

December 31 **Fiddlin' Foresters complete
successful Centennial Tour - My Impressions. By Lynn
Young**

December 31, 2005 - Buffalo, Wyoming - As the 2005 Centennial Year comes to a close, so does the year-long Centennial Tour of the Fiddlin' Foresters. The fantastic year included so many highlights and wonderful adventures, and the Fiddlin' Foresters were able to enhance the 100 year milestone for the U.S. Forest Service.

It was a great year. We were able to provide conservation messages to tens of thousands of folks throughout the nation, as well as contribute to dozens of Centennial events that hard working field employees celebrated. It was extremely rewarding.



Jane Leche

In 2005, the Fiddlin' Foresters traveled to 12 states, well over 40,000 miles, to provide 49 conservation programs to over 20,000 people. [See our 2005 Centennial Tour poster.](#) It is hard to know how many heard our message. For example, over 1 million people attended the Smithsonian Folklife Festival where we played about 12 programs over nearly two weeks. If only one percent of the visitors saw us, that's still a lot of people.



Jim Maxwell

Some of the highlights of the tour were:

The Centennial Congress in Washington D.C that included the national leadership team of the Forest Service and hundreds of the top conservationists in the United States

The National Wild Turkey Federation at the Opryland hotel in Nashville. Playing for 3000 people on the big stage as part of a huge program that included top Nashville celebrities was a thrill. In addition to all the backstage spectacle and association with the big country stars, the Fiddlin' Foresters got to play for over 1000 excited school children earlier in the afternoon.



Fiddlin' Foresters at Opryland Hotel

Recording a CD that provides the spirit of the Fiddlin' Foresters and our conservation messages. The hard work with a great producer in a great studio in Denver was an exciting learning experience. The CD is available through the [Rocky Mountain Nature Association](#).



Tom McFarland

The New Employee Orientation in Sacramento provided a rare chance to interact with hundreds of new Forest Service employees and talk about the strength and spirit of our agency. It allowed us to do what we may do best...enhance employee morale.

We rode in a parade! Even after over 10 years of performances we had never ridden in a parade. The San Juan NF Centennial Celebration provided an opportunity to play tunes through downtown Durango while riding on a wagon being pulled by a team of Percherons.



Lynn Young

Participating in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival was a huge honor. The once-in-a-lifetime experience provided enough memories for a lifetime.

How do you get to play on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center? Practice, practice, practice.

Participating in the National Retirees Reunion in Portland was unforgettable for me. As a recent retiree myself, I could connect with so many of the audience. But more

than that, seeing so many folks with so much experience and so much to share interacting with the current leadership of the Forest Service gave me confidence in the future of the agency. I believe there will be a huge Bicentennial of the Forest Service in 2105 to celebrate another 100 years of successful natural resource management. I hope the Fiddlin' Foresters are invited.



Fiddlin' Foresters at National Retiree Reunion in Portland

As exciting as these experiences were, there were three even more important memories of the Centennial year.

First was the chance to visit national forests and ranger districts and participate in their celebrations. Every event was uplifting and moving. From California to North Carolina, from Michigan to Nevada, the field employees were truly excited about being a part of an agency that has so much history and so much future. The enthusiasm, creativity and ingenuity of the field units was inspiring.

Second was the opportunity to meet hundreds of Forest Service employees and renew friendships with hundreds more. We couldn't help but to be so impressed with the people that serve the people who own national forests. From our special friends **Dale Bosworth, Tom Thompson** and **Denny Bschor**, to the district rangers, technicians, researchers, office managers, motor boat operators and a vast array of other talented and dedicated employees, we came away from the Centennial Tour knowing that the Forest Service is in good hands. It was an honor to meet and associate with so many capable people.

And last were the dedication, enthusiasm and devotion of my fellow Fiddlin' Foresters. The endless airports, hotel

rooms, restaurants, rental cars, sound checks, rehearsals, stage setups, changing rooms, booking and travel arrangements, travel voucher preparation, and the packing and unpacking runs together as a blur in our memory. It was fun, an honor and privilege to appear on stage to represent our entire agency. But the preparation to get there is not fun...it's just plain hard work. Jim and Jane did their best to carry on their regular full-time jobs while spending huge blocks of time making preparations and conducting the tour. And Tom spent many weeks away from his busy, successful law practice to travel with us. It was a huge effort that took all the teamwork, relationship building, trust, participation and conviction of a family. I am so proud of the Fiddlin' Foresters and all that we have accomplished.



On the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, Washington D.C.