



## **NORTH FORK LANDOWNER'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

Sondreson Hall  
September 12, 2021, 8pm

### **Board Members Present**

Richard Hildner, President  
Kevin Halsey, Vice-President  
Chris Heitz, Treasurer  
Karina Pettey, Secretary  
Bill Walker, Past President

Kenna Halsey, North Director  
Irv Heitz, North Director  
Jim Rittenburg, South Director

### **Board Members Absent**

Karina Pettey, Secretary  
Kevin Ulrichsen, South Director

Members enjoyed Lois Walker's annual North Fork history presentation which preceded the NFLA membership meeting.

### **1. NFLA President's Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Richard Hildner welcomed everyone to his first meeting as President. He mentioned his long history (63+) years on the North Fork and thanked Bill Walker for his outstanding work over the past two years. New attendees were invited to introduce themselves. No one chose to introduce themselves.

1.1. Report on road maintenance – Richard Hildner summarized for NFLA members his conversation with Dave Prunty, Flathead County Road Department Supervisor. Richard took notes of his meeting and then sent them to Dave for any corrections or clarifications before sharing them. Glacier Drive will be improved Summer of 2023. Glacier Drive improvements are dependent on the availability of millings from GNP maintenance of Going to the Sun Road. The GNP contract is being rebid since the previous bidding had expired. The project is a combined effort of GNP, Federal Highways and Flathead County. The county will oversee the work. The first order of business is to reestablish the roadbed. Millings will be laid down to a thickness of up to 18" in some places to build up the roadbed. The project includes installation of some culverts and ditch work. All environmental clearances for Glacier Drive and the last five miles of the North Fork Road to the Canadian Boarder have been approved by the Federal Highway Commission. Improvement of the last 5 miles of the North Fork Road is scheduled for 2022.

### **2. Minutes of August 8, 2021, Meeting**

2.1. Minutes were approved as read.

### 3. Treasurer's Report – Chris Heitz

This report is a combination of the August financial report and the NFLA fiscal year-end report.

- 3.1. August income included \$800 in dues/donations and \$250 in donations for the wood stove. Expenses included Fire Safe Montana, reimbursement for stamps/ink, USPS box rent and a second \$1,500 payment on new stove. Monthly loss was just over \$700. Total cash on hand, \$37,784.42 which includes \$15,000 in the emergency reserve fund.
- 3.2. Fiscal Year End Report (September 1, 2020, to August 31, 2021). The NFLA ended the year with 361 paid members and cash on hand of \$37,784.42. Total Income \$29,826.88 and expenses were \$19,794.73. Chris noted that \$9,960 of the income was the wood stove fundraiser. The gain for the year was \$10,032.15. The annual audit of the treasurer's records revealed no discrepancies. Membership dues were owed on September 1, 2021, for the new year. Dues are \$15/person for members, \$10/person for associate members.
- 3.3. The Treasurer was thanked for her report.

### 4. Committee Reports

#### 4.1. Fire Mitigation Committee – Molly Shepherd / Lynn Ogle

4.1.1. The fire mitigation committee has gotten a lot of grants for the North Fork over the past 18 years. This spring, Fire Mitigation obtained a highly interesting and competitive grant from NCRS. It is a TIPS (Targeted Implementation Project) grant and includes landowners from Ford to the Canadian Border. Anyone with property in this area is eligible to apply for the grant. So far only one person has expressed interest in the grant. If you live in this area, please go to the Fire Mitigation Committee page on the NFLA website, review the information and contact Shawn Johnson.

4.1.1.1. Question: What kind of activities are covered under the grant? Hazardous fuels reductions, forest health and weed control. There are a wide variety of stewardship issues that would be eligible. They are looking for a plan and willing to assign a forester to the landowner to assist in plan development.

4.1.1.2. Question: If there is not sufficient interest in the north end of the valley, could the grant area be expanded? Molly did not know if the grant area could be expanded.

4.1.2. Three factors have been identified that helped tame the Calder Fire this season. They were 1) Large numbers of fire fighters and equipment; 2) Since 2007, landowners and agencies had worked together to reduce fuels; and 3) Homeowners had taken lessons learned in 2007 seriously and created defensible spaces around their homes.

4.2. Lynn Ogle reported that there is no opening burning yet. You may have a campfire, however, if the fire gets away from you. You bear the cost. The Hay Creek fire is 80% contained. The large log piles are not for wood cutting. They will be sold. If you are caught hauling logs from these piles, you will be charged with theft. Also, now is the time to winterize all fire equipment. (Attachment 1)

4.2.1. Richard Hildner shared a report from Rob Davies, USFS Supervisor. Hay Creek Road closure remains in effect until September 30, 2021. Fire rehabilitation is about 80% done. Seed is coming and dust abatement will be coming for Red Meadow Road. There will be good firewood cutting on Hay Creek Road when it reopens in October. Firewood permits are required. There is not enough marketable timber within the fire perimeter to set up a timber sale.

#### 4.3. History Committee – Lois Walker (Attachment 2)

Lois prepared the presentation heard this evening. She also worked with community volunteers to move vital records to Linda Pittman's home for storage during the Hay Creek Fire. Lois provided information to the USFS historians regarding the Ford School House National Register nomination. She and Janet Leigh will be making a presentation to the Montana Historic Preservation Board regarding the Billy Cruz Cabin nomination next week. She also scanned photos from Valerie Cox.

#### 4.4. Maintenance Committee – Irv Heitz

Requested volunteers experienced with laying floor tile to assist in adding the row to the hearth. He plans to start on September 20 and finish by October 5.

#### 4.5. Sunshine Committee – Bonny Ogle (Attachment 3)

8/14/21 to 9/12/21 a total of 18 cards were sent. The annual report showed a total of 108 cards.

Bonny thanked those who had provided information and cards. She is currently short on thank you, sympathy, and get-well cards.

#### 4.6. Welcome Committee – Gerry Stearns

Creation of a mission statement for the welcome committee has been very difficult and “all over the board”.

What Gerry really wants to know is what members expect the Welcome Committee to do. There was considerable discussion amongst the membership on this topic. Richard Hildner requested that anyone who has ideas about what that committee’s purpose should be to please get those ideas to Gerry Stearns before September 30<sup>th</sup>. The board meets to review mission statements from committees on September 30.

4.7. Mission statements will be reviewed by the board on September 30 and be posted on the website and on the agenda at the next membership meeting.

4.8. If there is someone interested in leading a weed committee, please contact Richard Hildner. Richard expects the weed committee to coordinate with partner agencies regarding the locations/ types of weeds, volunteer opportunities and weed mitigation.

### 5. Old Business - None

### 6. New Business

6.1. Proposed new time (not date) for membership meetings Richard Hildner discussed potential times for NFLA membership meetings. There was considerable discussion regarding the time for NFLA meetings for next season along with a history of the changes made in 2019 as a result of the 2018 Member Survey which was sent to every member (not just those in attendance at one meeting).

6.1.1. Motion: Richard Hildner moved that the October 2021 meeting begin at 7pm. Motion was seconded. Most of the members present voted in favor of the motion. Two members were opposed.

6.1.2. Motion: Joyce O’Hare moved that the June/July/August 2022 meetings begin at 8pm and the September/October 2022 meetings begin at 7pm. Motion was seconded by Dawn Jacobson. Most of the members present voted in favor of the motion. Two members were opposed.

6.1.3. Richard Hildner reiterated that any changes to the bylaws (regarding the date of the meeting) must be presented to the membership in writing in July and voted on in August.

6.1.4. The NFLA Board is responsible to communicate this change via various communication channels.

#### 6.2. 2022 Event ideas and hosts

6.2.1. Lorna Rittenburg is going to organize events. Please submit your events and the host for the event. You may submit this information to Lorna via email at lornaritt@aol.com.

6.3. 2022 Presentation ideas – The June meeting will be presented by Lois Walker. It is a celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFLA. Please submit other ideas/speaker names to Larry Wilson.

6.4. New NFLA committees for 2021-2022 – Not discussed

6.5. Coordination of weed control efforts – See 4.7 above.

6.6. Richard spoke with Pete Melnick, Flathead County Administrator. Brad Able, County Commissioner, is hosting an agency roundtable to discuss North Fork Road maintenance (Columbia Falls to Camas Road) on October 6, 2021, at 1pm at the county fairgrounds. This is not a discussion regarding paving the road. The public comment period is limited to 15 minutes. Please, if you plan to make remarks, keep them short so as many people as possible have an opportunity to speak.

6.7. NFLA/NFPA are working together to create ideas/concepts on the topic of living with wildlife. Neither organization is minimizing or ignoring the wildlife conflict issues the Polebridge community faced this summer. Richard was invited to attend the NFPA board meeting and plans to be there to discuss how NFPA/NFLA can work together.

## **7. Reports from Non – NFLA individuals or organizations**

- 7.1. North Fork Patrol – Mark Heaphy reported bow season started on September 4. They are not required to wear orange until September 15 and then only if you are hunting moose, bear, or wolf. General season starts October 23. If you give permission to someone to hunt on your property, give it to them in writing and request they carry it on their person. If there is an issue, get a license plate and call it in.
- 7.2. North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee – Randy Kenyon reported that three members of the LUAC subcommittee met with Jeff Larsen, Planning Board Committee Chairperson on August 31. They have a much better picture of Planning Board expectations as a result of the meeting. Attempts have been made to schedule a subcommittee meeting with the planning board after the October hearing at the recommendation of Jeff Larsen. He believes it would be beneficial for the planning board to understand the context and reasons behind proposed amendment prior to a public hearing. The final draft will not be available for review until after the subcommittee completes adjustments after its informal meeting with the planning board. It is expected a new staff report will be required before the next public hearing. Flathead County has not hired a new planning director and there is no one in Planning and Zoning to really guide us through the process at this point.

## **8. Member Comments**

- 8.1. Suzanne Hildner – NFPA annual meeting is October 2, 2021. It is held at Home Ranch Bottoms. Potluck is at 4:30 followed by the annual meeting. Special presentation is at 6:30 pm by Sally Thompson, author of ‘The People Before the Park’.
- 8.2. LeGriz Ultramarathon is scheduled for October 9, 2021, Flannery Coates is race director and volunteers are needed.
- 8.3. The next NFLA membership meeting is October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Mark Heaphy is presenting on North Fork Search and Rescue and Solar Systems at 6pm.
- 8.4. The next NFLA board meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2021, at 5pm. It may be delayed to 6:30 pm if the Land Use Advisory Committee needs to meet.
- 8.5. Lois has a few extra historical slides she will be showing after the meeting adjourns.

## **9. Adjournment**