

# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION NEWS • ACTION

GROWING  
IN  
STRENGTH  
SINCE 2003

WINTER 2016

WWW.THERAF.ORG

ISSUE 17

*The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, maintains  
and creates airstrips for recreational access.*

## U.S. Forest Service commits funds for airstrips

The Recreational Aviation Foundation is pleased to announce that language was included in the Omnibus Bill supporting report and signed by the President that allocates \$750,000 for airstrip maintenance on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands. In spite of cuts to the USFS budget, the RAF made the point that backcountry airstrips are valuable and deserve funds that the USFS allocates to maintain recreational assets.

The bill further stipulates that the Forest Service is to consult with Congress, state and local officials, and affected stakeholders before making a determination to close or terminate the use of any rural airstrip.

"These two pieces go a long way towards advancing the RAF mission," RAF president John McKenna said. "Our foot-time, meetings with the Committee members and staff, and formal testimony did some good."

"This goes to show that perseverance pays off," said RAF Public Lands Liaison Mark Spencer of Arizona who accompanied McKenna on multiple trips to Washington, D.C. RAF delegates had laid important groundwork last

year; the result being the formal inclusion of aviation within the new USFS Planning Directives.

"Mark made the point to the USFS folks that we were literally just trying to help them do the job they could never seem to get done," McKenna added.

"A number of aviation groups had asked for this for a good long time, and it never made it past staffers in the House. The Big Creek Four come to mind. If this doesn't help, I will be surprised," McKenna said.

How will implementation begin? Spencer says, "They'll be asking for needs through their teams in the field, and then I believe we'll get to give some input on projects that will benefit backcountry aviation assets and experiences. Our job will be to let our partners know the money is available, and encourage them to begin prioritizing projects."

"Finally, this should be a door opener to Forest Service staff who haven't yet seen how aviation folks can cooperate successfully on our mutual goals," McKenna concluded.

## RAF partners with Friends of Arcadia Airport– Florida christens "Aviation City"

Join the RAF at Florida's Arcadia Municipal Airport (X06) for a week-end of hospitality and Arcadia's 87th annual Championship Rodeo, March 11-13. Arcadia has both paved and grass runways. Come and see why Arcadia has been christened "Aviation City."

"The [Friends of Arcadia Airport \(FOAA\)](#) built a welcoming on-airport campground complete with pilot

shelter, brick fire pit and plumbed water," Jack Tyler, RAF Florida Liaison said.

This will be the RAF's third Rodeo Weekend at Arcadia and "each time it's been more enjoyable and better attended," Tyler added. FOAA has also arranged a river cruise on the nearby Myakka River. **Blackwater plans**

The annual Blackwater (8FD3) Celebration is April 22-24. See [Blackwater River State Forest](#). An interpretative hike with the Santa Rosa County Forester is planned to learn more about this special place to visit.

View the [RAF Event Calendar](#) for all the events with RAF involvement scheduled for the Southeast in 2016.

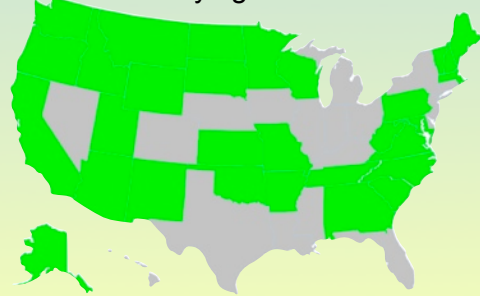
*At left: RAF Florida Liaison Jack Tyler (in orange) joins George Chase to celebrate cooperation between the RAF and Friends of Arcadia Airport – RAF photo.*



## RUS Success

Liability protection for airstrip owners is a key RAF initiative. RAF delegates have worked with state legislatures to accomplish this. To date, 27 states (in green) now include non-commercial aviation in their Recreational Use Statutes; three states list recreation broadly – recreational aviation is implied. States shown in green now include recreational aviation.

See [www.theraf.org](#) for updates on each state and how the RAF is working to protect landowners in order to open up more recreational flying destinations.



**RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION**  
**1711 WEST COLLEGE ST, BOZEMAN, MT 59715**  
**406-582-1RAF (1723)    [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org)**

**Tricia McKenna Administrative Director:** [tmckenna@theraf.org](mailto:tmckenna@theraf.org)  
**Sarah Chandler, Volunteer Coordinator:** [schandler@theraf.org](mailto:schandler@theraf.org)  
*All the following serve on a volunteer, unpaid basis:*

**DIRECTORS**

**John McKenna, President:** Montana [jmckenna@theraf.org](mailto:jmckenna@theraf.org)  
**Tim Clifford, VP:** Florida [tclifford@theraf.org](mailto:tclifford@theraf.org)  
**Rol Murrow:** New Mexico [rmurrow@theraf.org](mailto:rmurrow@theraf.org)  
**Peter Bunce:** Washington, DC/Wisconsin [pbunce@theraf.org](mailto:pbunce@theraf.org)  
**Steve Johnson:** Missouri [sjohnson@theraf.org](mailto:sjohnson@theraf.org)  
**Alan Metzler:** Pennsylvania/Montana [ametzler@theraf.org](mailto:ametzler@theraf.org)  
**Mike Perkins:** Colorado/Montana [mperkins@theraf.org](mailto:mperkins@theraf.org)  
**Jerry Cain, Chuck Jarecki, Dan Prill, Directors Emeritus**  
**Bill McGlynn,** Development Director: [bmcglynn@theraf.org](mailto:bmcglynn@theraf.org)  
**Safety and Education Coordinator:** Alan Metzler,  
[ametzler@theraf.org](mailto:ametzler@theraf.org)  
**Environmental Science Advisory Committee:**  
**Ric Hauer, Andy Turner, Mark Novak and Roger Blew**  
**Newsletter Editor:** Carmine Mowbray [cmowbray@theraf.org](mailto:cmowbray@theraf.org)

**STATE LIAISONS**

AK – Al Clayton [aclayton@theraf.org](mailto:aclayton@theraf.org)  
AZ – Mark Spencer [mspencer@theraf.org](mailto:mspencer@theraf.org)  
AR – Dave Myrick [dmyrick@theraf.org](mailto:dmyrick@theraf.org)  
CA – Chris Berge [cberge@theraf.org](mailto:cberge@theraf.org)  
CA – Rick Lach [rlach@theraf.org](mailto:rlach@theraf.org)  
CO – Patrick Romano [promano@theraf.org](mailto:promano@theraf.org)  
CO – Tom Haefeli [thaefeli@theraf.org](mailto:thaefeli@theraf.org)  
FL – Jack Tyler [jtyler@theraf.org](mailto:jtyler@theraf.org)  
GA – Eric Davis [edavis@theraf.org](mailto:edavis@theraf.org)  
GA – Brett Wilkes [bwilkes@theraf.org](mailto:bwilkes@theraf.org)  
ID – Mike Hart [mhart@theraf.org](mailto:mhart@theraf.org)  
IL – Mike Purpura [mpurpura@theraf.org](mailto:mpurpura@theraf.org)  
KY – Jeff Smith [jsmith@theraf.org](mailto:jsmith@theraf.org)  
ME – Andy Rowe [arowe@theraf.org](mailto:arowe@theraf.org)  
MD – Craig McCullough [cmccullough@theraf.org](mailto:cmccullough@theraf.org)  
MI – Brad Frederick [bfrederick@theraf.org](mailto:bfrederick@theraf.org)  
MN – Kirk Hiner [khiner@theraf.org](mailto:khiner@theraf.org)  
MO – Sarah Dickerson [sdickerson@theraf.org](mailto:sdickerson@theraf.org)  
MO – Jim Dickerson [jdickerson@theraf.org](mailto:jdickerson@theraf.org)  
MT – Ron Normandeau [rnormandeau@theraf.org](mailto:rnormandeau@theraf.org)  
MT – Jon Hudson [jhudson@theraf.org](mailto:jhudson@theraf.org)  
NM – Larry Filener [lfilener@theraf.org](mailto:lfilener@theraf.org)  
NY – Rus Holland [rholland@theraf.org](mailto:rholland@theraf.org)  
NC – Susan Dusenbury [sdusenbury@theraf.org](mailto:sdusenbury@theraf.org)  
ND – Brian Rau [brau@theraf.org](mailto:brau@theraf.org)  
OH – Freeman Swank [fswank@theraf.org](mailto:fswank@theraf.org)  
OK – Steve Thompson [sthompson@theraf.org](mailto:sthompson@theraf.org)  
PA – Lloyd Babcock [lbabcock@theraf.org](mailto:lbabcock@theraf.org)  
PA – Chris Groshel [cgroshel@theraf.org](mailto:cgroshel@theraf.org)  
SC – Kathy Hegenberger [khegenberger@theraf.org](mailto:khegenberger@theraf.org)  
TN – Steve Lewis [slewis@theraf.org](mailto:slewis@theraf.org)  
TX – Chase Snodgrass [csnodgrass@theraf.org](mailto:csnodgrass@theraf.org)  
UT – Steve Durtschi [sdurtschi@theraf.org](mailto:sdurtschi@theraf.org)  
UT – Wayne Loeber [wloeber@theraf.org](mailto:wloeber@theraf.org)  
VT – Bob Burley [rburley@theraf.org](mailto:rburley@theraf.org)  
VA – Randall Burdette [rburdette@theraf.org](mailto:rburdette@theraf.org)  
WA – Dave Whitelaw [dwhitelaw@theraf.org](mailto:dwhitelaw@theraf.org)  
WI – Jeff Russell [jrussell@theraf.org](mailto:jrussell@theraf.org)  
BLM Liaisons: Pete Smith; Craig McCullough



**President's Message –**

**Just  
show me  
the baby**

–John McKenna



**D**on't tell me about your labor pains, just show me the baby is a statement I occasionally mutter.

My son once said, "Dad, you're not really a boring guy, it's just that you talk about boring things." Hopefully he was referring to my day job of being a life insurance agent and not about my life in general. With that backdrop, it is perhaps why I enjoy the RAF to the degree I do. The work is interesting, we are doing some fun things, and good is happening as a result.

Here are a couple RAF babies we are pretty proud of.

This month the RAF signed a first-of-a-kind agreement with the Nature Conservancy to construct a new airstrip in Arkansas. With this first success we believe there will be additional ones to follow. We anticipate construction to be complete in the next couple months and opening this summer.

The RAF received official notice that the budget that Congress just passed includes \$750,000 for maintenance of rural and backcountry airstrips on USFS lands. This is a first-of-its-kind line item specifically applying to aviation assets on the ground. This allocation can go a very long way when combined with the cost sharing and volunteer labor that the RAF and its partners provide. It will certainly go further than the \$0 that has been available in the past, not to mention the ripple effect this could have across other agencies, both federal and state. This is a very important milestone and something the RAF has been working with the USFS to implement for a good long time. A fair bit of D.C. shoe leather was used up getting this accomplished. Details of how the funds will be available are being worked out as of this writing.

Congress included this language in the 2016 Budget Report which we believe has significant value to our community: "The Committee directs the Forest Service to consult with Congress, State and local officials, and affected stakeholders, prior to making a determination to close or terminate the use of any rural airstrips." This one sentence should send the message to local USFS staff that we are serious about this business of keeping these assets available

facebook

*Continued . . .*

The Recreational Aviation Foundation is a non-profit 501(c) (3) public charity, Federal EIN 42-1613294; Montana State ID D-128852. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers and gifts are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes. *Please provide your current email address to [contact@theraf.org](mailto:contact@theraf.org) to receive the newsletter digitally. Newsletter flag photo: LaSalle Mountains from Delores Pt., Colorado, Patrick Romano.*



# Radio Chatter

## Notes from our supporters . . .

You guys did a great job opening (North Fox Island) runway back up, very impressive. We hope to make it back to camp at some point. What a beautiful place!. I am going to check out a membership in RAF. Feel free to let me know about volunteer opportunities.

• • •

I have limited experience flying in the backcountry, and understand the importance of backcountry airstrips and maintaining them.

• • •

I know how hard you guys work and greatly appreciate it. Many of my donations sometimes get put on the back burner and just missed. Thank you! Keep up the great work!

## RAF representative on BLM advisory panel

Longtime RAF supporter and pilot Jeff Patnode of Lewistown, MT, was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to the Central Montana Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Council.

These 12- to 14-member councils are citizen-based groups that provide advice on the management of public lands. The BLM seeks people qualified through education, training, knowledge, or experience for these three-year Council appointments.

The BLM manages one-eighth of the U.S. land mass and seeks to collaborate with all stakeholders to set mutual objectives for proposed recreation opportunities, and pool resources toward shared goals. Council members represent various categories of interest within their geographic area. They advise BLM Officers on management of resources, implementation of resource plans, resolution of land use conflicts and assure public input prior to land use and management decisions.

For example, ten primitive backcountry airstrips were constructed on Montana BLM land in the 1950s. When the Missouri Breaks Monument

was proclaimed in January 2002, they were in jeopardy of closure. Through efforts of the RAF, MPA and the general pilot community, six airstrips were retained for public use.

"These councils are good places for the RAF and aviation-minded folks to be," said RAF president John McKenna. "Thanks to Jeff for stepping up."

Patnode is vice president of equipment at Lewistown-based Century Companies, Inc., a five-state enterprise employing over 150 people. Patnode and Century donated equipment and labor during the construction of Russian Flat (M42) in central Montana.



Patnode with his Cessna 185f, "the perfect plane to explore the West," he says.

Thanks for the hard work. You deserve recognition!

• • •

Wish I had more time!!

• • •

Please keep up your personalized touch, we thank you.

• • •

I'd like to make a donation for the holidays in my father's name. He's a member of RAF, and gets to fly in the back country a lot more than I do. I can't think of a better gift.

• • •

I embrace all which the RAF represents. I have enjoyed the many hours spent at the fly-ins with fellow members. My favorite place to visit is Russian Flat where the stars are magnificent. Please accept my donation as a small token of appreciation.

### HELP WANTED

Join our TEAM of  
RAF Volunteers today!



If you have any interest or expertise in:  
Event Planning  
Fire Hub Tenders –installing bricks at RAF Fire Hubs  
or

would like to be more involved in your state by becoming a state liaison,  
**Let us know!**  
It could be the most fun you've ever had.

Contact:  
Sarah Chandler  
[schandler@theraf.org](mailto:schandler@theraf.org)  
and  
Tricia McKenna  
[tmckenna@theraf.org](mailto:tmckenna@theraf.org)

*continued from page 2*

to the flying public. We realize this won't end the discussion about open or closed airstrips, but we know it is a very useable instrument in the RAF tool bag.

A good deal of labor pains were felt in all of this, but the babies they have produced will hopefully mature into yet another wonderful child we can all nurture.

We are truly off to a good start in 2016.

— John

## RAF benefits from Amazon sales

The RAF is pleased to be one of the select charities that benefits when you shop Amazon Smile. Amazon will now donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to the Recreational Aviation Foundation when you shop at ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)). The RAF certainly believes in shopping locally, but if you are going to buy online please consider using Amazon Smile and choosing the Recreational Aviation Foundation as your charity. There is no additional cost to you.

# Arkansas digs into three-state project

– **Dave Myrick, RAF Arkansas Liaison**

In the almost four years I've been the Arkansas Liaison I've been very surprised by the enthusiasm and dedication of the local aviation community. Our RAF membership has increased six-fold and continues to grow at a very welcome pace. I credit this growth with the passing of legislation that has included aviation activities in the Arkansas Recreational Use Statute.

Happily, I am finally able to announce a new project that defines the very essence of the RAF and our



*Myrick, in orange cap, is all smiles as the shovel crew prepares for the first new airstrip in the Ozark Airfield Project in December. Left to right: Presley Melton, RAF member; Chris Schnurbusch, Matt Trulove and Cori Miller of Crossland Construction; Tim Schnell with Arkansas Nature Conservancy; Steve Johnson, RAF Director; Myrick; Chad Cox, Founder of Ozarks Airfield Project; Tim Clifford, RAF Director, and Mr. Parker the lab, an RAF honorary canine.*

mission. A group of very dedicated local aviators working alongside the RAF has launched a groundbreaking project that has been over two years in the making.

The Ozark's Airfield Project began with their idealistic statement, "We would like to develop the Ozarks into a national recreation fly-in destination." The project will include eastern Oklahoma, northern Arkansas and southern Missouri. All three states now have private airstrip liability protection.

Centrally located in the U.S., the Ozarks can be reached within a day's flight of a very large percentage of the nation's GA community. They abound with recreational opportunities without high density altitudes.

## **Nature Conservancy partners**

A focal point is the construction of a new 3,000 ft recreational airstrip in cooperation with the Arkansas Nature Conservancy. Representatives attended the groundbreaking in December along with myself, and RAF Directors Tim Clifford and Steve Johnson.

This new airstrip, informally called Trigger Gap, is situated on one of the most spectacular and scenic bluffs in Arkansas and offers camping, a pilot shelter and trail to the protected, wild and scenic King's River.

As many as nine new airstrips are planned. Just as important, this project will invite owners of private airstrips within the three-state area to participate.

A mobile interactive app is planned to provide aviators with a comprehensive list of airstrips and activities. The pilot will be able to enter aircraft capability, and pilot's level of experience.

These are exciting times for this overall area!

# Idaho Fires, Summer 2015 – Carol Strong, Contributor

RAF members Tom and Carol Strong volunteer at Moose Creek Ranger Station for the month of August each summer. The Ranger Station is located adjacent to Moose Creek airstrip (1U1). Here's how *Pilot Getaways* described the location in its Summer 1999 issue: "Nestled deep within the remote and rugged mountains of Idaho's Selway Bitterroot Wilderness lies a little slice of paradise."

Popular with backcountry pilots, Moose Creek tallies up nearly 50 operations per month.



*Moose Creek airstrip in early August 2015. At right is a similar view from the Ranger Station during the serious 2015 fire season – Carol Strong photos.*



# Arizona's Grapevine preservation project

– Mark Spencer, AZ Liaison and Public Lands Director



For nearly three years of interaction with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) we heard several times from our friends at the Tonto National Forest in central Arizona, "Get the MOU signed." With the MOU signed in early 2015, we began working on our long time hope of gaining USFS approval to perform critical maintenance of the Grapevine Airstrip just 1,400 ft from the shores of Roosevelt Lake, on the Tonto. That approval was given by Forest Supervisor Neil Bosworth in September, and the weeks of weed control and crack clearing began. Grapevine is 40 ft wide by 3,800 ft long with a large apron at both ends, and has seen no asphalt maintenance for three decades.

This work, dubbed the Grapevine Asphalt Preservation Program (GAPP) resulted in an incredible exhibit of collaboration between the RAF, AZ Pilots, and the USFS the weekend of November 13-15.

What stood out most about this effort to preserve this incredible airstrip was how hard everyone worked. Volunteers made incredible meals, kept everyone hydrated, fed material to the machines and swung the wand, squeegeed, and burned weeds.

Equally amazing were the folks from Crafcro, Bryan, Jason, and Robi, and Robert, our driver, from

Otto trucking, giving their time and working side by side with the aviation community and USFS on a project they may never personally benefit from!

We worked six hours on Friday, fourteen on Saturday, and another seven on Sunday, not to mention the many weekends of prep work performed to clear the cracks in the weeks preceding this.

In all, nearly 20,000 pounds of material was applied to the airstrip, and both edges were mowed. All 32 people on Friday; 40-plus people on Saturday; and the remaining dozen working into Sunday were fed by a small crew of kitchen folks lead by Kit Murphy.

I could point out many individuals who have given above and beyond to accomplish this, but each person was truly needed and necessary to accomplish the goal.

Whether cooking, running water to thirsty laborers, mowing, or inching one of the three rigs forward as the crews worked feverishly behind them, each person and job contributed to our success. Many who could not attend gave of their finances, and many

gave in both time and finances.

No doubt, the APA, the RAF, Otto Trucking, Crafcro, and the USFS made a great team! See the video at our facebook site!

Next is fog sealing the entire surface to arrest the sloughing off of loose aggregate that continues to erode from the surface. This is an important additional step in preserving the asphalt, that we hope to accomplish in 2016. Our APA and RAF team will be looking for a professional source to provide the material and volunteers to assist. Watch for dates on this!

... an incredible  
exhibit  
of collaboration  
between the  
RAF, AZ Pilots,  
and the USFS



## RAF now Delta Sky Miles beneficiary

The Recreational Aviation Foundation is now a SkyBonus member. When you book a ticket on Delta, the RAF gets points for your travel. It does NOT affect any of your SkyMiles or other bonus programs. It is purely a benefit to the RAF.

The RAF redeems the points earned through your purchases for benefits on Delta such as travel that we might otherwise have to pay for.

**It's easy to sign up–** When you change your profile on your SkyMiles account it remains until you change it, thus eliminating the need to put the SkyBonus number in each time you book a ticket.

### Instructions:

1. From the homepage, log in to your SkyMiles account;
2. In the top left corner, click MY PROFILE;

3. Open the FLIGHT PREFERENCES located on the top right hand corner.

4. On the BASIC INFO page, enter the SKYBONUS ID as **US0056924** and Save.

The ID will now auto-populate on the PASSENGER INFO page whenever you log in and book a flight.

If you book with a travel agent or a Delta Representative, you will need to provide your SkyBonus number, **US0056924**.

Please ask your travel agent to place the SkyBonus ID in the Tour Code Box.

For tickets purchased through Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz, etc. you'll need to manually enter your SkyBonus number to earn credit. These self-serve discount travel sites do not store the SkyBonus ID.

# Team building – RAF adds State Liaisons

## Brett Wilkes, Georgia

Brett is a Georgia native. School and a job overseas took him away for many years until an opportunity opened up in finance for a major airline back in Georgia about 15 years ago.

As a young teenager he spent weekends pumping gas and sweeping floors at a local airfield in exchange for flight lessons, and soloed on his sixteenth birthday



with his check ride following a year later. He flew anything with wings to build time in those early years of flying.

For the first thirty years Brett has owned several aircraft, some of which he built or rebuilt himself, with the pride of the fleet being a 1947 PA-12 with all the Alaska mods. His two kids are both interested

in aviation, with his 14 year-old daughter about to start glider lessons, and his 10 year-old son flying every chance he gets and helping to build and maintain the family airplanes. Brett's wife has also gotten the bug, and found her niche doing fabric covering. Brett and the kids enjoy Supercruiser camping in south Georgia.

Brett is a member of EAA and AOPA, as well as serving on his county airport authority. Ever since taking the PA-12 on a nine-state tour of the Rockies last year, he's looked for a way to get more involved in promoting backcountry and recreational flying. He looks forward to working with Georgia State Liaison, Eric Davis and together furthering the mission of the RAF.

[bwilkes@theraf.org](mailto:bwilkes@theraf.org)

## Jeff Smith, Kentucky

Jeffrey, "Jeff" grew up in rural New Jersey near the Delaware Water Gap. His father introduced him to Ernie "Pete" Billows and flying at age 15 at Trinca Airport in Northern New Jersey. Jeff soloed on his sixteenth birthday in a J-3 Cub on skis, landing in a cornfield. "After a year of pumping gas and washing airplanes to pay for

lessons, I passed my Private at seventeen in a 50's Cessna 172," he said.

During college in upstate NY, he began competitive sailing and Architecture School. After college, he continued sailing on Chesapeake Bay while starting his Architecture career and family.

He resumed flying in his late thirties after moving from Baltimore to Louisville, KY. He earned his instrument rating in a Piper Warrior.

"We purchased a low-time Arrow and I enjoy flying it around the region. I also spent a great weekend on Lake Champlain earning my seaplane rating," Jeff adds. "I look forward to working with my new friends at the RAF to advocate for Kentucky's small grass strips."

[jsmith@theraf.org](mailto:jsmith@theraf.org)



## Freeman Swank, Ohio

Freeman is as comfortable piloting a John Deere tractor or a motorcycle, as he is flying his Piper Cherokee.

An Ohio native, Freeman started flying in 1971. He was inspired by the Flying Farmers he met while he was in the Farm Science program at Ohio State. He and wife Mary Jane now reside in Wellington, where he spent his career as both a farm implement dealer and educator.

While Freeman's interest in airplanes and motorcycles might lead you to believe he likes speed, the fact that he and Mary Jane once drove a 1950s farm tractor (with an Airstream trailer in-tow) 1,500 miles from



## RAF mourns loss of publisher and pilot John Kounis, California Liaison

John Kounis, 51, editor of *Pilot Getaways*, passed away July 13 at his home in Glendale, CA. He had recently delivered a Cessna 185 from California to Malaysia. John served the RAF in many ways, including his work in data systems and as the RAF Southern California liaison. He was an avid backcountry pilot and with his brother George, flew their Cessna 185 to many RAF events, often

presenting on a variety of subjects including mountain flying.

John had worked for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. His brilliance spanned many areas, and the RAF was a beneficiary of his knowledge.

For George's fascinating detail of John's life, go to: <http://pilotgetaways.com/mag/ja15/RememberingJohn>



# Complete roster of RAF State Liaisons is on RAF website

Ohio to Florida, says low and slow is okay too. "Thirty-one days traveling at nine miles an hour, you sure see a lot of the country," Freeman quips.

The Swanks own a private grass strip near Butler, OH with two miles of river front and access to 18 miles of bike trails and camping. Mary Jane says, "We welcome the public to use it. We've had over 30 airplanes here at one time!" Freeman adds, "We love to have visitors for a fly-in breakfast or for a camping weekend right on our airstrip, or the commercial campground off the end of the strip. Contact Freeman at [fswank@theraf.org](mailto:fswank@theraf.org)

## Steve Lewis, Tennessee

Steve was born and raised in northeast Tennessee. He graduated from East Tennessee State University in 1971. Commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant through ROTC, he went on active duty in the U.S. Army in the early 1970s. His first civilian job was as a flight instructor at Tri-Cities airport, (KTRI) which eventually led to a 30-year career in corporate aviation, including dairy product transport pilot, among other interesting jobs.

As an EMS Bell 407 helicopter pilot, Steve's missions often take him across state lines and through mountainous, rugged terrain. In just twelve minutes, he can reach an emergency site that would have taken an hour by ground. "Response time is so important. If we can get on the ground, get the patient loaded and to the hospital for treatment with angioplasty or clot-busting drugs, we can save a life," Steve said. Buying a Super Cub ten years ago opened the door to backcountry flying. Steve enjoys flying



with friends he met at the [SuperCub.org](http://SuperCub.org) Fly-In in New Holstein, WI. In 2014 he took his 17-year-old grandson and their adventures included landing on sand bars in the Wisconsin River and in a field at a dairy farm.

Steve has also organized Super Cub fly-in's at OA9 for five years. He enjoys the flying, the camaraderie and

meeting friends new and old. "It amazes me how much we have in common and how we all get to know each other. Aviation is the common thread."

"I enjoy promoting the RAF mission and introducing people to recreational flying opportunities in Tennessee," he says. "I'm blessed, in that I'm doing all I ever wanted to do: fly. [slewis@theraf.org](mailto:slewis@theraf.org)

## Jeff Russell, Wisconsin

A lifelong resident of Wisconsin, Jeff Russell grew up in Sheboygan and now resides near Madison, WI. He flies a SuperCub and Cirrus out of the Morey airport in Middleton. "The SuperCub rotates between Bushwheels, skis and floats, and spends at least two weeks a year in the backcountry of Montana and Idaho," he says,

adding, "I look forward to working with the RAF on its mission to promote recreational aviation in Wisconsin."

Young Jeff was exposed to general aviation while flying with his dad in their Cherokee 235. It wasn't until 1998 that circumstances allowed Jeff to take flight lessons and become a pilot himself.

Jeff is the president of Fisher Barton Blades, an American-made lawn mower blade manufacturer with plants in Wisconsin and South Carolina.

When not aviating, Jeff enjoys fly fishing, sailboat racing and bicycling. His girlfriend of 29 years, Rhonda, enjoys their flights into the backcountry and has an interest in learning to fly as well.

To share his passion for aviation, Jeff gives numerous talks about his floatplane adventures to Hudson Bay; and to the backcountry airstrips of the west.

Pictured are Rhonda and Jeff with his SuperCub. [jrussell@theraf.org](mailto:jrussell@theraf.org)

"We're thrilled to add these enthusiastic folks to our group of dedicated volunteers," RAF president John McKenna said.



## RAF mourns loss of Reade Genzlinger, dedicated director

RAF Director and Secretary/Treasurer Reade Genzlinger was killed in an aircraft accident near Alpine, WY in January. Reade's passenger, 17-year-old Kenzie Ruston also lost her life.

Reade leaves behind his wife Lynn, and five children. Lynn and the family kindly suggested memorials to the RAF honoring Reade's passion for its mission, and "his gratitude for the wonderful friends he'd made through his work there."

Kenzie was passionate about flying, and had earned her private license. A high school senior, she was also a world-class jump roper. For more about Kenzie or to memorialize her, click this [GoFundMe](http://GoFundMe) site.

RAF Arkansas Liaison Dave Myrick wrote, "The fact they were doing something they loved does not make the loss any easier. We are a family and that in itself makes this tragedy even more striking and personal."

# Vision of excellence for recreational aviators – RAF Code of Conduct

– RAF Safety and Education Committee, Alan Metzler, Coordinator

– Devin Landry photo.

**T**he Recreational Aviation Foundation offers recommendations to advance flight safety, airmanship, professionalism, consideration and courtesy toward the people and wildlife who share the recreational environment. Each of us is an ambassador to the non-flying public, and to the landowners or managers responsible for the airstrips we enjoy. We want to be the friendliest and most helpful recreational users working with land owners and managers.

Each of us  
is an  
ambassador  
to the non-  
flying public

Significant negotiation and work go into protecting backcountry airstrips and trust is earned through fulfilling our commitments to the land managers and owners. Honoring these agreements can go a long way towards these efforts, and even opening new airstrips. A few rogue pilots can destroy this trust and set our backcountry efforts backwards for years.

This Code of Conduct presents a vision of excellence for recreational aviators. Its principles complement and underscore legal requirements and agreements for land use.

## Pilot

- Make safety your highest priority, acting with responsibility and courtesy.
- Develop the skills necessary for safe backcountry aviation. Use instructors and knowledgeable pilots to seek excellence in airmanship through training and practice.
- Establish and adhere to personal minimums based on objective evaluation of ability.
- Research and practice prudent operating practices for the area and airfield you wish to explore. i.e, reporting points and altitudes.
- Anticipate, recognize, share with passengers, and manage risks using sound principles of aeronautical decision making.

- Be aware and consider all in the flying environment, avoiding operations that may alarm, disturb, or endanger passengers, people or wildlife.



– Mike Sidders photo.

## Aircraft

- Use an aircraft that is capable and maintained for the intended mission.
- Be competent in the use of appropriate technologies for navigation, communication, and emergency rescue.
- Carry redundant transceivers and navigational equipment.
- Equip with proper water, food, clothing, shelter, first aid and tools. Prepare for an extended time on the ground if necessary.
- Secure your aircraft.

## Environment

- Use “Pack it in / Pack it out” and “Leave No Trace” practices.
- Keep your aircraft/seaplane clean of weed traces and seed to prevent the spread of invasive vegetation.
- Recognize and minimize the environmental impact of aircraft operations.
- Go beyond applicable agreements, laws and regulations in being considerate stewards of the environment and others who may be sharing it.
- Act with courtesy to other recreators. Maintain reasonable distance and altitude and reduce your noise signature to a safe minimum.
- Know wildlife refuge boundaries and seasonal areas of wildlife congregation to avoid low level overflights.
- Minimize discharge of fuel and oil during refueling, preflight preparations, servicing and flight operations.
- Avoid very early morning departures unless safety of flight requires a deviation.
- Do not use sensitive backcountry airstrips for training. Stay long enough to enjoy their special recreational benefits.



## Purpose of the RAF Safety and Education committee:

- Highlight practices to support safety and professionalism;
- Promote improved pilot training, airmanship, conduct, personal responsibility, and pilot contribution to the recreational aviation community and society at large;
- Encourage sound judgement and ethical behavior;
- Advance self-regulation through the aviation community as an alternative to government regulation;
- Support improved communications between pilots, regulators, and others in the aviation industry; and
- Promote recreational aviation and make flying a more rewarding, safe and enjoyable experience.



# Backcountry noise study update

University of Montana graduate student Devin Landry is nearing the final stages of his research project into the potential impacts of backcountry aviation on wildlife stress levels.

With help from volunteer RAF pilots, Landry was able to complete a second research season last summer collecting data from backcountry airstrips throughout Montana and Idaho. Upon returning to UM in the fall, Landry turned right around and worked with the RAF to construct an online survey of pilots nationwide.

Responses came pouring in throughout September and October. "I'd like to thank every RAF member who took the time to complete this survey," Landry said. "And a big thanks to all the volunteer pilots who flew us and the equipment into the backcountry over the last two years."

Landry is currently synthesizing field and survey data, and looks forward to sharing the project results with the RAF over the coming months.



## CFI encourages RAF support

Jim Crawford of North Conway, NH is a flight instructor, and he takes no money for the Flight Reviews he gives. Instead, he suggests the pilot make a donation to the RAF. We appreciate Jim's generosity!

*At left: Jim Crawford and Andi Bartlett, RAF supporters.*

## Volunteers bring talent to RAF

**VPs of Appreciation** – Carol "Pinky" Strong is one of the women writing thank you notes to our many RAF friends and supporters, gaining the title "Vice President of Appreciation." Pinky doesn't let vacation get in the way of her task. Here she is writing a dozen notes while on vacation in Hawaii.

**Patricia Tyler** has taken on half the alphabet to help thank everyone who supports the RAF. Pat and her husband, Florida Liaison Jack Tyler, split their time between the Sunshine State and Montana. Their dedication to the RAF is year-round!

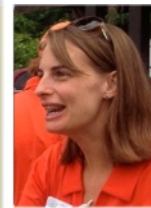
They do such a good job that we have received "thank you" notes for sending our "thank you" notes!

**Data Entry Volunteer** – Sue Mann is a private pilot in Oregon but also splits her time between Canada and Hawaii. When she is not flying her Husky A-1, she is a nurse and commander in the U.S. Navy Reserves. She joined the RAF in order to support backcountry flying and the airports around the country that serve those pilots.

**Social Media Volunteer** – Greg Daughtry lives in Boulder, CO. He is an avid climber, skier, fly fisherman and pilot. Originally from North Carolina, Greg moved west 25 years ago to follow his love of the high mountains and big skies. He got involved with the RAF to help improve access opportunities for aviation users in our public and private lands. He can usually be found pickin' a guitar and singin' to the wolves and willows.

**Graphic Design Volunteer** – Cody Wellons is a private pilot from Atlanta, GA. He's had a lifetime interest in aviation and the outdoors, and he enjoys spending time hiking, camping, snowboarding and cycling. Cody's interest in the outdoors and backcountry flying aligns perfectly with the RAF's mission, and he is excited to create graphics and visuals that will help the organization.

## From RAF Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Chandler



The RAF has been a success because of the passion and dedication of volunteers. We use the words "passion" and "dedication" because RAF volunteers share their time, expertise and talents without any compensation. People behind the scenes write thank you notes, attend meetings, staff booths, cook potatoes, enter data, represent the RAF in their state as well as fulfill many other important functions.

Without this amazing volunteer force, the RAF could not achieve our mission, continue growing as an organization and serve the needs of the recreational aviation community. Thank you to all of our wonderful, amazing, hardworking volunteers!

Would you like to join our team of passionate aviators who work to preserve, maintain and create airstrips for recreational access? We are looking for additional help in the following specific areas:

- State Liaisons
- Thank You Notes
- Real Estate Committee
- Marketing
- Event Planning

Do you have a "hidden talent" or interest not on this list?

Make 2016 the year you get involved with the RAF . . . You *can* make a difference. You can give back. You can learn something new. You can build new relationships. You can strengthen the aviation community. As you consider lending a hand, you should know that while giving of your time, expertise and talents, you can expect something in return. Long time RAF volunteer Debra "Smoky" Folsom says, "helping the RAF, it seems like I always get back more than I give – great new friends, lots of adventures and knowing that I am doing something that makes a difference!"

As your Volunteer Coordinator, the thing I look forward to most is meeting and working with RAF members all across the country.

Please let me know if you are interested in getting more involved.

Thank you,

*Sarah Chandler*  
schandler@theraf.org

# State Reports

## Idaho – Mike Hart

The RAF continues working with the Idaho Aviation Association, Idaho Airstrip Network and agencies like the BLM and U.S. Forest service to support continued access to the many strips in the state. The RAF's efforts in Washington, D.C. securing airstrip maintenance funds for the USFS will definitely have a major positive impact in Idaho!

Last year saw the conclusion of the Nez Perce Forest Management planning process. It is through Forest Plans that policy affecting airstrips is detailed. RAF participation was strongly felt and you can see it in the plan. Fish Lake airstrip (S92) in particular is an excellent example. Maintenance deferred by last year's fire season is slated for this year. The inclusion of this airstrip in the Forest Plan helps secure its continued operation and now there are funds available to make it so.

This year I hope to make headway on the currently closed Big Springs airstrip located near Island Park, ID. We will be working to identify issues that stand in the way of reopening this great recreational strip. We will also continue to support efforts to resolve the status of Mile-Hi, Vines, Dewey Moore, and Simonds, known as the "Big Creek Four" in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.

## Maryland – John Nadeau

In the past, MD recreators of various pursuits kept requesting specific additions to MD's Recreational Use Statutes. The lengthening list of recreational activities apparently included aviation before the RAF began its state-by-state RUS effort to include aviation. Sometime after 2008, the Legislature changed the RUS, replacing the specific list with the broad definition: "Recreational purpose, meaning any recreational pursuit."

Our stance, when explaining this to airstrip owners in MD, is that aviation used to be in the RUS along with the other forms of recreation, and the list was eliminated in favor of a broad definition of recreation. In a legal case, aviation is obviously included in the new broad definition of recreation. So with a level of confidence, we have added Maryland to the RAF's list of "green" states.

## Michigan – Brad Frederick North Fox Island Airstrip (6Y3)

We finished closing the season on North Fox Island airstrip with a recorded total of 27 aircraft and an unofficial total of around 35 aircraft. This does not include all the visits from the core crew that worked on the airstrip through the season. Aircraft from MI, OH, IN, IL, WI, NM and PA via MT stopped in at Michigan's newest public use recreational airport.



This coming season we will be scheduling work parties for cutting brush along the sides of the runway. Check the RAF calendar for dates and alternate weather dates. If you stop in with nothing official going on, please help by bringing a trash bag, walk the beautiful beach, and help by picking up washed up plastic bottles and other trash. If you would then fly the refuse off the island it would be a great help.

2016 6Y3 season looks to be busy as we do continuous improvement through the season.

Look for a 6Y3 Safety Briefing on the RAF website this spring.

We are looking for donations for a second new mower to help cut the runway, as it takes 6 1/2 hrs with one mower. Our goal is \$3,000.

### Michigan RUS:

The RAF along with AOPA continues working with the Michigan Private Airport Owners Assoc. to get "aviation activities" added to Michigan's Recreational Use Statute. With 29 states having accomplished this, one would think it would be an easy slam dunk. Not so. The Trial Lawyers are putting up a fierce battle against it in their claims to the Legislature. We have made headway last session and now will continue the battle into the 2016 session.

## Montana – Ron Normandeau

Winter has for all intents and purposes, shut down backcountry visits, except for ski planes. There is plenty to keep us busy, anyway, with five forests

combined into three and all involved in forest planning.

The Flathead Nat'l Forest is proposing their EIS will be released for public comment in April: The Helena/Lewis and Clark NF has finished its public meetings and is engaged in the preparation of the "Proposed Action" document which should be out for public comment this spring; The Custer/Gallatin NF is starting the planning process this month (January) and is in the process of conducting the Forest Assessment. Public meetings are expected this summer, fire season permitting.

A very important part of these Plans will be the Grizzly Bear Amendment. All these forests contain large areas of grizzly bear habitat, and there are airstrips in bear country. The grizzly bear, under protection of the Endangered Species Act, has recovered to the point of delisting as an endangered species. To accomplish the amendment, the RAF and Montana Pilots Assoc. made comments of record. **Cow Creek airstrip, Missouri Breaks** suffered vehicle damage over the years.



The MPA, RAF and BLM partnered together to erect a fence and signage at the airstrip with the goal of eliminating this type of damage.

In November, volunteers from the RAF and MPA graded the strip. Pete Smith, MPA member and RAF BLM Liaison, reported that on Dec. 5, he and the crew finished the east end fence of 13 sections, and that they will resume working when materials arrive for the west end. It was agreed among the partners to close the strip to allow for revegetation until it is determined that landing on the strip won't cause damage. Watch for notices of re-opening mid-summer 2016.

## Victory in New Hampshire–

David DeVries, president of the New Hampshire Pilot Assoc: sent this:



# State Reports

"Aviation in New Hampshire scores a victory! The final ruling has been posted and the petition to close Bellamy River in Dover, NH has been denied! Thank you to all who helped in the cause!"

"Bob Burley provided background data on wildlife and noise. We were joined by one of our dedicated RAF members from the SPA, Steve Williams, in the fight."

## New Mexico – Larry Filener

Fall is a beautiful time to fly here in NM. In August, the annual Mystic Bluffs fly-in was held and was a tremendous success. Near Ramah, NM it's surrounded by the red bluffs and sandstone, and is truly a magical spot. To make it even more special, the town of Ramah shows up with the most incredible breakfast you can



imagine, including green chile breakfast burritos and blueberry French toast.

This year we had 25 aircraft from as far away as Nebraska and Texas visiting. We were especially pleased to have AOPA representative Yasmina Platt and her husband attend. See her tremendous blog [HERE](#):

We also have had several exciting developments with privately owned airstrips. Early in the summer, several members traveled to Taos, NM to assist in opening a new private strip near the Rio Grande gorge. It's a beautiful spot located within walking distance of the Rio Grande gorge. NMPA and RAF are negotiating with the owner for limited access and hope to have a fly-in there this summer.

Our members also traveled to Santa Rosa, NM and commenced negotiations with a private land owner to reopen an airstrip near the Pecos River. The airstrip is very remote and beautiful. We will keep our members updated as discussions progress.

## Vermont – Bob Burley

The Vermont truth is that backcountry aviation happens safely right here, in all seasons.

Vermont and Northern New England have some of the most beautiful and accessible backcountry spots in the U.S. Mountain flying, wilderness flying, plains flying, island hopping and oceans all well within a day's range. Our advantage is shorter distances compared to western states while the vertical rise of peaks is virtually the same. We have more lakes and streams and our backcountry is green in season and white in winter. Grass, gravel, ice, snow and water are all possible operating environments in the backcountry. Pavement to pavement is a limited flying existence!



Hiking, birding, hunting, fishing, camping, swimming and all manner of outdoor activities are at our wingtips for a minimal expense, so backcountry flying is the obvious addition to our skill set.

Vermont has over 80 airstrips. Roughly ten are supported by Vermont AOT Aviation. The other 70 are private, mostly permission only.

In 2012, due to RAF efforts, Vermont improved its Recreational Use Statute, specifically indemnifying private landowners from aviation related liability. Land owners now are more willing to permit access with permission.

Interested? We have developed guidelines for very low impact backcountry access.

**RULE 1:** Get permission first.

**RULE 2:** Leave it better than you found it.

Things we've done this year include:

- Landed on ice near a small General Store for smoked sausages
- Flown to apple orchards for the fall harvest and some great pies and jams
- Fished for fresh dinner trout
- Watched moose, deer, eagles, falcons and other wildlife in their habitat
- Flown to remote farmers markets in the Adirondacks
- Attended an American-Canadian ice fly-in (40 aircraft) on the ice
- Swimming and camping near cascading streams.

## USFS aviation concerns in Montana – Ron Normandeau

The Helena and Lewis and Clark Nat'l Forests have combined into the Helena/Lewis and Clark (HLC) and is now engaged in Forest Resource Planning activities. Over the past months the USFS has held public meetings in Lewistown, Stanford, White Sulphur Springs, Townsend, Great Falls, Helena, Lincoln, Augusta, Choteau and Browning.

The MPA and RAF have worked closely with the HLC National Forest. The most notable accomplishment was the construction of Russian Flat airstrip, the first new airstrip on USFS lands in forty years.

The HLC Forest documents include aviation which allows us to approach them about airstrips in Inventoried Roadless Areas, which has been a stumbling block in the past.

Another issue concerning aviation is the condition of Benchmark (3U7) airstrip. At these meetings, the USFS expressed a desire to close it for safety reasons.

The airstrip is a 6,000-foot asphalt runway built in the 1960s. The surface is deteriorating and needs some sort of treatment. The USFS has determined there are 48,000 feet of cracks in need of repair.

The RAF is looking into several options to solve the problem. The USFS is thinking of approaching the military for help, as they expressed a desire to use the airstrip for training. The MPA and RAF have had discussions on the options of grinding the surface and removing it or doing crack repair. Both will be very expensive given the remote location and distance to move equipment and material.

Another round of public meetings will take place in January and February and scoping on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will take place in the spring and summer of 2016.

– Ron Normandeau, Chairman,  
MPA Backcountry Airstrip  
Committee; RAF Montana Liaison:  
[rnormandeau@theraf.org](mailto:rnormandeau@theraf.org)



# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

1711 West College St., Bozeman, MT 59715

406-582-1RAF (1723)

[www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org)

GROWING  
IN  
STRENGTH

SINCE 2003

*The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, maintains  
and creates airstrips for recreational access.*

## IN THIS ISSUE—

- RAF secures funds for USFS airstrip maintenance
- Ozark Airfield Project launched
- Cooperation leads to major upgrade on Arizona airstrip
- Florida's Arcadia goes all out for RAF
- 30 states now include aviation in Recreation law
- Meet four new State Liaisons
- RAF wildlife/noise study in progress



*Relaxing around Arcadia's new campground fire pit – Jack Tyler photo.*

The Recreational Aviation Foundation was formed in 2003 by a group of pilots in response to diminishing backcountry aviation destinations. Supporters from all 50 states and the GA and commercial aviation industry have joined in. To become a supporter of this important effort, use the secure "Donate now" button at [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org) or use the form below.

## YES! Count me in!

Membership Level:

Individual: ☐ Donor (\$50) ☐ Supporting (\$100) ☐ Sustaining (\$250) ☐ Benefactor (\$500) ☐ Heritage (\$1000)

Please make your check payable to: The Recreational Aviation Foundation.

Mail to: 1711 West College Street • Bozeman, MT 59715

For credit card donations go online to [www.TheRAFor.org](http://www.TheRAFor.org) or call us at 406.582.1723

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in: ☐ Backcountry flying & Camping ☐ Fly-Ins Volunteering for: ☐ Build/maintain airstrips ☐ Gov't affairs ☐ State Liaison

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

