



## **Final Notes**

### **NAFSR Board of Directors Zoom Meeting**

### **May 15, 2023**

#### **Attendees**

Board Members - Steve Ellis (Chair), Jamie Connell (Vice Chair), Jim Caswell (Past Chair), Johnny Hodges (Secretary), Greg Griffith (R-3), Lynn Sprague (R-4), Steve Eubanks (R-5 North), Becki Heath (R-6), Sandra Holsten (R-10), Rich Guldin (Research), Gene Blakenbaker (National), Nora Rasure (National), Hank Kashdan (National), Susan Skalski (National), Bill Timko (National), Jack Troyer (National), Ed Shepard (PLF Liaison)

Committee Chairs – Rich Guldin (Climate), Nora Rasure (Recreation)

Staff – Bill Disbrow, Webmaster

Unable to Attend - Rich Stem (R-1), Sharon Friedman (R-2), Mike Rogers (R-5 south), Marisue Hilliard (R-8), Don Howlett (R-9), Doug Crandall (Congressional Liaison), Ranotta McNair (National), Jeanne Wade Evans (National), Jose Linares (Restoration Committee), Phil Aune (Awards Committee), Mike Dudley (Fire Committee),

#### **Welcome – Steve Ellis**

- We have been busy on the advocacy front. Tomorrow is the second time we have been asked to testify on the Hill. Ranotta McNair will give our testimony (more details under “Congressional Update”).
- Thanks for the work of the Governance, Membership, and Wildfire Crisis Task Forces that were formed at our February meeting.
- American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) is looking for someone to testify about fire issues for their podcast on May 22.

## **Administrative Report – Johnny Hodges**

### **Membership**

The good news is we currently have 729 members. That includes 208 Golden members (age 80+) and 184 Lifetime members.

The bad news is we have 51 members that have not paid their 2023 dues. My last message to them was I would suspend their membership on May 1. This is a very high number for this time of the year.

I will send out the list of delinquent members with their contact information to the BOD. If you know any of these people, please contact them. If you are a regional representative, please contact any members in your region. Encourage them to renew their membership.

### **Finances**

Our current balances as of today –

Cash - \$34,229

Investments - \$11,183

Total - \$45,412

This is in line with previous balances for this time of year.

I am working on organizing a small group to audit our financial records. As far as I can tell, our records have never been audited since NAFSR was organized.

## **Congressional Update – Doug Crandall**

- Doug was unable to attend the meeting today.
- Ranotta McNair will be testifying tomorrow (May 15) to the House Natural Resource Subcommittee on Federal Lands. The topic is “Examining the Challenges Facing Forest Management, Wildfire Suppression, and Wildland Firefighters Ahead of the 2023 Wildfire Year.”
- Steve Ellis testified on March 23 to the House Natural Resource Committee on Federal Lands. The topic was “H.R. 1586, Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023”. The primary issue was the use of fire retardant.

## **Climate Change Committee - Rich Guldin**

**Decision Needed:** Task the Climate Change and Restoration committees to prepare carbon statements.

Rich prepared a one page briefing paper on this topic which was shared with the Board ahead of our meeting. Following is his paper -

**Topic:** Whether to Create a NAFSR Position Statement on Managing Forests for Carbon Sequestration

**Issues:** Forest inventory information shows that America's 766 million acres of forests—33 percent of the Nation's land area—absorb (sequester) 16 percent of the Nation's annual carbon dioxide emissions each year, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and their effects on climate. That acreage has varied less than  $\pm 10$  percent since the 1880s when coal, then oil, replaced wood as the dominant fuel for industry and residential use. The constant forest acreage has served the needs of a U.S. population that quadrupled since the 1880s. We played significant roles in managing those forests during our careers.

A public consensus is emerging that two over-arching policy initiatives are needed—reducing greenhouse gases emissions at their sources and increasing the absorption/sequestration of emitted greenhouse gases by forests. The latter policy initiative believes that significant increases in carbon storage are possible through a three-pronged approach: (1) increase the amount of land with healthy forests; (2) manage existing forest land to sequester more carbon; and (3) increase the use of harvested wood in long-lived products and buildings that have been traditionally built with materials (e.g., concrete and steel) whose production requires higher carbon dioxide emissions at their source.

Public policies are needed to implement each of the three approaches.

- ***Increasing the amount of land with healthy forests*** will require policies that overcome current constraints in seed collection, boost seedling production and nursery capacity, and create incentives to attract land currently in other uses or vegetative cover to forests. Further, wildfires and pest outbreaks in recent years have damaged much forest land, now needing restoration and increased resilience. Support is needed for expanding existing capacity to do more restoration, reforestation, and afforestation.
- ***Managing existing forest land to increase carbon storage*** will also require some shifts in objectives and activities—both for national forests, other public forests, and private forests. Some advocacy groups are urging new federal policies that make carbon storage the dominant use or most important objective for public land managers.
- ***Increasing the use of harvested wood in ways that store carbon for a long time*** also need additional policy emphases. Since 2015, USDA's Wood Innovations Program has made good strides. More opportunities remain. Yet, some advocacy groups are concerned that increased use of green materials, like cross-laminated-timber developed by USDA FS research and partners, will lead to increased timber harvesting and detract from the capacity of forests to maximize carbon storage. Particularly among groups who want managing forests for carbon storage as the primary and ultimate use objective, ignoring and objecting to the potential to use wood to supplant concrete and steel is growing.

NAFSR could lend its voice and play a stronger role in the ongoing policy dialogues regarding forests and carbon if it had a position statement on forests and carbon aligned with the three-pronged approach, supported by a longer description of the state of science on the topics. Preparing the statements could use the same approach as used for climate change statements. But because the topics affect both the Climate Change and Restoration committee's terms of reference, they would need to work together developing the carbon statements. Some aspects may also benefit from Fire committee participation.

End of Paper

After discussion by the Board, the unanimous vote was to authorize the Climate Committee to move forward with a Carbon Position Paper (1-2 pages) and a supporting Scientific Paper. The Climate Committee will take the lead in writing the documents and coordinating with the Restoration and Fire Committees.

### **Recreation Committee Update – Nora Rasure**

#### **Reimagining Recreation - Forest Service Recreation Strategy and Action Plan**

The NAFSR recreation committee met with the Forest Service recreation strategy co-leads on 2/13/23 to get an update on the Forest Service effort to reimagine recreation. Recreation staff have engaged with agency employees through surveys, calls and open door sessions. Tribal forums were also scheduled. External stakeholder engagement sessions are still being developed - potentially to be held in July. The recreation committee continues to maintain contact with the WO and plans to participate in the external stakeholder engagement sessions.

#### **Re-Creating Public Lands Recreation Environmental Conference - Andrus Center**

On 4/18/23, the Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University hosted an environmental conference on recreation and public lands with a focus on resolving tensions and furthering best practices. Speakers represented local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies, and partners, users and foundations. They provided diverse perspectives on the importance of recreation, funding sources, and legislative approaches. The speakers all highlighted the importance of working together across boundaries and agencies.

Speakers included Idaho Governor Brad Little, BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning, National Forest Foundation President Mary Mitsos, former Governor of Montana and Board Chair for the Foundation for America's Public Lands (BLM) Steve Bullock, and Toby Bloom, Forest Service National Program Manager for Tourism and Interpretive Services. For additional information and/or more detailed notes contact Nora Rasure

### **Wildfire Crisis Strategy – Jim Caswell and Greg Griffith**

- Members of the task force are Ranotta McNair, Rich Stem, Jim Caswell, Greg Griffith, and Jose Linares.
- The full task force has met 3 times.
- Rich and Ranotta have had 3 calls with the WO.
- We have asked the WO how we can help with messaging. They do not appear ready to do anything currently. We may need a liaison patterned after ICS.
- The WO does have interest on the SPF side – grants for example.
- How can we help them move projects down the line?
- Rich S. put together an organizational structure for Randy, but they didn't buy it.
- There is confusion on the ground, and they need one quarterback.
- Becki said the priority landscape teams are using ACES people on some projects.
- There is a reluctance to manage on a national scale.

### **Governance Task Force - Becki Heath**

- Members of the task force are Becki Heath, Jim Caswell, Rich Stem, Don Howlett and Johnny Hodges.
- Our task force is working on revisions to the NAFSR Constitution and Bylaws.
- We sent the current draft to the Board for review earlier this month. Thanks for the feedback. We will pause and reconsider some of the items.
- We laid out a process for rotating Board members and accountability to length of terms. Is this a reasonable approach?
- We have never had a good conversation about term limits. We don't want to lose Board members that are interested and very engaged. Maybe we need some sort of hedge language on term limits.
- When do we engage membership at large?
- We will send out another draft for further review this summer and be ready for a final vote at our August meeting.

### **Membership Task Force – Nora Rasure**

Members of this task force are Nora Rasure, Susan Skalski, and Johnny Hodges.

Nora shared a short update with the Board ahead of our meeting. Here is her update -

The membership task force, formed at the February board meeting, has held several meetings, and is still working on their assignment. Key activities and ideas are summarized below.

Board members were asked to provide input for developing key talking points for an “elevator talk”. The responses are being consolidated and formed into a final product that will be used for multiple purposes.

A short survey was sent to the 96 members who joined NAFSR in 2021/2022 to gain an understanding of what motivated recent members to join. Results are being compiled and will be utilized to inform recruitment efforts.

Task force members will be contacting NAFSR regional representatives to learn more about the status and activities of the regional associations and how we can work together on recruitment.

Key potential ideas for recruitment and retention of members:

1. Membership Drive - A focused and well-designed effort to recruit members in January/ February.
2. Better utilize regional retiree associations - increased awareness of NAFSR and actively recruit members through association meetings, newsletters, websites, and emails.
3. Utilize NAFSR website, emails, and other forums to encourage people to become members and support NAFSR efforts.

4. Utilize different ways of connecting with existing and potential members - highlighting new members on NAFSR website, personal contact with new members, virtual forums on various topics for interested members.

End of Update

Discussion -

- We have not had an active campaign for new members.
- Regional retiree organizations are a good pool for potential members.
- Using Zoom or webinars to discuss topics of interest with members is a good idea.
- Maybe we need a survey of all members. Last survey was 2018.
- We need to figure out how to reach employees about to retire.

#### **Public Lands Foundation Update – Ed Shepard**

- A couple of years ago we hired an Executive Director. She has moved on to another job. We decided we don't need an ED and have hired a part time administrator.
- Proposed planning/conservation rule for BLM.
- Leasing land for conservation is a controversial idea. It could involve NGO's or other groups investing in restoration or doing offsite mitigation by industry groups like oil and gas.
- June 20 deadline for comments.
- How BLM handles mature and old growth forests.
- PLF working on governance issues, mostly around the structure of the Board, which is large. We are not currently filling vacancies.

#### **McGuire Award – Phil Aune**

- Phil was unable to attend the meeting today.
- In April he traveled to Madison, WI and presented a John R. McGuire award to Dr. Bob Ross.

#### **Closing Comments - Steve**

We continue to receive increased attention and media calls.

#### **Next Meeting**

Board Zoom Meeting on August 22 starting at 10:00 a.m. Mountain Time.

Final Notes by Johnny Hodges  
May 28, 2023