

NFLA Newsletter

Autumn 2007

Neighborhood plan set for planning board review

North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee Chairman Jon Cole reports that the final draft of the North Fork Neighborhood Plan has been submitted to the Flathead County Planning and Zoning Office.

It has been posted on the P&Z office's Web site. Go to www.co.flathead.mt.us/fcpz/ and click "Draft Documents."

The 30-day public comment period on the plan begins begin Dec. 6. Letters will still be accepted after the 30-day comment period. However, they will not be included in the staff report prepared by the P&Z office for presentation to the Flathead County Planning Board. Comments may be submitted in writing to Flathead County Planning and Zoning, 1035 First Ave. West, Kalispell, MT 59901, Attn. Andrew Hagemeyer, or by e-mailing Hagemeyer at ahagemeyer@co.flathead.mt.us.

While it is not a regulatory document, the neighborhood plan establishes goals and policies that will guide zoning regulations in the North Fork Zoning District.

A brief rundown of the neighborhood-plan process, along with critical meeting dates and deadlines, accompanies this newsletter.

Inter Local meeting Feb. 13

Glacier National Park will host this year's winter Inter Local Agreement meeting, to be held at 10 a.m., Wed., Feb. 13, in the park's West Glacier Community Building near the West Glacier park entrance gate, off U.S. Highway 2. For more information call North Fork Subdistrict Ranger Scott Emmerich at (406) 888-7842.

The Inter Local Agreement brings together North Forkers and representatives of government entities and agencies whose operations affect the North Fork. There is also an Inter Local Agreement meeting in July.

North Forker reports poacher, eligible for \$500 NFLA reward

The North Fork Landowners' Association Poaching Reward Fund has a winner, reports Larry Wilson in his column in the Nov. 29 Hungry Horse News.

According to Wilson's early report, a North Fork landowner reported a poacher for shooting after dark and from a vehicle, killing a deer on private land without permission, and hunting without a license.

Wilson reports that the perpetrator was detained and fined—qualifying the North

Forker for a reward of up to \$500 for “arrest and conviction” of a poacher, at the discretion of the NFLA board of directors.

This is the first time someone has qualified for the reward, which was established in February 1999.

Nice going!

NFLA examining contribution policy

Questions about contributing North Fork Landowners’ Association funds to other organizations remain on the table after the September and October business meetings. The NFLA’s treasury comprises member dues and contributions, and proceeds of fund-raisers. The association receives no funding from other organizations.

Association bylaws do not address by whom and to whom NFLA funds may be contributed. Some members have suggested the need for guidelines on how association money is contributed, to assure fairness, consistency and compliance with laws governing non-profit organizations. A committee will be appointed to recommend a contributions policy.

For more details and minutes of the meetings, go to the NFLA Web site, www.NFLandowners.org.

The board of directors would like to hear your suggestions on the contribution policy and related matters. Please see President Molly Shepherd’s “Message from the President,” below.

NFLA Web site at your service

The North Fork Landowners’ Association Web site, which was launched this spring, is your source for current news concerning our special place.

Included on the site are:

- Up-to-date NFLA activity and Hike & Bike schedules
- Business-meeting news and minutes
- Wildfire updates
- Fire Mitigation Committee news and advice
- Important land-use planning news
- Other news affecting the North Fork, including mines planned in Canada that would pollute our river
- Links to North Fork weather; county, state and local government; Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest

Go to www.nflandowners.org.

Message from the President

Time has come to re-examine role of NFLA

What role should the North Fork Landowners Association play in the North Fork community? When should the association take a position on issues? When should it contribute funds to advocacy organizations?

There's nothing new about these questions. They've been asked since the association was founded in 1947. They're being asked again now, prompted in part by the activities of the North Fork Road Coalition for Health and Safety. Frustrated by the perceived unwillingness or inability of responsible agencies and the NFLA to address the road-dust issue, a group of North Fork landowners formed the coalition to compel action.

As a multipurpose community organization, the NFLA tries to avoid taking positions on divisive issues. The current bylaws require it to "pursue the interests of all North Fork landowners, regardless of permanent residence, and encourage and facilitate their participation in association activities." The premise is that the NFLA can't pursue the interests of all North Fork landowners if it favors one group or faction in a dispute.

Thus the NFLA hasn't taken a position on paving the road. Nor, for example, has it taken a position on the proposed Winton Weydemyer Wilderness. As a result of its non-partisanship, some North Fork landowners argue that the NFLA is just a social organization. They turn to advocacy organizations to promote their causes.

I suggest that the NFLA isn't merely a social organization. It has accomplished a great deal by advancing interests on which landowners generally agree. Recent achievements include: establishing zoning regulations; a draft neighborhood plan; grants to mitigate risk to structures in wildfires; Firewise Community status; a Web site; improvements to Sondreson Hall; a coordinated response to threatened resource development in the Canadian North Fork. By avoiding partisanship, the NFLA has earned credibility and acquired leverage that it might not otherwise have.

Nonetheless, a number of landowners aren't on the same page. It's time to re-examine the NFLA's role and its non-partisan stance on divisive issues. So I'm appointing a broad-based committee charged with recommending a mission statement, a contributions policy, a policy describing the circumstances under which the NFLA will take a position on issues, and a division of labor between the elected board of directors and the membership. The committee will report by the July 2008 business meeting and will propose any bylaws amendments necessary to implement its recommendations.

The new committee's recommendations probably won't please everyone. North Fork landowners have diverse interests, backgrounds and affiliations. But we need to try to build some common expectations about the NFLA's organizational structure and its role in the community. If we succeed, it will be a more stable and effective organization, confident of its purposes, and with a broader base of support than it has now.

I welcome your comments. Write to: North Fork Landowners' Association, P.O. Box 1603, Columbia Falls, MT 59912, or e-mail us at contact@NFLandowners.org.

Happy holidays!

—Molly Shepherd, President

Fire-protection funds still available

Grant money is still available for fuels reduction around homes. The grants provide cost-share assistance to eligible landowners, with the grant contributing 75 percent of the cost of the fuels-reduction treatment.

To determine whether your property qualifies for the program, call Bill Swope, Northwest Regional Resource Conservation and Development Council Community Forester, at (406) 892-3866 or e-mail him at bhswope@centurytel.net.

2006-2007 financial report

The North Fork Landowners' Association ended the fiscal year with a net operating income of \$622.82.

Income and expenses were as follows:

Balance, Aug. 31, '06	\$ 11,503.22
Plus income	4,609.10
Less expenses	<u>3,986.28</u>
Balance Aug. 31, 07	\$ 12,126.04

As of Aug. 31, there were 243 members.

Are you up to date?

Your dues might be due. Please check the mailing label on the envelope in which this newsletter arrived for the last date your dues were paid. If there is no date, your dues have not been paid in the past year.

North Fork Landowners' Association

Polebridge, Montana

President Molly Shepherd
Vice President Oliver Meister
Immediate Past President Ed Heger
Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cole
North Directors Jon Cole & Lynn Ogle
South Directors Gerry Stearns & Frank Vitale
Newsletter/Webmaster Richard E. Wackrow
Web site www.NFLandowners.org

End Autumn 2007 newsletter