November 2016

In this issue we look at some reactions to the acquittal of the occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. This surprise verdict stunned many people and, with the transition ahead to a new administration, may indicate a very trying period ahead for our federal land management agencies. (Special thanks, once again, to Les Joslin for our lead story.)

And speaking of the election, the NAFSR Board of Directors is hard at work developing advice for the presidential transition team. This is likely to focus on a few key points: that public lands and access is critical to the American public; that our wildfire financing methods are seriously broke and affect every aspect of National Forest management; and that we can create jobs to benefit our nation’s rural citizens by initiating an aggressive program of forest restoration. Look for a message from Chair Jim Caswell and Executive Director Corbin Newman soon.

We also include an essay on the Law Enforcement program by recent retiree Rico Burgess, who served for many years as LEO on the Deschutes N.F. News of innovative management in Michigan and an update on the FS reunion coming in 2018 also in this issue. And the Forest History Society has an idea on what you can do with your camera and some spare time.

On behalf of the NAFSR Board of Directors and Officers, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

Jim Golden
Interim Editor

U.S. Forest Service and Other Agency Personnel Face Bundy Verdict Threat

When, on October 27, 2016, a U.S. District Court jury in Portland, Oregon, acquitted Ammon and Ryan Bundy and five accomplices in the 41-day armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in southeastern Oregon, “the lives of federal land managers in the American West got a whole lot more difficult.” So wrote Christopher Ketcham of Moab, Utah, in an op-ed in the October 31 edition of The New York Times.

Readers will recall that, on January 2, 2016, armed militants seized the refuge headquarters and continued to occupy it until law enforcement made a final arrest on February 11. The leader of the occupiers was Ammon Bundy, who participated in the 2014 standoff against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at the Nevada ranch of his father, Cliven Bundy. Other members of the occupying group were loosely affiliated with non-government militias and the sovereign citizen movement. The organizers of the occupation sought to advance their view that the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM, and other agencies are constitutionally required to turn over most of the federal public land they manage to the individual states.

The acquittals

Ironically, the seven acquittals came on the birthday of President Theodore Roosevelt who was born on October 27, 1858. A pioneer of conservation and champion of public lands, Roosevelt created the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Oregon, by a presidential order in 1908.

The defendants and their attorneys were elated by the acquittals which they seemed to view as license to continue their cause. “We came to Oregon—to Harney County—seeking justice,” defendant Neil Wampler said after his acquittal, “and today we found it.” Wampler said he and others within the so-called patriot movement plan to “build on this tremendous victory for rural America.”

The message of the acquittals—as clearing the trail for future protests—was directly addressed by defendant Shawna Cox on the steps of the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse just after the trial. “Absolutely,” Cox said when asked if she will participate in future protests. “We can do it peacefully.” Cox called the acquittals “just one win” in a larger movement to change how the federal government manages land in the American West.
The acquittals weren’t the end of the legal story for the Bundy brothers and several other Malheur occupation defendants who still face a trial set for February 2017 in Nevada on federal charges for their roles in the 2014 armed standoff that took place on their father’s ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada. Cliven Bundy has failed to pay for grazing his cattle on public rangelands for a couple decades.

Ketcham saw the Bundy acquittal of the government’s primary charge of “conspiracy to impede federal officers by force, threat or intimidation” at the refuge as “more than just a court victory.” It was, he wrote, “a blow against a culture of public service embodied by the federal employees responsible for maintaining law and order and protecting our wildest Western landscapes.” The acquittals, “in what seemed like an open-and-shut case of guilt, came “against a background of deep antipathy in parts of the West toward the environmental regulation of the hundreds of millions of acres of rangeland, forests and national parks managed by the federal government on behalf of all Americans.”

**Around the West**

As a result of the acquittals, many public land managers and their personnel are more apprehensive about the safety of doing their jobs. In an e-mail to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, Director Daniel M. Ashe “described a traumatized staff at Malheur, whose work to protect wildlife and habitat was put on hold during the occupation, Ketcham reported. “The lives and careers of many employees and family members will never be quite the same,” Ashe wrote. “Even now, though many employees have returned, they continue to bear the scars of this traumatic experience.”

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell wrote in a message to her department’s personnel that she was “profoundly disappointed with this outcome” of the Portland trial, and was “concerned about its potential implications for our employees and for the effective management of public lands,” Ketcham reported. These concerns are shared by many within her and other department’s agencies. Not only are scarce funds spent on security rather than natural resource management, but fear of violence reduces some field work.

Figures compiled by the group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility “show assaults and threats of violence against federal employees on public lands in the West were up [in 2015], following Cliven Bundy’s standoff but before the takeover of the Oregon refuge by his sons.” That year, “Threats and assaults against BLM employees rose to 28 from 15 and to 155 from 97 against employees of the Forest Service.” The Utah office of the BLM “went so far as to hire a former military terrorism expert, who advised that in the event of “security threats”—which are constant—BLM employees should not go out in the field, wear BLM uniforms, or drive BLM-marked vehicles,” a credible source told Ketcham.

**In the Pacific Northwest**

In an October 27, 2016, “Dear Region 6 employees” e-mail regarding the Bundy case acquittals, Regional Forester and OldSmokey Jim Pena stressed that the “safety and security” of Forest Service personnel “is absolutely paramount” as they go about their work. “Please continue to be vigilant and situationally aware in our offices, while we are in the field, traveling from place to place, and while off on personal status.” he urged.
Regional Forester Pena asked his personnel to remember that “this verdict does not reflect the outcome of every situation we may face in the future. Our communities and partners, both in eastern Oregon and across the Region, continue to support and work in collaboration with us to improve management on the national forests and grasslands.” He encouraged his personnel “to be mindful of your engagement around this topic” and directed that all press inquiries “be coordinated through your public affairs officers and forwarded to the regional office for response.”

The bottom line
“The message of the Malheur verdicts is that the federal land management agencies stand alone,” Dennis McLane, the retired deputy chief of law enforcement for the BLM, told The New York Times.

The acquittal of the Bundys and five of their followers “was not only a slap in the face to law and order, but a dangerous precedent that sends the wrong message: that anyone who has an ax to grind over federal policy can stage an armed takeover of our public lands,” concluded The Source Weekly, Bend, Oregon’s, alternative newspaper.

The Bundy Standoff is a Sign of Things to Come?

Our friend Char Miller recently wrote a piece for the “New Republic” on his reaction to the Malheur acquittals, and how this may add “fuel to the fire”, especially in light of the recent election.

“The acquittal of Ammon Bundy and other militia members who occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon last January leaves our public lands and the people who steward them in a vulnerable position. Indeed, it puts a target on their backs.”

“The Bundy family has said as much. ‘The government should be scared,’ Ryan Bundy asserted to the Washington Post less than a week after their acquittal. ‘They are in the wrong. The land does not belong to the government. The land belongs to the people of Clark County, not to the people of the United States.’ When asked whether he and fellow militiamen had the right to take up arms to assert their control of the public land, Bundy declared: “Ask George Washington.””

“This brazen and unapologetic rhetoric is a striking contrast to the Oregon jury’s carefully tailored language about their decision to free those men who bore arms against the federal government. As one juror told the Portland Oregonian in response to the post-verdict uproar: ‘Don’t they know that ‘not guilty’ does not mean innocent?’”

“Clearly the militants, whose actions echo 20th-century Sagebrush Rebellions to take local control of public lands, know no such thing. For them the verdict offered an affirming message which, in my view, imperils the public servants who protect our lands in the face of a long history of threats and violence.”

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE

NAFSR Website Redesign

NAFSR’s board of directors has been working with a contractor to redesign and update our website, fsx.org.

Our new website is now up and running. The address is the same and you can check it out by clicking on the link - www.fsx.org

A few of the new features -

- You will now be able to pay your dues or make a donation with a PayPal account (if you have one) or with any credit card
- New members can join NAFSR easily with a new membership application form
- We have simplified the home page and will feature our most recent activities
- We have updated contact information for all regional retiree organizations
- We have included all winners of the John McGuire Awards

Check it out and let us know what you think!
Repeat photography is the practice of taking photographs of a specific location at two or more different times. It is a powerful visual resource for scientific study and education in forest and landscape management. From working forests to wilderness areas, such photographic pairs or sequences can help us understand ecosystem processes, and effects of human and non-human disturbances. They can inform our concepts of sustainability, help us understand the implications of public policy, and assess the results of management decisions.

While many repeat photos of forested land exist, they are scattered in many locations, occur in widely different formats, and are relatively difficult to find. A centralized database will allow for photos to be searched by subject keyword, location, date, format, and photographer, among many other characteristics. Additionally, repeat photography sets will be presented with contextual information and individual images will be displayed at detailed resolution for comparison and analysis.

The Forest History Society has undertaken a project aimed at collecting sets of repeat photographs relating to land management and environmental research. We aim to provide a centralized location on the web for users to access, compare and interpret them. The project is a collaboration between the Forest History Society and several other institutional and individual collaborators. By providing an authoritative site on the subject we hope to identify previously unknown repeat photographic pairs and sequences, promote the creation of new repeat sets, and foster interest in the future uses of repeat photography.

We welcome insights, recommendations, and collaboration in making this valuable historical information more widely available. If you have photos, research ideas, or any other input that might help, please contact Project Photo Archivist Sara Pezzoni at sara.pezzoni@foresthistory.org. The Repeat Photography Project can be accessed through www.repeatphotography.org.
Background

At the June, 2015 SFSRA Luncheon and Business Meeting, a presentation and recommendation was made by Sid Haggard and Dave Jolly for the Southern Forest Service Retirees Association to host the National Forest Service Eighth Retirees Reunion during the fall of 2018 in Asheville, NC. The recommendation was approved by acclamation. A request was submitted to the National Museum of Forest Service History, the keeper of the queue for the reunions, and was approved by their Board of Directors. Shortly thereafter, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Dave Stack and Jim Rogers. A short time later, Liz Agpaoa retired as Southern Region Regional Forester and joined the Executive Board.

These are the three people that have overall responsibility of planning and ensuring a successful, fun-filled reunion. At the Seventh Reunion in Albuquerque, NM, October 2015, a slide show video was shown inviting everyone to Asheville September 24 – 28, 2018.

A lot of things have happened since that day in Albuquerque. The Executive Board of Dave, Liz, and Sid decided that Dave Jolly would serve as the Committee Chair, Liz Agpaoa as Deputy Chair / CFO, and Sid Haggard as Deputy Chair. This Group has worked hard to appoint Committee Chairs, negotiate a contract with the Crown Plaza Resort, develop a strong relationship with the Asheville Convention & Visitor Bureau, the Southern Region Regional Forester, the Southern Research Station Director, and the Executive Director of the Cradle of Forestry. They have gathered information on field trips, and the list goes on and on.

Here is some information that those planning to attend might want to know:

- The Reunion Committee has guaranteed 830 room nights and the Crown Plaza Resort is holding 200 rooms for Tuesday – Thursday nights, 185 for Monday night, and a few for Sunday and Friday nights. The rate is $119.00. We have the option for an additional 30 rooms on those nights at this rate, if they are available. An overflow venue will be secured, if needed.

- The Crown Plaza Resort is the home to many events throughout the year including an Annual Bluegrass Festival for the last 20 years, tennis tournaments, etc. They are one mile from downtown Asheville and the shuttle van will be available at no charge throughout the week.

- A 2018 Reunion Web Page has been developed and is the source for continual updates. We are current enhancing it and adding more information about the Reunion and Asheville. www.2018.FSReunions.org.

- The target date for opening Reunion Registrations is March 2017. Watch the web page for this information. Hotel reservations will not be officially open until September 2017 but we are working with the hotel to develop a prioritized list for those planning to stay at the Crown Plaza, which we hope will be everybody.
Current Status

The 2018 Reunion Committee Executive Board and Committee Chairs are in close touch with Tom Thompson, Louis Romero, and their planning teams. The Committees and Chairs that you will hear from include:

- Venue, Facilities, Food, & Contracts (Mac Gramley)
- Communications and Publicity (Sid Haggard)
- CFO, Registration, & Finance (Liz Agpaoa)
- Program (Executive Committee)
- Field Trips & Transportation (Linda Brett)
- Sponsors, Exhibits, Donors (Dave Jolly)
- Auctions & Store (Bob James)
- Hospitality, Volunteers, North Carolina Committee (Sid Haggard)
- Ambiance & Entertainment (Keith Lawrence)

We already have a few names of retirees who volunteered and I am hoping this announcement will encourage many more to enlist. We would particularly like to get a good representation from North Carolina. We all know that personal circumstances can change for any of us between now and 2018. However, with a good volunteer inventory we can remain flexible and make role changes as necessary.

Please contact any of the Executive Board to join this exciting opportunity to stay involved and serve our “brother and sister” retirees nationally. Please indicate if you have an interest in a particular role or committee. We are all listed in the SFSRA Directory or if you don’t have this information contact Sid Haggard at 678-644-7240, SidHaggard@att.net.

Plan now to join us for the Reunion At The Cradle, September 24-28, 2018.
History of National FS Retiree Reunions

Thanks to Louis Romero for much of the following information.

- 1991, Region 2 Retirees, Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- 1995, Region 4 Retirees, Park City, Utah
- 2000, Region 1 Retirees, Missoula, Montana (NAFSR was founded at this Reunion)
- 2005, Region 6 Retirees, Portland, Oregon (feedback: have Reunions more often, perhaps every 3 years)
- 2006, The Amigos Board (Region 3) conducted a survey of all the FS Retiree organizations and led the establishment of a national sequence, or queue, for the next 3 National Reunions to follow: 2009 National Museum; 2012 California Region Retirees; 2015 SWFS Amigos. (The order and sequence of the queue simply meant the organization had the first right of refusal to host the next reunion.)
- 2009, National Museum; R1 Retirees and National Smokejumper Association. At the conclusion of that reunion the California Retirees decided to exercise their “right of refusal” to host the 2012 reunion, leaving it open for others to take it.
- 2010, Tom Thompson rallied R2 Retirees to host the 2012 reunion and was held at Vail, Colorado, September 17 – 21.
- 2011, SWFS Amigos Board enthusiastically favors hosting the 2015 reunion and appointed Louis Romero to explore Amigos readiness. He rallied a strong support team including former Chief, Dale Robertson and former R3 Regional Forester, Dave Jolly, to be Honorary Co-Chairs.
- The Reunion in Albuquerque, October, 2015, was a huge success.
- The SFSRA request permission from the NMFSH to host the 2018 Reunion in Asheville, NC.

"Pack Square" (and006) , Stafford and Wingate L. Anders Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, UNC at Asheville 28804

[View of back of souvenir folder, closed] "Mt. Pisgah and the Rat at Sunset" (and003), Stafford and Wingate L. Anders Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, UNC at Asheville 28804
Oldsmokeys Say

Law and Order on the National Forests

By Rico Burgess

I’m proud and fortunate to have served a U.S. Forest Service career. The outfit has many men and women who take ownership in and have a passion for the Service and its work. Unfortunately, it also has some who don’t.

It grieves me to hear and read about Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI) incidents around the nation that seem typical and heavy-handed. Stories of ticket quotas, police dogs straining at their chains, and law enforcement officers (LEOs) exiting vehicles with “automatic weapons” to confront senior citizen woodcutters and tragic “line of duty” deaths—dominate water cooler sessions, editorials, and newspaper headlines. These reflect negatively on the Forest Service as a whole, and Smokey Bear will have to prevent more than forest fires if we are not careful. Supervisor management is ultimately responsible and sets the tone.

In my perspective, LEI started losing credibility after the “straight-line” reorganization mandated by Congress. Many LEOs and special agents (SAs) no longer saw themselves as Forest Service and having any obligation to the local ranger district or national forest. And many LEOs and SAs welcomed this “freedom” and more or less alienated the local line officers they previously served. “I don’t work for the ranger” or “I don’t work for fire” or “I don’t work for timber” or “I don’t work for recreation” became their mantra. I have heard all of these. This view was and is still reinforced by LRI supervisors who believe the same. It doesn’t take long for a district ranger or forest supervisor to pay lip service to LEI but privately wish they didn’t take up space in their offices.

This is exacerbated in the new LEI generation taking the place of us “old dogs.” They may have police skills but neither training nor experience in any natural resource field and have little interest in acquiring skills and knowledge in timber, fire, wildlife, recreation, archaeology, etc. Many lack working knowledge of Forest Service history or their assigned resource areas, and are not encouraged to learn same by supervisors who lack historical perspective and see little value in it. This makes it more difficult for the LEO or SA to interact with local ranchers, loggers, lodge owners, forest permittees, and others—especially Native Americans—who have historic interest in national forest resources. To remedy this, the Forest Service desperately needs a “Forest Service Academy” or “boot camp” in which new personnel—especially LEI personnel—engage the culture, history, mission, structure, ethics, and expectations of the agency. New personnel I have been assigned to mentor had never heard of the Forest Service until a recruiter in college approached them. Even with some training, they cannot be thrown into some community east or west and expected to thrive—especially if they have no personal ownership or passion for the land and its people.

I and others perceive that LEI recruitment could be greatly improved by looking within the agency at young men and women with a few successful years in fire, timber, recreation, etc., who aspire to serve as LEOs or SAs. Sure, diverse candidates and experienced law enforcement officers from other agencies should continue to be recruited, but recruiting some LEI within the Service would round out a diverse workforce and improve effectiveness and morale.

Finally, I implore leadership not to permit Forest Service LEI to become the “jack-booted thugs” the public sometimes sees in its local, county, state, and federal agencies which tend to look and act like military “Gestapo.” Too many LEI want and wear “tactical” gear, display camouflaged shotguns and “automatic rifles” along with their legs, a couple knives in their waist belts, and a full duty belt with baton, taser, handcuff, gun, and four extra magazines. Clip on a mini camcorder, insert an earphone, and add stylish sweatsuit sunglasses to complete your LEO. Throw in a K-9 unit with a dog that won’t quit barking and it’s no wonder folks at the campground, ski resort, or logging show become upset fast. And now the district ranger or forest supervisor has to deal with a situation over which he or she has no control. There is a time and a place for all that, but LEI need to learn the time and place!

Whatever happened to the friendly “ranger”? What happened to the “ranger” who could identify wildflowers and caution about campfires, identify mud-covered logs at a landing and assist with timber sale inspections? What happened to the “ranger” who pointed out a great picnic spot? What happened to the “ranger” the district ranger could depend on for assistance even if it didn’t involve law enforcement?

Editor’s Note: Oldsmokey Rico Burgess knows what he’s talking about. Straight out of high school in Beaverton, Oregon, Rico served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966 to 1970 with a 1968 to 1970 tour in Vietnam as a combat correspondent. Rico and Leah moved to Bend in 1973 where he earned an associate in science degree in forestry at Central Oregon Community College in 1975. He worked a couple U.S. Forest Service summers as a student, then as a logging supervisor for Brooks-Scantlon and D&W Forest Products from 1975 to 1977. After two years with the family lift-truck business, Rico joined the Forest Service and served as a timber harvest inspector from 1987 to 1990 when he began the Forest Service law enforcement career from which he retired on the Deschutes National Forest in 2010. During that career, Rico served as a security manager on a National Incident Management Team for many years and worked incidents from Alaska to Florida. He was sent by the Forest Service Office of Intergovernmental Programs to help Liberia’s Forest Development Authority (FDA) and partner non-governmental organizations develop collaborative law enforcement techniques as the agency reorganized after a prolonged civil war. He was detailed to drug interdiction along the U.S. border with Mexico and to a Rainbow Family gathering. As a member of many regional timber sale audit teams Rico interviewed and had many “off the record” discussions with LEOs and SAs and developed a unique perspective on past and present Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigation (LEI) operations.

Have you got something to say? If so, write it up, send it in, and be heard!
The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service today announced that the first Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) timber sale contracts have been awarded to Biewer Lumber, LLC. The timber sales are located in the Huron-Manistee National Forest in Lake and Wexford counties.

Under the GNA partnership, the DNR acts as an agent – in collaboration with the Forest Service – to conduct land-management projects on national forest lands.

A 10-year master agreement was signed by the Forest Service and the DNR in October 2015.

“Michigan greatly appreciates the diligent work by the U.S. Forest Service to make this agreement a reality,” said Bill O’Neill, chief of the DNR’s Forest Resources Division. “The success of this first contract is a great example of how this partnership will continue to maintain and create healthy forest conditions, as called for in the national forests’ management plans, while providing additional wood fiber to industry.”

Michigan’s forest products industry contributes $20 billion per year to the state’s economy. Across the state, the forest products industry employs more than 96,600 people in diverse positions – from loggers and truck drivers in rural areas to furniture and cabinetry makers in more urban settings. In the Upper Peninsula, the forest products industry alone is responsible for one-third of all manufacturing jobs.

“This is an excellent example of a state and federal agency partnership functioning efficiently and effectively to serve the needs of the state’s local and rural economies,” said O’Neill, who also serves as Michigan’s state forester.

He said that the current focus for Good Neighbor Authority projects is on commercial timber sale preparation, bidding and contracting, with completion of most of this work by the end of October 2016.

Additional forester staff has been hired to help with the GNA workload and ensure that work on state-managed lands still is being accomplished.

The first contracts of the agreement involve 120 acres of predominantly red pine, which is being thinned to promote further growth of the remaining trees. Biewer Lumber is a St. Clair, Michigan-based company with sawmills and treated lumber facilities in Lake
City, McBain and Lansing. It specializes in many commercial and industrial-grade lumber products.

“Biewer Lumber is very pleased with the implementation of the Good Neighbor Authority project between the U.S. Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources,” said Tim Biewer, owner of the company. “These two organizations working together to increase the volume of Forest Service timber on the market will benefit many – from recreation to the forest products industry.”

He said that the increase in timber output will help Biewer by putting more red pine on the market and allowing more acres to be managed on national forest system land.

“We hope that this program will continue to grow as we move forward,” he said.

Michigan was the second state in the country to sign GNA agreements, and the DNR is working on projects in all three national forests in Michigan – the Huron-Manistee National Forest in the Lower Peninsula and the Ottawa and Hiawatha national forests in the Upper Peninsula.

A portion of the receipts from the GNA timber sales will reimburse the state for its costs to do the timber sale preparation work, with remaining funds available to conduct additional projects with the national forests in Michigan.

Discussions currently are under way between the DNR and the Ottawa, Hiawatha and Huron-Manistee national forests to identify Good Neighbor Authority projects for 2017.

Learn more about the Good Neighbor Authority. Find out more about Michigan’s state forests
NAFSR BOARD TO MEET IN FEBRUARY

NAFSR Board members will meet on February 13 and 14, 2017 for two days to review our accomplishments and to establish priorities for the coming year.

The meeting will be held in Las Vegas NV. The hotel has not yet been confirmed.

All members are welcome!