



The Lookout

Newsletter of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees

“Sustaining the Heritage”



January 2016
Happy New Year!

This week NAFSR and the Public Lands Foundation sent a letter to United States Attorney General Lynch regarding the takeover of the Wildlife Refuge in Harney County Oregon, imploring the Justice Department to take action against “those who are making a mockery of U.S. law.” If you have not yet seen that letter, you may find it by [Clicking Here](#).

NAFSR presented two John R. McGuire Awards this fall and we lead with the details of those events. It has always been the favorite of all my “presidential” duties to present these awards. Know that there are lots of great employees doing good things out there!

Former Chief Jack Ward Thomas has just released a trilogy of his experiences. We include some information and contacts.

Les Joslin is a frequent contributor and sends us a short piece about a former First Lady and her memorable experience with the Forest Service in Oregon.

And here is a link to a video that an excellent primer on the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. It includes some great talking points. It is only 1.5 minutes long and is worth your time. Pass it along to your friends and your members of Congress!

[Click Here!](#)

Finally I wish you all the best in the coming year! NAFSR will be on duty staying engaged with the issues that affect the National Forests and the Forest Service.

Jim Golden
Interim Editor

NAFSR Presents John R. McGuire Awards to RMS Researcher and to Malheur National Forest Leaders



Top: Chief Tidwell, NAFSR Chair Jim Golden and recipient Dr. Richard Reynolds at McGuire Award presentation in Albuquerque. (Ken White Photo)

Bottom: John R. McGuire Award presented to the Malheur NF Leadership in Vancouver WA on November 6. From left, Jim Golden, Steve Beverlin, Arnie Cole, Teresa Raaf and R6 Regional Forester Jim Pena. (Glen Sackett Photo)

Dr. Richard Reynolds, Rocky Mountain Station, Receives John McGuire Award at the Forest Service Reunion in Albuquerque

Dr. Richard Reynolds was presented with the John R. McGuire Award at the Awards Banquet during the National Forest Service reunion in Albuquerque New Mexico on October 15. Dr. Reynolds was trained as a research wildlife biologist, and his entire career has been focused on the study of forest avian species and the restoration of ecological integrity and management of forest habitats. Richard's career achievements can be best described as developing the science to inform and support applied forest ecology principles for forest management. Richard's long career in natural resources started in 1970 with his graduation from Oregon State University, and continued with advanced degrees and career service to state and federal land management and research organizations in Oregon and Washington. He joined the US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station in 1979, and has since focused on wildlife habitats and biodiversity of interior western forest ecosystems, primarily in Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

In 1990, Richard was asked by the Regional Forester here in the Southwest to lead a scientific team to evaluate sustainability of the northern goshawk and its' habitats in local forests. The result was research recommendations and publications that were the genesis for amendments to the Forest Plans for the entire Southwestern Region of the Forest Service in 1996. These recommendations led to the adoption of uneven-aged forest management strategies to sustain greater biodiversity and ecosystem services such as water and wood products.

Richard's recommendations resulted in novel approaches to the conservation of sensitive species on federal lands, demonstrating that managing for species conservation and biodiversity could be accomplished within an active forest management framework. His work, based upon the habitat needs of wildlife, was later shown to be a model for understanding the ecology of these forests, which was fully developed in a 2013 publication by Rocky Mountain Research Station titled "Restoring Composition and Structure in Southwestern Frequent Fire Forests" of which he was the lead author.

The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service is once again revising forest management plan strategies, based upon his work. During this process, Richard has worked with many natural resources professionals to conduct field workshops for agency and other professionals, and the public to dialog about forest ecology and demonstrate forest restoration and management techniques. One showcase implementation using similar concepts survived the 500,000+ acre Wallow fire in Arizona in 2011, sparking renewed interest in his publication's restoration strategies by diverse publics and other natural resource professionals. Richard's career exemplifies his influence as a scientist, a teacher, and a manager in the natural resources field. His contributions to the management of forests in the West will have lasting impacts on land management practices, especially in the Southwestern United States. Congratulations to Dr. Reynolds from NAFSR members!

NAFSR DUES NOTICES ARE IN THE MAIL!

**NAFSR Annual Dues remains \$25 and first Year Members are free!
Golden Members Over 80 years are free! Associates now pay \$25.**

**We have added a Lifetime Membership of \$250 per household.
Become a "lifer" and we'll never both you with dues collections again!**

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Malheur National Forest Receives John R. McGuire Award for Efforts on Behalf of the Forest and the Community

NAFSR Chair Jim Golden presented the John R. McGuire Award to Teresa Raaf, Steve Beverlin and Arnie Cole during the Pacific Northwest Region's Leadership team meeting held in Vancouver Washington on November 5. Regional Forester Jim Pena assisted with the award presentation.

Faced with the last mill in John Day, Oregon closing, Teresa Raaf (former Forest Supervisor) and her staff didn't give up on collaboration, in fact that stepped up their work with the Blue Mountain Forest Partnership and the Harney County Restoration Collaborative to find a solution to the long standing problem of forests vulnerable to fire, insects, and disease and the lack of a viable stream of wood products to keep mills open.

They worked with the two groups and the State of Oregon to produce a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program proposal. Their proposal was to restore landscape resiliency by vegetation and fuel treatments in high priority watersheds and riparian sites; improve collaboration and social capacity to focus on large landscape-scale areas with an emphasis on building trust; increase economic and organization capacity to maintain sustainable flows of work and outcomes while supporting infrastructure, supporting new markets, and providing local economic benefits.

After a series of public meetings, the Malheur National Forest awarded a 10-year Integrated Resource Stewardship Contract to Iron Triangle, LLC of John Day. Again, working with their collaborators, the contract was designed to meet three objectives. It would accomplish crucial forest restoration work while providing a predictable/sustainable supply of forest products to local mills and enhance the economic stability in the local counties. The mill was saved, with a reliable supply of forest products that are helping achieve the desired condition of the National Forest System lands, while maintaining processing capacity, infrastructure, and economic stability and growth in Grant and Harney counties.

The proof is in the outcomes. In 2013 45,000 acres of hazardous fuels reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface (12,883 acres) and non-WUI (32,219 acres) primarily using pre-commercial thinning; 55,000 tons of biomass removal (with a plan to remove 63,000 tons in 2014); and a commercial harvest component which together are restoring the forest to a more fire resilient state. The timber target on the Malheur NF increased from 29 mmbf in 2012, to 55 mmbf in 2013, an award of 65 mmbf in 2014 and another 10 mmbf increase is planned for 2015 and beyond. This is an amazing turnaround for a forest that has faced years of litigation and large, catastrophic fires. In addition to the hazardous fuels reduction and increased commercial harvest, restoration work includes aspen thinning/fencing, range improvement work, riparian area improvement through woody material input, road decommissioning and maintenance, and fish culvert installation. These types of restoration activities protect native plant, soil, and water resources that are critical to maintaining the significant wild salmon and steelhead runs of the John Day River basin, a tributary of the Columbia River.

NAFSR congratulates Teresa Raaf, Steve Beverlin and Arnie Cole of the Malheur National Forest! Thank you for a job well done!

The First Lady and the Ranger



Left to right, Chief of the Forest Service Ed Cliff, First Lady of the United States Lady Bird Johnson seated with Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman on her left, and Recreation Staff Officer Dick Burke standing with arms folded were among those observing the backpacking demonstration presented by District Ranger Dick Buscher, his daughter Lise, and Anne Heisler. U.S. Forest Service photograph.

Lady Bird Johnson and District Ranger Dick Buscher explored family outdoor recreation and backpacking on the Mt. Hood National Forest in June 1968.

By Les Joslin

Lady Bird Johnson, the wife of President Lyndon Baines Johnson and the First Lady of the United States from November 20, 1963, until January 20, 1969, had a serious interest in conservation and beautification of the American landscape. This led her to be a player in the May 1966 White House Conference on Beauty that resulted in the President's Council on Recreation and National Beauty chaired by vice president Hubert H. Humphrey and to championing related causes including family outdoor recreation.

This, in turn, led her to the Mt. Hood National Forest—while visiting Oregon to address the American Institute of Architects in Portland—where she met Dick Buscher, then in his second year as district ranger of the Zigzag Ranger District, for a two-day introduction to family backpacking. The idea was to emphasize that backpacking is a family activity, not just a sport for hardy mountaineers.

“You think you can do that?” Chief of the Forest Service Ed Cliff asked Dick in a telephone call. Dick assured the Chief that he could.

And so it was that, on the appointed day in June 1968, First Lady of the United States Lady Bird Johnson, along with an entourage that included Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, Chief Cliff, and four Secret Service agents, descended on the Zigzag Ranger Station.

The focus of the visit—which also included a picnic at Tollgate Campground and dinner at Timberline Lodge (for which the First Lady expedited listing on the National Register of Historic Places)—was to be a demonstration of family backpacking techniques followed by a five-mile hike in which Dick along with his wife, son, and daughter would portray the family.

But things didn’t turn out quite as planned.

First, Dick’s wife and son came down with chickenpox, and could not play their roles. Dick recruited Mt. Hood National Forest public affairs officer Anne Heisler to play the “wife” role, and his daughter Lise played her own role. Then it snowed, and the five-mile demonstration hike had to be scrubbed. But both the First Lady and the ranger took it in stride.

The visit ended with a fondue dinner. Mrs. Johnson was seated with Dick and Chief Cliff, whom Dick figured was worried about what he might say. Dick had found the First Lady most gracious, not at all pretentious, and possessed of a good sense of humor. “You know, ma’am, sometimes I think we elected the wrong member of the Johnson family to the presidency,” Dick shared with her. “You know, Bush,” the First Lady responded with the nickname by which Dick’s friends still call him, “sometimes I think so, too!”

Then Mrs. Johnson took pen in hand and wrote “Mrs. Buscher, We missed you at this fabulous evening” on one of the event placemats, signed it, and gave it to Dick. That framed placemat still hangs on Dick’s kitchen wall.



District Ranger Dick Buscher and First Lady of the United States Lady Bird Johnson enjoyed the salmon cookout at Tollgate Campground after her arrival on the Mt. Hood National Forest. U.S. Forest Service photograph

Trilogy by Chief Thomas Now Available

Former USFS Chief Jack Ward Thomas has published his memoirs as a trilogy of journals recalling his experiences over a lifetime of conservation.

According to the Boone and Crockett Club, “Thomas’ memoirs offer a rare, real-time peek behind the curtain of conservation leadership during a turbulent period marked by conflicts over spotted owl habitat, old-growth timber and the deaths of 14 wildland firefighters in 1994.”

Equally featured in the trilogy are journals describing the hunting, horseback and wilderness experiences that shaped the values and vision of a field biologist who would go on to lead the agency created by two icons of the conservation movement: Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot.

“Jack Ward Thomas was a prolific journal keeper,” said Julie Tripp, publications director for Boone and Crockett Club. “His memoirs tell the story of how conservation – and conservationists – evolved during the last-half of the 20th Century.”

The trilogy includes:

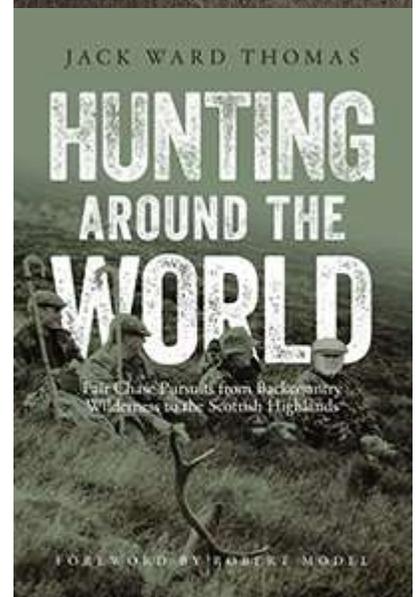
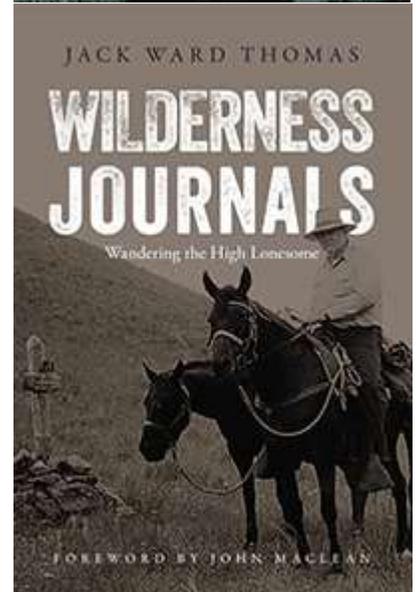
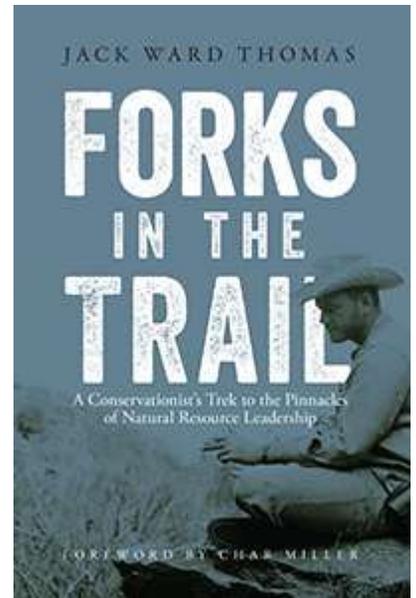
Forks in the Trail: A Conservationist’s Trek to the Pinnacles of Natural Resource Leadership – 344 pages with 25 B&W photographs.

Before Thomas, only 12 men had ever known the staggering responsibility, political pressure – and extraordinary opportunity to shape the future of natural resources in America – that came with the job of Forest Service chief. From his youth on a hardscrabble Texas farm through his tenure in Washington D.C., Thomas’ life and career led him squarely into confrontations with the hottest conservation topics of his day.

Wilderness Journals: Wandering the High Lonesome – 288 pages with 12 B&W photographs. Rough country, fine horses and good friends. These memoirs are adventures in the saddle as Thomas explores some of the West’s legendary skylines. Up the trail, deep in his beloved “high lonesome,” he finds bold bears, reclusive war veterans, a treasure of wild places untrammelled by man, and a vision for America’s forestlands.

Hunting Around the World: Fair Chase Pursuits from Backcountry Wilderness to the Scottish Highlands – 240 pages with 13 B&W photographs. Hunting provided food for his family and a lifetime of enjoyment, but it also brought Thomas to his life’s work in conservation. This collection of journal entries is classic sporting literature, offering the best stories and wisdom of a quintessential hunter-conservationist.

You may find more information about the books and ordering at www.boone-crockett.org/jwt.





Dan Nolan, Jim Thinnes, Pat Kallal, Johnny Hodges with guide Bigraj on Thorung La Pass, elevation 17,768 ft. *Photo by Johnny Hodges*

A Few NASFR Members Take a Long Hike: Old Guys on the Annapurna Circuit

By Johnny Hodges

Our guide, Bigraj, knocked on our door. It was 3:30 a.m. and time to get up. Our group of four trekkers, all in our 60's, had anticipated this day with a sense of excitement and dread. Today we were going to cross Nepal's Thorung La Pass at an elevation of 17,768 feet.

Until the day before I had never been higher than the top of Colorado's Mt. Elbert at 14,433 ft. We had just spent the night sleeping in Thorung Phedi at 14,600 feet and I had slept ok. Maybe climbing over the pass wouldn't be too tough. I was wrong.

Nepal's Annapurna Circuit is one of the world's classic treks. In 13 days we hiked 117 miles circling around the Annapurna Himal which features several peaks over 24,000 feet including Annapurna II, III, IV and Gangapurna. With two guides and two porters, we only had to carry our daypacks. This is a world of Tibetan Buddhists with plenty of prayer flags, prayer wheels, mani walls and spectacular scenery. Our group of 4 trekkers included 3 members of NASFR – Dan Nolan, Jim Thinnes and myself, plus Jim's cousin, Pat Killal.

There are fourteen mountains in the world higher than 8,000 meters (26,240 feet). Annapurna was the first to be climbed back in 1950 by French climbers Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenal.

I read Herzog's classic book, Annapurna, about that expedition 15 years ago, never thinking that someday I would be wandering through some of the same country. Unfortunately for Herzog, on his way down from the top, probably in an oxygen-starved delirium, he lost his gloves. By the time he made it back to France, he had lost all of his fingers and toes. I hoped that didn't happen to us.

The starting point for our trek was Besi Sahar, a village at the end of the paved road, a 6-hour drive from Kathmandu. At an elevation of 2,500 feet, it is the home of banana trees and terraced rice fields. We arrived in mid-November with the rice harvest in full swing. Women with scythes were cutting and threshing the rice, all by hand. We saw fields being plowed by men with two cows and a wooden plow. Although there was electricity in all of the villages we passed through, Nepal is still very much a third world country.

Travel is measured in time, not in meters or miles. We hiked 6 to 8 hours per day, staying in tea houses in the small villages along the way. Accommodations were very basic, a small room with two twin beds and foam mattresses. There was no heat and we slept in our sleeping bags, but the price was right. Rooms rented for \$3.50 to \$5.00 per night, about the same price as a bottle of Everest beer (our favorite).

On our third day, the really big mountains started to come into view. Manaslu, the eighth highest peak in the world at 26,781 feet appeared to the north only 6 miles away as the crow flies. The border with China was 4 miles further.

As we continued west along the Marsyangdi River the Annapurna range began to appear to our left. We knew that the world's 10th highest peak, Annapurna, was in there somewhere, but the view was blocked by its sister peaks. Ironically, although we were hiking the Annapurna Circuit, we never got a clear view of Annapurna on our trip.

By the time we reach Thorung Phedi at the base of the pass, we had been hiking for 9 days and gained 12,000 feet in elevation. We were ready to tackle Thorung La Pass.

We started walking at 4:30 a.m. under starry skies following the small circle of light from our headlamps. We knew the trail was going to be a killer first thing in the morning – it gained 1,200 feet in only 1/2 mile, a brutal way to start the day. The temperature was 20 degrees, but not too windy. After the first steep pitch the grade got a little easier, but then we hit shaded sections of trail covered in snow and ice. The footing was treacherous and even though I couldn't see below us in the dark, I could sense a huge void and I didn't want to fall.

As the trail climbed and climbed, my feet felt heavier and heavier, like they weighed hundreds of pounds. The thin air was really kicking in now. Bigraj's mantra was "slowly, slowly", but I'm not sure he knew how slow I could go. The other guys didn't seem to have any trouble keeping up with me. When we stopped to rest, or if the grade flattened, I had no trouble walking and breathing, but as soon as the trail turned uphill, I felt I could barely move. At 9:15 a.m. we reached the pass.

The last sentence in Herzog's book is "There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men." We were never going to climb Annapurna or any other of the world's highest peaks. Standing on Thorung La Pass at 17,768 feet I thought maybe this was our "Annapurna." We would never stand any higher on the planet. It was the hardest thing I had ever done.

And then we started down, a knee buckling descent of over 5,000 feet to Muktinath where we spent the night.

A couple of days later as we hiked along the Kali Gandaki River we had up close-up views across the river of Dhaulagiri, the 7th highest peak in the world at 26,795 feet. This was the first peak Herzog had planned to climb. After seeing the incredibly steep slopes, I could understand why he decided to try Annapurna instead.

The village of Tatopani is well known for its hot springs and we ended our hike there with sore feet and tired legs. We immediately headed to the hot springs to soak our exhausted bodies, down a few cold beers and think about our unforgettable trek in the Himalyas. Namaste!



Beginning 5,000 ft descent from Thorung La Pass *Photo by Jim Thinnes*



“Dedicated to sustaining the Forest Service mission and adapting to today’s and tomorrow’s challenges”

We represent Forest Service retirees who are dedicated to: sustaining the heritage of caring for the Nation’s Forests and Grasslands, partnering with the Forest Service, and helping understand and adapt to today’s and tomorrow’s challenges.

The **Association's** principal beliefs and values are:

- **Protecting** and **managing** diverse lands and valued resources while providing a wide array of uses and services to the public.
- **Actively managing** landscapes, where needed to improve both health and resilience.
- **Protecting Special Areas and Landscapes**, like designated wilderness, monuments and other special landscapes to maintain their unique character.
- **Balancing** social, environmental, and economic considerations with the best science available.
- **Communicating** effectively to increase awareness of the National Forests and Grasslands importance to an increasingly urban populace.
- **Responding** professionally and responsibly in support of the agency’s efforts to protect the public interest and ensure public safety.
- **Addressing emerging (national) issues** professionally and deliberately with facts and science.
- **Partnering** with the agency, communities and cooperators in a dependable and credible way.
- **Respecting** the Forest Service's rich traditions and history.
- **Maintaining** a diverse and productive field organization that is accessible to the public.



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The Lookout is the newsletter of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees. It is produced by Jim Golden, interim editor. Contact us at nafsr2000@gmail.com