The SAF Northwest Office
A Success Story of Regional Cooperation

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and
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Who We Are

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- Past Chair, SAF Northwest Office
- Past, Past Chair Inland Empire SAF

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- Manager/Editor SAF Northwest Office
- Northwest Member Services, SAF National Office
Why Should You Care About this Talk?
What SAF Does

• SAF is the only body in the USA overseeing the advancement of professional forestry.
• Activities it is involved in include:
  – Accredits academic degree programs at colleges and universities
  – Defines terms used (Dictionary of Forestry)
  – Tests and certifies members who choose to become Certified Foresters
  – Puts on issue-oriented, scientifically-based workshops
What SAF Does

• Prepares collaboratively-developed Policy Statements at local, state and national levels
• Posts job listings and provides assistance to members honing their job-seeking skills
• Conveys up to date information on forest issues via the E-Forester
• Oversees and supports scientific publications – Forest Science, Journal of Forestry
• Conducts public education in myriad venues, sometimes using the Foresters’ Fund
What the SAF Does

• “The national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States.”

• SAF is an indispensable agent for change for anyone who cares about how forests are managed and how foresters are trained.
SAF Provides a Vital Role in Holding Together a Diverse Discipline with Diverse Objectives

- Forestry is an “eclectic” profession sometimes called the liberal arts of the sciences.
SAF Provides a Vital Role in Holding Together a Diverse Discipline with Diverse Objectives

- Professional foresters work: 1) at every scale from DNA to biomes
SAF Provides a Vital Role in Holding Together a Diverse Discipline with Diverse Objectives

- Professional foresters work: 2) for landowners from industrial forestry to the NPS to NIPF tree farmers
SAF Provides a Vital Role in Holding Together a Diverse Discipline with Diverse Objectives

• Professional foresters work: 3) considering everything from fish to forest fires, taxes to hiking trails.
SAF Provides a Vital Role in Holding Together a Diverse Discipline with Diverse Objectives

- Professional foresters work: 4) in every setting from remote and expansive forests to street trees, and inner city urban parks.
SAF is Relevant

• SAF provides the backbone that unites foresters across disciplines and management objectives, and brings scientific and professional recognition to our field of endeavor.
Involvement in SAF is Rewarding

• Working in SAF to advance its scientific standing, keep academic programs rigorous and relevant, and share knowledge through education or policy statements can be exciting and rewarding.

• There are the tangible, meaningful, significant… things that SAF can contribute if volunteers and members are free to pursue those.
But...

- SAF requires an organized, hierarchical structure to function effectively. That requires member diligence on reports, budgets, tracking membership, elections, meetings, and other tasks.
Forester Realities

- Foresters typically live and work in rural areas
- We are scattered across the country
- It is difficult to organize and exchange ideas
- Chapters are often small and scattered, lack the critical mass to have regular and meaningful meetings, and are challenged to coordinate with other levels in a hierarchical organization.
SAF Realities

• Turnover in SAF leadership is frequent, members/leaders have other jobs so the business and deadlines of SAF work is unfamiliar to members, thus “onerous.”

• So, time and energy that could go into creative activities and programs is instead spent on bureaucracy, making this work all that SAF involvement offers (and who needs that!).
Organizational Structure Makes a Difference

• A common reason we hear about why people do not join SAF is that “SAF doesn’t do anything”--meaning, we don’t do anything except the basics to serve what is required to keep SAF compliant.

• Organizing at the regional level makes the nuts and bolts “bureaucracy” of SAF easy, freeing member time up for meaningful project work.
Our Thesis is:

- Organizing at regional levels can provide significant time savings making meaningful work within SAF easier to accomplish. A regional structure also increases the sense of connection and common purpose between foresters.
We will now...

• Describe how the NWO is organized
• Explain how the NWO is staffed and funded
• Provide a snapshot of the services provided
• Describe keys to success and a few challenges
• Answer your questions
What are other regions doing?

• 8 business managers around the nation:
  – All provide different types and levels of services.
  – About half of SAF’s membership is served by some level of a business office.
  – A Business Manager’s group has been formed to share practices, challenges, and successes.
Other regions

1,639
546
87 SoCal
307
1,255
1,071
900
270
History and Governance

- Established in 1965 by the Oregon and Washington State Societies to provide services and support to SAF units.
- Inland Empire and Alaska SAF joined as full members in 2012.
- Governing body is the Northwest Office Committee: 17-member committee
  - Chair, chair-elect, treasurer and member-at-large from all four state societies + committee chair
### State Society Membership for 2015

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<tr>
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<th>2015 #</th>
<th>2015 %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Organizational Structure

• Located at the World Forestry Center since 1985.
• Northwest Office staff are Employees of the Forestry Center.
• Current staffing levels:
  – Part-time admin support, 5 hours/week
  – Part-time editorial and professional support, 20 hours/week
  – Both provide services to other organizations.
• NWO Committee contracts with Center for staffing
Organizational Structure

• Guiding document: Administrative Policies and Procedures

• Also includes several appendices
  – Internal Financial Review Procedures
    • Conducted annually by Finance Subcommittee
  – Work Plan (strategic plan)
  – Operating Reserve Fund Policy
The Work Plan

- Work plan sets staff direction for the year
- It is a rolling plan updated annually.
- Five strategic outcomes:
  1. Internal Communications
  2. Membership and Diversity
  3. Professional Education (Western Forester and workshops)
  4. External Communications
  5. Operations and Finances
The Core

• Support SAF units (members, chapters, state societies, standing committees) to be more effective and efficient, e.g. enable them to do more of the cool things they WANT to do.

• Serve as a source for one-stop shopping -- a stable contact point for members and the public.

• With continuous turnover of volunteer leadership, paid staff provide organizational memory and continuity, saving lots of time, confusion, and frustration.
Some Examples of What We Do

– Western Forester: Publish 5 issues per year.
– Keep them organized: Develop SAF Action Calendar and Membership Retention Timeline
– Coordinate online balloting for state societies
– Provide full-service registration services to annual meeting committees
– Develop workshops with SAF units
– Assist with Leadership Conferences
– Assist with membership recruitment/retention plans and communication plans
Some Examples of What We Do

– Provide Constant Contact and FlashAlert Newswire services (communications)
– Oversee regional website at www.forestry.org
– Attend and contribute to executive committee meetings and annual meetings
– Answer questions
Western Forester

- Published 5 times per year.
- Each issue focuses on a specific theme.
- Focused on local issues and provides opportunities for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints.
- Provides members an in-depth look at important regional issues, gives a sense of connection.
- Provides the office with credibility and visibility.
There is a cost for these services!

- 2014 annual budget $160,000
- Operating budget: $83,800
- Major revenue sources:
  - State Society Assessments @ $22/member (47%). State society dues = $30
  - Western Forester and Web Advertising (30%)
  - Registration Services (13%) – 7 conferences
  - Grants/Contributions (4%)
Cost of Services
Where does the money go?

• Major expense items:
  – Contract Services—personnel (55%)
  – Western Forester—graphic design, printing, mailing house and postage (17% w/o personnel)
  – Registration Services (6%)
  – Rent (6%)
  – Supplies/Equipment (4.5%)
Why it Works

• Resource Sharing: Partner with like-minded organizations to cost-share staff, equipment, office space, and more. Our players:
  – World Forestry Center
  – Western Forestry and Conservation Association
  – Northwest Woodlands magazine
  – SAF National Office

  – Organizations maintain a full-time presence and response capability, but are only charged for time actually worked.
Why it Works

• Four state societies cooperating together:
  – Committed to the concept and support staff
  – Networking and collaboration on common goals
    spurs innovation:
    • Leadership Conference
    • www.forestry.org
    • Forum for communications and membership ideas
    • We all know each other: Makes it easy to work together
    • Structure makes it “feel real”
Why it Works

• We focus efforts on what we are good at:
  – Customer Service and Availability is #1
  – SAF Knowledge and History
  – Communicator and Facilitator Role: We see the big picture and can help connect the dots
  – Meeting management: A needed service
  – We have little to no bureaucracy
Challenges to our Operation

- Danger Zone: Funding
- Turnover of Volunteer Leadership
- Time: Volunteer and Staff
- We are a small business
Challenges – Funding Realities

• General budget concepts:
  – 50% of our revenue comes from member assessments
  – State dues are $30/member -- $22 goes to the Northwest Office as an assessment
  – Challenge: Golden members and students don’t pay state dues, so they are subsidized by state societies
    • ~25% of members fall within these categories.
Challenges-Volunteer Structure

- Volunteer roll over
  - Most NWO committee members have other SAF duties = burnout.
  - NWO committee members are serving by virtue of their state society position; additional duties.
Challenges-Time

• Time: Volunteer
  – Our biggest competitor is time
  – Leaders do what they can and are highly committed
  – Focus on specific projects/campaigns
Challenges

• We are a small business
  – We are generalists: from financial management to publishing to meeting management to writing communications plans to selling advertising to ordering supplies…
  – We are our own tech support: You break it, you fix it
  – Marketing? Member Recruitment? Social Media? There’s lots to do with limited resources
The National/NWO Partnership

• 16 months into a contract between WFC and SAF National for Lori to assist in national level programs from a local perspective
• Work focuses in Member Services area
• 12 hours per week
• Findings:
  – Immensely helpful to understand national-level programs and policies
The SAF/NWO Partnership

• Findings:
  – National staff better understands local level issues.
  – More connected: direct lines of communication
  – Our regional infrastructure provides for consistency in delivery of services.
  – Access to National staff expertise is key.
  – We are all SAF.
Conclusion

• The SAF Northwest Office plays a critical role in providing continuity and improving efficiency of SAF units in the four-state areas it services.
Questions?