gail Kimbell stated there are several issues affecting employee morale.

1. Taking funds from projects in the field for fighting fire takes a toll on the employees.
2. The constantly changing political directions such as the ever changing forest planning rules have a negative effect on morale.

3. The recent survey on Forest Service morale issues also had an adverse effect.
4. Other tough issues facing the Forest Service.

Gail and others feels we have a lot of good employees.

Membership was discussed. Jack Lavin challenged each Board member to get two new members this coming year. Jack stated that the next issue of "The Lookout" needs to include a membership application form for use by the members to recruit new members. This was confirmed by Darrel Kenops.

Stan Tixier indicated that the John R. McGuire award has been very important to those whom have received it.

Past Chair George Leonard and past Webmaster Ray Bunster were presented with well deserved awards for their outstanding work with the Association.

Max Peterson gave a very nice farewell to George Leonard.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 PM.

John A. Combes
Secretary / Treasurer
October 3, 2009