

National Forest Homeowners

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Building Connections

By Desiree LaMaggiore, NFH Field Director

The more I speak with fellow cabin owners and hear one another's stories, the stronger I feel we are part of something more substantial we must work together to preserve. When you start talking to other cabin owners, it's infectious, the story swapping begins and so do the solutions.

NFH hired me two years ago to build our national outreach effort to include any and all cabin owners and associations who might not be in regular contact with us. We wanted to rekindle the kind of awareness and network in the community Pete Bailey and the C2 Coalition built during the old days of the fee appraisal system. At the same time, we wanted to learn from local people what's going on in their forest and tract.



New cabin friends meet in Oregon—Jay Hennigan, President of Brietenbush-Devils Creek Tract, Avis LaGrone and Jerry Popenhagen, NFH Director.

Building connections—through shared experiences via email, phone calls, and visits—has become a passion of mine, almost like completing a jigsaw puzzle. If you've met me at an NFH event or talked to me on the phone, you may know I have a love of maps and enjoy a good road trip. The more I spoke with cabin owners, the more I wanted to visualize where all the summer home groups were, so I built a map of cabin tracts in each forest and state with a goal of visiting whenever I'm passing through. Traveling to and from NFH events and participating in cabin tours have been some of the most enjoyable road trips.

So far, I've tripped my way through more than 75 recreation residences tracts across Oregon, California, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. When speaking with cabin owners for the first time, I'll ask if they are aware of other tracts in their forest—and often, to the surprise of many folks—we discover there is another cabin group not far from theirs. A connection is made.

We've been making connections in many corners of our National Forests, getting in touch with local associations, and offering the information resources we have available. Lately, I've been reaching out to those in forests undergoing Forest Plan revisions, to encourage public comment and show solidarity and support for this national recreation program. Looking ahead, there continue to be reasons for us to connect on a national level, from lobbying to ensure a percentage of our fees are reinvested in the forests where our cabins are located to making our next permit renewal cycle as smooth a process as possible.

But it's finding the solutions we come across on our visits I really love to share. Like Jo and her composting toilet, which



Jo Musser-Krauss (Willow Canyon tract, Coronado NF, AZ) explaining how her composting toilet works.

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New on the Web

Compliance Manual: Forest Service Recreation Residences

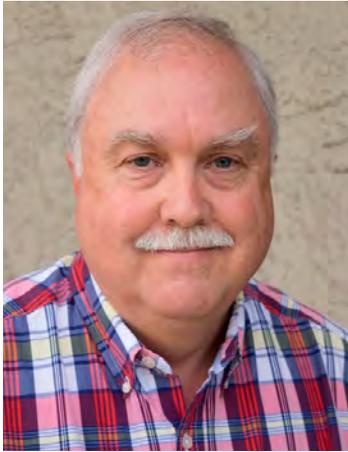
Courtesy of The Garden Law Firm P.C.

Being a cabin owner, you know rules apply to nearly every aspect of your cabin. This manual is an effort to collect the various rules and put them into one place, and where possible, to set them out plainly so they make sense. This can be a valuable resource in determining what your rights are and how the Forest Service should be addressing your situation. To access this manual, go online to our NFH website, log in as a member, and select **Resources** → **Working with the Forest Service** → **Compliance**.

Ask the Community: What's on your mind?

- Is rental actually allowed under our permits? If so, does the FS actually approve such requests?
- We've been told that the public can camp on our lots, is this true?

Answers, which may surprise you, can be found by logging in as a member, clicking **Resources** → **Ask the Community**. What is your cabin question?



President's Message

Your Board at Work

By Doug Gann, NFH President, Lake Wenatchee Summer Home Association, WA

By the time this newsletter reaches you, many of you have buttoned up your cabin for the winter, while others prepare their cabin for winter recreation activities.

As we all continue to enjoy the benefits of cabin life, your board is hard at work to protect and enhance the cabin experience. The NFH Board of Directors, along with our staff meet in person twice a year and another 4 times by web conference. We meet in-person on the Sunday following the Annual Conference in the spring and again in-person on the same weekend as the Fall Forum. Although it's a challenge for us to meet on the same weekend we host an NFH Conference or Forum, we find these in-person meetings very productive and it makes sense to optimize our travel expenses around member events. To provide some insight what it's like to be a Board member, I'll share our September 20-23 activities in Sunriver, Oregon with you.

Our visit started with a cabin tour of local tracts on Friday. On this optional day for directors and staff we visit with members in their cabin tract setting. Members graciously open up their cabins for us to look around and we are always pleasantly surprised at the variety and creativity that goes into cabin design and uses. No matter how small or large, new or old a cabin is, I've never met a cabin owner who didn't show great pride of their little place in the woods. In addition to seeing cabins in beautiful forest settings, we heard cherished stories of experiences enjoyed by generations of cabin owners. Every cabin has a wealth of personal and family history. This year, we visited with cabin owners from Odell Lake, Crescent Lake, and Elk Lake, all in Deschutes National Forest.

On Saturday morning the NFH Directors met for a 2½ hour Board Meeting. Most of our time was spent working through the 2020 budget. Prior to the afternoon Forum, I hosted a meeting of Oregon tract association leaders to discuss opportunities and challenges facing many Oregon cabin owners. Some of the discussed topics will prepare us for working with the Forest Service at several levels to collaborate on solutions to

issues brought up by Oregon cabin leaders.

Saturday afternoon was devoted to the Fall Forum. With over 70 attendees, the meeting offered a great venue for interaction with Forest Service representatives, NFH personnel, and fellow cabin owners.

This year we extended our Fall Forum weekend to work on the NFH Strategic Plan. Using the 2011 Strategic Plan as a foundation, our effort takes into consideration recent changes that impact the program and organization. While much progress was made in Oregon, our work will continue with the goal to complete the plan by year's end.

While the plan continues to be refined, it centers around 5 Strategic Goals: Advocate for the cabin program, Membership growth and participation, Financial sustainability, Communication and Engagement, and Forest Stewardship. The plan establishes a vision of where we want to be in 10 years and will guide NFH operations.

While our work as a board is fulfilling, engaging with individual cabin owners at the Forum and on the cabin tour provides satisfaction and reminds us of why we volunteer. We all appreciate this opportunity.

Our organization relies on volunteers. If you have an interest in volunteering for one of our committees, or serving on the board of directors, please let us know by going to our website and choosing **Get Involved→Volunteer**, or by contacting Executive Director, Sharon Leach at (800) 669-9971.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and ideas of how we can better serve the cabin community.



NFH Board of Directors.

NFH Mission Statement

National Forest Homeowners is a member-directed organization representing cabin owner recreation residence permittees on our national forests. NFH provides leadership, member information and assistance, and advocacy for continuation of all recreation residence cabins. It is dedicated to educating its members and others in sound science stewardship of our national forests.

NFH Staff

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Community Efforts in Action: Mount Lemmon, Arizona

By Chuck Huber, Greater Soldiers Camp Association President, Santa Catalina District, Coronado National Forest, Arizona

The Mount Lemmon community in the Santa Catalina district of the Coronado National Forest near Tucson, Arizona, consists of three major population centers—the village of Summerhaven (approximately 300 deeded residences and cabins), Soldiers Camp (55 cabins) and Willow Canyon (75 cabins) Recreation Residence communities. Due to our shared environment and experiences, a strong bond has formed between the three communities. The Mount Lemmon community has had the “advantage” of a catastrophic fire (The Aspen Fire in 2003) and a few recent near misses as incentive to implement a coordinated and unified Firewise community effort.

The Aspen Fire in 2003 burned over 132 square miles, consumed over 340 homes in Summerhaven, and burned 10 of the 55 cabins in the Soldiers Camp tract. Since then, we have had other near misses from fires on our mountain.

For the past several years, the Mount Lemmon Community has come together for our Community Firewise event held annually in early May. The Firewise event is much more than a community clean up. It is a holistic program that includes training of community assessors for each of the communities (Soldiers Camp has three) who are qualified by the USFS and the Mount Lemmon Fire Department. In the interest of education and protection of the overall community from wildfire, our trained personnel perform inspections of cabins in their community and provide non-judgmental advice to the homeowners.



Firewise community volunteers supported the Mount Lemmon Community Cleanup in 2019.



One of the many slash piles ready for chipping.



No more slash, lots more sun.

In the weeks leading up to the community clean-up, slash and forest debris harvested from residences in the community can be taken to an authorized burn pile managed by the Mount Lemmon Fire Department. On one designated weekend, a power chipper and a crew of operators travel the mountain to designated drop-off locations to macerate the fuel and accumulated debris.

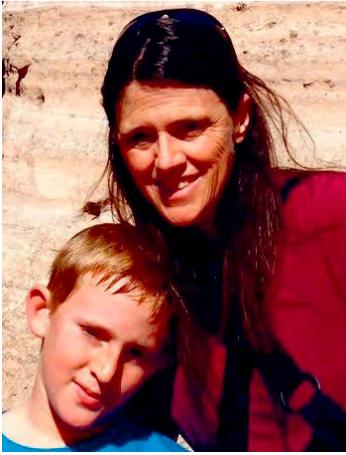
The community efforts have been gaining steam as each successful annual clean-up is accomplished. The success of this effort is not by chance, but requires a major coordination effort for community outreach, grant applications, tracking the work, and coordinating the efforts. Sally Crum of Willow Canyon tract has been the prime mover of this effort. She does outstanding work, but it's a real commitment—it isn't something that is easy.

Funding for the training, chipper and crew is all accomplished by grant money requested annually. The labor contributed by the residents helps to offset the costs of our Firewise efforts and supports increasing grants on a year-by-year basis. Sally is very good at recruiting, but her finest attribute is organizing and recruiting a large number of residents in the Willow Canyon, Soldiers Camp and Summerhaven communities to work toward a common goal—community preparedness. Each year, the Mount Lemmon community has had more success and more participation. We anticipate our 2020 Community Cleanup to be the best yet!

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she excitedly showed off during our visit—an excellent solution for cabin owners in other parts of the country trying to figure out how to manage when told their outhouses need to be decommissioned. Or, Norman, who graciously invited me in while I was wandering unannounced through his tract, sharing his mother's handmade cabin journal, a way to keep a log of the natural history and family stories, as well as document the processes for opening and closing the cabin. And most recently, visiting with Jay, who pointed to their tract's two-way radio boxes, positioned throughout the cabin group—a solution for emergency communications in locations with no phone or cellular service.

We're looking for a point of contact in each tract, so we can share our ideas and experiences and, working together, find ways to ensure this program endures. We've been working with state and regional cabin associations, as well. The program now has volunteer outreach coordinators in Minnesota, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Utah, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and California and we're always looking for more! If you are interested in connecting with or helping to connect cabin owners in your area, or simply being our point of contact for your tract, please drop me an email at desiree.lamaggiore@nationalforesthomeowners.org.



Maintaining History

By Sharon Leach
NFH Executive Director

The Recreation Residence Program is over 100 years old. As a centenarian, the program holds a wealth of knowledge; stories, cabin histories, and tales from our National Forests. A combined trove of knowledge from more than 100 years as permit holders on

public lands. In Florida, Kentucky, California, Montana and Michigan, and many more states, the walls of these cabins know a place through time and history.

How has our public-private partnership lasted so long? Of course, part of this program’s lasting value is because it is a uniquely American experiment—public lands, National Forests and family recreation. When you look back on this opportunity that was offered to families and working people, it’s amazing.

Consider the alternative. If all land were privately owned, few of us would get to see the iconic sights of our National Parks and Forests and fewer still would have a cabin on a lake in a National Forest. Thankfully, the Cabin Fee Act (CFA), enacted in 2014, established predictable fees and resolved the problem of runaway fee increases under the old appraisal system. And while nobody can argue that permit fees are not challenging for some, the opportunity is still there for families in 26 states in our country to experience what it is to wake up to the noisy quiet of the natural world.

As lovely and meaningful as the cabin program is, here’s the reality check. It is more than 100 years old and needs ongoing maintenance. Times change, permit terms and forest management change. Sometimes, these changes need to be monitored by a watchful group of stakeholders. That’s us. NFH wants to be sure that we stay on top of where the program is headed. The threats are real—sadly, it could be a fire or other catastrophe that takes down cabins, which are subsequently not allowed to be rebuilt. But at times, it’s systemic, like the cost of ownership.

That’s one reason that fee retention was included in the Cabin Fee Act, to make certain that our permit fees were used to administer this program and didn’t just dissolve into the U.S. Treasury. In the future, our hope is to see our fees used to help cabin owners and district Forest Service staff get needed work done, whether it is historic assessments, roads or hazard trees, permit renewal or annual inspections. We can’t control exactly how these funds will be allocated, but we made sure to include this clause in the bill and we continue to voice our priorities to the USFS and will monitor how it is implemented. While the rules regarding allocation of funds haven’t been written yet, we do know that first and foremost, fees collected must be spent on this program. And we’re also excited to see any remaining revenue used by the forests to support other recreation uses we enjoy and spend our outdoor time recreating in.

We’re navigating what’s ahead and responding to the grassroots (or forest roots) imperatives that you tell us about. We heard the community about the widespread experience of being dropped from insurance. Without insurance, many of these cabins will go away. Fire and falling trees aren’t the only hazards—the rising cost of obtaining insurance on any structure near the wildland-urban interface is its own hazard. Yes, the Cabin Insurance program is a new benefit of membership, but it’s also a response to what the cabin program needs. If you can’t keep your cabin, there is no program.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, Doug Gann, NFH President and I will have traveled to and from Washington, DC: tying up loose ends on the CFA, getting ready for fee retention in 2025, permit renewals in 2028, and speaking up for quiet family recreation on public lands. When NFH renewal comes around or you’re thinking of those organizations you’d like to contribute to, please remember us, keeping the 100-year old recreation program healthy, and working for you.

NFH Board of Directors 2019-2020

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One of the important elements of advancing the National Forest Homeowners' (NFH) federal agenda are periodic trips by NFH leadership to Washington, D.C. to meet with policy makers, increase awareness of the organization, and the Recreation Residence Program, and to discuss desired changes to existing or proposed regulations and laws.

Summit Strategies prepared and scheduled meetings for NFH President, Doug Gann's, and Executive Director, Sharon Leach's trip to Washington, D.C. from October 21 through 23, 2019. NFH leadership was last in DC in March of 2018. During that visit, we met with a number of Congressional staffers, as well as representatives from the Forest Service, to discuss issues with homeowner permits, wildfire funding and other public lands issues.

This year, Doug and Sharon met with the Chief of the Forest Service, Vicki Christiansen, additional representatives from the Forest Service, and Congressional staffers working for both the House and Senate Natural Resources Committees, as

well as those staffers working on public lands issues on behalf of the Members of those Committees. Our topics for discussion included Forest Service permitting, recreation on public lands, and the Recreation Residence program.

These meetings are a valuable opportunity for NFH to raise its profile with important decision makers and to advance the issues members most care about. Increasing the visibility of the organization in Washington, D.C. and meeting with the officials who write and implement the policies that impact permit-holders is essential to ensuring that voices of NFH members are heard. Just as last year's meetings were critical to moving forward a wildfire funding fix, this year's visit is just as important to ensuring cabin owner priorities are included and considered in upcoming legislation. Summit is committed to strengthening NFH's position as a key player and trusted voice in natural resource policy.

NFH 2020 Conference

The 2020 NFH Conference and Annual Business meeting will be at The Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, Washington April 24-25. This beautiful natural wood lodge is a perfect setting for National Forest Homeowners and makes you feel like you are in a ski lodge in the middle of the forest.

NFH elections will be announced at the annual business meeting including offices of President and Treasurer, and three Board of Directors positions.

Come and take this opportunity to speak with USFS representatives from Washington D.C., and Pacific Northwest Region 6 offices, as well as forest level staff, to share your concerns and also hear speakers address the topics that affect permit holders across the country. Face-to-face time with the USFS is truly valuable. Vancouver is a dynamic city and NFH plans on supplying not only an educational conference but a fun one as well.



Lobby of Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, WA

NFH 2020 Fall Forum

The 2020 Fall Forum will be held in Boise, ID and the date will be announced soon. We look forward to returning to Boise; the last time we were there was in 2010.

Boise sits in the southwest corner of Idaho and many cabins are part of the USFS Intermountain Region 4, others are part of USFS Northern Region 1. The Boise National Forest covers 2,203,703 acres of the state. This forest was created on July 1, 1908 from part of the Sawtooth National Forest and is managed by the USFS as five units: the Cascade, Emmett, Idaho City, Lowman, and Mountain Home ranger districts.

We look forward to connecting with cabin owners and tract leaders in the region next year!

2019 NFH Fall Forum



Beautiful Sunriver, Oregon, location of the 2019 NFH Fall Forum.

The NFH Fall Forum was held at Sunriver, Oregon on Saturday, September 21, 2019 at the beautiful Sunriver Resort. The resort is set in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains with views of Mt. Bachelor, a popular skiing and outdoor recreation destination. Oregon's scenic beauty was showcased to seventy-three (73) attendees of the 2019 Forum.

On the Friday prior to the forum, as is the tradition of all NFH Forums, we toured area cabins. NFH Board and staff visited cabin tracts at Crescent Lake, Elk Lake and Odell Lake. This is a favorite activity of the Board of Directors and staff as it is always so interesting to see cabins in different regions and to have the opportunity to share cabin stories.

The day of the Forum began with a President's Tract Leader Meeting in the morning including Oregon tract association leaders. NFH President Doug Gann welcomed speakers from the Forest Service, including Holly Jewkes, the (new) Forest Supervisor of the nearby Deschutes National Forest and Tracy Kremer, the Lands Special Uses Program Manager for the USFS Pacific Northwest Region. Tracy encouraged cabin owners to let their district staff know what is needed, in anticipation of the upcoming retention of our permit fees in 2025 when revenues go directly to administer the cabin program.

One of our most recent additions to the NFH Board, Kevin Orth, who is also President of the White River Recreation Association in Washington, gave a talk called *Preparing for Wildfire*, and shared some of his personal story from the Norse Peak Fire that threatened their large collection of cabin tracts in 2017. Alexandra Wenzl, USFS Region 6 Historian

& Heritage Program Lead, showed period photos of people going to the new National Forests in the early part of the 20th Century while sharing the importance not only of the cabins as historic buildings, but impressing upon the audience the value of the Recreation Residence Program as a historic recreation experience. Both presentations are available for viewing on the NFH website on the 2019 NFH Forum page.

Following some free time to network and socialize, we finished out the day with information about new NFH benefits, like the Cabin Insurance Program, and online resources, plus a fun quiz on permit rules that occasionally stumped even the experts. We always close the agenda with a panel of experts to answer questions ranging from how long you may rent your cabin (2 weeks maximum per year) to specific scenarios for a cabin trust.



Tracy and Alexandra with Kevin Larkin, District Ranger on Deschutes National Forest.

We thank our sponsors of the 2019 Forum: Assurance Risk Managers, Inc., Mt. Hood Forest Homeowners Association, Sashco Products, Crescent Lake Homeowners Association, Odell Lake Homeowners Association, and the Oregon Forest Homeowners Association. We couldn't have asked for a better group of attendees and a lovelier weekend in central Oregon.



Attendees at the 2019 NFH Fall Forum.

Call For Awards

We hope you had an enjoyable cabin season. As it comes to an end, think back to those who have made the season even better. Maybe you had a terrific experience with your Forest Service permit administrator; perhaps an NFH member assisted you with a frustrating problem; maybe a particular communication inspired you to find a way to improve your cabin experience.

Each year at the Annual Conference, NFH recognizes an outstanding leader or volunteer, an exceptional communications effort, and an exemplary Forest Service employee who has demonstrated support for the Recreation Residence Program. The Awards Committee does not know who these people are—but you do! Please go online to review the qualifications for the awards and select **Get Involved**→**Awards** to nominate that special person. With a deadline of December 31, 2019, you still have time to submit your nominations!

Volunteer in Your Organization

You can make a difference by using your energy, passion, and skill set to help boost and build relationships within the cabin community. Join a team of cabin owner volunteers working on Communication media for NFH. More folks are needed to help with newsletter and website layouts and content, as well as working with social media management and content. New and creative ideas are always welcomed!

Contact Executive Director, Sharon Leach at 800.669.9971, sleach@nationalforesthowners.org, to learn more. The only real qualification is your desire to help!

My Smiling Place (1992)

By Nancy Hughes Coe

Our cabin has been in the family since 1952. Five generations of my family from my grandmothers to my grandchildren, and scores of friends have built memories in summer and winter at this sacred spot. It is my favorite place in the world! The cabin is located on Bear Lake in the beautiful St. Francis National Forest, which has the best fishing in Arkansas. This place has been a sort of artists' colony for my family over many decades. Numerous paintings and poems were created there, and



Nancy Hughes Coe family cabin on the St. Francis National Forest.

much music was played on mandolin, guitar, flute, harmonica, banjo and piano. As we approach the holidays and look to the gifts to be thankful for in our lives, I share one of my poems about the Lake I am so very grateful to for giving my family and me a lifetime of memories.

The closest place to Heaven on earth
Is a lake we call Bear Creek,
And I've been coming here since birth
And hope to 'til I'm weak.

My soul unwinds and peace is found
To breathe the woodland air,
Or walk upon its ancient ground . . .
No cathedral can compare.

The diamonds dancing in the water
On a liquid silver surface
Forever fascinate this daughter
Of creation's special place.

The mosquito hum of faraway boats,
The whisper of evening breeze . . .
Dove and owl call out their notes,
Beckoning from lofty trees.

Frenetic is the city's pace
And so I do retreat
And slip away, detour the race,
Sweet solitude to greet.

The patient cabin awaits my pleasure,
So rustic but so fair.
My heart's contentment can't be measured . . .
I'd rather be here than anywhere.



Jerry Popenhagen,
NFH Board Member.

Meet Jerry Popenhagen, NFH Director

Cabin in Chequamegon-Nicolet NF, Wisconsin

Jerry and his wife, Christine, were raised on farms in Illinois and Iowa. Eventually, they made their home near Madison, Wisconsin. It was on a camping trip in the nearby Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest when they started thinking that a warm place at night might just beat a pop-up camper. The cabin they found was run-down, they didn't know how much at the time, but thus began their cabin adventure.

Jerry came to know NFH through John and Verda Murray, Barb and Pete Bailey, an NFH newsletter, and the C2 network, also known as the Cabin Coalition 2—responsible for taking action to stop the appraisal system that was rocketing permit fees. After many years of lobbying, within a few days prior to the Cabin Fee Act (CFA) passing, one of the Popenhagen's neighbors was getting ready to have their cabin hauled away because of the nearly \$20K annual permit fee required under the (now bygone) appraisal system. It was literally that close for many cabin owners, who were looking at selling, destroying or hauling away their family's beloved getaway place. There is only one cabin tract in the state of Wisconsin and it would have gone away.

When Jerry decided last year to answer the call to volunteer on the NFH Board, he said, "I wanted to give something back" for making it possible for his small tract on a Wisconsin lake to survive. When Jerry and Christine first purchased their cabin, they were surprised at how little contact some cabin owners had with their neighbors. During C2 and fee reform, the community came together. "Now everybody knows everybody," according to Jerry.

Looking back, Jerry laughs and knows exactly where he learned to love the outdoors. His parents started the tradition of what they called car camping in 1957 with the station wagon—kids on the ground in sleeping bags, the parents in the back of the wagon. His parents eventually moved up to a pop-up camper and took their kids to Colorado and Wyoming. With roots firmly in the middle of the country and a cabin on a Wisconsin lake, Jerry Popenhagen brings his own midwestern perspective to NFH, along with a life-long love of the outdoors.



National Forest Homeowners

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NFH Hotline: 800.669.9971

www.nationalforesthowners.org

To receive your NFH newsletter by email, please send a note requesting the e-newsletter to: mknnox@nationalforesthowners.org

Upcoming Events

SPRING 2020

**NFH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
THE HEATHMAN LODGE
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON
APRIL 24-25, 2020**



Details on the NFH Annual Conference in Vancouver, Washington to be announced on the NFH website.

**Special thanks to
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FALL 2020

**NFH FALL FORUM
BOISE, IDAHO
SEPTEMBER 2020**



Details on the NFH 2020 Fall Forum in Boise, Idaho to be announced on the NFH website.