

In Memoriam

John Christopher Noonan, PLS March 10, 1953 to June 15, 2011



John died in a tragic accident in the Yampa River on June 15, 2011. He was a vice president of the PLSC Northwest Quarter chapter and former president. Please see Brian T. Kelly's tribute to John in this issue's NW 1/4 Chapter News.

NW 1/4 CLS

As the NW1/4 has not met since July, I thought it best to perhaps use this space as an additional testimonial to the life and career of John Noonan, Land Surveyor. John would have been our President as of this writing, if a drowning accident in the Yampa River in mid-June of this year had not taken him from us. That duty has now befallen me and I hope I can mimic the dedication and love John had for the surveying profession.

John was one of the founding members of the NW1/4 over ten years ago and his surveying career actually got off to a somewhat late start. He started learning the ropes in the early 90s, working at Emerald Mountain Surveys in Steamboat Springs and worked his way through the ropes. At that point, he was in his late 30s, but that did not deter him. His higher education at CU gave him a broad based outlook on surveying, that it was not as simple as applying math to what were really legal or procedural questions. By the mid-2000's, having been licensed for a few years, he decided to start up his own surveying company, which became known as Storm King Surveys, Inc. He purchased AutoCAD, a robotic total station and a GPS system and he was on his way.

John was also very much a self-taught individual. Although he learned AutoCAD from other users and many land surveying practices from those he worked with, his increasing involvement with the PLSC furthered his quest for additional knowledge. He served on the Board of Directors of the PLSC for three years and the individuals he met there, JB Guyton, Diana Askew and Art Hipp, to name a few, inspired him to learn further about the world of surveying. There never was a time I could not call John about a surveying matter and he would not drop everything he was doing to ponder the question. John was the epitome of a lifelong learner.

His love of the outdoors was unmatched. I knew I could count on the privilege of digging more than my fair share of snow holes in the winter, looking for property corners, because John was doing more than his fair share of skiing on the mountain! He also enjoyed hut trips on the 10th Mountain Trail.

And so his time with us has ended. I was informed a few weeks ago by JB Guyton and Warren Ward that NSPS had honored John Noonan with a Final Point. This survey marker will be mounted at the location where John left us, which is only fitting. There was a trackhoe in Soda Creek yesterday, where John entered the river system for the last time. It was not there to prevent a future accident, but to maintain the drainage of the Box Culvert under US Highway 40. I believe John would find it fitting that life carries on and the rivers and outdoors he loved so well would be enhanced for future generations.

Brian T. Kelly, PLS President, NW1/4