

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - BOB MEANS MEMORIAL PROJECT, NATIONAL RESTORATION PLAN, & HOUSEKEEPING



Diana F. Tomback

This issue of Nutcracker Notes is dedicated to our friend and colleague, Bob Means, who passed away suddenly on May 27, 2015. With Bob's passing, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lost a strong and effective voice in support of five-needle white pines, and we at the WPEF lost a committed and supportive member. Bob joined the BLM Wyoming office in 2001 as the Wyoming state forester; and, as he learned about the diversity of communities on BLM lands in his state, he became an advocate for the previously underappreciated but precipitously declining limber and whitebark pine communities.

He had a scholar's interest in the ecology of lower elevation limber pine woodlands (e.g., Means, R. E., 2011, Proceedings of the High Five Symposium, RMRS-P-63, pp.29-36). Bob pointed out that these woodlands were highly under-studied, and he identified a set of important research questions to improve our understanding of their development and dynamics.

Bob was also active in the Colorado-Wyoming Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, and kept the plight of five-needle white pines on their radar screen. More recently, he worked with Dana Perkins and Alexia Cochrane to develop the BLM restoration strategy for whitebark pine, Conservation and Management of Whitebark Pine Ecosystems on Bureau of Land Management Lands in the Western United States, published in August 2016. (See article, this issue, by Dana Perkins, lead author of the strategy).

A number of people generously contributed to the WPEF Bob Means Memorial Fund. Over the last year, we have been working with the BLM to identify an appropriate restoration project to fund in Bob's name. We are pleased to announce that the WPEF is partnering with the BLM to support the Whiskey Basin Daylight Thinning Project for whitebark

pine, led by Jim Gates (see article, this issue). Whiskey Basin is on the east slope of the Wind River Range, south of Dubois, WY. This is special country where both lower elevation limber pine and high elevation whitebark pine form extensive communities, but both pines over the last 20 years have experienced major losses from mountain pine beetles and blister rust. This region also represents the southeastern-most limits to the distribution of whitebark pine in the Rocky Mountains. Our thanks to Jim Gates for helping make this project happen.

We will follow the Whiskey Basin Daylight Thinning Project and showcase photos in a future issue. Our sincere thanks to those of you who contributed to this fund and for all involved in making this happen.

National Whitebark Pine Restoration Plan

In the weeks to come, we anticipate an official announcement of some very important news. Last August, the WPEF and American Forests offered a proposal to the U.S. Forest Service leadership to collaboratively develop a "National Restoration Plan" for whitebark pine, working logistically with the U.S. Forest Service but extending the effort across all federal agencies that have whitebark pine

on their lands. We have been working out the details of this plan over the last six months. At the end of March, the agreement with the Washington Office was finalized and signed. By the next issue of Nutcracker Notes, we will be deep into the execution of this plan, with more information to share.

Housekeeping

At the end of October, 2017, I step down as Acting Director, and assume my new board role as Outreach and Policy Coordinator. Cyndi Smith, currently Associate Director, has graciously agreed to become Acting Director as we search for a candidate for the Director position. As Outreach and Policy Coordinator, I will be the lead for WPEF's work on the National Restoration Plan.

Please join us September 21-23, 2017, for the annual WPEF Whitebark Pine Science and Management Workshop in Jasper National Park, Alberta, which will be held jointly with WPEF-Canada. This is an opportunity to visit whitebark pine in an extraordinary setting—some of the most stunning mountain landscapes in the world--and to hear about challenges and efforts in the management whitebark pine, which is an endangered species under the Canada Species at Risk Act, in this northern region of whitebark pine's range.