



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 4, 2007

Media Contact: Terry Seyden, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Forest Service
(828) 257-4202

Alex Comfort Named Executive Director of the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association

Alex Comfort, currently Associate Vice Chancellor for Development at UNC Asheville, has been named Executive Director of the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association. In his new position, Comfort will direct all aspects of the growth and operation of the Interpretive Association in conjunction with its Board of Directors. He starts his new post on April 20.

The Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association is the not-for-profit agency that supports the mission of the Cradle of Forestry, a 6,500 acre site near Brevard, operated by the U.S. Forest Service. It fosters education about forestry and introduces visitors to the site of the first forestry school in America. The Interpretive Association and the Cradle of Forestry's joint strategic plan envisions the two organizations creating an enhanced regional and national profile for the Cradle of Forestry site and an expanded national role for the Interpretive Association in forest education and forest conservation.

“I am excited to join the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association at a time when it is expanding its vision and planning,” said Comfort. “The U.S. Forest Service is doing a tremendous job in North Carolina and around the country and the Interpretive Association is

-more-

100 South Broad Street • Brevard, North Carolina 28712 • (828) 884-5713 • Fax: (828) 884-4671
1002 Pisgah Highway • Pisgah Forest, North Carolina 28768 • (828) 877-3130
www.cradleofforestry.org

poised to partner with the Forest Service and any agency that promotes the best in forestry policy and education. It is important for everyone to know that George Vanderbilt started the first forestry school in the country, and we want to build on his legacy and make sure forestry receives its proper place among the important topics being discussed regarding our nation's future."

John Heinitsh, current chair of the Interpretative Association's board, said: "The Board has been seeking a person with experience, vision, and creativity for this key position. Alex's skills in community collaboration, leadership, fund-raising and non-profit management complement perfectly the Board's expertise in forest conservation, history and education. He's a great fit for us."

Comfort's tenure in Asheville was cited by Pat Smith, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina: "We are fortunate to have had Alex at UNC Asheville for this length of time, and it is wonderful that he will stay in this region. His community involvement has been extensive, and his professional skills have helped UNC Asheville and will move the Cradle of Forestry Interpretative Association ahead in its goals."

In his current position, Comfort has led UNC Asheville's major gifts program. He served as campaign director of the 1998-2002 university capital campaign which achieved \$11.1 million and also the campaign for the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement that built its new home after a \$4.2 million initiative. Comfort served as vice president for the LSU Health Sciences Center Foundation and also as Director of Development for Covenant House New Orleans. In 1995 he was chosen as the Outstanding Fund Raising Professional by the Greater New Orleans Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. In addition, he has been an Episcopal priest for 28 years.

He holds a master's degree in medieval history from Duke University, and a M. Div. and BA from Sewanee: The University of the South.

For more information, contact John Heinitsh, Chairman of the Board, Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association; 828-966-4260, extension 236.

###