

Final Notes
NAFSR Board of Directors Conference Call
August 6, 2020

On the Call

Jim Caswell, Larry Payne, Jim Golden, Rich Stem, Tom Thompson, Greg Griffith, Jack Troyer, Mike Rogers, Ranotta McNair, Mac Gramley, Don Howlett, Jane Kollmeyer, Bill Timko, Becki Lockett Heath, Al West, Phil Aune and Johnny Hodges

Membership, Finances and Constitution/Bylaws Update – Johnny Hodges

We currently have 701 members which includes 14 members that have not paid their 2020 dues. These members will be given one final opportunity to pay their dues this month or their membership will be suspended. We have gained 36 new members so far this year.

Financial summary – our current balance is \$31,077 with \$11,138 in our long-term investment and \$19,939 in cash and CD's.

Johnny is currently working on updating the Constitution and Bylaws. The document that is posted on the website is out of date. There are two sets of changes –

In December 2015, the Board agreed to make changes in membership categories and dues. At that time, we had five categories of membership – regular, associate, sustaining, contributing and Golden. We eliminated the sustaining and contributing categories. The associate members were paying \$15 annually. Their dues were changed to \$25 so all members were paying the same amount, except for Golden members (over age 80) which remain complimentary. We also added a Lifetime Membership with dues of \$250.

In early 2017, Jim Caswell and Jane Kollmeyer prepared a succession plan for the Board of Directors. During the August 2017 Board meeting, it was decided to include the succession plan in the Constitution/Bylaws document.

The revised Constitution and Bylaws will be completed later this month and posted on our website.

Legislative Update – Bill Timko

Great American Outdoors Act

On August 4, the president signed “The Great American Outdoors Act” which provides permanent, full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and establishes the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund. These two programs, with broad bipartisan support, will invest in our national parks and public lands and support American conservation long into the future.

For more than 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has used money from offshore oil and gas drilling royalties to conserve our public lands and waters across the country.

While LWCF is popular, Congress has never funded it at the legally permitted level. The historic bipartisan lands package that became law in early 2019 permanently authorized LWCF to receive \$900 million annually.

The Fund would be divided among five federal land management agencies, with the National Park Service receiving 70 percent of the funds, the U.S. Forest Service receiving 15 percent, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Education each receiving 5 percent of the funds.

The Fund would receive 50 percent of unallocated revenues generated from energy development on federal lands and waters from fiscal year 2021 through fiscal year 2025, totaling up to \$9.5 billion over the five-year period.

The Forest Service has a current infrastructure backlog of \$5.2 billion. Their share of the Fund will generate \$285 million annually. The Forest Service called and thanked NAFSR for the work we did on infrastructure which helped get the FS into the Bill.

REPLANT Act

“Repairing Existing Public Lands by Adding Trees Act” or REPLANT Act, has bi-partisan support. It removes the cap on Reforestation Trust Funds. It is not expected to pass as a stand-alone Bill, so they are looking to attach it to some other legislation.

The Highlights -

The REPLANT Act would:

- Remove the cap on the reforestation trust fund, so that the Forest Service would receive all the monies generated from imported wood products and lumber tariffs.
- The Forest Service currently receives \$30 million/year from the Reforestation Trust Fund. The yearly authorization for the Reforestation Trust Fund has not increased since it was established 40 years ago.
- Monies are generated from imported wood products and lumber tariffs. The 10-year annual average amount of tariffs collected on those products is nearly \$124 million per year (\$309 million in 2019).
- The Reforestation Trust fund provides most of the funding for post-disturbance reforestation on national forests. Reforestation needs caused by wildfire, insects

and disease, and weather events have increased and collectively account for 85% of reforestation needs on national forests.

- To address our current and anticipated reforestation needs over the next 10 years, it is estimated to cost approximately \$1.8 billion, or \$183 million annually.
- Raising or eliminating the cap on the reforestation trust fund would help to close the funding gap and enable the Agency to more fully address reforestation and stand improvement needs across the national forests.
- Require the Chief to work with the Regional Foresters to create a list of priority reforestation projects to promote effective reforestation following unplanned events.
- Emphasize using Stewardship contracting and Good Neighbor Agreement authorities to conduct reforestation activities and directs the Forest Service to quantify the backlog of replanting needs; and
- Require an annual report to Congress on progress and number of acres in need of reforestation.

Firefighter Pay and Covid

The Senate is looking at firefighter pay and Covid. Firefighters now they lose everything if they test positive.

Operations Updates and Status – Jim Caswell

We have held two presentations (Microsoft Teams) with the Chief and her staff, primarily focused on fire. These presentations were an outgrowth from talks with the Chief about Covid and fire.

There were 70 people on the first call and 45 on the second (12 FS and 33 retirees). It is a learning experience for members not familiar with the platform used, but still a positive event. The Chief stayed with us the entire time. We will work with the Chief on future fire presentations.

The next webinar with Mark Finney is a learning experience. The title is “The Essential Role of Fire in Fire Management”. It will be presented on the Zoom Meetings platform on August 19. It will be recorded and posted on our website for anyone unable to attend.

Jim has held several discussions with the Chief regarding our Workforce Capacity Report. She suggested a call with her and her staff to discuss our issues. We scheduled a call in July that was canceled. It appears the call will not occur until September. We are most interested in administrative changes that do not require any budget increases, but will help improve efficiency in day to day operations.

Jim and Larry have completed a Communications Plan Outline. We need someone on the Board to lead a team to work on the plan. We will wait until after the call with the Chief before deciding what to do.

CEQ and NEPA – Ranotta McNair and Rich Stem

Ranotta – A summary of the CEQ NEPA Final Rule was sent out to members and posted on our website. Since it is within 6 months of the end of this term of office, it could all be changed by a new administration. About 60% of our comments were acknowledged. There will be litigation from day 1. It will be a windy road for the FS.

Rich – The NEPA regs developed by the FS will fit under umbrella of the CEQ changes. They are being held in limbo by the administration. The final has not been published and there are a lot of questions about what is going on. It is critical that these go out very soon because of the timing and risk in waiting. The Agency has been ready since the end of May for publication.

We shared documents explaining the Regional Forester Fire update process to the Board last month. Rich said that John Phipps in the WO sent letters to RF's about the process. There are lots of new RF's across the Regions. Board liaisons need to work with their RF's.

Rich discussed the Forest Service and County Governments Guidebook which was produced by the Forest Service and National Association of Counties, working closely with NACO Liaison, Randy Phillips, and others. A link to the Guidebook was shared with our members and is posted on our website.

Senators Daines and Feinstein introduced the "Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act of 2020" this week. They are now hammering out the details within the bill on what will be of aid and what may not. There are some interesting items in there that will help as well as items that may not. Bi-partisanship is the key.

Decision Making, (does silence mean consent) – Larry Payne

- It is sometimes difficult to get a quorum for votes.
- There was a question of voting versus getting opinions. We need to be clear on what requires a decision.
- if someone is strongly opposed on an issue, they will vote no. If they do not care, they may not vote. Maybe if we do not hear from you, we assume you are a yes. Silence is consent.
- Due to time constraints, we will discuss more later. Board members were asked to send in their thoughts to Johnny to compile.

John R. McGuire Award, Board Decision Protocols, Discuss/Agree – Phil Aune

The award to the Pikes Peak Ranger District was to be presented at the Rocky Mountaineers Annual Gathering in September. Since the Gathering was postponed this year, the award will be presented to the District in the next couple of months.

A decision protocols paper was sent out to the Board earlier. There is currently no established role for the Board in decisions about awards. The Awards Committee proposed to “recommend” awards and Board will “approve/deny” awards. Phil Aune made a motion and Jane Kollmeyer seconded to adopt the recommendation in the paper. The motion passed.

2021 Forest Service Reunion, NAFSR Welcome Reception Sponsorship – Phil Aune

The planning committee for the 2021 Forest Service Reunion has asked NAFSR to sponsor the Welcome Reception on the first evening of the event. The cost would range from \$3,415 for 500 attendees to \$4,400 for 600 attendees. The Board decided not to make a decision at this time.

Transition 2021 (A Brainstorm for Action) – Jack Troyer

Jack would like to put together a small group to brainstorm a transition plan for either a new administration or possibly a new Secretary of Agriculture. We can use our last transition plan and our program of work for 2021 to help us with strategic thinking. Board members will let Jack know if they are interested in joining the group.

Next Board of Directors Meeting

The next Board meeting will be held on November 5. We will use Zoom Meeting rather than a conference call.

Johnny Hodges, Secretary

August 11, 2020