



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

Sondreson Hall  
October 10, 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**

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 - New attendees were invited to introduce themselves. No one chose to do so. The President expressed condolences to the families of Alice Caldwell, Annie Konkler, Walter Roberts, and Paul Mueller, all of whom are sorely missed.

1.1. Wood Stove - Irv Heitz was thanked for his hard work.

1.2. Report on Agency Outreach – Richard continues outreach to various agencies to identify issues of importance to North Fork residents and request that the NFLA be kept apprised. He attended the inter-agency public meeting hosted by Flathead County Commissioner, Brad Abell, and presented a statement on behalf of the NFLA membership indicating that the NFLA takes no position paving or otherwise with regards to the North Fork Road and that the NFLA needs to be in the loop as discussion progresses. His statement is part of the public record and will be posted on the NFLA website. He also met with acting Glacier National Park (GNP) Superintendent, Pete Webster. GNP is looking at options for 2022 visitation management. An initial proposal may be out by the end of October. Webster stated that “desired conditions” for the North Fork has been exceeded. He also indicated that no decision has been made on how to manage the Inside the North Fork Road. Richard requested that the NFLA have a seat at the table for any discussions impacting the North Fork community.

**2. Minutes of September 12, 2021, Meeting**

2.1. Minutes were approved as read. Richard announced that in the future, draft membership meeting minutes will be posted on the website.

2.2. Irv Heitz made a motion for reconsideration of the 2022 NFLA membership meeting times voted at the September meeting (See 9/12/21 minutes, Item 6.1). The motion to reconsider was approved by a hand vote of 15 in favor / 14 against.

2.2.1.A motion was made by Ray Brown and seconded by Debo Powers to keep the time changes voted at the September 2021, NFLA membership meeting which are: 8pm for June, July, and August, and 7pm for September and October.

2.2.1.1. Considerable discussion followed regarding how best to communicate differing times and significant concern about making any changes to what was voted in September without it being noticed to NFLA membership prior to reconsideration.

2.2.1.2. A hand vote showed 25 in favor of the motion, 2 opposed and 1 abstention.

### **3. Treasurer's Report – Chris Heitz (Attachment 1)**

- 3.1. The NFLA Budget was approved by the board at its last meeting. It is a balanced budget for \$8,500. A copy will be posted on the website.
- 3.2. Committee mission statements /budgets were reviewed by the board and will be posted on the NFLA website. The Welcome Committee is the only one still under review.
- 3.3. For September, the NFLA had \$65 dollars in donations and \$315 in dues. Total income was \$380. The Sunshine committee and mantles for the propane lights were the expenses. The September loss was \$72.75. Cash on hand was \$37,711.67 and that includes the \$15,000 emergency fund. In October we will pay off the wood stove and send out the fall newsletter. The membership signup form is included in the newsletter.

### **4. Committee Reports**

#### **4.1. Fire Mitigation Committee – Molly Shepherd (Attachment 2)**

4.1.1. Firewise requires we update our strategic action plan document every three years. Molly outlined three changes made to the document: 1) Add Flathead County CWPP language defining wildland urban interface. 2) Include mention of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Grant obtained and 3) Mention the Frozen-Moose Project which is currently being implemented. There is litigation regarding the Project and the strategic plan will be updated to reflect the litigation. These documents will be posted on the NFLA website.

4.1.2. Molly also requested North Fork Landowners turn in any expenses / hours related to fire mitigation work completed between November 2020 and October 31, 2021, so it can be counted as part of our annual Firewise Report.

#### **4.2. Fire / Safety Report – Lynn Ogle**

Be sure to burn safely and have a permit if required.

#### **4.3. Sunshine Committee – Lynn for Bonny Ogle (Attachment 3)**

A total of 15 cards have been sent since the last meeting.

#### **4.4. History Committee – Lois Walker (Attachment 4)**

Janet Leigh and Lois made the presentation for the nomination of the Billy Kruse cabin to the historic register on September 16, 2021. It was approved and forwarded to the Keeper of the Register in Washington, DC. Lois reported on additional North Fork related requests and contacts.

#### **4.5. Welcome Committee – Gerry Stearns (Attachment 5)**

Gerry provided an update on the Welcome Committee meeting.

#### **4.6. Maintenance Committee – Irv Heitz**

No Report

### **5. Old Business - None**

## **6. New Business**

- 6.1. The next NFLA Board meeting is scheduled at Sondreson Hall on for November 11 at 5pm.
- 6.2. Thanksgiving Dinner – No one has stepped up to host Thanksgiving at the hall and time is running out to host the event if alcohol is served due to insurance requirements. Tonight, is the last call for volunteers to host the dinner. There were no volunteers. Mark Heaphy reminded everyone that Thanksgiving Dinner is an NFLA sponsored event and is funded in part by the NFLA. Christmas is not an NFLA sponsored event.
- 6.3. Food pantry donations, checks/cash are collected at our October meeting. Donations will go to the Columbia Falls Foodbank this year. If individuals wish to write a check to the Food Bank, they may give it to Chris.

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

- 7.1. North Fork Patrol – Mark Heaphy reported bow season will be ending soon and general hunting season opens October 23. If there is an issue, get a license plate and call it in. North Fork Patrol is not law enforcement.

## **8. Member Comments**

- 8.1. Lynn Ogle – Please hold phone calls to Larry Wilson until he is feeling better.
- 8.2. Ray Brown –Hunting and shooting are allowed at Sondreson Meadows. The gate will be locked this week per USFS guidelines. Perhaps the NFLA needs to contact the USFS and request they address safe use of firearms at their rental cabins.
- 8.3. Mark Heaphy – Christmas plans have not yet been finalized. Organizers are discussing a dessert fest outside with warming fires and Christmas carols. Additional information will be posted later.
- 8.4. The next NFLA membership meeting is June 12, 2022, at 8pm. Lois Walker presents at 7pm.

## **9. Adjournment**

North Fork Landowners' Association  
2021-2022 Approved Budget

	Budget 2021 / 2022		Budget 2021 / 2022
<b>General Fund Income</b>		<b>General Fund Expenditures &amp; Disbursements</b>	
Fundraisers	\$0.00	Annual Report Fee	\$20.00
Donations	\$2,700.00	Committee - Fire Mitigation	\$100.00
Hall Sec Dep (Refunded/Pass through)	\$0.00	Committee - History	\$300.00
Dues	\$5,500.00	Committee - Historical Photos & Stories	\$200.00
NF Patrol/Poaching Fund Donation (Pass through)	\$0.00	Committee - Sunshine	\$400.00
NF Patrol Pstg/Printing Contribution Fall Newsltr	\$100.00	Committee - Welcome/Neighborhood	\$100.00
<b>Subtotal General Fund Income</b>	<b>\$8,300.00</b>	Fall Enrollment Letter - printing	\$300.00
		Fall Enrollment Letter - postage	\$100.00
		Hall Supplies	\$465.00
<b>Improvement Fund Income</b>		Insurance - Fire (due in August)	\$1,500.00
Donations for Hall Use	\$0.00	Insurance - General Liability (due in Sept)	\$375.00
Dividends Whitefish CJ (all 3 accts)	\$200.00	Interlocal Meeting	\$150.00
<b>Subtotal Improvement Fund</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>	Misc.	\$347.00
		Other Postage	\$125.00
<b>Transfer of WFCU Funds to Supplement</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	Office Supplies	\$200.00
<b>Total Income All Sources:</b>	<b>\$8,500.00</b>	PO Box Rental	\$120.00
		Propane	\$450.00
		Propane tank rental	\$60.00
		Property Tax	\$135.00
		Repairs & Maintenance	\$200.00
		Road - Mag Chloride Application	\$1,400.00
		Safety Deposit Box Rental	\$25.00
		Spring Newsletter - printing	\$500.00
		Spring Newsletter - postage	\$60.00
		Thanksgiving Dinner	\$0.00
		Treasurer's Stipend	\$588.00
		Weed Mitigation at Hall	\$100.00
		Website / Domain Fees	\$180.00
		<b>Subtotal General Fund Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,500.00</b>
		<b>Improvement Fund Expenses</b>	
		Hall Improvements/Fence/Outuse/Computer	\$0.00
		<b>Subtotal Improvement Fund Expenses</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
		<b>Total Expenses All Funds</b>	<b>\$8,500.00</b>
		<b>Net Income/Loss</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

## **FIREWISE-QUALIFYING ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES**

A summary of some of Firewise qualifying activities and expenses follows:

- Collaboration and consultation time with forestry and fire experts
- Organizing, planning, coordinating, implementing wildfire-related outreach events and educational presentations
- Program administration time
- Travel time to risk reduction meetings, trainings and workshops
- Attendance at wildfire-related education/informational meetings and events and at evacuation/preparedness trainings
- Firewise improvements and maintenance on homes and outbuildings
- Improvements and maintenance within the home ignition zone -- for example, thinning or limbing up trees, reducing ladder fuels, dealing with slash and other debris, moving firewood piles
- Vegetation removal; community clean-up
- Committee members attendance and participation at Firewise committee meetings
- Residents' attendance and participation at wildfire education/outreach events
- Writing wildfire educational articles

Qualifying expenses include equipment and tool purchases; mileage at the current IRS rate for attendance at wildfire-related meetings and trainings; purchases of food for meetings/trainings; contractor and labor expenses to perform risk reduction work; and the value of volunteer labor participating in risk reduction projects.

*mollshp@gmail.com*

## 2021 North Fork CWPP:

### b. Strategic Planning

In keeping with the National Fire Plan, the NFLA's Fire Mitigation Committee adopted a definition of "Wildland/Urban Interface" in 2004 that was tailored to the North Fork ecosystem's geography, demography and fire history.

The North Fork community occupies a corridor at risk from severe wildfire. The corridor is approximately three miles wide and thirty-five miles long, extending from Big Creek to the Canadian Border along the North Fork of the Flathead River. The community's wildland/urban interface extends up to 1.5 miles from the boundaries of the corridor, where private property with structures adjoins or intermixes with public lands:

*"The Wildland Urban Interface is any location where a fire can readily spread from vegetation (wildland fuels) to manmade structures (urban fuels). This is generally measured geographically as a 1.5-mile zone around areas with structures (e.g. homes, businesses, and outbuildings); public works facilities (e.g. drinking water and sewer); and critical infrastructure (e.g. power lines, gas lines, pipelines, bridges, railways, emergency communication sites, and watersheds)." (p. 21, 2020 Flathead County Community Wildfire Protection Plan)*

The committee participated in the development of the initial Flathead County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), approved by the county commissioners in 2005 and revised in 2011 and 2020. Committee members prepared a "North Fork Flathead Wildfire Mitigation and Planning Report," which was appended to the 2011 Flathead County CWPP and is scheduled to be updated in 2022. The report identified properties in inhabited areas of the North Fork that were most at risk from future wildfires. Those properties, which are shown in the accompanying map depicting important fuel reduction areas updated for the 2022 version, are as follows:

- Properties on the "North End," from Trail Creek to the Canadian Border, are considered particularly at risk. The area has not burned since the fires of the early twentieth century. Many sites within the area are choked with mature and decadent lodgepole pine and heavy downed fuels. It is difficult to gain access to the sites and to defend them. The US Forest Service and private landowners have treated a number of locations along Trail Creek Road to improve the situation, more work remains to be done.
- Properties in the Wedge Canyon Fire area that have significant downfall and dense lodgepole pine regeneration that has not been treated are at risk. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has approved the Wedge Canyon Targeted Implementation Program (TIP) covering the Wedge Canyon Fire burn area, plus private lands north of Trail Creek to the Canadian Border.
- Properties in the area from Whale Creek south to Moose Creek, which also have not burned during the recent fire cycle. Thick ladder fuels mix with older trees on many sites. Center Mountain Road, now gated, anchors the western side of the area. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MT DNRC), US Forest Service, and many private landowners have undertaken projects to address hazardous fuels, but there is considerable work remaining.

- Properties in the river corridor from Hawk Creek south to the 1988 Red Bench Fire boundary. In addition, untreated properties within the Red Bench Fire boundary with significant downfall and dense lodgepole regeneration stands also are currently at risk..
- Properties in the Hay Creek area, both north and south from the top of Hay Creek Hill, which have not burned during the current cycle. Montana DNRC, US Forest Service and private landowners have undertaken projects in this area as well..
- Properties along major Ingress/Egress corridors are prioritized for treatment.

Those corridors include:

- The main North Fork Road,
- Trail Creek Road over the Whitefish Divide, and
- Red Meadow Road over the Whitefish Divide for egress routes out of the North Fork.
- Secondary roads include:
  - Moose Creek Road,
  - Center Mountain Road
  - Red Meadow Road East of the North Fork Road,
  - Teepee Lake Road.
  - The old Polebridge Loop Road abandoned by the County is important egress for local residents
  - The County Road from the Polebridge Mercantile to the Park Entrance at Polebridge is also an important egress route for local residents and Park visitors.
- With a significant amount of hazardous fuels modifications completed around private structures, access roads, and on federal land adjacent to private lands, a current focus is looking at tying together fuel treatments to create shaded fuel breaks west of private land and structures to provide potential anchor points for suppression actions in the event of major fires.
- The continuation of implementation of hazardous fuels projects by the US Forest Service and Montana DNRC adjacent to private lands is critical. The most recent Forest Service project – Frozen Moose – is being implemented currently. In addition, the implementation of planned prescribed fire treatments to reduce fuel loadings in those portions of the North Fork where mechanized treatments are not permitted is important to reducing the threat to private lands downslope/downwind.

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WFLA

Sunshine Committee

Birthdays	7
Sympathy	5
Thinking of you	2
Get Well	1
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	15

(Cards since last meeting.)

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29 Cards in Sept! but only  
15 since last meeting.

Bonny S. Ogle



## **NORTH FORK HISTORY PROJECT**

October 2021 report

Janet Leigh and I made the presentation for the Billy Kruse cabin National Register nomination before the Montana Historic Preservation Board on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. It was well received, and the nomination was approved and forwarded on to the Keeper of the Register in Washington. We should hear more in three or four months.

Mid Connelly, Austin Weikert's daughter, stopped by for a visit. She has put me in touch with her grandson, Roland Oltmann, who has moved to Fortine now, with his wife and two small daughters, and is interested in working on the family history. We're sharing materials back and forth and hope to get together soon.

Richard Hildner and I are planning to visit Sawtooth Ranch north of Trail Creek this week and do a little documentation on the Helen and Orville Foreman property, formerly Ed and Emil Peterson homestead property.

I sorted through two big boxes of 35 mm slides and photos from John Frederick. He had them labeled to go to Dave Hadden, formerly of Headwaters Montana but who is now associated with the North Fork Preservation Association. I'll get them to him soon.

Mark Heaphy tells me that Maggie Rodriguez, daughter of Joe & Joan Lang (Joe was once Customs officer at the border) has some Tom Reynolds materials, so I need to get in touch with her.

I'm continuing to work on my history of the Polebridge Mercantile. The drafts of the Bill Adair chapter and the Ben & Annette Rover chapter are finished. I'll be working on the Ted & Esther Ross chapter next.

Joyce, Karina, Vernon and I met on Sunday to discuss the Welcome Committee. Here are the suggestions

Mission statement: Eat, Drink and Party Budget \$300

Actual mission statement: Welcome and orientation to the North Fork

- There should be two steps of the committee visit: Welcome with possible cookies, and Orientation when how to be a responsible North Fork neighbor/resident will be discussed.
- A cocktail party for newcomers in the middle or at the end of July. This will give them a chance to meet each other and the officers and board of NFLA.
- Short 5" videos of NF residents discussing various issues (fire, wildlife, etc,) will be posted on the web page.
- More extensive signage should be posted at all river put-ins telling people to protect river health, etc. The health of our river is being degraded in a big way every year.
- Sign at PB intersection pointing way to Bowman and Kintla lakes so tourists don't drive north.
- Perhaps develop an app that would cover important tourist info and could be downloaded before they head up here. The cost of development should be shared by all groups active here, including government agencies.