



RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION NEWS • ACTION

Preserving, maintaining and creating airstrips
for recreational access.



Winter 2018 • Issue 21

Arkansas offers recreational haven — Ozark's Trigger Gap established with FAA Identifier

The RAF is thrilled that the FAA officially activated Trigger Gap with an identifier in September. Trigger Gap, (17A) is a new 3,000-ft recreational airstrip, conceived and built with RAF leadership through private donations. It lies on lands managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in NW Arkansas' Ozarks above the Kings River.

AOPA Pilot Online reported that "Backcountry pilots have taken notice, and they're making the region a haven for recreational flying with a growing network of backcountry airstrips. And some of the grass and gravel runways tie into existing trail and river networks."

"The RAF enabled this to happen," said Chad Cox, Aviation Director for the Walton Family Foundation. "The Nature Conservancy also put a lot of trust in all of us on this one and they feel like we have been good stewards," he added.

The future of Trigger Gap is ensured by a long-term lease with TNC and local

RAF volunteers have committed to ongoing maintenance. "Our success is the result of having developed a great partnership with this international conservation organization," said RAF Arkansas Liaison Dave Powell. "This new destination will broaden the community of recreational flyers. It has easy approaches and is plenty long," he added.

Enjoy great views of the Ozarks from this strip atop Pension Mountain, named for Civil War veterans who settled there. As a special treat, [Kings River Outfitters](#) will pick you up and arrange for you to recreate on the river. Trigger Gap is just 3.2 nm south of Carroll County Airport (4M1) with courtesy cars and services. Within an hour's drive is Ridgefield, MO, and Big Cedar Lodge Resort. The Trigger Gap safety briefing is on the RAF website.



Oregon ranch-style hospitality available — Sunrise Valley Ranch airstrip open and chartered

The RAF is pleased to announce that another outstanding recreational destination is now official! Sunrise Valley Ranch airstrip east of Prineville, OR now has FAA identifier 29OR. RAF Oregon Liaison Richard Mayes worked with the owners to make this happen, originally identifying the potential airstrip location and runway alignment for safe approaches, aircraft parking area and access. He advised the Fildes family about the Oregon RUS and the RAF's "Guide for the Private Airstrip Owner", (see page 8) and they cooperated to open an airstrip on their privately-owned working ranch for public use.

Earthwork and drainage were planned and constructed by local pilot volunteers; Mayes advised on end and boundary markings, parking and windsock placement, completed the FAA documents for charting, and prepared the safety briefing, available on the RAF website. Topping off all this work, the Fildes hosted an opening day fly-in to introduce the new airstrip to the community.

Mayes and the RAF wish to thank all the local volunteers who donated equipment time and labor to construct

the airstrip. "In return for all our cooperation, the Fildes are strong promoters of the RAF, sharing the word and passing out RAF literature." Mayes said.

Visitors are welcome to camp adjacent to the airstrip, stay in the ranch's rustic lodge, or drop in for a delicious family style meal. "Local pilots have already made this a favorite destination for weekend breakfast and the dining area is often crowded," he added. Call ahead to request services: 541-477-3711.



See the RAF Home Page —
click this map for all the places
the RAF has had an impact!
Each month the RAF website
features a special airstrip. One
may inspire you to plan a flight
and discover a new
recreational destination!



RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION
1711 WEST COLLEGE ST, BOZEMAN, MT 59715
406-582-1RAF (1723) www.TheRAF.org

Tricia McKenna Administrative Director: tmckenna@theraf.org
Erin White, Volunteer Coordinator: ewhite@theraf.org

All the following serve on a volunteer, unpaid basis:

DIRECTORS

John McKenna, Chairman: Montana, jmckenna@theraf.org
Bill McGlynn, President: Washington, bmcglynn@theraf.org
Jack Tyler, Vice President: Montana, jtyler@theraf.org
Alan Metzler, Secretary: Pennsylvania/Montana, ametzler@theraf.org
Mike Perkins, Treasurer: Colorado/Montana, mperkins@theraf.org
Peter Bunce: Washington, DC/Wisconsin, pbunce@theraf.org
Steve Johnson: Missouri, sjohnson@theraf.org
Pete Burwell: Minnesota, pburwell@theraf.org
Todd Simmons: Tennessee, tsimmons@theraf.org
Environment/Science Advisors: Dr. Ric Hauer, Dr. Roger Blew
Safety/Education Committee: Jack Tyler, Chair
Newsletter Editor: Carmine Mowbray cmowbray@theraf.org

STATE LIAISONS

AK – Al Clayton aclayton@theraf.org
AR – Dave Powell dpowell@theraf.org
AZ – Mark Spencer m Spencer@theraf.org
CA – Rick Lach rlach@theraf.org
CA – Anthony Longobardo, alongobardo@theraf.org
CO – Patrick Romano promano@theraf.org
CO – Tom Haefeli thaefeli@theraf.org
FL – Bobby Capozzi bcaozzi@theraf.org
GA – Brett Wilkes bwilkes@theraf.org
ID – Mike Hart mhart@theraf.org
IL – Mike Purpura mpurpura@theraf.org
KY – Jeff Smith jsmith@theraf.org
ME – Andy Rowe arowe@theraf.org
ME – Steve Mason smason@theraf.org
MA – Rene Robillard rrobillard@theraf.org
MD – Craig McCullough cmccullough@theraf.org
MI – Brad Frederick bfrederick@theraf.org
MN – Kirk Hiner khiner@theraf.org
MN – Kurt Pennuto kpennuto@theraf.org
MT – Ron Normandeau rnormandeau@theraf.org
MT – Scott Newpower snewpower@theraf.org
NB – Dan Keller dkeller@theraf.org
NH – John Meade jmeade@theraf.org
NM – Larry Filener lfilener@theraf.org
NM – Ron Keller rkeller@theraf.org
NY – Russ Holland rholland@theraf.org
NC – Tim Farris tfarris@theraf.org
ND – Brian Rau brau@theraf.org
OH – Freeman Swank fswank@theraf.org
OH – Christine Mortine cmortine@theraf.org
OR – Richard Mayes rmayes@theraf.org
OK – Steve Thompson sthompson@theraf.org
PA – Andy Turner aturner@theraf.org
PA – Judson Rupert jrupert@theraf.org
SC – Bill Repucci brepucci@theraf.org
SD – Ray Jilek rjilek@theraf.org
TN – Steve Lewis slewis@theraf.org
TX – Chase Snodgrass csnodgrass@theraf.org
UT – Steve Durtschi sdurtschi@theraf.org
UT – Wayne Loeber wloeber@theraf.org
VT – Bob Burley rburley@theraf.org
VA – Matthew Kline mcline@theraf.org
WA – Dave Whitelaw dwhitelaw@theraf.org
WI – Jeff Russell jrussell@theraf.org
WY – Lori Olson lolson@theraf.org



Chairman's Message – That's My Story

– John McKenna



I tend to listen to a wide variety of music, and when I heard the Collin Raye song, "That's My Story," the theme for this column came to me. You see, the RAF has been able to consistently execute on our original ideals because the story has not varied from Day One. We set out to take care of the airstrips we love, reopen some of those left behind, maybe even build a new one or two. Those thoughts have been refined into what is now our mission statement, "The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, maintains and creates airstrips for recreational access." So, that's our story and we're stickin' to it.

RAF leadership met recently for our annual face to face board meeting and what really came out of that meeting is that we are still an all donor driven organization that gets good marks for getting stuff done. We simply could not do that if we allowed ourselves to get too deeply into matters or subjects for which we have little or no expertise, or ability to add value. So when issues come up that we don't know much about, we look to our valued partners like AOPA, GAMA, NBAA, EAA, HIA, and others, especially the many State aviation and pilot organizations. We appreciate the work they do and realize without them, the RAF effort would be diminished. Those same organizations are quick to support us since they understand . . . *That's our story and we're stickin' to it.*

2017 was an eventful year where we again accomplished a good deal. You can read about many of those things in this newsletter, and for sure you're always encouraged to reach out to our volunteer liaisons, staff (all two of them) or your all-volunteer board of directors. Our year end funding campaign – which I hope you have contributed to – not only brought us needed dollars but brought us reassurance through your feedback that the RAF is doing what you expect us to do.

This being our 15th year as a formal organization, it is our combined knowledge from what we've learned, our collective energy that just keeps building, and our getting better at what we do that drives the organization. As long as your interest in what we are doing continues and we can all keep our passion fires lit, we should have no problem taking the RAF into 2018 and well beyond . . . *That's our story and we're stickin' to it.*

– John

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 to receive the newsletter digitally. Newsletter flag photo: Nevada-style camping, Ravi Fry photo; back page North Fox Island, Gene Woods photo. (2017 RAF photo contest entries.)*

RAF teams with Air Safety Institute on Safety Guide

We all know that flying close to the ground, approaching and setting our aircraft down on short, narrow runways adds risk to our flying.

In the interest of furthering safety in these situations, RAF Vice President Jack Tyler engaged the RAF Safety and Education committee and they decided to ask you, "What would make YOU safer?" They tallied your answers, and teamed up with AOPA's Air Safety Institute to create a handy downloadable Safety Guide.

The result is a concise, four-panel checklist covering pre-flight planning, in-flight and destination considerations.

Watch for its final rollout March 1.



New study will examine effects of recreational aviation

The RAF strives to base its actions on the best science available. In 2014, the RAF launched a two-year study to determine if GA activity noise affects wildlife in the backcountry. Based on the results of that study, it was determined that there is no significant increase in stress levels among wildlife due to recreational aviation activity. According to RAF Environment and Science Advisor Dr. Ric Hauer, the study will be published this spring in a wildlife journal.

Not all recreational airstrips are in the backcountry, remote from residents, their pets and other users of the land.

In 2018, the RAF Environment and Science committee, again led by Dr. Hauer, will collaborate with the University of Montana School of Forestry on a separate study to determine the impact GA airplanes have on lands as compared to other modes of transportation. Details on this study will be made available in the coming months.

RAF FUNdraising AUCTION

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our aviation industry friends, and your energetic response, the RAF FUNdraiser Auction raised money to fuel our mission to preserve, maintain and create airstrips for recreational access.

On October 10, the virtual gavel went silent after ten fun-filled days of bidding on RAF logo wear, avgas, two new Hartzell propellers, an Aspen Avionics Flight Display, and dozens of items in between. The RAF wishes to thank you for your generous response to this first-ever "FUNdraiser Auction".

We truly appreciate everyone's participation. Successful bidders were able to take the tax benefits allowed by law, and are now enjoying their new aviation products, knowing they helped the RAF continue making special destinations accessible to you and yours.



Help us keep 'em open!

When you land at any backcountry airstrip, we urge you to find the place to register and record your use. We gather and use this data to demonstrate the importance of these airstrips. A record of use helps ensure the future of each airstrip.

We appreciate your cooperation.



Guest Essay — Aviation's Critical Mass

— Craig Fuller,

AOPA Past President and CEO

Excerpted from his "First Monday" essay, www.thefullercompany.com



So, I bought a boat. And, during the process, I had an epiphany about aviation. The aviation community's critical mass is diminishing.

What prompted the thoughts about aviation was something written by marina operator, boating writer and editor Randy Vance. He shared these facts: "about 250,000 new power boats and about 1 million used ones are sold every year – just in the United States."

The contrast is remarkable. [The General Aviation Manufacturers Association](http://www.the-general-aviation-manufacturers-association.com) reported that in 2016, 2,241 new piston, turboprop and business jets were shipped to new owners.

There are, to be sure, bright lights in aviation. There is no finer example than the Recreational Aviation Foundation which keeps backcountry airstrips available for recreational pilots. Just as important as its fine work on these strips, the organization connects people of widely varied backgrounds around their shared passion.

The threat to aviation, in my view, is that the critical mass is diminished. Ten years ago, as I was entering a role at the [Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association](http://www.aircraftownersandpilotsassociation.com), I worried about our ability to sustain our political strength if our numbers declined. Today, I worry about our ability to sustain the community of people who fly for the pure enjoyment of it.

I know a number of smart people are thinking about this. But, I am pretty sure the answer rests with the creation of more and more communities of shared passion. The Recreational Aviation Foundation is one fine example.

Today there are tools we didn't have before. We have some of the finest training capabilities ever for aspiring pilots. [Redbird flight simulators](http://www.redbird.com) give a new pilot the tools professionals use to train. It is safer, more efficient and certainly provides a better learning experience.

The tools extend to social media where enthusiasts can share aviation experiences and develop a better understanding of what might appeal to them.

For many years, pilots tended not to share a lot about their aviation experience. Oh, they would with fellow pilots around the hangar. But, flying, as important to them as it might be, was not something they talked a lot about. Well, it's time to share more and to recruit into the aviation community people who have a curiosity about flight. Turning that curiosity into a passion is what will build the community.

Every time I see those Facebook memory shots from that yellow Husky, I marvel at the 5,000 plus hours of flying time I've experienced. The bottom line, the only way the aviation community will sustain its critical mass is if each and every one of us who have the passion for aviation find a way to share it with others.



To OSH by RAF Pony Express



As a sworn general aviation devotee, it is my solemn duty to make the annual pilgrimage to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Lucky for me, as President of Redbird Flight Simulations, participation in AirVenture also happens to be my job. In 2016, as with most years prior, I bought an airline ticket and wasted 33 hours of my life wearing grooves in the terminal hallway at Austin Bergstrom International Airport. I recounted the ordeal in an article, aptly titled [“Well...That Sucked”](#) published by *Flying*, in which I made a very public resolution that “...next year, I’m flying GA.”

At the time I wasn’t sure how I was going to make good. I had no airplane and my pilot’s certificate had developed a thorough, reddish-brown patina. Nevertheless, I was determined to find a more enjoyable way to spend 33 hours of my life, so I dusted off my logbook and called my flight instructor. Somewhere between my BFR and IPC, I realized there wasn’t enough time to become proficient enough to negotiate the customary AirVenture arrival melée. I needed to be more creative.

So it was when I found myself at dinner in Troy Ohio, sitting across from John McKenna, Chairman of the RAF. I shared my goal of going GA to Oshkosh this year, but, in all likelihood, it was going to be impossible. As happens when good friends and strong libations converge, a simple idea became much more complicated...and more interesting. By evening’s end we had concocted a plan that I thought of as a GA version of “On the Road” and I was going to be Jack Kerouac. John brushed off my delusions of grandeur and likened it more to a modern-day Pony Express and I was the package. Call it what you will, the assistance of the RAF meant this thing might be possible after all.

By the time I returned to Austin, John had already made his rallying cry. Immediately, Jerry Cain, RAF co-founder and Director Emeritus, stepped up. Within a day Jerry had a dozen generous, enthusiastic volunteer pilots on board and had planned an eight-leg, seven-state journey that would deliver me to Oshkosh within 33 hours. Each leg involved vastly different aircraft, offering a unique perspective on what General Aviation means.

Spreadsheets and flight plans were made, alternates were chosen, and bags were packed. The closer we got to departure day, the more excited, and anxious, I became. What if weather or something mechanical grounded us? Would I make it to Oshkosh in time for AirVenture? Storms, mechanical issues and human factors are all part of general aviation, but so too is adventure, and that’s what this was, an adventure. So with a smile on my face, butterflies in my stomach and a c’est la vie attitude, I headed to San Marcos Regional Airport to begin my relay north.

I departed San Marcos aboard “Yellow Rose,” a Mitchell B-25 bomber operated by CAF Centex. The Rose was headed to Airventure to commemorate the Doolittle Raid. Stopping for fuel in Texarkana, I was passed off to RAF member Brian Baldwin who



delivered me to Berryville, Arkansas in his Piper Mirage. Brian turned me over to fellow RAF member Harper

Goodwin and his 1954 Skywagon. Harper, a retired American Airlines Captain, carried me to Trigger Gap, a brand-new grass airstrip, where I was picked up by a Bell 47, piloted by Chad Cox, a great friend and member of the RAF. After a quick tour of the Ozarks, Chad set down at Bentonville Municipal Airport, where I was transferred to a yellow and black Waco piloted by Dan Shewmaker. We headed north across Missouri and touched down at Noah’s Ark, a small private airstrip outside Kansas City. A leap out of the

back of a KingAir at 14,000 feet courtesy of

Falcon Skydiving, and my first day had come to a close.

A quick overnight in Kansas City and I met Joe Brown of Hartzell Propeller in his TBM 900. The original plan was to deliver me to Decorah, Iowa to rendezvous with RAF Minnesota State Liaison Kurt Pennuto in his 1946 Stinson. Unfortunately, inclement weather required us to scrap that stop, and Joe carried me directly to St. Paul, where I was met by Chuck Wiplinger, President of Wipaire. I loaded into his highly customized DeHavilland Beaver affectionately nicknamed “Kinky Lucy.” It was in Lucy’s right seat that I finally arrived at

Whittman Regional Airport, (OSH) 31 hours after I left my house in central Texas.

Prior to this journey, I could count on one hand the number of hours I’d spent in a taildragger, and I didn’t need any hands to count the number of grass strips in my logbook. It wasn’t for lack of desire, I just never had the occasion to enjoy backcountry flying. This trip was filled with

firsts: First time in a bomber, first grass strip landing, first open-cockpit flight, first jump, first landing on the Mississippi River, first Fisk Arrival into OSH, and many more. It was an experience of a lifetime for me, made possible by the dedication of the RAF and the amazing pilots that generously offered to take part in this Modern-Day Pony Express. Thank you all! I am eternally grateful that you handled your cargo with care.

For more detail on each leg of this trip, the pilots and the aircraft who carried me north, check out [“Oshkosh or Bust”](#) printed in the November 2017 issue of *Flying* and on the *Flying* website.

Top: One way to get the ponies going — Pulling the prop through on a B-25; bottom left, seated in Yellow Rose. Right: with Chad Cox and the Bell 47 at Trigger Gap; Kinky Lucy, Wiplinger’s highly modified Beaver for Charlie’s final leg into Whittman, (OSH).



RMEC series wraps up in Reedsville

Geared to support State Liaisons, each RAF Mini-Educational Conference, "RMEC" features guest speakers, panel and round-table discussions, and breakout sessions. An informal meet-and-greet kicks off the gathering Friday evening, followed by Saturday's high-energy conference.

The first RMEC was staged at Executive Airport in Henderson, NV last February to serve the northwestern region. The Southwest RMEC was in Fort Worth, TX in March; the Southeast conference was hosted by Beechcraft Heritage Museum in Tullahoma, TN in May.

Midwest RMEC

Twenty RAF volunteers spent August 19 networking and learning ways to further the RAF mission at the Midwest RMEC hosted by JA Air Center in Aurora, IL. Guest speakers

included state aviation officials, adding what RAF Michigan Liaison Brad Frederick called, "their great and enlightening input and perspective."

Each RMEC is geared to regional concerns, and participants found RAF Illinois Liaison Mike Purpura's section, "Collaboration gets more pilots in the air" very enlightening. Panelists included aeronautics officials from Minnesota and Illinois. Although each state deals with aviation differently, Cassandra Isackson, Minnesota's Director of Aeronautics pointed out a universal concern, that less money is available from federal sources, and "Every airport needs someone who loves it, and the RAF organization is more effective



RAF volunteers gather at Midwest RMEC.

than individuals trying to influence decision-making." Panelists pointed out that many airports are city-owned who see their role to manage tenants, not aviation. "You need to see things from their perspective and represent aviation from that viewpoint," Isackson added.

The Chamber of Commerce appreciates that an active airport brings more business to the community. Mike Purpura capitalized on this and perhaps opened some eyes as to opportunities aviation brings with his Migratory Bird Fly-In in March. Astronomy night in June brought 200 people and was "a big success" so they are planning more.

"Exploit an asset that they are already paying for," he said.

Brad Frederick shared his experience building an airstrip. "Get

involved, show up and become part of the community," he said. Brad is now a member of Michigan's Dept of Natural Resources Islands committee and GA committee, and is its voice for aviation.

The group explored what makes a "recreational" airstrip and what makes it a worthwhile project.

RAF Minnesota Liaison Kurt Pennuto thanked the RAF on his evaluation, adding, "I feel truly blessed to be in such great company! Knowing I have your support as I work to uphold the RAF mission is an awesome feeling!" The final RMEC was held October 20-22 in Reedsville, PA (KRVL).



Efforts are rewarded—Aviation included on Montana National Forest

RAF Montana State Liaison Ron Normandeau sent out a Call To Action asking the aviation community to provide input during the required Forest Service Public Scoping period on the Helena/Lewis and Clark National Forest.

In October, Normandeau reported that he verified the number of comments the Forest Service received on their website. "The one hundred seventy comments submitted by RAF membership and pilots nationwide was a very good response," he said. The pro-aviation comments amounted to 17% of the total recorded during the public scoping period. These comments will steer the future travel plan on the Forest, 2,846,606 acres of public land located in the Rocky Mountains of central Montana.

"Thanks to all who submitted comments during the scoping period. It ensures that aviation will be included in the Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement," Normandeau added.

Amazon Smile benefits RAF

The RAF is pleased to be one of the select charities that benefit when you shop Amazon Smile. Chose the RAF and Amazon donates 0.5% of everything you purchase to The Recreational Aviation Foundation.

It's easy! Just follow these instructions to start "sharing smiles" with the RAF:

1. Visit smile.amazon.com
2. Sign in select "Recreational Aviation Foundation" as your charity.

The RAF certainly believes in shopping locally, but if you are going to buy online, Amazon Smile is a no-cost way to support the RAF.



BACKCOUNTRY BOUTIQUE

New for 2018!
A monthly selection
of high quality RAF goods for sale in limited quantity

On the 5th of every month, we'll advertise a new RAF logo item for sale on the [RAF website](http://TheRAF.org), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TheRAF.org) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/TheRAF.org). We sell small quantities of each item and will let you know how many we have in stock.

When they're gone, they're gone! If an item sells out early, plan on being online on the 5th of the following month for our next big reveal.

All purchases benefit the RAF mission to preserve, maintain and create airstrips for recreational access.

Team building – RAF gains Directors

Complete roster of RAF Directors is on the [RAF website](#)



Peter Burwell

Peter Burwell is a licensed and avid pilot. He flies both airplanes and helicopters. "I am enthusiastic about the RAF mission," Peter says, adding, "In a fast-paced world, the RAF allows an opportunity for all pilots to slow down and enjoy the beauty of this country. What better way to showcase aviation, with the freedom and community of backcountry flying?"

Peter is President and CEO

of Burwell Enterprises, Inc., based in Minneapolis. Burwell's holdings include the Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club, a 367-room hotel adjacent to Wisconsin's Capitol building; Country Springs Hotel and Water Park in Waukesha, WI; Echo Mountain ski area just outside of Denver in Idaho Springs, CO; and C & B Operations, a chain of twenty-five John Deere dealerships throughout the Midwest.

He is a member of Angel Flight, a nonprofit organization that arranges volunteer flights for individuals who are financially distressed and in need of transportation for medical treatment. He is also a member of the Minneapolis Chapter of the Young Presidents' Organization.

Pete graduated from the University of Denver in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management.

In addition to the joys he finds in backcountry flying, his other interests are boating, fishing, hunting and snow skiing.

Todd Simmons

Aviation is in Todd's DNA. His father was an Army flight surgeon; one grandfather a WWII B-26 pilot, the other a crop duster. One uncle flew A-4's in Vietnam; one hunted enemy subs for the Navy; one served as Beechcraft's chief Starship structures engineer. Flying is as much a part of Todd's life now as well.

Todd joined Cirrus Aircraft in early 2008 as VP of marketing and now leads all Customer Experience activities including sales, marketing, personalization, delivery, service and support, flight training; and flight operations at the Cirrus "Vision Center" in Knoxville. He has led innovative growth initiatives aimed at the current aircraft owner and developing new markets. During his tenure, the SR22 continues to be the best-selling airplane in its class, and worldwide market share has reached an all-time high.

For more than 25 years, Todd has held positions in marketing and business leadership, international marketing communications, revenue management and sales leadership from boutique businesses to Fortune 500 firms including Delta Air Lines and CubCrafters where he eventually presided over the company.

Todd holds a Bachelor of Industrial and Systems Engineering from Georgia Tech, and an MBA from University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Outside of work, Todd's passion is recreational flying. He and his family enjoy outdoor activities in Eastern Tennessee, having returned to the Southeast.

On the RAF, Todd said in part, "How truly capable this organization is and why we should be expecting even more accomplishments ahead."



The cause you consider good

— Erin White, RAF Volunteer Coordinator

Are you passionate about the RAF Mission? Is preserving, maintaining and creating airstrips YOUR cause? Then let's talk! The RAF is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to add to Team RAF. Our current opportunities include:

- Shipping Volunteer (preferably located in the Bozeman, MT area).
- RAF Fire Hub Tender Volunteers (Sun N Fun in FL, and San Marcos Airport in TX)
- State Liaison Volunteers
- RAF Ambassador Volunteers
- Database Volunteer
- RAF Fulfillment Center Volunteer (preferably located in the Bozeman, MT area)
- Presentation Volunteer

Don't see quite what you're looking for on this list?

If you have other special skills you'd like to share with the RAF, I'd love to learn about them!

I look forward to hearing from you!

Erin White, RAF Volunteer Coordinator

970-209-5980 • ewhite@theraf.org • www.TheRAF.org

"The broadest, and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering: Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good."

— Ivan Scheier



Team building – RAF adds State Liaisons

Complete roster of RAF State Liaisons is on the [RAF website](#)

Anthony Longobardo, California

Anthony has lived and worked all over the world. He originally entered aviation to provide missionary and humanitarian services in some of the world's poorest countries working as a pilot and mechanic for Mission Aviation Fellowship, Samaritan's Purse, and other organizations throughout Africa, Central America, Indonesia and the US.



He received his security clearance to contract in the Middle East, eventually becoming a test pilot in the new niche of large UAV helicopters where he flew for Boeing and SAAB. While living in Sweden, he became test/demo pilot in their military and Intelligence, Surveillance Reconnaissance contracts.

He now flies a private business jet around the country for Delta Airlines. When he's not kayaking, climbing, or river rafting, he lives on a rustic equestrian/airpark community behind San Diego. He and Co-California RAF Liaison Rick Lach are working to bring SoCal backcountry to the attention of the recreational aviation world. They organize backcountry fly-in's and campouts. They built a gorgeous new airstrip in the southern High Sierras on a private ranch. He's eager to share these projects, some future dreams, and his passion for the area.

"The real reason I joined the RAF is because it's an organization that will help me do what I'm already doing, better!"

Andy Turner, Pennsylvania

Andy was introduced to aviation at a young age, buckled in the rear seat of his parents' TriPacer. Always interested in outdoor pursuits, he earned a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Michigan State University, and now lives in Clarion, Pennsylvania, where he is professor of Biology and Geosciences at Clarion University. His research is in aquatic ecology and he teaches courses in Fisheries Biology,

Limnology, Biostatistics, and Environmental Issues.

A 30+ year pilot, he has logged over 3,000 hours. Much of his flying involves exploring new landscapes and finding airstrips to camp and access remote areas. Summer flights may take the family to the backcountry of Montana and Idaho; winter vacations take them to the coastal Carolinas, Georgia and Florida.

Andy recently built an RV-10 to better fly his family across the country. His wife Sharon is an astronomer on the faculty at Clarion, and together they are the proud parents of twins Joshua and Caleb. The boys share the family enthusiasm for the outdoors, having completed a number of long hikes, including summits of the two highest peaks in the Rocky Mountains at only nine years old.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to combine my two greatest passions, the outdoors and flying, by working with the RAF," Andy said.



Judson Rupert, Pennsylvania

Jud was born and raised in central Pennsylvania where he says he "helped his A&P/IA father as much as I was allowed." He attended Penn State University where he received his BS in Aeronautical Engineering, followed up with his MAS from Embry-Riddle. He was a member of the US Naval Test Pilot School Class 132, working for the Navy as a flight test engineer.

When Jud finally had enough time and money to earn his pilot license in 2003, he quickly found his Cessna 170A to be an excellent resource to explore the outdoors.

Living back in north central PA, Jud now works for Lycoming Engines – previously as an Air Safety Investigator and currently as a principal engineer.

Jud enjoys building and restoring aircraft. There's a Hatz Classic biplane in the basement and a 1939 Luscombe 8B in the garage. He splits his time between flying the 170 with his wife and two daughters and working on the projects.

Jud is an avid hunter and fisherman and is a member of the EAA and the Society of Flight Test Engineers. He sees his new responsibility as State Liaison as an opportunity to "couple my passion for the outdoors with my passion for flying. I look forward to promoting recreational aviation in Pennsylvania."



What exactly is an RAF State Liaison?

The RAF State Liaison has been selected for their regional knowledge, willingness, and undying dedication to the RAF mission. They are the link between the RAF and their state aviation organizations and individual pilots. You will likely see your State Liaison behind a booth at aviation conferences and fly-ins, and anywhere folks gather to share aviation interest and knowledge.

When a job needs to be done, they organize volunteers. They facilitate maintenance contracts with public agencies and private landowners. They are responsible for requesting project grants from the RAF.

Your State Liaison attends public meetings that eventually form access policy. They are always aware of the importance of being at the table when policy decisions are in the making. They may issue a Call to Action requesting public comment.

Both the RAF Board and Liaison take this responsibility seriously. The Liaison has made a huge commitment to the task, costing their time, money, and skills. Liaisons serve entirely as volunteers. Each has demonstrated their ability to work with dedication and perseverance with a minimum of guidance. In short, these are outstanding people who share a passion.

Without them, the RAF could not fulfill its mission.



RAF Ambassador Team grows

You may see one of our enthusiastic RAF Ambassadors next time you're in the backcountry, at a work party or aviation event. If you'd like to share the RAF message, yet your work, family or travel

responsibilities don't permit a lot of extra time, consider becoming an RAF Ambassador. See [page 6](#).

RAF

Guide for the Private Airfield Owner

The RAF's *Guide for the Private Airfield Owner* is now available. It discusses considerations when

allowing others to use one's private airfield.

John Nadeau, former RAF Massachusetts Liaison and owner of Old Acton Airfield in Maine (02ME), led efforts to create the

document, which has gained the endorsement of AOPA.

"Preserving private use airfields is a primary mission for us here in the East," he said.

The Guide is available online from the RAF website or hard copies may be obtained from the RAF via contact@TheRAF.org

RAF and National Park Service renew agreement

The RAF and the National Park Service (NPS) officially renewed their cooperative maintenance agreement on the three airstrips within Death Valley National Park September 1. The original five-year agreement was inked in 2008 and approved RAF volunteers performing maintenance on the Park's airstrips. This Volunteer In the Parks, or "VIP" agreement marked the first such compact between the NPS and a pilot organization, a major step towards ensuring aircraft's low impact access to the Park.

"The RAF and the NPS have been successful partnering for nearly ten years to make access to these areas safe and available to the aviation community," RAF chairman John McKenna said.

The RAF works in conjunction with pilot associations from surrounding areas to provide manpower and funds for projects. When Chicken Strip washed out after an October 2016 downpour, RAF California State Liaisons mustered volunteers and worked quickly to re-open the gravel strip. "We go into Chicken Strip each fall for maintenance," RAF California Liaison Rick Lach said. "We pull the drag to smooth out the 'whoop-de-dos', and volunteers fill low spots with rakes and shovels. We have no problem rounding up twenty or so volunteers from all over California and Arizona for a work weekend," he added.



Furnace Creek and Stovepipe Wells are paved and the RAF pulls weeds and sees to tie-down maintenance. "It's a real pleasure working with Karen (McKinlay-Jones, Chief Ranger) and Mike (Reynolds, Park Superintendent)," Lach added. "They have been very supportive."

"The RAF is proud of our relationship with the Park Service in Death Valley and we look forward to a continued working relationship throughout the next five years of this renewed agreement," McKenna added.

2017 By The Numbers "Panel scan" of RAF accomplishments



Leadership - RAF Directors welcomed Todd Simmons and Peter Burwell to the RAF Board. Each bring a wealth of aviation experience and passion for the mission. (See page 6.)

Team building - In 2017 five new State Liaisons were recruited after rigorous screening and review by the RAF Board. *Congratulations new TeamRAF members!*

RAF Ambassador program - 2017 saw the roll-out of the RAF Ambassador program, initiating a dozen folks across the country; and two new "VP's of Appreciation", Sarah Mayes and Penny Hergenrather, who join Jo Schumacher, Patricia Tyler, Margie Prill and Smokey Folsom.

Erin White has stepped into the Volunteer Coordinator role, and looks forward to building on the great momentum of this past year.

Team training - The RAF conducted five regional educational conferences to make them more accessible to RAF volunteers. Guest speakers included industry leaders, AOPA leadership, state aviation officials, Forest Service and BLM representatives.

Gettin' it done - Work parties occurred all over the country, organized by State Liaisons, and assisted by pilots and local volunteers, including an important partnership in Alaska - Working with the National Park Service in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Work was also accomplished at North Fox Island (MI); Keystone (FL); Meadowlark, (GA); Carvers Cut (CA); Ryan Field, (MT); Trigger Gap, (AR); Creighton and McIntosh, (GA); and Grapevine, (AZ).

The RAF Grant Committee approved eight airstrip improvement grants including North Fox Island in Lake Michigan, Amigos del Cielo, Double Circle Ranch, Lee Bottom and Alton Bay, an ice runway on the East Coast. Other grants went to build shower houses at Kern Valley and Arcadia, and fire rings at Schafer Meadows.

Fundraising - The RAF boosted its core fiscal strength through its first FUNdraising Auction, during ten lively days in October, thanks to many generous donors and bidders.

Safety Education - With help from AOPA's Air Safety Institute, the RAF developed a unique survey focused on the safety challenges of recreational and backcountry flying.

Advocacy - RAF renewed its MOU with the Forest Service and National Park Service, and through vigilance, included aviation in the Flathead and Helena/Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan.

Following Idaho's initiative, the RAF helped facilitate the New Mexico Airstrip Network.

Just Plane Fun - The RAF launched its Inaugural TRAIL, a season-long itinerary of recreational flying destinations. State Liaisons and other volunteers organized meals and hosted special activities.

2017 by the numbers:

235 RAF Dutch oven breakfasts served;

350 scoops of ice cream atop Hartzell's booth at AirVenture;

Hundreds of Idaho potatoes wrapped, baked and served, gourmet-style at fly-ins;

1,500 handwritten 2017 Thank Yous sent, and counting!

Many thousands of volunteer hours furthering the RAF mission to preserve, maintain, and create airstrips for recreational access.

State Reports

State reports are submitted by Liaisons and are often edited for space.

Arkansas — Dave Powell

Survival Skills Training — Twenty-seven pilots spent Sunday, January 14, 2018 practicing real survival scenarios at Sugar Creek airfield (also called Price Coffee airfield) (58AR) and learned how to build a fire in spite of the snow.

Four instructors brought a combined 30 years' experience as Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (SERE) Instructors with Wilderness Emergency First Responder backgrounds. The four are also pilots and packed the eight-hour day with training to survive a forced landing into tree canopy, ditching, and flight into terrain.

Attendees could use the course for FAA proficiency WINGS credit.

Topics included the psychology and physiology of survival, first aid, shelter, signaling and communication and survival kit options and contents. It combined classroom learning with small groups outside practicing real examples of scenarios that you might be faced with. It was very applicable.

California — Anthony Longobardo

The Fall Backcountry Fly-In/Campout September 22-24 was co-hosted by Kern Valley Airport and the RAF. Over 30 planes

and 60 people came, camped, flew, and feasted, including Mt. San Antonio College students. Friday evening we briefed guests for the next day's fly-outs, then shuttled everyone to the Kern River Brewing Company. Everyone enjoyed a good time around the campground bonfire afterwards.

Saturday Dustin Mosher led a fleet of planes into area airstrips. Saturday night Sierra Vista Restaurant towed out the grill and cooked mouth-watering tri-tip with all the fixin's, followed by another evening around the bonfire. Sunday morning the crew flew up to Carver's Cut and some went on to Monanche Meadows for spectacular backcountry mountain flying in the local Sierra Nevadas.

We look forward to our next Fly-in, spring 2018!

Florida — Bobby Capozzi

The RAF completed their first flying "Trail" and Florida hosted two events, Arcadia (X06) in March and Blackwater (8FD3) in April. Many Florida members also attended the "Trail" destination at Creighton Island, GA hosted by Eric Davis; and McIntosh, GA hosted by Brett Wilkes. A couple of Floridians even made it to Freeman Field (0OH5) in Ohio. All were well attended making this first RAF Trail a big success.

The RAF grant committee approved a substantial contribution to Friends of Arcadia

Airport (<http://foaa.us/>) to build a shower facility in their campgrounds. Arcadia is a great destination choice to picnic or camp. This grant is just another example showing the RAF's commitment to continued support for all general aviation to enjoy.

The RAF invites you to gather in March 2018 to enjoy Arcadia's Pioneer Day event, details coming. Please watch the RAF calendar for dates and other events such as Blackwater, which will be moved to the fall time frame.

In October the RAF partnered with AOPA in Tampa and in November with Deland. At the Deland Showcase the RAF was in charge of the in-field camping and educating the LSA folks about recreational aviation. If you missed this event, plan on attending in 2018.

Amrat Chugani signed up with the RAF at AOPA's Tampa event and also attended the Deland Showcase. He then rolled up his sleeves for a work party at Keystone Heights (42J) and is now an RAF Ambassador. Amrat is a real asset to the RAF. He is a senior at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, working toward a bachelor's degree in aeronautical science with a minor in business administration.

Hooch Hut repurposed — Ten volunteers responded to my last-minute call for support for a November 18 work party at Keystone Heights (42J) airport, 15 nm northeast of Gainesville. Its maintenance shed/pilot shelter — affectionately called the "Hooch Hut" — is being re-purposed for aviation-only use. This facility will support meetings, fly-ins and camping.

Christine Tilton of Florida Sport Aircraft Antique Airplane Association (FSAACA) donated material to complete the flooring. The interior and exterior were prepped for painting. Todd Falconer used his forklift to reposition a large concrete slab which will be used to support the outside shower.

Future work parties will complete painting, installation of the shower, routing of a new water supply line, new metal roofing and concrete flooring for the pavilion areas.

I want to thank volunteers Lakin Jones, Christine Tilton, Kathy Gronbach, Albert Gronbach, Maria Hitt, Todd Falconer, Kim Capozzi, Ariel Gleason and Amrat Chugani.

Georgia — Eric Davis

The first of several fall/winter work parties at Georgia's Meadowlark, (GA75) took place November 18. Neighbors showed up with tractors and graders. Volunteers cleared the brush from the North end of the runway, which opened it up to the county road, so fencing became a requirement. Another neighbor, not a pilot, volunteered to lead the fence installation. (Continued on next page)

The 2017



RAF Trail's END

The "RAF Trail" showcased some of the destinations the RAF supports east of the Mississippi. Our eastern region State Liaisons organized unique activities at some of their favorite recreational flying destinations.

The 2017 RAF Trail lined up like this:

- ★ Arcadia, FL, March 10-12
- ★ Creighton Island, GA, March 24-26
- ★ Blackwater, FL, May 12-14
- ★ *Weather forced a reschedule of McIntosh Reserve and Trigger Gap*
- ★ Lee Bottom, IN, June 9-11
- ★ North Fox Island, MI, June 16-17
- ★ Shannon, VA, July 8
- ★ Swank Field, OH, September 1-3
- ★ Pennsylvania Safari; September 30 - October 1
- ★ McIntosh Reserve, GA, November 3-5
- ★ Trigger Gap, AR, November 4-5

Thank you everyone who participated!

**Watch for a Western version
of the RAF Trail!**

(Continued from page 9)

The group cleared brush from the East side of the runway, installed a new base station for ground-to-air communication, and made plans to bring the hangar lighting up to code.

Marie-Claire LaBerge and her husband Kevin plan to run a soaring school from the field in addition to making the site available for transient and recreational pilots who want a nice place to camp. There is also an apartment in the barn that will be cleaned up and refurbished.

Future projects include creating a shooting range, tent sites, and a fire pit

Maine — Andy Rowe

Ragmuff fly-in, October 13-15 –

Ragmuff is the first airfield within the privately-held North Maine Woods now open for public use. RAF Maine State Liaison Steve Mason knew the land manager and we worked to prepare it. I've filed for the FAA identifier, and it is included in the "Airfield Guide." (See page 11.)

Visitors for this fly-in drove campers and flew in Friday. We set up the fire circle (an old truck rim) and grill. My lean moose burgers were less than totally successful — they were good but fell apart!

As it was upland bird season, several went looking for partridge. Sunday the rains came, along with a strong southerly. Most left early. I may have beaten Jeff Bossie in his C-140 home in my pickup.

In total we had 13 airplanes, seven or eight overnight campers, and four new RAF donors signed up.

Michigan — Brad Frederick

North Fox Island (6Y3) was busy. 145 pilots registered landing in 2017; we estimate a total of 450 visitors. The official season ended Nov. 1 and a few later visitors pushed the envelope a little.

Visitors enjoyed the walking trails that we maintain now. One of our volunteers, Steve Kelly, informed me that he successfully sent a text from the sand dune — the high point toward the South end of the island. That could be good news for emergencies. We'll look into that when we get back out there. North Fox Work Party — I am looking at July this year for warmer weather instead of June. Watch the RAF Calendar for the date.

Two Hearted River (6Y5), Eastern Upper Peninsula: Work on the airstrip has been accomplished enough to open 2,200 ft in late spring 2018. An additional 200 ft has a few holes and low spots to fix before opening. Other work is to re-route an ORV trail and work on aircraft parking areas when we can get out there.

The FAA has reserved 6Y5 as its identifier, but it's always a wait to get one on

the charts. The MDOT-Aeronautics Dept. has issued the license to us after inspecting and approving it.

Holland Park Township (HLM)

Southwestern Lower MI — Pavement and grass runways, a camping area 100LL and Mogas. This airport on the outskirts of Holland, MI invites you to visit the interesting area. Take a bike and pedal to Lake Michigan. Holland State Park is just a short hike away.

Iron County, (50D), Western Upper Peninsula — We hope to start working on a camping area on the edge of the airport close to the Paint River. You can go online to the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources for a fishing license then bring your fishing pole for smallmouth bass.

In 2018 come fly some Pure Michigan!

Montana — Scott Newpower

I am working to include aviation in the Custer Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan as well as the Missoula BLM Resource Management Plan.

AOPA's regional Fly-in will take place in Missoula on Father's Day weekend, June 15-16, so we are planning an RAF potato bake at the Seeley Lake airport Saturday evening while they are in the area. Plans are still in the making!

New Hampshire — John Meade

Hello from New Hampshire!

It was a very cold December and early January with ice and snow abundant. However as of late it has warmed up and slowed ice making at Alton Bay. We are working on an RAF February fly in to the ice where all pilots will get their RAF ICE WINGS Certificate. I am hoping for all of the NE RAF SL's to be present and pass the word.



I have been invited by the Cape Cod Hangar of the Quiet Birdmen to provide a briefing on the RAF and our mission here in the Northeast. My fellow State Liaison Rene Robillard is working, so I will step in to assist. I am focusing on two airfields on Martha's Vineyard, Katama and Tradewinds and what the RAF can do to assist in keeping these open to pilots.

I have completed three RAF airfields in New Hampshire for the Airfield Guide.

New Mexico — Ron Keller

Gila National Forest Plan Revision Technical meeting was held at Silver City, NM December 13. Five presenters and about 50 people attended, including a high school team with New Mexico Envirothon that finished 3rd in a recent North American Competition. One of the students is studying wildlife, so I told him about the RAF Noise/Wildlife study.

Best of all, I had a nice conversation with Adam Mendonca, Forest Supervisor for the Gila. He seems completely on board with our Gila Airstrip Integrated Maintenance Plan, and is eager to see the draft. He also seems to be in favor of reopening a couple of other Gila airstrips.

Amigos del Cielo Fly-in Nov. 2-5 —

Airplanes started arriving Friday afternoon. The RAF-sponsored windsocks were much appreciated as they indicated winds worse than forecast. On Friday evening we watched Alaskan Bush Pilot videos in the theater behind the hangars.

Saturday morning started with New Mexico piñon coffee, followed by more arrivals challenged by sporty winds. Three adventurous souls enjoyed horseback rides. Saturday afternoon we visited the Chiricahua Desert Museum followed by a short drive to Portal, AZ to see Vista Point in the Cave Creek Recreation Area. The evening meal was a great catered dinner of chicken and beef fajitas with all the trimmings. The former sheriff — a local historian — gave a presentation about Chiricahua Apache figures and the photographers who captured key moments. I presented a power point on New Mexico backcountry airstrips.

Sunday morning started again with piñon coffee and cheerful goodbyes. All together, 12 airplanes and 25 people from CA, AZ, TX, and NM attended the fly-in.

North Carolina — Tim Farris

We are looking forward to a year of growth for the RAF in North Carolina. I am actively working with member Charles Lewis to plan our first RAF Fly-in this spring. Details to come once a date and location have been finalized.

Any NC members who would like a presentation covering the ins and outs of the RAF at their local pilot group, please contact me, Tim Farris at tfarris@theraf.org.

A big thank you to our new members and donors in NC this year. We can't do this without you.

Oregon — Richard Mayes

Working in collaboration with our friends from the Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) and the Willowa Pilots Association (WPA), RAF

State Reports

members joined two work parties in May at the **Owyhee Reservoir Airport**. Locally known as Pelican Point, the airstrip is considered Oregon's premier backcountry destination. The airstrip surface is in poor condition due to erosion and in dire need of significant maintenance. Unfortunately, the absence of road access and State funding means that all of the repairs must be undertaken by volunteers, and by hand.

The above organizations, along with the Oregon Pilot's Association (OPA), are negotiating with the State and BLM to try and improve the situation.

With a great deal of support from volunteers, we christened the **Sunrise Valley Ranch** airstrip in early June. The newest backcountry airstrip in Oregon, which was developed with RAF guidance, sits in a small valley at 4,400 feet elevation, surrounded by 6,400 feet high mountains.

Owners Larry and Susan Fildes welcome pilots to visit their lodge for a meal, or to stay overnight. The ranch has turned out to be a very popular destination with often a full house for breakfast on the weekends.

The widespread forest fires and resulting smoke put a damper on backcountry flying for a good part of this past summer.

However, with our colleagues from Washington, we did manage to hold our first **Nehalem Bay Fly-In**. The July weather cooperated with a warm, sunny and mostly fog free weekend on the beautiful Oregon coast. Members flew in from as far as Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. Local pilots also dropped in to greet new friends. Attendees camped adjacent to their airplanes and enjoyed a potluck dinner featuring fresh salmon generously provided by RAF Washington State Liaison Dave Whitelaw and his brother John.

For a couple of years, the RAF has been discussing with the USFS the possible

reopening of the **Fall River airstrip**, opposite the Fall River Fish Hatchery, east of La Pine. Unfortunately, the USFS has rejected our proposal citing the fact that the USFS had no need for the Fall River airstrip and that Sunriver, a private airstrip is available for use seven miles northeast of Fall River. The outcome was disappointing, but we will continue to investigate other approaches.

RAF is actively participating with the USFS in the **Blue Mountains Forest Plan**

Revision. In reviewing and commenting on the proposed plan revision, our objective is to protect aviation access to the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. We are also working to re-open access to several abandoned airstrips, such as Big Rock Flats, Cold Springs Guard Station and Calvert Peak. The RAF is also working with the BLM on the **Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan**, which could impact access to public lands in the Owyhee Canyonlands region.

On the horizon — Airfield Guide under construction

You have asked us for a guide full of recreational airstrips for a long time. We realized the scope of the undertaking, and are now supporting a private developer who is assembling data and video for an interactive online repository of "out-of-the-way airfields." We are very excited to share this development with you, and encourage you to explore the Airfield Guide website. The geographic region covered is expected to grow as more airfields are added.

See <https://airfield.guide/default.asp>



Kids dig recreational aviation in Arizona

"One of the greatest rewards I feel we reap from our hard work in the backcountry is the effect those efforts have on future generations," said RAF Arizona and Public Lands Liaison Mark Spencer. Consider James, son of Lori and Ken Nebrig of Prescott. For his Eagle Scout project, he designed and constructed the ramada at the Payson airport (**KPAN**). James, then 14, got his first backcountry ride from the Payson airport to Buzzard Roost, the newest airfield on the Tonto National Forest "and it really lit a fire in him," Spencer said. James completed his glider private pilot checkride on his 16th birthday and is headed toward his fixed wing checkride on his 17th birthday.

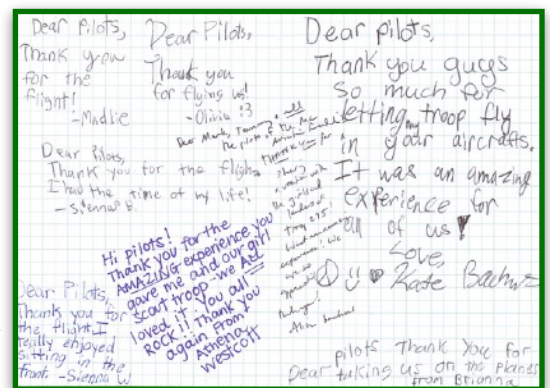
"There is just something about the freedom that aviation brings us, and added to the backcountry experience that [the RAF] team has helped make possible . . . we've got something that is truly interesting to young folks," Spencer said.

At one of Grapevine's (**88AZ**) fly-ins, young Eddie Stetcher received his first ride in RAF member Tod Dickey's seaplane. As Eddie was recovering from his airsickness, he proclaimed, "This is the best day of my life!" Spencer heard from Eddie's parents that he is now hooked on aviation.

At the 2017 Veteran's Day Pleasant Valley (Young, **24AZ**) fly-in, USFS recreation specialist Gary Lollman approached a local Girl Scout troop camped up the road, and invited them to visit the airstrip. The visit turned into airplane rides. "The smiles on these girls' faces after the flight were one of the greatest rewards I've experienced in the few years I've been involved," Spencer said. "Perhaps that day will have touched one of them in a way that no school or other career counselor can, perhaps leading them onto the path towards becoming a pilot."

"Our partnership with the USFS on this endeavor has also been one of the most rewarding things I've ever experienced," he added.

Christmas/Thank you card the Girl Scouts sent to the Arizona pilots, courtesy of Mark Spencer.



RAF Memorial Bricks

Folks gather around RAF Fire Hubs to enjoy a campfire, share stories and plan adventures. For a \$100 contribution, we'll engrave your brick(s) with a unique message.

You select the **RAF Fire Hub** where you'd like it permanently placed: Sun 'n Fun, FL, San Marcos, TX or Ryan Field, MT.

What better way to show your support for the RAF or honor a loved one? You may order here:

contact@TheRAF.org





RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

1711 West College St., Bozeman, MT 59715

406-582-1RAF (1723)

www.TheRAF.org



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

We received armfuls of mail from generous supporters located all over the U.S. during our year-end fundraising campaign. Here is a sample of the notes we received to our question, How are we measuring up? What will make you glad that you support the RAF?

"Thanks for all the great initiatives!"

"Love you guys – Keep up the GREAT work!"

"You're doing GREAT"

"More grass runways – EVERYWHERE!"

"The good work and all the time the board has given for a very worthwhile cause – Thanks!"



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 or use the form below.

Yes! I Want To Be A Member Of The TEAM!



Contribution Levels:

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

Please make your check payable to: Recreational Aviation Foundation.

Mail to: 1711 West College Street • Bozeman, MT 59715-4913

For credit card donations go online to www.TheRAF.org or call us at 406.582.1723

Name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Interested in: Volunteering for: _____

Comments: _____