Slated to open summer of 2010—
Construction on new public airstrip

The first public airstrip on Forest Service lands east of the Rocky Mountain Front is well under construction. Russian Flat is slated to open next summer after reseeding has occurred on this beautifully situated natural landing strip. RAF director Dan Prill of Sand Coulee led the efforts throughout the comprehensive planning process, the requisite public comment input, an EIS and public appeals period, also attended by RAF president John McKenna. The Forest Service, responding to the wide-ranging concerns of the public, authorized the establishment of the airstrip in their Record of Decision.

Ideal for recreational purposes, the 4,000 foot long airstrip is adjacent to a tree-sheltered established campground with picnic tables, a vault toilet and is within walking distance from the south fork of the Judith River.

Recent RAF Board action designated funds for improvements in keeping with the backcountry environment, in addition to the $8,000 grant for grass seeding and the purchase of a field roller.

Century Construction of Lewistown with management oversight by Jeff Patnode, provided environmentally-sensitive ground preparation, and volunteers from Montana Pilots Assoc., Central Montana Hangar have put a lot of sweat into preparation: moving rocks, seeding, fencing, installing windsock(s) and parking areas. A new campground and toilet is planned convenient for pilot use.

Other volunteers from Century Const. and Central Montana Hangar are Tim Robertson, Garrett Workman, Ralph Rogers and Liz Davis. The RAF wishes to thank all volunteers for their hard work, logistics and time on this exciting project. Volunteer efforts continue as of this writing.

For current updates, see Patnode’s blog at http://russianflats.blogspot.com/
It was December 2003 and the ink was barely dry on the newly-formed Recreational Aviation Foundation paperwork when Ben and Agnes “Butchie” Ryan heard about this fledgling organization. RAF supporter Mike Kuefler took only a moment to suggest this new group to the Ryans as the place to entrust their life’s work. Mike suggested that the Ryans consider donating their 152-acre parcel, home, and accompanying airstrip to the RAF. They did, and as a result, on the last weekend this June two dozen airplanes and 80 people arrived at beautiful Ryan Field to celebrate that effort.

Guests included representatives from the backcountry pioneer state of Idaho; pilots from Washington, Montana, Wyoming; and RAF director Tim Clifford flew his family from Florida for the event. RAF board member Chuck Jarecki had put aside his business attire, and over a period of a year donned a carpenter’s belt in order to have completed a pilot shelter and all that goes along with it for the event. We can now offer you a first class backcountry flying experience in hopes you will personally experience this special place.

Can you believe it has been over 40 years since there has been a new airstrip built on USFS land? Well, the Russian Flat airstrip is under construction in conjunction with the RAF and Montana Pilots Association. The Central Montana Hangar of the MPA and Century Paving of Lewistown, MT have taken this project to heart. We should have a brand new place to visit soon. Check out the blog listed on page 1 of this newsletter.

The Montana Wilderness Association has chosen to sue the BLM over their recent management decision on the Missouri River Breaks. This is unfortunate because the RAF, BLM, Montana Pilots Assoc. and so many individuals worked so hard for nearly six years attempting to make a plan that would work for all. Guess some just don’t see it that way. This development was not totally unantici-

Continued, pg 3
Bob has worked in the field of aviation since the age of 17. While trying to make a living at it in his youth, he was fortunate enough to find employment with the federal government.

The greatest part of his federal career was with the U.S. Forest Service where he retired as the aviation director in Washington, DC.

After “retirement” Bob took a job with the State of Idaho as the Aeronautics Director where he became a staunch advocate for recreational flying and backcountry airstrips. During this time he had many occasions to engage with the US Forest Service on backcountry airstrip issues.

Bob is now retired from the State of Idaho and today keeps very busy as the Executive Director of the Idaho Aviation Foundation (IAF), sitting on various aviation organization boards, and has a aviation consulting company. Through his association with the IAF he continues to stay closely engaged in matters concerning recreational aviation and backcountry airstrips. RAF is fortunate to have Bob working in this capacity.

Letters

We have spent ten years flying around the back country of the Northwest and would welcome the opportunity to spend time at Ryan. Thanks for all the RAF has done, it's an uphill battle!

Jerry Highland and Kelly Highland

Letters, continued –

What a fun time we had at Ryan's the board is to be commended for hosting the fly-in, making such a nice pilot shelter and generally making an attractive place. We will be forever grateful to the Ryans for such a generous donation!!! Thanks for your great efforts on behalf of recreational opportunities for Montana Pilots!

Roger and Mable Lincoln
RAF members and families enjoyed a collegial weekend at Ryan Field at West Glacier June 27-28; some stretching their camping for several days in the beautiful mountain meadow just a stone’s throw from Glacier Nat’l Park. Jon Hudson manned the grill and cooked steaks to perfection for the nearly 80 dinner guests, including residents Ben and Butchie Ryan. Ben had his three vintage homebuilts on display, and enjoyed swapping aviation stories with pilots. Pilots demonstrated their best mountain flying etiquette and the potluck options came in multiples: salads, deserts and side dishes for the meal and the abundant breakfast on Sunday morning. Tricia McKenna collected recipes and will gladly share if you email her at tcub@montanadsl.net.

The runway was lined with 24 aircraft, with adequate parking for more. The field is now open to the public as long as the pilot requests and receives a safety briefing by emailing the RAF directors listed below. Facilities include a rustic pilot shelter and vault toilet. The courtesy van at the field is first come, first served. There are also rental cars near West Glacier through Glacier Heli-Tours (406-387-4141) who provide shuttle service for rental cars. There is good cell phone service at Ryan Field.

For more photos of the Ryan fly-in go to recreationalaviationfoundation.org

The RAF requires that you obtain a safety briefing before landing at Ryan Field. Email a request to the following RAF Directors:

Chuck Jarecki, skywagon@centurytel.net  
Jerry Cain, sgr@linctel.net  
Dan Prill, dprill@gpdinc.com  
Carmine Mowbray, clarity@cyberport.net

To ensure a rapid response, contact all four directors in your first email in case one or more is unavailable to provide you with a timely reply.
IDAHO REPORT

Idaho Liaison Paul Collins represented the RAF during the Treasure Valley IAA Conference in Boise in February, and reported that “the RAF video was well accepted, and I pretty much went through the documents and DVD’s. Folks were interested and appreciative for the information.”

Idaho Aviation Foundation liaison Bob Martin met with Idaho’s US Senator Mike Crapo in early February to provide input on the Backcountry Airstrip Access bill, requiring federal agencies with airstrips on their property to get approval from the state aeronautics agency before they can close, change or restrict the airstrip in any way after gathering input from the RAF.

MAINE REPORT

As you may have read in a recent AOPA press release, Maine’s Recreational use Statute now limits landowner liability for noncommercial aviation activities. Maine’s governor signed legislation similar to that now in place in Idaho and Montana. RAF supporter John Nadeau – with guidance from the RAF – had gathered evidence and letters to present to the legislative Committee in support of the revision protecting airport owners. Nadeau credits what he calls the “awesome RAF DVD” that he presented to the Committee members during their deliberations. Nadeau reported that Committee members thanked his group for showing the DVD, adding, “what an exciting and compelling piece of evidence!” Now that the bill has passed, Nadeau is hopeful that “we can recruit more members for RAF” adding, “you are the only organization that seems at all interested in actually doing something for private use airport owners, and I, for one, really appreciate your efforts.”

Nadeau welcomes the public to his privately-owned Old Acton Airfield (02ME) and hosts an annual fly-in to promote recreational aviation.

MONTANA REPORT

It’s been a productive few months for Montana’s recreational aviation opportunities. Some very tangible signs of progress are the improvements to Ryan Field. Expanded camping and tie-down areas, buried concrete tie-downs, and some ditching and filling of the low areas make for a much more hospitable environment for recreational flyers. What was merely a concept and a concrete vault two weeks before the Ryan Fly-In became a very suitable rustic privy, replacing the rented portable unit.

Project organizer and RAF Director Chuck Jarecki wishes to thank all those who put in labor or services toward these improvements: The Ryans for providing lumber for the privy; Montana Aeronautics for several used runway marker cones and a windsock; John Stene of Stene Aviation for hauling the backhoe, and providing fiberglass for the cone restoration; Knife River Co. for a half yard of concrete to anchor the windsock mast; David Mercer Welding for steel for the tie-downs. Many individuals flew in and worked clearing trees and brush, picked rocks, and aided in construction. In addition to the physical improvements, Jarecki canvassed the local emergency service agencies and drew up a comprehensive emergency procedure checklist, now posted in the shelter.

Jarecki has been in frequent communication with the district USFS Ranger, following up on the proposed tree removal at both ends of the field; bids on the project are expected to go out by the time this is published.

RAF Secretary-Treasurer and Director Jerry Cain has worked closely with MT Aeronautics in the development of a campground at the Lincoln airport. Both in terms of physical efforts and time, Cain has volunteered many hours toward this project and urges pilots to enjoy its refreshed facilities and its proximity to the famous Blackfoot River – an excellent recreational opportunity. This is an example of cooperation between the RAF and the state aeronautics staff in accomplishing expanded opportunities for recreational destinations.

The RAF set up and staffed the informational booth again at the Montana Aeronautics Conference in March; it is always a popular place for pilots to gather and network.

Forest Service Special Use Permits have again been brought up for air taxi operators using Spotted Bear, Meadow Creek and Schafer Meadow, a popular landing strip for rafting and other recreational use. The issue falls in Montana Pilots’ Assoc. purview, but the RAF is monitoring developments.

NEVADA REPORT

RAF Board of Directors has appointed Shane Gorman of Reno to become its state liaison for Nevada, a state that offers recreational flying opportunities in relatively close proximity to a large segment of the flying west.

There is interest in the Van Veck Ranch, 20 miles SW of Tahoe, where the USFS has a rental cabin. The airstrip is currently closed.
Volunteers Appreciated—
The customary “welcome gift” that RAF volunteers can look forward to is the simple but effective pulaski. Here are RAF Director Dan Prill and President John McKenna awarding the symbolic and practical tool to Ralph Rogers of Winifred, MT who along with many others has invested significant “sweat equity” in the Russian Flat project.

Rogers is a relatively new pilot who flies a Cub, and says he’s proud to be involved with the RAF.

Professionally, Rogers is a biologist who is involved in the Grouse Organization. See www.grousepartners.org/staff.htm

OREGON REPORT — Alan Cossitt
In Oregon I’ve been moving forward with the Oregon Pilots Association and its Backcountry Aviation Committee. We are planning on having a Westside fly-in for backcountry enthusiasts in early August, probably at Nehalem Bay airport (http://www.airnav.com/airport/3S7).

An Eastside fly-in is planned in early September for Lands Inn (http://www.landsinn.net/). RAF members are more then welcome to join. I'll send out more concrete dates as available.

NEWS FROM ARIZONA
(Excerpted from Arizona Pilots Assoc June 2009 newsletter, Asa Dean, Editor; Bob Carter, Backcountry Director)
Sprucedale Ranch (continued, next column)
Recently APA members visited Sprucedale Ranch located in the White Mountains of northeastern Arizona to locate the rumored Sprucedale Airstrip. The Ranch Owner/Manager informed us that it had not been used in over 25 years and graciously provided transportation to the airstrip. Reviewing topo charts of the region, we estimated that the airstrip is 3,600 feet in length at 7,600 MSL and could be easily cleaned up for use. The location is ideal for trout fishing and camping or a day trip for breakfast or a burger at the Sprucedale Lodge. It would provide great access for guests of the Ranch where they have many indoor and outdoor amenities.

The geography of Sprucedale reminds one of the backcountry airstrips in Idaho and Montana.

The APA is investigating the possibilities of reopening the Sprucedale Airstrip, but needs your input to determine if our efforts are worthwhile. Please forward your comments to Bob Carter at bobc@buildersguild.com.
Chapman Ranch – 58AZ on the new Phoenix sectional
As a result of the recent NACO publication, numerous flyers have become aware of 58AZ and have contacted the APA with the intent of flying to this jewel in the Arizona high country. The APA now has 71 aircraft registered at Chapman Ranch. Your requisite Hold Harmless Agreements are only valid through the end of each year. If you haven’t already done so, when planning to use the airstrip, please go to the APA website where you’ll find the Agreement and the Operations & Safety Guidelines under the Latest News tab at the APA website http://www.azpilots.org/Latest_News.htm

Thanks to the efforts of Tommy & Linda, Barry & Caroline, Arv, Nancy and many other volunteers, the second annual Chapman fly-in went off without a hitch. Arizona Pilots Association collected about $300 in donations and thanks from our supporters whose generous donations will help preserve this airstrip.

The APA is planning more fly-ins; contact Bob Carter at bobc@buildersguild.com.

Recently, the APA put out a call for donations to offset the costs of the annual lease and insurance. We received many generous donations from 58AZ supporters. The APA thanks our supporters for their generosity. Without your donations, the APA would not have been able to continue leasing the Chapman Ranch Airstrip.
Valuable resources in protecting airstrips available—

Part 1, “Advocate’s Guide” is a 35-page wealth of information for effectively navigating the public lands planning process; how the National Environmental Policy Act affects the decision-making process of federal agencies; landing on Federal Lands; where to find information to bolster your efforts to save airstrips; effective participation at public meetings; writing effective letters; opportunities on State and private lands, and more.

Part 2, “Reference Guide for Public Land Managers” is a 49-page document for the public lands manager on lands that include recreational airstrips. It covers basic topics such as pilot and airplane licensing, environmental questions, FAA regulations, aircraft noise, liability issues, existing agreements between pilot groups and agencies plus a useful appendix. This is all information that the recreational aviation advocate would want to submit into the public record when there is an airstrip issue on Federal land.

Available in either a three-ring binder or in PDF format. Order yours from Chuck Jarecki at:
skywagon@centurytel.net

Funds for printing and distribution have been provided by the Wolf Aviation Fund.

From an Advocate:
Thank you for the excellent Advocate’s Guide and Reference Guide for recreational airstrips. I’ve just finished reading all of the document and will further distribute to our managers. You folks have done some excellent work. I gratefully accept your offer to put me on your mailing list. The Idaho Division of Aeronautics and the RAF have very similar organization goals and should be good allies for each other on most issues.

JV DeThomas
Administrator, Division of Aeronautics
Idaho Transportation Department, Boise

Sharing the Mission—
RAF President John McKenna recently met with Paul Von Gontard and Al Hilde of Jackson Hole, WY to discuss the accomplishments of the RAF, the future plans of the organization and potential recreational aviation opportunities in Wyoming. Joining them was RAF director Jerry Cain. Hilde and Von Gontard are long time backcountry aviation enthusiasts. Pictured left to right in front of Hilde’s Kodiak are McKenna, Von Gontard, Hilde and Cain at the Flying B Ranch on the Middle Fork of the Salmon in Idaho.

RAF Seeking State Liaisons—
Are you concerned about the future of recreational airstrips in your state? RAF is seeking Liaisons in states yet unrepresented. Be a part of our progress!
Please request application at: raf@linctel.net

The Montana Pilots Association Air Safety and Aviation Foundation held a raffle under the guidance of Wade Cebulski of Seeley Lake who initiated the fundraiser, netting over $9,000 for its Recreational Airstrips fund.

The prize was a new Polaris Ranger LE with a retail value of $11,400. Drawing was held at the Montana Aviation Conference in Billings in March.
Steve Richardson of Canton, MI, a pilot and member of Montana Pilots Association was the lucky winner.
Arrangements were made so Richardson was able to pick up the Ranger directly from Champion Power Sports in Michigan.
The MPA Air Safety and Education Foundation wishes to thank everyone who purchased tickets.
Recreational Aviation Foundation

VISION – Keeping recreational aviation strong for generations to come by preserving the legacy and promoting the enjoyment of aviation in the backcountry of America.

MISSION – Taking a leadership position in preserving and enhancing recreational aviation resources on both public and private land throughout the United States for present and future generations by providing private financial support, expertise, and promoting safety.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES – The RAF works in a cooperative manner with public and private landowners/managers and aviation advocacy organizations on State and National levels.

Aviation is a valid and appropriate way to access recreational opportunities on public or private land.

Access to backcountry is well served by low-impact airstrips as trailheads.

Safety education will help ensure the future of successful recreational aviation.

Aviation safety through pilot education is paramount to the successful use and enjoyment of backcountry airstrips.

The RAF, a volunteer-driven organization, works to develop partnerships in protecting the common interest of the recreational flying community.

How To Support RAF

It’s now easier than ever to become a supporter of this important effort to preserve and create public use recreational aviation facilities for future generations. Use the secure “Donate now” button at www.recreationalaviationfoundation.org or mail in your tax-deductible contribution to:

Recreational Aviation Foundation, 1711 W. College, Bozeman MT 59715.

Consultation referrals for legacy giving, such as land or trusts. All supporter records are held in the strictest of confidence and never disclosed for commercial purposes.

Recreational Aviation Foundation

1711 West College Street

Bozeman, Montana 59715

www.recreationalaviationfoundation.org

406-587-5166

Thank you, Supporters!

Winners of the 2009 RAF Supporter Raffle Prizes:

GPSMAP 696:
Jack Threadgill of Bryon, TX

Telex ANR 4105 Headset:
Mike Sidders of Bozeman, MT

Winners were announced at the 2009 Montana Aeronautics Conference,
Billings, March 7