



2015 OFHA Spring General Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday, March 21, 2015

Location: Marriot Courtyard Medford Airport Conference Room
600 Airport Rd, Medford, OR 97504

Call to Order: 10:00 A.M. Scott Letourneau, President
Members Present: 25

Welcome, Introductions

1. Review/Amend/Approve Minutes from last Meeting

There was a motion to approve the minutes, it was seconded, and the minutes were approved.

2. Treasurer's Report/Report on the Membership:

The budget and actuals for 2014 were similar. The cost of the newsletter is always our largest budget item. The Newsletter circulation exceeds the number of cabins.

The last two years has seen an increase in membership reflected by 350 in 2012 which jumped to 498 in 2013 and 525 in 2014. Also OFHA has appreciated additional contributions from the membership above the dues. We believe that this has been to help support the passage of the CFA and help us provide the newsletter to all the cabin owners.

Statistically we show OFHA receives its greatest support from those cabin owners who receive both the email newsletter as well as the hard copy.

Budget: In reviewing the 2015 budget there was an adjustment to reduce the CFA support from \$1500 to \$1000 and to relabel the line item from "CFA" to "NFH support" for additional support NFH may need. Also 2 line items were added:

1. Lobbyist - \$500
2. Lobbyist Contingency - \$500

The discussion concerning this new line item was that although Forest Service cabins are currently exempt from possessory interest tax in Oregon (paying property tax on the forest service land plots that we lease from the Forest Service) – there is currently a budget short fall in Oregon and our exemption could be at risk. Therefore investing in/hiring a lobbyist could keep us informed and provide the information necessary to help OFHA and the cabin owners of Oregon to contact their state congressional representatives for help if there was a move to remove the existing exemption.

There was a motion to approve the 2015 budget; it was seconded and approved.

3. Old Business: There was no old business discussion.
4. New Business

Cliff Reported:

Forest Service Historic Designation Guide for maintaining cabins: This is a new document originating from Montana (MTDC) and is dated April 2014. It can affect the exterior of cabins that are over 50 years. There are some rigid standards and this may be difficult for cabin owners to maneuver through when trying to do a remodel or simply a repair on their cabin. There may be requirements to use like materials as the original – this can require a cabin owner to be required to find a smaller wood mill – with higher costs, etc. One of the main concerns is that if a cabin owner falls under the historical designation requirement there may be multiple entities that the cabin owner will need to work with such as:

- i. The county in which the cabin is located (local)
- ii. The general national FS cabin guidelines that already exist
- iii. And this new historical Designation document and possibly SHPO– (State and this new FS document)

In general Cliff said that it is important to start local if you fall under the historical designation. And then the local authorities will communicate their recommendations to (SHPO - State Historical Preservation Office) One of the difficult issues that cabin owners may experience with a remodel or repair is that the different authorities and/or guidelines may not have general construction consistency. And because of the layers of bureaucracy cabins owners need to be aware that this process could take more time than normally anticipated.

Brad Aspell, Vice President of National Forest Homeowners – Now What for the CFA Forward:

Brad reported on the history of passing the CFA which has been essential to replace CUFFA. The CFA was successfully passed within a National Defense Authorization Act HR3979-3024 and is referred to as “Cabin User and Transfer Fee” section.

Passage culminates over 7 years by NFH and C2 Coalition which OFHA was a major participant and a contributor to the funding and the passage of this bill. Brad covered the milestones over the 7 years starting in October of 2007 up to the final passage of the CFA in December of 2014. Personal credit of passage was credited to Rep. Doc Hasting + other members of congress and the Forest Service cabin owners who supported this long process.

Currently, since the bill passed in December, the focus is on interpretation and implementation. The bill that was passed was intentionally written in simple form so now it will require more detailed process and clarifications to avoid ambiguities.

Next Steps:

Implementation process:

1. Interpretation of the legislation
2. Implementation of the CFA
3. Be prepared for future issues and work with the Forest Service
4. The CFA implementation Committee has identified three major areas which they are actively meeting with the Forest Service to resolve
 - a. Normalization of values
 - b. Transfer fee standards
 - c. Access and occupancy adjustments

5. Normalization Standard: to equitably adjust for changes in real estate market over the last 6 years

Brad brought up that there are technical adjustments that need to be acted on because it is a “fairness issue” as to when the different cabin areas were appraised under CUFFA and the economic volatility during that time period.

The fee tier assignments start in 2016 - the interim fee for 2014 & 2015 cannot exceed \$5600. The Forest Service must refund or credit any fees over \$5600 in 2014 or 2015 as well as fees in excess of 25% increase from the prior year. It was also discussed that only very small percentages of all cabins can fall into the higher fee categories. This should bring some assistance in fairness of the fees.

Transfer Fee Act:

A \$1200 transfer fee shall be assessed for “A new recreation residence permit due to change of ownership.” What is a change of ownership? Out-right sale is clear and defined, but what if the change in ownerships is due to:

1. Dissolution of marriage
2. Subsequent marriage and adding a spouse
3. Transfer to approved Trust
4. Transfer among cabin co-owners
5. Transfer fee recommendations

CFA Committee is working to resolve these issues.

Permit Amendments:

Brad reported that our current Special Use Permits with the Forest Service reflect CUFFA regulations concerning fees, appraisals, and other policies which have now been repealed. Our permits will need to be adjusted to reflect the new regulations of the CFA.

In summary, the CFA implementation Team meets weekly, and is actively engaged in recommendations and in the proposed drafting of implementation language in permits and the Forest Service regulations.

Tracy Kremer Lands Special Uses Program Manager, Region 6 (Oregon, Washington areas)

We welcome Tracy she is new to our region and came to our meeting to say “Hello”, however she had helpful comments on a number of the issues that were discussed at the meeting:

1. FOCA –The Federal Advisory cannot work with the permittees in certain areas of implementation – The Forest Service has been sued before in this area of work. The issue has been mainly environmental groups who have sued the Forest Service when working with permittees in the past.
2. Cabin Fees: The cabin tiers that relate to cabin fees are being worked on currently by the authorized forest ranger and they may be completed as early as the next two weeks.
3. CFA, when finalized with an amendment that is signed by the authorized officer, will be standardized to all.
4. FS Road Maintenance: In response to some discussion by the membership Tracy clarified that with the Forest Service’s declining budget road maintenance may be less than before. Gates can affect maintenance- unless prior arrangements are made. Concerns need to be sent to the Forest Supervisor.

5. Forest Service Guidance (Historical) – This is identified by “Cabin Tracts” A tract as a group may be designated. Specific tracts fall under the Historic guidelines. She hopes to provide information to us on who fall under this historical designation.
6. Cabin Billing: There are still a number of cabin bills that need to be sent out.

Elections: Scott –

There will be a ballot going out.

Jeanie Baecher Brown who has been OFHA secretary for 6 years is retiring

Scott will run for President for the next 2 years.

Amelia Wilcox is willing to serve as our secretary for the next 2 years

We also have the position of Vice President open

There were no additional nominations.

Thank you to our special guests, Brad Aspell, Tracy Kremer, and to our board member, Cliff Conner Coash for organizing our meeting facilities and speaking on the April 2014 Historical Maintenance Document.

5. **Adjourn:** 12:00 noon