

Tim Love call the meeting to order about 1140 am for the Northern Rocky Mountain Retirees Associations on September 3, 2024 at Fort Missoula.

Members present were Tom Blunn, Fred Cooper, Michael and Sue Cummings, John Drake, Barry Hicks, Tim Love, Milo McCloud, Vicky Mclean, Bo Nelson, Mike Oliver, Jack Puckett, Bill Ruediger, Dave Stack, Don Stevenson, Pat and Sharon Sweeney, Jack Walton, and Tim Stauffer, RO Liaison.

Today's guest speaker was Leanne Marten, Northern Region (R1) Regional Forester.

Leanne mentioned the Monthly Operations Newsletter from the Regional Office for the month of October will highlight the anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

There was a 75th Anniversary event the first week of August in Helena commemorating the Mann Gulch Fire and the firefighters who lost their lives. Also, in July was the 30th Anniversary of the South Canyon Fire in Colorado.

Many projects under The Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Act are being completed as the funding is set to expire in 2025. Many of the projects are being completed through partnerships and cooperative agreements.

The Great Outdoors America Act is set to expire in 2025, with numerous recreation and road projects complete across the region. Visit the [R1 GAOA Webpage](#) for more information.

Fire Funding Fix is set to expire in 2027. More info about the fire funding fix can be found here: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2018/03/23/secretary-perdue-applauds-fire-funding-fix-omnibus>

“The solution included in the omnibus provides a new funding structure from FY2020 through FY2027. Beginning in FY2020, \$2.25 billion of new budget authority is available to USDA and the Department of the Interior. The budget authority increases by \$100 million each year, ending at \$2.95 billion in new budget authority by FY2027. For the duration of the 8-year fix, the fire suppression account will be funded at the FY 2015 President’s Budget request - \$1.011 billion. If funding in the cap is used, the Secretary of Agriculture must submit a report to Congress documenting aspects of fire season, such as decision-making and cost drivers, that led to the expenditures. The omnibus includes a 2-year extension of Secure Rural Schools, providing provide rural counties approximately \$200 million more per year. It also provides Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization...”

The Agency had about 8,000 vacant non-fire position and were able to fill about 4,200 positions nationally over the last two years. Lack of housing and local amenities are an issue in many locations.

The 2024 Forest Service budget was similar to the 2022 budget. The 2025 Forest Service Budget outlook may be down slightly.

The Region is expected to sell about 300 mbf this year. The expected target for 2025 is about 300 mbf.

Firefighter Pay is currently a temporary program. The Presidents and Department Budget projections are to make it permanent.

Leanne answered questions from the Group.

Michael Cummings gave the Treasurer's report and the association has a current balance of \$7,827.67

Dave Stack gave an update on the National Conservation Legacy Center and ground-breaking will be Friday, September 6th at 3 pm. Dick Anderson is the Contractor for the Constructing the Center. The National Museum of Forest Service History received a \$340,000 grant from the National Park Service. The grant comes from the Park Service Museum Appropriations.

NRMRA fall newsletter is expected to come out in October.

Next meeting will be October 1st at the Museum of Mountain Flying. Keith Lannom, Director of the National Technology and Development Center in Missoula, will be the guest speaker.

Respectfully Submitted

Jack Walton