



**NAFSR ANNUAL BOARD MEETING NOTES (FINAL)
February 8 and 9, 2022
via
ZOOM MEETING**

Day 1 - Tuesday, February 8

Attendees

Board Members - Steve Ellis (Chair), Jane Darnell (Vice Chair), Jim Caswell (Past Chair), Rich Stem (R-1), Sharon Friedman (R-2), Greg Griffith (R-3), Lynn Sprague (R-4), Mike Rogers (R-5 south), Steve Eubanks (R-5 North), Becki Heath (R-6), Malcolm Gramley (R-8), Don Howlett (R-9), Sandra Holsten (R-10), Rich Guldin (Research), Doug Crandall (Congressional Liaison), Gene Blakenbaker (National), Ranotta McNair (National), Nora Rasure (National), Susan Skalski (National), Bill Timko (National), Jack Troyer (National), Jeanne Wade Evans (National), Dale Bosworth (Chief Emeritus), Ed Shepard (PLF Liaison)

Committee Chairs – Phil Aune (Awards), Mike Dudley (Fire), Nora Rasure (Recreation), Kurt Wiedenmann (Restoration)

Staff - Bill Disbrow (Webmaster) and Johnny Hodges (Secretary)

Washington Office (on Tuesday afternoon) – Chief Randy Moore, Brian Ferebee (WRIT Team Leader), Alex Friend (Deputy Chief R&D), Jaelith Hall-Rivera (Deputy Chief State and Private), Robert Velasco (CFO)

Others (on Tuesday morning) – Mary Jo Rugwell (President, Public Lands Foundation), Tom Thompson and Lisa Tate (NMFSS)

Opening Remarks - Steve Ellis

- Welcome to new Board members - Doug Crandall, Jane Darnell, and Sharon Friedman.

- Recognized Jim Caswell and Larry Payne for their years of service as chair and vice chair. We have purchased two trees that will be planted on the campus of the Museum of Forest Service Conservation Legacy Center in Missoula and with plaques that will honor Jim and Larry.
- NAFSR is asked to co-sign many letters that are drafted by other organizations on a wide variety of issues. Our point people for this workload are Sandra Holsten and Doug Crandall, although some requests come to other Board members. Sandra handles all correspondence that comes from American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP).
- Sandra agreed to provide Johnny with copies of all final letters that NAFSR cosigns. She explained that the turnaround time on this correspondence is usually way too short to provide Board review. It was also noted that opportunities to edit or wordsmith occur well before we are asked to sign. So essentially the choice is to sign the letter as we receive it or not sign it. There are exceptions to all of this, but generally that is the procedure. Sandra said that depending on the issue she often checks with our leadership or various team leaders.
- We do not have a good way of tracking these requests or the final version of letters that are approved. Johnny will work with Sandra and Doug and others to develop a simple tracking system for the purpose of added transparency of activities to other Board members.

2021 Accomplishments Report – Steve Ellis

Steve did a brief review of our 2021 accomplishments. His report (below) was approved by the Board.

2021 NAFSR Accomplishments Report

Changes in NAFSR and Agency Leadership: 2021 was a year of transition for both NAFSR and the Forest Service. The agency bid a fond farewell to Chief **Vicki Christiansen** and welcomed **Randy Moore** as the agency's 20th Chief in a 116-year history. The transition from one experienced and respected career professional to another was seamless.

Our welcoming letter to Randy expressed our desire to continue the open and welcoming relationship NAFSR has built with the Chief's office. In 2021, we had multiple coordination contacts with the Chief(s) via text, email, calls and an occasional Zoom session. I was able to meet with Chief Christiansen at the Yates Building while in Washington, DC over Memorial Day weekend. Our coordination with agency leadership also included similar communication/sessions with Deputy Chiefs and key staff, and some Departmental officials on a variety of current issues.

As for NAFSR, we bid adieu to **Jim Caswell** and **Larry Payne** as our Chair and Vice-Chair respectively and thank them both for their invaluable service. The good news is, they have both agreed to remain active in our organization and continue helping us in an advisory capacity. We are grateful to **Jane Darnell** for agreeing to bring her experience and talents into

the Vice-Chair position. Both Jane and I appreciate all your help and support as we transition into our new NAFSR roles.

I know we were all pleased to accept **Doug Crandall's** offer to serve as our Congressional Liaison. Doug has always had tremendous respect and credibility in the agency, the Department and on Capitol Hill. He will be an enormous asset for NAFSR in fulfilling the advocacy part of our mission. Another new piece that seems to be working out was the formation of a "kitchen cabinet" to assist Jane and I during the Chair and Vice-Chair transition. It currently consists of Jim Caswell, **Jack Troyer**, **Rich Stem**, Jane Darnell and me. It may be a function worth keeping in some fashion.

Several new Board members joined or replaced outgoing Board members this year. Thank you all for serving on our Board and for your assistance in responding to the many inquiries we received from the public requesting information or help. While on the topic of our Board, we voted this year to purchase a liability insurance policy that would cover our Officers, Board members, and Committees performing in their NAFSR roles. The Board also voted to increase our annual dues from \$25 to \$30, and lifetime membership dues from \$250 to \$300.

Our financial situation continues to improve as does our membership. **Johnny Hodges** reported that we had a net gain of 38 members in 2021. We once again express gratitude to Johnny and our webmaster **Bill Disbrow** for their invaluable service. Johnny pushed out 32 official announcements, notices, and updates of NAFSR work accomplishments to the Board and membership. Bill once again, has kept our organization's "front door" current and looking good. He made improvements on the website that make it more interesting and easier to find information.

NAFSR created two new Standing Committees (Restoration and Recreation) in 2021, realigned and repurposed the existing Fire Committee, chartered a Communication Team and approved a communication strategy because of the team's work. We also developed an operations statement on: "*Standing Committees and Teams Responsibilities and Expectations*". Accomplishments of our three primary committees are summarized in this document.

NAFSR continues to stay engaged in climate change matters on many fronts. **Rich Guldin** remains faithfully involved and on point with the science and other climate change issues on our behalf. As you all probably know, the Job Corps program was on shaky ground for a brief period during the last Administration. Thankfully this historic and beneficial program survived. We appreciated them and continue to appreciate **Joan Golden's** continued involvement on this front.

NAFSR took a very active role on the forest management and catastrophic fire front in 2021. We prepared a landmark position paper titled *America's Forest Management Crisis - A National Catastrophe*, 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, National Association of State Foresters, TNC, B&C, TU. In addition, individual

Board members shared the position paper with their local contacts. We also wrote an Op Ed titled *The Science is Clear, Catastrophic Wildfire Requires Forest Management*. The Op Ed was picked up and published in several regional newspapers around the west last Fall. Both documents are posted on our website.

Other Notable Advocacy Accomplishments include:

- Joint PLF/NAFSR comments to FWS on ESA Regs changes regarding interagency cooperation. We also sent a joint comment letter to CEQ on proposed planning changes. A big thank you to **Ranotta McNair** for her help on this and other planning related efforts.
- Letter to **Robert Bonnie** on Wildfire Commission expressing our interest in a seat at the table.
- Federal Register Notice to USDA on climate change proposals (30 pages).
- Letter on behalf of the National Museum of FS History supporting their application for receiving a wood innovation grant.
- Letter in support of Wildlife Crossings (a section in the Infrastructure Law).
- Letter to **Secretary Vilsack** regarding selection of a new Chief.
- Congratulatory letter to Chief Moore.

NAFSR joined several other organizations in signing letters of support for: The Big Game Migration/ Habitat Conservation Act, Budget Reconciliation, The Infrastructure Bill (now law), The Resilient Federal Forest Act, and wildlife crossings. In addition, Board member Sandra Holsten represented NAFSR at the American Wildlife Conservation Partners national meeting. Her notes are posted on our website. Special thanks to **Sandra Holsten** who along with Larry Payne, served as NAFSR focal points for most of these “sign on” letters.

John R McGuire Award: I had the privilege of traveling to Colorado in September to personally present the John R McGuire award to the Pikes Peak Ranger District for their dedication in maintaining the Forest Service Memorial Grove over the years. A special thanks to the Rocky Mountaineers for hosting the event.

Infrastructure Law Funding Increases: 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.

Fire Committee: We “rebooted” our Fire Committee in 2021 with a focus on working *strategically* with Forest Service leadership and other interagency and intergovernmental fire management officials to effectively and diplomatically engage in the many fire related issues.

The restructured committee has **Mike Edrington, Joe Stutler, and Steve Eubanks** from the original Fire Committee along with new members **Rich Lasko, Tom Zimmerman, Bill Van Bruggen, and Jeanne Wade-Evans**. The new Fire Committee is comprised of individuals with strong fire management and line officer experience and operates under a new Charter approved by the NAFSR Board this past summer. Our thanks to **Mike Dudley** for agreeing to chair this committee for the time being. He did an excellent job of representing NAFSR at a November roundtable on catastrophic fire that was sponsored by TNC and the Aspen Institute. We look forward to his continued engagement with the group. The Fire Committee is currently developing a *position paper on managed fire*. They plan to have it finalized this winter. I would like to acknowledge **Mike Rogers** for faithfully serving as interim Fire Committee chair for much of 2021 after our long-term Chair **Al West** stepped down. The committee has done a very good job of coordinating closely on issues with Deputy Chief S&PF **Jaelith Hall-Rivera**.

Restoration Committee: This is a new committee that was established in June 2021, which was a spin off from the former restoration committee and lead that existed for the past 5-6 years. With the additional funding coming and requests for advice/assistance from the agency, we felt that we needed to constitute some new members and leader to take on what may be a time-consuming effort. Our thanks to **Kurt Wiedenmann** for the excellent job he has been doing as the new committee Chair. Their first accomplishment was the development of a new charter which indicates the committee will work strategically with Forest Service leadership and other entities to prepare NAFSR reports, briefing materials, and deliver analysis of landscape restoration initiatives, management, planning, and operations. The committee then prepared a position paper on *Forest Thinning and Prescribed Fire – A Viable Tool to Restore American Forests*, which is available on the NAFSR website. The committee has additionally been working to gain an understanding of the Forest Service-related provisions in the *Infrastructure Law* and how NAFSR can support the agency in its implementation.

Recreation Committee: The Recreation Committee was established in May 2021. The committee includes nine NAFSR members (Board and general members) with a diverse set of experiences and geographical representation. The committee has focused on establishing key working relationships with national level Forest Service leadership and other organizations interested in recreation, including the Public Lands Foundation. Committee members have utilized their personal contacts to reach out to congressional members and staff to discuss appropriations and other proposed recreation legislation. We are grateful for **Nora Rasure's** direction and leadership as committee Chair.

Treasurer Report - Johnny Hodges

- Johnny provided the NAFSR Financial Summary for 2021.
- Our ending bank balance on December 31, 2021, was \$37,286. During 2021, our revenue was \$22,848 and expenses were \$9,259 for a net increase of \$13,589. We did not hold an in-person Board meeting in 2021 which is generally our highest expense for the year.
- The market value for our mutual fund long-term investment account at the end of 2021 was \$14,654, a gain of \$2,340.

- Our total assets at the end of the year were \$51,940.

Membership Report - Johnny Hodges

- As of February 1, 2022, our membership was 744 members. At this time last year, we had 721 members.
- We have 208 “Golden” members who are over 80 years old. They comprise 28% of our total membership which is the same percentage as a year ago.
- We have 185 Lifetime Members which make up 25% of our membership, a gain of 5% compared to last year.

Support for 2022 FS Retirees Reunion

- The Board had previously agreed to fully sponsor the first night of the reunion program on August 29 at a cost of \$5,000. When the reunion was re-scheduled to 2022, the cost of the sponsorship increased to \$5,600.
- We have been collecting donations this year to support the Reunion. So far, we have raised \$1,630.
- The Board agreed to increase our sponsorship by an additional \$600 for a total of \$5,600.
- We will staff a booth at the Reunion to provide information about NAFSR and to recruit new members. Johnny will coordinate.
- Because of our donation, we will be provided a half-page ad in the program. Johnny and Bill Disbrow will work on designing the ad. If anyone else is interesting in helping, please let them know.

Liability Insurance – Johnny Hodges

- NAFSR has never had liability insurance for its Board members. When Steve became chair, he felt it was important to secure coverage. The Board agreed last Fall.
- Johnny has been working on this issue the past few months and now has a policy approved for \$1 million in coverage with a premium of about \$900 per year.

Website Update – Bill Disbrow

- Bill provided a report with statistics related to our website.
- The total number of visitors to the website in 2021 was 53,057, an increase of 3,821 (8%) over 2020.
- Our total page views in 2021 were 67,158 a decrease of 16,345 (20%) over 2020.
- Total hits in 2021 was 387,395 a decrease of 16,345 (4%) over 2020.
- The most popular documents viewed –
 - Workforce Capacity Study
 - America’s Forest Management Crisis
 - Notes from various Board of Directors meetings
- Several Board members voiced their appreciation to Bill for his management of the website.
- To see Bill’s 4-page report go to –

<https://nafsr.org/WebStats/NAFSR-2021-WebStats.pdf>

Public Lands Foundation Update - Ed Shepard

- Mary Jo Rugwell took over as the new president of PLF in January replacing Ed.
- Ed will remain as liaison with NAFSR.
- PLF now has a paid Executive Director.
- BLM currently has a huge number of vacancies.
- Ed and Mary Jo went back to DC to meet with BLM Director, Tracy Stone-Manning. The building was almost empty.
- The move of BLM headquarters back to DC from Colorado is ongoing.
- Last year was the 75th anniversary of BLM.
- PLF 35th anniversary is this year.
- The Foundation for America's Public Lands has been created to raise money, but their name has created confusion with PLF.
- The BLM has asked PLF for help with a mentoring program.
- PLF nominated Tim Murphy for the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Tim was formerly the BLM State Director in Idaho.
- PLF is planning an in-person meeting in the Fall.
- NAFSR and PLF are partnering with the Student Congress. Jim Caswell is our liaison.

National Museum of Forest Service History - Tom Thompson and Lisa Tate

- They now have over 1,000 members.
- They have raised over \$4 million in the last 2 years.
- Lisa shared a video of the Conservation Legacy Center's final structure and proposed exhibits.
- The capital campaign is at 80% of its target and hope to reach 100% this spring.
- They plan to start construction on the center in Spring 2023 and open in 2024.

Congressional Update – Doug Crandall

- The Infrastructure Bill that passed has large budget increases for the FS.
- There is no budget yet for 2022. Hopefully it will be approved around March 1.
- The current Continuing Resolution expires Feb. 18. Expect another extension to March 11.
- Senators Leahy and Shelby will get the appropriation bills passed.
- Funding is looking good for Interior appropriations. The FS is in good shape.
- No individual bills are progressing.
- The FS will receive \$1.1 billion from the disaster bill (fire/hurricane).
- OMB has a huge amount of power with little accountability.
- The firefighter conditions/pay issue has a lot of bi-partisan support, and something is going to happen.
- The upcoming National Association of Counties (NACo) meeting will have a resolution against managed fire. Some do not support that position. Bill Timko will be at that meeting representing NAFSR.

- NACo has been supportive of the Forest Climate Working Group.
- Is there a chance of firefighting resources becoming stove piped? Doug thinks we can stop it. OMB has never been in support. NAFSR has never taken a position on the issue. Does NAFSR need a position about a professional firefighter series?
- What are our thoughts about hiring/workforce capacity?
 - We have talked to Tony Dixon about it, and he is open to suggestions.
 - We do not have enough information from the FS on their plan for the “rubber meets the road”.
 - There is not a national approach – they are leaving it to the Regions.
 - Regions are being asked to provide lists of what they need. They are broken into categories and then doing national mass hiring events. The forestry group is 3 weeks away from hiring.

Comments from Chief Randy Moore

- The pandemic has changed how we work. For example, there are only 5 people in the WO today, but we are making it work.
- From Secretary Vilsack – you (FS) are getting a lot of money. Will you be smart and strategic? Yes, we can be both.
- Our 10-year strategy is designed to get at threats. It is also about carbon.
- AZ, CA, OR, and CO Front Range are the highest priorities in the strategy.
- The first 2 years will be focused on projects that are NEPA ready.
- Other states will be supported with appropriated dollars.
- We must introduce ourselves to the public that doesn’t know us. We need to create a story about who we are and why we matter.
- Value Resources – water, electricity generation, timber, and recreation.
- Drinking water is worth more than agricultural water.
- The president knows a lot about the FS and is interested in many issues – firefighter pay for example.
- Infrastructure Bill gives us a \$6 billion boost over 10 years.
- We are getting good support from our partners. It is about how we do our work and will sustain support into the future.
- The Build Back Better Bill – if not dead, it is on life support. It would give us another \$20 billion.

Q and A’s with Chief Moore

Q (Rich G.) – The next Farm Bill is in 2023. What can we do to help? There is widespread substance abuse in rural communities which make potential employees uninsurable.

A – Stay engaged with us. Small, low value material, lack of markets and transportation are issues. It is difficult to find anyone to work in the woods. Secretary Vilsack is focused on the substance abuse issue.

Q (Ranotta) – You only have 2 years to get “meat on the bones” and to show progress. What can we help you with?

A - Managed fire for resource benefits. Science says it is a legitimate tool, but how we use that tool is the question. The perception of some is that isn't true. Catch the fire on the next ridge vs. on the “right” ridge. We can use help to communicate that in a way that resonates. For example, in California people hear it as trouble. Firefighting tactics are coming under increasing scrutiny.

Q (Phil) – Is there any discussion on removing export restrictions?

A – It will be a tough sell to lift the log export ban. We tried it and industry is not opposed if it was for a couple of years. Industry is a conglomerate. In the Black Hills, they are closing facilities. We can we move logs from CA to SD, but there is a potential problem with bugs in the material. We need facilities in local areas. I am all ears looking for solutions.

Q (Mike) – You stopped managed fire for a time when you became Chief. The line officers make decisions based on their local situation, not the national picture. We need a decision tree.

A – We are re-working the Chief's letter and will consider a decision tree.

Q (Jeanne) – NAFSR is working on a position paper for managed fire. How we talk about it is a nomenclature issue. The fuels treatment story gets lost as well. You are very good at story telling.

A – Thanks. I value what NAFSR can offer.

Q – (Sharon) – On a new topic, the FS needs to provide a person that we could pass on problems such as broken links on the website or when we need information.

A - Start with Katie O'Connor, Director of Communication.

Q (Sandra) – There is an opportunity to move recreation forward. I know Chris French is working on a national recreation strategy. The administration is pushing equity in recreation and special uses.

A – The Recreation Strategy is going to be released soon. There is an equity lens in everything we do. There is a team working on reducing the backlog of special uses.

Q (Mike) – The Regional Foresters are hamstrung by administrative centralization. Are there plans to put authorities back on the ground and remove centralized operations? Why can't we hire people ahead of time to be ready to fill upcoming vacancies?

A – We are working with forests to determine priority positions to fill. There are no plans to go back to the old way of doing things. We want to be more effective. Regional Foresters are looking at what employees they really need in the shared stewardship model.

Q (Dale B.) – Competitive sourcing and financial management forced us to centralized operations. We could not get a clean audit. We were inconsistent in dealing with Human Resources. We can't go back to the old ways.

A - We were directed to centralize our budgeting function. It was a tough adjustment for line officers to lose that authority. The move changed the texture of the organization. Centralized vs. Decentralized is like having two identities. OMB has a lot of influence over how we do things. We must confront that now. Are you with us as we change?

Committee Reports

Awards Committee- Phil Aune

- The Awards Committee Report is below.
- Phil provided the Board with the Nomination File on the Mike Munoz.
- The nomination of Mike Munoz was approved by the Board.
- We need to decide on where to make the presentation.

Awards Committee Report

1. Committee Members: The John R. McGuire Committee (JRM) was expanded recently to include new members and broaden the regional membership. The JRM Committee is saddened by the recent passing of Dr. Chris Risbrudt a long-standing member. Members: Phil Aune Chair; Marlin Johnson (R-3); Bob Joslin (R-2); Sandra Key Holstein (R-10); Tom Mulder (r-6); Ted Stubblefield (At Large); Al West (R-5): New Members: Dave Hammond (R-8); Mike Paterni (R-1); Barbara Tormoehlen (R-9). Emeritus Advisor: George Leonard. Steve Ellis as Chair of NAFSR receives all emails and correspondence.
2. JRM Nomination: Mike Munoz, District Ranger of the Rocky Mtn. Ranger District, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests. The JRM Comm has reviewed this nomination and our letter of recommendation to NAFRS Chair Steve Ellis, and the Nomination File follow this report.

Board Action Needed: Discussion and Motion to accept, modify, return to the JRM Committee for further action, or reject the nomination.

3. JRM Nomination: Dr. Robert Ross, Forest Products Lab. Nomination received from Dale Bosworth on January 26 who worked with Chris Risbrudt who was working on this before he passed.

Board Action Needed: Nothing at this time, the nomination is in the early stages of review by the JRM Committee.

Recreation Committee - Nora Rasure

- The Recreation Committee Report is below.
- The Director of Recreation position in the WO is currently advertised and closes February 21. It will be a while before it is filled.

Recreation Committee Report

Introduction

The NAFSR Recreation Committee has focused on developing relationships with Forest Service leaders in the Washington Office (WO) and with other recreation organizations, tracking legislation, and pursuing opportunities to share the recreation story with others.

Relationships with WO

Committee members held several meetings with WO leadership to share NAFSR's new focus on recreation. We gained information from the WO about current happenings and established relationships to facilitate future conversations. In November 2021, we met with Chris French, Deputy Chief for National Forest System (NFS) and Ellen Shaw, Director National Partnership Office. In January 2022, we met with Richard Thornburgh, Acting Deputy Director for Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources (RHVR) and Katie Armstrong, Director Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Additional meetings are planned with the Katie O'Connor, Director Office of Communications, and the new permanent Director for RHVR.

National Recreation Strategy

The Forest Service is developing an updated 5-year recreation strategy in response to current and future needs, and in anticipation of an influx of additional funding from several sources. Reframing and focusing on 3 pillars: reinvesting in capacity, reimagining recreation planning, and reengaging through messaging. The FS has begun sharing the draft strategy externally to gather input. We will pursue opportunities to engage in these discussions.

The agency is depending upon funding from the GAOA, the Infrastructure Bill and annual appropriations to strategically implement the recreation strategy.

Great American Outdoors Act - GAOA

Jeff Vail continues to lead the GAOA team which includes recreation and engineering staff. There are several websites that may be of interest to NAFSR members:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/49fb8e5fbfc44ec589dc92e4789b1c80> and
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/gaoa>

Legislation

The Recreation Committee is tracking several pieces of legislation related to recreation and engaging with congressional staff and WO staff. Many of these acts have bipartisan support in the House and Senate, and in the recreation community. The Forest Service generally supports most bills with some concerns still needing to be addressed.

SHRED - Ski Hill Resources for Economic Development (S.1964) was passed out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in November 2021. Chris French, Deputy Chief for NFS, provided the following testimony supporting the bill on 10/21/21:
<https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/AE540BC1-353E-4918-9046-9AEF345F15A3>

SOAR - Simplifying Outdoor Recreation Act (S.1229), ORA - Outdoor Recreation Act (S.3266), and other acts were the subject of testimony by Chris French, Deputy Chief for NFS, on 12/2/21. For more details see <https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/64DF86F0-023B-4171-B926-B744F786A18D>

Forest Service Retiree Reunion - Recreation Panel

The FS Reunion IC/Team has asked the NAFSR Recreation Committee to assist with finding speakers and shaping the conversation for the Recreation Panel discussion on 9/1/22.

Restoration Committee- Kurt Wiedenmann

Restoration Committee Report

In June 2021, the NAFSR Board established a Restoration Team, comprised of NAFSR membership. The team leader is Kurt Wiedenmann, with the following members: Jack Troyer, Sharon Friedman, Steve Eubanks, Kevin Martin, and John Lowe. The Restoration Team's Charter guides the team to work strategically with Forest Service leadership and other entities to prepare NAFSR reports, briefing materials, and deliver analysis of landscape restoration initiatives, management, planning, and operations.

In December, the Restoration Team finalized a position paper on "Forest Thinning and Prescribed Fire – A Viable Tool to Restore American Forests", which is available on the NAFSR website. The paper focuses support of the proper use of forest thinning and prescribed fire as one tool to help achieve those recommendations. The paper is intended to be a supporting document of NAFSR's March 2021 position paper on "America's Forest Management Crisis – A National Catastrophe" which recommends six actions to address this crisis.

The Restoration Team has additionally been working to gain an understanding of the Forest Service provisions of the Infrastructure Bill and how NAFSR can support the agency in its implementation.

Fire Committee - Mike Dudley

- The Fire Committee Report is below.
- NAFSR is making a nomination to represent us on the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Our nominee is Patty Grantham. There are 2 at-large seats to fill.

Fire Committee Report

During July 2021, a small group of NAFSR members worked on developing a new Charter for the Fire Committee which was approved end of summer.

At the time of transition of NAFSR leadership the Fire Committee was also restructured. Al West, long term Fire Committee Chair stepped down and was replaced with by Mike Dudley as

interim Chair. The new committee has Mike Edrington, Joe Stutler, and Steve Eubanks from the original fire committee along with new members Rich Lasko, Tom Zimmerman, Bill Van Bruggen, and Jeanne Wade-Evans. The new fire committee maintains strong fire management and line officer experience and operates under the new Charter.

In September the Fire Committee welcomed Jaelith Hall-Rivera as the new Deputy Chief State and Private Forestry. Jaelith had been acting in the position for a while and is well known to most members of the committee. The committee looks forward to working with her in her permanent role.

In November, NAFSR was invited to participate in a roundtable by TNC hosted by the Aspen Institute in Washington, DC focused on the development of the Implementation Plan for the Infrastructure Bill. Steve Ellis, NAFSR Chair and Mike Dudley, interim FC Chair both participated virtually along with senior Forest Service leadership.

The Fire Committee has been focused on a position paper for managed fire. The Fire Committee supports and promotes the maintenance and implementation of a fully balanced wildland fire management program, consistent with the framework of policy, strategic guidance, and land management objectives. This includes the use of “managed fire”. A working draft has been completed to be reviewed by the Board.

Team Leads Reports

The concept is to have ad hoc leads for tracking temporal type issues when they occur.

- **Jack** - Keeping public lands public
- **Ranotta** - CEQ
- **Rich S.** - Planning and EADM (environmental analysis decision making)
- **Joan Golden** - Job Corps Advisory Board/Mentor program concept
- **Rich G** – FCWG (forest climate working group)
- **Jack:** ESA (endangered species act)
- **Bill T.** – Reforestation

Day 2 - Wednesday, February 9

Managed Fire Position Paper & Committee Recommendation - Mike Dudley

The Fire Committee completed a position paper on “Managed Fire”. After a short review/presentation by Mike, the Board spent two hours discussing the paper. Following is a bullet summary of the discussion.

- “Managed fire” is a term without a definition – it is “fire for resource benefit”.
- Confusing terminology.
- Some Forest plans are 30 years old. Should that be our guidance?
- Our paper should not use “managed fire” as the title.

- Communication box – The decision process is not visible to people.
- No consistent fire review process.
- SAF position statement vs. our statement – SAF responds to a broader group – we are more focused on federal lands.
- We are working with many partners. Many of our partners have different missions than us. We are not all on the same page. There is a lot of tension in CA between groups.
- Our membership is not in agreement on this. Maybe we should run it by them.
- We have never run position papers by all members.
- If we run it by all members, the responses will be all over the board – we will be unable to deal with it.
- The paper is a bit “wonky”.
- This is a high priority for the Chief. He asked for help in messaging this topic.
- Once we issue the paper, it will create a lot of noise. What is our communication strategy/plan?
- Covid has made it difficult to communicate. There have been no national fire meetings in the past 2 years. Some people feel like they have been cut out of the process.
- People on the committee represent a diverse background.
- Bill T. is meeting with NACo on Saturday. This will probably come up. What is our message?
- There have been hours of discussion on this paper between kitchen cabinet and fire committee.
- Rich S. supports the report. He has questions on the transmittal of the report.
- “Review” is the wrong word. “Prescribed fire” and “wildfire”. One of the tools is wildfire for resource benefit. We endorse that. How are we utilizing the tools in the toolbox in the heat of battle? Highlight the good and the bad. If there are problems, fix it and put out direction to the field to help make better decisions.
- Social license. Review is a building block for communication and social acceptance. Spend time on communication strategy.
- This is about execution, not policy. Daylight the decision tree to show how things are done.
- Clarify language on the first page for people without the depth of experience of people on the committee.
- Do we endorse the paper? Communication strategy? Call for an analysis of how the agency is doing. Lessons learned.
- Decision Question - Endorse the position as presented in the paper and recommend analysis/assessment of decision process leading to use of “managed fire” with intent of lessons learned and social license.
- Next Step - Final polish, transmittal, and communications strategy. Assign to communication team. Include some element of external engagement.
- Jeanne Wade Evans will be POC for transmittal letter, etc. for next 2 weeks.

Additional Discussion on 2022 FS Reunion

- After additional discussion about holding a Board meeting at the 2022 Reunion, the Board decided –
 - BOD will get together as the BOD, if time allows.
 - BOD will provide an opportunity to mix with NAFSR members.
 - The window for meeting is Monday, August 29 between 12:30 and 3:00 p.m.
 - We will continue discussion at our Spring BOD meeting in May.

Kitchen Cabinet/Executive Team Model Proposal

- The “Kitchen Cabinet” (KC) was designed to serve as Vice-Chair during Jane’s transition.
- The members of the KC were Jim Caswell, Jack Troyer, and Rich Stem.
- The plan was to disband after the Vice-Chair transition was complete.
- The KC has been helpful and may be valuable to continue.
- The purpose of the KC is to serve as a sounding board for the Chair/Vice Chair.
- The membership of the KC would be Chair, Vice Chair, immediate Past Chair for one year, and 2 at-large BOD representatives.
- The membership would be reviewed annually.
- Discussion –
 - Jim, Jack, and Rich want to step down from the KC.
 - Beware of Board Bureaucracy.
 - NAFSR is a heavy lift and takes a lot of work. The more you can share leadership, the better. It is up to Steve and Jane whether to continue.
 - If you keep a subset of advisors, would it require a change to bylaws or charter?
 - The Leads were developed to give point of contacts for the chair.
 - Use of an Executive Director was a good decision for the time but was not permanent.
 - An Executive Committee is necessary for organizations with a large budget and workload. I do not think that is the case with NAFSR.
- The decision made was to disband the Kitchen Cabinet.

Future Issues - What’s Next for NAFSR (3 – 5-year window)

- Jane organized the remaining Board members into two groups/Fishbowls.
- Each Fishbowl was given 15 minutes to discuss future issues, while being observed by other Board members.
- Then the entire Board followed up with additional discussion.

Fishbowl #1: Greg, Susan, Bill T., Sharon, Malcolm

- **Bill T.** - Future is going to be about spending infrastructure funds and see results. NAFSR is going to have monitor and communicate. **Reforestation** is a long-term program.
- **Susan – Recreation and sustainability** – there are lots of steps between funding and results.

- **Greg – Climate change** - What is our role? Should be doing more with that topic? Other climate driven events and disaster response.
- **Malcolm** – We see all that money coming for the FS and don't see any **increase in personnel**. How are we going to handle that? Do we need a staffing paper?
- **Greg** – Hiring and simplify the hiring process. Do mass hiring events work?
- **Sharon** – Trust and social license to cut trees. People and Congress want to know what landscape changes are accomplished in 5 years. Tell **the FS story** – **media** is interested in conflict.
- **Malcolm** – How do we get **R8 and R9 issues more engaged**? Between R-8 and R-9 are 35 states. Most issues are in the West and lots of decision-makers are not aware of the issues. That's where the votes are. Is there some way NAFSR could include or leverage R8/R9 more?
- **Susan** – Fire and communities and thinning. The message is muddled. We aren't protecting communities because of the scope and scale of environment, so there isn't a **false sense of security (or expectations of what responders can do)**.

Large Group Discussion

- **Rich S.** - Getting work done isn't enough, scale of work has to change. Craft a new message for that.
- **Nora** – We need a new strategy. What role does NAFSR have in roundtables?
- **Becki** – We need a capacity sub-group. WRIT team needs support, **something more than support papers**. What is NAFSR is positioned to provide?
- **Jeanne** – How do we organize around the invite we've received to attend Roundtables? How do we have impact? How do we organize to act?
- **Sharon** – When? Timing matters.

Fishbowl #2– Rich S., Nora, Lynn, Becki, Gene

- **Rich S.** - How do we organize to act? There is only so much capacity within the NAFSR volunteers. If we continue with Leads, then we should institutionalize it.
- **Nora** - **Best use of resources we have and best apply them**. Focus in on what NAFSR can do.
- **Gene** - 3 thoughts - **Utilize Technology, Communication, Recruitment**
- **Lynn** - Leads vs Regional representative function. Opportunities in communication, especially with upcoming roundtables. Capacity within NAFSR and FS. We need to pay attention to **capacity of the workforce**.
- **Becki** - Workforce is something all of us face in daily life these days. Utilize ACES to recruit expertise. Go outside the FS to get work done such as contractors, industry, etc.
- **Bill T.** - Do we get involved in how the FS allocates the millions in the **reforestation** trust fund? Currently the agency allocates it in the regions' constrained budget, and it is so diluted it is not available for reforestation after fires. Another approach is to have the Chief maintain a pot and fully fund large reforestation projects and move the money around. Bill will work with Doug Crandall and keep NAFSR informed on Reforestation.

Large Group Discussion

- **Steve** - Climate change and workforce capacity issue. 10% of us do 90% of the work.
- **Sharon** - Restoration Committee representative. Volunteers will work on what they feel passionate about. They don't like to be "**voluntold**".
- **Jim** – Climate change venue is the FWCG where Rich G. represents us.
- **Rich S.** - Internal - We need to institutionalize the concept of leads to foster a team approach and maintain relationships. It has worked well. External – The 10-year plan is a top priority for this year. How do we operate?
- They maintain relationships with the WO. We should re-refresh the leads.
- **Phil** – Reforestation allocation of the money is an issue, but the bigger problem is the full system.
- **Jeanne** - How to engage the regional representatives more fully. **Provide reports to the board?**

Summary of Decisions, Recommendations, and Next Steps

2022 BOD meeting dates:

May 5, 2022

August 11, 2022

November 10, 2022

Annual Board Meeting - February 7-8, 2023

Decisions:

Accomplishment 2021 – Accepted

Reunion \$5,600 financial support – Accepted

Managed Fire Position Paper – Accepted

- Endorse the position as presented in paper and recommend analysis/assessment of decision process leading to use of "managed fire" with intent of lessons/learned and social license

Kitchen Cabinet disband – Accepted

Managed Fire Next Steps:

Assigned Jeanne Wade Evans as POC for comm strategy and transmittal letter/Jeanne reaching out to Crandall/others – finalize by Feb. 18

- Final edits to streamline paper
- Transmittal and Communication strategy
- Talking points to Bill Timko by 2/11 (Doug Crandall and Bill Timko)

Other Action Items:

Correspondence: Simple tracking system to provide transparency to the BOD – Johnny and Sandra

Awards: Phil Aune and committee to work with local units to plan presentation and reunion announcement

Reunion: Principal objectives for NAFSR at Reunion: Discuss/Decide at May 5 BOD meeting

- BOD will get together as the BOD; timing pending
- Create some opportunity to mix with retirees

Potential Action Items/Program of Work Considerations:

- NAFSR position on firefighter proposed legislation (FF pay and series)
- FS Workforce capacity increase needed and ability to hire at scale improved
- Support national approaches for:
 - Specific Hiring
 - Reforestation allocation

Issues of interest from Fishbowl #1/**NO commitment for NAFSR action at this time**

- Help tell FS Story
- Engage R8 and R9 to help carry western issues
- Fire and communities; counter false sense of security or expectations of what responders can do

How can NAFSR organize to act on issues of importance? Fishbowl #2?

- Institutionalize Leads to be assigned to follow/engage/report on issues of NAFSR interest
- Establish more clear expectations for regional representatives to be a conduit of information/opportunities
 - Standing expectation for regional reps to make a report to the BOD periodically
- Leverage NAFSRs ability to mobilize retirees to recruit new FS workforce
- Develop NAFSR role to help recruit retirees for ACES positions

Regional Roundtable Participation by NAFSR: *Identify 1-2 for each of the regional roundtables that would also work for us, and we'll pass along to NFF for inclusion. Johnny to send the attached roundtable timeframe to our Board members.*

Questions to Andrea p: 202-295-7968; andrea.bedell-loucks@usda.gov

Roundtable Geographical Focus	Timeframe
National	February 3 rd , 4 th , and 9 th
Region 3	February 22, 23, 24
Region 2	February 28, March 1, 2
Region 5	March 16-18
Region 6	Week of Apr 4
Region 1	Mid-April
Region 4	Late April

Region 8	Early May
Region 9	Mid-May
Region 10	Late May

Meeting Evaluation

- Facilitation was excellent
- Group discussion time was valuable
- Give notice before assigning to fishbowl type activities to help organize thoughts
- Will work on Plan of Work
- Thanks for sticking through 2 days!

ADJOURN MEETING

Notes by Johnny Hodges and Jane Darnell

Notes edited by Johnny Hodges

First Draft 2/19/2022

Final Draft 2/24/2022