



2014 OFHA Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday, March 15, 2014

Location: Multnomah Arts Center
Portland, Oregon

Call to Order: 10:10 AM Scott Letourneau, President
Members Present: 35

Welcome, Introductions

1. Review/Amend/Approve Minutes from last Meeting

Bernie motioned to approve the minutes, they were seconded, and the minutes were approved.

2. Treasurer's Report/Report on the Membership

There has been an increase of membership by over 100 members since last year. This resulted in an increased budget and expenses in 2013; Expenses increased due to increased membership and larger newsletter mailout. Budget for 2014 will be lower with anticipation of less added revenue. We have 498 members up from 350 in the prior year. We increased membership by adding the dues envelopes to both newsletters and due to increased interest in the CFA. There was a motion to approve the budget; it was seconded and approved.

3. Old Business

None

4. New Business: Speakers:

A. Jim Sauser, Region 6 Special Use Coordinator

Update from the Forest Service:

Field reports:

Willowa Whitman – dealing with 1 permit holder compliance issue

Fire Funding:

It is very expensive to fight fires across the country by the FS. It cuts into all the other government land and outdoor programs across the budget. The FS put in \$6 mill last year on this line item.

In December, 2013, Senators Wyden and Crapo introduced bipartisan wildfire funding reform legislation. The bill frees up to \$412 million for prevention, and treats massive wildfires as natural disasters. This would free up FS money to deal with a backlog of work that needs to be done and that has not been done because of the fire fighting issue. The FS can do more work on reducing hazardous conditions; particularly in the SW where the fuel is really explosive, but also in the West. It remains important that cabin owners be diligent in managing fire danger regarding their cabins. Be sure to clean roofs and there should be no wood or brush near cabin. Also take care with outdoor fire pits. Be aware of escape routes in case a fire appears.

Also the aircraft for FS fighting fires needs to be updated (currently they use WW2 aircraft). It is in the works to transfer aircraft from Coast Guard to update and add some planes for fighting forest fires.

There was a question regarding the fee memo that recently came out. It addressed the issue of fees that folks can not afford to pay and it outlined how to pay at least something to show good will towards paying the permit fee. The bottom line is that the fee system is the law and eventually folks need to pay. The FS needs to follow the law as well as cabin owners. The FS is trying to work with cabin owners to come up with a plan to pay their fees. If owners refuse to pay, then the FS will have to take action.

At the end of Jim Sauser's talk Bernie Kosola, former OFHA Board member announced that Jim is scheduled for retirement May 30th of this year. He thanked Jim for all of the years of service and for the many years he has willingly attended the OFHA meetings. He presented Jim with a thank you card and acknowledgement for all his years of service.

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B. Doug Gann, National Forest Homeowners' Assoc. (NFH) Board Member, C2 Member: From Lake Wenatchee

Doug Gann got involved with C2 because of the CUFFA fee structure that was implemented in 2000. He has worked hard to get the Cabin Fee Act (CFA) passed. If it does not pass, then he will probably lose his cabin in the long run.

Doug gave a slide presentation on the CFA; what it is and why it is being pursued.

Some key points include:

- There is a problem with inconsistency in the fees. Some are too high for the market and some too low for the market.
- NFH survey, 80% unsatisfied with CUFFA and 87% want to replace CUFFA
- 4% did not pay 2013 fee
- 6% said they won't pay the 2014 fee
- 25% are undecided if they will pay.
- 35% of cabins are currently for sale or will possibly be selling due to the high fees.

(First time this statistic has shown up)

- SB1341 - CFA is in its 2nd year of the 113th Congress
- The fee levels are over 11 tiers and span \$500-\$5500. The average fee will be \$2200. It will generate \$30 million per year. If the CFA does not go through...there will be 1/3 fewer cabins as people will be forced out.

In the Senate, S1341 was introduced last summer. It is the second bill introduced by the NFH on the fee issue. It had a successful hearing in November, 2013. Unfortunately, there was an unfavorable Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report returned in the past week or so. The CBO interpreted the bill differently than was intended by the NFH. The CBO says the bill will not generate the needed funds to be revenue neutral. It will be short \$71 million over 10 yrs. The NFH are now looking at some ways to adjust the bill and it is thought that it should be an easy fix. It will be resubmitted to the CBO in the next few weeks for another try at approval.

Hopefully, the House will adopt the Senate bill as they want to do what the cabin owners want and we have better support in the House.

Next steps:

1. Meet with Forest Service to fix bill.

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2. Work with the Senate ENR Committee to revise the bill and re-approach the CBO.

It is important that cabin owners contact their Senators and Representatives once the bill is fixed. Oregon has a history of doing a good job in contacting Congressional members. Phone calls emails and/or letters are effective in making a difference in convincing Congress to act and pass the CFA.

5. Meeting Adjourned: Noon