

Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests

# Cascade Lookout

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Beautiful Echo Ridge

40 Years of Wilderness

Historic Sites Protected

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Saturday in the Park at Lake Wenatchee

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And Much More Information About Your Local National Forests



Cascade Lookout

A Publication of the U.S. Forest Service — 2004

Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests

# Forest News & Information

## A Note from the Forest Supervisor



James L. Boynton

It is my pleasure to share a few words and thoughts with the readers of this, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cascade Lookout. I became Forest Supervisor for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests in October, 2003. Prior to moving here, I was the Forest Supervisor for the Sierra National Forest, in California, for the previous 18 years.

I am replacing Sonny J. O'Neal, who has retired after a distinguished Forest Service career including 16 years as supervisor of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

I've had a chance to visit each of the seven ranger districts on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, and have met most of the Forest employees. I've also met with many community groups who are very interested in management of National Forest lands. During my travels throughout the two forests I've been impressed by the beauty and the grandeur of these lands, and look forward to working in this wonderful area.

The articles contained in this edition of the Cascade Lookout address many of the issues that are affecting most forests nation-wide. Dale Bosworth, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, has identified four issues which he calls "four threats."

The most important of the threats is dealing with fire and fuels. Wildfire has been an important issue for the residents of north central Washington for many years. Most recall the devastating fires of 1994, 2001, 2002, and the summer of 2003 in which several hundred forested acres burned. The center pages of this newspaper have been developed to be "pulled out" and stand alone as a fire information sheet. These pages address the continuing threat of wildfire and Forest Service plans for fuels reduction on overcrowded forests. This information is especially important to people who live adjacent to national forest lands.

The other "threats," that are affecting national forests are unmanaged off-highway vehicle cross-country travel, invasive species (both plant and animal) which are encroaching on national forest lands; and the loss of the nation's private forests and rangelands to subdivision and land conversion, resulting in the loss of open space.

The articles in this paper will help you learn more about your national forests, some of their history, and how they are managed. I hope that you will plan a visit to personally experience the beauty and diversity of these 4 million acres of public forest land. I hope to see you there.

James L. Boynton  
Forest Supervisor

## Celebrating America's Wilderness

by Jim Archambeault  
Recreation Planner  
& Lisa Therrell  
Wilderness Manager



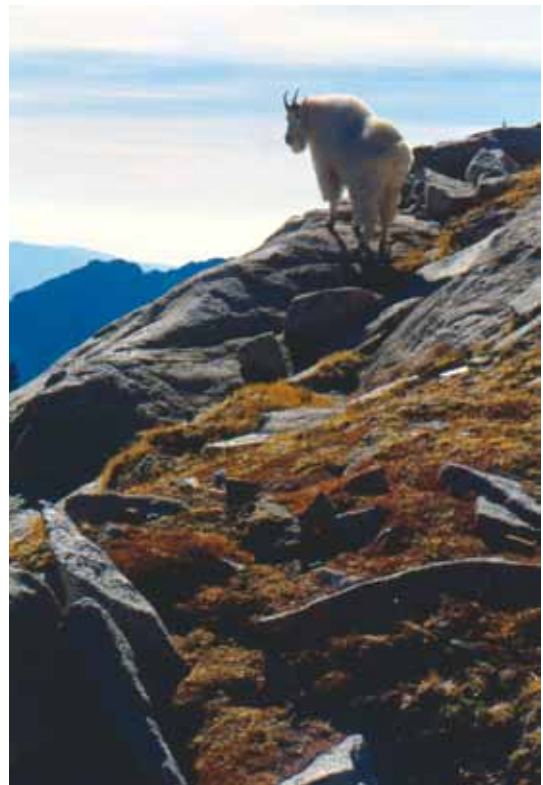
The year 2004 marks forty years of a great American accomplishment – designation of a National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness Act of 1964 was enacted after eight years of heated Congressional debate and sixty-five versions of the Bill.

The original Act preserved 9.1 million acres of public land as wilderness. Subsequent legislation has brought our current system to over 105 million acres. This means that 4.7% of the United States and a wide variety of ecosystems are now protected as wilderness.

On the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, wildernesses encompass over one and one-half million acres, nearly 40% of land within the two Forests. Portions, or all, of eight wildernesses are included in this total: Glacier Peak, and Goat Rocks, established with the passage of the original Wilderness Act of 1964; Pasayten, established in 1968; Alpine Lakes, established in 1976; and Henry M. Jackson, Lake Chelan-Sawtooth, William O. Douglas and Norse Peak, all established in 1984.

The Wilderness Act mandates that wilderness areas be "... administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

The management of wilderness. The Forest Service recognizes that wilderness is a unique and vital resource. In addition to offering primitive recreation opportunities, it is valuable for its scientific and educational uses, as a benchmark for ecological studies, and for the preservation of historical and natural features. Federal policy is to manage the wilderness resource to ensure its character and values are dominant and enduring. Managers must ensure that each wilderness offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Wilderness stewardship does not attempt to mold nature to suit people, but to manage human use



and influences so as not to alter natural processes. The toughest challenge will be to keep wilderness "... affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. . . ."

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment shows that Americans who know about Wilderness value it tremendously. Management of the National Wilderness Preservation System to maintain its legacy of clean water and air, critical habitat for rare and endangered species, and unparalleled opportunity for recreation, reflection, and solitude is one of our most important missions.

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Fees collected from the Recreation Fee program have really helped augment regular annual Forest Service appropriations for operation and maintenance of recreation facilities.

Not only have they paid for maintaining many of the spots forest visitors love to recreate in, they have provided a source of cash to match grant applications the Forest makes to other agencies, and have helped defray the costs associated with the large number of volunteers that assist the Forest Service in maintaining our facilities.

In 2003, over \$700,000 was collected in fees from recreation lodging, campgrounds, Northwest Forest Pass sales, Golden Passport sales, and other recreation programs in the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

Last year, over 830 miles of Forest trails were maintained with Northwest Forest Pass revenues. An additional 1,200 miles was maintained with grant money, and Northwest Forest Pass funds were used to leverage support from volunteers.

Numerous volunteers from the following groups helped in this effort--Washington Trails Association, Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, Student Conservation Association, Northwest Youth Corps, Wilderness Volunteer Corps, Skagit Audubon Club, Washington Outfitters and Guides Association, Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association, and Washington Conservation Corps. In addition, fees provided replacement of campground amenities, such as fire rings and tables, and funded employees who serviced and maintained campground facilities.

Fees also helped maintain the Nordic ski trails at Echo Ridge, paid for maintenance of the boat docks at recreation sites on Lake Chelan, provided staffing to run the limited entry permit system for the Enchantment Basin in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, and funded wilderness rangers. More information on specific accomplishments can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/recreate/rec-fee-accomplishments-2003.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/recreate/rec-fee-accomplishments-2003.pdf)

Christmas tree permits are also part of the Recreation Fee Demonstration program. Fees collected

from Christmas tree permit sales helped keep some district offices open later during the winter, to better serve customers who couldn't come in during regular business hours. These fees also paid for additional staff who worked in the woods offering assistance and maps to those seeking trees.

This year, visitors will see some changes in the Northwest Forest Pass program. About 50 trailheads, mostly those with minor facility development or light use, were dropped from the Northwest Forest Pass system. Those trailheads will now be available without charge. In addition, some changes have occurred with campsites that were part of the Northwest Forest Pass system in the past; check with local ranger district offices for these changes.

Before purchasing this year's pass, trail users should check with local Forest Services offices, or obtain a copy of the 2004 Northwest Forest Pass Site Guide to make sure that their favorite sites still require a Northwest Forest Pass. The 2004 North-



west Forest Pass Site Guide is available at all ranger district offices and also can be downloaded from our forest web site.

Revenues from the sale of passes will continue to go to locations based on visitor use. Where people go is where the money goes. As tax dollars decline, recreation pass revenue continues to be a key source of income for maintaining services on public lands. Be assured, your money is definitely making a difference! ■



## Your Money is Making a Difference!

by Jim Archambeault  
Recreation Planner



Photos show before and after trail repair

Those interested in temporary employment with the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests are encouraged to view job opportunities and apply online for summer/seasonal jobs, said Anita Spargur, Human Resources manager for the two National Forests.



"Each year we recruit for a wide variety of summer jobs, including those in fire fighting, campground maintenance, trail construction, fisheries and wildlife survey work, engineering, road maintenance, and more," Spargur said. The easiest way to find out more and submit an application is to use the Internet system set up specifically for this purpose, she noted.

"Three websites provide the tools for job seekers to get the information they need and to provide their application for the 2004 temporary employment field season," Spargur said.

[www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/](http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/) –Provides basic information on Forest Service employment.

[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov) –Provides a listing of all government jobs, including temporary positions on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

[www.avuedigitalservices.com/usfs/applicant.html](http://www.avuedigitalservices.com/usfs/applicant.html) –Accesses the online application process.

"We strongly encourage applicants to apply on-line to eliminate the mailing and scanning time that hard copy applications encounter," Spargur said.

To be eligible to apply for these summer jobs, individuals must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Some positions are subject to drug testing and/or require a commercial driver's license. To qualify for firefighting positions, individuals must be able to pass a physical fitness test. Depending upon the position, pay will vary between \$9.08 and \$11.40 per hour. Most jobs are entry-level forestry aid/technician jobs.

Applicants with additional questions may call 509/664-9386, or 509/664-9235 to obtain a hard copy application. ■

## Temporary Summer Jobs



# Forest News & Information

## Join the Effort to Revise the Forest Plan!



Many people care deeply about how national forests are managed. Whether you visit them regularly and have intimate knowledge of them, or simply dream about visiting them, you can make a difference in how your national forests are managed for the future.

You are invited to join us as we change the "blueprint" that directs management of the national forests. Currently, a team of Forest Service employees is revising the plans for the Colville, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. Your ideas and opinions will be important to updating the plans, which were last completed in 1988, 1989, and 1990 respectively. By law, this blueprint, officially known as the Land and Resource Management Plan, is revised every ten to fifteen years.

Plans define how the Forest Service manages the national forests. Each national forest and grassland has its own plan which establishes the desired future condition for the land and resources, and sets broad, general management direction.

Forest operations must be consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines, as well as its goals, objectives, and management requirements, and all relevant overarching laws and regulations. Although management plans identify where and under what conditions an activity or project can proceed, they do not normally make site-specific decisions to undertake particular projects.

Forest Plans make these six decisions:

- Establish forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives.
- Establish the forest-wide management requirements for implementing projects under the plan.
- Determine the boundaries of management areas and prescribe the activities that may be applied in them.
- Identify land suitable for producing timber and establish how much timber the Forest Service is allowed to sell from lands suited for timber production.

- Establish what the Forest Service must do to monitor and evaluate management activities and effectiveness.
- Evaluate and determine whether roadless areas should be recommended as part of the National Wilderness Preservation system, and address which rivers and streams be recommended for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

Much has changed in our world and in the management of the national forests since the late 1980s and early '90s. Ecological conditions have changed, public expectations are different, and new laws and regulations have been implemented since the plans were originally created. These changes need to be reflected in the new forest plans.

Rather than making sweeping change, Forest Service planners expect to build on the existing forest plans and make changes only as necessary.

The Forest Plan Revision effort is expected to be completed by March, 2006 so there's plenty of time for you to join us and not get left behind! Some public meetings have already been held, and more will be planned as new information is available. Besides public meetings, you can also participate anytime by writing us via U.S. Mail, e-mailing us your comments, or by giving us a call on the phone. For more information on Forest Plan Revision, you may also access our web site. Here's how you can reach us.

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## Recreation Dams Brake Fish Migrations

By Gary Torretta  
Fisheries Biologist  
Naches Ranger District



Each summer the annual human migration to the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests occurs. Thousands of people come to the forests to recreate and escape the summer heat of the valleys. When streams are low, there is a temptation to construct rock and wood dams to deepen pools for swimming. Each year hundreds of large recreation dams are found on the forest.

Another migration happens at this time of year, too. From spring through fall, native salmon and trout return to spawning areas in national forest streams. Chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, and west-slope cutthroat trout swim upstream to spawn, often returning to the same stream where they were hatched. Most of these fish are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act.

What people may not realize is that building recreational dams can actually harm fish by blocking or delaying them from reaching their spawning grounds. A single dam can prevent all spawning reproduction in a stream for that year.

Hundreds of bull trout migrate from lakes into a few small spawning streams on the forest each summer. When stream flows are at summer lows, large salmon and bull trout (which spawn between August-October) find it difficult to swim through shallow areas.

Water flowing over play dams is often too shallow to allow fish passage, because most of the water is seeping through the dam. Fish unable to swim over a dam are susceptible to poaching, predation, disease, or even death if water temperatures get too warm. They may be forced to spawn



in unsuitable habitat areas, causing poor survival for their eggs. Rock dams can also entrap juvenile trout in side channels, with no protection from predators.

Building play dams may also damage fish habitat. Moving cobbles and small boulders disturbs the streambed, destroying aquatic insects that fish feed on. Stream banks may be trampled, and vegetation and trees cut for dam materials, increasing the risk of stream bank erosion. Plastic sheeting and other litter found in play dams is unsightly.

You can help protect our native fish runs

If you find a recreation dam, please dismantle it totally, or notch it open, so fish can swim through freely. Or let a Forest Service employee know the locations of dams that need removal. Discourage others in your group from constructing new dams. Explain to others how these dams harm endangered fish populations.

Each year, considerable time is spent by Federal and State fishery managers dismantling play dams to restore fish passage. With your help, native fish may return in stronger numbers to national forests for the enjoyment of future generations. ■

# Forest News & Information



It's going to be the most fun-filled Wenatchee River Salmon Festival you could imagine. Don't know what Salmon Fest is? Well then, swim on over to Leavenworth, Washington September 18 and 19, 2004 and take part in this premier, educational and award-winning, outdoor environmental education event!

Featured on CNN, and in Sunset Magazine and the Wenatchee World for its unique blend

It could be mountain weather data collection or thinning for fire risk reduction, or replacing a culvert to improve fish passage. Maybe it's noxious weed control or roadside brush cutting. Sometimes it's road resurfacing or relocating campsites away from sensitive streams.

Other times it may be completing recreation project work, like trail maintenance or wilderness campsite rehabilitation, while giving local youth an opportunity to work and learn in the national forest. Over the last three years, these projects and many others have all received financial support through Title II of the "The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000."

In fact, since this special funding became available, over \$1.7 million has been allocated to projects on national forest land in Okanogan, Chelan, and Kittitas Counties.

Enacted by Congress in 2000, the law provides payments to local counties as compensation for the impact of large federal land acreages within their boundaries. "This law guarantees a secure level of funding for schools and roads," said Jim Boynton, Forest Supervisor of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. In addition, the legislation also provides monies that can be devoted to projects that benefit the national forest lands within the counties, he noted.

"Although many project proposals are developed by local ranger districts, project applications may also be submitted by other agencies, local governments, organizations, or individuals," said Boynton. Proposals for the FY2005 funding round were due April 1, 2004, he said. Boynton added that FY2006 will be the final year of program, unless the Act is reauthorized by Congress.

By law, projects must benefit national forest lands, directly or indirectly. The projects are to enhance forest ecosystems, restore and improve

of excitement, education and entertainment in a relaxed and family-friendly atmosphere, there's something for everyone at the Salmon Festival. We look forward to celebrating this special event with you. And, it's all free!

The festival is located on the grounds of a working national fish hatchery located along the Icicle River. The rugged peaks of the Cascade Mountains, and clear blue, sunny skies frame the setting. You'll have a chance to visit the nearby Bavarian theme village of Leavenworth when not at the festival. For more information call (509) 548-6662, or catch our website at [www.salmonfest.org](http://www.salmonfest.org)



## Don't Miss the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival



## Supporting Needed Natural Resource Work

by Marta Ames  
Public Affairs Specialist



Cabin Creek Trail on the Okanogan National Forest gets a facelift from Pacific NW Trail Youth Crew

land health and water quality, or improve the maintenance of existing facilities within the forests.

A citizen advisory committee reviews the project proposals and recommends to Boynton which of them should be funded. The Resource Advisory Committee members represent a wide variety of citizen interests including forest users, industry, tribes, and local governmental representatives. They are residents of each of the four counties. Members of the committee include Daryl Asmus-



sen, Geraldine Gillespie, Midge Cross, Robin Stice, and James Weed from Okanogan County; Cary Condotta, Steve Tift, Chester Marler, and Everett Burts from Chelan County; Janice Osmonovich, and Bill Hinkle, from Kittitas County; and Saundie McPhee, Jess Heaverlo, Lee Carlson, and James Hall from Yakima County. Terry Wallgren, Kittitas County; and Jerry Gutzwiller, Chelan County, serve as replacement members.

For 2004, twenty-one projects were recommended by the committee and approved by the Forest Service. They included projects to improve roads, maintain trails, control weeds, educate young people while putting them to work in the woods, restore flood plain lands, and help clean garbage from forest areas. ■

## Forest Contractor Honored

Ubaldo Perez, owner of Green Tree Re-forestation of Grandview, Washington, will be honored as the Region 10 Prime Contractor of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration during National Small Business Week ceremonies in Orlando, Florida, May 19 - 21.

Perez was nominated for the award by the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. In nominating Perez, Forest Service contracting officer Charlotte Carter highlighted the responsiveness and competency of his crews. Most of Perez' work with the Forest Service involves thinning

and selectively logging, pruning the lower branches of trees, and clearing brush to reduce excessive fuels that could feed a wildfire. The work is critical to the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests' Dry Forest Strategy that seeks to move overgrown forests toward a more sustainable, healthier, and safer condition.

Perez joins nine other SBA Regional Prime Contractor of the Year award winners in competition for the national Prime Contractor of the Year award. ■

## West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus was first recognized in the U.S. in 1999. Although, as of spring 2004, no cases had been found in either Oregon or Washington, health officials say it is very likely that the virus will soon spread to these states.

The virus spreads by the bite of a mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by biting infected birds. More information on West Nile Virus may be found on the Washington State Department of Health website: [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html) or by calling the toll free West Nile Info Line at (866)788-4787.

Reduce the risk of being bitten by following these tips: COVER UP by wearing long sleeves and pants; KEEP MOSQUITOES OUT by using screens on windows and doors; REPEL MOSQUITOES by using repellents that contain DEET; DRY OUT SURROUNDINGS...empty anything that holds standing water. ■

# Methow Valley Ranger District

## Community Fire Planning

by Deborah Kelly  
Public Affairs Specialist



Residents of the upper Methow Valley attended many meetings last summer with fire officials to be informed of the Needles Fire situation and evacuation alerts.

Photo right: The Needles Fire burns near homes in the Methow Valley.

The realities of living in a fire dependent ecosystem, where the natural processes of fire have been suppressed for nearly a century, have become all too clear in recent years to people in north central Washington.

Residents of Okanogan and Chelan Counties remember the impacts of recent wildfires such as Needles, Farewell, Libby Creek, Thirtymile, Mount Hull, Isabel, Virginia Lakes, Indian Dan Canyon, Rex Creek, North 25 Mile Creek, Deer Point, and Union Valley fires.

Last summer, the communities of Lost River, Mazama, Chelan, Union Valley, Tonasket, Pateros, and Brewster were put on evacuation notice. Residents of Okanogan learned you don't need to live right next to a forest to be at risk from wildfire. In less than two hours a suspected human-caused fire, pushed uphill by strong hot winds through dry grass and sagebrush, quickly engulfed 9 homes.

People in each of these communities have experienced the risks of living near private, state and federal wild lands. Experience gained from dealing with these wildfires has underscored the need for communities to be prepared. This past winter, a group met to discuss the funding and application process for 2005 National Fire Plan grants. They recognized the need for a comprehensive fire plan that would provide a framework for long-term community fire protection. This plan would cross boundaries and include state, private, and federal lands.

The Methow Valley Community Fire Plan Coordinating Group, in partnership with local agencies such as the county, rural fire districts, Washington Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service, has taken the first steps in developing a community fire plan.

The objectives of the plan are to assess the community's capacity to suppress and deal with the impacts of wildfire, and identify areas that may be at the greatest risk of fire. The plan will help identify areas that may be a priority for fuels reduction treatments, and areas that need better access for emergency vehicles. Homeowners will also learn where to obtain information on how to improve their defensible space and develop an evacuation plan.



The Methow Valley Community Fire Plan will also identify areas where further planning and funding efforts should continue. The Coordinating Group has applied for a 2005 National Fire Plan grant to hire a part-time planning coordinator and public outreach coordinator to continue this effort. The group's goals are to work together to increase wildfire protection and prevention, increase wildfire education and outreach, and create a safe environment for fire suppression.

To view a copy of the community fire plan developed by the Methow Valley Community Fire Plan Coordinating Group and see a listing of the cooperators, log on to [www.okanogancdc.com](http://www.okanogancdc.com)

## Fish Passage Restoration

By Jennifer Molesworth  
Fisheries Biologist  
and  
Dana Bardslley  
North Zone Engineer



As a part of ongoing watershed improvement efforts, seven culverts on the Methow Valley Ranger District will be replaced with larger structures that allow for improved fish passage and larger flood flows.

The aging culverts targeted for replacement are at the end of their expected structural life. Originally only sized to withstand a 20-year flood event, the culverts are much narrower than the natural stream channel. The narrow culvert constricts the creek water flow causing high water velocities and scour at the outlet. Overtime, this scouring causes the culvert to be perched higher than the natural streambed, creating a waterfall.

The combined effect of high water velocity, shallow water depth at low flow, and the waterfall at the culvert outlet creates an impassable barrier to young fish and migrating adult fish. Once upstream habitat becomes inaccessible for spawning and rearing fish, the long term effect is a decline in fish populations.

Undersized culverts also trap large woody debris and gravel, starving downstream reaches of these valuable building blocks of quality habitat for aquatic and riparian species. Such culverts are also more vulnerable to failure during flood events. If the culvert fails, the road washes out, blocking the road and damaging downstream fish habitat with sediment and debris.

To correct this problem, old culverts will be replaced with larger steel plate arches that have natural stream bottoms. Installation of the new arches requires the stream channel to be temporarily diverted around the existing culvert. The old culvert and fill is removed, then a new channel is excavated to fit the new structure.

Next, concrete footings are constructed and the steel-plate arch is bolted to the footings. A streambed is constructed using natural materials and water is diverted back into the new channel. The new structure is then backfilled and road rebuilt over the top. The site is re-vegetated with native plants to control erosion and the disturbed area is monitored for noxious weeds.

In summer 2004, work will take place on the South Fork of Beaver Creek Road #4225 and Libby Creek Road #4300. In addition, the War Creek crossing on Twisp River Road #4420 will be replaced with a bridge because War Creek is a large stream that requires a wider crossing than a steel plate arch can span. These projects involved a lot of planning, close coordination and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The hydraulic project approval from WDFW limits the timeframes when in-stream work can be done to July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>. Check with the ranger district for specific road closure updates.

The planning, permitting, design and contracting of these seven stream crossings projects will cost a total of \$825,000. A total of 33 miles of valuable fish spawning and rearing habitat will be restored, benefiting anadromous steelhead trout, bull trout, rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, young spring Chinook salmon, sculpin and, possibly, Coho salmon.

# Methow Valley Ranger District

The full impact of trail damage sustained from last summer's fires and October flooding on the Methow Valley Ranger District has yet to be seen. Snow that fell immediately following heavy rains prevented district crews from making a full inventory of flood damage to trails and fire burned areas last fall.

"A full account of the damage won't be made until the snow melts this summer, and we have a chance to walk the trails," said Jennifer Zbyszewski, District Recreation Manager.

The Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests received \$243,000 to begin repair of fire and flood damage to trails and roads. The Methow Valley District will use its portion of the \$243,000 to repair the Harts Pass road, replace the Rainy Lake Bridge, repair the Robinson Creek Trail, and prepare a contract to fix the Andrews Creek Trail. When funding is received, the Andrews Creek contract will be advertised and awarded. The Meadows Campground and most of the damaged trails will remain closed until funding for restoration becomes available.

The following trails have known impacts from last summer's Needle Creek and Farewell Fires, and will remain closed until funding can be secured for their repair: Andrews (#504), Lake Creek (#500), Crystal Lake (#1517), Fire Creek (#561), Peepsight (#525), and Coleman Ridge (#505), Little Andrews (#537), Diamond Jack (#514), Driveway Butte (#481), West Fork Methow (#480), and Trout Creek (#479).

"These fire damaged trails have holes in the tread, thin crusts of tread over burned-out roots under the trails, hazardous trees hanging over the trails, destroyed turnpikes, and burned bridges," Zbyszewski said. "It's a very dangerous situation for hikers and horseback riders, so the trails will remain closed until they can be repaired," she said.

The Chewuch Trail (#510) was also damaged by the Farewell Fire, but is not closed. Crews will be working on the trail early in the summer to improve a ford, fill in a few holes in the trail, and restore the tread.

The Harts Pass road (#5400) was damaged by the Needle Creek Fire, and flood waters compounded the fire-created slope and road stability problems. The road will remain closed to all traffic

(motorized and non-motorized) until repairs can be completed. Work will begin as soon as the road melts out. Once work is completed, the road will re-open to public travel, hopefully by August.

The Meadows Campground located in the Harts Pass area was completely burned in the Needles Creek fire. The loss of this campground reduces the developed campsites in the Harts Pass area to the 6 in the Harts Pass Campground, so there will be competition for campsites in this area.

The October flood damaged one bridge, caused portions of two trails to fail, and left deep trenches in others. One of the bridges on the Rainy Lake Trail (#310) was severely damaged, so the trail will be closed until the bridge can be replaced in mid-to-late summer. Sections of the West Fork Methow Trail (#480) and the Twisp Pass Trail (#432) were damaged, and another damaged section on the Chancellor Trail (#754) was enlarged by the flood.

The Twisp Pass Trail is currently open to hikers but closed to stock. It will be repaired by a volunteer group this summer. The West Fork Methow and Chancellor Trails will remain closed until funding becomes available for repair. The Robinson Creek Trail (#478) sustained tread damage during the flooding, but is not closed. Crews will be working on the trail this summer.

A very short section of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT #2000) that parallels Highway 20, just east of Rainy Pass, was covered by a debris slide but will be repaired this summer. Other sections of the PCT located on the Darrington, Leavenworth and Lake Wenatchee Ranger Districts, also sustained a lot of damage.

A project that was not connected to the fires or floods is the replacement of a bridge on Cutthroat Trail (#483). The trail will be closed from July 12, 2004 until August 27<sup>th</sup> to replace the bridge.

This summer, fees collected from the Northwest Forest Pass program are being used for routine maintenance on trails that were not damaged by the fires or flood. The fees will also help fund the replacement of Cutthroat bridge, and bridge and trail work on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Contact the Methow Valley Ranger District (509-996-4003) or go to [www.fs.fed.us/r6/okanogan](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/okanogan) for the latest updates on road and trail conditions and closures. ■

## Fire and Floods Impact Roads and Trails

by Deborah Kelly  
Public Affairs Specialist



Lake Creek Trail



Andrews Creek Trail

After two years of preparation, the effort to learn how birds respond to prescribed fire took a big step forward with the Finley Canyon burn in March. The burn was one of three being evaluated on the Methow Valley Ranger District under the "Birds and Burning" study.

As one part of a larger eight-state research project, biologists from the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests and the Wenatchee Forestry Sciences Lab are carefully evaluating the effects of spring burning on both songbirds and cavity nesters.

Biologist Kent Woodruff and a field crew of six have spent the last several seasons setting up study plots, gathering data, counting birds and nests, and measuring and identifying vegetation in preparation for a study on the effects of fire on birds and their habitat.

Songbirds either live year-round in one location or are migratory, returning each spring from warmer winter climates in the south. These birds feed and nest on the ground or in shrubs and trees. Some can consume thousands of insects a day. Cavity nesters like woodpeckers drill holes for nesting. They eat insects that bore holes in living and dead trees. Other cavity nesters, like bluebirds, follow behind woodpeckers and use abandoned holes from previous years. Bluebirds are almost exclusively insect eaters.

By taking precise measurements of pine needles, grass, ponderosa pine trees, and even dead trees, both before and after fire, biologists can find out what changes take place as a result of controlled burning. Information gathered after the fires can be compared to the hundreds of records already collected before burning. The compiled data will show how birds respond to fire.

To date, little specific information has been gathered on the benefits and consequences for birds of intentional burning. However, biologists suspect that the results of these three prescribed fires will show a benefit to many types of birds. For centuries, natural fire has renewed the forest vegetation, and has created healthy habitat for many species of animals, including birds.

As employees of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests continue forest restoration work through the use of prescribed fire, fire managers and biologists will continue working together to monitor the effects of fire on birds and other wildlife. ■



## "Birds and Burning" Study

by Kent Woodruff  
Wildlife Biologist



Above: Video screen view of three small birds.

Left: Setting up the 'peeper' camera to view a bird nest inside a snag cavity. Tiny camera is mounted at end of long pole.

# Tonasket Ranger District

## Dry-Site Urban Interface Work Continues

By Shannon O'Brien  
Public Affairs Specialist



Dense stands, like the ones pictured above, are unhealthy for a variety of reasons. Large numbers of trees, growing in close proximity, restrict the growth normally found in healthy stands of trees. These unhealthy stands are also more vulnerable to insect and disease problems. The small trees, with branches close to the ground, will provide a ladder for fire to climb through the branches and straight to the crowns of the larger trees. Once a fire is in the crowns of trees, it travels more quickly and is much more difficult to suppress.

Four years of assessment, analysis, review, comment and, finally, approval have resulted in a flurry of activity west of Conconully in the South and West forks of Salmon Creek Watershed on the Tonasket Ranger District. The Conger project is a continuation of the District's work to improve forest conditions in areas where private lands are adjacent to national forest lands.

An assessment of the area, which lies three miles west of Conconully, illustrated the need to remove trees that are heavily infected with insects and disease. Work needed to be done to improve the health of this dry forest and to reduce fire hazard in the area. "Work occurred in this area about 20 years ago," said Mark Morris, District Ranger at Tonasket. "We are returning to the area as a maintenance measure."

In order to achieve the improvements recommended by the analysis, a number of activities will take place. In most stands, thinning will provide the desired result. Where insects and diseases, such as spruce budworm and root disease are too well established, stand regeneration will be encouraged. Work will also be done to encourage new growth in existing aspen stands. Prescribed burning is also

planned which will help those species of brush that thrive with naturally occurring fire.

Many stands of trees were overgrown with smaller trees. This creates a fuel ladder which can carry wildland fire up to the branches of the larger, healthy trees. The stand structure also makes it easier for spruce budworms to fall from host trees, spreading to the trees below.

The smaller trees and infected trees are being selectively removed. Much of the work is being done during the winter. This allows treatment to take place with minimal soil disturbance. The open stands of trees left after thinning are better spaced to reduce threats from insects and disease, allow for natural regeneration, and lower the threat from intense wildland fires.

"The goal with these projects is not necessarily to bring the stands back to their historical conditions but to bring them within a sustainable condition that history indicates is acceptable," said Morris. "While the District has completed other dry-site projects, such as Sneed and Coco, the Conger project is the most recent and it is larger and more visible." ■



Commercial thinning provides a more desirable, open landscape. Remaining trees will experience better growth, remain more resistant to insects and disease, and will support the process of natural regeneration.

## Historic Sites Protected – USFS Honored

By Powys Gadd  
Forest Archaeologist



Employees of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests will receive a special award from the Washington State Office of the Archaeology and Historic Preservation for protecting the historical structures in the Pasayten Wilderness last summer during the Farewell fire. The Forest Service has received the 2004 State Preservation Award for Site Stewardship.

During 2003, the Farewell Complex of wildfires on the Okanogan National Forest threatened three historic sites located in the Pasayten Wilderness. With information from fire behavior analysts, Tonasket District Ranger, Mark Morris initiated the effort to preserve the sites known locally as Spanish Camp Cabin, Horseshoe Basin Cabin and the Tungsten Mine.

The Spanish Camp Cabin was built in 1943 by Charles Johnson as a Forest Service guard shack. The 14-square-foot, one-room log cabin with a shake roof sported four bunks and a barrel stove. The Horseshoe Basin Cabin was built in the early 1930s by sheep rancher Omar Smith. This log cabin was used to store salt for sheep grazing in the area until it was turned over to the Forest Service and used as an administrative guard shack. The Tungsten Mine consists of several structures associated with the mining of tungsten from 1906 to the 1950s. Among those still standing is a bunkhouse/cookhouse and the supervisor's cabin adjacent to it. The mine was most active between 1915 and 1918.

Vanessa Freeman, Forest Service Wilderness Fire Advisor and a student at Central Washington University was assigned to organize, coordinate, and

oversee the effort. A fire crew comprised of 20 employees from the Methow Valley and Tonasket Ranger Districts manually wrapped both cabins and two structures from the Tungsten mine in fire shelter material held in place with metal staples.

The task was quite daunting given erratic fire behavior, extreme temperatures, dense smoke and the size of the buildings. It took more than a week to wrap the Tungsten Mine buildings alone and to clear vegetation from around all three sites. In the end, the fire avoided both cabins and came to within two miles of the Tungsten Mine. After the fire was contained, Forest Service employees returned to the three sites and manually removed the fire retardant wrapping material and the thousands of staples used to secure the wrap to the exterior of each structure.

The Canadian government was impressed by this effort and invited Ms. Freeman to instruct Canadian fire teams in historic structure protection. In doing so she became the first Forest Service employee in Washington State to work under an international agreement. ■





# Tonasket Ranger District

In the 1980s, the Forest Service got an idea to grow genetically improved trees from seed harvested from nearby National Forest lands. The idea was formulated by large timber companies some time before, but proved to be both an innovative and original quest for a government agency to embark upon. The idea, if it worked, would offer local solutions to local problems – an economic concept offering a sustainable, renewable resource. This stock of superior trees would grow faster, healthier, and be more durable than average. The trees could then be used to replant areas ravaged by fire or otherwise in need of replanting.

Inspired, the Tonasket Ranger District followed suit, choosing to utilize a 30-acre parcel of land near Peony Creek to plant a seed orchard consisting of Douglas-fir, Western larch, and ponderosa pine tree seedlings. The groundwork was laid in 1988 by the Pacific Northwest regional geneticist Pete Theisen, and was implemented locally by Laurie Walters in 1988. Forestry Technician Brad Hughes took over the project in 1990.

As with other seed orchards, the Peony Creek project began with a select tree program. Technicians combed the District in search of conifer trees with superior growth and form. Once a “plus tree” was located, its tree rings were measured to insure it was indeed the fastest growing tree in the stand. The tree was then monitored, and when the cones were produced they were harvested and sent to a tree improvement center. There the seed was extracted and stored, then planted into the seed orchard.

A few years ago, this paper published an article about the beetle infestation in the Tiffany Mountain Area. Since that time, the epidemic has become even more widespread, more visible, and portions of it have even burned.

For years, green hues of spruce, and lodgepole pine trees have covered the sides of the mountains from the Canadian border to Conconully. Now, thanks to the singular appetite of ‘the beetles,’ many of those same mountainsides have turned hues of red and gray.

A recent aerial survey indicates that almost 14,000 forested acres in the Tiffany area are suffering from beetle infestation. Studies on the ground



show thousands more acres of infestation. Although some of the trees may remain standing for a while, they are dead, and serve as an abundant source of explosive fuel at risk for wildland fire.

Last October was a good example when the Isabel fire burned across 4000 acres west of Conconully. “Without management intervention, this is going to be typical of what’s to come in that area,” said Mark Morris, District Ranger at Tonasket.

In a healthy subalpine fir forest, insect activity is part of the natural disturbance pattern. During drought conditions it is typical that large, stand-replacing fires will follow the insects. These fires, which occur at intervals between 80 and 250 years, help to regenerate the forest. Some wildlife species evolved to depend on this forest type.

Snowshoe hare and lynx, a threatened species in the lower 48 states, rely on these disturbances to create good habitat. Snowshoe hares, the principle

In 2002, twelve years of hard work and nearly half a million dollars later, the seed orchard underwent its last planting. Every year, trees have been planted, thinned and pollinated with only the healthiest and tallest trees remaining. The genetically superior trees are called the primary trees. “Eventually, I will eradicate all the trees but the best looking ones,” Hughes said. “They will get to stay and reproduce with the trees around them.”

While the past emphasis of such projects has been fast growth, now it’s more about gene conservation. Hughes hopes to underplant existing forest stands with seedlings derived from his orchard.

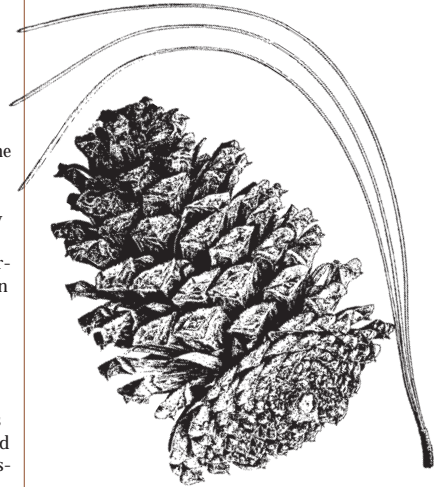
“In the summer of 2000, Dave Colbert and I climbed and picked cones from 60 new select trees,” Hughes said. “This spring I planted 6,000 of the seedlings myself.” Hughes is proud of the project and is dedicated to its success, ensuring the trees have water and are protected from pests.

The job isn’t always an easy one. Gophers, parasites, pollination problems, frost, hot and dry conditions, and rocky soils all pose problems. However, as Hughes points out, the trees that survive at Peony Creek will likely thrive anywhere on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. “The trees will already be acclimated to the dry environment that is typical of our forests, as well as our extreme temperatures,” he said.

Despite setbacks, the seed orchard has been hailed a success. The Peony Creek seed orchard is sure to be an invaluable asset to the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. With growth increases already observed at 30-40% above average, the future is promising. ■

## The Peony Creek Seed Orchard

By Estrela Rehanek  
Information Receptionist



food source for lynx, reach their highest densities in young (15-40 year old) lodgepole pine forests. Lodgepole pine cones require heat to open the cones and spread seeds and depend on these fires to regenerate the forest. Other species, such as the black-backed woodpeckers, are nomadic and depend on large fires and the insects that follow.

Today, with insect infestations becoming more widespread, managers are working to reduce the potential for a catastrophic fire event. Most of the dying trees are within inventoried roadless areas with only one way in and out. Removing dead trees along existing road corridors may help provide firebreaks and safe zones for firefighting efforts.

Extreme fire behaviors, like those experienced with last fall’s Isabel Fire, may continue to be a common occurrence in areas where beetle infestation has taken place. Erratic fire behavior can create situations where crews are forced to pull back from their direct attack.

“When a fire is being pushed by winds, and it has built up sufficient heat by traveling through acres of dead and down trees, even green material gets consumed,” remarked Dale Birch, Incident Commander for the Type 3 Team that provided initial attack on the Isabel fire.

Safety is always the first priority for firefighters and forest visitors. During wildland fires, it is important that people not involved in fire fighting efforts stay well clear. Given the right wind, heat and other factors, a fire in this terrain has the potential to grow at an incredible pace, much faster than a person, or even an animal can make the trek over rugged terrain. Forest visitors are asked to check with local offices for information about closures or current activity when planning a visit to forest lands, particularly during fire season. ■

## Fire Follows Beetles

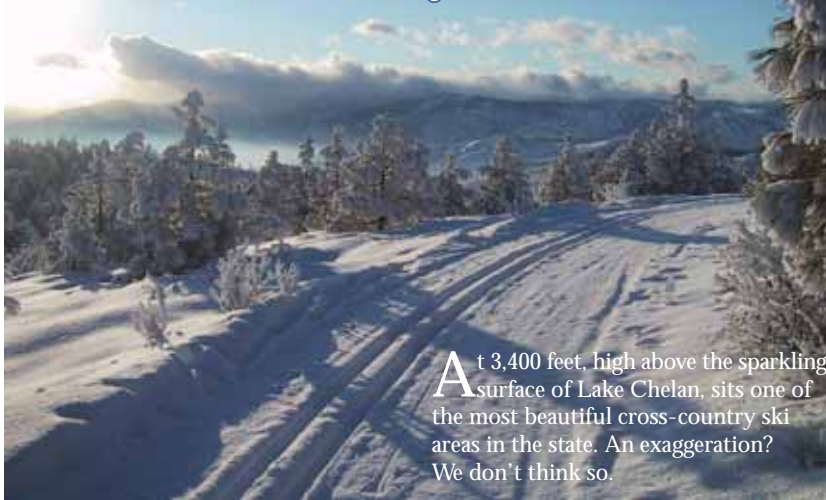
By Shannon O’Brien  
Public Affairs Specialist



The Isabel Fire, still burning hot in the middle of the night.

# Chelan Ranger District

## Breath-taking Echo Ridge - Can it Get any Better? YES!



At 3,400 feet, high above the sparkling surface of Lake Chelan, sits one of the most beautiful cross-country ski areas in the state. An exaggeration? We don't think so.

All Articles by Anna Larsen  
Public Affairs Specialist

### Into the Backcountry

The Echo Ridge Nordic Ski Area was designed to give beginning and intermediate skiers the idea of what it would be like to take a cross country ski tour through the backcountry, while still providing the comfort of a groomed trail system. The

loop trails sprawl and wind over a large enough area so that it is rarely possible to see other trails. Designed so even when the parking lot feels full, the trails won't, Echo Ridge does what it sought to do - take you into the backcountry.

The existing trails utilize roads only when they enhance the loop system; the majority of the trails have been built specifically for cross-country skiing. Trails dip and roll, providing ever-changing, but constant, views of the valley below. Unlike many cross-country ski areas, Echo Ridge is not located in the valley bottom. As its name implies, it sits on rolling ridges. Its 26 kilometers of trails loop around and through open forests. Often above the clouds, skiing at

Echo Ridge makes you feel as though you are on top of the world.



### Surprising Summer Use

When Echo Ridge was designed almost 12 years ago, the Chelan Ranger District expected it to be popular for mountain bikes and the use has more than met those expectations. The Ridge is extremely popular with beginning and intermediate mountain bikers. Hikers and horseback riders have also found Echo Ridge to be enjoyable in the summer. In short, Echo Ridge has become the most popular down-lake recreation spot on the Chelan Ranger District.

## Implementation Begins in "A to A"

The Antilon to Alta (A to A) Ecosystem Restoration Project will begin this spring. The A to A project is designed to reduce fuels in areas of the national forest that are in close proximity to urban areas and to develop and maintain large tree character. It will be implemented over the next several years.

Project activities begin in the spring of 2004. They will focus on those areas closest to the urban interface. Treatment will include thinning, pruning, and piling excess fuel. Hand and mechanical methods will be used.

### Making Echo Better

While Echo Ridge is sure to remain one of the most breath-taking places to ski in the northwest, improvements have been scheduled to expand and improve the area. Chelan District Ranger, Bob Sheehan said, "Echo Ridge provides great opportunities for people to get out and use their public land. We plan to continue to work to make Echo Ridge even better."

Users should see the first noticeable improvements in the winter of 2004-05. New beginner trails, as well as additional skate trails, are planned. There are portions of existing trails that are easier, but many have steep grades and sharp corners more suited to the intermediate skier. By next season, several existing trails will have been modified, and several new trails will have been constructed to accommodate beginning skiers. The new skate trails will connect with existing roads to create a long skate loop for intermediate and advanced skate skiers. Vault toilets will also be added to the trailhead.

During 2005, the winding road to Echo Ridge will be widened. A second parking lot and new snowshoe trails will be added. The expansion project will increase the kilometers of groomed trails to about 38 kilometers.

### The Vision

According to Ken Dull, Trails Coordinator on the Chelan Ranger District, "Echo has the potential to continue to expand." The long-term vision is to have a mix of different kinds of cross-country skiing (and other winter recreation) available for users. In the future, Echo Ridge will boast a mix of double and single track trails. Skate and snowshoe trails will be added while the current heart of Echo Ridge, classic cross-country skiing, will be preserved and enhanced. "The idea is to expand while preserving the very qualities that make Echo Ridge so spectacular," Dull said.

Cooperation with the Lake Chelan Nordic Ski Club and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) have made Echo Ridge a success. The Nordic Ski Club is responsible for all of the grooming at Echo Ridge. IAC provides supporting grant dollars to make grooming and road plowing possible. Chelan County Public Works helps to keep the road in great shape. In short, neither the continued operation nor the planned expansion of Echo Ridge would be feasible without the cooperation and support of our partners. Their help makes our shared vision possible.

### Echo Ridge Nordic Ski Area

Fee: \$5.00 per day, per person to ski on groomed trails, or \$40 per person for a season pass.

Note: Fees collected are used as a match for IAC grants and make trail grooming and road plowing possible. ■



In the fall of 2004, prescribed burning may be implemented to further reduce brush and woody debris in the A to A project area. "Ultimately, we would like to see fuels reduced so this area is more resistant to catastrophic wildfire," said Chelan District Ranger Bob Sheehan. "This will help make wildfire suppression safer and more effective." ■

# Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests Wildfire News & Information



## Why Are We So Driven?



Photo above and right: Karen Wattenmaker

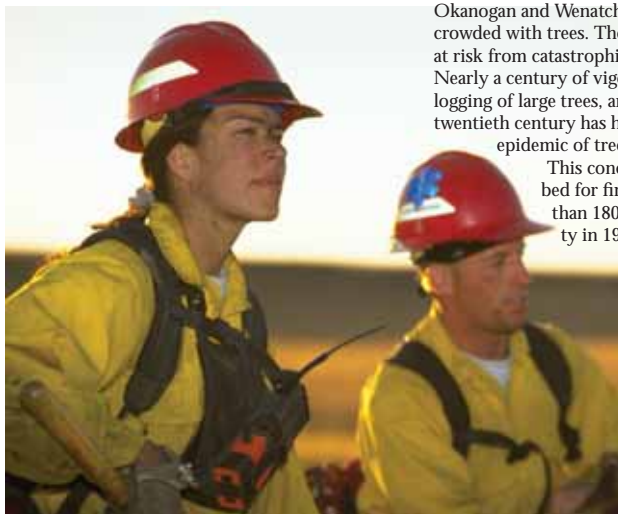


Photo: Bryan Day

**W**ildfire has been a “hot” topic, so to speak, for the residents of north central Washington for many years. Most locals recall the devastating fires of 1994, 2001, and the summer of 2003 in which thousands of acres of forests burned.

Historically, fire has played a major role in developing the forests of North America. By studying hundreds of fire-scarred tree wedges dating back to the 1600s, fire ecologists on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests have found that fires frequented our eastside low elevation forests on average of every 6-20 years.

One unintended consequence of 90 years of forest management (fire suppression, logging and grazing) has been the build up of large amounts of highly

flammable fuels in most mid-and lower elevation dry forests. Today, over 600,000 acres of the dry forest, within the boundaries of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, are vulnerable to insect attack, tree diseases, and high intensity fires.

Defending these dense, thick forests from high intensity wildfires is becoming increasingly difficult. These forests will burn again—it’s only a matter of when. The challenges we face in managing wildfire are great, but not insurmountable. It has taken decades for the current forest situation to develop, and any solution will require time, commitment, funds, and resources. With perseverance we can restore our forests to a condition where populated areas are buffered from large wildfires.

Contributors to Wildfire News:

Jim Bailey, Robin DeMario, Barbara Kenady-Fish, Paul Hart

**E**very now and then someone asks, “Why is the Forest Service so bent on cutting trees” or “setting (prescribed) fires?” “Why can’t they just leave the forest the way it is?”

These are fair questions. After all, the Forest Service is assigned the task of managing the nation’s forests on behalf of all Americans. The 154 national forests are located across the country in 44 different states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They contain a remarkable diversity of natural ecosystems, plants, and animal species. They house the watersheds which supply pure water for much of the nation.

Forest science, like all other areas of scientific study, is continually evolving. As knowledge of natural processes improves, management practices are modified to protect natural resources, and management objectives change.

Research has shown that it is not possible to “leave the forest the way it is.” Forest ecosystems are constantly evolving as trees and other vegetation age and die. Insects, root diseases, fire, and drought all change the forest in ways that may be acceptable in some areas and not in others.

By studying fire scars in the growth rings of old trees, scientists have discovered that some 600,000 acres in the mid and lower elevations of the Okanogan and Wenatchee Forests are unnaturally crowded with trees. These “dense, dry forests” are at risk from catastrophic, uncontrollable wildfires. Nearly a century of vigorous fire suppression, past logging of large trees, and over-grazing early in the twentieth century has helped pave the way for this epidemic of trees.

This condition provided the fuel bed for fires, which burned more than 180,000 acres in Chelan County in 1994, and another 80,000 acres in 2001 and 2003.

Dense, dry forest conditions also contributed to the South Libby, Rocky Hull, and Wilcox fires in the Okanogan Forest in recent summers.



“The Tyee and Rat Creek Fires in Chelan County burned 37 homes, killed almost every tree over vast areas, choked the valleys with smoke, and virtually shut down tourism for much of the summer of 1994,” remembers Elton Thomas, Fire Management Officer for the Okanogan and Wenatchee Forests.

“An event like that is very traumatic for everyone,” he remembers. “At one time, every community in Chelan County was threatened by fire. Thousands of people were evacuated from their homes. We want to prevent these huge fires everywhere we can. That’s why we are so dedicated to doing active management. We are driven.”

# Wildfire News & Information

## Steps to Healthy Forests and Fire Safe Communities



Since 1994, the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests have adopted land management strategies to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The Dry Forest Strategy outlines methods to decrease fuels in our forests. Congress passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 that streamlines the planning and environmental process, and authorizes expenditures of government dollars to get the work done. And, local communities are working in partnership with land management and state and county fire departments to reduce fuels in forest/community interface areas, and to make homes more fire safe.

## Dry Forest Strategy

The 1994 Tye and Rat Creek Fires led to the development of a 'Dry Forest Strategy' for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. This strategy involves thinning in dry forest areas, leaving larger, well-spaced ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch trees. The thinning operations are followed by use of prescribed fire in the spring or fall to clean up ground litter and remove many of the smallest trees which are too small for thinning.



Elsewhere, tree thinning is not needed, but burning is done over large areas to reduce accumulations of brush, fallen logs, branches and needles. The objective is the same...to reduce available fuels in the forest and increase the chance that firefighters have of heading off wildfires before they burn entire

drainages, private land, or rural residences. After these management practices, forest groves more closely resemble those that existed prior to settlement of the west.

Each of the seven ranger districts on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests have designed and implemented projects in the dry forest zone to help lessen the chance of catastrophic fire. Good examples are the Nile project on the Naches District, the Iron Restoration Project on the Cle Elum District, the Fish Pole and Pendleton projects on the Lake Wenatchee and Leavenworth Ranger Districts, Preston Fox Restoration Project on the Entiat District, North Twenty-five Mile project on the Chelan District, Doe Mountain project on the Methow Valley District, and Conger and Coco projects on the Tonasket District. Contact the local ranger district office for more information on these projects.

Because the problem is so widespread, it will be many years before we are able to restore the dry forests to a more defensible, natural condition.

## Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003

Last December, Congress passed and the President signed new legislation designed to encourage efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on national forests, restore forest ecosystems, and help protect rural residence from fire.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 authorizes needed work, and seeks to streamline the planning and environmental process to speed things up. It authorizes the expenditure of \$760 million a year to do the work. However, until extra funding is actually appropriated, the Forest Service will seek to direct regular appropriated funding to this work where possible.

The new legislation is fully compatible with the dry forest strategy managers of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests have been working to implement in recent years.



## Fire Websites and Publications

[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

- making your home firewise, firewise landscaping, firewise checklists, outdoor fire safety.

[www.smokeybear.com/only\\_you.asp](http://www.smokeybear.com/only_you.asp)

- the science of wildfires, good fires and bad fires, fighting fire.

[www.nwccg.gov](http://www.nwccg.gov)

- Information on fire education, firefighting, fire weather, home fire protection, smoke management, wildfire career opportunities, wildland fire ecology and research.

[www.boi.noaa.gov](http://www.boi.noaa.gov)

- fire weather

[www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov)

- National Interagency Fire Center. Information on protecting your home from wildland fire.

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/airhome.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/airhome.html)

- air quality information

**Living With Fire**

- a guide for the homeowner published by the Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group. Contact any Forest Service office for copies.

# Wildfire News & Information



## ...at home

Every summer, headlines tell of more loss of life and property due to wildfires. Supported by the National Fire Plan and the President's Healthy Forest Initiative the Forest Service has been putting emphasis on treating fire prone landscapes, especially those near the wildland/urban interface. By decreasing the amount of fuels available by thinning trees and using prescribed fire, the Okanogan and Wenatchee Forests can lessen the severity of wildfires, reduce the threat of fire to nearby residences, and give firefighters an area from which to mount a safe defense.

## ...in the forest

We now know that fire had a significant role in keeping our east Cascade forests healthy. Since uncontrolled wildfires are a limited option because of threats to life, property, and important natural resources, we must rely on carefully managed fire to mimic the natural fire cycle. Prescribed fire can help recycle nutrients, thin out small trees and brush, encourage new plant growth, allow remaining trees to grow bigger and healthier by eliminating competition for water and nutrients, and create natural openings in the forest that act as barriers to the spread of insects and disease.

## Conducting a Prescribed Fire

During the spring and fall of 2004, each of the seven districts on the Okanogan and Wenatchee

National Forests expect to do prescribed burning on over 28,200 acres. The objectives are to reduce fuel and fire risk, and to re-introduce fire as a natural part of the forest ecosystem, or to prepare a site before replanting with seedling trees.

All of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests' prescribed burning projects are carefully planned with thorough analysis and opportunity for public feedback according to the National Environmental Policy Act.

## The Right Conditions

The Forest Service and other land management agencies do not truly "choose" when to burn. A number of conditions must be met before igniting a prescribed burn. Temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, and fuel moisture are all critical for a desired outcome. The conditions that have the best results and meet the "prescription" occur only during a very narrow window of time. In the spring, this window may last for four or five weeks. In the fall it may last as little as a day or two, but more typically up to two weeks. With a tremendous backlog of work to be done, and more being added every year, the Forest Service must take advantage of every opportunity to burn.

During a prescribed fire, weather conditions are monitored carefully. If conditions are too hot and dry, desired species of plants can be killed and noxious weeds may invade. If burned too cool and wet, the amount of fuels will not be reduced and not enough thinning may occur. Species dependant on fire for rejuvenation (buck brush for example) may not be stimulated to grow.

## Ignition

Most prescribed fires are lit by crews using the "drip torch," a hand-carried device that pours out a small stream of burning fuel. Sometimes fires are lit from a helicopter. A "helitorch" is used to pour out a large stream of burning fuel from a drum slung beneath the helicopter. Sometimes a sphere dispenser is used, which drops small balls of fuel that ignite and burn after landing on the ground.

## Many Faces of Prescribed Fire



## Smoke Management

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources manages smoke approval for prescribed fires. The goal of fire managers is to conduct prescribed fires that burn quickly and cleanly with smoke carried up and away from populated areas. Conditions are watched constantly. Often scheduled burns are cancelled at the last minute if these objectives can't be met. Since weather and winds are unpredictable, there is always a chance that some smoke will end up in the valleys. This happens mostly at night when cool, calm air flows down-valley bringing smoke with it.

Information on the location and objectives of each prescribed fire may be obtained at any of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests' offices.

**L**arge fires have become more frequent in recent years in higher elevation areas of the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests. In many locations, lodgepole pine and spruce forests in higher elevation zones are nearing the end of their natural lifespan. Widespread tree mortality from insects and disease is providing a ready fuel bed for large fires like the Farewell and Isabel Fires on the Okanogan National Forest during the summer of 2003.

"Most of these forest stands are located within classified Wilderness or remote unroaded areas and management options are limited," said Elton Thomas, forest fire management officer. "Wildfires will eventually burn through these areas, however, we try to prevent fires from burning onto adjacent state, private, or Canadian forests."

Firefighters actually have been very successful fighting fires in these areas...more than 98 per cent of lightning fires are put out before they reach one acre in size. Unfortunately, the few fires that cannot be put out grow to very large size because of extreme weather, drought, and heavy fuels.

Current forest fire management plans recognize the natural role fire plays in renewing a forest and removing brush, downed trees, fallen needles, and branches.

"When conditions and location are favorable, it makes sense to manage lightning fires to burn out dead and dying vegetation, breaking up large contiguous concentrations of fuels," Thomas said. "This creates barriers and control points that will help limit the spread of future large wildfires."



Fire fighters often utilize natural features like open ridges, streams, and snowfields to contain wildfires. This is less costly, has less impact, and minimizes risk to firefighters. Such fires also help establish the fuel breaks Thomas describes.

About 25% of the two forests are within inventoried roadless areas. These areas are allocated primarily to roadless recreation, wildlife habitat, and watershed. Timber harvest is not an emphasis, although there may be thinning proposed for roadside zones beside such areas to create firebreaks.



# Wildfire News & Information

## A Season of Fire and Smoke



Needles Fire

The 2003 summer fire season arrived amidst a third year of drought conditions. Rainfall in the state for June, July and August was 70-85 percent below normal; the driest since about 1895. A persistent ridge of high pressure stayed off the coast of Washington all summer long, preventing storms from coming ashore.

Following are some fire statistics for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests of the summer of 2003:

A total of 130 fires burned in the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

Of that total, 74 fires burned in the Wenatchee National Forest and 56 fires burned in the Okanogan National Forest.

The majority of the fires were started by lightning in June, July and August, 2003.

The largest fire was the Farewell Fire which burned 84,343 acres of forest in the Methow Valley Ranger District. Fire crews were able to keep the fire from reaching Canada and the Loomis State Forest.

An International agreement was signed between the U.S. and Canada to make firefighting operations possible across the border. The agreement facilitated the movement of crews and aircraft across the international border for firefighting efforts.

The Needles Fire burned 21,000 acres on the Methow Valley District and threatened numerous homes near Mazama.

Late season fires on the Lake Wenatchee and Leavenworth Ranger Districts, and Tonasket Ranger District burned thousands of additional forested acres and caused anxious days and sleepless nights for hundreds of rural residents.



Isabel Fire

## Wildfires and Their Impact on Recreation



Every summer, the sounds of people having fun can be heard throughout the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

Swimmers splashing, anglers sharing whoopers about the ones that got away, visitors ooh-ing and awe-ing over spectacular views, mountain bikers whooshing by, motorcyclists and off-road vehicle users putting through the woods, and a myriad of other sounds of happy forest users.

The summer of 2003 was a different story. Although people still had fun, last summer's wildfires definitely affected thousands of visitors recreating in the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.

The first effect was a campfire ban. Campfire bans were put into place very early, on July 9 in fact, and became more restrictive as drought conditions and the fire danger worsened over the summer. By the end of August, a ban on all campfire use was in effect for most of the Okanogan and Wenatchee forests.

As the summer progressed and major fires began burning throughout the two forests, access to many forest areas was also restricted. Area closures were implemented due to safety concerns resulting from major fires burning in the two forests.

Along with the campfire bans and access problems experienced last summer, everyone in North Central Washington was affected by smoke at one



Farewell Fire

Air tankers hauled 826,385 gallons of retardant.

Airplanes and helicopters flew over 6,000 hours in fire suppression and firefighter support efforts.

Campfire restrictions went into effect on July 9, 2003.

A campfire ban went into effect on July 25, and was lifted on Oct. 14.

Woodcutting activities were completely suspended on July 23, and did not resume until September 17.



1944 poster

time or another. There was smoke from local wildfires, from fires burning in Oregon, and from the huge fires in Canada. With all the smoke from these wildfires, it was difficult for recreationists to know where the fires were and whether they were in harm's way. In fact, many changed their plans and went to other national forests in adjoining states where fires weren't so prevalent.

It wasn't until late September, after fall rains returned, temperatures dropped significantly, and most of the fires were contained, that most of the bans and restrictions were lifted. Woodcutters were once again able to cut firewood, hunters could get to most of their hunting areas, and overall, things returned to normal.

The fire impacts on recreation during the summer of 2003 were great, but most forest visitors understood the need for the bans and closures and were very cooperative.

With fire season starting earlier than usual this year, it is very likely that north central Washington communities and visitors to the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests will be affected by wildfires again this summer. By following federal, state and local fire restrictions, human-caused wildfires can be prevented. National forest campfire bans and closures are posted on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests' website at [www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee)

# Chelan Ranger District

## Holden Lake Trail

#1251

DIFFICULTY: Easy

LENGTH: 4 miles (6.5 km)

LOW ELEVATION: 3565'

HIGH: 5300'

GAIN: 1735'

PARKING AND FACILITIES: None.

BEST SEASONS: summer, fall

TRAILHEAD ACCESS: Trailhead starts at Hart and Lyman Lakes Trail #1256. From Lucerne, hike or ride up Railroad Creek Road to the end of the road (at Holden Ballpark Campground). Follow Hart and Lyman Lakes Trail #1256 for .5 mile to the junction with Holden Lake Trail #1251.

MAPS: USGS – Holden; Green Trails – Holden

DESCRIPTION: The trail leaves from Railroad Creek Trail and climbs through thick brush on a hot, south-facing slope. It then traverses across open slopes, up switchbacks and through heavy timber to Holden Lake. The views along the route are spectacular. Holden Lake itself is nestled in a beautiful, high mountain cirque. From the lake, it is possible to see Mary Green Glacier on Bonanza Peak (the highest non-volcanic peak in the North Cascades). This is one of the best day hikes on the District. Campsites are available near Holden Lake. There is a closure for overnight camping and campfires within 200 feet of the lakeshore. Not recommended for stock. This trail is maintained annually.



The cedar shingles, visible when you walk up the sturdy stairs, still have the rusty color of a shiny new penny. They have not yet turned silvery-gray with age. The shingles are part of the new public campground shelters constructed by the Lake Chelan Boating Club at Graham Harbor and Refrigerator Harbor. While the actual construction of each shelter only took two days, the preparation that led up to that point took years.

The idea for the shelter was based on the desire to have a safe place for boaters to get out of the bad weather at Safety Harbor. Members of the Boating Club and employees of the Chelan Ranger District worked together to get the ball rolling. When the 2001 Rex Creek Fire closed Safety Harbor, it was decided the first shelter would be best located at Graham Harbor. The other shelter would be built at Refrigerator Harbor. One of the many challenges was selecting a design that reflected the historic construction of other existing shelters at Big Creek, Graham Harbor Creek, and Moore Point. The design was modeled after the Adirondack style trail shelters constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The Chelan Ranger District provided the materials for the shelters and the Boating Club supplied the labor. Several work parties were held to mark, cut, and pre-assemble the shelters. Once the preparation work was finished approximately twenty members of the Lake Chelan Boating Club rolled up their sleeves to build the shelters. During the construction of the second shelter at Refrig-

## Summer Blossom Trail

#1258

DIFFICULTY: More Difficult

LENGTH: 6 miles (9 1/2 km.)

LOW ELEVATION: 6400'

HIGH: 7400'

GAIN: 960'

PARKING AND FACILITIES: Parking is available at the Summer Blossom Trailhead.

BEST SEASONS: summer, fall

TRAILHEAD ACCESS: Trail starts at Summer Blossom Trailhead (off Grade Creek Road) and Summit Trail. From Chelan, drive north on Highway 97 to Pateros. Turn left on Highway 153 for 17 miles. Take the Gold Creek Road #4340/County Road #1034 for 1 mile. Turn left onto South Fork/Gold Creek Road #4330. Take spur 600 and continue until the junction with Grade Creek Road #8200/Cooper Mountain Road #8020. Turn right on Grade Creek Road and continue for 8 miles to Summer Blossom Trailhead.

MAPS: USGS – South Navarre, Martin Peak; Green Trails – Prince Creek

DESCRIPTION: This is an excellent trail for viewing the Sawtooth high country. The trail is an old sheep herder's route through Summer Blossom basin, arriving near the summit of North Navarre Peak (7,963 ft.). The peak offers outstanding views from the snowy Cascades to the vast semi-arid plains of the Columbia Plateau. Appreciate the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps trail work (rock cribbing) as you hike the ridge down to the junction with the Summit Trail and at the East Fork Prince Creek switchbacks. The trail has a few steep grades and the tread is light in some spots, due to low use. Water should be carried. There are possible camping areas after 1.5 miles. ■

## Hit the Trail!



### Imagine...

The trail winds through the forest. Limbs of ponderosa pine filter the sun which glints through the trees, beckoning you further. As you break out of the forest, spectacular views steal your breath... and you are so glad you decided to take a hike on the Chelan Ranger District! To the left, you will find a couple of trails to make your pleasant daydream a reality. If you enjoy these trails, be sure to ask for our new district trail guide.



## Take Shelter!

With the Lake Chelan Boating Club and Chelan Ranger District



erator Harbor, the Lake Chelan Boating Club celebrated with a luau for nearly fifty people.

The shelters are a beautiful testament to the Boating Club's hard work. The craftsmanship is evident in the details. Cedar shingles trim the front of the shelter, and benches line the inside. Even the edges of the two by fours used to provide a frame for the shingles have been rounded, thanks to the Chelan and Manson High School shop classes. Finishing touches included horse shoes for coat hooks and a couple as good luck symbols. The Boating Club has all of the materials marked and ready to go for a third shelter (location to be decided at a later date).

The up-lake shelters are not the only projects the Boating Club has undertaken. In addition to the shelters at Refrigerator Harbor and Graham Harbor, the Boating Club has constructed steps at Graham Harbor and a bridge at Graham Harbor Creek. The Boating Club dedicated last Father's Day weekend to repairs and improvements at Mitchell Creek and Deer Point. "The partnership between the Chelan Ranger District and the Lake Chelan Boating Club is very beneficial to the public," said Chelan District Ranger Bob Sheehan. "With hard work and dedication, they have created a beautiful, lasting improvement to the lakeshore. We really appreciate all of their hard work."

Visitors can be assured that the shelters will be there for a long time—far beyond the point where the shingles weather to gray. ■

# Cle Elum Ranger District

## Lending a Hand for Public Lands

by Rebecca Wassell  
Fisheries Biologist



Volunteers spread grass seed on recently closed roads

On September 20, 2003, volunteers and employees of the Cle Elum Ranger District joined more than 80,000 citizens nationwide in celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> annual National Public Lands Day. In one productive morning, volunteers saved taxpayers hundreds of dollars and improved camping areas along the North Fork Teanaway River. A feeling of accomplishment stayed with them long after they'd brushed the last bits of straw out of their hair. Valerie McCallum, mother of the youngest volunteers, commented, "I really like what we're teaching our kids."

Dispersed camping areas along the North Fork Teanaway River are beautiful places for families to get in touch with nature and each other. Unfortunately, the popularity of these sites has caused soil compaction, loss of trees, and streambank erosion. These effects lead to degraded habitat for the steelhead, bull trout, Chinook salmon, cutthroat and rainbow trout in the river.

With the support of the Title II Resource Advisory Committee, the Respect the River program has worked to restore these sites over the past four years. Respect the River personnel map the sites, talk with campers, and design sites that will protect the river while providing high quality camping experiences.

Typical restoration work includes loosening compacted soil, creating new parking areas, and moving or restricting access to protect habitat.

Once this is accomplished there is still work to be done. The most efficient, and most fun way to accomplish this work is through a volunteer work day.

In the Teanaway campsites, volunteers spread grass seed and straw on recently closed roads, and built new access trails to



the river. Americorps volunteers installed signs to let campers know, "These campsites are free and fish-friendly!" Participating volunteers ranged in age from five to sixty-five. The younger volunteers enjoyed sprinkling grass seed. They were so committed to the task that they didn't miss a square inch of bare ground. If you pass a lush carpet of annual grasses along the North Fork Teanaway this spring, you'll know it's one of the restoration sites.



Nationally, volunteers and agencies worked at 520 National Public Lands Day sites located in all fifty states. Volunteers improved 500 miles of trail, built more than 60 bridges, planted more than 6,600 trees, bagged nearly 2 million pounds of trash, and cleared nearly 60,000 pounds of invasive plants. In Central Washington, volunteer efforts focused on improving the areas that impact fish habitat in the Columbia River watershed. Volunteers in Richland cleaned up 200 acres near the Yakima River, and a work party in the Methow Valley packed 50 pounds of cans and bottles out from Beaver Lake.

On the Cle Elum Ranger District, the Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) partnered with the Ranger District to publicize the event, supply volunteers with edible goodies, and provide people for the work. The partners are planning to celebrate National Public Lands Day each year. In 2004, we will work on the remaining campsites along the North Fork Teanaway River. If you are interested in joining us, please set aside September 18. We will meet at 9AM at the Teanaway Guard Station, and move from there to the work areas. For more information about this, and other environmental education events in Central Washington, check out [www.KittitasEE.net](http://www.KittitasEE.net). We look forward to working with you! ■

## Huckleberries

by Nancy Jones  
Information Assistant

Fall in the Cascades means that the huckleberries are ready and waiting. The Cascades have seen traditional harvests by Native Americans for centuries. Wildlife depends on the berries to ready them for winter. Modern times see continuing harvest of the berries by wildlife and humans.

A trip to the Cascades to pick huckleberries makes for a wonderful family outing. Every one from the toddler to grandma and grandpa can enjoy a day in the mountains picking and eating the juicy purple berries. Time spent together in the woods leads to sharing memories over huckleberry pie in the months that follow.



On the Cle Elum Ranger District, Stampede Pass is the most popular harvest area. Exploring other areas along the Cascade crest can yield patches that receive little or no harvest - and more berries!

In the lowlands the berries ripen as early as mid-July, but do not ripen at the higher elevations until mid-August. Labor Day weekend traditionally brings the most folks to the woods for the peak of the harvest. Many people won't pick until the berries have received the first frost of the season, claiming the frost brings out the taste. The berries are usually too soft to pick by late September.

As with any crop, some years are better than others. Don't expect anyone to tell you where their secret spot is, as most Huckleberry pickers won't disclose the location to even their closest friends or family! To find your own secret spot start scouting the area early in the season, looking in open areas for bushes with green berries. When you come back to pick, and find that your spot didn't produce, don't be discouraged. Keep looking - you will nearly always find a patch that will produce enough berries to make it worth the trip.

While picking, be aware of your surroundings. You may be sharing a patch with some of the local wildlife (including bears), which if surprised, could be protective of their favorite patch. To avoid this, occasionally call out, talk, or sing while picking.

From 1-90 you can access miles of forest roads at Exit 62, the Lake Kachess / Stampede Pass Exit. Forest Road #54 will lead not only to Stampede Pass, but to miles of additional roads from Lost Lake to Blowout Mountain. Forest Road #49, towards Lake Kachess gives access to Keechelus Ridge and Gale Creek. Exit 63, Cabin Creek, will lead you to Amabilis Mountain. Good luck and happy picking! ■



# Cle Elum Ranger District

Whether you go to snowy places for recreation or because it's the place you live, nature in winter provides unique opportunities to witness the wonder of survival. A few feet of snow opens doors to investigation. Where do the animals go? How do they cope? What keeps them alive? All these questions can be answered by looking deeper into winter ecology.

Consider what it's like to live in a forest elevated 10 feet above ground. That is the experience animals are faced with when winter stacks snow in the Cascades. Imagine your everyday life at work, school, in the grocery store, or where you are sitting as you read this with challenges of being 10 feet higher than you are now.

Animals in winter must adapt to the piles of snow, as well as the change in food supply, cold temperatures, and challenges of finding shelter. Innovative adaptations accommodate a variety of needs. Lynx grow extra fur on their feet that act as snowshoes. Snowshoe hares change the color of their fur to blend in with the pristine white environment. In the fall, a hormone triggered by the shortening days causes the hare to enter its white phase.

While some adaptations are easily observed by the winter investigator, there are unseen changes happening in more obscure places. Where does



a shrew go in the winter? It becomes subnivean! A subnivean animal spends the winter under the snow, at ground level where a constant temperature, food and shelter are available. Shrews have plenty of company under there; moles, voles, and some mice all congregate where berries, seeds, insects and water all abound.

What are those black bugs flipping around on the snow? You may see such black critters called Springtails singly, or by the millions. Springtails are a common insect that can be seen on warmer winter days squirming and flopping across the snow. A tail shaped like a lobster's helps propel them across the snow in search of food and companionship. They flock to the fresh snow to feast on microorganisms and also are searching for that perfect mate. Consider the extra protein you may be eating with that refreshing handful of snow!

Plants are not exempt from the necessity of adaptation to the winter environment.

Trees buried beneath the snow can absorb enough sunlight to continue the photosynthetic process of making food. While their processes have slowed considerably, basic needs continue. Some plants save energy by dropping their leaves and slipping into a dormant state and storing their food in roots or tubers. Spring growth is triggered by the lengthening day.

Winter provides an opportunity to observe nature's patterns and processes. As you wonder about how the natural world reacts to an environment buried in snow, will you be inspired to investigate further? ■



## Winter's "Wonder Land"

by Kim Larned  
Public Affairs Specialist

In 1993, Jacquie Higgins-Rosebrook answered a call to work at the Stampede Pass Weather Station as a certified weather observer for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA). The weather station has been in operation since the 1930s when it began as a Forest Service fire lookout and has slowly evolved into the facility it is today. The remote station sits at 4,000 feet and gets plenty of snow – about 120 inches a year. For the last 10 years Jacquie has made this place her permanent residence.



Stampede Pass Weather Station

acres out her back door. Jacquie has been successful raising native plants from seed at the station although domestic garden foods inevitably fall prey to the hare and deer.

Things Jacquie misses most in winter are fresh veggies and books. She maintains that she cannot keep enough books stocked at the station to satisfy her. When in the city, she misses the quiet and solitude found at her mountain home.

Beginning mid August, Jacquie is usually visited by between 100-150 Pacific Crest Trail thru-hikers...those who started their trek in Mexico in April, hoping to reach Canada before the snow flies. Jacquie has cooked many meals for these weary travelers, listened to their fascinating stories, and shared an evening of company and comfort. "They are very interesting people by the time they have walked from Mexico to Stampede Pass. Most have gone through some sort of transformative experience on their way here," said Jacquie.

Jacquie feels grateful to have a group of people looking out for her at her remote workstation. The 'Giard cabin gang,' Tommy Willis, and Tim and Hillary Foss are among several U.S. Forest Service employees. Others include Colleen Hawley and the staff at Easton State Park, Tacoma Watershed Patrol, the Hyak Department of Transportation, and the High Country Snowmobilers. All have helped Jacquie during 10 interesting years at the weather station, whether in a time of need or just to drop a bag of freshly picked chanterelles. She is equally thankful for both. ■

## A Weather Observer Unlike Any Other

by Kim Larned  
Public Affairs Specialist



Jacquie accesses her winter home through the second story window

A typical winter work day for Jacquie begins at 8 am with snow shoveling to clear an egress from the office building. She then treks out to the snow field to measure the snow for depth and water content. This process occurs daily between 9 and 10 am, and is repeated in the afternoon between 3 and 4 pm when she measures snow again and then climbs to the instrument platform to record 24 hour high, low and current temperatures. She spends the rest of any given winter day shoveling out the necessary doors and equipment

The summer routine is much easier, checking gauges only once a day for high and low temperatures and 24-hour precipitation. Data is transferred to the NOAA office in Seattle where it is stored and compiled. Spare time is spent gardening, hiking and exploring the literally millions of



It's a 3-hour trip by snowcat to get the mail

# Entiat Ranger District

## Mad River & Devils Backbone

### OHV Trail Riding at its Best

by Barbara Kenady-Fish  
Public Affairs Specialist



The Entiat Ranger District has 200 miles of multiple-use trails, reaching from Lake Chelan to Lake Wenatchee. This system crosses Tyee Ridge, Entiat Ridge, Devils Backbone, Shady Pass, and the Mad River and Entiat drainages, making it one of the most diverse multiple use trail systems in the state of Washington.

Unlike non-motorized trails or restricted use areas on National Forest lands, the Forest Service manages multiple use trails for a wider variety of uses. The trails are popular with horseback riders, backpackers, mountain bikers and motorcyclists (also called off highway vehicles, or OHVs).

"We are pleased to offer such an extensive multiple use area for the recreating public," said Randy McLandress, trail manager for the Entiat Ranger District. Managing this type of trail system does have its challenges. With current use on these trails, McLandress says safety issues are a concern. "You could go around any corner and encounter horse back riders, a motorcyclist or a family riding mountain bikes," he said.

Because many of these trails are popular with all users, the increased popularity can have an impact on trail conditions. "Today's motorcycle and mountain bike technology has allowed riders to go at higher rates of speed than was envisioned for these types of trails," said McLandress. Inappropriate use by all trail users including traveling at excess speed, cutting switchbacks, and violating seasonal closures, can contribute to trail widening, ruts, and erosion.

McLandress knows that public contact is an important component in helping to increase public safety awareness and proper OHV riding techniques. During the summer he hires two OHV Patrol Officers who make contacts with visitors, enforce regulations, assist during emergencies, and help increase awareness of safety and resources issues.

Mike Forney and Mason Schuur spend their summers contacting people who use the trail system. Both are OHV enthusiasts who know trail riding techniques for maximizing enjoyment while minimizing impacts. "We emphasize proper use of the throttle and clutch in our education outreach to avoid roosting," said Forney. 'Roosting' is a term used to describe tire spinning and kicking up the dirt. "Poor riding can move a lot of soil and really damage the trail," he said. "However, you can put the right amount of traction to the ground by using your clutch properly."

Although the primary mode of travel for the OHV Rangers is by motorcycle (they can cover a lot of ground on a bike) they are knowledgeable about each of the recreation uses and are equally at ease talking to backpackers, horseback riders and mountain bikers.



With the sun shining brightly and the snow melting in the mountains, McLandress, Forney and Schuur look forward to getting out on the trails once again. With 200 miles of trail to patrol, they have their hands full with enforcement and education. Between trail maintenance and public contacts, this year is sure to be another busy one.



### Riding the Trails

This system of trails offers a full spectrum of difficulty and accommodates anyone from novice to veteran. With many riders coming from the Seattle area, the Lake Wenatchee area is the more popular point of access to the trails. Many riders travel over State Highway 2 and then up the Chiwawa River.

You may wish to pick up a free map of the Devils Backbone, Mad River, Lower Chiwawa and Devils Gulch multiple use trail system. These are available at any Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forest office.



OHV Officer measures exhaust decibels

### Motorcycle Requirements:

Make sure your motorcycle is legal for riding Forest Service trails that are open to motorized use. This includes a working headlight and tail light, USDA Forest Service approved spark arrestor, muffler that limits exhaust noise to 105 decibels, and current ORV permit tabs. All trails are closed to ATVs.

Seasonal Closures. The Upper Mad River area has a seasonal closure to protect the trail from rutting and erosion until the tread dries out.

All trails are closed to 4-wheeled vehicles.

### Chiwawa River Road Access (Lake Wenatchee):

Access the trail system from Alder Ridge Trail #1523, Chikamin Creek Trail #1534, or from Goose Creek or Deep Creek Campgrounds. Both Upper Chikamin Trail #1561 and Alder trails have seasonal closures in conjunction with the seasonal closure on Upper Mad Trail #1409.1. These areas are signed and violators will be ticketed. The trails are closed to wheeled use and horses for resource protection until the trails dry out. Depending on the season, this area generally opens around the middle of July or the first of August.

### Entiat Valley Access:

A popular hub for OHV users is the Entiat Valley. From Lake Creek Campground users can access the Devils Backbone and Lake Creek system during one day, and the Upper Mad, Tommy Creek and Tyee Ridge system the next. These areas offer a complete day of riding for each area. Some popular destinations include Mad Lake and the Klone Peak area. ■

# Entiat Ranger District

Working side by side with professional forest managers, fourteen 4-H students from Entiat and Chelan gained valuable work experience while learning to appreciate the beauty and value of the amazingly diverse natural world that surrounds their communities.

During the summer of 2003, the Entiat Ranger District participated in this mutually beneficial opportunity to educate high school students and to accomplish work that wouldn't ordinarily have been done.



The WSU 4-H Forestry Education Program gets funding from the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act Title III, which is secured and allocated by the Chelan County Commissioners. This unique educational program for high school students in Chelan County benefits both students and local, state and federal agencies. Students receive a small stipend for their participation and earn school credits during this summer program.

While the students learned what it was like to tromp through acres of forest in 90-degree temperatures counting and recording snag trees, the district was able to accomplish about 15 acres of surveys that were needed to meet habitat management requirements for birds and mammals that depend on snags for survival.

Other projects included much needed campground maintenance at Silver Falls Campground, and clearing brush and debris from the Silver Falls Interpretive trails.

In addition, employees of the Entiat Fish Hatchery and Entiat Ranger District put their heads together to design an interpretive trail at the hatchery. In just 3 days, the 4-H students hauled and spread many yards of gravel, learned about streamside ecology and how to interpret it, built a bench, flagged additional trail to be built in the future, and agreed on messages and themes for interpretive signs that will be installed along the trail.

The rewards of such collaboration can be measured both in acres and dollars, but there is much satisfaction in building relationships, learning together, and working toward a common goal to protect our natural resources. ■

## 'A' for Accomplishment

### WSU 4-H Forestry Project

by Barbara Kenady-Fish  
Public Affairs Specialist

Martinez Livestock Inc. has grazed domestic sheep on the Entiat Ranger District for decades. Entiat is one of 5 districts, and 10 sheep allotments on the Wenatchee National Forest upon which Martinez Livestock grazes its sheep.

The grazing season typically begins in mid-May but, for the Martinez family, caring for the livestock is a 24 hour a day, year-round field season. For the band of sheep that grazes on the Mosquito allotment (located in the Tillicum Creek area of the Entiat Ranger District), the preparation begins in the middle of winter at the lambing camp in Mabton, WA.

At this facility the sheep are sheared and the lambs are born. The shearing is done by a private company that brings in their own trailer set up to shear sheep and they can do hundreds of animals



a day. During this time, the ewes are watched closely and moved out of the weather into large lambing sheds where the lambs are born. When the lambs are approximately a week old, their tails are docked and they are moved outside. With the arrival of several thousand lambs each season, the lambing process begins as early as late January and sometimes continues into April. The animals are brought to this location in mid-winter and remain until bands of ewes and lambs are moved onto various privately owned low-elevation ranges. The lambs must typically be more than 3 months old prior to going onto the national forest range allotments.

Starting in mid-May, bands of approximately 1000 ewes with lambs are hauled by semi truck to the Mosquito and other allotments. The livestock are unloaded at an authorized location and held until the entire band has arrived. After the ewes and lambs have paired up, they begin on their established route, working their way up, down, and across the steep terrain of the Entiat District.

The band is moved approximately every two days, depending on the available forage, water, and terrain. There is a single herder, frequently of South American origin who works with herd dogs that assist him with the movement of the band, and a guard dog that protects the band from predators. The herder lives in a trailer which he tows behind a farm tractor. Meat, produce, water, and supplies are delivered to him by the Martinez family every few days.

The camp sites are often in areas that have been used for several decades. The sheep prefer to bed on open ridge tops, so these are the desired locations for the camps. The sheep are bedded near the herder's camp at night and moved out across the landscape to graze during the day.

It is the responsibility of Martinez Livestock to ensure that grazing is within the standards set by the Forest Service. Midway in the route at a location accessible by semi truck, the lambs are sorted from the band then loaded back onto the trucks, and hauled to market. The ewes continue to graze, moving up through French Corral and then trailing through the Limekiln Allotment on the Leavenworth District and finally down to private land in Plain. They are then moved back to their fall and winter pastures on private ground. ■



## Home on the Range Allotment

by Carla Jaeger  
Range Technician



# Lake Wenatchee and

## A Special Place Around the Bend

by Susan Peterson  
Public Affairs Specialist



Mary and John Ware

“Even as a little girl I had a penchant to see what was around the next bend in the trail, so I walked across the Sear’s Creek Bridge, saw a trail, and just started walking. It was beautiful with huge cedar and fir trees. Farther up, I heard a clap sound to my right and walked toward it to discover an enormous pond with beaver and muskrat. I returned time after time to that peaceful place so hidden and protected that few knew it was there.”  
—Mary Ware

Hidden in a quiet forest and nestled among tall cedars, moss and peaceful waters is a new interpretive project in the White River Watershed in the Lake Wenatchee area.

The Ware Walk is a short interpretive trail that takes you gently down to the waters edge of the White River. The White River is a major tributary to Lake Wenatchee, and provides critical habitat for many fish and waterfowl. It is also a place that pulls you in and holds you still with its beauty.

The character of this section of river has changed over the years. Logging and other activity altered the area for several decades. Roads, tree plantations and human activity changed the course of the river itself. In the last couple of years though, the Forest Service and other partners have committed to restoring these wetlands to their natural state.

By removing old portions of road, the White River was restored to its natural floodplain. High stream flows are now filtered through the area, the strong currents are reduced to gentler currents that no longer scour the river’s channel but provide calmer waters that enrich wetland habitats. Fish and other aquatic species have regained access to places of refuge where they can rear their young or escape the hectic pace of the stronger currents.

The Ware Walk is named in honor of John & Mary Ware, pioneers in the fields of recreation and range management. Their lives were intertwined in the Upper Wenatchee Valley for decades. John passed away several years ago, but Mary is still an

active participant in the community and will be present at this year’s dedication of the Ware Walk.

Please accept Mary’s invitation to follow the Ware Walk Interpretive Trail and learn more about the complex river environments, while strolling beneath the tall mountains and breathing the fresh air. You will undoubtedly see many birds, old growth habitat of cedar and fir, peaceful waters teeming with fish, and maybe a paw print of some forest creature. You will also be able to learn more about the White River’s story and how the land is beginning to heal again.



Driving instructions: Take the Stevens Pass Highway (Highway 2) to Coles Corner. Follow Highway 207 (pass the Forest Service Office) to White River Road. Follow this road to Sear’s Creek, cross the bridge and follow the road till the end. There you will find parking and the first trail signs. ■

## “Saturday in the Park”

### Lake Wenatchee Interpretive Programs

by Terri Halstead  
Information Assistant



The view from Lake Wenatchee State Park

...Saturday in the park...  
every day’s the Fourth of July  
People reaching, people touching,  
a real celebration waiting for us all.  
- Robert Lamm (Chicago)

Looking for something different to do on your Saturdays this summer? Join us at the Lake Wenatchee State Park for fun and informative campfire programs designed for all ages. The U.S. Forest Service, Washington State Parks, and the Northwest Interpretive Association offer interpretive programs every Saturday during

July and August. The programs are presented in a 300-seat outdoor amphitheater at Lake Wenatchee State Park, located on the edge of beautiful Lake Wenatchee. They provide a variety of cultural dance, live musicians, storytellers, natural and cultural history programs, and movies.

The schedule changes each summer, so contact the Lake Wenatchee Ranger Station at (509) 763-3103 for this year’s line up.

Another highlight for visitors to Lake Wenatchee is the Saturday morning program when Smokey Bear and his firefighter friends teach about fire prevention and campfire safety. Kids can spray water from a real fire hose, take pictures with Smokey, get an up-close look at fire engines, and take home a Smokey Bear “goody bag.” Help



us celebrate Smokey’s 60th birthday on August 7<sup>th</sup> this year, complete with cupcakes and visits from Smokey’s animal friends. It’s an event for the whole family!

The Smokey Bear programs begin at 11 am (wildfires and weather permitting), and the evening programs start at 8 pm every Saturday in July and August. The programs usually last about an hour. Admission is by a \$1.00-per-person suggested donation. Washington State Parks will waive the \$5.00 day-use parking fee for visitors parked while attending these programs.

Come and enjoy the entire day at the Lake Wenatchee State Park with hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, or swimming at the beach. Bring along a blanket and a jacket for those chilly nights - and mosquito repellent, just in case! From Highway 2, drive 3½ miles north on Highway 207. Turn left on Cedar Brae Road and follow to the South Lake Wenatchee State Park. ■

# Leavenworth Ranger District

**W**ilderness management can be tricky. Failing to act at the right time with the right tool can result in long-term damage to wilderness character. Using two examples from two different lake basins in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness we can see how managerial adjustments brought each area toward a more desired condition.

Lake Mary, a subalpine lake basin, first suffered impacts from sheep grazing from the 1880s until the 1950s. In the 1960s, the area became popular for hikers, so managers responded by installing picnic tables, a hitch rack, and garbage pits. By the 1980s, the area was now part of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, and a strategy was needed to reduce impacts. Campfire prohibitions were implemented, a toilet was installed, the access trail was moved to a more durable location, and damaged campsites were restored by transplanting salvaged plants from the trail project. Since the area had been designated as wilderness, all structures other than toilets were removed. Additional wilderness-wide regulations further restricted use. Group size was limited to a total of twelve people and stock, and two hundred-foot setbacks from lakes were installed for stock access. A regulation was adopted making it illegal to enter a closed restoration site.

These strategies worked somewhat, but erosion and compaction, continued use in closed sites, and a loss of organic soil hampered recovery. In 1993, additional strategies were adopted: a quarter-mile stock setback; designated campsites to concentrate use; and delineation of trails and campsites with barriers such as logs or rock. A more intensive approach to restoration work was implemented that included seeding, planting, erosion control, site closures, and signage.

Fast forward to year 2002. The revised management strategy is a success! The restoration work is flourishing. Visitors know where they can walk and camp. The lake side area is dominated by native vegetation. Well-located trails replace a huge bare dirt campsite that blocked access to the lake. Visitors now comment that Lake Mary looks far better than it did 15 years ago!

Let's contrast the example of Lake Mary with the exceedingly popular Enchantment Lake basin. Unlike Lake Mary, impacts from stock and commercial grazing were not a management issue in the Enchantments – access was too steep and rocky. However, in the 1960s and 70s, literally hundreds of people were camping at one time in the three square mile basin. Campsites occupied virtually every flat dry spot.

By the early 1980s, the vegetative condition had declined to a rating of "poor" despite campfire closures, installation of toilets, trail hardening, and group size limits. Measurable fecal coliform from human and dog feces were even found in the lakes.

Because the basin consists of mostly thin and dry soils, restoration only succeeded in the wettest of locations.

In 1987, a limited entry permit system was implemented allowing no more than 60 people overnight at one time. Group size was further reduced to eight. To protect fragile meadows education messages were strengthened, coaching people on how to walk and camp, and even where to urinate (the mountain goats paw up vegetation to eat the salt in urine).

Today, visitors notice improvements in the condition of the vegetation. Trail hardening and a cairn system keep most traffic on durable routes. Well-established campsites accommodate the reduced use level. Prohibiting campfires and providing toilets further limits impacts. This area will always pose management challenges, but the overall trend of wilderness quality is no longer declining. In this case, management actions other than restoration proved to be a more effective tool due to the harsh conditions.

This tale illustrates that no simple 'one-size-fits-all' approach works for managing wilderness. A successful strategy in one location may not succeed elsewhere. Improvements can be made by adjusting management actions over time. Of course, the real lesson is to prevent damage in the first place, as remedies are expensive, painful, and take years for results. ■

## A Tale of Two Lake Basins

by Lisa Therrell  
Wilderness Manager



Prusik Peak in the Enchantment Lakes area.  
Photo by John Lindsey

excerpted from a draft publication on wilderness restoration to be published by the Forest Service Missoula Technology and Development Center. Lisa Therrell is principal author

**T**he second annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, centered in the stunningly beautiful town of Leavenworth, Washington was held Mothers Day weekend of 2004. The event featured workshops, field trips, art shows and other bird-related activities.



Birding is the number one leisure activity in the United States, and both fledgling birders and experts enjoyed the unique range of events. The weekend was filled to the brim with a host of activities from Birding by Boat, to an Owl Prowl, to a Mother's Day Wildflower Walk. Tours included a visit to the future Leavenworth Audubon Center, a

saunter through the forests and shorelines, shopping for works by local wildlife artists, and meeting birds live and up close that are being rehabilitated from injury. The festival concluded with a song-bird concert at Canyon Wren Recital Hall.

In association with International Migratory Bird Day on May 8<sup>th</sup>, the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest seeks to teach us all about the conservation and preservation of the birds that nest here every spring. Participants gained a greater understanding of why Neotropical migratory songbirds come to the Wenatchee River watershed for a very important, and brief, part of their year – to breed and fledge.

Bird Fest is a unique partnership between Audubon Washington, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Okanogan & Wenatchee National Forests, the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, North Cascades

National Park Service Complex, the North Central Washington Audubon Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Upper Valley Arts. For more information fly to our website at...

[leavenworthspringbirdfest.com](http://leavenworthspringbirdfest.com) ■

## Nature Tourism Soars at Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest

by Susan Peterson  
Public Affairs Specialist



# Naches Ranger District

## A View to the Past from Edgar Rock

by Mike Hil er  
Special Uses Coordinator,  
and  
Doug Jenkins  
Information Assistant



This historic photo of Edgar Rock was taken by Asahel Curtis

A visit to the top of Edgar Rock rewards those who are inclined to struggle up a steep trail for an outstanding view. The peak overlooks the small mountain community of Cliffdell, 26 miles west of Naches, WA. Edgar Rock and the community of Cliffdell have a unique place in local geology, and Washington State history.

Native Americans once camped along the Naches River near Cliffdell. Those early resident campgrounds weren't located on the river bank as is common today. At that time the river's edge was relatively unpopular because it was here that grizzly bears and wolves scavenged for salmon, and large numbers of dead fish rotted in the sun.

Instead they chose to camp away from the river at various fresh water springs, such as the one at Spring Creek. It was around this spring that the Cliffdell community developed.

The old Naches Pass Trail once followed the south side of the Naches River near Cliffdell, directly across from Whistlin' Jack Lodge, a popular lodge located in the heart of this mountain community. The pioneer trail was used by the Wilkes "Pacific Exploration Expedition" in 1841. The Longmire wagon train also passed near here, heading to western Washington in the fall of 1853. In those days the trail was simply a travel way, but old maps indicate that it passed near the present location of the Crag Summer Homes.

In 1856, a singular historical event occurred near Cliffdell, which resulted in the naming of Edgar Rock. That year John Edgar, an army scout, was riding ahead of a military detachment sent to the Yakima area from Fort Steilacoom. In the vicinity of Saw Mill Flat, Edgar encountered scouts from a group of hostile Indians who wanted to greet the military with force.

Edgar, who was married to a Yakama Indian, learned of the war party and returned to his military group with the news. They fled back to Steilacoom to resume the war at a later time. Possibly in retaliation for this deed, John Edgar was killed in what is now called the Yakima Indian War of 1856. Edgar Rock, a remnant of an old volcano, was named in his honor.

### Hiking Edgar Rock

Choose one of two ways to get to Edgar Rock. These trails are free of snow by June, and either hike is suitable for late spring.

**Lost Creek Route** - If you choose the more "aerobic" route, drive west from Naches on Highway 410, or east from Cliffdell. At the old River Road #1704 (just west of Gold Run) turn south and drive west across the Naches River and through the Fontaine area. This was the site of the old Fontaine Ranch. The old ranch house still stands near the road. At the turn to "Lost Creek Village," turn left (Road #1704-311) and drive one mile down river to Lost Creek to a small parking area with a trail sign. This hike takes several hours and climbs almost 800 vertical feet over its 2 mile climb. The views are outstanding.

**Upper Trail head Route** - To approach the peak from the upper road system, depart from Highway 410 at the Boulder cave turnoff, one mile west of Whistlin' Jack's Lodge. Cross the Naches River, turn right on road #1704 and drive 1/2 mile. Before you reach Camp Roganunda turn left on road #1706. At approximately 4 miles you will reach road #1709. Stay on #1706 two more miles and look for the Lost Creek Trail sign on the left. Park here and hike to the north.

A detailed map, such as the Naches Ranger District topographic map is invaluable here, but you can follow road numbers to get to the trailhead. Allow approximately 3 hours round trip. Forest Pass not required.

Edgar Rock Lookout, at 3,840 feet elevation, was a summer fire watch station between 1934 and 1951. Its proximity to the old Naches Ranger Station made it a popular site for "fire watch" during dry periods, weekends, or after local lightning storms. The old lookout station is now gone but some bits and pieces remain to remind us of the old Fire Watch System and the lookouts who worked there. ■



## Range Allotment Maintenance Protects Resources

by Carla Jaeger  
Range Technician



Range allotments on National Forest lands have a history as long as the Forest Service itself. The general public may rarely see the livestock or even the evidence that livestock is out there, with the exception of the occasional fence or cattle guard. What might look like recreation to a lot of people, cowboys pushing their livestock through the forest terrain, is actually an ongoing effort between the Forest Service and the Permittee to protect and maintain the integrity of our forest grazing lands.

There are structures and developments within the allotments that the permittees are responsible for maintaining. Often a combination of natural events such as those associated with wind, snow and wildlife can render a fence non-functional and major repairs or reconstruction are needed.

With the busy schedule of the permittees through the summer months, the Forest Service will work cooperatively to coordinate the permittees and volunteer groups to accomplish some of these repairs and reconstructions.



In the 2003 season, one such project was located at 2 Point Springs. It was necessary to remove the dilapidated wire fence that surrounded the spring. In the best interest of wildlife, increased life of the fence and to reduce annual repairs, it was decided to replace the fence with a large buck and pole fence. The permittee cut and delivered the supplies to the site. The volunteer crew took down the old fence and built the new buck and pole fence, and the Forest Service fire crew removed the old fence debris from the site. Through the cooperation of everyone involved, we now have a new buck and pole structure for spring protection that is also wildlife friendly. This structure should last for years to come with only a fraction of the maintenance needed by the previous wire fence. ■

# Naches Ranger District

Visitors to the Naches Ranger District have commented on the number of trees that are turning brown and appear to be dying. This has been most noticeable along the White Pass and Chinook Pass Highways and in the Bumping drainages, although trees in the Rattlesnake, Oak Creek, Nile Creek, and South Fork Tieton River drainages are also turning brown.

The tree discoloration is caused by the larval (caterpillar) stage of the western spruce budworm feeding on the new growth needles at the tips of the tree branches. Douglas-fir and grand fir are preferred host species, but Engelmann spruce and western larch needles can also be affected. The current outbreak became noticeable on the Naches Ranger District in 1999 and has affected over 200,000 acres.



Western spruce budworm adults are triangular, rusty-colored moths about ½ inch long. They emerge in late July or early August, living only long enough to mate and lay eggs. The tiny, newly-hatched larvae spin silken shelters under bark and branches where they hibernate for the winter. In the spring they emerge and spend 30 to 40 days feeding on needles, buds and cones, reaching a mature size of 1 to 1 ¼ inches. Then they form hard cases, called pupae and, in about ten days, the adult moth emerges.

Budworm outbreaks appear to be related to a combination of the high survival rate of the larvae and an abundance of multi-aged Douglas-fir and grand fir. A steady increase of these 'host' trees has occurred where wildfires have been suppressed and timber harvest reduced. Most outright mortality has occurred in smaller trees (less than 12 feet tall) that generally have less well-developed crowns and root systems. Larger trees seem to withstand the defoliation with little more than scattered branch or top kill.

Extended outbreaks combined with drought conditions may result in weakening trees to the point they are susceptible to bark beetle attacks that cause mortality.

While it is difficult to accurately predict the future of this infestation, some observations are becoming increasingly clear. Areas where the trees are more widely spaced with a sparse understory tend to support much lower populations of spruce budworm and recover more quickly than densely stocked areas. These local observations and research results indicate that the most effective long-term method of minimizing the adverse effects of western spruce budworm and similar defoliating insects is to modify the habitat that supports them.

This habitat modification involves strategic thinning of dense forests, particularly those with significant amounts of grand fir and Douglas-fir. Reducing the number of host trees and the amount of understory vegetation limits the competition for available moisture and nutrients. This tips the balance in favor of the forest rather than the insect pests.

Complete eradication of the spruce budworm is neither practical nor desirable. Treatment with pesticides has proven expensive and largely ineffective. The goal is to have thinned areas distributed across the landscape to serve as barriers to extensive and destructive infestations. Currently, tree thinning is completed or planned for approximately 15,000 acres of the insect- and fire-prone dry forest stands on the Naches District and additional projects are being developed. The thinning will reduce the intensity and spread of both wildfires and insects such as spruce budworms. ■

## Why Are the Trees Turning Brown?

by John Durkee  
Forester/Vegetation Management  
and  
Connie Mehmel  
Entomologist



Additional information available

USDA Forest Service website:  
[na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/westbw/fidl-wbw.htm](http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/westbw/fidl-wbw.htm)

The following handouts are available at Naches Ranger Station: Western Spruce Budworm, and Western Spruce Budworm – Frequently Asked Questions.

Private landowners may contact Karen Ripley, Forest Health Program, Resource Protection Division, Department of Natural Resources, PO Box 47037, Olympia, Washington 98504-7037.

The White Pass Company has requested an expansion of their current Special Use Permit for the White Pass Ski Area in response to growing public demand for more diverse downhill skiing opportunities, as well as a need to provide additional terrain to reduce skier density within the ski area. The White Pass Ski Area lies on the crest of the Cascade Mountains, on National Forest System Lands of the Naches Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, and the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The proposed expansion area lies within the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District. It includes:

An addition of approximately 700 acres to the existing permit area

Construction of two new chairlifts and associated ski trails

A mid-mountain warming facility within the expansion area

Additional expanded parking

Public scoping was conducted during in the fall and winter of 2003. Alternatives to the proposal are being developed in response to issues raised through the scoping process. The analysis will be documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and is planned to be available for public review and comment in June 2004. The DEIS will be followed by a Final Environmental Impact Statement and after thorough review, a Record of Decision will be signed by the Forest Supervisors of the Okanogan-Wenatchee and Gifford Pinchot National Forests. Although public input is welcome throughout the process, it is most helpful to our analysis if it is received during the public comment period.

To learn more about the White Pass Expansion Project, visit the Wenatchee National Forest website at: [www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/planning/white-pass/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/planning/white-pass/). Comments may be emailed to [scoping\\_comments\\_naches@fs.fed.us](mailto:scoping_comments_naches@fs.fed.us). You may also contact the Naches Ranger District at 10237 Highway 12, Naches, Washington, 98937 or telephone (509) 653-1400. ■

## White Pass Expansion Analysis Underway

by Sue Ranger  
Recreation Planner





# Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests

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215 Melody Lane  
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(509) 664-9200  
(509) 664-9201 (TTY)
- Naches Ranger District**  
10237 Highway 12  
Naches, WA 98937  
(509) 653-1400  
(509) 653-1401 (TDD)
- Okanogan Valley Office**  
1240 South Second Avenue  
Okanogan, WA 98840  
(509) 826-3275  
(509) 662-4396 (TTY)
- Methow Valley Ranger District**  
24 West Chewuch Rd.  
Winthrop, WA 98862  
(509) 996-4003
- Tonasket Ranger District**  
1 W. Winesap  
Tonasket, WA 98855  
(509) 486-2186  
(509) 486-5144 (TTY)
- Methow Valley Visitor Center**  
Bldg. 49 Hwy. 20  
P.O. Box 579  
Winthrop, WA 98862  
(509) 996-4000  
Open May—Oct.
- Chelan Ranger District**  
428 W. Woodin Avenue  
Chelan, WA 98816  
(509) 682-2576 (Voice/TDD)
- Entiat Ranger District**  
2108 Entiat Way  
Entiat, WA 98822  
(509) 784-1511 (Voice/TTY)
- Lake Wenatchee Ranger District**  
22976 State Highway 207  
Leavenworth, WA 98826  
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Major Highways  
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Scale  
miles 2 6 10 14

Cover photo: Prusik Peak by Dan O'Connor  
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