

## 2022 NAFSR Accomplishments Report

### FS and NAFSR Leadership

In 2022, we had multiple coordination contacts with Chief Randy Moore, Associate Chief Angela Coleman, Deputy Chiefs, and other key Forest Service leadership. **Steve Ellis** was able to meet with Chief Moore and Associate Chief Coleman at the Yates Building while in Washington, DC last spring. Steve was also able to meet in Jackson Hole, Wyoming last fall with Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Meryl Harrell.

Also in 2022, we bid adieu to **Jane Darnell** for her invaluable service as our Vice-Chair and welcomed Montana native **Jamie Connell** as Acting Vice-Chair. Jamie worked for both the Forest Service and BLM during her career which included a tour in Washington, DC. More of Jamie's background can be found on our website. We are grateful to Jamie for agreeing to bring her experience and talents into the Vice-Chair position.

**Doug Crandall** continued doing exceptional work for NAFSR as our Congressional Liaison. Doug's contacts on Capitol Hill were invaluable in fulfilling the advocacy part of our mission. Doug has also been helpful as a reviewer of NAFSR media statements and letters to various policy makers. We had contacts from several local and national media outlets during the year including *The Washington Post* and *E&E News*.

**Bill Timko** attended the National Association of Counties (NACO) meeting in Washington, DC in March 2022. Bill had many conversations with county representatives and the NACO public lands board.

A big shout out to all who continue to serve on our Board of Directors. Thank you all for serving and for your assistance in helping NAFSR accomplish its missions. NAFSR purchased a liability insurance policy in 2022 that covers our Officers, Board members, and Committees while performing in their NAFSR roles. In January 2022 our annual dues went from \$25 to \$30, and lifetime membership dues from \$250 to \$300. Still quite a bargain!

Our financial situation continues to improve as does our membership. **Johnny Hodges** reported that we gained 50 new members in 2022. We once again express gratitude to Johnny and Ellen, as well as our webmaster **Bill Disbrow** for their invaluable service.

In 2022, Johnny pushed out 23 official announcements, notices, and updates of NAFSR work accomplishments to the Board and membership. Bill has once again kept our organization's "front door" current and looking good. He made improvements to the website that make it more interesting and easier to find information.

### Reunion

NAFSR held an informal open board meeting at the 2022 Forest Service Retiree Reunion held in beautiful Lake Tahoe. A photo of the meeting can be found on our website. NAFSR was quite visible throughout the reunion, and we gained a good bit of visibility.

Several members of our Board met with the Chief and some of his staff during one of the lunch breaks. The highlights of this session are posted on the NAFSR website under November 10, 2022, Board Meeting minutes.

### **Aspen Institute/TNC Wildfire Resiliency Initiative**

In August 2021, The Nature Conservancy, and the Aspen Institute (Aspen/TNC) launched a new partnership to create a document that could serve as a roadmap for improving wildfire resilience. It would include potential solutions for mitigating risks to catastrophic wildfire.

NAFSR was pleased to be a partner in this effort, along with the Forest Service and an assembled group of leading voices, policy makers and stakeholders. NAFSR was represented at the partnership's 3-day September session in Jackson Hole, WY where potential solutions were surfaced and discussed.

Our NAFSR fire committee followed up in October by reviewing the group's 19-page draft and providing feedback via zoom session with Aspen/TNC representatives. A final report is expected to be published in 2023.

### **John Freemuth Student Congress**

The Andrus Center for Public Policy partnered with the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) and NAFSR to host the 2022 Inaugural *John Freemuth Student Congress* held in October 2022, in Boise.

**Jim Caswell** served as our primary contact for organizing the event. Board members **Becki Heath** and **Jamie Connell** actively participated in the session, as did Jim. Photos and session highlights are posted on our website.

### **Managing Wildland Fire Position Paper**

NAFSR took a very active role on the catastrophic fire front again in 2022. We prepared a position paper titled *Managing Wildland Fire, Including the Concept of "Managed Fire"*, and gave it wide distribution, including Senate and House leadership and germane Committees (17 members in all), all Western Governors, Association of Counties for each State, NGA, WGA, NACO, and the National Association of State Foresters.

### **American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP)**

This was a year of transition as **Sandra Holsten** handed off the duties of NAFSR Liaison with AWCP to **Kevin Martin**. We salute Sandra for her many years of stellar service as NAFSR's chief diplomat to this important organization.

Steve Ellis (in person) and Sandra Holsten (virtually) attended the AWCP meeting in Spokane, WA on March 15, 2022. The meeting notes are posted on our website.

In 2022, NAFSR joined many other AWCP organizations in thanking Johnny Morris, the Morris Family, and Bass Pro Shops for their passion and commitment to ensure a future for wildlife, wild places, and our outdoor heritage.

NAFSR and our AWCP partners requested the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources favorably report the Bipartisan Manchin/Daines Amendment as a Substitute to S. 2561, also known as the "Cottonwood Fix".

We also expressed our support for the *Save Our Sequoias Act*, and our shared support for the American System of Conservation Funding as it is currently configured under the *1937 Pittman-Robertson Act*. It currently provides for a “user pays-public benefit” in the American System of Conservation Funding.

We also added our NAFSR logo to the *1937 Pittman-Robertson Act* - 85 years celebration letter from AWCP.

We signed an AWCP letter expressing our position on the Forest Service’s and Bureau of Land Management’s efforts to define old growth and mature forests (Fed. 87 Fed. Reg. 42493-42494, No. 2022-15185). In addition, we shared with AWCP the similar joint statement by NAFSR, PLF and the Society of American Foresters (SAF).

Finally, we signed an AWCP letter urging passage of the bipartisan *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* (H.R. 2773/S. 2372).

NAFSR was supportive of AWCP’s position to establish a natural resources trust fund in Montana – “The Montana Legacy Fund” with a quote from Chair Steve Ellis - “The National Association of Forest Service Retirees understands the important of investing in wildlife habitat and public access on our public and private lands today and into the future. The Montana Legacy Fund could be a generational investment in an amazing Western state”.

### **Infrastructure Law Funding Implementation**

There is certainly a good deal of money coming the agency’s way as part of the new infrastructure law, and no lack of opportunity for NAFSR to engage on many program fronts, including our offer to be at the table on the new *Wildfire Commission*. Some of our members have been involved in various facets of the new legislation including such things as landscape restoration, hazard mitigation, recreation infrastructure, planning, and fuels treatment project list development.

NAFSR will continue to stay engaged in this matter as our capacity allows. It is important to bear in mind that our role is to be strategic, helpful, supportive, and forward thinking. It is not NAFSR’s role to be operational.

### **Other Notable Advocacy Accomplishments**

- Joint NAFSR/PLF/SAF statement in response to President Biden’s Executive Order 14072, on managing mature and old-growth forests.
- Contributed to the Forest Climate Working Group and SAF response to USDA climate change proposals listed in the *Federal Register*.
- Joint NAFSR/PLF comments in response to a request for information to inform the Interagency Working Group on Mining Regulations, Laws, and Permitting as requested through the *Federal Register*.
- Letter to Chief Moore, along with our NAFSR position paper titled, Managing Wildland Fire, including the Concept of “Managed Fire”.
- Letter to Undersecretary Wilkes congratulating him on being confirmed as USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

- Nomination letter recommending **Patty Grantham** to be appointed to the new Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission.

## **NAFSR Committees**

### **Climate Committee**

NAFSR created a Climate Committee in 2022 with **Rich Guldin** agreeing to serve as Chair. Rich is also NAFSR's representative to the Forest Climate Working Group. The committee has been working on a climate change position paper that we hope will get Board approval this winter. NAFSR continues to stay engaged in climate change matters on many fronts.

### **Fire Committee**

A key accomplishment for the fire committee was finalizing a position paper: *Managing Wildland Fire, Including the Concept of "Managed Fire"*. The Chief, in his letter of December 20, 2021, reinstated the prescribed fire program which had been on pause, and reaffirmed the use and need for fire as a management tool. NAFSR's position paper was released in February and supported the use of fire as part of the toolbox for fire managers and line officers.

Committee members participated in a zoom interview with a General Accounting Office (GAO) work team. GAO was reviewing the federal wildland firefighting workforce in response to a bipartisan Congressional request. GAO was interested in having our perspectives on challenges related to the federal wildland firefighter workforce. This past November, GAO released their report titled *Wildland Fire: Barriers to Recruitment and Retention of Federal Wildland Firefighters* ([GAO-23-105517](#)). We thank **Mike Dudley** and the committee for their input and engagement.

In June, **Synthia Zerr**, retired Deputy Forest FMO from the Rogue River-Siskiyou National, Oregon became the 9<sup>th</sup> member of the fire committee.

In November of 2021 Steve Ellis as Chair of NAFSR and Mike Dudley NAFSR Fire Committee Chair participated via Zoom in a kickoff of the Aspen/TNC workshop on Wildfire Resilience.

This work continued through several stakeholder sessions culminating in a draft report; *Roadmap for Wildfire Resilience: Solutions for a Paradigm Shift*. The fire committee participated in a Zoom session with Aspen/TNC to review and provide comments on the draft document. The final report has yet to be released.

Mike Dudley participated in a Forest Service National Prescribed Fire Review briefing in September.

One final note, the committee provided review and input to Rich Guldin on the draft NAFSR position paper(s), *Climate Change Effects on Our National's Forest*.

### **Restoration Committee**

The restoration committee chair position transitioned from **Kurt Wiedenmann** to **Jose Linares** on August 1, 2022. A big thanks to Kurt for his leadership over the past year!

The restoration committee drafted a comment letter for the Board in response to the Forest Service/BLM *Federal Register* notice requesting comments on old growth and mature forest definitions and inventory. The response was coordinated with the PLF and SAF. Ed Shepard (PLF), Danielle Watson (SAF) and Richard Guldin (Climate Change Team Chair) assisted in this effort.

Jose Linares, along with Steve Ellis, participated in a briefing by Brian Ferebee to key partners on hazardous fuels accomplishments to date and the next level of investments under the *Inflation Reduction Act* as well as the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. Notes from the briefing were emailed to the Board.

The restoration committee's responsibilities were expanded to include reforestation. **Bill Timko** was added to the team for his expertise on this topic. With Bill Timko's help, **Hank Kashdan** was hired through the ACES program to provide guidance and assistance to the Forest Service reforestation program manager in implementing the increase in reforestation activities. This increase is primarily from passage of the *REPLANT Act* which removed the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund.

### **Recreation Committee**

The committee remained active with nine members engaged during the year. Committee members maintained contact with Forest Service national recreation and wilderness directors and staff, and other key external contacts.

The committee tracked several pieces of legislation including the *SHRED Act* and the *Outdoor Recreation Act* which encompassed several other standalone bills. None of the proposed bills passed during the 2022 congress.

The highlight of the year for the recreation committee was organizing and hosting the recreation panel at the National Forest Service Retiree Reunion at Lake Tahoe. **Nora Rasure**, lead for the recreation committee, moderated the panel of three speakers who provided national, state, and local perspectives about recreation.

Chris French, Deputy Chief National Forest System, shared the agency's plans for developing a new 5-year national recreation strategy and plan. Colin Robertson, Administrator for the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, highlighted the multi-agency collaboration and partnerships that culminated in a Nevada Agreement for Recreation Shared Stewardship. Julie Regan, External Affairs Chief and Deputy Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, shared the collaborative work focused on developing a Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan.

All these presentations are posted on our website.

### **Awards Committee**

We received two nominations and acceptance for the **John R. McGuire Award** (JRM) this year.

The first was awarded to **Mike Munoz**, District Ranger on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forests. Working with the National Museum of Forest

Service History and Region 1, the JRM Award was presented to Mike on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the James B. Yule Pavilion.

The second JRM Award will be awarded to Dr. Robert Ross, Supervisory Research General Engineer of the Forest Products Laboratory located in Madison, Wisconsin. Dr. Ross was nominated by former Director of the Forest Products Lab **Chris Risbrudt** and submitted by former Chief Dale Bosworth on behalf of Chris. This JRM Award is scheduled to be presented in April 2023.

Working with leadership of the National Museum of Forest Service History and NAFSR Board members, two candidates were selected for the **Leisz Leadership Award**. **Tom Thompson** and **Rich Stem** were selected for their outstanding leadership for both the Museum and NAFSR.

Both have served NAFSR and the Museum as members of their Board of Directors. Tom has served as Chair of the Museum's Board of Directors for the past several years and Rich as Chair of the museum's forest products committee which successfully acquired multiple donations for construction of the Conservation Legacy Center. Both awards were presented at the Forest Service Reunion in South Lake Tahoe.

Thank you, **Phil Aune** and all members of the Awards Committee, for another stellar year of service to our organization.

*Steve*

Steve Ellis, Chair  
NAFSR

January 17, 2023