

North Fork Landowners Association

September 2009 Business Meeting

Submitted by Valerie Cox (preliminary – awaiting final approval)

Call to Order: President Betsy Holycross called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. on September 5, 2009 at the Community Hall.

Roll Call: Officers and Directors present were Betsy Holycross, Margaret Heaphy, Valerie Cox, Lee Secrest, Jan Caldwell, Richard Hildner, and Molly Shepherd.

Minutes: The August business meeting minutes were read and approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report was approved as read. A motion was made and seconded to approve payment of the 2009-2010 Hall insurance coverage bill. The motion carried.

Committee Reports: President Holycross explained that henceforward committee reports will be given in the following order: first the NFLA committees, second the Webmaster, and third other entities.

NFLA Committees

North Fork Patrol: Larry Wilson reported that two more mailboxes have been shot. The Osborne Fire Finder was stolen from Thoma Lookout some time between August 22 and September 5. Members were encouraged to record license plates of suspicious vehicles in regard to poaching, spotlighting, and other activities to Lee Downes, Lynn Ogle, John Frederick, Mark & Margaret Heaphy, or Oliver Meister. A member inquired about the fire on Trail Creek and the license plate of the truck observed.

Trails Committee: Chairman John Frederick read a letter from Mike Dardis, US Forest Service Fire Officer, detailing the Thoma Lookout refurbishment project. On September 8 Phase I will begin, transporting supplies and materials. On September 14 – 18 Phase II, the restoration will take place. John asked for volunteers for Phase II. He reported that the Osborne Fire Finder was removed and presumably stolen sometime after August 22, based on anecdotal member information.

Fire Mitigation: Chair Molly Shepherd updated the membership on the Red Whale Fuels Reduction Project. The US Forest Service anticipates a lawsuit preventing initiation of the

project, including the RAC funded thinning on Red Meadow Drive. Due to the threat of lawsuits, the project is on hold. The committee will reapply for Firewise Community status for projects completed this year.

Road Committee: Betsy Holycross resigned as chair and Margaret Heaphy took on chairmanship. Margaret reported that the 2009-2010 focus will be to research dust abatement options. Laura Fay of the Western Transportation Institute based at MSU Bozeman will give a presentation on dust abatement on September 8 at 10 a.m. at the Community Hall. Margaret asked the membership for help in conducting research. Dave Prunty indicated that a contract is ready to be awarded to LHC to crush gravel this fall at the Demers pit. Bentonite will be added to the gravel. Blade patching was done on the paved portion of the North Fork Road. The countywide road plan is still in draft form.

Cell Phone Service: The committee had no new information at this time. Director Jan Caldwell noted that Willson Electronics of Utah sells mobile boosters and magnetic antennas for cell phones. A member indicated that red lights on towers are only needed in airport approach areas.

Webmaster's Report: Patti Craig-Hart noted that Hotmail addresses have been created for each of the NFLA officers and directors and are now available on the website. She noted that members need not rely solely on email. For urgent matters, send a note via Karin Craver or visit with an officer or board member in person. She reported that alternative keepers of the website login and password have been established as per a request from the Board of Directors. If members feel something is missing on the website or any corrections should be made, contact the Webmaster.

Newsletter: The newsletter comes out in November. Inform the secretary of a new address and Patti if you wish to receive the newsletter as an email attachment.

Non NFLA Entities

North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee: Chairman John Frederick relayed efforts to define a structure or building in general and as it applies to a building on skids as well. Also to be considered are definitions of temporary and permanent structures.

Fire: Chief Lynn Ogle noted we are not free of fire danger until the end of September, and urged members to report fires. The county's repeater on Numa can call for help. There is no open burning until the end of September.

Flathead Basin Coalition: Ed Heger requested an NFLA member who is a centrist to volunteer to take over his seat on the Flathead Coalition as he is now a member of the Flathead Basin

Commission. Volunteers should contact Betsy Holycross. Will Hammerquist noted that roads and trenching are already in place for a hardrock gold mine near the border. Members expressed concern about cyanide leaching.

RAC: Larry Wilson reported that money previously designated for thinning Red Meadow Drive now goes to the North Fork Road project as per US Forest Supervisor de Herrera. The money allows the county to add bentonite to gravel applied to a 6 inch depth from the Camas Junction to the Polebridge Junction. Application of gravel is weather dependent. The US Forest Service funded a NEPA study and provided the gravel for the road project. Next year's plan is to gravel north of Polebridge Junction. RAC money can be applied for trail improvement.

Continuing and Old Business

History Project: Chairman Morgan Hart announced an organizational meeting will be held in October. The date, time and place will be advertised. The committee's first priority is primary sources, with the goal of cataloging and preserving artifacts and eventually archiving them. Contact Morgan if interested.

Weed Committee: Valerie Cox presented the idea of reactivating the weed committee. The following members volunteered to serve: Will Hammerquist, Steve Berg, Steve Weber, John Frederick, AnnaMarie Harrod, and Carol Vuchetich.

Flagpole: Ray Brown has information on materials needed and will forward information to Betsy.

New Business

President Holycross brought to the members attention a policy proposal which had been submitted by email by Greg and Beth Puckett "that policies be developed for each of the by-laws we submitted." The President explained that the Board of Directors had considered this at its August 20 meeting and noted three issues that arose in considering this proposal: a) confusion between the NFLA and the NFLUAC, b) the question of possible subversion of the will of the membership, and c) the role of policy in the NFLA. She summarized these as follows:

- a) The NFLA and the NFLUC are distinct and separate organizations governed by different state statutes. The NFLUAC is not a part, subsidiary or committee of the NFLA. The NFLA is a private, non-profit corporation and not subject to state right-to-know laws. The NFLUAC was created by Flathead County in 1987 via a resolution that prescribed membership, required open meetings, and is subject to right-to-know laws. NFLA practices which may have added to the confusion are being rectified. For example, the inclusion of the NFLUAC report among NFLA committee reports was changed earlier in

this meeting. Also the NFLA secretary treasurer will no longer serve as the NFLUAC secretary. It was noted that Steve Berg had volunteered to fill this role.

- b) Adopting failed bylaws as policy does an end-around and undermines the will of the membership.
- c) Other than Hall rental policies, the NFLA does not have a history of adopting policies to govern its operations and has no process in place for formulating and adopting policies. The Board had expressed concern about the need for “policy cops” and agree that it was preferable to emphasize operating in “Good faith.”

The Chair asked if there were any comments, questions or actions anyone wished to make on this agenda item.

A motion was made as follows: “any motions to adopt policies will be considered out of order unless and until a bylaw has been adopted that would govern NFLA policy-making, including the scope, formulation, procedure for adoption, implementation and enforcement of policies.” The motion was seconded. Discussion requiring clarification ensued. A member asked that the motion be reread. It was reread and opened for discussion. Discussion followed. The motion carried with 4 votes against. After the vote, a member requested more information on state statutes which were referenced in the course of the discussion.

NFLA Board of Directors Meeting: A member asked about reading the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting. The Chair responded that as they had not yet been “approved,” they would be read at the next meeting and posted on the website.

Noise Complaint: Member Dennis Groebe presented a petition signed by 17 NFLA members regarding the noise level of amplified music in Polebridge after 10 p.m. in violation of a previous oral agreement. Late night generator noise was also addressed. The Sheriff has indicated there is no noise ordinance for the state of Montana. Larry Wilson volunteered to talk to the offending party in Polebridge. A motion was made and seconded to consider placing a reminder in the newsletter regarding noise and courtesy. Discussion followed. The motion carried with one vote against.

Hall Coordinator: Valerie Cox will serve from May to October and Steve Berg will take over for the remainder of the year.

Auction: Valerie Cox proposed reinitiating the auction. It was moved and seconded to consider. Discussion followed. Director Richard Hildner asked the membership to suggest a calendar date. Larry Wilson suggested auctioning consignment items as well.

Food Drive: Member Bob Grimaldi suggested contributing non-perishable food or cash donations to the Columbia Falls Food Bank. It was agreed that such goods should be brought to

the Hall before the October 2009 meeting. Jan Caldwell volunteered to transport collected food.

North Valley Search and Rescue: Larry Wilson announced he would be selling books of raffle tickets outside after the meeting.

Adjournment: President Betsy Holycross adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by _____, Secretary
_____, President