



*Preserving, improving, and creating airstrips for recreational access*

*Winter/Spring 2021 | Issue 27*

## Connecticut – Feature-rich New England airport saved

The RAF has helped save one of the country's most distinctive airports from potential closure. Goodspeed Airport, (42B) lies beside the historic Connecticut River in East Haddam, CT. The airport has a 2,120-ft paved runway, a potential turf runway, and is the only

seaplane base in southern New England, listed as 4,500 feet in length. Nearby is a 1913 swing bridge that swivels on a turntable to allow river traffic through.

Visitors can camp at this scenic recreational airport, and within easy walking distance is a typical New England village and the Goodspeed Opera House, world famous for its Tony-award-winning productions. "The beautiful surrounding countryside is brim-



*Goodspeed airport along the Connecticut River*

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## Montana – Volunteers raise the Ryan Barn, rustic cabins

The Barn at Ryan Airfield, (2MT1) near Glacier Park is now a reality. A determined group of RAF volunteers made it happen this past autumn.

Support for the project came in great part from generous financial contributions. RAF volunteers from all over the country offered

to come and work on the barn, outhouse and two rustic camping cabins. By the end of October, more than 50 volunteers had swung hammers, climbed ladders and driven screws, providing an estimated 2,000 hours of labor.

Each day began with breakfast cooked on a wood stove and a safety briefing. Lunch and dinner together were a good time to catch up on what the day had produced. The crew worked past dark to finish before Montana's assured snowfall.

Because not everyone could participate in person, we are sharing this video that gives a sense of the spirit behind the project, and the dedication of RAF volunteers

and supporters:

<https://theraf.org/ryan-barn-video/>

*Left: The new barn awaits winter at Ryan Airfield.*

*Below: Volunteers Jay PerryCook and Tim Riley atop barn roof during another long day of roofing.*



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## Planes, Places and Privileges

- **RAF Chairman John McKenna**



**T**hese words are ones we talk a lot about at the RAF. Of course, the plane is always a campfire topic. What kind, how big is the engine, what tire size, two blades versus three . . . These tangible components can be bantered well into the starlit night.

Places usually follow. Those that we have visited, and those we learn about that sound well worth a future visit, whether that is tomorrow or goes on our bucket list. The RAF thinks about places from the perspective of how to hold onto the ones we have, improve them where we can, and find new ones to work towards. Places where we feel that connection with the people we are with and the land we share. It is our love of the sky that drives us, but it's our love of the land that brings us together. Places that form memories that stay with us long after the airplane is home and put away.

Privileges is the challenging one. There is plenty of aviation out there with the theme "There I was . . ." or "Watch this!" Some of it instructive, some interesting, and some that leaves us with raised eyebrows at what we just saw on the latest YouTube. Privileges are difficult to earn but easy to lose if we are not mindful of other recreationists.

The RAF is surely about the fascination of flight. Without that internal desire to simply get into the air we would not exist. At the RAF, we work hard to build friendships with those who share our passion, as well as with those who may not. And we work equally—if not harder—to take care of the lands we find ourselves drawn to. Much of our efforts focus on preserving the privileges of accessing them with our light footprint.

Why are we all doing this? So others might also experience what we know to be the best of aviation, and because we are:



RAF

## Guest Editorial – “RAF is making it possible”

– “Cowboy” Ken Winiarski, *Cowboy’s Air Ranch, Maine*

Howdy Everyone,

While I am in the northern part of Maine, what goes on out west at the RAF filters throughout the country. The RAF’s work to maintain, build, and keep open these remote airfields is valuable to everyone in aviation.

The RAF has been good to me. I have been working with RAF Maine Liaison Andy Rowe. The RAF has given a partial grant to lengthen our airfield to be safer for more diverse aircraft, and provide a destination for folks to experience the way aviation should be experienced.

While New England has a large population, the existence of backcountry airfields has been diminishing greatly. Those that do exist are either too small or unimproved for GA to use safely; or the owners are reluctant to open them for public use. Folks need an organization like the RAF.

My personal views align with the spirit of the RAF. I have met many folks over the years looking for the way to use their aircraft for this type of experience. The RAF is making it possible all over the country.

I wish to thank the RAF for the grant. I hope I can repay – with interest – all that the RAF is doing for this remote airfield. I encourage everyone to please donate to this organization, not only for ourselves, but for our children.

Thanks to all you folks for doing what you do for this organization.

*See related story, page 9.*

## Feature-rich airport saved – *From page 1*

ming with restaurants, shops, and galleries,” its website says.

“I learned that the owner put this airport up for sale, and that this airport could close,” RAF Director Bill Brine said. He connected with two local aviation enthusiasts who approached a third-party foundation that agreed to provide resources to preserve Goodspeed because its unique layout allows for aviation education and training. This aspect appealed to the RAF as the airport provides pilots from southern New England an experience not easily found in the region. The RAF provided funds toward the down payment, leveraging the local group into an outright purchase. They have begun upgrading facilities to boost seaplane use, fuel sales, hangar rentals and eventually provide for repairs and maintenance, to ensure the airport is self-sustaining. The RAF agreed to terms that excess revenues from operations go to Goodspeed capital improvements.

“All the pieces are in place for success in preserving the airport for public use in perpetuity,” Brine said. He encourages pilots to put this special place on their list. “Without the RAF as conduit, this cool little airport would have been lost,” he said.

“So glad to see Goodspeed has been preserved. My father ran the FBO there in the late 70’s. It was a bustling FBO and seaplane base back then. I will be sure to visit soon. Good work and good luck.”

– *Matthew, December 2020*

### STATE LIAISONS, *continued*

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*The RAF also enlists Ambassadors to represent the RAF at events. See current list on page 7.*

*Front page flag photo: Night falls on Ryan Airfield,*

*– Voortex Productions photo.*

*Ryan barn awaits winter – Jeff Scholl photo, Kalispell.*

## RAF renews cooperative agreement with Forest Service

RAF Chairman John McKenna and US Forest Service Recreational Director Michiko Martin in January co-signed the five-year renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the USFS and the RAF. The document records aviation as one of the three legs of the National Forest Transportation System on 155 national forests, twenty national grasslands and seven national monuments. What does this mean to pilots? With responsible use of backcountry airstrips on national forest lands, pilots can be sure of continued access and enjoyment.

“Working together, we are tracking projects and access to eighty-seven airstrips on Forest Service lands in seven of the nine Forest Service regions across the country,” RAF Idaho Liaison Tim Riley said.

The stated purpose of the USFS MOU is to:

“develop a framework for cooperation between the Forest Service and the RAF relating to support of Forest Service airstrips programs, including support for the operation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and public use of existing backcountry airstrips; assisting in collecting and sharing information about backcountry airstrip recreation opportunities; and

enhancing recreation opportunities through funding, volunteerism and sharing technical advice . . . Such programs, projects and activities will complement the respective missions of the Parties and serve the mutual interest of the Parties and the flying public.”

The RAF also has a Master Challenge Cost Share agreement with the USFS to identify specific projects, and leverage RAF volunteers and funding in public/private partnership.

The federal budget now includes an annual allocation of \$750,000 for the maintenance and preservation of backcountry airstrips on USFS lands, including increasing recreational access to federal lands, maintaining airstrips for recreational access, and promoting responsible outdoor recreational use of federal lands and waters. RAF state liaisons and ambassadors are typically joined by volunteers from state pilot organizations to provide “boots on the ground” to accomplish these goals.

“The RAF is celebrating this ongoing accomplishment,” McKenna said of the MOU.

*Inset: Signing together at a distance – RAF Chairman McKenna and Michiko Martin, USFS Recreational Director each sign the cooperative document.*



## Arizona— Grapevine benefits from USFS allocation

Arizona State Liaison Mark Spencer, who also serves on the Arizona Pilots Association (APA) board, reports that work is ongoing at Grapevine airstrip, (88AZ). This year volunteers are improving drainage and safety at the strip. Material worth \$10,000 was purchased by the US Forest Service, through the Master Challenge Cost Share agreement with the RAF. In lieu of a cash match, APA and the RAF agreed to provide volunteer labor to spread and compact it.



APA President Brian Schober delivered his tractor to help spread the material. “Our most senior supporters of the Grapevine efforts, Paul and Charlie Pitkin, were there to help,” Spencer said. Volunteers also resealed runway cracks.

“Grapevine requires a lot of work, but it’s well worth it based on the number of inquiries we receive about visiting it,” Spencer said.

Spencer has coordinated for years with Tonto National Forest District Ranger Kelly Jardine, and refers to him as “an RAF and APA friend and supporter.” Mr. Jardine has started the NEPA process for installing a vault toilet at Grapevine this year from the Cost Share agreement funds.

“Grapevine gets better every year thanks to pilot support and teamwork with the Forest Service,” Spencer added.

For more information about Grapevine visit the Airfield Guide.

## Airfield Guide

### Online Guide to be expanded

The Airfield Guide ([www.airfield.guide](http://www.airfield.guide)) is an interactive resource to help plan your next flying journey. Airfields are being added frequently. At present, there are nearly 300 listings, and RAF state liaisons are surveying and adding listings regularly. Once you register, you’ll receive invitations to explore new listings. You’ll find information like lat/long, elevation, ownership, and CTAF. Proximity to recreation like swimming, hiking, mountain biking, camping, lodging, horseback riding, restaurants and WiFi availability is included.

You’ll find important Safety Briefings, **some of which are required prior to landing**. Some include videos of approaches and departures.

The “Manage Tour” feature enables you to plan a flight of several locations, and send it to your friends who automatically receive any Safety Briefings associated with each location. Your “Tour” interfaces with ForeFlight® as well.

Register at [www.airfield.guide](http://www.airfield.guide) and begin planning your next adventure — brought to you by the RAF in association with Tailwind Aviation Foundation.



The RAF has earned GuideStar’s “Platinum” seal. Only organizations providing the most comprehensive data earn this rating showing commitment to transparency. To learn more about the RAF’s financial status and leadership go to [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org).

## Areas of focus for 2021 – RAF Directors “Raise Bar Higher”

The RAF board of directors met virtually in early February to identify general goals and specific projects for 2021, focusing on improving backcountry and recreational airfields, developing parallel or adjacent turf runways, expanding the popular Airfield Guide, and continuing collaboration with AOPA's Air Safety Institute.

“We accomplished a lot in 2020, in spite of COVID avoidance,” RAF President Bill McGlynn said. “We even helped save a couple of airfields from extinction, enough to raise our bar higher.”

RAF projects are realized due to generous volunteer labor, but to provide for materials and

other hard expenses, the RAF grant fund is a continued area of focus. Watch for fundraising on specific projects, which has been very successful in the past. “We intend to make 2021 a high mark on projects,” McGlynn added.

Specific projects under consideration at this time include Trigger Gap in Arkansas, an airfield in the Northeast, and further exploration of a privately-owned airfield complex in the Midwest. Volunteer RAF state liaisons continue to identify destinations that could benefit from RAF cooperation.

*Top: Trigger Gap in Arkansas. Bottom: The RAF is identifying airfields like this for future improvements.*



## FAA thanks RAF, AOPA RAF initiative keeps privately-owned airfields on the chart

RAF Director Jeff Russell led the RAF effort to provide the FAA with current information from owners of privately-owned airfields. Airfield listings that had not been updated risked “closed indefinitely” status. Russell motivated RAF state liaisons to reach out to private airport owners to assist in this effort by the FAA deadline, year-end 2020. “Our team con-

tributed to a great outcome with this project,” Russell said. “The FAA is very happy with the effort and with the number of updates. They also specifically thanked the RAF and AOPA for our contributions.”

Nearly 3,000 private use airports were on the original list to be “closed” by the FAA. Due to RAF collective efforts, along with AOPA and

other aviation organizations, the number of airfields facing de-listing has been cut in half.

“It has been truly rewarding to hear the gratitude of dozens and dozens of airstrip owners thanking us for making them aware of the FAA's intent to list their airports as being closed,” Russell added. Updated listings will be reflected in the April charting publications.

## California – National Park Service considers Stovepipe comments

RAF California Liaisons Rick Lach and Katerina Barilov learned of plans to close Stovepipe Wells airport in Death Valley National Park and convert it to a dark sky viewing site. They issued an RAF Call To Action requesting public comments.

“We are encouraged by the significant outpouring of public support from RAF members as well as the general public,” Barilov said. “It demonstrates the immense value that airports such as this have to the pilot community and the public as a whole.” Many comments cited locations where aviation and stargazing

are compatible activities and are successfully combined. The RAF thanks all who took time to submit comments supporting Stovepipe Wells airport. Your comments count, and the RAF will report the outcome.

Lach and Barilov are in active conversation with the Park Service about potential ways to share the grounds with dark sky viewing while preserving aircraft access. Through the established cooperative MOU between the RAF and the NPS, the liaisons can commit to ways to maintain access and mitigate NPS maintenance costs.

“We are hopeful that we can reach a suitable outcome for all parties involved,” Barilov said, adding, “The Park Service sees how cherished this access point is.”



“I’ve flown into this airstrip several times. It’s a neat place and a joy to land at. I think a night stargazing site and the airport could coexist. It’s a gem that should be preserved for future generations to fly into and enjoy.” – Donnie, Illinois

## Team Building – RAF adds three State Liaisons

For a complete roster of RAF State Liaisons, see [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org)



### Bill Steinmetz, Indiana

Bill Steinmetz grew up in a flying family. He graduated in 1979 from Purdue University in Indiana with a degree in Professional Pilot Technology. “I was teaching and flying Part 135 in what was then a horrible aviation job market,” he says.

Eventually becoming engaged full time in a family construction business, Bill flew a club Bonanza and a Cherokee Six to projects around the Midwest.

In 2012 he purchased a Cessna 140A and began exploring grass airstrips and enjoying camping on the field wherever it was allowed.

A flight to North Fox Island in 2015 shortly after it opened led him to RAF Michigan Liaison Brad Frederick, and to an appreciation for the RAF mission of creating, improving and preserving places like North Fox Island.

Bill bought a Cessna 172 in 2018 and has been upgrading it for backcountry flying and camping.

“I look forward to more exploring with my 172, attending RAF events, and participating at work parties to help improve RAF supported fields in my area,” he says.



### Doug Turnbull, New York

Doug Turnbull is a native of Bloomfield, NY, near the beautiful Finger Lakes. His father took him on camping and fishing trips in his Cessna 185 amphibian. Turnbull spent much of this time flying from the right seat.

In 1983, he earned his private pilot license at the Penn Yan Flying Club, and bought a 1947 PA12, which he flew for many years.

Turnbull continues to live in the area in which he grew up, and it was there that he grew his firearm restoration business. The business gained a national reputation for quality work. His daughter and son-in-law are in the process of assuming the business, which gives Turnbull additional time to fly and promote aviation.

Traveling the country in his current airplane – a 1946 PA12 with many Alaskan modifications – he attends events and gets acquainted with RAF liaisons and RAF members.

“I am looking forward to promoting the recreational flying that is available in western and central New York state,” Doug says. “I hope to educate pilots about the exciting places there are to see and experience in my state.”



### Alan White, Virginia

Alan White was one of those kids who always looked up when he heard an airplane overhead. His family had no aviation background, but he was so fascinated with airplanes that he promised himself that as soon as he could afford to, he would learn to fly.

He graduated from the University of Tennessee dental school in 1987 and began a residency program at East Carolina University. True to his promise, he took his first paycheck to the airport, and began flying lessons. Within six months, White was a private pilot.

He married Deedra whom he met during his residency and they settled in Staunton, VA where he has built a thriving dental practice and raised two boys.

Along the way he bought a 1972 Beech Sundowner that he painted the University of Tennessee’s orange and white. He has flown it all over the country and into grass strips wherever he could. He sold an antique truck and bought a 1946 Taylorcraft to enjoy more recreational airfields.

“I am looking forward to working to expand the RAF’s role in Virginia and visit even more recreational strips,” he says.

## RAF adds Director of Marketing



The RAF is pleased to announce that former intern Kodi Myhre has become the RAF Director of Marketing.

Now engaged full time for the RAF Kodi said, “I’m most looking forward to becoming more involved with the RAF’s marketing strategy for ways the organization can grow.”

Kodi is a Montana native and recent Finance graduate of Montana State University in Bozeman. She was introduced to the RAF in May 2019, and as an intern, Kodi brought valuable IT skills to the job as the RAF migrat-

ed to its new website and Customer Relationship Management database.

Her duties have taken her far beyond her keyboard, attending events helping represent the RAF. “People are pretty passionate about what the RAF does. When you connect with the passion they have, it really is meaningful,” she said.

RAF Administrative Director Tricia McKenna said, “I am confident that Kodi knows who we are and understands the heart and soul of the organization.”

## Normandeau named RAF Public Agency Consultant

Preserving, improving, and creating airstrips on public lands is a significant part of the RAF mission. Alaska leads the nation in percentage of federal and state-owned land, at 89. Nevada follows with over 81, Utah with over 70 and Idaho with 66.5 percent. This does not include municipal lands.

When policy decisions on public lands are made, they typically remain in effect for a decade or more. Unlike private property, public lands decisions require public scoping, publication of alternatives, further public review, all stretching long before an actual land plan is finalized. RAF state liaisons who consider projects on public lands must be aware of upcoming planning, engage early in the process, and understand the procedural steps involved.

Ron Normandeau is the perfect fit for the position of RAF Public Agency Consultant. He combines his passion for backcountry flying with a rich background working in public agencies. He spent 22 years with the U.S. Geological Survey and retired from the US Forest Service after a career as a Cartographer/Photogrammetrist in Missoula, MT.

Normandeau's twelve years with the US Forest Service enables him to bring other valuable experience to the RAF, and a good rapport with Forest Service personnel.

Normandeau maintained a parallel career as a reserve officer in the Corps of Engineers as a Topographic Engineer.

When the state liaison position was developed by the RAF, Normandeau was the logical pick for the task in Montana, and he became the RAF's first state liaison. In his new role as Public Agency Consultant, he is a valuable resource for RAF state liaisons seeking guidance on public lands issues.



## Our VP's of Appreciation

*The RAF is proud of its all-volunteer crew of folks who write personal, individual thank you notes to each donor for supporting the RAF mission.*

- Diane Goodwin, Arkansas
- Kim Capozzi, Florida
- Carol Strong, Idaho
- Ann Warner, Illinois
- Barbet Mason, Maine
- Patty Bunce, Wisconsin
- Ashley Castner, Minnesota
- Margie Prill, Montana
- Meghann McKenna, Montana
- Sarah Mayes, Oregon
- Penny Hergenrather, Texas
- Jo Schumacher, Washington

## RAF Ambassador Team

Our enthusiastic RAF Ambassadors serve at work parties and aviation events.

Arizona	Jeffrey Iorio	Minnesota	Paul Noskowiak
Arkansas	Donna Perkins	Minnesota	Amy Gesch
Arkansas	Presley Melton	Missouri	Jim Dickerson
Colorado	Michael Langersmith	Missouri	Sarah Dickerson
Colorado	Alex Ruehle	Missouri	Jim Rhodes
Colorado	Sam Chambers	Nebraska	Mark Farrell
Colorado	Bill Murrish	Nevada	Fred Williams
Colorado	Kurt Pennuto	New Mexico	Larry Filener
Connecticut	Greg Delp	New York	Bob Anderson
Florida	Debra Folsom	New York	Sarah Tamar
Florida	Amrat Chugani	North Dakota	Jeff Faught
Florida	Wes Whitley	ND and MN	Rick Mercil
Florida	Joe DeLeon	Oregon	Bill Ables
Florida	Lynn Gardner	Oregon	Alan Cossitt
Florida	Wendy Sosa	South Carolina	Bill Repucci
Florida	Samantha Inguanzo	South Dakota	Ray Jilek
Georgia	Eric Davis	Tennessee	Cal Scholten
Idaho	Andrew Simmons	Texas	Mike Hergenrather
Illinois	David Warner	TX and MT	Steve Maus
Illinois	Tom Scott	Washington	Ray Ballantyne
Iowa	Ken Warren	Washington	Jered Paine
Kansas	Bruce Latvala	West Virginia	Jack Soronen
Maine	Jeremy Harmon	Wisconsin	Charlie Miller
Maryland	Craig McCullough	Wisconsin	Bill Mecozzi
Maryland	Dhruv Thakkar	Wisconsin	Austin Levin
Michigan	John Riordan		

## The unstoppable Carol Strong, RAF's first VP of Appreciation



Carol Strong hand-wrote thousands of RAF thank you notes to donors before she "retired" to spend more time flying with her husband Tom in the RV-9A they built together. "But I missed it so much, and didn't want to lose touch," so she re-volunteered for the task.

Last Christmas eve, she was run over in a Rigby, ID grocery store parking lot. She woke up Christmas day in the hospital after surgery on her severely injured leg.

That didn't stop Carol. "Duty called," she said, and she's taken up her pen on behalf of the RAF, and continues to write thank you's from her wheelchair. Carol gets in-home physical therapy, and looks forward to weight-bearing improvements this spring, and replacing the wheelchair with a cane.

You may see Carol and Tom in Idaho's backcountry volunteering at a Forest Service airstrip, "hopefully this summer," but it depends on how quickly she's well enough to board and settle in their airplane's cozy cabin.

We appreciate Carol's great attitude and wish her a quick and complete recovery!

## THE **RAF** OUTFITTER™ Welcome to our online store.

Your secure place to shop for RAF apparel and gear. All RAF items are selected for quality and endurance, and whenever possible are locally sourced. Shop for RAF caps, belts, t-shirts; gear such as tote bags and water bottles; RAF-logo windsocks and decals for your

aircraft or hangar. We're adding selections all the time, and invite you to shop often. All purchases benefit the RAF mission to preserve, improve, and create airstrips for recreational access.

See [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org).

Merchandise photos by Jake Peterson.



## Colorado – Kent Rominger Airport hosts AOPA STEM class

RAF Colorado Liaison Tom Haefeli reports that Astronaut Kent Rominger Airport manager Jay Sarason conducted a successful extracurricular activity for a local AOPA High

School STEM class (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.) using the new classroom at the airport.

In 2019, Haefeli was awarded a \$30,000 RAF grant for a multi-function pilot shelter, including a classroom. He obtained funding from individual donors, the airport board, and with donated labor, supplies, and heavy equipment from various contractors, finished the project with the balance of funding from Rio Grande County.

Sarason convinced the Sargent school board that the AOPA STEM program would

be a great addition, and it all came together this year. Sarason has a Sport Pilot Instructor license, and an Aeronca Champ to teach kids to fly. Already, one of his students has earned his Private Pilot license.

Haefeli visited during a ground lesson. "Seeing the smiles on those kids' faces, I have no doubt the numbers will be much higher on the next field trip," Haefeli exclaimed, adding, "Thank you so much RAF and AOPA for giving us this opportunity!"

For more information about Kent Rominger Airport, (KRCV) visit the Airfield Guide.



## Florida – Arcadia voted Airport of the year

RAF Florida Liaison Bobby Capozzi has shared news that Arcadia Airport, (X06) was named 2020 General Aviation Airport of the Year by Florida Dep't of Transportation. According to GlobalAir data, there are 884 air-

ports in Florida, so the folks who operate Arcadia should be very proud.

Arcadia is an example of successful cooperation between the RAF, local pilot volunteers, city officials, and local businesses.

In 2012, a group concerned that the airport was underutilized formed "Friends of Arcadia Airport" (FOAA). They proposed a new campground, but the City opposed the idea. FOAA turned to the RAF for help. FOAA hosted a fly-in during Arcadia's annual Rodeo Weekend. Following the event, pilots wrote letters to the local newspaper and city council describing how much they enjoyed Arcadia and its shops

and restaurants. The city council was moved to cooperate.

Over the next five years, FOAA raised funds and volunteers build a pavilion, campgrounds, and fire hub. A \$5,000 RAF grant went toward a shower facility.

The RAF congratulates airport staff Yensi Rivera, Shelley Peacock, and Dick Shaner; and FOAA founding members George Chase, Rickey Hilton, Ross Clark, Dave Hutchinson, and Greg Smith.

See Arcadia's Facebook page and <https://foaa.us> for features and amenities. Arcadia is listed in the Airfield Guide, as well.



"RAF is a great organization. Do not ever give up what you are doing." – *Stephen, Florida*



## Illinois – Improvements continue at Havana Regional

A picnic pavilion is going up at Havana Regional, (910) in Illinois in addition to other improvements, completed in part through an RAF grant. RAF Illinois Liaison Mike Purpura reports that the project is being coordinated by the Havana Regional Airport Board and members of the local EAA Chapter 1420.

The RAF grant partially funded a shower facility for year-round use and a fire pit, both completed through the cooperative efforts.

Havana is a unique 2,200-ft grass airstrip in a small town located on the Illinois River. “There is an abundance of wildlife and archeological remains from the early Mississippian culture. At night, the skies are pitch black. All of these resources have been brought to bear on the revitalization of Havana Airport,” Purpura said. Events include migratory bird watching, and astronomy nights right at the airport, an event cited as a successful combination of stargazing and aviation for the Stovepipe Wells airport



comments. *See related story, page 5.*

Visit the Airfield Guide, or contact Purpura at [mpurpura@theraf.org](mailto:mpurpura@theraf.org).

## Maine – RAF grants help improve Fort Kent; lengthen Cowboy’s Air Ranch

The RAF has granted funds to help cover improvements at Fort Kent Municipal Airfield in Maine. Camping area additions will include two picnic tables and a picnic shelter off the west side of the runway next to the trailhead to Fish River Falls.

Fort Kent Municipal Airfield is adjacent to Maine’s Fish River, and George Dumond of the Fish River Flying Club has spearheaded this round of improvements to the 2,154-ft airfield.

“It has blossomed into a beautiful asset for recreational aviators in northern Maine,” RAF Liaison Andy Rowe said, promising “muskie downstream and brookies upstream of the falls, and a grass strip with plenty of camping and friendly local folks.”

Back in 2010, RAF Liaisons Steve Mason and Rowe obtained an RAF grant to help the Club maintain the field. “This is a Phoenix of an airport,” RAF New Hampshire Liaison John Meade said. “Steve and Andy helped reverse the demise of this airport,” he added. Dumond added his own note of appreciation, saying, “Thanks Andy for everything you continue to do to promote us and other airfields in the state!”

### Cowboy’s Air Ranch lengthened

Rowe reports that the tree removal and lengthening project is underway on Cowboy’s Air Ranch (84ME), closing it for the time being.

An RAF grant will extend the 2,100-ft turf airfield an additional 1,300 to 1,500 feet, once stumps are removed and the surface is properly graded and seeded by owner Ken Winiarski.

As a privately owned field, permission is required prior to landing. For updates, call Rowe at 207-837-9155, or owner Ken Winiarski at 207-538-7583, or [cowboysairranch@gmail.com](mailto:cowboysairranch@gmail.com).

“I wish to thank the RAF for all the help getting this project extension underway so all who wish to enjoy this unique airfield may do so,” Winiarski said. “This could not be completed in a timely manner without the help of the RAF, the volunteers, and donations from everyone involved with the RAF,” he added. *See Winiarski’s message, page 3.*



*Cowboy’s Air Ranch, looking north.*

“My thanks to you all.” – *Jeff, Maine*

“You folks are doing a great thing for General Aviation.” – *Charlie, New Hampshire*

## The RAF implements its mission through these Guiding Principles:

- We believe that aviation is a valid form of accessing recreational resources on public and private lands.
  - We believe in collaboration with both public and private entities to arrive at solutions that provide benefit to all parties.
  - We value the relationships of all stakeholders – both public and private – and commit to fostering relationships based upon integrity and transparency.
  - We believe that creation of new recreational airstrips will encourage the general aviation community to get out and recreate as well as provide more dispersed recreational opportunities.
- Find out more at [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org)*

## Minnesota – RAF helps keep Isle open

In June, the RAF reported that the Isle, Minnesota city council voted to keep Isle Airport, (MY72) open, in large part due to the positive input resulting from an RAF Call To Action.

Minnesota Liaison Kirk Hiner and former RAF Director Peter Burwell met with Isle Airport management to agree on a cost sharing project to remove encroaching trees that had threatened to close the airport. The Isle Airport Association raised part of the cost of the project, and an RAF grant provided \$14,000. The tree-removal project will ensure that the airport survives to serve the community and region around Isle.

In return for the grant, the IAA is giving all RAF members a pass to land at Isle, without having to request prior permission.

Isle Airport is a well-maintained turf airport with many recreational attributes. Visitors can

enjoy underwing camping, access to two airport cars and several bicycles for transportation to the many fishing resorts, restaurants, and other attractions of this central Minnesota lakes region.

“This is a great airport that the RAF was able to participate in saving, and will remain open for years to come,” Burwell said.



“RAF just made it possible to save the Isle Airport. Very great work, especially Peter Burwell, Kirk Hiner and Kurt Pennuta.” – Patrick, Minnesota

## Oregon – Silver Lake saved; Red’s mowed

Silver Lake airfield, (45S) is located in the Fremont-Winema National Forest in central Oregon. For the past several years, maintenance had been neglected at the 3,000-ft runway. “The Forest Service discussed closing the airfield because it was considered unsafe and a liability risk,” RAF Oregon Liaison Richard Mayes said. He contacted the Forest District Ranger and made it clear that the aviation community values remote airfields like Silver Lake, and that the RAF is willing to invest volunteer time and money toward their preservation at no cost to USFS. It was agreed that clearing encroaching brush and repairing surface damage would greatly reduce potential

liability. Thanks to Mayes’ action, the USFS decided that Silver Lake was indeed an asset worth protecting. The RAF installed a new windsock, and volunteers cleared brush.

Silver Lake airfield is located on private property leased by the USFS. Visitors may camp and explore, but open fires and discharge of firearms are prohibited. “Please don’t do anything to offend the land owner, and avoid flying low over nearby ranches and the town of Silver Lake,” Mayes asked. See the Airfield Guide for Silver Lake.

**Red’s Wallowa Horse Ranch** – Last issue, we reported that being within a Wilderness Area, all work at Red’s had to be done without motorized equipment.

In July, mule team Bird and Bat – with Jim and Holly Akenson at the reins – completed the task.

This publicly owned airfield, (6OR9) is managed by the US Forest Service and provides access to a spectacular recreation site, including fishing on the Minam River. For many years, the volunteer group Backcountry Horsemen of Oregon had mowed the airfield.

Mayes applied for an RAF grant to cover



mowing the high grass from heavy spring rains, and began looking into logistics.

A 1940s-era horse-drawn mower was on site, thanks to Dick Walker, Backcountry Horsemen volunteer, who has maintained the equipment for many years. RAF Oregon Ambassador Bill Ables secured the mule team and operators, airlifted the harnesses and gear in and out, and physically helped with the mowing all day, providing invaluable assistance.

The RAF, Oregon Pilots Assoc., Idaho Aviation Assoc., and the USFS collaborated to ensure a valuable public asset was preserved. See the Airfield Guide for details on Red’s Wallowa Horse Ranch.

*At left: Volunteers install windsock at Silver Lake; above: Mayes at the Minam River, accessible from Red’s Horse Ranch airfield.*



“Thanks Richard! Silver Lake could have been over looked so easily; you and RAF are on the ball.”

– Dale, Oregon

## New Mexico – Rainy Mesa opened; Negrito ramp; Sacaton assessed

RAF New Mexico Liaison Ron Keller has announced that after more than forty years of disuse, Rainy Mesa airstrip is now open for recreational use, after removal of encroaching trees.

“RAF Ambassador, and former New Mexico Liaison Larry Filener’s vision and dream to reopen Rainy Mesa is now a reality,” Keller said. He credits a great working relationship with the Gila National Forest as key in getting the approval to rehabilitate this 5,300-ft airstrip, which lies at an elevation of nearly 7,400 feet.

Volunteers rehabilitated the strip, erected a windsock pole and runway end markings. Approval to reopen it came from the District Ranger and Forest Aviation Officer.

“This has been a slow, methodical process involving the RAF and New Mexico Pilot As-

sociation volunteers,” Keller said. The New Mexico Airstrip Network had developed the Gila Airstrip Integrated Operations and Maintenance Plan for the Forest Service, which has facilitated projects like Rainy Mesa.

Find its listing in the Airfield Guide. Please



call the Gila National Forest at 800-538-1644 for permission to land.

**Negrito gets ramp** – New Mexico Pilot Association coordinated adding an ADA access ramp and stoop for the new vault toilet at Negrito Airstrip (ONM7) in October.

Keller is assessing **Sacaton** airstrip for potential rehabilitation and reopening. “If we are able to rehabilitate and reopen Sacaton, it will provide direct access to the western side of the Gila Wilderness and great recreational opportunity,” Keller said. Sacaton was built by the USFS during the late 1950s or early 60s and has been dormant for decades. The trailhead to Rain Creek is a short walk and offers trout fishing within a mile of the airstrip.

*Inset: Determined volunteer takes on another stump at Rainy Mesa.*

## Montana – Mule team grades parallel Wilderness strip

When Montana’s Schafer Forest Service airstrip (8U2) needed substantial grounds work last summer, RAF Montana Liaison Scott Newpower outlined the need, and an RAF grant was awarded for the project.

Schafer lies entirely within a Wilderness Area, and like Red’s Wallowa Horse Ranch in an Oregon Wilderness, (*story, page 10*) motorized equipment is not permitted. In August, a team of mules was trailed in to plow and

grade a 2,500-ft parallel turf runway that had fallen into disuse. The project reestablishes a proven management plan of two parallel turf runways. Using one runway for several years, then switching to the alternate, allows the “fallow” land to recover its natural health and appearance.

*At right: Mules are part of the Schafer work crew and show interest in what’s cookin’. RAF volunteers suggested the two be named “Husky” and “Cub”.*



“Just returned yesterday from a couple of days at Schafer. Really pleased that needed maintenance on the runway [was] accomplished this summer. Thanks to Congress, Montana Pilots Association, RAF and volunteers who preserve this jewel.”

– Gaylen, Minnesota

## West Virginia – Rainelle gets new facilities

RAF West Virginia Liaison Evan Davis is working with an RAF member who owns Rainelle, (WV30) a mountaintop turf airfield.

To make it more appealing for fly-in camping, the owner is building men’s and women’s restrooms with showers.

“There is no place in West Virginia that provides a facility like this that I am aware of,” Davis said. “The owner offered his property,

well and septic system, and will go through all the local permitting,” Evan reported, about the collaborative effort.

Davis secured an RAF grant to complete this improvement. Volunteers will provide the labor at no cost.

“The owners want to see it used in the future, and have graciously listed it in the Airfield Guide” Davis added.



“This field is a gem. Lots of great stuff happening there and the owners/residents are welcoming and friendly.”

– Bob, October 2020



*Smiley Creek, Idaho by Steve Niessner  
2020 RAF Contest photo submission.*

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