

# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION NEWS • ACTION

SUMMER 2017

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

ISSUE 20

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

## Michigan

### RAF project takes shape on an Upper Peninsula airstrip

The RAF is excited to announce that work has begun on reclaiming another Michigan airstrip at a beautiful recreational destination, this time, along the Two-Hearted River in the Upper Peninsula. The project is overseen by RAF Michigan Liaison Brad Frederick, who worked with volunteers and the state Department of Natural Resources, coordinating the restoration of Lake Michigan's North Fox Island airstrip.

Frederick has staked out the airstrip, and donations for this project have funded excavating equipment and crew, and seeding the turf. *It is not yet open to the public.* The RAF will announce its opening once it has been approved in safe condition.

"I am so happy the RAF and its members are bringing this airport back to life. I will be flying my 206 up to Two Hearted Airfield, camping, fishing and enjoying all the scenery," Dan Schiffer wrote on the RAF website.

"It really deserves to become a destination for recreational flying. It offers some of the best wilderness views and experiences in Michigan's UP. The flight over the southern shore of Lake Superior with its beautiful vistas are

perhaps some of the most spectacular of all of Michigan's Shorelines," Richard Ness wrote.

To donate to this project, [click here.](#)



The scenery inspired Ernest Hemingway to write "The Big Two Hearted River", published in 1925.

## Oregon RAF inaugurates turf airstrip

RAF Oregon State Liaison Richard Mayes organized a Fly-In Saturday, June 10 at Madras, Oregon (S33) to inaugurate the new grass runway.

Pilots came from as far away as New Hampshire. Saturday evening, Berg Air hosted a barbecue dinner. On Sunday morning, five aircraft flew out to the Sunrise Valley Ranch to try out the newest backcountry airstrip in Oregon, developed with RAF assistance. Its 2,100 ft x 60 ft dirt airstrip sits in a small valley at 4,400 ft elevation, surrounded on three sides by 6,400 ft mountains.

Larry and Susan Fildes, owners of the Sunrise Valley Ranch, hosted nine hungry visitors at their lodge for a family-style breakfast.

## Illinois

### RAF hosts successful Astronomy Night

Guests loved their "out of this world" camping experience during the RAF Fly-in June 23-24 at Havana Regional Airport (910), staged by RAF Illinois Liaison Mike Purpura. The local EAA Chapter 1420 handled Friday dinner and a pancake breakfast. Aircraft arrived at the beautiful grass strip before the runway lights and beacon were darkened at 9:30 and guided Celestial observations began.

Leslie Prellwitz, Ninety-Nines Director and Chicago Area Chapter president wrote, "Mike Purpura gave a 99s webinar in February about recreational flying, and I got hooked on the awesome locales he described. I couldn't pass this one up!"

University Astronomers manned four big telescopes long in to the new-moon darkness.

RV pilot Pete Howell attended, and commented on the VansAirforce.net forum: "The EAA Chapter and the RAF hosted an Out of this World Astronomy Fly-In camping night. Kudos to EAA Chapter 1420 and the RAF for a great idea and flawless execution!!"

Quoting more of Prellwitz's message, "The event was very well attended, not only from people who flew in, but also many locals who came out for the viewing party, so it was a great mix of aviators and 'could be' aviators, and promoted the airport as well as stargazing . . . well done!"

The RAF wishes to thank everyone who attended, helped, and for the support of the Havana Airport Authority.



Astronomy Club volunteers set up one of four large telescopes for fly-in guests.

# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

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## President's Message – Building on our success

– Alan Metzler, RAF President



As I fly around the country visiting RAF State Liaisons and volunteers, I'm asked, "so now that you are president, where is the RAF headed in the next few years?"

I believe that to know our current heading, we must look to the past and the vision of the founding directors. They set out to preserve, maintain and create airstrips for recreational access, which remains the focus of today's Board of Directors. Many of the founding directors remain engaged and continue to support the organization in a variety of ways.

With John's move to Chairman, I, along with the rest of the board, stepped up our engagement with the day-to-day work of the organization. The plan is to build on the success we have had building relationships with federal and state agencies, aviation organizations, industry folks, and private landowners.

The RAF is truly a national organization with a desire to support great destinations in all fifty states. The board set a goal earlier this year to identify airfield projects around the country with a particular focus on creating an airfield or two on the eastern side of the country. I'm excited for what lies ahead.

Many passionate volunteers and supporters contribute time and resources for the benefit of all recreational aviators and their families, and the RAF has accomplished much. We can use your help spreading the message. Please tell your friends about the RAF. Whether your favorite outdoor activity is hiking, fishing or camping under your airplane wing surrounded by friends and family, spending the evening around the campfire, the experience is really about the people you are with and who you may meet and come to count as friends through recreational aviation.

For many, the RAF has provided a way to engage aviation in a new and exciting way.

In the tradition of Ben and Butchie Ryan who gave all of us beautiful Ryan Field (2MT1) to enjoy, I encourage each of us to provide for future generations by giving time and resources to further the RAF mission. Take a young person along on a flight to experience the beauty of the back-country.

On behalf of the RAF Board, I wish everyone a safe summer enjoying the great freedom and privilege we have in this country to use our aircraft for access to very special destinations.

– Alan

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## Reflections on RAF's first decade

# Mission formed to save airstrips

– Chuck Jarecki, RAF co-founder and former director



Jarecki was awarded the RAF "Golden Pulaski" for his work.

**D**uring my fifty-four years of recreational flying, nothing has been more satisfying than the past ten years I have served as a founding board member of the RAF.

About fifteen years ago, I realized that if we just sat back and did nothing, our recreational aviation opportunities would gradually diminish. There was no organized advocacy to protect backcountry airstrips from closure. Our Montana Pilots Association (MPA) addressed this concern, and formed a Recreational Airstrip Committee with a core of dedicated members.

As we progressed with our mission in Montana, we soon realized that there needed to be a national organization with a specific mission. Thus, the Recreational Aviation Foundation was formed. By-laws were written, and the entity was incorporated with both Montana non-profit and IRS 501-c-3 status, mostly due to the hard work and perseverance of founding director Jerry Cain.

Meanwhile, we got started saving airstrips. Six airstrips in the newly created Upper Missouri River Breaks National



Jarecki installing the vault toilet at Ryan Field.

Monument were saved, Chicken Strip in Death Valley National Park was saved, plus numerous others. The RAF, with support from the MPA, built a brand new airstrip on U.S. Forest Service land – the first new Forest Service airstrip in over forty years – truly a remarkable achievement in this day and age. As word spread about the RAF, pilots from all over the country joined in,

... We soon realized that there needed to be a national organization with a specific mission.

– Chuck Jarecki

volunteering their time, expertise and money. Valuable contacts were made in Washington, D.C. at Congressional and Agency levels. Under RAF guidance, various states have amended their Recreational Use Statute to include aviation activities. It is hard to believe that we have accomplished so much in just ten years.

With much valuable input from many individuals, I was able to write two RAF produced manuals. *Recreational Airstrips on Public Lands – A Reference Guide for Public Land Managers*, was designed to help public land managers understand recreational aviation needs. The *Advocate's Guide* was written to help individual pilots be effective in carrying out the RAF mission.

As I look back on this experience, I can say that the friendships made as well as working with a dedicated cadre of aviators has been the highlight. This has been especially true in the case of Ryan Field. When the RAF became involved with the property – eventually obtaining full ownership – trees and bushes were encroaching on the runway, and there were no camping facilities or amenities. Through the efforts of countless volunteers, a first-class backcountry destination airstrip has emerged. This is what makes the RAF the unique, productive organization that it is, and I am proud to have been a part of the process. Under the

guidance of then-President (now Board Chair) John McKenna, Administrative Director Tricia McKenna, veteran board members and highly qualified new board members, the RAF is poised to achieve even more successes.

## New Arkansas airstrip readied

"In spite of thirty mile-an-hour crosswinds all day, nineteen volunteers accomplished everything we hoped to," said RAF Arkansas State Liaison Dave Powell, of the Trigger Gap project, located 3.2 nm south of Carroll County Airport (4M1) in Arkansas. The new 3,000 ft. grass airstrip lies in the Ozark Mountains on Nature Conservancy lands. Private donations enabled the RAF to create the strip, and a long-term lease ensures its future.

"We worked a Bobcat to death, and were lucky Matthew Turnage was able to get a second unit out to us," Powell said.

The team assembled, staked, and placed two picnic tables, established a safer road access, and placed runway pattern markers around the windsock. The customary left hand pattern will help mitigate noise over neighbors.

Amenities now include an upgraded fire pit and split firewood, 4x4 posts with lantern hooks for hanging hammocks to adjacent trees, and two lines of anchored cable for tie-downs.

The RAF thanks the hardworking volunteers. "You've done a lot to make Trigger Gap a more desirable destination,"



Powell added. Local volunteers have committed to long-term maintenance. Click here for the [Trigger Gap Safety Briefing](#).

Pictured above: Volunteers take a break at one of the new Trigger Gap picnic tables for pulled pork sandwiches, courtesy of Justin Shockley.



# Could a psychological condition ground you?

– Dr. Chuck Denison, PhD and RAF supporter

Even with the much-publicized “Third Class Medical Reform” of 2017, pilots still need to qualify mentally and physically to practice the privileges of an airman. The medical certificate can be a source of frustration for many airmen, as there are a variety of conditions that can affect your qualification.

Have you been instructed to get a psychological or neuropsychological evaluation, or an aviation test called the CogScreen-Aeromedical Edition? Are you involved in substance abuse recovery and want to keep flying? Have you experienced a head injury (concussion), depression or anxiety? If you have been advised to seek out a Human Intervention and Motivation Study (“HIMS” trained) medical examiner or psychologist, you will need to work with professionals who have very specific training in working with pilots through the HIMS program.

“There are resources available to help you through this process,” says Chuck Denison, PhD, an Aviation and Forensic Psychologist at [Aviation Psychology, LLC](http://AviationPsychology.LLC). He and

his colleague Dr. Kendra Sherwood, PhD, have offices in Laramie, Wyoming and Rocky Mountain Metro Airport, Broomfield, Colorado.

Denison, an avid backcountry Husky pilot says, “If you have been referred for a psychological evaluation or HIMS consultation, we could be one of the available advocates there to to serve you.”

Aviation Psychology, LLC conducts a thorough orientation to the process of establishing the First, Second or Third Class Medical Certification. “It’s your right to enjoy a thorough, fair process,” he adds.

Your Aviation Medical Examiner is the key professional in your medical certification process. Your aviation psychologist should work closely with your AME to ensure that he or she has the necessary information to represent your case with the FAA, not always available through general, clinical psychology.

To get in touch with Dr. Denison, contact him at [ChuckDenison@iCloud.com](mailto:ChuckDenison@iCloud.com).



## “Out West” theme for Annual Ryan Fly-In

Having hosted fly-ins at Montana’s Ryan Field (2MT1) in pouring rain and triple-digit heat, the ideal weather this year was most welcome. Campers woke to sunshine, great for trail rides and hiking through the

abundant wildflowers and glorious sunsets on Strawberry Mountain June 23-25.

This year 75 folks in 25 aircraft and various drive-in camping outfits arrived. Swan Mountain Outfitters erected a huge canopy and catered both Friday and Saturday dinners out of their authentic chuckwagon. They brought two kegs of

local craft beer tapped by foreign exchange workers who enjoyed the western backcountry atmosphere as much as anyone.

RAF President Alan Metzler got up early Saturday to fire up the charcoal, and treated everyone to a gourmet Dutch oven breakfast.

Ben and Butchie Ryan arrived along with a half dozen other residents of the Montana Veterans Home to enjoy refreshments and a view of the airplanes parked on the beautiful grass strip. There were tears in Ben’s eyes as he surveyed the lineup, saying, “Ryan Field is for everyone to enjoy.”

Swan Mountain Outfitters brought a string of saddle horses and led trail rides along the fringe of the Great Bear Wilderness. Margie Prill led the children on an aviation-themed scavenger hunt, and called Bingo when they returned, including prizes. Berkley Hudson led an afternoon hike and the group returned with all bear spray intact.

Other than Alan’s flight from his home field in Pennsylvania, distance honors go to Mike and Penny Hergenrather and grandson from Spring, Texas who arrived in their Maule M-7. Mike and Penny pitched in all weekend to help.

The RAF thanks everyone who attended, purchased meals, logo-wear; and the many volunteers who helped make the RAF Ryan Fly-In so enjoyable.



Top: Swan Mountain wrangler leads riders into Great Bear Wilderness; Left: approach to Ryan Field; Right: camping in perfect weather. All photos courtesy of Mike Hines, Polson, MT, [mikeh@hellroaring.com](mailto:mikeh@hellroaring.com).

## RAF Mini Conferences reach out regionally

Launched this year, the series of five regional RAF Mini Education Conferences has gathered dozens of RAF volunteers to hear specialists on varying topics relevant to recreational aviation access.

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

Although the scheduled day is jam-packed with activity, participants take time to socialize and visit informally.

The first one was staged at Executive Airport in Henderson, NV in February to serve the northwestern region. The Southwest RMEC was in Fort Worth, TX in March; Beechcraft Heritage Museum was the site of the Tullahoma RMEC in May, serving the Southeast. John, Charlotte and Charles Parish were superb hosts.

Next up is the Midwest conference in Aurora, IL August 18-20, and the series ends in Reedsville, PA on October 20-22.

Mark Spencer, RAF Arizona State and Federal Lands Liaison,

attended the Henderson RMEC and summed up the general feeling of the group. "This conference was short and highly efficient, something that is important to my packed schedule," he said, adding, "I felt that the smaller size group allowed us to actually make a difference in our relationships with each other."



RMEC attendees gather for a photo at the Tullahoma, TN Beechcraft Heritage Museum, where hosts John, Charlotte and Charles Parish "rolled out the orange carpet for us," Tricia McKenna said.

## RAF Guide for the Private Airfield Owner

The RAF's *Guide for the Private Airfield Owner* is now available. The document 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), took the lead in drafting 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 document is available online from the RAF website or hard copies may be obtained from the RAF through [contact@TheRAF.org](mailto:contact@TheRAF.org)



## RAF launches Ambassador Team

— Sarah Chandler, RAF Volunteer Coordinator

Do you love flying to airstrips with recreational access?  
Do you enjoy local aviation events?  
Do you find yourself sharing the RAF story with all your family and friends?  
Do you gravitate toward the color orange?

**You** could be the next RAF Ambassador – RAF members passionate about preserving, maintaining and creating airstrips for recreational access. The role of an RAF Ambassador is to increase awareness of the RAF in their community.

**RAF Ambassadors accomplish this in several ways:**

- Sharing the RAF story
- Promoting and representing the RAF during local aviation events
- Providing support to their State Liaison
- Adhering to the RAF Mission, Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct

Have you considered becoming more involved with the RAF?

This may be the perfect opportunity.

Contact me to start your RAF adventure today!

**Sarah Chandler, RAF Volunteer Coordinator**  
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# Team building – RAF adds State Liaisons

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



## Steve Mason, Maine

Steve joins RAF Maine State Liaison Andy Rowe to advance the RAF mission in our northeastern-most state, famous for lobster and colorful fall foliage.

Steve started flying at a young age at Folsom's Air Service on

Moosehead Lake. "My flying experience actually began on floats. After earning both my private and commercial licenses on floats, I transitioned to a taildragger," he says. He has flown everything from a Cessna 150 on floats to a DC-3 on amphib.

"I was fortunate to fly people to their backcountry river destinations, with canoes strapped to my floats – a practice that no longer happens in Maine," he added.

He says his favorite backcountry strips will always be water, but he stepped up to help the RAF open backcountry strips in Maine's vast Unorganized Territory.

## Dan Keller, Nebraska

During his freshman year in college, a "Learn to Fly Here" flyer caught Dan Keller's eye. Four years later he graduated with an ag business degree. It was post-9/11 so he decided on a profession in finance instead of aviation and pegged his hopes on pursuing recreational aviation.

Today, Dan uses aviation in his business scouting cornfields for insurance and personally to fly back and forth to the family ranch.



Dan's most memorable trips include the 2015 SuperCub Fly-in at Johnson Creek, and joining Caribbean Flying Adventures in 2014 on a fly-out to Long Island in the Bahamas.

He says his goal for the RAF in Nebraska is to

connect pilots with unique locations allowing them to land with easy access to recreational activities. He points out that there is very little public land in his state, so he sees his task as "a liaison between pilots and private airport owners."

Dan is available by email or phone and is very interested in talking about different aircraft for different missions and unique airports in Nebraska. His current experience is in an Aviat Husky and a Columbia 400.

## Christine Mortine, Ohio

Christine Mortine joins RAF Ohio State Liaison Freeman Swank as a second Ohio State Liaison.

During a career in classical music spanning over twenty-five years, Christine turned from conducting and playing instruments to flying them. She is now a full-time flight instructor, having spent the past ten years obtaining her CFI, CFII, MEI, Cirrus Training Center Instructor, as well as SIC in the Citation 500.



She is learning the ropes of her C185

"Songbird" and getting

into the mountains whenever possible. Christine cut her teeth on crosswind landings in Laramie, did the high altitude airfields hop in central Colorado, regularly flies to North Carolina's Ocracoke Island, (W95) to visit her baker daughter, and is always searching out new airfields and their people.

Christine has spent her life backpacking, hiking and kayaking. Originally from Minnesota, she spent summers camping in Colorado and lived in Alaska for seven years. Combining her love of the outdoors with general aviation is "what I've been waiting for all my life," she says, cherishing her ability to be a pilot, and now, an advocate for the RAF mission. She also volunteers with FAAS Team, Ninety-Nines, Professional Pilots Association, Angel Flights, EAA, and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and WOSU Public Media TV/Radio.

Christine has been involved with many non-profit organizations, and says, "I am truly impressed with the professionalism, dedication, safety, and mission of the RAF."

## RAF invites you to fly with us!

The RAF is staging frequent, dispersed "RAF Weekends". Watch the RAF Calendar for an event in your area during 2017! Come meet your RAF State Liaison as the RAF brings recreational aviation to pilots, during these flying/camping weekends, "where we actually do what we say," Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Chandler explains. "This is our chance to introduce pilots and their families to the joys of flying to destinations with recreational activities," she adds.

Also, watch for the RAF at AOPA's Regional Fly-Ins! The RAF hosts a display and speakers for your enjoyment and information. See us in:

- Norman, OK – Sept. 8-9
- Groton, CT – Oct. 6-7
- Tampa, FL – Oct 27-28



Partnering with  
**AOPA**

Next Oshkosh, I'm flying GA  
—Charlie Gregoire

## RAF Pony Express

Plans are underway to shuttle Redbird Simulator's Charlie Gregoire from his home in Austin, TX to Oshkosh July 20, landing at mostly recreational airstrips.

The concept gained momentum after Charlie mused about his dreadful 33-hour commercial flight into Oshkosh last year in *Flying* magazine. "Next Oshkosh, I'm flying GA," he declared.

RAF Chairman John McKenna took him at his word and challenged RAF members to help Charlie hopscotch across America's backcountry from San Marcos to OSH, delivering him "with his luggage, within 33 hours, refreshed, in spite of smelling a little like campfire smoke," McKenna added.

Dubbed "Pony Express Charlie", RAF Director Emeritus Jerry Cain is coordinating the pilots and destinations – 10 including Chuck Wiplinger's splashdown on Lake Winnebago, 96WI, on July 21. We invite anyone who's in the area to greet and cheer them on at each airport. Check the RAF website and Facebook page for ETAs and updates!

*As in any flight, safety is foremost, so ETAs are subject to weather.*



ForeFlight image of the cross-county RAF Pony Express, through six states from San Marcos, TX to Oshkosh, WI.

## Jerry Cain, Board Member Emeritus

### Taking on another task

What started as a donation of a dogsled ride turned into over a dozen years of dedication to the Recreational Aviation Foundation for Founding Director Jerry Cain of Lincoln, Montana.

A small group of Montana pilots concerned about losing backcountry airstrips had begun organizing a statewide effort, and had drafted a charter and by-laws. They held an online auction to raise funds, and after Jerry donated the dogsled ride, he volunteered to file the paperwork to establish a non-profit foundation. He was quickly acclaimed as Secretary/Treasurer, and the RAF was formed.

"We decided that it should be a national organization – not limited to just Montana," Jerry said. "I prepared and sent an inch-thick binder of documents, including support letters, and we were granted Public Charity status in December 2003." As the RAF gained membership across the country and several foreign countries, "I was spending ten to fourteen hours almost every day trying to keep up with it," he added, leaving very little time for flying his 1999 Husky or his Cessna 182 into the backcountry.

He retired from the board in 2011, but continues to participate in monthly teleconferences, and keeps a close eye on developments. "It's extremely satisfying to observe how the RAF is progressing and growing on a first-hand basis. *Wow!*" Jerry emphasized.

Jerry understates his level of support for this organization. He has given multiple cash donations, in addition to his invaluable professional time. "I could not have imagined in 2003 what the RAF would accomplish in its first ten years and could not be more proud as its success continues. The all-volunteer Board and the membership make this all possible through their generous support of time and their dollars," Jerry said.

Jerry stepped up to coordinate the intricacies of the RAF's "Pony Express" shuttle from Austin, TX to Oshkosh. (*Details at left.*)

"Jerry is one of our former board members who continues to help us," RAF President Alan Metzler said. "We really appreciate his willingness to arrange the logistics for the RAF Pony Express trip!"

"This speaks to the level of Jerry's dedication to our mission," Administrative Director Tricia McKenna added, "and Jerry's incredibly generous character."



## Hartzell hosts RAF again at Airventure



The RAF is pleased that our friends at Hartzell Propeller invited us to join them again this year for AirVenture at Oshkosh. TEAM RAF has declared Thursday, July 27 as "Orange Day at Oshkosh" and will be wearing our signature orange. We'll be serving ice cream that day from 2 to 4 p.m. on the rooftop patio above the [Hartzell Propeller](#) showroom. Enjoy the "best ice cream in America" from Wisconsin's Kelley Country Creamery of Fond du Lac. We've been called the "fun guys" (and gals) and would love to talk with you about backcountry recreational flying.

*New this year:* The RAF will raffle off logo wear at the Ice Cream Social between 2 and 4 p.m. See you there!

## 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.

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# State Reports

## Alaska

RAF Alaska Liaison Al Clayton organized a June 3 work party to remove trees along 1,000-ft Jake's Bar, which lies within Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. The group gathered Friday at Clayton's rustic cabin at Fireweed airstrip, near the old mining town of McCarthy. The pilots enjoyed an incredibly scenic flight, while Al's wife Beth and daughter Taral made the six-hour drive from Anchorage, bringing tools, food, beverages and propane.

After Saturday's hearty potluck breakfast, nine volunteers in five planes made the short flight into the Park, landing at Jake's Bar along the Chitina River, a tributary of the Copper, famous for salmon. Al had worked with Park officials to obtain the permit and guidelines for the work, and packed in chainsaws, loppers, hearing protection, a weed whacker and sandwiches. The strip was originally a staging place for mining

activity, and is now ideal for recreational use. There is an old cabin, sauna and historic cache at its north end, maintained by the Park Service and available for public use. A short trail leads to a good put-in place for rafting the Chitina. The group tracked down an old road grader abandoned in the woods.

Overcast but dry weather held all day Saturday, but typical Alaska spring rains began Saturday night, and low ceilings delayed departures on Sunday. Spirits were high in spite of wet tents and clothing.

Al thanks Bernie Willis and Ed White, volunteers from EAA Chapter 42; Matt Freeman, retired FAA; and Bob Waldron, Ray Huot, Jim Schaff, and Montana's Carmine Mowbray, all from the RAF. Ray's guest, Ralph Peters from Georgia did a great job with the weed whacker.

## California – Rick Lach

### First Annual RAF Fly-In At Kern Valley:

In spite of a poor forecast, around thirty-five airplanes and more than fifty people attended the RAF's first annual Fly-In May 5-7 at Kern Valley Airport (L05), located just south of the mountain-sports town of Kernville near the southern High Sierra foothills. Organized in large part by RAF member Anthony Longobardo, Dustin Mosher led flights to ten backcountry airstrips within an hour's flight of Kern Valley.

Folks took the shuttle into town Friday night and enjoyed restaurants within easy walking distance of each other. Saturday night's tri-tip barbecue by Sierra Vista

Restaurant at the airport got many compliments. A raffle included aviation prizes and giveaways from local businesses.

**Campground improvements:** The RAF was instrumental in improving amenities at this ideal recreational destination, adjacent to the majestic Kern River and just north of Lake Isabella. Within three miles of the airport is world class fishing, river rafting, hiking, mountain biking and spectacular views. Through a grant from the RAF and individual donors, the old barrel solar shower was replaced with a three-stall shower house with sinks, mirrors, and charging ports.

There is an on-site cafe, a courtesy car and minor maintenance. The airport hosts the Annual Kern Valley Backcountry Fly-In with camping, barbecue and fly-outs to area backcountry airstrips; and the town hosts Western-themed activities including the Whiskey Flat Days festival and rodeo.

[See Kern Valley Airport](#) for more details.



Volunteers pose in front of the old cabin.



"Short final into Kern," – photo by George Kounis of Pilot Getaways magazine.

## Arizona

### Chart shows no more "X" on Arizona's Grapevine

– Contributed by Mark Spencer, RAF Arizona and Federal Lands Liaison

The new Phoenix FAA sectional shows no more X through the Grapevine Airstrip symbol. It's taken nearly five years of collaboration between the [RAF](#), [Arizona Pilots' Association \(APA\)](#) and the U.S.

Forest Service – including the signing of the national MOU between the RAF and the USFS – but we are celebrating another success advancing the RAF mission. The new identifier 88AZ appears on the chart for this Arizona airstrip located close to Lake Roosevelt. Hundreds of volunteers gave their time, monetary contributions, sweat and even blood, (everything has thorns in the Sonoran Desert) to make this happen. Grapevine is an example of what can be accomplished through partnering, and is a great example when working with public land managers.

The RAF thanks USFS District Ranger Kelly Jardine for his support, and his trust in the aviation community.

While designated as private, access is open to the public; with no commercial operations, no training, nor automobile access. As a symbol of cooperation between the aviation community and the USFS, the mutual expectation is for visitors to respect the Forest Service's vision for the site. Please know and obey [fire restrictions](#), and practice [Leave no Trace](#) ethics. There are limited campsites along the eastern side of the airstrip and midfield on the west. Please do not clear new areas. Always hand pull your aircraft off the airstrip as far from the runway edge as practical. Be courteous to other campers, and keep safety in the forefront of every visit to Grapevine.





## Florida – Bobby Capozzi

**RAF installs new Florida Liaison:** 2017 started with my meet and greet as the new RAF Florida State Liaison in January, at Capozzi's Hangar at Melrose Landing (FD22).

**RAF Trail # 1:** Florida kicked off the "Fly the RAF Trail" at Arcadia. Arrivals started Friday behind schedule due to dense fog. By sunset planes were parked and camps set up. Canoe Safari showed up using their bus to transport everyone a few miles to the El Pirata restaurant, 100% participation including many members of the Friends of Arcadia Airport (FoAA). On Saturday, some joined Canoe Safari's float down the Peace River. Others chose to tour downtown, ducking in and out of the numerous antique

shops and eateries. The rest attended the rodeo or just stayed in camp for a heavy dose of R&R.

After returning from their day adventures, folks headed into town for another group dinner. The rest of the evening was spent around the fire pit with music.

Sunrise came an hour later due to the Daylight time change, tents were dry and there was no fog. After coffee and donuts, planes packed up and said good-byes.

**Sun 'n Fun:** Tim Clifford and I, representing the RAF, kicked off SNF 2017 April 4 with a two hour radio show. Additional guests were Florida Sport Aviation Antique & Classic Association (FSAACA) VP and Chairperson Kim Capozzi, hosting the

*Continued, page 10*



## RAF steers New Mexico Forest Plans

### Gila National Forest update:

New Mexico pilots responded to RAF Calls To Action regarding Forest Service plan revisions and sent comments.

Several people have taken time to attend face-to-face meetings with USFS personnel, including former RAF Director Rol Murrow, RAF New Mexico Liaisons Larry Filener and Ron Keller. The Gila National Forest Planner emailed, thanking them and advising of the inclusion of language advocating airstrips into the plan revision. Here is an excerpt;

"Thank you for sharing your ideas and perspectives. We were able to add "airstrips" to the sustainable infrastructure need-for-change statement as you suggested. We appreciate your efforts to help us with the plan revision process. We expect to post final versions of these documents to our website (<http://go.usa.gov/h88k>) soon. Please feel free to contact us with any additional comments or questions."

### USFS applauds presentation

Filener and Keller teamed up on a Power Point presentation for the Gila National Forest managers in May on the RAF and New Mexico Pilots Assoc.

They explained the NM Airstrip Network, recreational aviation liability issues, the RAF wildlife study, the MOUs between the RAF, the USFS and the BLM; and RAF accomplishments at Montana's Russian Flat and Arizona's Grapevine and Double Circle. They distributed the RAF *Land Managers Guide*.

"I believe we laid the groundwork for further discussions around an integrated maintenance plan for all airstrips in the Gila. We received a round of applause at the end, which seemed to me to indicate the presentation went very well," Keller said.

The USFS Aviation Officer told the RAF team that maintenance standards for airstrips have been discarded, "so the RAF has a real opportunity to provide guidance and input in this area," Keller added.

## The 2017 RAF Trail is in progress!

RAF VP Jack Tyler brought up the "RAF Trail" idea to showcase some of the destinations the RAF supports east of the Mississippi. Right away, our eastern region State Liaisons began organizing unique activities at some of their favorite recreational flying destinations.



"The RAF thought it would be fun to knit some destinations into a series of fly-ins, beginning with Spring gator watching in southern Florida and ending with a Fall Leaves Safari in Pennsylvania" – Jack Tyler

### The 2017 RAF Trail lined up like this:

- ★ Arcadia, FL, March 10-12
- ★ Creighton Island, GA, March 24-26
- ★ Blackwater, FL, May 12-14
- ★ *We regret that weather cancelled 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

See RAF website and Facebook for details.

Watch for a Western version of the RAF Trail next!



## Successful RAF/ Private partnership

– Ron Keller, NM State Liaison

The RAF has done tremendous work building relationships with the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and the National Park Service. Here in New Mexico, those efforts have resulted in increased cooperation with the USFS, preserving and reopening airstrips.

In addition to our success on public lands, the RAF also considers privately owned airstrips.

We have a partnership with the owner of Grant Besley Memorial Airstrip (NM03), located about 15 miles north of Taos.

This airstrip is special for its proximity to the Rio Grande Gorge. As an avid fisherman, I was thrilled by this fishing possibility. The area is within the boundaries of the proposed Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, with bountiful wildlife and amazing views.

Landowners Steve and Deborah Weiss fly a Bonanza, and were open to the idea of putting in a runway. That was completed in 2016 assisted by the RAF and New Mexico Pilots Association.

RAF members met July 8-9 to perform maintenance, and worked with a former BLM official to map roads and trails accessible from the strip.

The Besley Airstrip is a great example of how RAF/Private partnerships can provide greater



*Keller takes a shift mowing the airstrip.*

backcountry access. As RAF contemplates adding airstrip inventory, both public and private lands hold future opportunities.

The second annual Grant Besley Fly-in takes place the morning of July 15. The airstrip lies at an elevation of 7,646 feet. See [www.NMPilots.org](http://www.NMPilots.org) and click the [full Event Calendar](#) link. This private airstrip requires prior permission and the [safety briefing](#) before landing. Hope to see you there!

Vintage Hospitality House where the RAF headquartered. Numerous folks passed through and RAF volunteers spent time explaining our mission and presented materials.

The SNF newspaper included an article about the RAF. Thanks to Ohio State Liaison Freeman Swank, Lisa Reece from Maine, Joe Deleon, Wes Whitney, and Wayne Whitney of Florida. We all had a great time, signed up numerous new members, many giving donations.

**Blackwater's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fly-In:** was also the third stop on the inaugural RAF Trail. Weeks before, a small group called the Grass Strippers – many who are also members of the RAF – worked hard to complete a facelift which included weeding, re-painting runway marking tires; they purchased picnic tables, benches and a large fire pit and an unbelievable sign. There was also a moment to reflect on the passing of Drew Hatch, a major player in obtaining use of Blackwater Airstrip.

### Upcoming RAF events in Florida:

Closing out the year here in Florida, the RAF will be partnering with AOPA in Tampa the end of October. In November, the RAF will partner with Deland Aviation Showcase, and this year will allow limited tent camping near the center of the show, so make your plans early to secure a spot.

## Idaho – Mike Hart

Things have been going great in Idaho. The RAF and Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) worked closely with the State Attorney General resulting in a definitive policy statement by the Idaho Department of Transportation Board regarding the status of four Wilderness Airstrips known as the Big Creek Four. The status of these strips has been a bone of contention between the aviation community and the Krassel Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service.

The State took a clear position that they should remain open while the Forest Service considers them Emergency Use Only and is now taking down tail numbers of users. It is not the collaborative situation we prefer, but



*RAF Liaisons Mike Hart and Christine Mortine at Big Creek – Mike Hart photo.*

clarity will be coming. Read our code of conduct and stay tuned.

**Lodge update:** Other happenings at Big Creek include continued progress on the reconstruction of the Big Creek Lodge by the Idaho Aviation Foundation. If you are looking for a good cause to donate to, consider stopping by [rebuildbigcreek.com](http://rebuildbigcreek.com) and consider a large or small donation. The lodge is expected to have a soft opening later this fall.

**RAF active in USFS planning:** On a more collaborative note, RAF is working with the Salmon-Challis Forest on the revision of the Forest Management Plan. This includes seeking the opening of a once closed airstrip known as Hoodoo Meadows. If we are successful, this high beauty will offer great spring hunting, and early summer hiking into the Big Horn Crags area. Idaho Fish and Game is leading the final charge on opening this amazing strip.

## Minnesota – Kurt Pennuto

**Isle Airport ponders private to public status** – Isle Airport lies on the southeast shore of Lake Mille Lacs, known all over the country for prime bass and walleye fishing. You can land, walk across the road, board a fishing boat and be out on the lake in minutes. I have met with the Isle Airport Flying Club, owners of the airport, and there is a movement toward opening it up to the public. Minnesota includes aviation in its RUS, which helps make the ownership more comfortable with the change. Currently, pilots need membership standing or permission to access this private grass airstrip. "It is much safer to have pilots who have never been in Isle talk with someone familiar with flying in and out of that airport because it does have some unique characteristics," Dave Retka, incoming club president said.

We are working to submit a grant to improve campsites, runway cones and hopefully a shower house.

I joined a dozen other planes the weekend of July 9-10 for a fly-in at Isle and 200 townspeople came for the pancake

*Continued on page 11*



*Isle Fly-in demonstrates the value of a local airfield – Kurt Pennuto photo.*

# State Reports

breakfast. They recognize the economic value that airport access brings to the community.

In the May issue of *Minnesota Flyer*, C.S. Swanson reported that the city leased the airport to the non-profit Isle Flying Club, whose members volunteered to maintain the grounds. Eventually the city turned responsibility over to the private entity entirely. To gain the safety approval necessary to return to public status, trees need to be removed. I am in talks with local loggers to arrange for harvesting the trees to generate some cash flow for the club. For now, the club is building their membership, which at last count was around 60.

Dave said, "It would be nice to have it be public. It would be great to have access to funds that might be available with public status, but it's a long road to get to that point."

## New Mexico – Ron Keller

I represented the RAF in June at the New Mexico Pilot Bash. Co-RAF New Mexico Liaison Larry Filener learned that exhibit tables were available for a modest donation and I set up next to New Mexico Pilots Association's table. I handed out newsletters, brochures, my cards, and spoke to pilots and aviation business professionals about the RAF. The RAF logo was included on a sponsor Thank You flyer with Bendix-King, Garmin, Aspen, etc. I think it bodes well for the RAF. Attendees included professional pilots, private pilots, air traffic controllers, aerospace industry reps, and several non-profits.

*More New Mexico news on pages 9 and 10.*

## North Dakota – Brian Rau

### Movement on the Elkhorn

**Ranchlands airstrip:** I attended a meeting on March 29, with several U.S. Forest Service personnel regarding the Elkhorn Ranchlands Airstrip. I met with the District Ranger, the Real Estate specialist and the Recreation specialist and presented information about the RAF and how we work with agencies like the Forest Service in developing and maintaining backcountry airstrips. They provided information about the Land Use Management Plan Amendment that we have been waiting for an opportunity to comment on.

The Plan Amendment should be available for review and public comments in 2018. The first part of the comment period will focus on the value rating for different areas of the Elkhorn Ranchlands, to determine what type of uses may be allowed in different areas. The second

opportunity for us to comment will be more specific on the ability to use the existing airstrip. I will let RAF supporters know when the comment period opens.

A couple of issues which the Forest Service was waiting on have been resolved. The owner of gravel rights on the land has been granted the necessary permits to mine gravel and is doing so in a responsible manner. The site for a bridge over the Little Missouri will be farther south and will not directly affect this area.

**Possibly the North Dakota gem:** Every state with backcountry airstrips has one they consider to be an aviation treasure. Elkhorn Ranchlands Airstrip has the possibility of being a gem for North Dakota. You can view the airstrip on Google Earth at 47.2345 N; 103.5586 W.



*Elkhorn Ranchlands strip s a potential North Dakota gem – Brian Rau photo.*

## Vermont – Bob Burley

**Today's Story:** Thanks to cooperative efforts by the State, the FAA the RAF, and a small group of tenants and supporters, New Hampshire's Newport/Parlin Field (2B3), is now an active "go-to" place for townspeople, regional and local aviators, and local organizations who use its facilities and grounds for events of all sorts. There is no fancy FBO, nor operations building – just a great group of energetic aircraft owners and community groups working to create a community focal point. There are parallel grass operations on both sides of the main runway, a trout stream and camping area.

**See the RAF Home Page – click this map for all the places the RAF has had an impact!**



With prior permission, you can ride the courtesy bicycles into town and use the building for shelter/bathrooms for overnight camping.

The "Airport Rats" and local personnel are permitted and encouraged to do much of the work, which increases broad involvement, increases commitment and teamwork and keeps costs manageable for the town. At Newport/Parlin Field, the Tenants, the Town, and the Transients are visibly happy, energetic and share a passion for the airfield.

**The Backstory:** About three years ago, the Town of Newport, NH, under pressure from a small group of townspeople, tried to shut down the airport based on exaggerated environmental, noise, and cost issues. Working closely with the town, the State, the FAA and the RAF, airport tenants and supporters prevented its demise, turning it into a vigorous community asset.

The temporary grass runway I helped design at Middlebury has kept two businesses and about ten people employed. The plan is full runway rebuild; scheduled to be completed by August.



*Photo from Parlin Field's Facebook page.*

## 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.*



# RECREATIONAL AVIATION FOUNDATION

1711 West College St., Bozeman, MT 59715

406-582-1RAF (1723)

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



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

*A May, 2017 visitor posted this comment:*

I had a great trip to Trigger Gap yesterday. I flew in with my daughter in our Decathlon. . . nice runway, tie downs and camping area.

We called Ernie at Kings River Outfitters and he shuttled us to the river for a nice 3 hour canoe trip.

Thank you to all who have made this possible, my daughter (6years old) and I loved it!



*Work party volunteers bring their families to Arkansas's new recreational airstrip, Trigger Gap – Donna Perkins photo.*

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

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