



## Colorado –

### Del Norte pilot shelter welcomes travelers

Thanks to a \$30,000 grant from the RAF, a new pilot shelter is open for use at Astronaut Kent Rominger Airport (KRCV) in Del Norte, Colorado. The project was coordinated and overseen by RAF Colorado Liaison Tom Haefeli.

The Airport Advisory Board had developed an idea for a multi-use facility that would be easy to maintain and could be of benefit to the local community as well. With the cornerstone RAF grant, the project came to fruition with additional \$5,500 in cash donations, \$18,200 in donated labor, supplies, heavy equipment use and operation from various contractors involved. Rio

Grande County supplied the balance of funding from its Airport Fund. Rio Grande County was a key partner for the project, as well. “It was truly a community project,” Haefeli said. *Continued, page 4*



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- RAF welcomes two board members
- Nat'l Forest keeps seven airstrips
- Chairman's message
- Ryan Field developments
- USFS awarded \$750,000
- RAF grants advance the mission
- Meet seven new RAF Liaisons
- RAF Ambassador roster grows
- Airfield.Guide adds features, places
- RAF at 2020 AOPA Fly-ins
- RAF at regional aviation events
- RAF Online Store now open

### US Forest Plan includes aviation, airstrips

RAF Montana Liaison Ron Normandeau reports that the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest has released its draft management plan. The four million acre Forest spreads throughout beautiful landscapes in north-central Idaho, that include the North Fork of the Clearwater, the Lochsa, and Selway Rivers and is bordered on the south by the Salmon River.

Airstrips on the Forest are Cayuse, Fish Lake, Moose Creek, Shearer, Orogrande, Dixie, and Wilson Bar.

Normandeau identified the relevant statement in the plan:

*Infrastructure – Airstrips serve the Nez*

*Perce-Clearwater land management and public recreation opportunities. The seven existing public backcountry airstrips for airplane and helicopter access to the Nez Perce-Clearwater's backcountry maintain historical site conditions to provide safe and functioning airstrips for backcountry access.*

The RAF thanks all who took time to comment, and to attend planning meetings throughout the lengthy public planning process.

RAF Idaho Liaison Mike Hart added, “The Nez Perce is not only a success story [about] aviation making it into the plan, I

think the impression we made as collaborators, partners and interested civic minded folks left an indelible impression on the staff and other participants as well.”



*Moose Creek, ID – Bill McGlynn photo.*

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Continued, page 3

## It takes ALL of us

– RAF Chairman John McKenna

The excitement for where we  
are, and what we might yet ac-  
complish is not slowing down.

– RAF Chairman John McKenna



**P**unxsutawney Phil has spoken for 2020. Based on his indisputable forecast, we are going to be in the backcountry sooner rather than later, and your RAF has been busy getting ready.

So what have we been up to? The RAF board just finished its annual face-to-face meeting here in Montana, and I can tell you that this group of people only has one thing in mind: *How do we continue to be a positive influence on recreational and backcountry aviation?*

We do it by partnering with our friends across the aviation spectrum as well as those not necessarily considered aviation-centric organizations. BTW . . . I hope you saw the shout out that Mark Baker of AOPA gave the RAF in his President's column in February's *AOPA Pilot*.

AOPA and others with a strong national voice keep the broader aviation community aware of what we are all about. At the local level, it is your state pilot associations, community groups, type-clubs and EAA chapters that keep us involved. Just this past year we participated in local projects in Colorado, Vermont, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oregon, Montana, Michigan, New Hampshire, Florida, and New Mexico to name just a few. Through relationships we've nurtured, the RAF has been able to do so much.

Enthusiastic passion is the phrase that comes to mind when I try to describe the RAF – from your volunteer board members, to the volunteers who provide the boots on the ground. The excitement for where we are, and what we might yet accomplish is not slowing down. We are all part of a *growing* aviation organization, and in today's world. . . well, that says a lot. Quoting Mr. Baker, "Now, they [the RAF] have a following of adventure-seeking pilots who showcase the fun and exhilaration of GA flying."

Folks continue to respond generously to our year-end appeal for financial support. However, there is still time for those that have yet to help. What, where, or how your dollars are used is a question we are happy to answer. Please feel free to call on myself, any of the directors, or your state liaison. Stop by and visit with us in person at any of the many aviation events we are taking part in this year. Most importantly is for you to know your contribution is valuable. If you cherish the special places we are trying to protect, please don't just assume someone else will do it for us. It takes ALL of us.

So, with that early Spring on the way, I hope you are brushing up on your skills and getting ready to join us in the backcountry. **RAF**

*John's photo owes thanks to Punxsutawney Groundhog Club  
and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.*

## RAF welcomes two board members

### Jeff Russell, Liaison to Director

A lifelong resident of Wisconsin, Jeff Russell began as that state's RAF Liaison in 2015 and was recruited to the board in August, 2019. He flies a Super-Cub that rotates between Bushwheels, skis, and floats; and a Cirrus out of the Morey airport in Middleton. Russell is the president of Fisher Barton Blades, an American-made lawn mower blade manufacturer with plants in Wisconsin and South Carolina.



"My four years' experience as a state liaison was valuable and really helped me understand this great organization and the impact it has had to enhance and improve access for recreational aviation," he said. Russell recently completed improvements to northern Wisconsin's Cornucopia airport with its many recreational benefits near the shore of Lake Superior.

"We're thrilled to add Jeff and his enthusiasm to our board of dedicated volunteers," RAF chairman John McKenna said. Jeff and Rhonda, his girlfriend of 30 years, reside near Madison.

### Bill Brine brings business experience

Long-time RAF member Bill Brine has stepped up to serve on the all-volunteer RAF Board of Directors. Cessna seems to have always been part of Brine's life. The family plane was a tool to support the family businesses. At first, Brine learned to fly for practical purposes for business commuting.



A glider ride 30 years ago changed his life. "Discovering that soaring is about the journey, not the destination, opened my eyes to an entire new world of aviation," he says. Flying became a passion and "I migrated back to power flight simply for the joy of flying."

Brine's business career began in a family enterprise, Brine Inc. In 1986 he left to start the sports equipment brand, Cascade. As Founder and CEO, he led the start-up to become a dominant player in the lacrosse equipment market, exiting in 2012 after its acquisition by Bauer. Brine holds over 30 patents and has a passion for finding elegant solutions to challenges.

A native New Englander with two grown children, Bill and his wife, Joanne, live on Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts and enjoy flying their Cessna Skywagon.

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*The RAF also enlists Ambassadors to represent the RAF at events. See current list on page 8.*

*Front page flag photo: Chamberlain, ID  
by 2019 RAF photo contest entrant Missy Martin.*

## RAF efforts secure \$750,000— Congress funds USFS airstrip maintenance

The RAF is pleased to announce that for the third consecutive year, language was included in the Omnibus Bill and signed by the president that allocates \$750,000 for maintenance on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) airstrips. “The time we spent meeting Committee members and staff, and our formal testimony did some good,” RAF Chairman John McKenna said, adding, “This goes a long way toward advancing the RAF mission.”

The initial allocation has turned into an annual appropriation and has engendered a lasting partnership from the top offices to the ground level of the Forest Service. “This money enables the Forest Service to engage in the kind of maintenance on airstrips that we could only dream of...including cutting trees and brush, establishing new drainages, roll-

ing and grading, and even returning an airstrip to its original length.” RAF President Bill McGlynn said.

The RAF made the point that backcountry airstrips are valuable and deserve funds that the USFS allocates to maintain recreational assets.

“We’ve proven that local aviation folks can cooperate to leverage Forest Service funds and personnel and accomplish more,” McKenna said.

How will implementation begin? Forest Supervisors will ask their teams in the field to prioritize maintenance needs.

“Our job will be to encourage aviation organizations who we partner with to begin identifying projects that will benefit backcountry aviation assets and experiences,” McKenna added.

### Del Norte, from front page

The facility offers WiFi, refrigerator, stove and restroom with shower. Campsites are being prepared adjacent to the pilot shelter. “This will allow airplane campers, mountain bikers, and pilots a place to refuel, refresh and continue great recreational adventures,” he said. The airport is three miles north of Del Norte, central to many Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico airstrips. “This shelter will also be a great resource for cross country travelers as well,” he added. Haefeli invites pilots to come and enjoy the new facility while exploring the many recreational opportunities in the region, and announced that there will be a grand opening this summer.



Right: Note left at Del Norte pilot shelter from grateful visitor.

## California – National Park Service legalizes Chicken Strip

After ten years of cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), the RAF is pleased to announce that Saline Valley’s “Chicken Strip” in Death Valley National Park was officially authorized on August 19. The



Federal Register now states, “Chicken Strip has been in continuous use for decades, pre-dating the management of the Area by the NPS. This rule will formalize its continued operation as a backcountry airstrip.”

“This is about what we do to fulfill our mission,” RAF board chairman John McKenna said. “The major credit for this accomplishment goes to everyone who got involved, wrote letters, and remained engaged to save and preserve an airstrip.”

“It’s official now,” said RAF California Liaison Rick Lach, who organizes the seasonal volunteer work parties at the strip, and took the lead on communicating with the NPS. “The aviation community demonstrat-

ed its sincere desire to maintain access at Chicken Strip with volunteer labor and input during the public comment period.” Lach said his experience with Park personnel was amicable throughout the lengthy process.

The RAF and the NPS have been successfully partnering through a Memorandum of Understanding to make Chicken Strip safe and available to the aviation community. The MOU allows the RAF to maintain Chicken Strip under NPS supervision at no cost to taxpayers.

Left to right: CA Liaison Rick Lach, RAF Member Janette Riley, Death Valley National Park Superintendent Mike Reynolds, RAF ID Liaison Tim Riley.

## “It’s why you learned to fly”

### Family enjoys access to Wilderness by air



Backcountry airstrips serve as trailheads—jumping off points for adventures. The RAF was founded over 16 years ago to preserve backcountry airstrips, ensuring low-impact aviation access now and for future generations.

RAF Pennsylvania Liaison Andy Turner flew his two boys out to Montana’s Benchmark airstrip, (3U7) on the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The Turners used the airstrip and associated campground to stage a four day, 44-mile hike into what locals fondly call “the Bob” and adjacent Scapegoat Wilderness Area. “We climbed peaks along the Continental Divide, fished the streams, and saw country of spellbinding beauty,” Turner said. “The boys are already planning a return for summer 2020,” he said, and they can testify that backcountry airstrips like Benchmark provide access that makes wilderness travels like this possible.



## RAF board meets, elects 2020 leadership

The RAF Board of Directors began its face-to-face meeting in Bozeman, MT January 24-25 by acknowledging Jack and Patricia Tyler’s eight years of dedication. Tylers met the RAF at Sun ‘n Fun 2012. They were so willing to share the mission that Jack became a Florida liaison, and Patricia took on VP of Appreciation tasks. Jack eventually served as vice president of the RAF board.

“Jack and Patricia have been appreciated and their contributions will be felt for a good long time,” RAF Chairman John McKenna said.

The board selected its 2020 leadership with Bill McGlynn of Leavenworth, WA continuing as president; Mike Perkins of Bigfork, MT will now serve a combined role as secretary/treasurer, and John McKenna of Bozeman will continue as chairman.

RAF Director Todd Simmons was elected RAF board vice president. Simmons brings a wealth of experience as he is the President of Customer Experience of Cirrus Aircraft, responsible for sales, marketing,

personalization, delivery, service and support, flight training, flight operations and the opening of the Vision Center in Knoxville, TN. He is also an active backcountry pilot and noted spokesman.

The board made commitments to participate in many aviation events across the country, tapping volunteers to staff booths and displays. *See related storied, below and page 11.*

They reviewed the vision for the RAF property at Ryan Field, (2MT1) in Northwest Montana. Structures were removed in November, with the goal of creating a truly backcountry destination, aesthetically fitting with its setting near Glacier National Park. Ongoing changes include simplification and beautification of the mountain property. Director Peter Burwell donated a 2017 John Deere 4WD tractor with seven-foot mower deck. The RAF thanks all the volunteers who, over the years have given their time, expertise, and equipment toward improving this signature property.

## RAF at AOPA Fly-Ins, starting with San Marcos, Texas



This year’s Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) two-day events kick off May 29-30 in San Marcos, TX (KHVI), and the RAF will be there! This is a special event combined with “Go Wheels Up! Texas”. The exciting weekend includes all the popular AOPA Fly-In programming, along with an airshow, concert series, and car show.

Next, AOPA heads out west to Casper, WY (KCPR), June 19-20. The RAF will be present there as well. AOPA returns east to Rochester, NY (KROC) on September 11-12.

AOPA’s fly-ins offer special meals, in-depth workshops, Town Hall

meetings and vast and memorable static displays. Workshops in the past have included ground school for IFR proficiency; VFR cross-country flight; owner-performed maintenance; and mountain flying techniques and survival skills. AOPA’s website says these “proved wildly popular with members,” and will be offered in these 2020 fly-ins.

AOPA’s website concludes, “And, as always, we are working hard to create new and exciting opportunities for pilots of all levels to improve and expand their skills.” For more details, see the RAF Events Calendar at [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org) or [www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org).

## Team Building – RAF adds seven State Liaisons



### Dan Barnhill, Alabama

Dan's dad flew an Aeronca Champ off the grass strip on the family farm in south Alabama. Dan graduated in 1996 from Auburn with a Mechanical Engineering degree and worked in the chemical industry for about ten years. He transitioned to outside sales for an equipment company, and now serves the chemical, pulp/paper, power, and other industrial manufacturers.

A few years ago, Dan's father purchased a different Champ and they flew it together. "It definitely got me hooked," he says. Dan earned his private pilot license in 2015. They upgraded to a 7GAA Citabria. "Since then I have enjoyed weekly sunset and sunrise cruises, camping and vacation trips," Dan says. "One of my highlight trips was flying to Oshkosh with my dad and landing on the green dot at Witman Field." Dan, the new RAF Alabama Liaison, is eager to explore possibilities to fulfill the RAF mission in The Cotton State.



### Todd Banks, Kansas

Todd, a Wichita native, began flying in high school. After taking a 30 year break to raise kids and see them off to college, flying again topped his to-do list. He started re-learning tailwheel skills after acquiring a yellow Cub.

While working on a timber project near Beaver Lake in Arkansas, it occurred to him during the 230-mile drive south, "Why not make a backcountry strip and commute from home in Kansas City with the Cub?"

One project led to another, and there are now four strips at Banks Ranch, 62AR, described in Airfield.Guide as "a fantastic complex of four airstrips."

Semi-retired from an investment management and engineering career, Todd enjoys backcountry adventures and keeps farming and ranching. Eager to continue the RAF's mission, he hopes to get Kansas on the map with new recreational airstrips to rival those in Arkansas.



### Julian Pridmore-Brown, Nevada

Julian has early memories of landing a Bonanza with his father in a cow pasture on the central California coast.

Flying has been in his blood from a young age. He learned to fly at the airport at University of California, Davis while completing a degree in Environmental Planning and Management. After graduating, he started to fly for a living.

After instructing in Asia, Julian returned to California, and became an airline pilot during what would become a turbulent time for the industry. After September 11, 2001, he returned to flying smaller airplanes as an air ambulance pilot in eastern Oregon and flying firefighters around the country in a Boeing 737.

Julian is with Southwest Airlines, and flies his Maule around looking for new adventures. Adding the role of RAF Nevada Liaison, he looks forward to the adventures that will bring.



### Tim Riley, Idaho

A native of upstate New York, Tim's

introduction to aviation was in a Beaver on floats in the Adirondacks. He has lived around the world during his career in the data networking and security industry.

Tim has flown foot launched gliders thousands of miles across the Western US. As the kids grew, Tim switched to airplanes to share the joy of flying with his family, accumulating over 30 years of flying experience. "From Baja to the Florida Everglades, recreational aviation is an incredible way to see the country," he says. Tim has owned

a flight school and maintenance shop, providing flight instruction, and aircraft sales.

Tim's wife Janette is also a pilot and they are based in Driggs, Idaho, where he serves on the airport board. "By far, over the years, the best thing about flying has been the incredible number of kind and generous people we've met," Tim says, adding, "The RAF is the epitome of this flying and family spirit. It is a privilege to work with such a group on preserving access for everyone to enjoy."

He joins RAF Idaho Liaison Mike Hart.

## State Liaisons serve on a volunteer basis

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



**Tres Clinton, Texas**

Tres is a proud graduate of the University of Oklahoma, earning his B.S. in Aviation Management. He began flying in 2004, with the goal of becoming an airline pilot. “Landing a Super Cub for the first time, my path was altered,” he says.

Owner of C3 Air flight school in Burnet, TX, Tres instructs for tailwheel and seaplane endorsements in partnership with Promark Aviation and Tac Aero. “I enjoy working with people who share a passion for stick and rudder flying,” he says.

Already an enthusiast of recreation and aviation, the RAF was a natural fit for Tres. He’s also a member of AOPA, the Society of Aviation Flight Educators (SAFE), and Seaplane Pilot Association (SPA).

Tres and his family live in the Texas Hill Country town of Burnet. There he enjoys giving his wife Caitly and his two children rides in the “Yellow Airplane.” Tres works primarily from the Burnet Airport (KBMQ), 44 nm northwest of Austin International.



**Wendy Lessig, Utah**

Wendy joins Liaison Wayne Loeber in advancing the RAF mission in Utah. Just three months after her first flight in a single engine airplane, she’d earned her private pilot license and has earned more ratings along the way.

After moving to Utah, Wendy took her biennial flight review in a SuperCub and knew that she needed one of her own. “In 2005, I flew my Piper PA-12 to Idaho for my first backcountry fly-in.” she says. “I especially enjoy introducing others to backcountry aviation,” she adds.

Wendy continues to hone her backcountry flying skills, flying across the lower 48 states and even to Baja. Always an eager volunteer, Wendy works hard at work parties and knows the importance of commenting on government actions affecting airstrips. “Now that I’m retired I’m excited to step up to the challenge and opportunity to serve as the RAF Utah state liaison,” she says.



**Evan Davis, West Virginia**

Evan got some actual stick time at about age 12, “which sunk the hook deep,” he says. Evan began flight training in 2013, “and the real adventuring began.”

Throughout his twenties, he worked as a forester in West Virginia, groundwork for his position as a Land Man for an oil and gas operator in West Virginia.

Now Evan flies a 1957 Cessna 182A, having landed in 26 states and counting. He helped at the 2017 Ryan Field work party, “and there, I felt a calling to do more with the RAF,” he said.

He often works on his own airstrip, Checkpoint Charlie, in Lowell, Ohio; or his business “Off Airport Gear”, making clothing, producing videos, photography, and logos for aviation related businesses.

“West Virginia is under-represented as a recreational aviation state,” he says. “There are tremendous opportunities here. ‘West By God Virginia’ is an outdoorsman’s paradise.”

## What does an RAF State Liaison do?

All RAF State Liaisons serve on a volunteer basis and work under the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator. Liaisons further RAF goals by providing expertise, support, labor, and encouragement to individuals and coordinating with state aviation and pilot organizations. The Liaison is a resource for private landowners. On public lands, they take part in scoping and commenting during management planning.

They identify projects and may apply for RAF grants, and organize volunteers to accomplish tasks to preserve, maintain, and create air-

strips for recreational access. Part of the state liaison’s task is identifying and researching airfields to be included in the Airfield.Guide.

The Liaison publicizes RAF activities, projects and accomplishments to pilot groups, cooperative groups, and state and federal lawmakers. They provide reports for the RAF website and newsletter.

For a complete job description, follow the link at [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org) or contact Erin White, RAF Volunteer Coordinator, 970-209-5980, [ewhite@theraf.org](mailto:ewhite@theraf.org)



## The Ambassador Experience

– Dave Warner, Illinois

As an RAF Ambassador I am more aware of fun places to fly, and it is a joy to share that knowledge with other people.

Southern Illinois has beautiful hills, forests, cliffs, wilderness areas, trails, waterfalls, and wetlands. Along with Illinois Liaison Mike Purpura, I am working to open some private airstrips for public use to improve access to recreational opportunities here.

You can find me at aviation events, wearing the orange shirt and talking up the RAF!

## RAF Ambassador Team

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

Arkansas	Donna Perkins	Kansas	Bruce Latvala
Arkansas	Presley Melton	Maine	Jeremy Harmon
Arizona	Jeffrey Iorio	Michigan	John Riordan
California	Katerina Barilov	Minnesota	Paul Noskowiak
Colorado	Michael Langersmith	Missouri	Jim Dickerson
Colorado	Alex Ruehle	Missouri	Sarah Dickerson
Colorado	Sam Chambers	Nebraska	Mark Farrell
CO	Bill Murrish	Nevada	Fred Williams
Connecticut	Greg Delp	New Mexico	Larry Filener
Florida	Debra Folsom	New York	Bob Anderson
Florida	Amrat Chugani	North Dakota	Jeff Faught
Florida	Wes Whitley	ND and MN	Rick Mercil
Florida	John Hall	Oregon	Alan Cossitt
Florida	Joe DeLeon	Tennessee	Cal Scholten
Florida	Lynn Gardner	Texas	Mike Hergenrather
Georgia	Eric Davis	TX and MT	Steve Maus
Georgia	Brian Unrein	Wisconsin	Charlie Miller
Idaho	Andrew Simmons	Wisconsin	Bill Mecozzi
Illinois	David Warner	Wisconsin	Austin Levin
Iowa	Ken Warren	West Virginia	Jack Soronen

## How RAF grants work

The RAF is primarily volunteer-driven, meaning your donations go directly toward on-the-ground projects that further the RAF mission to preserve, maintain, and create airstrips for recreational access.

Volunteer RAF state liaisons – usually in cooperation with a state’s aviation or pilot organization – identify where an airstrip project will improve safety, add amenities, or enhance access to recreational opportunities. They apply to the RAF grant committee, whose members review each application for relevance to the RAF mission. Applications come in from all over the country, and the review committee takes great care to place dollars

where they’ll do the most good. Once the grant is awarded, projects are scheduled and the teamwork begins.

Most projects involve all volunteer labor, and donated or discounted materials and equipment usage. Occasionally, products or services must be purchased, but the emphasis is always on maximizing donors’ contributions to deliver the best value on these tangible improvements.

This newsletter outlines a few of the current projects supported with RAF grants in Colorado, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Georgia and New Hampshire.



## *Airfield.Guide adds more destinations, features*

are being added frequently, and once you register, you’ll receive invitations to explore the new listings. You’ll find information like lat/long, elevation, ownership, usage, 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. Listings include photos and 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.

See Airfield.Guide to register, and begin planning your next adventure — brought to you by the RAF in association with Tailwind Aviation Foundation.



## Illinois –

### Havana Regional is four season destination

Since 2015, the RAF has made efforts to bring more recreational aviation activities to Havana Regional Airport, (9I0). Thanks to RAF Liaison Mike Purpura, a dedicated group of volunteers, and the Mayor of Havana, several important hurdles were overcome and the results have been positive.

With the help of an RAF grant, and substantial investment by the Havana Airport Authority and local EAA Chapter 1420, airport and RAF volunteers are improving the facilities at Havana Regional for a comfortable year-round camping experience. They are adding shower facilities, picnic pavilion and fire pit to the existing pilot lounge with kitchen and restrooms. A June completion is planned.

The Airport Board has allocated \$10,160 toward these projects, and the EAA Chapter has pledged \$1,500. One EAA member prepares a monthly hamburger lunch with profits going to the project. One EAA member donated \$9,250 worth of construction equipment use and labor. An anonymous donor pledged \$2,600.

Havana is a 2,200-ft grass airstrip in a small town located on the Illinois River, surrounded by abundant wildlife and archeologi-

cal remains from the early Mississippian culture. Havana’s unobstructed approaches make an ideal training ground for pilots new to turf. Although Havana is an easy day trip from Chicago or St. Louis, “Havana is away from city lights and has a spectacular night sky,” Purpura says.

“Our annual Stargazing event brings more than 50 students and professors from the University of Illinois, as well as dozens of airplanes, and hundreds of local residents for this special night,” Purpura added. Overnighters enjoy the EAA pancake breakfast. The first first Migratory Bird Fly-in in 2017 brought 15 airplanes and 29 pilots and friends. Attendees were treated to a tour of the Emiquon wildlife refuge, ate lunch in town, and everyone was home before sunset. This is an on-going annual event that continues to attract pilots and friends from a multi-state area. See [Airfield.Guide](#) for more detail.



## New Mexico –

### Negrito gets sanitary vault toilet

Ron Keller, RAF New Mexico liaison took the lead on a project to install a vault toilet at Negrito in cooperation with New Mexico Pilots Association, NMPA. Negrito, (0NM7) is a 7,500-ft U.S. Forest Service airstrip at an elevation of 8,143. “Over the years, together we have cleared aircraft parking areas, installed tie-downs, installed a windsock, and fire ring,” Keller said.

NMPA paid to load the two-piece structure at the Reserve Ranger District Office, haul and place it at Negrito, no small task. They repaired, painted, and cleaned it. In addition, NMPA paid for the concrete pad to comply with ADA requirements.

An RAF grant will cover the cost cleaning supplies, and annual pumping, which Keller will oversee.

“This facility will enhance the airstrip and proclaim loudly that RAF truly is a champion of recreational airstrips,” Keller said. The RAF thanks each NMPA volunteer, and Gila National Forest Reserve District Ranger John Pierson, for supporting multiple work parties that have improved Negrito. See [Airfield.Guide](#) for more detail.



## Wisconsin –

### Update on Cornucopia amenities

RAF Director Jeff Russell coordinated the improvements at Cornucopia airstrip, (WI23) while serving as Wisconsin Liaison. Motivated by community support and the recreational opportunities in the vicinity, Russell laid out the first phase of improvements which included construction of a pilot shelter and bicycles for use. The next phase may include brush clearing, more camping areas and possi-

bly lengthening the runway, leading to an FAA inspection to allow the airstrip to change to “public” use status. At this time, permission is required from the City of Cornucopia prior to landing. See [Airfield.Guide](#) for more detail.



## Michigan – North Fox Island

Michigan Liaison Brad Frederick was awarded an RAF grant to purchase a stump grinder for North Fox Island airstrip, (6Y3) that lies on an uninhabited wooded island in Lake Michigan, just 24 nm northwest of Charlevoix. See Airfield.Guide for details.

“I believe that North Fox Island is now one of the RAF’s top ten destinations,” Frederick said, citing records that indicate well over 500 planes have used the airstrip so far.

Many volunteers have helped maintain the airstrip, and Frederick acknowledged key volunteers RAF member Jerry Ness, who mows, maintains trails, fixed the mowers, transports and donates mower fuel, built the work/tool shed and the firewood lean-to; and RAF member George Stevens who cuts brush, trees and grass, flew out the porta-john and kayaks, and built all the picnic tables.

*Below: Morning on North Fox Island, MI –  
Oliver Reik photo.*



## Georgia– Creighton Island gets WX station

Georgia RAF Ambassador Eric Davis has taken the lead initiating further improvements on Creighton Island.

“I can attest to the diversity of weather relative to the nearest reporting stations,” he said. Thus, his desire to establish accurate localized weather. With no electricity on the island, his design included solar panels, charging controllers, and “enough battery storage to ensure continuous operation for at least a week,” he added.

Eric was helped by his father Gary, RAF Florida Ambassador Joe Deleon, RAF Georgia Ambassador Brian Unrein, and other volunteers. They cleared trees that were encroaching into the runway, and painted palm stumps to create a visual run-

way side markings.

Davis envisions extending WiFi service to the lodging on the island, and possibly installing runway webcams. Watch for future accomplishments at this interesting destination. There are three cabins, each

with six beds; first come – first served; unlimited tent spots, meal pavilion, hot showers, potable water, and fire ring.

NOTE: No landings are authorized outside of scheduled events unless you have spoken with owner Frank

Williams at 912-269-5194. Contact him 24 hours prior to arrival to obtain a runway report as a safety requirement. All pilots must review the airport briefing before operating on this field. See Airfield.Guide for briefing and more details.



## Minnesota – Bowstring Campground update

RAF Minnesota Liaison Kurt Pennuto reports that the project to install campsites, fire rings and a pit toilet at Bowstring airport, (9Y0) is complete. The overall objective was to demonstrate a commitment and to show support for an airport that was on the verge of closing. “With the funds from the RAF grant, we demonstrated the unseen value of the airport to elected officials, and generate more interest and use of the airport,” he said.

## RAF opens Online Store



The RAF is proud to announce the opening of its Online Store! The RAF does brisk business selling useful aviation items and logo-wear at aviation gatherings. Due to popular demand, we now offer merchandise online. When you purchase RAF gear, you are supporting the mission to preserve, maintain, and create airstrips for recreational access.

Shop at [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org). New items that are being added all the time!



## New Hampshire – Alton Bay Icefield

Alton Bay, New Hampshire, (B18) is located on the southern edge of Lake Winnepesaukee, the largest Lake in New Hampshire. It is the *only* FAA sanctioned public Ice Runway with designator in the lower 48 states. RAF New Hampshire Liaison John Meade invites you to “Come land on the frozen lake and get your Ice Wings and Ice Chip.” Pilots eager to practice this New England tradition come from as far as New Jersey and the New England states.

The RAF has been a key supporter

these past few years keeping this tradition alive. “Due to NHDOT budget cuts, this was on the chopping block a few years ago,” Meade said, but RAF grants boost donations from New Hampshire Pilots Association, local pilots and a Maine FBO, all motivated to keep the ice field plowed for safe operations. Again in 2020, Mead applied for, and received a grant toward maintenance.

Volunteers have provided the labor to open the airfield by late January. As long as



the ice holds up – typically through March – they are there to award pilots Ice Wings and Chips.

Alton Bay appears in a “Destinations” story by Julie Summers Walker in the February *AOPA Pilot*.

## Meet an RAF delegation at 2020 aviation events

Throughout 2020, you will find the RAF at aviation events across the country, beginning February 6-9 at Arizona’s Copperstate Fly-In and Expo at Buckley Municipal Airport. The RAF will co-host a booth with Arizona Pilots Association where you can learn what volunteers have done to create, preserve, maintain and create airstrips for recreational access. See copperstate.org for details on this event.

The RAF sets up February 22-23 in Puyallup, Washington at the Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show. RAF President Bill McGlynn will speak at this event featuring more than 400 display booths and static aircraft displays, national speakers and over 75 hours of aviation seminars.

The following weekend, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 27-29, the RAF is in Great Falls for the Montana Aviation Conference. RAF Vice President Todd Simmons of Cirrus Aircraft will share the les-

sons he learned from his near-fatal aircraft accident in the backcountry of Idaho. See his multi-media presentation 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 29.

Sunday through Tuesday, March 1- 3, the RAF will be at the Upper Midwest Aviation Symposium at the Grand Hotel, 1505 N Broadway in Minot, North Dakota; followed by a display at Sun ‘n Fun in Lakeland, Florida March 31 - April 5; the Great Minnesota Aviation Gathering, Buffalo, Minnesota April 24-25; up north to Anchorage for the Great Alaska Aviation Gathering, May 2-3; continuing with AOPA’s events in San Marcos, Texas May 29-30, and Casper, Wyoming June 19-20.

Back by popular demand, come take advantage of RAF hospitality July 21, during AirVenture week in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

See the RAF calendar under the Pilot Info tab at [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org) for more RAF participation in 2020 aviation events for one near you!

## New RAF website simpler, easier to use

If you haven’t yet seen the new RAF website, please take a moment, go to [www.theRAF.org](http://www.theRAF.org) and you’ll see why we are so proud of it.

It’s easier to navigate, works on mobile devices, and displays valuable information quicker, whether you’re in front of your desktop, or on the go.

With one click on the Pilot Info tab, you arrive at the fact-filled Airfield.Guide for great places to fly for new adventures and critical Safety Briefings.

Shop our new RAF Online Store.

So enjoy exploring some great images, and the accomplishments of the RAF’s many dedicated volunteers. There is a secure donate button to make tax-deductible donations. It’s an easy way to support the RAF so we may continue to preserve, maintain, and create airstrips for recreational access.





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

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