



14. JUNE 2024

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS IAWF  
FROM: KELLY ANDERSSON

Hi there IAWF board members,

Because you've raised many varied points in your letter to me on June 11, my responses below address those points individually.

The IAWF board of directors would like to thank you for your work managing WildfireToday and FireAviation since Bill's passing.

Thank you very much for thanking me! It's been a pleasure and I think of Bill every day and hope he's pleased so far.

From the beginning it was our understanding that you did not want to do this long term

That was my understanding too. The agreement was that I would "transition" the sites over to IAWF ownership and management, to provide continuity and a minimum of disruption in the ongoing function of the websites. I further understood that IAWF would acquire a couple of writers familiar with wildland fire and AP style and WordPress functions – and a website manager. I am delighted to see that after a year and a half, we're progressing toward that.

however, you ended up doing it because Ron Steffens was not as available as we had hoped

Ron was fired because he was incompetent at both AP writing and WordPress function. All of his log-ins and passwords were changed by agreement among Mikel, Jeffrey the backend manager, and me.

The board of directors and communication committee are keen to work with you to continue the success of the sites, while ensuring they fit into our overall communications strategy.

I'm delighted to hear this and relieved to see IAWF step up here. No one from the IAWF (except Kim and Mikel) has contacted me about IAWF and the fire news websites, offered to help, asked about support, sent me news, or updated me on the transition since Bill died.

readership has dropped significantly in the past 18 months. We expected that to happen after Bill passed away, however, we can't continue to let it drop.

I am excited to see IAWF step up with this too. I've needed assistance since the fall of 2022. Rebounding back from a loss is much harder than maintaining steadiness or improving, and this is true here with both readers and advertisers. Ads and advertisers no longer needing my focus is also a relief to hear; I trust you'll find someone experienced and skilled to take over my time and work on this. Thank you!

After we receive Raul's feedback, we will update the theme and necessary plug-ins. We are happy to work with Jeffrey, however, we don't want to just apply some fixes, the sites need a major overhaul.

Will I be included in the discussion about the new theme and the function of plug-ins? I very strongly recommend you start communicating with Jeffrey now. He's handled the backend of these sites for years and is always available, skilled, prompt, efficient, and easy to work with.

Make the IAWF more prominent on the sites, it should be obvious that IAWF is the owner of the sites. The IAWF has a lot of great content that can be used, e.g. Wildfire Magazine, IJWF, conference presentations, etc.

The IAWF (with links to its site and its publications) is noted on every single page of both websites.

We need to add a feature for people to sign up to receive emails when something is posted, this is a missed opportunity and could partially account for the decrease in readership.

It's not a missed opportunity at all, it's already there and has been functional for years.

We need to post every entry on social media, Facebook and Twitter, and perhaps LinkedIn. We would like this to happen automatically, however, if not, someone needs to be doing this manually. We do not expect you to do that, we will find someone who is willing to take that on.

Proper social media monitoring has evolved for news sites past just posting. A Facebook page (for either or both websites) requires multi-daily checking of both new and previous posts. Bots and scammers constantly post crude images and malicious links in the comments of posts. Deleting and banning these commenters is necessary to maintain a professional account, or else our names and the IAWF will be linked to said scammers. I'll also not have anything to do with X – a quick Google search should explain why.

Find someone to manage adding and changing the advertisements, we understand this takes time and this should not be your job. Our hope is that with a new theme it should be easier to do.

I'm delighted to hear this! I'd suggest you find someone with verifiable experience in this who knows the difference between a 300x200 ad and a 200x300 ad – and can also write/edit html code to correctly install ads. Also, advertisements do not have anything to do with the theme – the ads run via a plug-in.

We want the content to be more international to fit the IAWF mission. We will work to find writers to contribute more international content.

This is by far the best part of your listed goals. Thank you, thank you – and please keep Miguel on.

Separate the advertising opportunities for Fire Aviation. We believe FireAviation has a lot of potential advertisers who may not be interested in WildfireToday, and vice versa.

I disagree with this, as I've discussed with Joaquin, but I wish you the very best in achieving your goal.

Hire someone to manage the sites for the long term, this will require us to write a position description with your help. We hope that you will continue to contribute articles.

I am not keen to help you write a PD for the person you plan to hire to replace me. Whether I still write or edit for you will depend 100 percent on the changes you make to the websites in the near future and whether I am included in these changes.

We need to look at how the sites can better sit within IAWF's overall communications, including its publications, conferences, websites and social media. Currently, they are totally separate and not supporting each other.

RE: "not supporting each other"

I recommend you load the Wildfiretoday site and type into the search bar IAWF and see what you find. There are pages of search results.

Then load the IAWF website and type WildfireToday into the search bar. You will find there is exactly one search result:

In this magazine, on our portals (wildfiretoday.com and fireaviation.com), and during IAWF events, you'll find many such dedicated technologists and companies striving to offer affordable, actionable solutions that enhance our challenging roles.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Neither WildfireToday nor FireAviation is a portal. They are fire news sites and should never be referred to as portals.**

RE: "they are totally separate"

This is correct and is precisely what Gabbert intended when he entrusted these sites to your care. He asked me in the spring of 2022 (before we knew he was so ill) if I'd take them over and I said "no" because I was trying to retire and move to Mexico. In the fall, when he was dying, he told me he was discussing handing them over to the custody of IAWF and asked if I would help to "transition" the sites to you. I strongly hesitated and told him I suspected it would be far longer than the couple of months he'd mentioned, but more important, I told him I did not want to see his websites and 35-year collection of wildland fire news (and opinion, policy, issues, history, photos, and videos) transformed into a PR vehicle for the IAWF.

Bill was fairly ill by then, but he raised his voice at me. ***"That is precisely what I DON'T want!"***

What is your timeframe? I look forward to our next exchange and I'm glad we've begun!

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Kelly Andersson

[WildfireToday.com](http://WildfireToday.com)

[FireAviation.com](http://FireAviation.com)

[AnderssonPublishing.com](http://AnderssonPublishing.com)

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