

# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

# NEWS • ACTION

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NEWSLETTER ISSUE 9

*THE RAF MISSION: "Keeping the legacy of recreational aviation strong by preserving, maintaining and creating public use recreational and backcountry airstrips nationwide."*

## RAF awarded \$10,000 grant from Lightspeed



From left to right: RAF's Dan Prill, Tim Clifford, John McKenna, Carl Hicks, Jr., Lightspeed Foundation President and Founder Allan Schrader, and RAF's John Kounis, Chuck Jarecki, Craig McCullough and John Nadeau

Your votes were counted, and the Recreational Aviation Foundation received a Lightspeed Foundation 2011 Grant, announced at September's AOPA Summit in Hartford, CT.

RAF President John McKenna was on hand to accept the \$10,000 grant, saying, "We work hard for every dollar we raise and even harder to make sure donor dollars are spent effectively." McKenna added, "the aviation community has spoken; Lightspeed honored the RAF. Now it's back to work preserving, maintaining and creating public use recreational and backcountry airstrips around the nation."

The RAF sends a hearty thank you to Lightspeed and all who made this possible.

## RAF, NPS cooperate to reopen Death Valley Strip

– John Kounis, RAF CA-South State Liaison

Recreational pilots can applaud the RAF's recent accomplishment in California with the reopening of the famed "Chicken Strip" in Death Valley National Park Oct.



– John Kounis photo

15. This 1,350-ft airstrip provides access to the Saline Warm Springs in a remote corner of the park; the only other access is via a rough, 40-mile dirt road that takes three to four hours to navigate.

When a National Park Service volunteer closed the airstrip after flash flood damage in early August, the RAF sprang into action. Within 24 hours, RAF California Liaison and *Pilot Getaways* Editor-in-Chief John Kounis overflew the strip to assess the damage and met with National Park Service (NPS) Chief Ranger Pennington. Kounis provided the RAF and NPS photographs of the airstrip that revealed damage that could be repaired with a small volunteer work party.

Under the provisions of a 2008 landmark memorandum of understanding signed by the NPS and the RAF, Ranger Pennington authorized the RAF to organize a work party and reopen the strip. California Liaison and Kern Valley Airport Manager Rick Lach recruited 16 volunteers through the RAF and BackcountryPilot.org websites. The RAF thanks the NPS and everyone who worked diligently to reverse the closure. Special thanks go out to the many volunteers who showed up, went to work and made it happen. The work was completed, and all pilots agreed that Chicken Strip is now in better shape than ever before.

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The Recreational Aviation Foundation is a non-profit public charity with 501(c) (3) status. Federal EIN 42-1613294; Montana State ID D-128852.

Donors may deduct contributions made to the foundation as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers and gifts are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes.

*Photo on newsletter flag and back: Mike Todd*



**President's Message –**

# Eggs and Ham

–John McKenna



This American breakfast classic is produced from two different critters. The chicken and the pig. What's that got to do with the Recreational Aviation Foundation?

The roots of the RAF were planted long before the formal documents were signed bringing this organization to life. RAF director Chuck Jarecki's yellow and white 180 had already landed on most of the airstrips that many of you have only heard about around the campfire, or in today's circles, on internet chat sites. There were no golf clubs to be found in the back, but rather a pair of well-worn leather gloves and the sturdy hand tools needed to make the place safer and for sure, better. Chuck always felt it was his responsibility to be involved, even if the only one paying attention was the curious squirrel in the tree watching as Chuck did some job that needed doing.

I, on the other hand did not experience flying to these unique places until I had 20 years in my logbook. Idaho's Johnson Creek was the place, 1989 was the year, Boyd Miller was the guy, and the mission was a plea, asking folks to write letters to help in the effort to save Idaho airstrips known as the "Big Creek Four." Not quite what I had planned for my first backcountry experience, but there I was, addressing, stuffing and stamping envelopes.

I am often asked "why do you think the RAF has been able to accomplish all that it has in such a short period?" At first I wasn't quite sure how to answer, but watching the RAF move forward, the answer is now quite clear. Commitment.

Commitment is that notch above involvement. The RAF has some of the most committed people I have had the opportunity to witness in any organization, both in the for-profit, and not-for-profit worlds. The RAF has attracted a group of donors, volunteers and directors who individually and collectively are completely committed to making a difference.

RAF's California State Liaison Rich Lach says, "maybe we are just too dumb to duck", but I believe it's quite different. RAF people see things that need to be done, step in, step up, and don't stand around waiting for someone to do it for them. That is commitment. When their job is complete – rather than go find a place to rest – they look around to see how they can assist on someone else's project.

What does all this have to do with eggs and ham? Well you see, the chicken is *involved* in the process, while the pig is *committed* to it. Your RAF has involved people, and for that we are grateful.

But what we really have are committed people. So the real answer to our success is the RAF has a nice mix of eggs and ham.

– John

*Please provide your current email address to: [contact@theraf.org](mailto:contact@theraf.org) to save printing and distribution costs and insure you receive the latest RAF information.*



Meet four new State Liaisons—

# Building the RAF Team

The RAF is pleased to announce it has unanimously approved four distinguished aviators to take on the duties of State Liaison. Leading these positions are Lloyd Babcock of Pennsylvania, Rick Lach of California, Brad Frederick of Michigan, and Alan Cossitt of Oregon.

These four recreational aviation enthusiasts will each make a fine addition to the RAF's nationwide campaign to create, maintain and preserve backcountry airstrips.

We are immensely proud of and are protective of our efforts and progress so far. The selection process requires diligence to make sure representatives of the RAF are the right fit for the demands of the task.

Our well-earned image as a reliable, credible and trustworthy partner in these efforts, whether working with the General Aviation Caucus in the U.S. Congress, or with local government or private recreational airstrip owners truly is our pride and joy.

What that meant for Lloyd, Alan, Rick and Brad was repeated interviews by RAF directors at the regional and national level, alongside a multi-page application that cautioned long hours, paying all of their own expenses, and exactly zero dollars for their time as part of this volunteer organization. All this so that they can serve you, your families, and all of our fellow pilots by helping in this very important effort to keep recreational aviation destinations open for us all.

**Rick Lach** and his wife Holly hail from Weldon, CA. His passion for aviation is boundless. As owner of Raven Aviation, which manufactures parts for Piper aircraft, he meets people every day who think similarly that the “lost backcountry airstrips in California need to be reopened” and more destinations added. In addition to belonging to the RAF, Rick is a member of both the EAA and AOPA

and flies a Zenair CH701. Thanks for deciding to do something about it, as has RAF CA-South state-Liaison John Kounis. Welcome Rick!

We are very fortunate to have **Brad Frederick** accepting the mantle of leadership in Michigan. Brad is a successful small business owner, member of the AOPA and EAA, and president of the Hastings Flying Association, a group of pilots and aviation-related individuals dedicated to providing development and enjoyable activities at the Hastings City/Barry County Airport. He flies a Piper Cherokee 180 and makes his home in Caledonia, SE of Grand Rapids.

Brad has personal experience in preserving recreational flying. He purchased a grass airfield that had been closed by the state, brought it up to basic utility airport status, lengthened the runway for safety, and reopened it for public use. Remarkable enough, *Continued, page 4*



California liaison Rick Lach



Michigan liaison Brad Frederick



Oregon liaison Alan Cossitt



Pennsylvania liaison Lloyd Babcock

but consider that the field is 325 miles from his home! He continues to operate and maintain the airfield with a minimum of dollars.

**Alan Cossitt** is our new man from Oregon's Portland area. He is a techie extraordinaire who, as the technical lead for software at Nike, ensures that their multi-billion dollar web business operates smoothly.

Alan flies a Thunder Gull JT2 tandem ultralight and is a member of EAA, AOPA, serves as Backcountry Aviation Division Director for the Oregon Pilots Association, and is a long-time volunteer for the RAF. In his application he states "...the RAF (is) critical. I believe it is key that pilots band together to preserve recreational airstrips of all sorts, not just the raw 'Super Cub' backcountry airstrips". The RAF couldn't agree more!

**Lloyd Babcock**, a Mooney Ovation owner from Chester Springs PA, was one of the founders of a flying club started in 1964 that is still in existence. He served as the club's president for eleven years while building a successful regional business across eight eastern states. Based at Chester County Airport, Lloyd has been an active pilot for 47 years. He also co-chaired the committee for the State of Pennsylvania to acquire Willow Grove Naval Air Station. New to the RAF, he became excited about its mission during a cross-country flight in his Mooney when he met RAF president and co-founder John McKenna. Lloyd's enthusiasm toward the requirements and challenges of being an RAF State Liaison was impressive, and we look forward to working with him.

The State Liaison position is where the rubber truly meets the road in the RAF. One day they may be gath-

ering an inventory of possible airstrip locations or interacting with state legislators in helping to get recreational use statutes enacted; the next, speaking to an EAA chapter about our work and the next planning an airstrip work party to get a local field ready for the upcoming flying season. The next time you flare and touch down on that beautiful little grass strip with your family for that picnic, you may very well have these key volunteers to thank for it.

These four fellow airmen are well qualified to serve, and we couldn't be more pleased to have them join us in this endeavor. Welcome to the team guys! Please drop them a note of thanks, and ask them how you can volunteer in your state:

California State Liaison:

Rick Lach, [rlach@theraf.org](mailto:rlach@theraf.org)

Michigan State Liaison:

Brad Frederick, [bfrederick@theraf.org](mailto:bfrederick@theraf.org)

Oregon State Liaison:

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Pennsylvania State Liaison:

Lloyd Babcock, [lbabcock@theraf.org](mailto:lbabcock@theraf.org)

The RAF is actively seeking volunteers for other liaison positions. Right now we have opportunities in several states, including Florida, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Texas, and Virginia. Please contact any Director if you know someone with a strong desire to serve.

Join Team RAF!

Go to: [theraf.org](http://theraf.org)



## Seaplane access approved at Ross Lake

– *Stephen Ratzlaff, President, WA Seaplane Pilots Association*

The National Park Service released the Final Ross Lake National Recreation Area General Management Plan Dec. 1.

The Washington Seaplane Pilots Association (WSPA) was pleased with the outcome of a cooperative effort to include seaplane operations for the next 15 to 20 years.

Ross Lake, in the North Cascades, provides hydro power for the City of Seattle. A National Recreation Area, it is surrounded by the North Cascades National Park and is managed by the NPS. Ross Lake is not generally accessible via automobile and most visitors hike to the lake or reach campsites via motorboats managed by the Ross Lake Resort. NPS manages over 20 lake campsites which are a favorite destination for WSPA members, along with the 10 cabins owned and managed by the Resort, founded by Wayne Dameron, a seaplane pilot.

The initial draft plan limited seaplane access to a small section of the lake and created an unsafe situa-

tion. Once aware of the management plan process, WSPA jumped in to provide input from its members. Other organizations helped, including Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association, the Recreational Aviation Foundation, Sea-

plane Pilots Association, Washington Pilots Association and others. The NPS readily accepted our input and adapted plans to address pilot concerns. WSPA also developed a document advising procedures for noise abatement on Ross Lake (available at [www.wa-spa.org](http://www.wa-spa.org)) and is providing training to members on these procedures. Stephen Ratzlaff, WSPA President, stated, "We were very impressed with the professionalism demonstrated by the personnel of the National Park Service and their sincere desire to understand our concerns and work out a fair compromise for all visitors. He concluded, "WSPA is dedicated to maintaining access to Washington's waterways while promoting safe flight operations and protecting our outdoor environment."



## *RAF Founding Director / Secretary / Treasurer Jerry Cain retires*

RAF Founding Director/Secretary/Treasurer Jerome (Jerry) Cain is retiring from the demands of those tasks to become RAF's first Director Emeritus. His contribution to Board activities is valued, so he will continue to participate as desired but without voting privileges or obligations.

Jerry's RAF experience began in 2003 at the annual Montana Pilots Assoc. Board Meeting and Retreat in Bozeman. During discussions of how to preserve, maintain, and create recreational/backcountry airstrips, Jerry proposed that an independent, national non-profit be created since the MPA could not qualify for such status. Jerry volunteered to do all the legal work to create such an organization. He discovered that several other Montana pilots had previously planted the seeds for such an organization (Backcountry Airstrip Foundation), but no one had stepped forward to do all the necessary legal work to make it happen. With the

other pilots' help, Jerry assembled and submitted documentation to the State of Montana and the IRS, and after providing additional supporting documentation, the RAF was incorporated in the State of Montana and recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) Public Charity effective Dec. 22, 2003.

Jerry accepted the unpaid position of Director / Secretary/Treasurer and has served the RAF exceptionally for over eight years helping to bring the RAF to the national status it enjoys today.

Jerry's retirement allows him more time to enjoy the great outdoors from his ranch near Lincoln, MT. Jerry and his wife Liz plan to spend more time together in leisure activities including flying, riding horses, running sled dogs, petting cats, attending the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and traveling for visits with friends and family across the nation.

We thank Jerry for his dedicated service to the RAF and wish both Jerry and Liz well as they transition to this next stage of their lives.



*Jerry in his Aviat Husky with Canyon, his Alaskan Husky companion*

## **Oregon's Owyhee River airstrip closures**

– Chuck Jarecki

For years pilots used several backcountry airstrips along the Owyhee River in southeastern Oregon. Things changed in October when an Idaho pilot discovered that the Pinnacle Ranch airstrip was littered with rocks with a yellow "X" mid-way down the 2,600-ft runway— apparently added last summer. After phone and email contacts between Idaho Aviation Association (IAA), the RAF, Oregon Pilots Association (OPA), Oregon Department of Aviation and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a meeting convened at the BLM office in Vale, OR with BLM area manager Don Gonzales. It was discovered that this section of the Owyhee River was designated by Congress as a Wild River in 1984, closing several airstrips along it. Further confounding airstrip use was the 1993 adoption of a BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) which states "*Protect the outstanding remarkable values of the river corridors from the impacts of aircraft use, by prohibiting aircraft landings.*"

Bill Miller, IAA Government Affairs Coordinator, is heading representatives of the IAA, OPA and RAF, represented by Chuck Jarecki. One positive bit of news is that once it was pointed out to the BLM that the RMP states that Pinnacle airstrip will remain available for emergency purposes, the BLM removed the rocks.

The committee has requested a Freedom of Informa-

tion document from the BLM to better understand how these airstrip closures occurred without any input from the aviation community. ***Miller needs reports from pilots who have used any of the Owyhee airstrips and when. Documenting long-term and consistent use will aid the process of reopening the strips.***

***Email: [millerwilliamc@cableone.net](mailto:millerwilliamc@cableone.net)***

Of particular interest is this quote from the BLM Owyhee River boater information packet:

*"Aircraft landing is illegal within the river corridor. Aircraft landings, over time, have created several unauthorized airstrips sometimes used by poachers. If you see aircraft on the ground within the corridor, please obtain the aircraft tail numbers and a complete description of the aircraft from a safe distance. Do not approach the aircraft yourself. Report the information to the BLM."*

We will continue diligently working to re-open the strips. The RAF believes that oversights occurred in the BLM's public involvement process. As always, the RAF approach is based on fact. This situation came about before recreational aviation interests got organized as they are today. Now, it is up to all pilots to be vigilant and closely monitor agency websites, newsletters and news releases to determine what land management decisions are coming.

## Protecting private airstrip land owners – Recreational Use Statute Update – John Nadeau

Work continues toward the RAF's goal to include aviation in every state's recreational use statute (RUS). Including aviation-specific language provides private airstrip owners a degree of liability protection. With this protection, access to private airfields is more achievable.

**As of this writing, ten states include aviation language in their RUS:** Massachusetts (1979), New Hampshire (2002), Montana (2007), Idaho (2007), Maine (2009), Tennessee (2010), New Mexico (2011), Arizona (2011), Pennsylvania (2011) and Kansas (2011).

**States with Bills Pending:** New York - Senate Bill S4513. Some states begin new legislative sessions after January 1, 2012.

**States with RAF efforts underway:** Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota,

Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

**Our work is far**

**from done:** Getting a state leader to get this accomplished is RAF's first step in the process. Once these efforts produce a sponsored bill the RAF sends an email to members in that state asking pilots to support the bill. If you are contacted, please respond as advised.

If your state is not included here, contact John Nadeau at [jnadeau@theraf.org](mailto:jnadeau@theraf.org) if you can help the effort to amend the RUS in your state.

To learn about the importance of the RUS issue go to [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org) and click on "Advocacy."



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## New directives impact airstrip viability— US Forest Service to include backcountry aviation

– Ron Normandeau, Montana State Liaison

Pertinent instruction to the US Forest Service is contained in the US Department of Interior Appropriations Bill. (The following excerpts refer to the House Appropriations Committee.)

Regarding litigation: "The Committee has included language . . . allowing the Forest Service to use a pre-decisional objection process in place of the current appeals process. . . . current use of the pre-decisional objection process has improved Forest Service projects and public input and support of projects. . . . The Committee believes this authority will help the Forest Service accomplish more work on the ground while maximizing appropriated dollars."

### Excerpt regarding New Planning rule

"The Committee has significant concerns about the implementation and cost of the planning rule as currently drafted. The draft rule places too many conflicting requirements on forest plans and will likely lead to increased litigation. . . . The Committee believes the Forest Service must simplify the rule; ensure it is implementable, understandable to the public, and cost effective. . . . The Committee modifies this language by allowing forest plans to be completed under the 1982 and 2000 planning rules and allows these plans to be used in place of revised plans. . ."

It appears dissatisfaction with the new rule goes all the way up to Congress. (*No planning rule as of Dec. 13.*)

### Non-adverse impact on wilderness

"The Committee directs the Forest Service to recognize that Congress intended to ensure that existing and historic motorized recreational uses were to continue in wilderness study areas designated in the 1984 Wyoming Wilderness Act. . . . Recent decisions have misconstrued this intent . . . and severely limited previously established winter motorized uses. **This Committee directs the Forest Service to ensure that important historic and existing uses be allowed to continue on Wilderness Study**

**Areas at commercially sustainable levels of use."** The bold type is my emphasis.

### Backcountry Airstrips

The following has its own sub-heading, as a result of House Resolution 1473 that the RAF facilitated in Sept. 2010:

"Back-country airstrips are an appropriate use of certain National Forest System lands that can provide enhanced access for a variety of legitimate activities. The Committee encourages the Forest Service to support, through cooperative relationships with pilots . . . the operation and maintenance of appropriate, existing back-country airstrips as part of a balanced, safe, and efficient forest transportation system. The Committee urges the Forest Service to evaluate whether it is appropriate to establish additional backcountry airstrips on NFS lands. . . Further, the Committee directs the Forest Service to provide within 90 days upon enactment of this Act, an inventory of backcountry airstrips presently under Forest Service jurisdiction; a detailed description, including examples of the management, conservation, recreational, and public safety and security benefits and uses of existing airstrips; a description of any existing conflicts that presently hinder or may hinder operational use of any such airstrips in the future . . ."

The above will impact the viability of recreational use airstrips on public land. The RAF keeps an eye on these things and will notify the pilot community of specific actions needed.

Coming up: "**Forest Service Manual Revision.**" The Forest Service is revising Chapter 2300 (Wilderness), a draft for publication in the Federal Register which is expected to be available to the public in late December or early January. **The RAF will send notifications at that time with a request for pilots to comment.**

# State Reports

## Arizona Report

—Mark Spencer, AZ Liaison

Momentum is building in the Arizona backcountry as pilots witness the progress we've made this last year and join in our work and efforts.

Regarding the Forest Service airstrips, we have Pleasant Valley AZ21 open to use and two other airstrips in line to open once necessary work days are completed. Grapevine, located just off the shores of Roosevelt Lake, is a prime location and we'll schedule at least two work days to clear encroaching trees and vegetation growing in the runway. District Ranger Jardine announced that he'll be issuing a letter reversing its nearly decade-long closure! Initial approvals have been given for APA/RAF-sponsored fly-ins to Grapevine, and we are hopeful that success with these fly-ins will lead to less restrictive rules for its use.

Next on our list is Eagle Creek airstrip located on the historic Double Circle Ranch north of Clifton in the Apache Sitgreaves Forest. District Ranger Telles is eager to see volunteers work to clear and open this airstrip.

At the infamous Red Creek airstrip we have been able to avoid a full closure for now. Red Creek is a well-known but uncharted airstrip, and has never been officially open. District Ranger Congdon has agreed to allow the APA and the RAF to author a safety pamphlet on Red Creek with the hope that pertinent information will improve safety and reduce the number of incidents there.

On state trust lands, we are negotiating with the State Land Department to open several recreational airstrips. In a November meeting between RAF's AZ Liaison, the Deputy Land Commissioner, and AZ Representative Russ Jones, a potential path forward was discussed. This would provide for an annual permit for pilots wishing to land at certain trust land airstrips. Our next meeting will take place in late January or February on this plan.

## Montana Report

—Ron Normandeau, MT Liaison

This past summer saw maintenance accomplished on eight of the twelve airstrips located on public

land in Montana. Maintenance is scheduled by the Montana Pilots Association (MPA) Hangar responsible for that particular airstrip. Schedules appear on MPA's website event calendar. A typical work party consists of 8 to 12 airplanes—some drive in—around 15 to 25 volunteers.

Maintenance tasks performed were: mowing of landing area, gopher hole filling, camping area cleanup, weed spraying, snag removal, firewood cutting, fence repair, wind sock replacement, brush removal, and general debris cleanup. The responsible Hangar provides a barbecue at the end of the day and the result is camaraderie with people of like interests and pleasures.

This winter meetings with public agencies (USFS, BLM) are planned to establish airstrip maintenance priorities. Hangars will schedule the work parties, and we'll prepare for another summer of fun.

## Washington Report

—Bob Kay, WA State Liaison

It's been a busy and fun year for RAF folks in the state of Washington. In February, we sponsored a booth at the Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show in Puyallup. We will be repeating that effort in 2012 during the NWAC & TS Feb. 25-26. Hope to see you there and get your ideas on RAF-WA activities we have planned for 2012. If you want to help meet and greet the people passing through our booth, give me a call and we'll schedule you in.

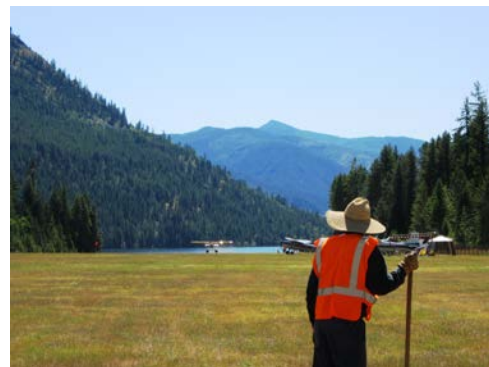
Early in the year, I attended several USFS Planning conferences locally and in Washington DC. The RAF has been trying to influence the Forest Service to continually recognize the importance of including recreational aviation in their forest plans. We joined the AOPA and other recreational stakeholders from around the nation and made some progress towards our mutual goals.

In May, the RAF joined with the Green River Chapter of the Washington Pilots Association (WPA) on annual work party efforts at Ranger Creek (21W), located at the base of Mt Rainier near Greenwood. It was a cold and rainy experience; however, thanks to the coordination of Paul Wolf of the WSDOT-Aviation Division, we had plenty to do and the

tools with which to do it. Ranger Creek chili was served and we all had a great time.

In June, we joined the work party at Sullivan Lake (09S) in eastern Washington. We filled lots of gopher holes, trimmed brush around the airstrip perimeter, and painted picnic tables. The work was done under the supervision of Mr. Wolf and the Deer Park Chapter members of the WPA.

I met with RAF supporter and Washington Seaplane Pilots Association Board member Greg Corrado and his wife Mary Jo to plan a joint RAF-WSPA fly-in at Sullivan Lake in August; and we had a tremendous turnout. Lots of folks from all over the Pacific Northwest (including Canada) flew in. About 30 land and seaplanes arrived and departed at different times during the weekend. In addition to accomplishing cleanup work on the strip, we also had an RAF/WSPA sponsored steak barbe-



*It's hardly work when you fly in to a beautiful place like this—Sullivan Lake*

cue Saturday night. Airplane camping at its finest, great food, wonderful weather, fun flying, good company, and lots of laughs! It just doesn't get much better than that. To top it off, we think we left the airstrip in better shape than when we arrived.

Our goal to include aviation in Washington State's Recreational Use Statute (RUS) is moving in the right direction. A bill to get that job done should be introduced by Representative Mark Hargrove in January. RAF-WA members will be hearing from us as the bill is introduced. We'll need a grassroots letter, email, and phone campaign to our Washington State representatives, senators, and the Governor to support this important legislation. Since it

# State Reports *cont'd*

lessens the burden of airstrip owner liability, the amended statute should result in increased and varied destinations for pilots to fly into with permission from landowners.

The RUS effort is being supported within the state by the AOPA, WPA, and the WSPA, as well as other aviation-oriented organizations. For updates on individual state's RUS, see related article, page 6 or go to the RAF website: [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org) and type "RUS" in the search field.

## Maine Report

– *Andy Rowe, ME Liaison*

This summer I concentrated on continuing the good work started by John Nadeau two years ago: spreading the word about the RAF and its mission. With constant help from Lisa Reece (Maine Aeronautical Association) and her husband, Steve Williams (Seaplane Pilots Association), the RAF had booths at the Brandy Pond Seaplane Fly-In, the opening of Brunswick Executive Airport (ex-NAS Brunswick), two fantastic warbird fly-ins in Wiscasset and the International Seaplane Fly-In at Greenville, Maine. With masterful help from RAF state liaisons Bob Burley and John Zanchi in Greenville, we signed up 32 new members at these popular events. Also important to note, we discovered that the kids who seem to love our distinctive orange bracelets were happy to go on-line and vote for us in the Light-speed sweepstakes.

## New Mexico Report

– *Rol Murrow, RAF Director and New Mexico State Liaison*

Following this year's passage of the law adding aviation to New Mexico's Recreational Use Statute (RUS), the Recreational Aviation Committee (RAC) of the New Mexico Pilots Association (NMPA) has been working with landowners to open their Restricted airstrips for public use. In some cases pilots may be required to obtain permission and a special briefing. NMPA Vice President and RAF Member Ron Krohn led the successful campaign to revise the Recreational Use Statute.

The first strips involve certain privately or publicly owned strips that for one reason or another have not been available to the flying public.

We intend to contact the many other owners of strips throughout the state.

Last year's fly-in to Negrito Airstrip in the Gila National Forest was very successful. RAC Chairman Larry Filener organized a work party earlier this year to move large rocks from the edge of the runway, and with the help of volunteers like Ron Keller, put together another fly-in on the Oct. 1-2 weekend.

The fly-in was blessed with balmy weather, clear skies, and the usual beautiful high mountain scenery. Attendees enjoyed group meals, excellent camping, and a campfire sing-along led by backcountry flight instructor Clayton Stansell.

On Saturday a number of pilots flew out to enjoy landings at nearby airstrips including Beaverhead, Me-Own, and Whitewater Mesa.

Ron Krohn posted a writeup about the fly-in on the NMPA website, [nmpilot.org](http://nmpilot.org). Thanks to the entire team for a great time! This is likely to become an annual event.

Other NMPA backcountry events included the Mountain Flying Clinic on Sept. 23-25, which started out with an FAA Wings seminar in Santa Fe. A fly-in to Socorro and area airports was held on Sept. 24. Jim Wisda and Skip Egdorf represented our New Mexico backcountry efforts in the Back Country Forum at the Copperstate Fly-In with the Arizona Pilots Association.

Our New Mexico team reminds all our fellow RAF supporters that many New Mexico destinations remain open during the cold months, so feel free to fly on down for some winter fun!

## Florida Report

– *Tim Clifford, RAF Director and FL State Liaison*

It's winter flying weather here in Florida and while most of the country mothballs its airplanes, we are well into months of just about perfect flying conditions.

In 2011, the RAF built good footings for the growth of recreational aviation in the state.

Last spring we initiated discussion with the Division of Forestry regarding the use of existing airstrips on state forest lands as well as the possibilities for future developments.

Jim Karels, director of Florida Forest Services could not have been more accommodating and was open to all discussions.

This fall, we met with local managers at an existing airfield within the 202,000 acre Blackwater State Forest and discussed ways this private strip could be opened for recreational use. We are optimistic that the first airstrip on State Forest land will open in 2012.

RAF supporters Drew and Gary Hatch (who first brought the Blackwater Airfield to our attention) have been busy surveying the owners of all 400-plus private airstrips in Florida. We are seeking support for an amendment to the state Recreational Use Statute that will specifically list aircraft. (See *related story, page 6*) We need to find a state legislator willing to sponsor the bill. Please help if you can.

The RAF has established a relationship with the Seaplane Pilots Association (headquartered at Lakeland) in an effort to open more water-based recreational destinations here in the state and across the country.

The RAF is working with new Sun 'n Fun president John "Lites" Leenhouts to expand the relationship between the two non-profit organizations. In December RAF supporters Jeff Jones and Sean Connor accompanied RAF director Tim Clifford to the Sun 'n Fun campus to meet with "Lites" and tour the campus. The two organizations have a shared objective of seeing the Spanish Moss draped campground accessible year round.

It is your Florida RAF team's objective to establish our state as the number one recreational flying destination in the United States!

## North Dakota Report

– *Brian Rau, ND State Liaison*

The Badlands / Medora area of ND has some possible backcountry airstrips, so my wife Elly and I visited the Ebert's Ranch Airstrip (Google earth at 47 degrees 14' 10.39" N and 103 degrees 33' 31.12" W) approx. 20 miles north of Medora, ND in September.

We flew over the strip and visited the strip by ground and found the

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# State Reports *cont'd*



*Ebert's Ranch airstrip in North Dakota  
– Brian Rau photos*

strip to be in fair condition. I visited with Forest Service Ranger Ron Jablonski by phone and he has invited us to stop by for more discussions on the use of the airstrip. More formal meetings are planned on land use of the area after the first of the year. I am on their contact list, and will keep others informed of the meetings.

We also met with Randy Hatzenbuehler of the Theodore Roosevelt / Medora Foundation regarding an airstrip closer to the tourist town of Medora. He is interested in a recreational airstrip near town that would be able to bring people in to golf at their new golf course. Finding an area at least 3,000 feet long is difficult near Medora. There are airports at nearby towns outside of the most rugged parts of the badlands. My plans are to attempt to find such a location.

I have been invited to give a presentation about the RAF at the Upper Midwest Aviation Symposium, which is North Dakota's aviation convention March 4-6 and encourage representation from the RAF officers and any others who might be able to attend.

## Vermont Winter Musings

*–Bob Burley, VT State Liaison*

A much respected mentor once told me that flying is fun first, work second. The backcountry never sleeps and new, unconventional "airports" emerge and change almost daily. Remember there are some special cold-weather considerations for engines, airframes, operations, clothing and survival. Also terrain evaluation changes considerably. We assume you're an experienced backcountry aviator, so review your favorite sources and let's imagine the fun.

The aircraft's entire flight regime jumps into hyper drive, visibility is unparalleled and the calm days (particularly following a blizzard) present a unique and contemplative peace. East, Plains and West all offer great opportunities when the ground and lakes freeze. Your options vary if you fly with skis or 8.50 or larger tires. Each has advantages and limitations. If the surface is loose or lightly packed - use skis; if wind-swept and firm - use wheels.

Some adventures to consider: Watching migratory birds in frozen wheat fields; Land on lake, ice fish; Alton Bay, NH - the only FAA approved ice runway in the lower 48 - and has aviator friendly restaurants! Visit snow machine speed trials - perfect one-mile plowed runway! Skiing, snowshoeing in a remote high pasture or grazing area; Watch elk, caribou and swamp donkeys descending for the winter.

***Always use backcountry flying ethics when flying into private and public lands.***



*Impromptu flight to remote lake smoke house for sausage – Bob Burley photo*

## Where was the RAF in 2011?

- Northwest Aviation Conf., Puyallup, WA
- Montana Aviation Conf., Helena, MT
- Cactus Fly In, AZ
- "LoPresti" fly-in, Sebastian, FL
- Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL
- Wingnuts Flying, Tarkio, MO
- International Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, ME
- Brandy Pond Seaplane Fly-In, Naples, ME
- Grand Opening of Brunswick Executive, Brunswick, ME
- Warbird events, Wiscasset, ME
- Idaho Aviation Trade Show, Idaho Falls
- Blackfly Smashin' Fly-In, Sandford, ME
- Negrilo Airstrip, New Mexico
- American Yankee Assoc. fly-in camp, Payson, AZ
- Pleasant Valley fly-in camp, AZ
- Four Pillars Fly-in, AZ
- Copperstate Fly-In, AZ
- 180/185 Club Conference, Cody, WY;  
*Guest speaker John McKenna*
- Chicken Strip, Death Valley NP, CA
- Missouri River Breaks work party, MT
- E. Washington State Aviation meet, Spokane
- Russian Flat Airstrip work party, MT
- Great Falls Airshow, Great Falls, MT
- Sullivan Lake work party/ fly-In, Sullivan Lake, WA
- Ryan Airfield, West Glacier, MT
- Missouri River Breaks BLM hearing Great Falls, MT
- Acton, Maine and New England area
- AOPA Summit, Hartford, CT
- Land Mgmt meetings, Wash., DC
- US House Caucus, Wash., DC
- Meetings with BLM, Great Falls, MT
- USFS Region One Planning Rule meeting, Missoula, MT
- USFS Region Six Planning Rule meeting, Portland, OR
- Federal court hearing on Missouri Breaks lawsuit, Great Falls, MT
- "Great American Outdoors" meetings
- Industry and Legislative Issues, Wash., DC

# The Recreational Aviation Foundation

Pilots and aviation enthusiasts from all 50 states have joined our team.  
If you believe in the need to preserve your favorite recreational aviation destination,  
Join TEAM RAF

It's easy to support this important effort to preserve and create public use recreational aviation facilities for future generations. Use the secure "Donate now" button at [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org) or mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

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

## RAF New Englanders host AOPA's Sweepstakes Husky launch

AOPA's Sweepstakes "Tougher than a Tornado Husky" began its yearlong national tour at Old Acton Airfield in Maine in October. Piloted by AOPA Senior Editor Dave Hirschman, AOPA President Craig Fuller accompanied the tour in his own Husky. A camera crew arrived, and some of the group camped at the 2400-ft grass airfield.

RAF Director John Nadeau and his wife welcomed the AOPA group, joined by RAF Liaisons Andy Rowe (ME), Bob Burley (VT) and John Zanchi (NH) to host the crew's choice Maine lobster meal.

At Wiscasset the aerial photo mission was met by more New England RAF supporters including Maine Aeronautics Association President Lisa Reece and her husband Steve Williams who arranged breakfast for the

crew.

It is difficult work capturing those wonderful aerial shots so customary in [AOPA Pilot](#). The crew landed in Bar Harbor for a lunch break before launching again in search of the perfect photo over Lake Winnepesaukee and many other lakes in the local region. New England's legendary autumn leaves were gloriously lit and morning fog shrouded the lakes

RAF supporters and the AOPA folks engaged in discussions about what can be done together to keep these wonderful places available now and for future aviators.

AOPA's "Tougher than a Tornado" Husky national tour is bringing home the message that aviation is fun, and that's why we all learned to fly. The RAF is proud to have hosted this first of many stops along the tour



### RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

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*Postage*

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